IN CLASS, IN TREATMENT
Can Columbia and Barnard handle eating disorders?

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK
Getting acquainted with the Diana and the Northwest Corner Building

STAFF PERSONALS, SPECIAL INTEREST COMMUNITIES, AND A CONVERSATION WITH SPACE SHUTTLE PILOT GREG JOHNSON
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THE BLUE AND WHITE

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COVERS: “Columbia Olympics” by Cindy Pan and “Maze” by Stephen Davan
After venturing as far abroad as Midtown before the new year, The Blue & White returns to campus for the first issue of the spring semester.

Not everything is how we left it, though. It seems a valuable moose head—the hunting trophy of the Bull Moose candidate himself, Teddy Roosevelt—has gone missing from the walls of the Alpha Delta Phi fraternity, and the prospects of its return are growing dim (pg. 6). On the opposite side of campus, two glitteringly new buildings are springing forth like Athenas from their architects’ foreheads (pg. 16), while to the south, WKCR is working on a project that will put it back on the right financial footing again (pg. 13).

But, as the saying almost goes, the more Morningside changes, the more Morningside stays the same. That’s certainly been true of the magazine staff this Valentine’s Day as they and I continue to lead lovelorn lives, a proud Blue & White tradition handed down from editors yore. Perhaps this year’s edition of the Staff Personals (pg. 18) will change that for us—although I suppose that’s actually up to you, dear reader.

I must admit, embarrassingly, that despite having so much to cover here at home—and I haven’t even mentioned yet our detailed examinations of Columbia’s eating disorders treatment policies (pg 20), special interest communities (pg. 14), and a new exhibit on campus from photographer Thomas Roma (pg. 24)—we just couldn’t resist the opportunity to take one jaunt off-campus this month. To make the most of our trip, we decided to go as far as we possibly could, and we think you’ll find that our journey into low Earth orbit with space shuttle pilot Greg Johnson, MS ’85, definitely stretches our travel budget to its limits (pg. 27).

Who knows where the staff will end up next issue, but for now, come huddle around the home fires with us as we start the new semester and new year together.

Jon Hill
Editor-in-Chief

DEPARTED COLUMBIANS, BY THE NUMBERS

J.D. Salinger

Number of English-language obituaries on Salinger’s death: **243**
Number of those obituaries that mention his time at Columbia: **23**
Number of known Salinger novels and short stories: **41**
Number of those that mention Columbia: **1**, *Catcher In the Rye*
Number of Salinger books ordered at Book Culture this semester: **1**, for Barnard’s “Intro to Fiction Writing” with Nellie Hermann
Number of years spent at Columbia: **Less than 1**
Number of courses Salinger enrolled in at Columbia: **1**, a short story-writing class with Whit Burnett
Number of J.D. Salinger mentions on Columbia Web pages: **90**

Howard Zinn

Number of English-language obituaries on Zinn’s death: **85**
Number of those obituaries that mention his time at Columbia: **26**
Number of books and articles by Zinn: **158**
Number of Columbia mentions in *A People’s History of the United States*: **9**
Number of Zinn books ordered at Book Culture this semester: **0**
Number of Zinn books ordered at Columbia University Bookstore this semester: **0**
Number of years spent at Columbia: **7**, from 1951 to 1958
Number of Zinn mentions on Columbia Web pages: **126**
LEGO LOGOI

Make words into building blocks! Each clue below hints at a word that, when combined with another word, can create a completely different, new word. For example,

*Put an Insect into a Scam to get a District.*

instructs you to insert “ant” into the middle of “con” to create “canton.” Try a few—they’re tricky, but if you get stuck, the answers are provided at the end.

1. Put a Shack into a Prohibition to get a Kingdom.
2. Put a Solution into a Tree to get a Disease.
3. Put a Pool into an Apprentice to get a Swiss Ski Resort.
4. Put a Cloth into an Enemy to get Animal Feed.
5. Put a Fence into a Mama Pig to get a Bird.
6. Put a Corridor into a Bodily Fluid to get a Sexual Symbol
7. Put a Mantra into a Female Possessive to get a Bard.
8. Put a Swine into a Drunkard to get a Faucet.
9. Put a Spy into a Bed to get a Vehicle.
10. Put a Celebrity into Dirt to get a Condiment.
11. Put a Shopping Center into a Stem to get Chatter.
12. Put a Pundit into a Dynasty to get a Quarterback.
13. Put a word for Sick into the Jewish Homeland to get a Big Number.
14. Put a Scarf into a Dock to get a Marksman.


POSTCARD FROM MORNINGSIDE

![Image of a postcard with a drawing of a woman looking at a painting by Georgia O'Keeffe.]

Compiled by Jon Hill, Mariela Quintana, Alexandra Mahler, Brian Phillips Donohoe
Postcard by Stephen Davan
“It has no sentimental value. It’s just a dead animal,” says Imani Brown, CC’10, as he gestures toward the head of a waterbuck antelope hanging over the fireplace in the Alpha Delti Phi brownstone. Though mounted in the triumphant style of a hunting trophy, this display is hardly an object of pride—in fact, it’s a symbol of loss, a stand-in for an enormous moose head that disappeared over winter break in an act of burglary.

What makes this moose head both so dearly missed and so high-value a target is its provenance: the trophy was fashioned from a moose shot by Harvard ADP alumnus President Theodore Roosevelt and, consequently, is estimated to be worth as much as $50,000. The head occupied the same space above the fireplace in the fraternity’s “moose room” for decades after it was acquired from the Harvard chapter, but this is not the first time the trophy has been stolen.

“Last time the culprits got in through the fire escape in the kitchen,” said the society’s president, Dalton LaBarge, CC ’12. “When they took the moose head, security officials were able to follow a trail of moose hair from our second floor, out our front door, down 114th, to the house where it was being held.” LaBarge believes the December thief likely used the same route, but unfortunately for ADP, last year’s late snow covered any shedding that might have marked the trail. To avoid a witch-hunt, the society has not filed a police report, trusting the case instead to Columbia Facilities and the Office of Residential Programs. There are no leads to date, so with each passing day, LaBarge feels more and more resigned to the loss: “Every day the likelihood of getting the moose back decreases,” he said. “It’s very hard because the moose head itself is really symbolic to ADP.”

But LaBarge may not find much sympathy from a descendant of Roosevelt himself, Columbia College senior Alice Sturm. “On the whole, I’m pleased to have yet another example of ancestral blood lust expunged from the campus,” TR’s great-great-granddaughter told The Blue & White after learning of the trophy’s theft.

—Adam Kuerbitz

Tucked away in the bowels of SIPA lies a collection of books that few have seen. Cloaked in mystery and a lockable metal grating, these stacks form the Tibetan Special Collections Reading Room, Columbia’s small-but-splendid collection of centuries-old traditional Tibetan texts.

The unusual dimensions of these unusual books are the first things one notices upon entering the Reading Room. The bindings are often two feet long while only three or four inches wide, giving each the appearance of an antique maroon—flute case. The collection’s caretaker, a friendly Tibetan exile named Chopthat, will explain to inquisitive visitors that their almost comical proportions can be attributed to Tibetans’ traditional lifestyle. The books are meant to be read sitting down cross-legged, and indeed they are long enough to rest quite comfortably on the reader’s knees in this position.

Tibetan books bound in the Western style have found a home in Kent Hall’s Starr East Asian Library and Columbia’s most prized Tibetan texts—Buddhist tracts printed over a century ago.
with ink made of gold and silver—rests safely in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library in Butler, but Chopthat’s traditionally bound books stay in SIPA alongside regional decorations, prints, calendars, and an endearingly large number of photographs of the Dalai Lama. “He is a true and simple monk,” Chopthat tells visitors, pointing to one of the older portraits on the wall. The other raison d’être of Chopthat’s cubbyhole is that, as he puts it, “Tibet is not in East Asia. Tibet is in South Asia.”

