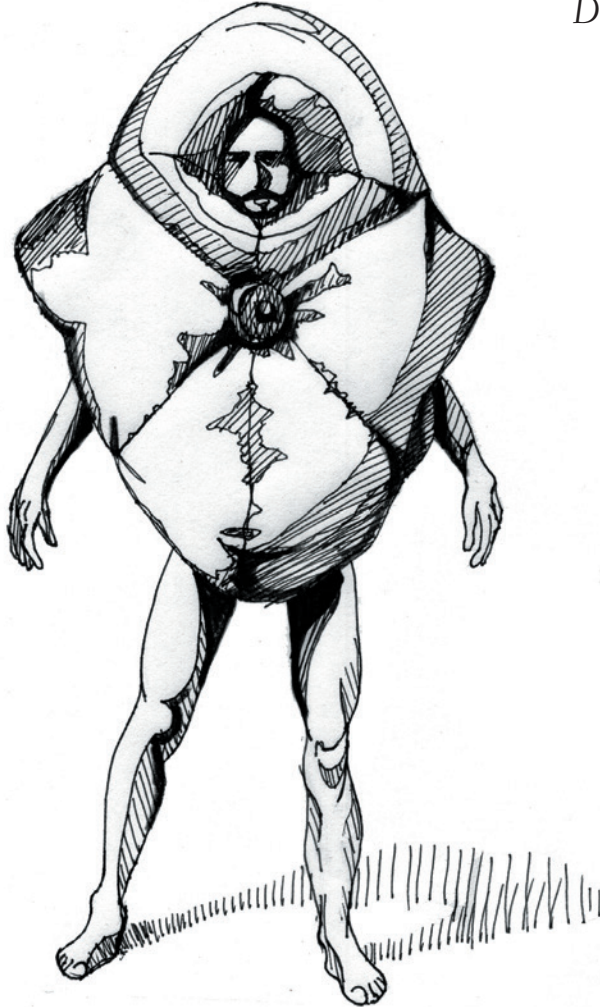


THE BLUE AND WHITE

Vol. XII No. IV

December 2005



ILL COMMUNICATIONS


The death and half-life of Columbia linguistics
by Lucie Kroening

CRAIGSLUST

The art of logging on and getting laid
by Bethany Milton

THE CONVERSATION Randy Cohen takes on Judith Miller and angry readers

ALSO: ADDERALL, COLUMBIA V. BOLLINGER, BUBBLE MEN AT MOMA



Editor-in-Chief
ZACHARY H. BENDINER

Publisher
HECTOR R. CHAVEZ

Managing Editors
AVI ZVI ZENILMAN
JESSICA SHIZU ISOKAWA

Senior Editors
CHRISTOPHER BEAM
MAXWELL HAYES DILALLO
BRENDAN O. PIERSON
JOSIE D. SWINDLER
MARC TRACY

Literary Editor
CODY OWEN STINE

Graphics Editor
JERONE L. HSU

Senior Writers
KATHY GILSINAN, DAVID PLOTZ, C. MASON WELLS

Editorial Staff
BRENDAN BALLOU, LENORA BABB, PAUL BARNDT,
IGGY CORTEZ, LYDIA DEPILLIS, IZUMI DEVALIER,
AMANDA ERICKSON, OWAIN EVANS, PAUL FILERI,
NICHOLAS FRISCH, MERRELL HAMBLETON,
MARK KROTOV, ORIANA MAGNERA, JONA MICI,
BETHANY MILTON, KATIE REEDY, TAYLOR WALSH,
ROB WILE, GLOVER WRIGHT

Artists
SUMAIYA AHMED, JULIA BUTAREVA,
LIZ FERGUSON, MATT FRANK

Contributors
NATASHA CHICHILNISKY-HEAL, ANDREW FLYNN,
K.P. HURWITZ, JOHN KLOPFER, DONNA LOFFREDO,
PAUL MAZZILLI, ASHLEY NINN, WILL SNIDER,
JACOB VICTOR, I. DAVEY VOLNER, BARI WEISS

Business Staff
OHAD BARKAN, HELEN BUYNISKI, NANCY LOI, ERIC WANG

Web Master
ZACHARY VAN SCHOUWEN

THE BLUE AND WHITE

Vol. XII

FAMAM EXTENDIMUS FACTIS

No. IV

- 4 CAMPUS CHARACTERS
Wayne Ting and Melanie Brazzell, these are your lives.
- 6 TOLD BETWEEN PUFFS
In which our hero nurses a broken heart.
- 26 DIGITALIA COLUMBIANA
She hid in the foliage of his garments and read a novel.
- 28 MEASURE FOR MEASURE
“Worth the Candle” by I. Davey Volner
- 39 CAMPUS GOSSIP
Horny adjuncts, dirty panties, Tyrannosaurus Rex.
- Lucie Kroening* 7 ILL COMMUNICATIONS
The death and half-life of Columbia linguistics.
- Amanda Erickson* 16 GOTHAM AND GOMORRAH
How to evacuate Morningside Heights.
- Kathy Gilsinan* 18 ADVENTURES IN ADDERALL
The joys of overprescription.
- Bethany Milton* 20 CRAIGSLUST
The art of logging on and getting laid.
- Cody Owen Stine* 22 THE REJECTION MONOLOGUES
Check thyself before thou wreck thyself.
- Mark Krotov & Merrell Hambleton* 24 CULPA: THE LOST FILES
Columbia v. Bollinger
- David Plotz* 29 SOVIET CHILDREN’S STORIES
The Cat in the Red Hat, and other tales.
- Katie Reedy* 30 THE REAL WORLD: MANHATTANVILLE
A walking tour of our northern neighbors.
- Lydia Depillis & Oriana Magnera* 31 THE CONVERSATION: RANDY COHEN
An accidental ethicist on Judith Miller & angry readers.
- Glover Wright* 34 IMPRECISION
Review: Benjamin Kunkel’s Indecision.
- Iggy Cortez* 35 BODY PAINT
Review: “Egon Schiele” at The Neue Galerie.
- Jona Mici* 36 INSIDE THE BUBBLE WRAP
Review: “SAFE” at the MoMA.
- Rob Wile* 38 GERIATRIC HUMANITIES
Lifelong learners take on the core curriculum.

Campus Characters

You might not know the following figures—but you should. In *Campus Characters*, THE BLUE AND WHITE introduces you to a handful of Columbians who are up to interesting and extraordinary things, and whose stories beg to be shared. If you'd like to suggest a Campus Character, send us an e-mail at theblueandwhite@columbia.edu.

WAYNE TING

Years ago, while I idled at a housing info session, some random sophomore came up to me, shook my clammy first-year hand with choreographed earnesty, made gratuitous eye contact, and started praising the LLC with the unironic exuberance of an infomercial pitchman. He pointedly asked my name, and I knew he'd remember—the world-class handshake hinted at someone who makes it his job to remember people's names and faces, and maybe even a random fact or two about their lives.

A month or so later, I discovered that the gladiator I met that night, Wayne Ting '06, was stepping down as class president to run for Columbia College Student Council (CCSC) president. He was only a sophomore, and there were two qualified juniors also running. His pre-packaged ambition irked Columbia's nerdy masses, and his ticket only got 32 percent of the vote, 15 points behind the winner. He lost the vote in all four classes, and he discovered

his name recognition to be a curse—an entire student body saw not a person but, as he puts it today, an “egomaniacal caricature.”

The caricature had a past. At the end of his freshman year, Wayne ran unopposed for sophomore class president, but he still blitzkrieged the campus with “Party On Wayne” posters. When he revealed a year later that he couldn't wait to be king, the cartoon became reality. “People thought—and I don't want to say that these [assumptions] are all false—I was very egotistical, very self-centered,” he said with his trademark staccato, machine-gun pitter-patter.

Wayne now concedes it was good for him to get his ass kicked. So good, in fact, that he spent a lot of the next year getting his ass *re-kicked*. He took the next semester off in a failed attempt to take the upstart CUCommunity nationwide in the form of CampusNetwork, but “Facebook was simple, CampusNetwork wasn't.” Then, like George Foreman coming out of retirement, he returned to Columbia and once more ran a losing campaign for CCSC president. The first time it was painful; the second time it was cathartic.

Despite all this losing—a former co-chair of Columbia Students for Kerry and the current National Communications Director for College Democrats of America, the last time he worked on a successful campaign was in 1999, when Don Wesley won the mayoral election in his hometown of Lincoln, Nebraska—Wayne is impossible to pity. He has a plush consulting job at McKinsey waiting for him next year, and his dynamism is unrelenting. He preaches political pragmatism with the zeal of a prophet, and he really does love America: when his family returned to the midwest from Taiwan at the age of 9, he didn't know English, and admits that irony was not his strong suit (“I didn't understand why David Letterman was funny”), so he needed to make an active effort to belong.

The problem is, for all his earnesty, there's no way to tell if he is trying to pull a fast one. He's both obviously full of shit and totally genuine, and it's often difficult to wrap your head around the fact that it's



usually both Waynes gripping your hand with such glee.

A couple of months ago, I told Wayne that my profile of him would have a simple message: while I actively worked against him when he ran for CCSC president, at the same time I really want him to be my congressman one day. “Congressman!?!?” he sarcastically recoiled and put his hand on my shoulder, “Why can’t I be a senator!?!?”

He was kidding, I think. -*Avi Zvi Zenilman*

MELANIE BRAZZELL

When most people picture feminism, they think of burning bras, discovering the clitoris, and Ani DiFranco. When Columbia students picture feminism, they think of Melanie Brazzell, C ’06.

In many ways, they’re right to. A typical Melanie ensemble combines an “I ♥ Vaginas” tote bag, buttons proclaiming female empowerment, and possibly a flash of unshaven leg. She has made a name for herself through her work with aggressive-sounding groups like POW! and SE EJ.

But as much as Melanie seems to play a certain stereotype, be wary of putting her into the feminist box—if you try to reduce her, she’ll outsmart you.

“I don’t think there’s one feminism,” she replied when asked to nail down the term. “All I can say is what it is for me. It’s not a definition so much as it is different ways of looking and knowing: it’s spiritual, academic, and deeply personal.”

Rather than viewing the world in strictly gendered terms, Melanie’s much more interested in how capitalism, racism, and classism combine with gender biases to create the world we live in. “When white middle-class feminists make it all about self-empowerment, they’re still involved in structures that oppress other women and people around the world. It’s all about finding a way to understand difference in a non-hierarchical way,” she said.

Though her feminism undergirds her personality, she characterizes it as a “gateway drug” into the wider world of political activism and philosophy, in which she is deeply entrenched. A comparative literature concentrator—she has too many interests to confine herself to a major—Melanie received the Williams Fellowship to fund her trip to Dakar last summer, where she studied the recent work of female Senegalese filmmakers.

“Activist” and “feminist” are convenient labels, but a close friend described her as “a thinker,” and

I’m inclined to agree. Unlike many activists, Melanie has serious intellectual game. She peppers her speech with well-placed jargon while at the same time conveying a genuine interest in the other person.

After four years of action, Melanie’s big post-graduation plan is to stop planning. “I realize that purposefully leaving school without a job may come off as a little perverse, but I want to face the fear rather than hide behind an I-banking job.” Her biggest reservation about her anti-plan is lack of healthcare, so she’s asking her parents for a year of coverage as a graduation present.

“My goal isn’t to be jobless forever,” she explained. “I’m just really weary of that whole weird cult of ambition—I want to be doing things that are self-fulfilling”—including, she says, gardening, dancing, cooking, and catching up on all the philosophy reading she’s never been able to fit in.

But her commitment to taking some time off for herself is as complicated as the rest of her, since the activist in her refuses to be entirely quieted. “I am often plagued by an almost maddening urgency to do something about all the violence and suffering in the world,” she said, “but I also think that the most revolutionary thing may begin with being satisfied, being joyful, and being still—not buying into structures of desire that lead you to false conclusions.”

And if that’s the sort of revolution Melanie wants, she just might get it. -*Taylor Walsh*



TOLD BETWEEN PUFFS

In which our hero nurses a broken heart

December. Better say, simply, Winter—this dreariness, this weight around one’s soul, is too vast and nebulous to attach itself to a single month. Is Verily Veritas nursing a broken heart? What do you care, you heartless trull?

The details, Verily insists, mustering grimly his *sang froid*, are unimportant. Romantic disaster, no matter how lurid, has a touch of the trite in its every iteration. What’s important, he argues—and hopes the gathered students have their notebooks ready—is that the cliché itself be played out with appropriate panache. Verily Veritas has neither taste nor tolerance for private wallowing—a statement which may come as a surprise to some of his gentler readers. What, after all, more sweetly savors self-indulgence than solitary weeping? But Verily believes his fellow students too frequently fail to capitalize on their wellsprings of sentiment: self-indulgence should be aesthetic, or it should be scrapped. Bingeing alone is hardly worth the trouble unless one’s cigarette is to be taken out of one’s shaking hands and lit by a particularly attractive, dark-haired, sympathetic type, in the sordid morning’s aftermath.

It was with all this in mind, thus, that Verily Veritas this week set about the serious, deeply artistic task of skulking—skulking, elaborately, at a table toward the back of Butler’s Reserve Room. He had risen this morning feeling really half-way decent, for the romantic wreck, the wraith of his former self whom he claimed to be. But that was quickly taken care of: a cold shower, a quick shave with last week’s razor (assisted by some woefully inadequate shaving cream from—shudder—a can), and two fingers of bourbon with his morning mush had him as haggard as a GS commuter from Queens. Thus arrayed in his conspicuously squalid splendor, Verily prepared for the inevitable narrative conceit of his existence: conveniently topical conversation, rendered



with dubious mimesis. This arrived forthwith in the form of one of his faithful, besotted editors, who seemed to have other things on his mind than Verily’s magnificently picturesque malaise.