Whether or not visitors agree with the librarian’s geography, it’s difficult to argue with such an earnest, middle-aged, pot-bellied Tibetan man, especially when he shows off the little treasure chest he keeps in his desk: a cardboard box stuffed with, among other things, postcards of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, some dried grass from the Tibetan highlands, and an old peapod he found pressed inside one of the collection’s Buddhist tracts. “Maybe over 100 years old,” he tells visitors as he squirrels the box back away in its drawer.

— Brian Phillips Donahoe

Most seniors in Columbia College are not required to write a thesis, ostensibly because they are already liberally educated. Tempting the self-satisfied to do so for the “academic experience” can sometimes be a challenge, since most departments offer no extra credits for work completed beyond the requirements of the thesis seminar. The possibility of departmental honors is incentive enough for ambitious stack-a-holics, but this year the Religion Department discovered a secret to lure the rest—get rid of the pesky writing.

...Most of the writing. Replace it with a medium not generally known for its religious use (save the little known glory days of Saint Claire of Assisi): le cinema. The first film religion thesis was proposed last year, in lieu of the traditional narrative format. After some deliberation, the department approved the proposal, so long as a short, explanatory paper accompanied it. Department Chair Professor Mark Taylor remains unsure of the policy’s implications, qualifying, “There has been no policy decision on the subject...I’m not sure where this will lead.” Still, Taylor remains open to all proposals from students and will consider legitimating their innovations on a case-by-case basis.

Other departments are also beginning to open up to open-mindedness. The Philosophy Department’s web site officially states, “Over and above the courses required of all majors, there is room for considerable flexibility” in planning a major. Students retain a decent amount of leverage; they cannot be hurt academically in many departments if their thesis proposals are rejected, and departments have little reason to turn down alternatively-packaged projects of real merit. Strong arguments can be made for a student of a niche field like cinematic sociology who wants to submit a documentary film thesis, especially since such a project might require even more effort than the written option.

Oddly enough, one department is rigid about its thesis requirements: Dance. Departmental requirements firmly stipulate that seniors submit a written thesis to complete the major. Why they feel so strongly that students must perform upon the page rather than the stage is anyone’s guess.

-Mark Hay
KATHARINE TRENDACOSTA

“2, 4, 6, 8, our team is really great! 3, 5, 7, 9, you lead petty little lives and you live in a cultural wasteland!”

It’s Saturday night, and the Columbia University Marching Band (CUMB) is cheering for the Columbia basketball team, which is losing to Cornell—badly. But you wouldn’t know that from looking at Katharine Trendacosta, CC ’10, who is wearing the band’s signature light-blue-and-white rugby shirt and shouting louder than anyone else.

Surprisingly, Trendacosta, who has been both Poet Laureate (i.e., script-writer) and Head Manager during her nearly four years with the band, doesn’t expect everyone to share her pep-rally zeal. An unabashed lover of all things Columbian, she likes that the university “isn’t the kind of rah-rah, school spirit, jock place where I wouldn’t have been comfortable; it’s a place where we’re all very proud to be here, but we’re not all going to dress in light blue and beat the shit out of people who say bad things. I like that sort of quiet school spirit.”

A few minutes later, she backtracks. “It’s weird for me to say I like our quiet school spirit when I’m in one of the groups that’s the loudest, isn’t it?”

The band aside, Trendacosta herself can hardly be described as quiet. She just as easily punctuates stories with exclamations of “Fuck this noise!” as she does with digressions about the history of the BBC, the topic of her senior thesis.

Of course, the band is famous for revving up even Columbia’s most staid students at Orgo Night, the biannual storming of Butler 209 the night before the notoriously difficult Organic Chemistry final. “My first Orgo Night – that’s the closest I’ve ever felt to a rockstar,” Trendacosta says. “Because I was a freshman walking in to a room full of hundreds of people there to watch us perform and watch someone say jokes that I’d helped write.”

And Trendacosta has written some of Orgo Night’s most memorable jokes. Her favorite is an Eliot Spitzer joke from Spring 2008, because “it runs the gamut from every possible kind of joke. It starts off with me just listing weird sex positions that sound funny and ends with Governor Paterson as Oedipus. And there’s a Barnard joke about the whore in the middle. And David Paterson finds out the whore is his mother, and stabs out his eyes with his campaign pins. It’s the perfect Columbia joke. It goes from sophomoric, to Barnard — which is campus-based — to a Core joke. You have to do a Core joke.”

The ability to tell jokes has gotten Trendacosta further than she ever expected. “I told jokes from Orgo Night during my Rachel Maddow interview,” she laughs, referring to her internship at Maddow’s MSNBC show this past summer. “I was so sleep-deprived it didn’t occur to me that a ‘Two Girls, One Cup’ joke might not be appropriate.” Still, it worked. Trendacosta is currently interning for The Colbert Report, where again, “during the interview I described what the band does and got people interested in it. To make the jokes, you have to have the knowledge base. So at least I know what’s going on in the world and I know what’s going on in New York, just to be able to contribute.”

But that sense of humor may have also clouded for Trendacosta what was once a certain future. “Band is the reason I stopped just knowing I was going to be a lawyer. I completely blame them for my indecision in life. Because the most fun I’ve ever had is doing all the stuff I do for band.” Trendacosta allows herself a nostalgic moment, then smiles ruefully, “There are people who come up to me and say, ‘I know you, you did Orgo

Campus Characters

You might not know the following figures—but you should. In Campus Characters, The Blue & 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 email at editors@theblueandwhite.org.
Night.’ Yes, yes I did. Three times. Lost my voice every time for a week after.”

—Hannah Lepow

KANAK GUPTA

“Being lazy is what I’m all about,” says Kanak Gupta, GS ’11, lying in bed half-asleep on a Sunday afternoon. Indeed, this is a man who will often take a taxi from 112th Street to Knox Hall just to avoid a 15 minute walk and who has never set his clock because he cares more about being rested than being on time. But looking at Gupta’s track record, sloth hardly comes to mind.

A bright child, Gupta easily jumped two years ahead in elementary school, but his brilliant ascent was nearly halted early in life. A misdiagnosis at age 11 resulted in Gupta being prescribed an improper medication, triggering a condition called Stevens-Johnson syndrome that ravaged his skin and eyes. After six weeks of intensive care and a bilateral partial corneal graft, Gupta reentered the world legally blind and sensitive to light. The nerves in his fingers were so badly damaged that he could hardly read Braille. Public schools blocked Gupta from taking advanced classes for fear that he would fall behind. In response, Gupta taught himself several AP courses, graduated at 16, and, after flirting with other degrees, earned his teacher’s certification at 19.

After a stint teaching science at his old high school, Gupta regained his sight and his mobility with the help of scleral lenses, an advanced form of contact lens. He immediately secured what he calls “your typical government grants” and set off to pursue a degree in creative writing.

Where, then, is all the laziness of which Gupta speaks? Mainly in his love life, he explains. His friends confirm this, describing how Gupta will occasionally compose lurid, flowery love letters and send them en masse to every girl he knows. Gupta claims that he simply does not want to expend the effort necessary to chase a single girl, nor does he want to change himself in any way for a relationship. For the sake of convenience, he has considered the possibility of an arranged marriage: “If,” he says, “I can get someone like [Bollywood actress] Priyanka Chopra with no effort, that’s a good system, right?” But when he asked his mother to set up such a marriage, “she said she didn’t want to ruin another girl’s life.”

Friends often accuse Gupta of using his myriad positions of leadership in student clubs to pursue young and insecure women. While he denies using his positions to prey on the young, he will admit it takes less effort to “hit on the young girls who get high off of soda and worry about the freshman 15.” He will, though, use religion to romantic ends with no shame. His friends debate whether or not it counts as sacrilege that Gupta has in the past dressed up as Hindu holy figure Hanuman to pick up women. Or that he wears what he calls “my Om bling,” a large, bejeweled Hindu symbol, to attract eager glances.

All levity aside, Gupta takes Hinduism quite seriously, having served on the board of the Hindu Students Organization since he first arrived at Columbia. Once embedded in the HSO, Gupta began to interact with the school’s large South Asian community and decided to become more involved in order to “know more about my culture instead of just pretending to be South Asian.” Having since joined Awaaz and Nazaara, as well as continuing his relationship with Hinduism by joining the nascent Interfaith Collective, Gupta now feels like a leader in the South Asian community. “People know my name now,” Gupta says, adding that his lust for recognition and leadership is fairly sated. “I don’t know if they know it in a good way, but that’s still kind of cool, I think.”

It is hard to believe that Gupta thinks he has to make an effort to earn his place when he seems to make an impact effortlessly wherever he goes, even when he travels abroad. He has, after all, been at the heart of an international incident when, while assisting with research in Spain at age 15, he attempted to bring back several swords from Morocco. Mistaking his passport for a fake, the Spanish customs agents destroyed his swords and held him as a terrorist suspect until the U.S. State Department could bail him out.

Yet for all his energetic efforts, Gupta boils down to two core beliefs: “I’m not sexist, because I want a girl who works so I don’t have to,” and, “don’t put it off until tomorrow, procrastinate today.”

—Mark Hay

Illustrations by Adela Yawitz
Broadway or Amsterdam?

By Nina Pedrad

“Yo check this! Feelin’ a comeback!” I am standing four feet from 1020’s dart board, wedged between a chair of coats and a man with a rat tail. The bartender who looks like the Icelandic coach from *D2: The Mighty Ducks* is too busy scowling to take my drink order. Someone I don’t know just got stabbed by a flying dart.

These are signs.

I wiggle through a sea of beer and body odor to reach the street. My friends keep chanting “spicy,” but I’m tired and cold and the *EncoreLove* movie just made me sad so I opt out. I’ve been on Amsterdam all day. My laptop battery died at Hungarian. My Taqueria burrito came with pieces of plastic wrapping inside. Frankly, I don’t give a damn if Amsterdam is “real” New York. I want my brightly lit street with manicured center dividers and I want it now.

Is Darts Guy fist-pumping toward CrackDel?

I’m walking to Broadway.

Westside Market greets me with friendly fluorescent light. Welcome home, Nina. Would you like some dip samples? Well, I do feel a little hungry, and my dorm’s four blocks up. Maybe a quick stop in, just for a second.

Five minutes later I am shoving slabs of rice cake and guac into my mouth like it’s the Last Supper. I’ve already manhandled the cream cheese and spinach. And that pale pink dip. I don’t even remember what it tasted like, I just remember needing to finish it.

I spot the cheeses. The cheeses! There are so many cheeses! I want to learn about cheeses. An hour later, I’ve met Jesus. He stocks the cheeses and he’s taught me what pasteurized means. His family’s from Guadalajara and he loves working at Westside Market. Let Amsterdam have its neo-Gothic church for enlightenment. I have Jesus.

My basket’s filled with cheese, bread, Nutella, and Fresca. My total is $27.59, not that it matters. Flex is like Monopoly money.

Everything in this store is so pleasantly pre-packaged and clean. I love that. The place where I buy food should be clean. If wanting sanitary groceries makes me bougie, then fine. Better that than being tragically misguided in thinking Amsterdam Avenue constitutes “off-campus.” Unlike its dirtier-than-thou neighbor to the East, Broadway doesn’t masquerade as something other than a street lined with Columbia Safe Haven stickers and stocked with undergrads.

Yes, Community serves comically tiny glasses of orange juice. Yes, Liberty House caters to wealthy middle-aged women with weaknesses for pashminas. And no, I don’t think anyone at Tom’s knows what the hell he’s doing. But class and kitsch are just as much New York as dirt and grit are.

So I’ll shop at my slightly overpriced market because Jesus introduced me to six varieties of Gouda. I’ll take pleasure in my pick of frozen yogurt shops because life’s too short not to. And if I want to find “real” New York, I’ll take the subway downtown.

Full from dip and armed with newly acquired knowledge, I’m carrying four bags of groceries home. From across the street, I spot possibilities—capital P. My favorite store in the world, not just because the “@” symbol is actually on the awning and in the title, but because it is stocked with the most spectacularly unnecessary items—Princess-themed glitter pens, ill-fitting shirts with “funny” statements, picture frames that state the obvious (“We’re Sisters!”). I peer into the window, see a stationary set titled “Glamour GalZ!” and start laughing out loud.

I glance down 112th. St. John the Divine looks beautiful from Broadway.

Is Evan hugging a gargoyle?
AT TWO SWORDS’ LENGTH

AMSTERDAM

By Evan Johnston

It’s late. I’m drunk and silly and trying to make some bad decisions. 1020 was, as usual, almost insufferably crowded, but at least now it feels good to be in the bone-liquefying cold. My friends and I, an alcohol-fueled and jovial bunch, are laughing and enjoying ourselves. An innocent, fleeting glance to your right, expecting the typical well-lit storefronts of which the city is composed, and... BOOM. The Face of God is staring right into my eyes, unrelenting and scolding. It is the Church of St. John the Divine, and it means business. For a second, I think I actually mistook a shadowy gargoyle for a ratty Tom Hanks haircut and a bad plot about the Christian Illuminati.

Regardless of your religious leanings, St. J the D can inspire a real and strange feeling of panic inside of anyone. Maybe it was a bad idea, for example, to show my uncle’s ID at 1020. Or perhaps I should’ve foregone that last beer. What is Easter about again? Is the chocolate rabbit Cain or Abel? It’s decided— I am a bad person, and God is telling me so. I should’ve just stuck with the friendly, innocuous establishments on Broadway. The Heights? Sure, the stairs are scary and everything is sort of sticky, but it’s got a certain charm nonetheless. And Campo has...an Italian name! And a becoming faux-European aesthetic! In fact, I’m almost positive I saw Diane Lane there filming Under the Tuscan Sun!

But Amsterdam, unlike its Botoxed and perpetually smiling neighbor to the west, is on some real shit. It will mess you up. Hey, have you not been appropriately thankful for all the good things in your life lately? Just take a look through any of the windows of St. Luke’s and you’re sure to see some poor fool putting around with his asscheeks in the wind. A late-night excursion to 109 Gourmet Deli prompts a fleeting suspicion that maybe it’s called CrackDel not for the addictive quality of its sandwiches but because the late-night customers may actually be crack dealers. Oh, and that leggy woman standing outside Suite asking you for a cigarette? Her name is George.

So I quake underneath the neo-Gothic cathedral presently acting as my moral compass, reconsidering what I’ve done this evening, the questionable choices I’ve made. No Broadway edifice causes the same late-night introspection. Everything is so conscience-free over there. No, balding Community Food & Juice waiter, I don’t care “from whence the poulet rouge was sourced,” nor do I care about your speaking role on that one episode of Queer As Folk. The fact that your grandmother stone-ground the wheat from which my $10 pancakes are composed is not going to redeem my $10. Here’s my point: Broadway, and the bougie restaurants and bars that adorn it, aren’t real. They represent a fake world. They didn’t even use the interior of Tom’s for Seinfeld. The only presumable reason that they used the shot of the outside was because the owner couldn’t come up with something better to put on the awning than the word “RESTAURANT.” Creative.

Suddenly I’m feeling a bit better. Even though my stomach is churning because of the Taqueria burrito I had four hours ago, I take solace in knowing that it wasn’t prepared by some assembly-line robot, grinning like a Cheshire cat, from Chipotle over on Broadway. Okay, yes, Chipotle burritos are delicious. But they aren’t real. There’s no integrity there, just a corporate attempt at cornering an under-pursued fast food market. At Taqueria, it actually feels like Mexico—not only can you not drink the water, you literally cannot ingest anything without feeling like you’re going to die. Amsterdam reminds me that the world is not always free-trade coffee beans and boutique food carts; more often than not, it’s gay bars attached to Indian restaurants. •

Illustrations by Stephen Davan
O, gather ye rosebuds, for February-month marks the traditional recapitulation of the tale of Valentine Veritas, a great something or other once removed and put back several times over by your hero Verily V. It would not be an overstated suggestion that Valentine Veritas, née Val Valentinowitz, is the lone architect of a certain archetype of the Platonic ideal of non-platonic love.