“Veritas. Charmed I’m sure. One more lousy column like that and you’re out on your ascot, I don’t care if you have been on the damn thing since 1891.”

“My dear boy, your syntax is as vague as your sexuality, and every bit as unappealing. Can’t you see I’m a man in Pain?”

“I’ll show you a man in pain if you’re not careful—don’t think I won’t.

What’s wrong with you?”

It was just the question Verily Veritas had been fishing for. This was his chance; this was the moment when he could show the world how True Heartbreak should really be done.

“If only a Philistine like you could understand. I’ve been alone in my room for two weeks, I haven’t been to a single discussion section since midterms, nor to a single lecture all year. My professors think I’m dead, my TAs think I was probably never real, my mother thinks I’m certifiable, and my advisor thinks I’m abroad—although that particular cat’s bound to get out of the bag any day now, at which point I expect to see a flaming “C-” athwart the sun, with the inscription, ‘By This Sign, Academic Probation’—in Latin, which by the way I’m also failing. I’ve consumed nothing but breakfast cereals and Orangina for two weeks, dropped and then subsequently regained thirteen pounds, lost touch with all national events not occurring between 116th and 125th streets, and lost the ability to carry on any kind of functional social relationship with my peers!”

There was a moment of silence. The editor, glowering, pulled his pipe from between his teeth, wound up, and pitched:

“You’re new here, aren’t you?” —*Verily Veritas*



ILL COMMUNICATIONS

Why don't you know any linguistics majors at Columbia?
Because there aren't any. How a world-class department
fell from grace, disintegrated, and may rise again.

BY LUCIE KROENING

Boris Gasparov arrived at Columbia in 1993 as a professor of Slavic languages from the University of California-Berkeley, home to a prominent linguistics program. He assumed that Columbia, a major research university, would have a linguistics program of its own. Instead, he found nothing. Senior faculty members were unwilling to talk about what happened. “They sounded like they didn’t want to revive the spec-ters,” he told me. Had faculty been willing to speak to him, Gasparov would have learned of an epic intra-departmental brawl.

Additional reporting by Andrew Flynn & Jona Mici

“It hit people on a visceral level,” said Germanic Languages Professor Aili Flint, who has been at Columbia since the early 1960s teaching both Finnish and linguistics courses. The bureaucratic clashes left destruction in its wake: in 1981, Columbia College eliminated the major, and Barnard followed suit six years later. Then, in 1989, the graduate program was put to rest.

Twenty years earlier, if you had asked an academic to name the leading institutions in the field of linguistics, Columbia would have been near the top of the list. Its department had been so eminent that its elimination sent shockwaves through the academy, and raised the more general question of

Illustrated by Sumaiya Ahmed

whether linguistics necessitates a department at all. Linguists at other schools feared their universities would look to Columbia as an example and deem their departments expendable. In fact, within three years of Columbia's decision, both Yale and Harvard's linguistics faculty were threatened with re-absorption into their respective universities.

Afraid that the planned 2001 retirement of Barnard Professor Joseph Malone, the only remaining tenured linguistics professor, would further dim the faded future of linguistics in Morningside Heights, Gasparov took matters into his own hands. In 1999, he assembled a proposal for an interdisciplinary concentration that made use of teaching resources already available at Columbia—although there was no department, Columbia still had a number of faculty intellectually invested in linguistics. Gasparov sent his proposal to every member of the faculty asking for their input and approval, and the response was positive. Yet the Committee on Instruction rejected his proposal, citing insufficient resources.

Only last spring did Columbia College approve an interdisciplinary special concentration. Student interest has burgeoned since Gasparov began teaching Introduction to Linguistics—enrollment in the class has been steadily rising, from 20 in 2001 to 60 this fall. But Psychology Professor Robert Krauss, who has been at Columbia since the 1970s, is not a fan of the new program. While acknowledging that Columbia has a wealth of professors with significant intellectual interest in the study of language, he maintains that ultimately Columbia has “the icing without the cake.” One of his arguments against the concentration seems especially valid: the distinction of special concentration, which must be accompanied by a major or a second concentration, is generally used to test experimental subjects like Human Rights that have not proven they legitimately stand alone; linguistics, unlike Human Rights, was once a major at Columbia, and currently stands alone at almost every other American university. Either way, the administration has finally begun to take tenuous steps toward filling the most glaring gap in the course catalogue.

The absence of a linguistics program in Columbia's curriculum is an anomaly in the academic world. Virtually every major research university offers its students the opportunity to pursue the

study of language. Indeed, before it collapsed, Columbia's department was a leader in the field.

Theoretically Speaking

Modern linguistics began around the turn of the 19th century, focusing on the aural similarities between languages. For example, the English f-sound somehow emerged from the Latin p-sound, and “pater” became “father.” These correspondences revealed common roots, prompting scholars to begin constructing a family tree of languages. As the century progressed, the study of sounds became increasingly systematic. Sounds were assigned distinctive features, such as “voiced” (caused by a vibration of the vocal chords, like “b” and “d”) or “unvoiced” (like “p” and “t”). This method of categorization was later expanded to encompass entire languages and their grammatical structures. English's subject-verb-object word order, for example, distinguishes it from tongues like Irish and Turkish.

Language, once merely a subject of philosophical inquiry, now appeared as a structured system. As late as the 1980s, the Columbia bulletin likened the study of language to the hard sciences: “the study of language is to the linguist as the study of matter is to the chemist.” This mode of thought, called structuralism, established linguistics as a genuine discipline.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the study of linguistics was centered in anthropology departments, and Columbia's stellar program trained and attracted some of the world's premier linguistic



Illustrated by Sumaiya Ahmed

structuralists. The anthropologist Franz Boas made monumental contributions to the study of phonology and phonetics, and his student Edward Sapir developed the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which suggested a relationship between the way a person speaks and his perception of the world.

As linguistics grew out of its infancy, Columbia continued to trailblaze. André Martinet, who chaired the Columbia linguistics department, developed an approach to language known as functionalism, which emphasized its human aspect, taking into account the role of memory limitations and sense perceptions in our ability to process meaning. Roman Jakobson, one of the founders of the structuralist Prague School, briefly taught the Introduction to

form, he insisted, exists only in the mind. These ideas spawned new branches of linguistic thought and a generation of academic feuds. While Chomsky's theory remained the dominant paradigm for several decades (and still does) and his fiery personality made it hard for departments to reject his work without suffering professional irrelevance, it still faced heated opposition.

Today, the discipline is vital. Contemporary linguists study everything from the physics of sound waves to the physiology of the speech apparatus, from speech acquisition to slips of the tongue, from poetic meter to computer programming. If language is what distinguishes us from other animals, then linguistics is essential to the study of our humanity.



Illustrated by C. Mason Wells

Forty years ago, if you had asked an academic to name the leading institutions in the field of linguistics, Columbia would have been near the top of the list. Its department had been so eminent that its elimination sent shockwaves through the academy.

Comparative Linguistics course as a visiting professor. As one current Columbia professor put it, this would be like having Federico García Lorca teach Elementary Spanish.

Enter the 1960s, Noam Chomsky, and his theory of generative syntax, which turned the field on its head. Emphasizing linguistic universals over linguistic difference, he posited that all humans are born with a universal grammar, a kind of mental switchboard of on-off buttons for things like subject-verb-object word order. These switches are activated or deactivated by an individual's environment. For Chomsky, syntax was an expression of the structure of mind. His approach was radically formalist and highly mathematical, and he dismissed speech as corrupted "by such irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shift of attention and interest, and errors." Language in its pure

Floundering Fathers

Columbia's linguistics department first ran into trouble in 1967, when Uriel Weinreich, the department chair, died unexpectedly at the age of 41. Brilliant and charismatic, he had held together a faculty prone to infighting. Also, unlike the three tenured professors remaining after his death—Robert Austerlitz, Marvin Herzog, and William Diver—Weinreich had been receptive to Chomsky's pioneering work.

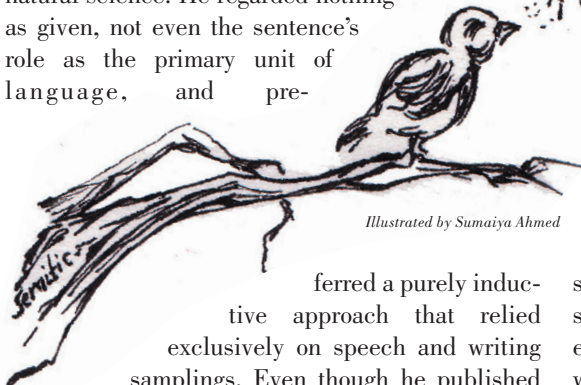
Austerlitz, a specialist in Uralic and Paleo-Siberian languages, supposedly knew languages from every continent. He studied phonetics and developed an uncanny talent to place accents. His descriptive approach made him a perennial alternative to Chomsky, although he later acknowledged the linguist's influence and the necessity of genera-

tive grammar: “I’d rather you learn it here than pick it up on the street,” he told one of his graduate students. He was greatly respected, even beloved, by faculty and students alike.

Herzog was Weinreich’s protégé. Like Austerlitz, he never cared for linguistic theory; he was far more invested in his unfinished work *Language and Culture Atlas of Ashkenazic Jewry* (eventually completed in 1972) and a multi-volume dictionary of the Yiddish language.

Diver, unlike Austerlitz and Herzog, devoted himself almost exclusively to linguistic theory—his own theory. Diver’s functionalist method of form and content analysis, which later came to be known as the Columbia School of Linguistics, systematically critiqued Chomsky’s work.

Like Martinet, his mentor, Diver saw language as a tool for communication rather than expression of thought, and viewed linguistics as a natural science. He regarded nothing as given, not even the sentence’s role as the primary unit of language, and pre-



Illustrated by Sumaiya Ahmed

ferred a purely inductive approach that relied exclusively on speech and writing samplings. Even though he published very little, a vocal minority of zealous followers around the world still hold regular seminars and conferences to discuss and develop his theory.

Diver’s students remember him as a generous, but demanding, genius. “He was not for the faint of heart,” said Radmila Gorup, who worked with Diver on her doctoral dissertation and now teaches in the Slavic Languages Department. Although Chomsky’s ideas consistently overshadowed Diver’s deconstructionist work, he politely refused to compromise on his theory. “His students knew they were paying a price by studying with him,” Gorup said. Faculty and administrators remember him as “an odd duck” who was “his own follower.”

Despite their quirks, or perhaps because of them, these professors cultivated a vibrant department in which students and faculty regularly engaged in

fierce debate. “They could excite you about things you didn’t mean to get excited about,” said Flint. “The faculty had a great deal to give.”

But in 1970, the department was dealt a major blow when William Labov, a popular teacher and a star in the rising sub-discipline of sociolinguistics—which studies the relationship between dialect and socio-economic class—left Columbia for the University of Pennsylvania to study the Philadelphia dialect of English. Best known for his work on African-American Vernacular English, Labov says he was drawn to Penn because it “offers an ideal laboratory for the study of changes in sounds: two thirds of the Philadelphia vowels are involved in a complex game of musical chairs.”

Labov’s departure had left the department with two empty senior positions and two empty junior positions to fill. The department became less productive and less inviting to pro-

In 1989, much to the dismay of the faculty, the university put its foot down. Linguistics at Columbia was no more.

spective hires. According to Professor Krauss, who served on an interfaculty committee assembled to evaluate the department in 1972, the professors were “unwilling or unable to remedy” the situation. Their continuously clashing interests complicated hiring decisions, occasionally turning interested parties away.

Laurence Horn, now a professor of linguistics at Yale, turned down a junior post at Columbia. In addition to personal reasons, he felt uneasy about the department, especially Diver. “At the time I didn’t think it would be that comfortable being at Columbia unless the other people offered positions were going to go,” he said.

He was not a Diverian, and a conversion would have required renouncing everything he believed about language. His hesitancy was not baseless: in the 1960s Columbia hired Erica Garcia, a prominent Chomskyan, to teach generative linguistics. After meeting Diver, however, she converted and renounced her previous guru.

The difficulties kept coming. The 1968 student uprisings, which occurred squarely between Weinreich's death and Labov's departure, crippled the university. Before the riots, the university was \$6 million in debt; when President William McGill took office in 1970, the debt stood at \$34 million. McGill responded with drastic staff cuts. The faculty started to feel a deep sense of unease. "Everyone was wondering who was going to be next," said Flint.

Fund Razing

In 1979, a faculty commission appointed by the president and chaired by English Professor Steven Marcus criticized various departments for falling behind in their fields: "The evidence is unambiguous," they reported, "and candor compels us to acknowledge that we no longer occupy a position of distinct pre-eminence."

Then, in 1981, President Reagan cut federal

A TIMELINE OF MODERN LINGUISTICS

Around 1800: Modern linguistics is founded.

Around 1900: Columbia's anthropology department, chaired by Franz Boas, is the linguistics trailblazer of the academy.

1940s and 50s: Led by André Martinet, Columbia's linguistics department experiences its golden age

1957: Noam Chomsky, then an assistant professor at M.I.T., publishes *Syntactic Structures*. Over the next decade, his theory of generative syntax revolutionizes linguistics.

1967: Uriel Weinreich, the well-liked Columbia Linguistics Department chair, dies at the age of 41. Lacking an effective mediator, the department subsequently falls into a disarray from which it never recovers.

1981: President Reagan cuts federal aid to universities, precipitating a policy at Columbia of "selective excellence." One consequence: the end of linguistics at Columbia College.