Val Valentinowitz—citizen of Rome, citizen of the world—was a local Lothario of Empire-spanning repute. (His mien was enhanced, or perhaps exacerbated, by a proclivity for a certain, shall we say, ethical leniency. This tendency was a congenital characteristic that’s indigenous to the Valentinowitz bloodline, your Modern narrator will take care to remind you, in case it had slipped your mind.) “In vino Veritas!” Val V. would say, as he raised a hallowed vase of Martine Nouet 1981 B.C. and glanced lasciviously at the day’s lady.

Valentinowitz was the proprietor of the Empire’s finest confectionery-shoppe. This enterprise had been passed to him from his own father, a voracious sweet-maker whose efforts allowed him to bequeath an income sufficiently suited to the admittedly immodest appetites of his only son. And when fat Nero took the reigns of Empire, creature comforts gave way to laps of luxury for dear Valentinowitz, who transformed into quite a lush by spending many an hour and day in one of the Empire’s more distinguished dens of iniquity.

While there, shall we say, sating one of his baser appetites, Val met the enchanting Ethel Enamora, a woman of easy virtue and ample endowment. Instantly enraptured, our ancient hero vowed to make the ethereal Ethel his own. But how to trap the flighty sprite? What trick could turn her eyes towards him, and him alone? Valentinowitz, his head in his hands, tried long and hard to conceive a contrivance by which to ensnare the exquisite Ethel.

Always mindful of the bottom line, the candy-man soon realized it would be in his best of interests to benefit his livelihood whilst he satisfied his loins. As he pondered the hallowed traditions of the business, it came to him: he would invent a new festival of sweets! A new tradition would give reason to celebrate his luscious lover, and in so doing disperse mounds of sugared treats among the well-paying masses. Unhappily, the name “Valentinowitz Day” made a quite unsavory noise upon the ear. But “Valentine’s,” ah-ha! Our Hebrew hero knew that he had found a moniker palatable to the plebs (of then and now).

Yet when to schedule the spurious saint’s day? Val did not ponder long before another bolt from Minerva: February! Yes, February—to compensate for that post-Saturnalia-solstice lull in sales. And what better theme for the fête than abiding ardour—after all, he aimed to warm the heart of darling Ethel in the middle of Roman winter.

Bonbons in hand, the newly-named Valentine dashed to the palace to present the sweet-toothed sovereign with his perfected plan. So enthused was corpulent Nero by the social occasion—freshly constructed—that his eminence proclaimed it immediately, and imminently for a fortnight hence. Valentine passed the 14 days dutifully concocting the sweetest of syrups, confections, and petit fours to please his darling (and his purse). When Valentine’s first Valentine’s day arrived, it was all old Val could do to stay abreast the amorous ancients, whose demand for sticky treats ceased not ‘til his entire stock was sold. His coffers filled as he vended his wares, but while his hands worked fast, his eyes scanned the crowd in vain for Ethel.

Our ancient hero closed his shoppe and wandered the streets to find his beloved nowhere. He rushed perturbed to the cathouse that had become his favorite, but alas! He’d been beaten to his prize by many wishing too to celebrate the day. As a vexed Val walked home alone, surrounded by carousing couples, he cursed the luckless, fickle festival of love.
Radio Daze

THE IDENTITY CRISIS OF WKCR

BY SAM SCHUBE

Soft pops of jazz could be heard drifting out of Low Library one recent night in early February. Inside, the atmosphere was buzzing as the crowd warmed to the music and free-flowing booze. Veteran WKCR jazz host Phil Schaap was the man of the hour as guests celebrated his 40th year at the station, but just beneath the surface flowed a palpable sense of need—with tickets to the gala costing $500 a piece, there was no mistaking that this was more than an anniversary party.

Schaap’s glamorous fête-turned-fundraiser highlights the serious financial and logistical challenges facing WKCR as it seeks to put an end to an identity crisis that began nearly 70 years ago. Blurring the boundary between a traditional student group and a well-respected news and entertainment source for New York intellectuals, WKCR has built its reputation on marching to the beat of its own drum. But now the station is being pushed into the uncharted realms of commercial, if not conventional, radio.

Since it began broadcasting in 1941, WKCR has been one of the leading jazz stations in New York. Its musical tastes broadened in the 1970s as the station began broadcasting more Latin and new music, a move that raised WKCR’s profile among members of New York’s New Left. News operations at the station have a similarly lengthy pedigree—during the strikes of 1968, WKCR was the only source of live news from the campus, and the station’s reporting informed national news sources such as the New York Times. “We’re a college station because of the programmers, not the programming,” said Station Manager Michael Zaken, CC ’11.

Columbia is well-aware of this dichotomy. In 2009, the university decided to cease all funding of the station, writing to staff that “the special nature of WKCR makes it more of a ‘student enterprise’ than a student group.” Though WKCR’s staunch anti-commercial philosophy makes the “student enterprise” tag seem curious, WKCR has since sought out multiple sources of supplementary income and begun to create a $4-6 million endowment to cover the high costs of running the station.

A portion of that budget is directed toward the upkeep of the analog equipment that is a point of pride among staff members. Unusual among modern radio stations, WKCR maintains multiple analog tape decks and near-obsolete DAT cartridge players. While these tools make possible the extremely high audio quality the station provides, they’re long past their prime. “Some of it is meant to be out of date,” said Director of Operations and Engineering Joanna Farley, CC ’11, “but some of it just isn’t in great shape.”

Moreover, the station is still working to ease the debt incurred by the 2003 acquisition of a new antenna at 4 Times Square, which became necessary after the Sept. 11 attacks destroyed the station’s former antenna atop the World Trade Center. Further capital outlays will be necessary to complete the station’s shift toward broadcasting a stereo audio signal, but the project remains contingent on the station’s finances.

To pay for these costs, WKCR is mounting a full-court press to secure alternative sources of funding. The Schaap event, for example, was the first of more gala-style dinners, but listeners may be relieved to know that they will mostly be spared from on-air drives for contributions. “It’s just not a very sustainable way to make money,” said Farley.

Fortunately for both city and campus listeners, WKCR’s staff is simply unwilling to yield to the financial pressures that have put the station’s future in jeopardy. “As long as we have people who believe in what we do,” Zaken said, at once optimistic and guarded, “we’ll keep going.”

FEBRUARY–MARCH 2010

Illustration by Louise McCune
Geography Is Destiny

In special interest communities, you are where you live.

By Anna Kelner

Months before the housing lottery rewarded some with East Campus and consigned others to the McBain shaft, the fates of two student communities were sealed.

For Greenborough, a special interest community (SIC) created to focus on environmental issues, a bright future lay ahead—January brought news that the university’s Housing administrators had granted the group use of a spacious brownstone on 114th Street for the following academic year. But, for the writers of 114 Rue de Fleurus, January was not so lucky—the collaborative writing community learned that month of their assignment to a cramped corner of Wein’s second floor. Not all SICs are created equal, it seems.

These night-and-day housing placements aren’t unusual to anyone who has ever tried to navigate the special interest communities program. Begun roughly 10 years ago, SICs were created “in large part to provide a unique residential experience for a group with a shared identity or common interest,” said Kristen Sylvester, an associate dean in the Office of Student Affairs. But, though the program itself is here to stay, individual communities have distinctly fluid existences—in practical terms, this means Housing must make building assignments weighted by their evaluation of the group’s ability to sustain itself over coming years.

“Sometimes, there’s a particular time in the Columbia community when there’s a really passionate group of students and they think the SIC program may be able to fill a gap on campus,” said Sylvester. “Other times, there’s not a need on campus if those outlets are being provided elsewhere.”

Perhaps not coincidentally, then, the oldest existing SICs are also the best-housed. Potluck House calls a 114th Street brownstone, a prime space to carry out its mission of bonding over good food and good talk. The vegan residents of Metta House live in a plum East Campus townhouse, where they can more easily maintain a strictly vegan kitchen area. The LGBT issues-focused Q House is located in a coveted Ruggles suite, and the list goes on.