1987: Due to lack of funding, Barnard eliminates its linguistics major. All Columbia undergraduates must now petition and formulate their own course of study if they wish to declare in linguistics.

1989: Graduate studies in linguistics at Columbia is discontinued. Columbia now has no institutionalized study of linguistics. Linguists at comparable universities fear for their departments.

1999: Slavic Languages Professor Boris Gasparov officially proposes an interdisciplinary undergraduate concentration in linguistics. Despite widespread faculty support, the proposal is rejected due to lack of faculty.

2001: Gasparov begins teaching Introduction to Linguistics.

2005: After the hiring of several faculty members competent to teach aspects of linguistics, Columbia approves an undergraduate special concentration in linguistics.

In 1970, the department was dealt a major blow when William Labov, a popular teacher and a star in the rising sub-discipline of sociolinguistics, left Columbia for the University of Pennsylvania to study the Philadelphia dialect of English.



Illustrated by Sumaiya Ahmed

aid to universities, leading to a belt-tightening fiscal policy that the administration christened “selective excellence.” The flailing linguistics department at Columbia College was dissolved.

There was a belief common to administrators at both Columbia College and Barnard—though decidedly uncommon to comparable colleges around the country—that linguistics was a fundamentally inappropriate course of study for undergraduates. “I think it’s better done at a graduate level,” said Charles Olton, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty at Barnard in the 1980s. “If you want to be a linguist, you should major in psychology, or one or two languages, or philosophy, and then take linguistics at a graduate level.”

Malone shot back by calling Olton’s attitude “dopey and old-fashioned.”

Despite President Michael Sovern’s lucrative Campaign for Columbia, which raised \$600 million by the time it ended in 1988, “selective excellence” continued to guide Columbia’s hiring philosophy throughout the 1980s. Much of the windfall was used to repair neglected buildings, rather than neglected academic departments. Krauss recalls Sovern telling him, “We could put \$10 million into just roofs and you wouldn’t see a difference.” But the opacity with which the administration doled out its newly acquired funds led faculty and students to question its priorities. As academics continued to suffer, professors began to protest. Geography Professor Kempton Webb, whose department was also cut in 1987, summed up the general sentiment when he lamented, “To what avail is all this money?”

Though the college no longer offered a major,

both the graduate school and Barnard still had linguistics programs. Barnard’s department was even smaller than Columbia’s, but as the graduate school continued to disregard Chomskyan theory, graduate students were forced to take their courses in generative grammar across the street with Robert May, a Barnard tenure-track assistant professor and the only generativist left in Morningside Heights. However, in 1985, Barnard decided that it couldn’t afford a second tenured position, effectively pushing May out and ending the major.

Malone did his best to save the undergraduates. He suggested that students could satisfy their requirements by taking the necessary syntax and semantics classes May had previously taught through the graduate program, since Columbia would need a new generativist anyway. But Malone’s pleas were rejected. After 1987, all undergraduates interested in linguistics, both at Barnard and at Columbia, were forced to petition the Committee on Academic Standing and design their own course of study.

Although Columbia’s financial situation had picked up by the late 1980s, Barnard’s situation remained dismal and was aggravated by the imbalance in cross-registration between Barnard and Columbia. The Columbia-Barnard Intercorporate Agreement required that Barnard and Columbia compensate each other for use of resources. This arrangement cost Barnard \$3 million during the 1987-1988 school year. The linguistics department, which graduated only two students in 1986, couldn’t attract enough students from across the way to pay for itself.

The fall of Columbia’s graduate program followed a slightly different trajectory. Gillian Lindt,

Dean of the Graduate School in the late 1980s, still claims that the department was beyond repair. The university sought external advice and was told that it would be “extremely unlikely that anyone would come until [the faculty at the time] were gone.” Even if the money was available to make new hires, Lindt believes that no one was willing to join the beleaguered department. Infighting had reached the point where the professors were telling their graduate students not to take classes with certain other professors in the department.

Universities do not take the decision to disband a department lightly. In extreme situations, there are fail-safes that include taking hiring power from the current faculty and hiring senior faculty from elsewhere. This happened to Columbia’s English department in 2002. But it requires both an investment of energy and money from within, and the support of the academic community from without, and it is unclear whether the university considered doing this.

By 1989, two of the three tenured linguistics professors were scheduled to retire within the next five years and Lindt said it made more sense to “suspend” the department until they had left, allowing for a fresh start. However, others allege that finances played a significant role: Radmila Gorup recalls Sovern, upon being asked why they were dissolving the department, replying that if she were to give him \$5 million he wouldn’t have to.

In 1989, much to the dismay of the faculty, the university put its foot down. Herzog and Yiddish Studies were moved to the Germanic Languages Department, Austerlitz was relocated and Diver soon retired. Austerlitz later died of cancer in 1994 and Diver a year later in a sailing accident. Though

the university placed the blame on the linguistics department for its ultimate failure, those within the department accused the university of denying it the necessary resources. “They cut off our right hand and they ask us why we only play the concerto with our left,” Austerlitz said.

Columbia’s decision again raised the question of the university’s priorities, which would continue to be asked into the 1990s. In 1991, 25 department chairs dug in their heels against further budget cuts. Echoing Professor Webb’s sentiments four years earlier, the faculty submitted a letter to the Vice President of Arts and Sciences, protesting, “It will not be possible to absorb these cuts and still provide a quality education for our students.” David Kastan, former Chair of the English and Comparative Literature Department, gave voice to widespread resentment among the faculty: “It would seem to me cuts in the magnitude that the faculty have been asked to accept aren’t evident in the central administration.”

All Talk?

The eventual approval of the program last spring was connected with the recent arrivals of two new faculty members. In 2003, Paul Kockelman joined the Barnard anthropology department, taking a position marked expressly for a linguistic anthropologist, turning down a senior research position at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in the Netherlands. In addition to Kockelman, Alan Timberlake, who taught in the Slavic Department at Berkeley with Gasparov, came to Columbia as an adjunct with a preliminary two-year contract to teach Slavic linguistics.



Illustrated by Sumaiya Ahmed

Like the majority of linguistics programs nationwide, Columbia's special concentration has a core that addresses the central topics and methods in linguistics, including phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and historical linguistics. However, there are no intro classes for any of these subjects—there hasn't been a phonology class offered since 2000—so students must fulfill the requirements by taking classes like History of English Language or the graduate lecture on philosophy of language. Krauss thinks the hodgepodge of classes is too narrow and that Columbia students, while getting a general idea of the field, will be unprepared for graduate study in linguistics.

Gasparov approves of the interdisciplinary approach, especially because students pick up many of the formal tools in his 3000-level Introduction to Linguistics. The concentration may also include classes in psychology, anthropology, philosophy, computer science, and a wide range of languages.

Professor Krauss, though absent on the day of the vote, sat on the COI and participated in the deliberations over the new concentration. Despite his strong belief that a program would benefit both students and faculty, as well as increase the university's intellectual rigor, he disapproves of the decision. "Gasparov is telling the university exactly what it wants to hear: that it can have something with nothing," said Krauss. The proper response, he said, would be to hire more professors with the express intention of building a high-quality program.

Gasparov, while optimistic, admits that the concentration lacks depth. Although impressive in certain areas, such as historical and Slavic linguistics, its weakness in modern theories mitigates its strengths. The two major areas that Columbia lacks and that he believes are necessary to building a legitimate program are generative syntax and a newer phonology theory called optimality theory. With a background

primarily in Slavic linguistics, Gasparov feels it would be irresponsible to teach courses in these areas, since he is not an expert. He also admitted he simply isn't that interested in generative grammar.

Still, some would-be linguists have been getting by with even less than what the new concentration will offer. Last year, with special approval from the Committee on Academic Standing, Mariel Frank B '07 declared a self-formulated major in linguistics, the first such student at Columbia in six years. While she seems happy to be pursuing her interest, it has not been easy. She is currently spending the year at Universidad de Salamanca in Spain partially because it offers classes in phonology that Columbia lacks.

Dedicated faculty members have also overextended themselves to accommodate and foster student interest. Last spring, Timberlake, the Slavic linguistics adjunct, mentored seven students in their individual research while simultaneously holding visiting professor positions at UC-Berkeley and Stanford. He often commuted from one coast to the other to cater to these few interested students.

While sympathetic to the administration, Gasparov believes a foundation exists for linguistics to thrive, and insists that it is merely a matter of hiring two or three new linguistics professors to anchor and round out the program. He does not even consider a department to be totally necessary, though it would make hiring much easier; rather, he sees this interdisciplinary and cooperative pedagogical approach as the very essence of linguistics.

Throughout his academic career, Gasparov has held a special interest in the role of linguistics in the history of ideas. He believes his discipline can inform and penetrate the rest of academia. "If linguistics is not self-limited—i.e., Chomsky—it can stand at the very center of all disciplines studying society and the human mind." ❖

Contribute to *THE BLUE AND WHITE*
 theblueandwhite@columbia.edu

CU ARTS .COM

YOUR PORTAL TO THE **ARTS**
ON AND OFF CAMPUS

Gotham and Gomorrah

Floods. Earthquakes. Dirty bombs. Snow days. If disaster strikes Manhattan, will the Columbia administration save the day?

By AMANDA ERICKSON WITH JACOB VICTOR AND DONNA LOFFREDO

In 1776 Columbia prepared for disaster by instituting the swim test, in case students needed to doggy paddle from Manhattan to the safe, soothing New Jersey mainland.

But these days, there are bigger problems than British invasions. While a civil war is unlikely, the fact that this city is, well, New York City has made it a prime target for terrorist attacks, dirty bombs, and biological warfare. September 11 permanently embedded these dangers in the minds of New Yorkers, and recent subway scares and hotel evacuations reveal a still-looming fear of an indistinct but all-pervasive threat.

And in the wake of Katrina, we now have another worry: can we handle the disasters that can't be prevented by even the most dramatic overhaul of US intelligence? Historically, the city hasn't been prone to Katrina-size natural catastrophes. Although New York may not have many hurricanes, tornadoes, or floods, it has suffered from epidemics and fires.

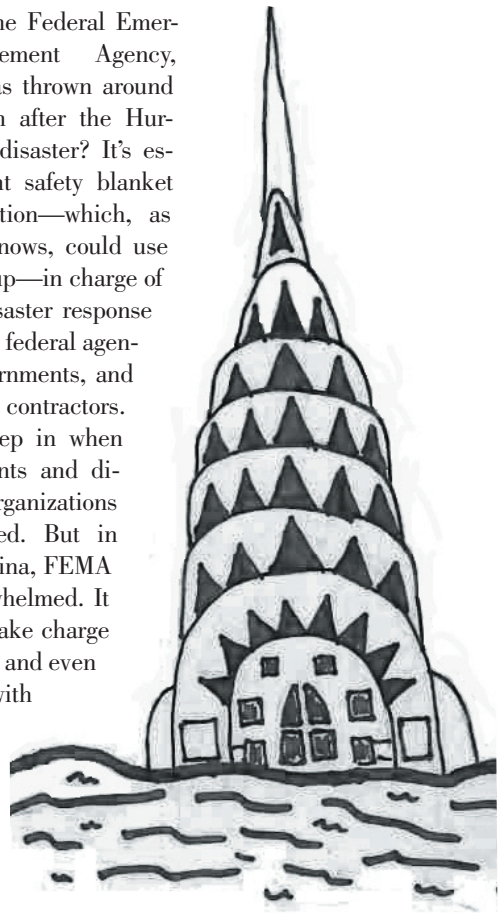
Even though the threats are smaller, scientists and city officials agree that today, their focus is protecting the city's eight million citizens from even moderately sized crises. Because of the city's size and density, a blizzard, small fire, low-grade hurricane, or nor'easter could shut down the transportation system, cut off the power, and leave the city's poorest without homes. While none of these effects would devastate the city by itself, together they would fill the city streets with chaos and make it more dif-

ficult for emergency workers to do their jobs. We'd be on our own—the federal government, despite having the most money, authority, and personnel, would probably do nothing. And most agree that's a good thing.

If You Can't Blame the Feds, Ignore Them

Remember the Federal Emergency Management Agency, whose name was thrown around and stepped on after the Hurricane Katrina disaster? It's essentially a giant safety blanket of an organization—which, as New Orleans knows, could use some patching up—in charge of coordinating disaster response between various federal agencies, local governments, and private sector contractors. Its job is to step in when local governments and disaster relief organizations are overwhelmed. But in the case of Katrina, FEMA itself was overwhelmed. It took it days to take charge in New Orleans, and even longer to deal with the thousands of trapped refugees.

If disaster struck New York, the federal response



Illustrated by C. Mason Wells

(or lack thereof) would be no different. FEMA divides the country into 10 regions, each with its own disaster command center. The make-up of these regions is a good indication of how thin the Agency is stretched: New York State is located in the same region as New Jersey, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. The federal government wanted to save money by creating a single region that lumped together many of America's Spanish speakers. FEMA's Region II offices maintain only 67 full-time employees—to put that in perspective, the region made up of Alaska, Idaho, and Oregon, has almost 100—and many of them are based in Puerto Rico.

Luckily, New York is no New Orleans. While the Big Easy's government, undersized and unprepared, begged FEMA for support, New York City officials would probably tell FEMA to stay home. With a powerhouse of a government at its disposal, New York can coordinate its own disaster response. "FEMA's involvement in any New York City disaster is probably the last thing we need," said Steven Cohen, a SIPA professor. "They'd just botch it up."

The city seems to agree. Instead of the feds, the city's Office of Emergency Management would handle general evacuation efforts, emergency plans, public information campaigns, and response and recovery efforts. It's a big job, but Jarrod Bernstein, an emergency management spokesman, said the OEM is up to the challenge.

Not everyone agrees. Since Hurricane Katrina shipwrecked New Orleans, some people have questioned whether OEM is ready to handle a large-scale natural or man-made disaster. *The New York Post* pointed out in September that New York City's hurricane contingency plan still bore the signature of Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

Most of the concern is muted, however. "We should expect cities to be prepared for the most likely disasters," Professor Jackson said. While the city isn't perfect, he thinks they've done "a damn good job" of handling big crises, citing the FDNY's strong internal structure, the well-staffed NYPD, and the city government's competent staff.

The War Room of Lerner Hall

And, if we're all wrong and they're not ready, Columbia has a plan...at least on paper. As of last year, a consortium of universities in New York were granted a spot at the OEM's planning sessions and in the 'War Room' they use when coordinating responses to pos-

sible emergencies. During the Republican National Convention, Columbia representatives sat in on the OEM's daily meetings.

Although the university says it relies on the city for major assistance in case of any major disasters, it also can take care of itself, sort of. Last year, it established an emergency response team, which, should a disaster occur, is supposed to coordinate communication and plans with all major areas of the university. While the team does not have specific strategies for handling emergencies, it will, according to Executive Vice President for Public Safety James McShane, coordinate a response with city officials from its temporary base in Lerner Hall.

"Columbia is not what you would call a target for most major attacks that could happen," McShane said. "But if there were a problem in the city that affected the university, our team's job would be to get people to communicate, and to figure out a plan of action."

But whether the room will work in a serious crisis remains to be seen. The university hasn't had an opportunity to test whether the room and "we'll just plan for everything" plan has a chance of working in real life. The team most recently used the room to decide whether to cancel classes for a snow storm.

Why Everyone Wants to Go to Columbia

Barring worst-case scenarios of *Day After Tomorrow*-like proportions, Columbia is a place to be evacuated to, rather than from. As the name of our neighborhood suggests, the university sits on higher ground than its surroundings, and atop solid bedrock. According to scientists at the Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory, a part of the Columbia's Earth Institute, the university is therefore naturally well-suited to handle disasters. Vivian Gronipz, a scientist at the Observatory, assured us that "it's difficult to imagine a truly devastating disaster." The same height that has allowed students to enter most university buildings on the third floor also keeps the university safe from problems like flooding, she said. And our solid foundation should protect us from ground tremors.

But, before we start feeling too safe, there's more to the story. Columbia is situated right near a small earthquake fault line near 125th Street, one that been incredibly active since 2001. No one anticipates any major quakes. But scientists do warn that even the smallest earth quake could have major implications,

GOTHAM AND GOMORRAH continued on page 37

Adventures in Adderall

A tale of prescription drug abuse, Henry Kissinger, and overdiagnosed learning disabilities. BY KATHY GILSINAN

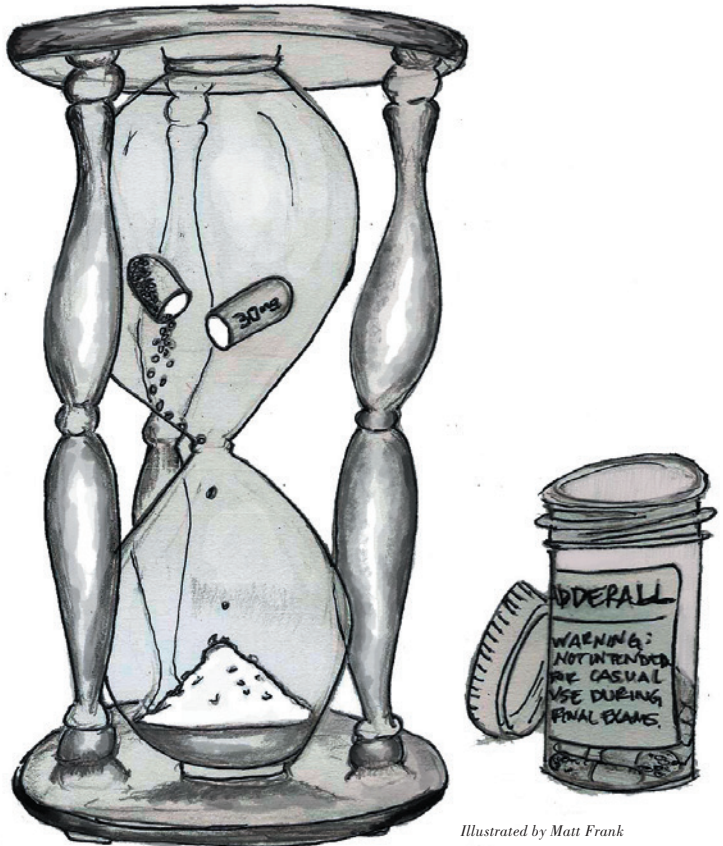
My heart condition is now not so much a murmur as an excited chatter. I am abruptly aware of my face, which has begun to manifest a slight tingling about the corners of my mouth. The blood in my arms, too, has begun to stir strangely beneath the skin; I can suddenly feel the unspeakable brilliance that no doubt courses brainwards at this moment! Yes! My eyes have shaken off their film of fatigue, have begun gobbling Kissinger's memoirs with reckless abandon. Kissinger! I could lie in bed for hours with you and your crazy, evil policy prescriptions! I must! I will!

In a moment, it vanishes. I'm unfocused again, probably less focused than usual, because I keep stopping to see how focused I am. Five pages ago, I was invincible, and now I'm cross-eyed with fatigue. A nap is a good idea. I think I'll take one.

This, apparently, is what a Sunday on 25 milligrams of extended-release Adderall (Adderall XR) feels like. It's supposed to work better, various sources tell me, and several have proposed solutions. Don't take XR, someone recommends; the regular version hits you faster and the feeling of focus is more intense. If you must take extended release, snort it; this will give you the same instant effect as the regular version. (Except that it has cocaine's potential to damage the mucus membranes in your nose and deliver wacky chemical timers directly into your brain.) Take lots of Extended-Release; why stop even at 60

milligrams? A hundred will probably do the trick.

None of these recommendations, by the way, come from people who have been diagnosed with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, the acute lack of focus for which Adderall is intended. The kind receptionist at Health Services freely admitted to the difficulty of ascertaining whether a congenital lack of focus is medication-worthy, and referred me to a psychologist. The phar-



Illustrated by Matt Frank

macist at Duane Reade was suspicious of my efforts to “just try it out.” But if you tell someone who can write prescriptions that you can’t focus on anything, chances are that they can’t prove you wrong. And, if you’re in college, you’re probably also telling the truth.

It is for this reason that even when Adderall is used illegally here at Columbia, it’s often used for precisely the purpose delineated on the prescription bottle that may or may not be yours: to maintain focus. (Unless your purpose is journalism. Then you just have contempt for the law.) There are lots of reasons not to focus, however, including disinterest, fatigue, and shiny things, and suffering from any one of these does not entitle you to a diagnosis of ADHD. But whatever the distraction, it can be battled with the amphetamines used to treat ADHD, of which Adderall is one.

Some swear by it, and others are less impressed. Ryan, a former user whose name is not Ryan, noted that the drug is “not Super Focus 2000, or whatever everyone says it is. It just makes you sweat a little more.” I found, on the Sunday afternoon I spent with the drug, that I could take a great nap, after which I was capable of epic staring sprees and little else.

And yet Seth, another pseudonymous user, couldn’t, for a time, write papers without the drug. Some of Seth’s friends testified to being able to write 10-page papers in five hours. Kirsten was able to stay awake for five days straight during finals, though she says it started to hurt her head after the first three days, and that she got rather dehydrated.

Adderall’s extreme popularity even extends to prescribed users. After Canada briefly banned Adderall XR in February after 20 heart- or stroke-related deaths occurred out of 11,000 patients taking the drug, it was forced to re-introduce the drug this August, amid reports that patients forced off of the drug had lost jobs and marriages to the re-emergence of their ADHD.

But the drug’s apparent spike in demand on college campuses may have causes other than exams and papers. A recent flurry of articles on the

rising use of Adderall on college campuses have gently reminded readers that abusing prescription drugs is illegal, and yet are saturated with quotes from students who guiltily gush about Adderall’s performance-enhancing capabilities. One student outside of Butler admitted to *The New York Times* in July that she couldn’t maintain a 3.9 without it. Further, the most often documented side effects from sustained use—sleeplessness, nervousness, and high blood pressure—rarely cramp and could enhance the style of the student on the go. One user commented that, “whatever, they say smoking pot is bad for you, too.”

It should be noted, however, that side effects can also include erectile dysfunction, convulsions, and psychotic episodes, which tend to occur after sustained or chronic use or high dosages. Seth, for instance, began to hallucinate after staying up for days at a time on Adderall; and even without hallucinations, there is such a thing as too much focus. Seth recounts spending days revising individual paragraphs of papers, being interested to the point of obsession, and missing classes as a consequence. A friend of his had to take a semester off after taking lots of

Adderall and writing music rather than studying.

Focus, then, can be a form of inertia, wherein one can do what one is doing for an extended period of time. Being in bed with my eyes closed on a Sunday afternoon, for instance, and having decided that I could obtain a pleasant afternoon thereby, I was content to continue without getting bored. I found, once I had finally gotten up, that this was true of the rest of the things I was doing. I felt no particular drive to do work, so much as to continue doing what I was doing in any given moment.

In any case, I didn’t feel smarter, either, which aligns with what Columbia psychiatrist Laurence Greenhill told the *Times*, that Adderall does not “increase your intelligence, it just increases your diligence.” Since the dumbest kid in your CC class who does all the reading will get a better grade than you, however, it seems safe to say that it’s heightened diligence and not heightened intelligence that Columbia students, and the people who grade them, are after. ❖

Ryan, a former user
whose name is not
Ryan, noted that the
drug is “not Super
Focus 2000.”



Illustrated by Jerone Hsu

Craigslust

BY BETHANY MILTON

It's 11 p.m. on a Thursday night. Do you know where your roommate is? He's probably on the internet, arranging an erotic encounter with our intrepid correspondent.

Come to my dorm room (CU undergrads), drop your pants, get a load sucked out and then you can leave. Just have a nice piece of meat to suck on and we are in business."

Load. Meat. Suck. The casual encounters section of Craigslist is not known for its romance. It's a pragmatist's paradise that, years after transforming downtown New York into a veritable meat market, has finally seduced Morningside Heights.

"John," the Columbia undergrad who posted the blowjob invitation, didn't always use Craigslist for sex. Parents take note: he started out using the site to find babysitting jobs on the Upper West Side. Eventually his curiosity led him to the casual encounters section and one day John posted his first ad, "just to see if anyone wanted to chill on a Sunday on campus and watch a DVD." He met up with

a senior who also posts, it worked out well, and he felt emboldened to post a more sexual ad. The second ad produced results and John has since been "messing around" with one of the respondents.

"Jane," also a Columbia undergrad, posted a recent ad looking for an undergrad male fuck buddy game for "4 times in one night!" The post was a joke ...this time. Her first cybersexual experience coincided with another first, namely, losing her virginity. And this coming from a girl who described herself as "not an impulsive person. I generally color inside the lines and never wear bright colors."

Jane's first post asked for "a fuck buddy who wouldn't mind doing a virgin and 'showing her the ropes'." The ad produced a flood of emails and one potential lead, a graduate student who subsequently backed out.

Taking a new approach, Jane posted a more descriptive ad on the Craigslist site for her hometown and included a warning that she wouldn't be home for three months. Her new requirements didn't curb the number of responses (close to 200), and she eventually found that special someone who seemed nice, smart, sincere, and willing to wait. Three months and a few dates later, Jane found herself minus a maidenhead and involved in a summer fling that matured into a close friendship.

While Jane claims never to have met a fellow Columbia student who has taken the internet route, she isn't as alone as she thinks. John described a whole "sexual DL [down low] culture" on campus where "a lot of so-called 'straight' or mostly 'straight' guys post." These students use the anonymity of Craigslist to cover the fact that they're closeted or even seeing someone else. To find out the extent of Craigslist's popularity—and to answer the age-old question of who the hell responds to these things – I embarked on a little experiment.

The Tuesday before Thanksgiving a new casual encounters ad went up under the heading, "CU student not looking forward to weekend all alone." The text was straightforward: "Studying is getting old. Horny Columbia undergrad (cute, 5'0, 115 lbs) looking for on-campus NSA [No Strings Attached] sex this weekend. Fellow CU undergrad preferred but I'm flexible." Just to separate fact from fiction: I actually went home to Virginia that weekend, I really am cute, and, in terms of sketchiness, I put random sex somewhere between trench coats and 4 a.m. in Morningside Park.

They didn't know that, though. Within 24 hours of posting the ad, I had replies from over 170 people, including three couples, more than a few older men offering a "financial arrangement," and one fellow who thought he could beat the competition with those three magic words: "former Olympic swimmer." Attaching a photo is considerate; attaching an unsolicited photo of a penis is not.

Ok. So there are 170 men in New York City who want to fuck me. How many are there at Columbia? By my count, 17.

Ok. So there are 170 men in New York City who want to fuck me. How many are there at Columbia? By my count, 17. And that's not including the one who bragged his "grandfather was a Columbia Law teacher," the one whose "parents both went to Columbia," the brother of a CC senior, and the one who, while "not a faculty member at Columbia, [does] have borrowing privileges there." In the end I tallied responses from three alumni, seven graduate students, three more students who didn't specify a division, and four undergraduates.

The first undergraduate was a senior who described himself as a "massive cutie" and wanted to know whether we should "trade pics, or...check each other out somewhere on campus." It sounded too good to be true, and it probably was, especially when he said "NSA (and discreet) sounds good." That's probably code for "my girlfriend sure as hell better not find out."