Less-than-stellar accommodations, meanwhile, seem to be the hallmark of the less-than-successful SICs. A row of singles in Broadway housed the now-defunct Urban Economics Perspectives, and Third Culture Alliance spent a year stuffed into a top corner suite of Claremont before disbanding. Similarly, Art House existed for only year in the Wallach suite across the hall from the Dean of Residence, a location that made it difficult for members to be as artistic as they would have liked. “A lot of us would practice instruments there, and we were also attuned to potentially annoying the Dean of Residence,” said Robyn Burgess, CC ’10. “We were never called out as a nuisance, but we got the feeling we shouldn’t be doing that there.”

114 Rue de Fleurus, though not yet extinct, is hoping to avoid a similar fate. With a single-stall bathroom for eight residents, its current home is humble by most campus standards, to say nothing of the garbage chute extending through the suite and a pillar that awkwardly divides the common area. The low point, the residents speculate, was the November dinner they hosted for Mark Strand, former Poet Laureate and Columbia faculty member. Feasting with a literary giant on homemade quiche and cookies, the writers were forced to cram a dining room table into their largest single.

Cristen Scully-Kromm, assistant dean for Community Development & Residential Programs, acknowledges that “limits to budgets and space” curb
the numbers of SICs approved and determine where they’re placed. Kristen Sylvester adds that the Office works closely with Housing to “support the communities programmatically” while still “taking into considera-
tion the needs and desires of the general student population and keeping in mind the general housing lottery.” The balance is a precarious one, allowing communities like the newly approved Middle Eastern Cultural Appreciation House (MECAH)—the only new SIC approved for the 2010-11 school year—to land two palatial suites in Claremont.

Just across Broadway, Barnard’s Special Interest Housing Suites are not meant to be as qualitatively distinct as those at Columbia. Instead, these suites are intended to “support programming in the residence hall community as opposed to acting as a discrete, separate living unit the way that some of the groups may be at Columbia” explained Matt Kingston, associate director of Residential Life and Housing. Freed from finding their groups a distinct home, last year Barnard approved a more eclectic group of communities: Music House, CG Chefs, Science House, Recess, GALS (Globally Aware Ladies), and Food Fight.

Beyond a proposed SIC’s potential for longevity, the Columbia Office of Residential Programs also seems to weight its approvals in favor of groups with political leanings or identity bases. Narine Atamian, CC ’12 and MECAH’s coordinator, sees the private, “safe space” afforded by the house’s suites as instrumental to the sensitive, politically-charged events they hope to host. “We want to create a safe space to express personal opinions, and having an intimate location—specifically kitchen space—is important,” said Atamian. “Food is really important in Middle Eastern cultures, and we want to both honor and be able to explore that aspect.”

Liz Allocco, CC’11, Greenborough’s Coordinator, affirmed that the trendiness of going green may have also appealed to Housing during the SIC application process. “To try to get the administration more into it, we said we’d be leading the Ivy League schools in environmentally conscious housing,” she said. “We told them it’d be a wonderful way to show commitment to Green NYC. We tried to play to their pride a little bit.”

The lack of a political mission or identity basis may have been what most hurt 114 Rue de Fleurus when building assignments were made at the beginning of last spring. “A lot of the SICs are ‘safe spaces’,” said Erica Weaver, CC ‘12 and house co-ordinator.

“Writers don’t really need a safe space so it’s a little different for us.”

Still, the writers did not concede to their residential fate. A campaign begun last fall by the house sought to convince Housing to assign them a new, larger space for next year. “Whenever we had an event, we would write Housing a message,” said Weaver. “Every week, we’d try to figure out if we could reserve a space for workshop so we could have more people from the community come. I think Housing recognized that we weren’t in the best space.”

And the writers won. Beginning next fall, they will take over the sunnier, more spacious rooms on Harmony Hall’s second floor, where a true common area will allow them to hold more events and host writers with dignity. The new home may be no brownstone or East Campus townhouse, but with this better location, the writers of 114 Rue de Fleurus might have done more than secure the future of their SIC—they might have just proved that you can change your own fate.

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New Kids on the Block

Getting acquainted with the Diana and the Northwest Corner Building

BY LIZ NAIDEN

This February saw the presentation of Morningside’s newest daughter. The long-awaited Diana student center finally emerged in ceremony after ceremony; after opening her doors and shedding her fences in late January, amidst a shower of berets they finally cut her ribbon to great applause. She may be Barnard’s pride and joy of the moment, but architecturally she is one of two black sheep to join the neighborhood this year. The other odd-man-out stands across Broadway—called the Northwest Corner Building for now, this younger creature of indeterminate gender may feel even more out of place as it struggles to live up to the standard set by its older brothers, the aristocratic and ornate McKim, Mead, and White-esque science buildings of north campus.

Coming of age almost simultaneously, the science building and the student center are different faces of the same super-modern moment in architecture, urbanism, and campus planning. In fact, both Columbia and Barnard administrations have expressed a desire for a new building that boldly announces the historic moment in which it was conceived. Professor Andrew Dolkart of the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation describes the Northwest Corner Building as “a statement of contemporaneity.”

The two designs do share a certain set of memes floating about in today’s architectural thought. For one, the Diana’s use of matte glass and the science building’s ribbed aluminum siding both represent the contemporary architect’s interest in the novel use of old materials. The Diana is one of many recent buildings to experiment with opaque colored glass; a new variation on the completely transparent and quintessentially modern all-glass box. Marion Weiss and Michael Manfredi, the architects of the Diana, said that they chose the “terracotta” tint to quote the various shades of brick around the campus without imitating any single shade. Rafael Moneo, the Spanish architect contracted to design the Northwest Corner Building, is also experimenting with his chosen exterior medium—a shiny, lightly brushed aluminum. And he isn’t the only one; current architects are discovering that metal is a stunning, malleable material that they can use to transform a building into an abstract sculpture. Moneo’s design manipulates metal to beguile the eye, but not by twisting it into a strange shape like many contemporaries including Thomas Mayne, the man behind the curvaceous new aluminum student center at Cooper Union. Moneo has instead fragmented the face of his traditional, rectangular tower by creating ribbing at either diagonal, vertical or horizontal angles on various sections of the façade in no predictable pattern. Michael Manfredi could have been speaking about the Northwest Corner Building as well when he said in reference to the Diana, “Good
architecture is always a little theatrical; messing with you is a good thing.”

The Diana “messes with you” by unexpectedly breaking from its simplest geometric form, jutting in and out in places from the wedge-shaped base. But the shifting path of the zig-zagging staircase, extending sometimes past the floors below into precipice before heading back into the building, is also meant to “gently teach an architectural lesson,” says Manfredi, by forcing students to look sometimes north, sometimes south, and sometimes down at the 60 feet of space below their feet. The Diana is designed to force you to look around literally as well as figuratively. “It’s part of a moment in education,” says Marion Weiss, “I think schools are recognizing that the distinctions between disciplines, which are so administratively separate and ossified, hurt the energy of the school, and that energy should be all about interaction.”

Accordingly, the space in the building was parceled out for a variety of uses to encourage students and faculty from a variety of departments to mix and mingle in the double-height open spaces and on the “relaxed,” wide staircase of the building. And should you run into someone on the meandering stair or in the lobby, “you’re actually encouraged to sit! There’s coffee nearby!” says Weiss.

The idea that architecture can encourage pan-academic innovation through interaction made its way into Moneo’s thought process as well. The select science researchers and faculty who will be upgraded to the science building’s new state-of-the-art labs form a diverse group, so that each lab will neighbor facilities working in different fields. Bio-chem will run into its cousins biology and chemistry in the elevator, not to mention in the café on the ground floor. Plus, the bridges connecting the building to Chandler and Pupin will bring the entire scientific end of campus together, connecting labs in Chandler and Havemeyer to offices and classrooms as far away as Schapiro and Mudd. The literarily-inclined student who couldn’t point to “Mudd” on a map might even feel the love – like the Diana, the campus side of the Northwest Corner Building features a huge amount of glass, encouraging visual interaction. Drawn north by the building’s Blue Java coffee station after hitting the gym, the humanities major will find himself or herself face to face with a lab-coat-clad side of Columbia they’ve never seen before.