The second respondent, who tried to get friendly with me, might be better off trying to add to his list of Columbia Facebook friends, currently at one. The third undergraduate was probably the sweetest of the Columbia bunch. He said he was sorry that I couldn't make it home for Thanksgiving, wanted to know if I was interested in meeting up for dinner or drinks, and told me to Facebook him. The final undergraduate gets points, however, for being brave enough to email me from his Columbia account. It turned out that since "[his] roommates are flying home...[w]e can have sex in the living room or whatever."

Of the three undergraduates I could identify, I can't say I've ever noticed a gleam of desperation or sexual predation in their eyes as they walk around campus. In fact, I would never have suspected them of responding to a casual encounters ad and they probably would never have suspected me of posting one. While I might not be willing to give these guys what they're looking for, it seems like there are enough Johns and Janes on campus that with a little more searching on Craigslist, they'll eventually find it. No strings attached. ❖



The Rejection Monologues

BY CODY OWEN STINE

Dear Sir:

Thank you very much for your interest in *THE BLUE & WHITE*. We have read and carefully considered your two poems, “Battered Sole” and “Wet (Parade).” Unfortunately, we found that your work was not quite right for our pages at this time. I wish you the best of luck with your writing.

Dear Sir or Madam:

First, allow me to apologize for such an impersonal form of address; however, I’m sure you’ll understand that your pseudonym—“The Hammer”—under which you recently submitted several pieces to *THE BLUE & WHITE*, left our staff in some confusion as to your gender. A staff member currently reading over my shoulder wishes me to add that your pseudonym also left some of us in confusion as to your taste, basic human decency, mental stability, and first language; and I for my part feel it necessary to add that your poetry did not much help to alleviate this confusion. Oh, another editor wants me to include his suggestion that you amend your pseudonym to “The Hammer and [Sic]kle,” a suggestion which I can in good conscience neither endorse nor fully reject. Your recent submission to *THE BLUE & WHITE*, on the other hand, is something about which I have no such qualms.

Wishing you the best of luck with all future endeavors.

Dear Miss Patterson (Margot, if I may):

I believe I first caught sight of you on a bright gray winter morning—Saturday, the streets empty, the faces of students passing on Broadway bleary-eyed and haggard. You were bundled up to the neck in your slim black coat and charcoal scarf, but your hair above the luminous circle of your face was aflame with all the vibrant color of a pungent, powerful passion—the passion, in fact, which you kindled in my own tender breast, that very winter morning. O, Margot, Margot, my limbs ache, my dreary shell calls out for you, you and only you, you and your flaming, flowing hair.

That said, I have considered your recent submission to *THE BLUE & WHITE*, and found it not worthy of our pages. Good luck.

Dear “Sir”:

“Thank you” very much for your “interest” in “*THE BLUE & WHITE*.” “We” have “read” and “carefully” “considered” your recent “submission” of three “poems,” “Untitled,” “Untitled,” and “Poem Without Title.” “Unfortunately,” we found that your (“so-called”) “work” was “not quite right for our ‘pages’” “at this time.”

Here’s wishing you “all the best” with “your” “writing.”

Sir:

Your way of life; your choice of sexual partner; your politics, both national and international; your basic worth and dignity as a human being; your right to submit three short prose poems, entitled “*Supermarché*,” “That’s Not What I Meant by Rosebowl,” and “Vomitorium,” to *THE BLUE & WHITE*; that sandwich you just ordered with ham and margarine on a low-carb bagel; your race, religion, ethnic background, and right to assemble; your girlfriend who sings two numbers with the band; the way you work it; your thesis about Obscurity and the Objective in Henry James; your new scarf; your credit rating—I accept.

Your three short prose poems—nope.

Dear Sir:

Thank you for your recent submission to *THE BLUE & WHITE*. Unfortunately, we found that your—AHHH! MY ARM! MY ARM! GET IT OFF! GET IT THE—OH, GOD, THERE’S SO MUCH BLOOD!

Dear Miss Patterson:

Thank you once again for your continued interest in *THE BLUE & WHITE*. We have read and carefully considered your submission, entitled “CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF NEW YORK—RESTRAINING ORDER NO. 05627-P357A.” Although initially intriguing, our editors found that it lacked narrative motivation, and was, all things considered, really just incomprehensible.

We would wish you luck with all your future literary endeavors, but my lawyer has advised me specifically against it.



Department List
 Search Results
 Bollinger, Lee

His Holiness Lee C. Bollinger

President of Columbia University, King of Morningside Heights, and Master of His Eminent Domain displaying all reviews (6) [search directory of classes](#) [review prof](#)

PHYS C1009 Fun Run for Poets

I wasn't too sure about this class when I first signed up. I didn't even want to take it but yoga was full. Anyway, even though Coach Bollinger was really draconian about water drinking (he kept reminding us that we could NOT have any during the run, only in the designated rest and stretching areas), the class turned out pretty great in the end. We got these stylish Fun Run t-shirts, and I ended up wearing mine to every class, just like Coach. Bollinger was also great with moral support. Anytime I felt like I just couldn't go on, he would run up alongside me, flash that smile, and my pain would just melt away. Amazing. One weird thing: his hair NEVER seemed to move when he ran. It looks sort of flowy at a distance, but up close it was solid, like fine porcelain.

Workload: Lots of running... surprise! Easy midterm and final (graded by the incompetent TAs). Great pre-run stretch routine though. You also get lots of free orange slices, which are delicious.

URBS V3671 Pirates, Boys, and Expansion

PB&E was the biggest waste of time ever. The guy that wrote the other review could not have been talking about the same class. First of all, it was hard to learn anything because homework assignments were only handed out to certain students, all of whom were white. Bollinger was also incredibly pushy. After a couple of really friendly lectures, he started trying to push me and my friends out of the front row. At first we just thought he wanted more lecture space so everyone would benefit, but then we realized his goal was to help the overachiever pre-med types expand their horizons while shafting everybody else.

Workload: I think some of the students had papers assigned, but class assignments and expectations were never made very explicit. I always felt he was thinking and planning things that he never shared with the students. No midterm, and he never clearly explained what was gonna be on the final!

URBS V3671 Pirates, Boys, and Expansion

The eminent Professor Bollinger did a truly amazing job with this class. At first, it seemed that he was being too ambitious: could our final class project really be so complex? He divided us into groups and gave us daily assignments involving simple surveying, environmental analysis, and eviction notices. With no assigned books, there was lots of supplemental reading, and the legal briefs got pretty brutal. That said, Bollinger really tried to connect with us. I was worried that the lecture was too big for us to truly work together with the professor, but the professor was really good about pretending to give us special attention and feigning

- Browse**
- > Main Page
- > Gold Nuggets
- > Latest Reviews
- > Most Wanted

Search

Professors:

- Write**
- > Review an Instructor / TA
- > Request a Review
- > Contact Us
- > Professors, Click Here

- Read**
- > FAQ
- > CULPA Style Guide
- > 2004: TYIR
- > Surviving The Core
- > A Slice of History



Department List
 Search Results
 Bollinger, Lee

www.**CULPA**.info

Your guide to the best (and worst) of Columbia

His Holiness Lee C. Bollinger

President of Columbia University, King of Morningside Heights,
 and Master of His Eminent Domain

displaying all reviews (6) [search directory of classes](#) [review prof](#)

interest in our opinions, even if we said we had fundamental disagreements with the purpose of the class. We even got a free barbeque! Highly recommended.

Workload: Fairly inconsistent. Daily analysis of various urban plans was pretty tough. Eminent Domain project takes up a lot of time—don't leave it till the night before.

CHUM V1001 Crimes Against Humanities (Crim Hum)

I was so grateful for this amazing opportunity! Usually, in my country, I do not get this kind of education, but President Bollinger was a very knowledgeable man and explained how to get white Americans to write nice things about me. Usually, not many Americans are interested in my particular form of government, but thanks to "PrezBo," everyone seemed to respond positively! Every day we were tested on five new vocabulary words. When I started, my knowledge of English was limited to "for energy purposes" and "cocaine," but I quickly became an expert at vernacular gems such as "globalization," "leadership," and "market reform." Furthermore, we watched an exhilarating film on "the end of poverty" with a buxom goddess and her doe-eyed counterpart. I thought I was in trouble, but then some furry Jew told me the world was flat. Strange, but good.

Workload: We each had to make a presentation in Low Library, which was very intimidating. However, the sandwiches were wonderful, and I got to ride in a long convoy. Students do not receive grades, but a second-rate publication called the Spectator will describe you as an amazing leader committed to democracy!

CLME W1122 Intimidation and the Other: A Constitutional Perspective

Don't waste your time with this guy! I couldn't tell you a single fact I learned in this class. It's like Bollinger wasn't even there, and when he was, he just couldn't get specific. I was really excited to learn about the Middle East from someone so smart, but Bollinger insisted on being completely general all the time, and gave no opinions and no real perspective on the material. In spite of this, the ass-clowns in the front row still managed to take issue with every sentence he said. Also, the frequent unannounced guests in the class—and all their not-so-hidden cameras—got really distracting. Ditto the lifelong learners. [CULPA CENSOR] Jews.

Workload: Impossible and inhumane, maybe even illegal under international law.

—Mark Krotov and Merrell Hambleton

- » Browse
- » Main Page
- » Gold Nuggets
- » Latest Reviews
- » Most Wanted

Search

Professors ▾

- » Write
- » Review an Instructor / TA
- » Request a Review
- » Contact Us
- » Professors, Click Here

- » Read
- » FAQ
- » CULPA Style Guide
- » 2004: TYIR
- » Surviving The Core
- » A Slice of History



DIGITALIA COLUMBIANA

These excerpts were culled from documents left on Columbia's lab computers. We encourage our readers to submit their own digitalia finds to us, via e-mail, at theblueandwhite@columbia.edu.

Justifying dropping Calculus II for Acting Puppetry and Masks sounds like more of an arduous task than it is. To me, there's nothing to explain. I had no reason to take Calculus, and Puppetry seemed intriguing.



He desired a woman with slender finger nails and curvacious hips, a woman who would feed him cucumber sandwiches off platinum trays and lick his fingers for him. In short, he desired his mother.



To puppeteers, it was a triumph. Yes, across the world the news flew, faster than fire. And in this single moment, in the destruction, there arose a new unity, and the galvanization to continue the art form, to bring it to an entirely new level. Yes, some puppets were lost, but more could be made. The moment was a tragedy wrapped in a joke, agony sweetened with honey.



Unexpectedly, it was Raphael who pulled her out of her self-wound cocoon of self-pity and regret. It was also Raphael that had talked her into smoking and drinking, into living a little.



In 2000 during the Republican National Convention the Philadelphia police force massacred hundreds (Kennicott 3). Weren't aware of it? Most media sources ignored were unaware, or simply passed over the bloodshed for reasons to be discussed later.



University Writing 1010.57
15 November 2005
2500 Words of Nothing:
Collaborative Class Project

What could merit seventy-five arrests, vicious wounds, and private property ripped apart? A drug bust? An illegal gambling ring? An opium den filled with diseased prostitutes? No, to the Philadelphia Police Department the situation appeared even direr. For sitting on tables, hanging from rafters, hidden in cabinets laid hundreds of carefully wrought paper mache, foam, cardboard and wooden puppets (Kennicott 3). To the police these were weapons of mass intoxication, harbingers of anarchy, tools to unhinge the public. The puppets had to be taken out. This act was a preemptive strike to protect the masses that would soon assemble to discuss fewer taxes and more guns. To defend their ability to a quiet, puppet free week, Haverford Puppet Warehouse could not allow to go on producing such subversive creatures. So, to the authorities, the blood, and paper mache spilt was justifiable.



Puppetistas are innately political, though not always inherently. They roam the Vermont countryside, the corners of New York City, and are tucked in other states as well.



"The weak force is amongst the most impressive things I have heard of. A force that shattered every previous logical expectation of how matter reacts. I could comprehend that objects can be broken down into molecules, atoms, even protons, neutrons, electrons, and even quarks, but particles exchanging charges, and particle anti-particle pairs blew my mind. My first shock was the reaction $Ve + n \rightarrow p + e^-$."



Behind her, various neon magnets were missing from the refrigerator, shaken loose by the slam of the door and now floating in the yellowed linoleum sea with the morsels of dinners past.

His name was Gorgeous Tumbler. His mother wanted to name him George, but when Mr. Tumbler skimmed the book of baby names he came across a gorgeous name.

“Gorgeous is a name?” He said allowed. (SIC haha)

“What?”

“Gorgeous. That is so bitchin’.”

And so George was the name of Gorgeous’ younger brother, born the following year. Although the younger brother’s name was less handsome than his older brother’s, he was the looker of the two. Gorgeous and his life long love affair with food kept things that way.

Gorgeous lived in a one room closet, although the closet itself contained a closet large enough to fit a person, and there was a time when both Leona and Gorgeous made it their home, so perhaps that’s an over exaggeration. It was small. Leona put her things into his actual closet and put herself in their too, then she waited mischievously. Pressed against the wall, his clothes hung from hangers and drooped over her face like vines in a jungle. She felt like a leopard as she hid in the foliage of his garments and read a novel. Gorgeous looked like he had consumed about forty ounces of vodka and was feeling dandy.



For crying out loud, Angelina is obviously trying to become the next Mia Farrow by adopting every poor little disadvantaged scamp the world over. How about adopting some good old red-white-and-blue American kids? If we don’t adopt American, our country will fall.



I have been with a lot of sad girls.



One housekeeper was Shirley, who taught me how to part my own hair and to say ‘witch’ in the language of the Philippines. She said it was ‘bruja’ but, actually, that is Spanish, and it doesn’t mean witch, it means the other word that sounds the same, but is worse. My dad says it a lot.

Another housekeeper was Belinda, who was nineteen and drove a truck. Her hair was boy-short and curly and she tied a bandana around her head to keep it back. She went to Barnard during the year, too, so I figured out that she was a lesbian. Later I figured out the she might not have been, actually. It was summer then and she was supposed to teach me how to dive, but I wouldn’t.

Sunshine to Jess and Kate (and Lindsay) for participating in the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention walk today, and for SAS!

Sunshine to Tamsin and Jenn for having great marching band practices across the street from Shira’s window!

Sunshine to Talie who was in a minor car accident, but at least her shoes are cute!

Sunshine to Monique for spending the whole week-end drawing a life size self-portrait of herself and wearing the same outfit for 3 days straight!

Sunshine to everyone who came to the Sisterhood Potluck Picnic on Saturday!

Sunshine to help Tova catch up on all her work!

Sunshine to Megan for knowing all the 50 states!

Sunshine to the Alpha Theta class because they are awesome and we all love them and a special welcome to Naomi and Amy!

Sunshine to Lindsay for waking up early to make brownies for SAS to sell at the Night Market even though she couldn’t come AND Sunshine to Sam for helping out at the Night Market!

Sunshine to everyone who sent Aasha sunshine and good vibes last night even though she stunk and didn’t send out the Sunshine News!

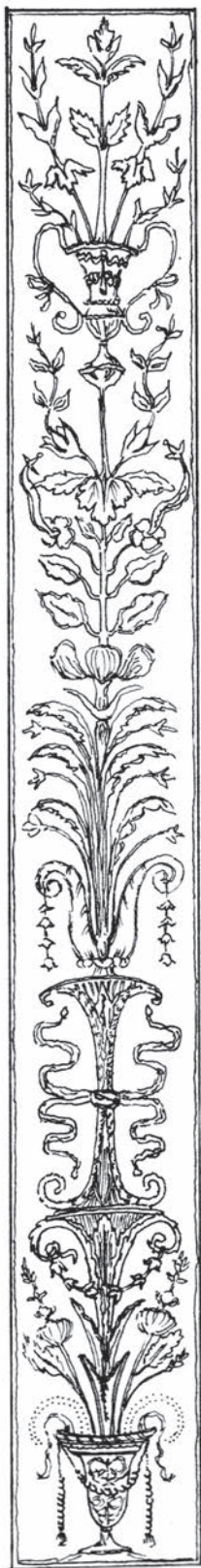


As he performed, our eyes fixed to the ten-foot stick. Uncle John flipped it from his nose up in the air, and then he caught it on his chin. Afterwards, he delivered the morning announcements: “Lunch is meatball sandwiches. Today the weather is 78 degrees. Beware of bee season. There are bees everywhere.”



The Baroque music concert by the Concert Royal was one of the best Baroque music performances I have ever seen.

I enjoyed the fact that the Concert Royal used Baroque style instruments while playing the Baroque music at the performance.



MEASURE FOR MEASURE

WORTH THE CANDLE

Supper is a bottle of Riesling, oysters and crab Louis,
true to form. All around
it's pretty seasonable;
children are running from crime to crime,
the lattice gives on to an accord
and grenadiers sing the capture of their beloved Marshall
whom they always kept at a distance.
Now, here are some words
which I have written to the same tune:

*For I am the cardinal, and the rapier
I am the foxhound, and the furrier
I am he that is always getting ahead
Be aware!
With such art do I play at living and dying.*

—I. Davey Volner

SOVIET CHILDREN'S STORIES

Excerpts from the 1987 Russian children's book Today is a Holiday

HOW VASYA WATCHED THE DEMONSTRATION

Vasya's mother was given a ticket to Red Square.

"Take me with you," begged Vasya.

"You won't be able to see anything there," answered Mama. "I won't be able to carry you in my arms, because even though you're small, you're heavy."

"I'll stand on tiptoes," answered Vasya.

And Mama agreed.

On the platform near Lenin's Mausoleum were many people—our Soviet people, and guests from different countries. Vasya saw only the backs of the adults and the sky above his head.

"Look, it's just like I said!" said Mama angrily.

The music started to blare. The celebration began. At that moment, a man came up to Vasya and sat him on his shoulders.

"I live in a far away country," he said to Mama, "and I study in Moscow. In gratitude for this, let me carry your son."

"Only for a little while," said Mama, blushing. "He's heavy."

The demonstration moved around Red Square. People carried flags and posters. White doves and balloons of many colors flew from the columns.

"It's already been a little while," said someone near Vasya.

And Vasya suddenly found himself on the shoulders of another man.

"I'm also a foreigner," the man said. "Soviet engineers built us a factory. In gratitude, I will carry the boy."

And the demonstration went on and on. The music continued to play. From one end to the other of the enormous square were heard cries of "Hurrah!"

Near Vasya someone said something in a different language than ours.

"He says," the student translated for Mama, "that in his country a flood killed all the crops. People would have died from hunger, if not for the help of the Soviet Union. He really wants to carry your son in his arms."

Then Vasya was carried by many other people. And each one spoke words of gratitude to the Soviet nation.

At home Papa asked Vasya, "So, I bet you wore out Mama, eh?"

"I didn't wear her out," answered Vasya.

And Mama added, "He didn't wear me out. The entire world held him in its arms."

EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS

A little Chukcha arrived at the Young Pioneer camp Artek. He asked his father, "How will I talk with that Marii? I don't speak a single word of Marii."

"Don't worry," replied his father, "you know a language that the Marii understands."

The little Marii also came to Artek. He asked his father, "How will I talk with that Avar? I don't know a single word of Avar."

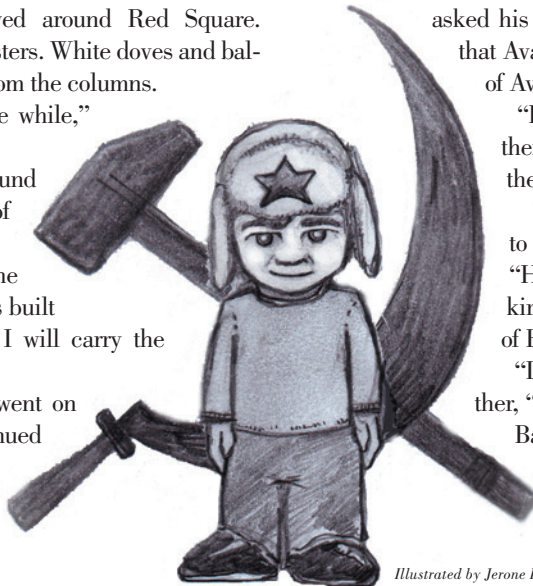
"Don't worry," replied his father, "you know a language that the Avar understands."

The little Avar also came to Artek. He asked his father, "How will I talk with that Bashkir? I don't know a single word of Bashkir."

"Don't worry," replied his father, "you know a language that the Bashkir understands."

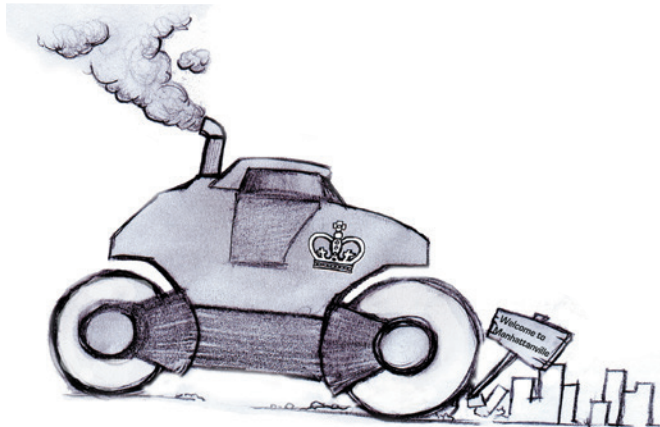
And the language was Russian.

-Translated by David Plotz



Illustrated by Jerone Hsu

THE REAL WORLD: MANHATTANVILLE



Illustrated by Jerone Hsu

Do any Columbia students really know what Manhattanville is like? Even after taking a tour sponsored by an expansion opposition group, I'm not sure I do. I know the basic facts: Columbia wants to expand into the area extending northward from 125th Street. Residents and business owners in the area, however, represented by Manhattan Community Board 9, have their own plan to develop their neighborhood, and it doesn't involve a new campus for Ivy Leaguers. Looming over the debate is the possibility that the city may use its power of eminent domain on behalf of the university to displace current residents. This, I know, is the heart of the struggle. But about the people who call Manhattanville home, I know very little.

I do have the benefit of the various anecdotes and images impressed on me by the two CB9 members who led an open two-hour tour of the area, sponsored by the Student Coalition on Expansion and Gentrification, on Friday, November 11. The two guides condemned Columbia's plan relentlessly, their outward calm belying their desperation as they tried to convince us privileged students that Manhattanville was worthy of respect. Walter South, a curmudgeonly man sprouting grey tufts of hair, provided an impassioned defense of local industry, often leading us abruptly into

open warehouses to extol labor and manufacture (we were only asked to leave once). Pat Jones, a younger African-American woman, offered a more insightful perspective on the social makeup of the community. Their deep concern did not sit comfortably beside our casual, impotent sympathy; guilty conquerors, we tried to soothe our consciences by slumming it with our subjects. Worse, I was the only person who showed up who was not required to attend for a Barnard environmental science class, a fact that caused one business owner to remark snarkily, "Eh, where are the guys?"

Manhattanville is poor. "Unemployment here is two times that of Manhattan," said Jones early in the tour, "and 40 percent of residents pay over 30 percent of their income to rent." Fenced in and boarded up stores mar the blocks like missing teeth. Jones, pointing at one of these gaps, said, "Columbia owns much of this area already. When they buy out another business, they make sure to not keep it up. Then, they can point here and say there's nothing worthwhile, nothing but run-down lots." Motioning to the same burnt-out store, South offered one of his many anecdotes, a tale of an "old bookie" who ran the store and threw a yearly Christmas feast, complete with "whole hams and chickens," for his neighbors.

MANHATTANVILLE continued on page 37

RANDY COHEN: THE ACCIDENTAL ETHICIST

Seven years ago, The New York Times Magazine decided to run a weekly advice column answering readers' ethical questions. Editors chose Randy Cohen, an Emmy-winning writer for the Letterman Show, Rosie O'Donnell, and Good Morning America, to apply his wit to his quirky column, The Ethicist. Criticized for being too political, too Upper West Side, and too utilitarian, Cohen was more than willing to rise to and dance around such accusations when THE BLUE AND WHITE caught him between french fries at the Key West Diner.

B&W: How did you get your start?

RC: It was an in-house idea at the paper. The editors of the magazine, I think, went on some kind of retreat and came back with ideas for a bunch of new features. They asked a bunch of people to audition for that. I like to think it's like a hundred and I was so much better. It's like being a plumber and you do plumbing around town for a long time you get to know contractors. If you're a writer and you're just around, persistence makes up for ability, which is an astonishing thing in my case.

B&W: Do you think that if you had been some Ivy-educated philosopher, the column may not have reached people in the same way?

RC: Right, right, yeah, and that way the column is kind of a fancy pants Dear Abby. And so as long as you have a strong voice and a clear voice, that's half



Illustrated by Julia Butareva

the problem. Also what I find is that often people aren't writing seeking advice in the sense of what to do. You can tell from the way they phrase the question they have a pretty good idea of what right conduct is. What they want from me is they want to know why. They want me to make a sort of reasoned logical case.

B&W: Have you started reading more philosophy since you began the ethics column?

RC: Some, but not in a disciplined way. Now, every now and then someone will criticize something I've written and say, 'he doesn't understand Aristotle at all, here read this,' and I will. I mean that there's no doubt about it, I'm not trying to defend ignorance.

B&W: How do you respond to criticism?

RC: As soon as the column comes out, e-mail comes in. The mail, I would say 90 percent of it is critical. The majority of that mail is written in this unbelievably generous, spirited way. That it's as if 'oh we're all in this together and we're trying to sort out these

interesting puzzles.’ I love that, and I respond to all that mail. A chunk of that mail is less generous-spirited. You know, the mail that starts out, “dear sir I am appalled....” Things that no one would ever say to your face. They wouldn’t even say it on the phone. People will say this in e-mail.

B&W: I’ve done it.

RC: I used to respond in kind when someone would write something vicious. It happens routinely, and it really hurt my feelings. I used to think, “Well, you think you’re vicious, I’m a trained professional. I can be a hundred times more vicious.” And I can. And I would write back something just scabrous and I have to tell you it was enormously satisfying. And I was better at it than they were.

B&W: Do you think that ethics and morality exist just to make us feel better about ourselves?

RC: Well, I despair. I don’t think Utopia is going to be coming any time soon. You’ve lived under governments that are either incompetent or corrupt, or both, and cruel. Well, let’s see, another presidential election coming up in three years, we have a chance to improve our country.

B&W: You don’t hesitate to sometimes make little political jabs and connect your ethics to the world.

RC: Sometimes the column is criticized for being too political, and the argument is I should stick to ethics and my editor thinks that too. But I think the distinction between the two is quite artificial.

B&W: *The New York Times* is generally acknowledged to be sort of left-leaning...

RC: It’s not acknowledged by me! You know, if you see *The New York Times* as left-leaning you’ve defined left in such a right-wing way that maybe the country has moved so far to the right that if your idea of left wing is *The New York Times*...I mean, when I grew up *The New York Times* was kind of the paper of the establishment. I regarded it as quite conservative...I wish it were a left-wing paper. I wish there were a left-wing. But where is this left in America, where do I join? ‘Cause I keep missing the meeting.