The Diana’s Broadway façade is similarly transparent, exposing student activities so that the outside world will want to come onto campus and learn more about Barnard, says Weiss. She is among the many professors, architects, and administrators from both Columbia and Barnard who have expressed hope that both the Diana and the Northwest Corner Building will serve to activate the dead corner of the university at 120th and Broadway. “Columbia hasn’t spent a lot of time looking to the northwest,” Professor Robert McCaughey added. “I think that [the Northwest Corner] building does indeed face outward in certain ways, and it will be important if Manhattanville ever gets built.” President Lee Bollinger shared similar hopes in a New York Times piece about the building, which he described as a “beacon to Manhattanville.”

“Beacon” bespeaks well the soaring height and massive proportions of the new Columbia building. “I think it’s gutsy,” says David Smiley, a professor of architecture and urban studies at Barnard. “It will become one of those landmarks that marks the city, one that you can see from all the way down Broadway.” Professor Dolkart similarly embraces the bold statement, comparing the building to the work of McKim, Mead and White who he describes as “the avant garde of the 1890s.”

Continued on page 30
Staff Personals

Because even magazine writers need to find love.

Seeking Men

Wonk off. (5211)

Young Truman Capote lookalike wants to do you in cold blood. (5677)

Straight-laced but not straight. (3025)

Diet Sunkist lover thirsts for a sun-kissed lover. (7308)

BBM me hard! (6290)

Young Woolfian seeks tragic romantic to bring her to the lighthouse. (6495)

Brooklyn native will let you flatten her bush. (7308)

Future European traveler wants to stop by your room first. (4600)

Si hoc legere potes, futuamus. (3025)

Opponent of eminent domain down for imminent domination. (6064)

Settled New York Jewish Intellectual couple seeks same for dinner dates. (6290)

Lay this out. (5543)

Don’t worry about the swelling, I carry an Epi-Pen. (3223)

East Village native seeks someone to make her Howl. (6064)

Scholar of ancient Judaism wants to part your Red Sea. (5452)

Vegetarian boy will make exceptions for the right man’s meat. (1415)

Show me your Burj. (6557)

I’ll bring the bangers and mash. You bring the spotted dick. (6317)

Kinky girl seeks raptor, rapture. (2325)

Computer god can flip your pleasure switch. (4981)

Twitter...it’s worth it! (5211)

Artist wants to sharpen your pencil, go over you in pen. (4925)

Me: Rising editor-in-chief of campus publication. You: First-year stunned senseless by power. It’s tradition! (3025)

Investigative reporter is ready to embed with you for days on end. (1418)

Upstate native left his vestal pretenses behind in Vestal. (1415)

Canuck wants to fuck. (5360)
Seeking Women

Relentless Indophile wants to see your Om face. (4620)

Rough-and-ready reporter has one bone that won’t break. (2682)

Seniorclassman seeks freshwoman to make him say “Wow, I feel old.” (2326)

I’d like to put my 1 in your 0. (7744)

You’ll find me at the bottom of a scrum of sweaty men...but it’s totally not gay. (2682)

Skilled piccolo-ist invites you to blow on his instrument. (7744)

McBain resident just wants something clean. (4620)

Bouncy steps, bouncy nights. (2270)

There’s more than a parrot in my pocket... (3184)

Firecrotch needs you to help him handle the raging heat down below. (2326)

Boston native wants to put cream in your pie. (2270)

Don’t choke on the consonants. (4649)

Captain of dying industry seeks deck chairs covered with inky newsprint to fuck on. (1865)

Whatever I Can Get

Uninhibited, wide-open, and robust. (Low 202)

F. F. for V. V. (editors@bwog.net)

Soft-spoken philosopher wants to fuck with your ethics. (Hamilton 208)

You have 1 new friend request. (????)

Nested pair wants a nasty affair... in the Cathedral! (hawk@bwog.net)

There may be Nine Ways of Knowing, it’s only the Biblical one that counts. (Milbank 109)

my Freak = my Mass x my Acceleration. (Mudd 510)

You broke the embargo on my heart. (Low 402)

Take me to the Brink. (Fayerweather 622)

Wanna find out why they call me a “macro-economist”? (Uris 814)

Looking for love in all the wrong places. (Howl)

I’ve got a hell of a joint. (2731 Broadway)

You can call me Mother. (The Steps)

Vice versa, for favours. (editors@bwog.net)
When you arrive on campus as freshman, you’re keenly aware of your freedom, but when you arrive on campus with a history of an eating disorder, you’re keenly aware that no one’s watching you,” says Alisha, a Columbia College junior with a history of anorexia. “You’re away from parents and that close, intimate network of people who can monitor your mental and physical health on a passive, day-to-day basis.” Columbia has never been known as a particularly nurturing environment for fragile students, but the sudden freedom of any college environment can exacerbate preexisting eating disorders. Every school must devise a strategy to handle students who suffer from them—treating those who can be treated on campus, advising and sometimes forcing leave for those who cannot be.

Inside and outside of the academy, the treatment of eating disorders is discussed in a somewhat standardized language of cases, management, units of weight, and concurrent programs. The common terms allow for what Dr. Julia Sheehy, associate director of the Counseling Center and head coordinator of Barnard’s Eating Disorder Treatment Team, deems the “absolute necessity of collaborative care, especially when there are questions about a person’s medical status or a person who is very symptomatic or at a very low weight.” The team strategy has the advantage of addressing the many aspects of a patient’s life that might be affected by an eating disorder—from their medical and mental health to their academic and social habits.

The typical roster of an eating disorder treatment team includes four to five key players—the therapist, the psychiatrist, the nutritionist, the medical doctor, and, of course, the patient—and can be compared to the starting line-up of a basketball team. Instead of fending off an eating disorder using aggressive man-to-man defensive strategies, an eating disorder team uses a zone system of defense. Each player focuses on an area of the disorder, but cases vary—some require more defense in one area, and some require overlapping, coordinated counseling between one doctor’s office and the next. The players on the ED team may also shift their tactics according to the developments of the patient. “We design the treatment to the patient so that it changes as their symptoms change,” says Dr. Marjorie Seidenfeld, the medical director of Barnard Health Services. “As a team, we set goals with the student and we all work together to make sure we’re all on board with those goals.”

Like Barnard, Columbia Health Services tackles eating disorders using the team approach. Though both Columbia’s doctors and Health Services administrators declined to discuss their program in detail with The Blue & White, the information that Columbia Psychological Services and Health Services make publicly available indicates the coordinated involvement of medical doctors, therapists, and nutritionists in the treatment of eating disorders. Both schools, however, acknowledge, either implicitly or explicitly, the limits of any on-campus treatment program, which are by definition short term. Seidenfeld feels that the medical coverage Barnard offers students with eating disorders is comparable to the care they might
receive at an out-patient facility off-campus. But her colleague Dr. Mary Commerford, director of the Barnard’s Rosemary Furman Counseling Center, is quick to acknowledge the limitations of the Barnard program: not only must students leave campus for any in-patient care, any out-patient help that Health Services can provide is by definition “a short-term basis of care.”

Columbia’s program for students with eating disorders is also time-limited. Columbia Psychological Services offers only eight sessions to students before referring them elsewhere on the condition that a Columbia therapist deems them stable. What is defined as “stable” is unclear: Ruthie, a 2009 Columbia College alumna with a long history of anorexia, for one, was assigned a therapist at her first visit to CPS for anorexia who told her, “We’re here for you. There will be eight sessions and then we’ll refer you out.” Ruthie made progress over the course of the eight sessions and remembers her counselor as “incredibly helpful” and someone with whom she might have developed a relationship with over time. After the cursory eight session limit, however, the counselor informed Ruthie “We don’t think you’re in such a bad place that you need serious care.” After her final session, CPS never followed up with Ruthie.