B&W: The question I was more trying to ask was do you ever feel pressure from editors in terms of what you can say?

RC: Never! Never! That’s been one of the really great things about working there. Especially the first couple of years. I know I was writing things that I know my editor found uncomfortable. And I know that from time to time his bosses said, “What, what was that?” and never once was I told to not pick up a topic or change my view.

B&W: You mentioned earlier about how a lot of times, letters written to you for advice are written with the tone that people have already decided what they want to do.

RC: They’re genuinely trying to work out what’s the right conduct and why. And what they want is not so much justification as understanding.

B&W: Does that make you more of a shepherd?

RC: No, ‘cause believe me they’re not sheep. There’s no reason to think that anyone is doing anything I tell them to do. We’d all be dressing differently.

B&W: Do you ever get letters that make you just feel morally repulsed?

RC: That, yeah, oh yeah sure. You know, “I did this thing and I don’t know if I did the right thing. What do you think?” They did something that they shouldn’t have. That happens all the time. You only



hate them and think, “Ewww! What a horrible person!” That comes as much from the tone in which they write. And I think what you were tiptoeing up to is more [that] they attempt to be self-serving, and when they try to justify horrible conduct. “Horrible babies, they had that coming, and besides I’m really attractive, why shouldn’t I?” It’s hard to feel affectionate towards those kind of people.

B&W: Speaking of morally repugnant situations... if you know your friend is being cheated on, do you tell?

RC: The obligations of friendship are to serve your friend’s happiness. And that you should be guided by your friend’s desire. People have their own ways of conducting their intimate lives and more power to them. So that if your friend wants to know, then you’re obliged to tell her. And it’s not going to be good, she’s not going to be happy, and it’s not going to make her like you more, but if she really wants to know you, have to tell her. And if she doesn’t want to know, then you should shut up.

B&W: We spoke to a letter writer who said that she had not wanted to publish her name and you asked her to. What’s the virtue of having someone disclose her identity?

RC: Credibility. When I meet people and I tell them what I do they almost always ask, “Are those questions real?” And you could do a perfectly fine column where the questions were not. The virtue of



using actual questions from actual readers is a sociological one, that you have a sense of what people are actually wrestling with. And that’s one of the things that makes it fun for me to do the job. And I think makes it fun for the readers too.

B&W: And do you hold yourself to the same standards that you preach?

RC: Oh no, no, certainly not. No. I’m not meant to embody these virtues. I did not get my job because I’m singularly honorable. And it’s in my contract, I don’t have to be any better than anyone. Well, all right, it’s not actually in my contract, but it should be.

B&W: In the case of the Judith Miller scandal, do you think that ethics and law are in conflict? Which one do you think should win out?

RC: I think Judith Miller is horrible. Judith Miller got a whole bunch of falsehoods in the paper that apparently [Ahmed] Chalabi fed her. I don’t know how Judith Miller kept her job after that. The general principle that you gave your word to a source and that you have to protect that—absolutely, yeah that’s important. You can’t have a free press without it. I’m all for shield laws. But there again you don’t give that promise casually. There was no clash between law and ethics here.

—Lydia DePillis and Oriana Magnera



Illustrated by Julia Butareva

Imprecision

Indecision: A Novel

Benjamin Kunkel

Random House

256 pages, \$21.95

It isn't that Dwight Wilmerding, the 27-year-old protagonist of Benjamin Kunkel's debut novel *Indecision*, is a bad guy. It's just that he doesn't really do anything. He's decent, good-looking, and intelligent, but is entirely without ambition. His mid-level job at Pfizer is uninspiring, and he's lonely, despite a long-term relationship.

Still stuck in his college wardrobe and drug habits, Dwight lives in Manhattan and does little more than smoke pot and drop e with his roommates. Muddling through life in a self-medicated stupor, it is no surprise that Dwight and his friends spend the morning of September 11 pathetically recovering from last night's ecstasy high.

Dwight's plight is clearly emblematic of both a deluded generation and a shaken city,

but his chronic—and comic—inability to make decisions sets him apart, to the point where he can't buy a snack at the corner grocery, much less switch jobs or girlfriends. Then, his medical student roommate Dan declares that Dwight's vacillation is caused by a condition known as “abulia,” and illegally offers him the miracle drug Abulinix, Dwight thinks his life in his order.

Unfortunately for Dwight, Kunkel needs a plot. While organizing his 10-year high school reunion, Dwight's high school crush Natasha invites him to visit her in Ecuador. He then loses his job, breaks up with Vaneetha, and flees to South America to find himself (or at least get laid).

Upon reaching the southern hemisphere, the novel surreally morphs into an action-adventure-romance. Dwight hooks up with Natasha's friend Brigid, a beautiful Belgian grad student, and they galavant across the country. Hopped up on drugs, they form an unconventional bond as Dwight predictably discovers his anti-capitalist soul and becomes a man.

A graduate of the Columbia MFA program and an editor of *n+1*, Kunkel has become something of an “it” boy in self-important New York literary circles, and *Indecision* has been hailed by some as distinctly postmodern fiction.

But earnesty is earnesty no matter how you spin it, and the novel is really a cookie-cutter bildungsroman. A la John Hughes, the story ends with a motivational speech. “Knowing clichés are clichés doesn't help you to escape them,” Kunkel writes. “You still have to go on experiencing your experiences as if no one else has ever done it.”

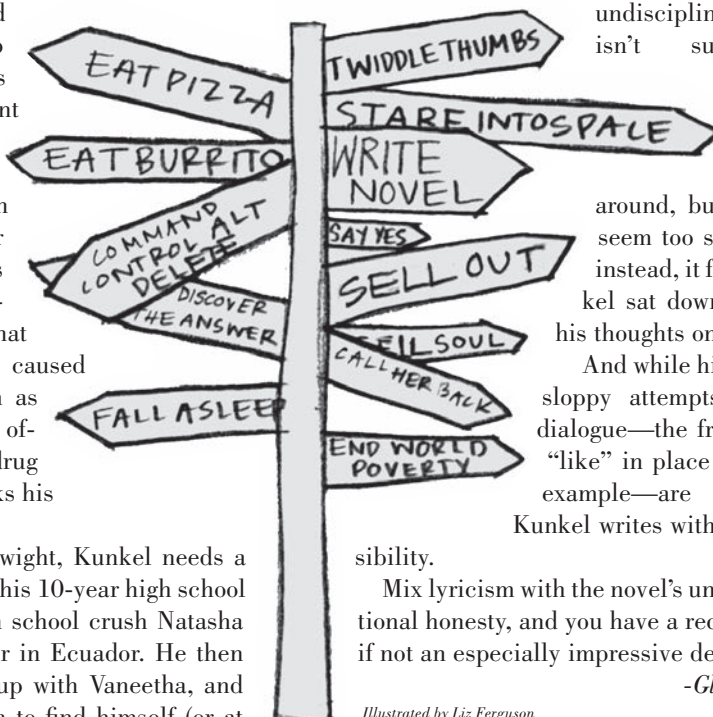
Kunkel's stylized but undisciplined debut isn't subversive—it's celebratory.

The narrative structure jumps around, but this doesn't seem too self-conscious; instead, it feels like Kunkel sat down and spewed his thoughts onto the page.

And while his consistently sloppy attempts at realistic dialogue—the frequent use of “like” in place of “said,” for example—are maddening, Kunkel writes with a poetic sensibility.

Mix lyricism with the novel's underlying emotional honesty, and you have a recipe for talent, if not an especially impressive debut.

—Glover Wright



Illustrated by Liz Ferguson

Body Paint

Egon Schiele
 Neue Galerie New York
 1048 Fifth Avenue (at 86th Street)
 Through February 20, 2006

In high school, the no-globalists wore Che T-shirts and the potheads luxuriated in Radiohead. I worshipped the art of Egon Schiele.

The Viennese Expressionist's angsty and erotic art embodied any self-respecting high school student's credo: gratuitous provocation, an affected nonchalance toward sex, and unembarrassed narcissism.

Adoration of Schiele—like that of Nietzsche, Plath, and *Catcher in the Rye*—is often diagnosed as a symptom of adolescence, dying out with maturity. Admitting a taste for Schiele at particularly vicious parties invites cutting scorn normally reserved for those who admit a penchant for Klimt: they assume you enjoy the art for the wrong, sentimental reasons.

In a *New York Times* review of the Neue Galerie's recent exhibition "Egon Schiele: The Ronald S. Lauder and Serge Sabarsky Collections," Ken Johnson scoffs that Schiele "has been a romantic hero to generations of young people raised on sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll who would not know a Monet from a Manet." Johnson's remark nails the general smugness toward Schiele's art: it is beautiful, but puerile at heart. While I am no longer a devoted teen groupie, I still think his art has more than visceral or decorative value.

Schiele's critics call him a pornographer, but the exhibit reveals an artist. Ever the modernist, his work shows an aggressively secular character; few 20th-century artists have so emphatically depicted humanity as no more than the bare contours of anatomy. The most exciting collection in the exhibit gathers Schiele's mostly naked self-portraits, their con-

torted poses and defiant gazes accentuating the skin and bones of a mangled body.

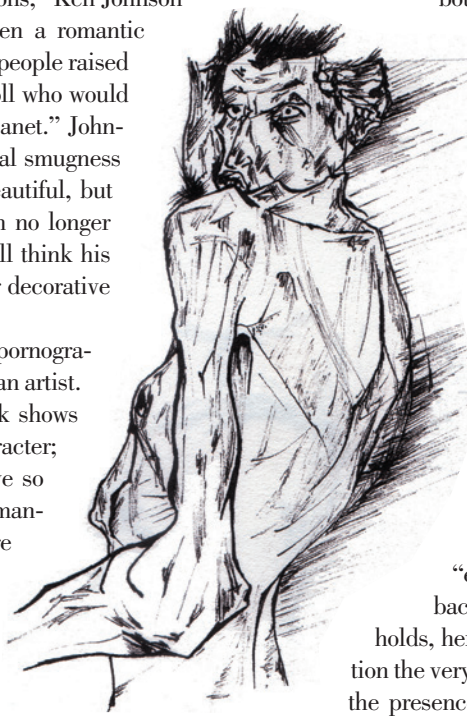
While many of his contemporaries believed identity was rooted in Nation and History and other Capitalized Hegelian Ideas, Schiele saw things on a more primal level—for him, identity could be reduced to a pose and a sneer, activating an otherwise volitionless body. (Just like a teenager.) But his art is more than mere glamorous nihilism.

Schiele's cult status invites flagrant misreading of his work. Johnson points out that Schiele had a taste for the finer things in life, and "the myth of Schiele as a sacrificial outcast who died to rid the world of its moral hypocrisy does not tell the whole story." There is no evidence suggesting that he was complicit in advancing his own myth. He celebrates a distinctly bourgeois aesthetic. His portraits of Erich Lederer idealize youth; the European heir exudes a self-possessed androgyny. Schiele lovingly silhouettes the stylish cuts of Erich's high-fashion suits, leaving his arms defiantly akimbo. His portrayal of Erich's sister, Elizabeth, is equally

bourgeois: her gaze is alert, and her intelligent smile intimates a casual lack of concern that poverty could never accommodate.

Schiele's most acclaimed works are also his most controversial: dynamic, spare female nudes against blank backgrounds. But to claim that Schiele was making pornography, as Johnson does, is disingenuous. These drawings' sexuality is so over-the-top that it denies arousal. He clearly wants it to explore the idea of arousal, not to elicit it. "Mother and Child" for instance, is emblematic of these "erotic" works. The woman's turned back coquettishly reveals and with-

holds, her knee-high boots calling into question the very category of "the nude" in art, while the presence of a fetus-like infant at her side



Illustrated by Sumaiya Ahmed

SCHIELE continued on page 37

Inside the Bubble Wrap

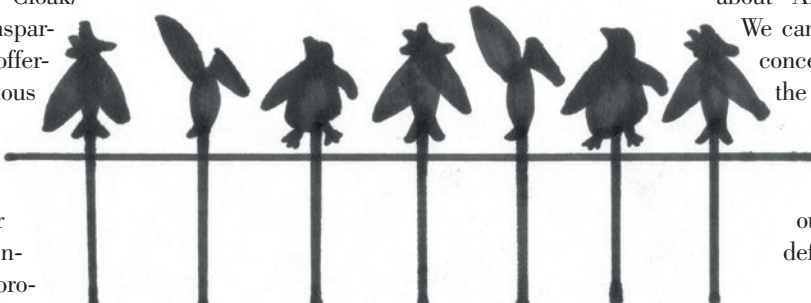
SAFE: Design Takes On Risk
The Museum of Modern Art
 11 West 53 Street
 Through January 2, 2006

As winter gloom—and its accompanying affective disorder—begins to settle in and make itself comfortable, the SAFE exhibit, currently at the Museum of Modern Art, starts to sound like a comforting prospect. The show is a collection of quirky objects that supposedly provide, represent, or at least are loosely associated with feelings of comfort and security—something for all those terror-stricken adults and children for whom the big helicopter doesn't immediately say “warm happy place.”

The exhibit was distinctly international—European artists have peered into our national fishbowl and decided what we really need is a bullet resistant mask designed for that uniquely American dilemma of getting from strip mall to SUV without getting shot by a sniper.