Barnard’s Furman Center for the Treatment of Eating Disorders limits their patients to 10 therapy sessions, which Dr. Commerford explains is necessary “because there is such a high demand for what we do and we want to see as many patients possible.” CPS wouldn’t comment on its eight session policy, but Alisha, who has recently been diagnosed with bipolar disorder in addition to anorexia, assumes that the explanation is the same. “CPS is so over run with students,” she said, “it’s is wonderful that so many people are going, but it’s impossible to get appointments.” Despite her enthusiasm for the services CPS offers, she sees the session limit as a Catch-22, “they need to expand the offices and increase their staff, the more people who can get help the more chances we have from losing people to their psychological instabilities, to leaves of absences, or even suicide.”

If Barnard or Columbia doctors judge a case as serious enough, the last session may lead to more than the recommendation of another therapist. In extreme situations both schools can force a patient to take an involuntary leave of absence. By and large, Barnard and Columbia only require involuntary leaves of students who have violated university policies academically or legally, but the administration may force students who are at imminent medical or psychological risk to take leaves as well. Involuntary leaves of absence for psychological or medical reasons fall under the same umbrella policy at Barnard, and are implemented only if a student is “unable to receive reasonable institutional care, if she is a threat to the safety of herself or others, or if she is disruptive to the normal college activity in such a way that the community itself is harmed,” said Barnard Dean of Students Karen Blank.

Students suffering from eating disorders at Columbia, however, are subject to a special category of involuntary leave, “Required Medical Leave for Students With Eating Disorders.” No one at Columbia would discuss the specifics of the targeted form of leave, but Columbia’s Essential Policies Web site states that involuntary leaves are usually implemented when a student requires hospitalization or medical treatment beyond what is available on campus, or when the student is disrupting the learning environment of the university. These criteria are markedly similar to the those found in Barnard’s single, broad policy for involuntary leave. But Barnard’s Dean Blank, a copy of Ourselves, Our Bodies resting on her bookshelf, emphasizes that “we try very hard not to suggest that some sort of illness is better or worse, or that one reason for taking a leave is more legitimate than another.” The question of why students with eating disorders are singled out at Columbia remains.

Alisha, who took a voluntary leave of absence
last year to focus on her mental health, understands where the policy is coming from. Taking leave helped her get back on track, and today she would recommend that any student with an eating disorder at least consider taking leave. She explains that leave can be the best option because in order to treat eating disorders specifically, “you have to make sure the body is physically healthy before you can start tackling the mental issues, and sometimes we don’t have the resources to do that on campus. Sometimes it might be in everyone’s interest for a student not to be on campus.”

As Alisha says, in some extreme cases, leave may be the most appropriate course of action. Columbia’s Dean of Students Kevin Schollenberger confirms that “these situations are rare and only occur after consultation with student affairs and health services staff, the student, and the student’s family.” But the rigid policy with which Columbia singles out students with eating disorders is indicative of a larger trend—despite employing a potentially versatile team approach to treatment, the Eating Disorder Team of Health Services at Columbia follows a rather formulaic procedure for all students suspected of having an eating disorder.

Ruthie, for example, who scheduled an appointment at CPS when her anorexia symptoms were the worst they had been since she was hospitalized in middle school, was permitted to disappear into the murky world of outside referrals after completing her eight sessions. By that point, her weight, though low, was not low enough to merit more treatment. Her extreme fear of gaining weight had not abated much by the end of her treatment at CPS, but she never did see the doctor CPS referred her to outside of the university, and CPS never followed up to ask if she had. The use of the patient’s weight, more specifically their Body Mass Index, to determine the seriousness of an eating disorder produced the opposite effect for Mara, a Columbia College sophomore who scheduled an appointment with Health Services after unintentionally losing weight. She wanted to make sure that there was no underlying reason for the weight loss besides stress and a recent run in with the flu, but after being weighed upon arrival at Health Services, a doctor began a litany of strange, seemingly unrelated questions: “Do you get frequent headaches? Are you often cold? Are you aware of how low your BMI is?” Mara has never displayed any of the behavioral characteristics of an eating disorder, but at the time her BMI was low enough to merit in-patient clinical treatment. “I felt like the doctor wasn’t even listening to what I was saying. She wouldn’t even look up from the form,” Mara says of her medical evaluation last semester.

The doctor explained that she had to rely on these empirical questions despite Mara’s assertions because students with eating disorders deny their illnesses in initial stages of treatment and cannot be trusted to evaluate themselves accurately. Her options were clearcut, Mara says: “You either get on board with our program or we’ll refer you to an in-patient treatment center.” Before Mara could even comprehend that the doctor was alluding to a leave of absence, “she began telling me which treatment centers she thought would have empty beds,” Mara adds. Medical records and a family doctor eventually attested to her natural thinness and Health Services dropped the option of involuntary leave.

Part of being “on board” with Health Services’ “program” involved signing a contract which required Mara to gain a set number of pounds per week, in addition to seeing a doctor, therapist, and nutritionist regularly. Mara was uncomfortable signing a contract, but she was even more uncomfortable taking a leave of absence. “I felt like I didn’t have very many options,” she said.

Barnard’s eating disorder team approaches students with a completely different ethos. Dr. Sheehy takes pride in the care her team provides, but she stresses that a student may wish to pick only one piece of the care package they offer. “It’s not my job to impose my recommendations on the students,” she said. “People are free agents and they need to find out for themselves what their needs are.” When talking to a patient about her options, Dr. Sheehy says she always tries “to emphasize to them that they’ll feel better about themselves, less irritable, and less depressed when they’re nourishing themselves.” But even before offering a package to a patient, Dr. Sheehy maintains that, “We do things on a case by case level for each student as opposed to having broad
policies that immediately apply to all students with eating disorders.

Unfortunately, when discussing eating disorders and psychological problems which in extreme cases can lead to death, a less rigid, more sensitive system is also a more risky one. Though Barnard’s self-described “individualistic” process may better identify which students are most in need, failing to impose any aspect of a plan for recovery on a student with an eating disorder is inherently dangerous. One could argue that sending anyone who has admitted to or been suspected of an eating disorder out into the world with a referral after eight or 10 sessions is risky as well.

Forced leave is designed to attenuate the risk, but policies like Columbia’s can sometimes have the opposite effect. Alisha, a staunch supporter of voluntary leave to deal with eating disorders, worries that the practice of forcing students to take leave might keep them from seeing treatment in the first place. She also worries that students might not take voluntary leave if the university is sending the a rigid message of intolerance for students with eating disorders. “They’re worried they won’t be able to come back because the school will see them as a liability,” said Alisha. Sonya, a Columbia College senior, also feels that many students with eating issues like herself might avoid going to Health Services of CPS because of a fear she once had of rigid, standardized treatment: “I was worried that they would try to simplify what I thought was a complicated issue; that instead of working with me, instead of listening to my own explanation of what was going on, they would impose their own clinical views, their own prescriptions.”

Columbia’s rigid approach to eating disorders can be discouraging and often unhelpful for those who don’t perfectly fit clinical definitions. But Columbia also doesn’t take any risks. Barnard’s drastically different individualistic approach is not only tailored to individual students, it also gives a good deal of control to the individual student who may be in no place to make good decisions about their own health. Adam, a Columbia College sophomore with a history of anorexia, emphasizes that treating eating disorders is difficult regardless of clinical approach. Many people with eating disorders cling to their symptoms because controlling their weight gives them a sense of control over their lives, he says. “You don’t want to be forced to surrender control, and you don’t want to be forced to recognize your problem.” Often, “if a doctor tries to convince someone that they have an eating disorder, they’re not going to listen, they’re just going to get angry—at the doctor, but primarily at themselves, and that’s only going to intensify the problem.” But still, Adam does not approve of Columbia’s rigid policy, especially the special policy of involuntary leave for eating disorders: “You don’t want to be forced to surrender control, you don’t want to be forced to recognize your problem, and being forced to take a leave of absence is forcing you to do both. If you’re at Columbia and you have a lot of drive and then someone comes along and says ‘you’ve got an eating disorder, you’re out of here,’ you lose everything that you’ve been working so hard to get here for. That could only cause someone to massively break down.”