The daily life envisioned by the artists in SAFE is at once both frivolous and far-reaching. Tree-huggers need no longer lash themselves with rough hemp to the nearest redwood; they can instead dangle from the branches in comfort with their entire family of radicals in a plush, pear-shaped balloon. The Treetent was originally designed for England's Road Alert Group, an environmentalist organization protesting the destruction of forests to build highways. For those less environmentally minded—or for Howard Hughes—a more enticing home would perhaps be the Faraday Chair, a Snow White-like glass coffin with a plastic tube for breathing protruding through a hole in the cover. Or perhaps Howard would prefer living under the Hooded Cloak/

Tent, a transparent raincoat offering commodious positions for sitting, sleeping and other postures intended to pro-



Illustrated by Julia Butareva

mote relaxation.

Some artists preferred keeping their enemies close, though it is debatable just how secure a child would feel waking in the middle of the night next to a giant fluffy bacterium. Neither the cuddly Giantmicrobe, a medium-sized tater tot-shaped lump of your choice of color, nor the Priscila Huggable Atomic Mushroom, would do much to alleviate a modern child's nagging anxiety of ultimate world destruction.

Squirrels and rabbits fare better than the children who like to chase them in public parks. The exhibit offers a collection of squirrel-sized safety gear—construction helmets to prevent small animals from suffering from concussions, and scuba masks for survival in case of floods.

As sex consumes all lives and unconsciously endorses all kinds of risks, several of the SAFE designs addressed the topic in an unconventional and thankfully less redundant manner than your seventh grade health class. The practical Condom Applicator vaunted expediency with a merciful three-second application process, promising to be the savior of the HIV/AIDS pandemic sweeping Africa. Ironically enough, next to the condom applicator stood the Hot Box, an illuminated podium designed to offer comfort to sex workers on the street. I am sure Mayor Bloomberg is happy to see that the MoMA is encouraging prostitution by placing it on a rather conspicuously blinding pedestal.

While catering to the ridiculous, the SAFE exhibit is more a commentary on our perpetual desire for security than a salve for it. Happily, it is hardly MoMA's duty to provide adequate protection for you and your loved ones. Appearing in a city like New York, the SAFE exhibit merely highlights a truth about American living:

We can appreciate fey conceptual artists all the more knowing that, unlike in Belgium, they are not our first line of defense.

-Jona Mici

MANHATTANVILLE continued from page 30

The neighborhood is zoned for manufacturing, which allows small factories to nestle into blocks at odd angles, a holdover from the days when the meat-packing, dairy, and beer industries flourished. Many of these are literally mom-and-pop operations that have been functioning since the '20s, and their owners are proud of their neighborhood and their own niche in it. Almost every business we barged in on suggested that it played a vital and exciting role in the world. Hudson Moving Company, which does fairly well for itself packaging goods, passed out free calendars and pamphlets about the company's history, and bragged like a proud father that it had boxed vases and other paraphernalia that were sent from the Vatican to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for an exhibit.

Nearby Skyline Windows, over the course of its near century-long existence, has been forced to move north twice before, once because of eminent domain. This time, it's considering the Bronx. David and Steven Kraus, the seemingly well-off father-son team that supervises the company's 250 employees in Harlem and in New Jersey, exclaimed that they turned the heat on especially for us, and casually mentioned the high-quality couture windows they make for the rich and famous. Like Hudson Moving Company and its Vatican vases, they had come into contact with greatness, and meant to confer a sense of their individual importance by extension. It may have been a bit pathetic, but it

was completely understandable.

No one can blame them for holding fiercely to what they've accomplished. They do fill a niche, just as Columbia does. In one of Walter South's more colorful moments, he broke off from his description of Columbia's expansion plans, which he claimed included a network of underground tunnels enclosed by a huge cement basin and several enormous new biotechnology buildings, to exclaim, "I really think that the reason for these tunnels is so they can take their experiments and stuff underground between buildings. It's like that movie...*The Manchurian Candidate*." Pat Jones apologized for the outburst, but South's comment was relevant: Columbia is a large institution, its shadowy bureaucracy concealing obscure, confusing legal and financial dealings. To many residents of Manhattanville, we are a sinister behemoth, the antithesis of an honest family business.

When Columbia comes into Manhattanville, we will follow a pattern that is played out every time a Barnes & Noble drives out another idiosyncratic bookstore, or Wal-Mart uses its ill-gotten low prices to conquer another small town. It is an almost genetically predestined path towards the bigger, better, and cheaper. As Columbia wheels towards this destiny, the least we owe the people we will displace, as insignificant as we imagine them to be, is to know that they exist.

-Katie Reedy

GOTHAM AND GOMORRAH continued from page 17

especially as Columbia plans to expand onto a fault line.

"The earthquake fault is right where Columbia wants to build its Manhattanville campus," said Won-Young Kim, another scientist at the Observatory. "The school should consider that a small earthquake can happen there." While Kim said no one has contacted the Earth Institute about how to shore up buildings to be constructed on the proposed new campus, he is sure that someone, somewhere is aware of the problem and thinking about it.

At least, we hope so.

So the next time you're thinking about putting off the swim test for another semester, reconsider. It might be more important to know how to swim to New Jersey than you think. ❖

SCHIELE continued from page 35

impedes the potential for erotic enjoyment.

It appears that the exhibit has succeeded in introducing Schiele to a broader audience—when I visited, the room was crowded with professor types, retirees, and ladies who lunch. Two posturing groups stood out: the suits and the blazers. The suits are balding men who visit museums only to confirm their indignation at particular artists, nagging their wives to promise that

next time they'll go to the Met. The blazers are tousle-haired, chain-smoking boys, opinionated if not necessarily informed. Their peculiar ambition epitomizes what the suits would call pretentiousness.

My interest in Schiele may not outlast my twenties, but for now, at least, I would much rather be with the blazers.

-Iggy Cortez

Geriatric Humanities

BY ROB WILE

We've all seen them: They take the Hamilton elevator down from 3 to 2; they can't wait to tell you how their letters to the editor were published in Partisan Review; they pop more pills than the Orgo kids at 4 a.m. the morning of the midterm. An offshoot of the School of Continuing Education, Columbia's Lifelong Learners program has been making Columbia's undergraduate classes mildly awkward since 1986. What would a Lifelong Learner admission guide look like? THE BLUE AND WHITE uncovered the hidden world of Columbia's real seniors...

The Students Mumble!: A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Lifelong Lifestyle

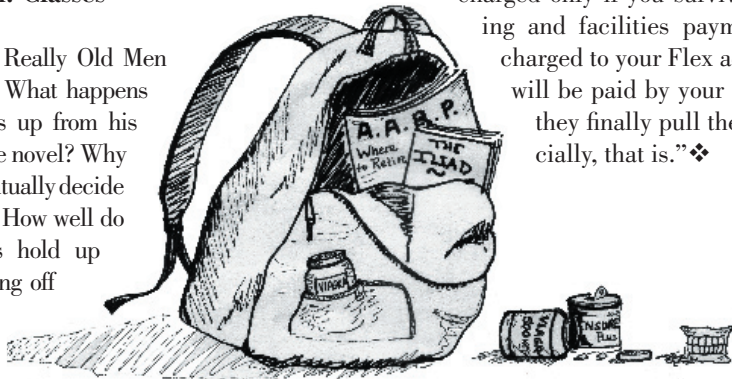
"The classes at this school let me hear all kinds of different viewpoints. If I could hear them, that is."—Arthur Johnston, 75

"On weeknights—Fridays mostly, the girls and I...well I suppose it's Thursdays that we—yes, the other Thursday we were walking down Broadwa... you know, I do think it was Friday after all...well, anyway, it was Thursday, and we were walking to..."—Dolores Hutchinson, 84

"On a typical school night, I eat in my room, usually canned peas and some nice gefilte fish. You know they have this wonderful gefilte fish down on 107th street...here, I have some leftovers. Will you take some leftovers? Look at you, do they even feed you at this admissions place? Here, take! Take!"—Mortimer Stein, 79

An Hour and Fifteen Minutes Closer to Death: Classes

ENGL W3340x Really Old Men and the Sea 3 pts. What happens when Santiago gets up from his nap at the end of the novel? Why does Odysseus eventually decide to buy a schooner? How well do Ishmael's Depends hold up 20 years after getting off the Pequod? An epistemological analysis.



Illustrated by Merrell Hambleton

PSYC W2220 Losing Control 3 pts. Of your bowels.

Lifelong Living Situations: Housing and Facilities

Due to a lack of space on campus, all Lifelong Learners will have the privilege of living in nearby St. Luke's Hospital. Each floor is patrolled by a team of RAs—Retiree Assistants—who design colorful door tags in the shape of tombstones or bedpans. They are also required to distribute free condoms.

In the event that you fall ill during class, you will be given a MedicAlert bracelet that directly calls NightLine, with whom you can relay details of your present stroke or how it's just so super stressful to have a paper due when you're fighting with your boyfriend. The Columbia Area Volunteer Ambulance (CAVA) is on call 24 hours a day to take you back to St. Luke's and pump your stomach, no matter what the problem. Your family will be charged only if you survive. "All housing and facilities payments may be charged to your Flex account, which will be paid by your children until they finally pull the plug. Financially, that is." ♦



CAMPUS GOSSIP

THE SOCIAL COST OF CIGARETTE TAXATION

One soft November night, a bearded man wearing a backwards baseball cap and puffy jacket lumbered up to one of the large, sand-filled, concrete ashtrays outside of Butler. The man proceeded to bend down, carefully hand-pick several spent cigarette butts, and put them in his pocket before walking off.



WEST SIDE CIVILIZATION

Written on the blackboard of Hamilton 404:
“I’ve got 95 Theses, and a bitch ain’t one!”

CC: merging Protestant philosophy and gangsta rap since 1919.



Girl #1: I’m going to see the Vagina Monologues!
Girl #2 (excited): Oh, cool, I’ve heard of that! (Pause)
Do they talk in it?
Girl #1: The people?
Girl #2 (serious): No, I mean, um, the vaginas.

If so, we’re ready to start a dialogue.



Heard outside John Jay late one night:
Student #1: Did you ever hit her sober?
Student #2: Yeah...I think maybe once.
#1: So? How was she?
#2: Well, you know, it was kind of awkward. I’ve been fucking her since orientation, and I still don’t know her name.

This is what happens when the *Spectator* encourages first-years to skip all of orientation and get drunk.

Following a disillusioned exit from John Ashcroft’s speech, a non-student protester was seen holding a leash attached to a masked imitator of a Guantanamo prisoner. The protester raised the topic of America’s detention policies:

Protester (yelling): “Why do we detain Muslims?”

Well-dressed blonde girl walking past: “Because they’re Arabs. No shit.”

The blonde was then seen walking away with a taser, a desecrated Qu’ran, and a small Tasti-D-Lite.



What kind of masseuse is hairy, wet, and doe-eyed? No, not Olga from the Russian baths, but a puppy. With StressBusters booked through finals, first-year RAs have brought in cuddly canines to play and romp with residents. Unfortunately, this will only further muddle the classic Carman caper *Who Shat the Elevator?*



Four students entered Butler 209 and started quietly doing an interpretive dance across the room, interspersed with screaming, inventive use of shelves, and over-the-top balletic maneuvers.

What first appeared to be a sorry attempt to resurrect the spirit of Prangstgrüp—the sporadically defunct group of campus pranksters—or some sick hazing ritual by the female rugby team was, in fact, neither. Rather, students witnessed the midterm for Barnard’s Site-Specific Dance Workshop. Seriously. And, seriously, it sucked.



Columbia's Orthodox Christian Fellowship recently hosted a spirited Thursday night discussion entitled "The Virgin Birth: theology or gynecology?" Other suggested subtitles for the discussion:

- The hymnal or the hymen?
- The synod or the speculum?
- Consecration or penetration?
- Holy or holey?
- Immaculate or ejaculate?
- Blood in the wine, or blood on the sheets?
- So, did God hit that or not?



A flyer was spotted on campus announcing a screening of the film *Kinsey* as part of SEAS 2008's "Movie Night in Havemeyer Featuring Movies that Feature Havemeyer."

Screening *Kinsey* for a bunch of SEAS students? That's like eating a seven-course meal in front of a starving child.



A man in his 50s wearing a maroon cardigan was spotted perusing a website called Screw My Sexy Wife in the crowded Lerner computer lab. He later appeared in Butler library, watching porn as before and oblivious to giggling onlookers. Poor adjuncts.



A Latin professor, revealing her sinister liberal bias, on the Cataline Conspiracy: "I have always suspected that poor Catalina did nothing. No, I am convinced. He was a person of the left, so he bothered some people, but it was all inflated."

See that, Campus Watch? We do our part.

Overheard in the Hamilton elevator:

"Man, I feel so bad when the door shuts and people are still outside. I mean, it's like missing the last helicopter out of Saigon or something."



VIGILANTE JUSTICE

A man with a bullhorn was seen shouting at jay-walkers from a window of 600 W. 113th St. "You in the blue jacket. You are crossing against the light. Please wait until it's your turn."



Apparently, there was a pile of dirty panties in the Carman computer lab.



Sign on a lamppost at the corner of Broadway and 112th:

FOUND:

- Tyrannosaurus Rex
- [Photo of Tyrannosaurus Rex]
- [Email address on little tear-off flags]



Girl #1: Judah Maccabees, he's in the New Testament right?

Girl #2: Yeah.

Girl #1: So there are two Judahs in the Bible?

Girl #3: Isn't Judah the one with the whale?

Girl #2: Wait ... Judah? That's the guy who betrayed Jesus!

Girl #3: Oh yeah! That's right!

The sound you hear is \$160,000 being flushed down the toilet.



Printing quotas...they're racist!



Crêpes on C

New York

Café
Crêperie
Ice Cream

Enjoy!

990 Columbus Avenue, New York, NY 10025
(between 108th & 109th streets)
(212) 222-0259 www.crepesoncolumbus.com
Major Credit Cards Accepted
8am-10pm Daily Free Delivery