"They’re worried they won’t be able to come back because the school will see them as a liability."
Rambling Man

A REVIEW OF THOMAS ROMA’S PICTURES FOR BOOKS

BY ALEXANDRA MUHLER

The first room of *Pictures for Books*, an exhibit at the Wallach Art Gallery by School of the Arts Professor and Director of Photography Thomas Roma, is decked out with photographs of Brooklyn. Don’t worry—there are no go-for-broke sunset shots of the Brooklyn Bridge, and none of the plaintive nostalgia of 1940s boys in undershirts playing stickball as the evening begins to glow. At first, Roma’s disordered landscapes—vines, fences, hanging laundry, composed mostly in the middle gray tones—barely catch your eye.

Slowly, the tangled photographs compose themselves: the curve of a telephone wire, barely visible, perfectly divides a cluttered scene. Three boys huddled around a piece of flaming garbage are fenced in by the arc of a sidewalk corner and the painted rays of a crosswalk. Drawing beauty out of trashed scenery requires a sentimental attachment to the landscape, and Roma is a Sicilian-American Brooklyn boy through and through.

But Roma’s Brooklyn reaches far beyond Italian neighborhoods. Also featured in the current exhibition are photographs from his books *Sicilian Passage*, observations from his ancestral island; *On Three Pillars*, a collection of synagogue exteriors; and *Come Sunday*, cinematic shots of black church services.

Roma’s probes into these communities have shown him where he is welcome among his borough neighbors. After September 11th, his habit of photographing Jewish temples earned him a surprise visit from the FBI. *Come Sunday*—originally called *God’s Work*—began as a series of exterior shots. When he explained his project to one pastor, he was invited to document God’s real work inside the churches on Sunday mornings.

The pictures from *Come Sunday* are unlike Roma’s pictures of daily life in Sicilian fields and on Brooklyn streets. For one thing, there is sharp contrast between the black skin of the parishioners and their white Sunday clothing. The close-up is not standard Roma, either, but it’s hard to imagine any other option in the tightly-packed pews. What remains of Roma’s style is the arrangement of seemingly mundane modern life into the beautiful, if crooked, scene. After he heard a pastor refer to his congregation as “saints,” he articulated his project: “Why can’t I make two-dimensional art of saints?”

*Come Sunday* was shot with a self-built camera, jury-rigged with five or six large flashes and worn with a harness that supported 45 pounds of battery packs to power the high-wattage equipment. Suited in the whole apparatus, “I looked like a mad bomber,” he says.

Roma has been building his own cameras almost since he began taking photographs. His photographer friends admired the craft of his contraptions, so for a while he commissioned cameras of his own design from the machine shops that used to litter Brooklyn. Since the venture failed he has kept his power tools in a shed behind his Greenwood Heights row house.

The row house, the machine shops, even the habit of showing his photographs in books rather than in galleries all point to a preference for doing things the good old way. “I just want to make something that people won’t throw away,” he says of his books, in which pictures have been paired with essays by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Phillip Lopate, and others.

Perhaps the most instructive accompanying commentary is from *Show & Tell*, a book available for perusal at the current exhibit. The author is an elementary school-aged Giancarlo T. Roma, CC ’13, the professor’s son. The inferences Giancarlo draws from his father’s pictures are simple but penetrating: he induces an underlying feeling from the marriage of his own memory with his observations of the photo’s light, scale, and expression. A good instruction for anyone learning to look at photographs—including the Photo I students Roma loves to browbeat and reform.

The last picture in *Show & Tell* is of the Roma family, a surprise among the legion of images Roma has made of perfect strangers. Roma’s unexpected scene picks away at the edges of those borders that separate our families from our friends and our surrounding community, bringing his viewer in as near, and as far, as he stands himself.
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Rocket Man

Air Force Colonel Greg Johnson decided he wanted to be an astronaut at the age of 7, the night he watched Apollo 11 land the first humans on the Moon. Johnson’s road to space was long—he trained as a fighter pilot at the Air Force Academy, graduated an engineer from Columbia University in 1985, and toured in the Gulf War—but after racking up 4,000 flying hours in 43 types of aircraft, Johnson finally left Earth in 2008 as the pilot of space shuttle Endeavour. He’s going back this summer on the final flight of Endeavour, but before he buckles up and blasts off, The Blue & White caught up with Johnson to talk about his time at Columbia, his experience in NASA, and the future of manned spaceflight.

The Blue & White: I understand you were born in the United Kingdom, but you sound very American.

Greg Johnson: My dad was a military Air Force officer. He was a musician, and he was a director of one of the USAF bands in South Ruislip in England.

B&W: Do you play an instrument, then?

GJ: Yeah, we have a very musical family. My brother’s a working musician, and I played trumpet and piano all through high school. There’s a lot of music in the family. I’m actually the only male adult who’s not a working musician.

B&W: If your family is so musical, why did you decide to join the Air Force?

GJ: I started once I got to the academy. A lot of guys go to the Academy to fly, but I was really there for the practical engineering side. But, once I became a pilot, I thought, “Wow, this is a lot of fun,” so I ended up doing that for several years until I merged the two in test pilot school.

Going to Columbia, I wanted to get some good Ivy League engineering—a real solid basis—in a master’s degree before I went off to flight school. The Air Force Academy was the best of all worlds, and at Columbia, that’s where I was wrapping up the engineering education.

B&W: What was your coursework like at Columbia? What were some of the classes you took?

GJ: It was the flight structures program, but in the civil engineering department. It was a lot about vibrations, like wind engineering. We studied winds over bridges and then we extrapolated to air foils and vibrations in airplanes.

The Academy had great engineering, but on the math piece I was lacking a little bit when I got to Columbia. I remember the first day of one class when the professor said, “Well, you all know all the Sturm-Liouville equations,” and I raised my hand and said, “Who’s Sturm-Liouville?” [laughs] So I was running a little bit behind, but I had to really do...
some homework and I studied to catch myself up in math. Overall, though, my experience at Columbia was wonderful.

B&W: Jumping ahead a few years, how did you get into NASA? Is that something you’re recruited for or do you apply for it?

GJ: I applied after I had been a test pilot for a complete tour and I was headed to a leadership school for a year. I knew I was going to a desk job after that, probably at the Pentagon, so as something I always wanted to do, I just threw my name in the hat to see what happens. There were 3,000 applicants in my class, and I didn’t have any expectation of getting picked, but I wanted to see how far I could get.

They go through the whole selection process, eventually picking interview candidates. It’s a week-long interview, a lot of physical and mental aspects, and then they talk to you in a formal interview fashion for about an hour with a big panel. Even after I went to the interview, I looked at all the people around—there were 20 of us in my interview group—and I thought, “There’s no way I can compete with these guys,” but luckily I slipped through the cracks and got selected.

B&W: Take me through that process from being selected to finally making into space.

GJ: It takes a year and a half to get checked out in the shuttle to be dubbed a “mission-ready” shuttle astronaut. Once you become a mission-assignable astronaut pilot or a mission specialist (depending on the crew position you are), then you get assigned to a space flight, and then you have another intensive year of training. It’s almost like graduate school, and it kicks you out right before launch.

Right now, I’m six months prior to my second flight as a pilot. The training is starting to crescendo—yesterday was a very long day—and it’s just intense training in all facets of it. We learn again to fly the plane manually, and in fact, we did that yesterday. We also learn how to deal with all the host of malfunctions that you can have in the simulator. However, if everything goes perfectly as planned during the 8-and-a-half minute ascent, I only have one switch-throw to make.

Once we get into space, we can hand-fly it, and we always hand-fly the landing, but the ascent portion is completely automated as long as it works correctly. But, I know of few ascents where there wasn’t something that went wrong. There’s so many little pieces and parts on the shuttle, and the vibration is so intense that we usually have some sort of little malfunction on most flights.

Even though I’d talked to astronauts in the past about the launch, I wasn’t ready for how much vibration was involved. As soon as I’d lifted off, I could not believe the intense

Illustration by Eloise Owens
sensual overload. I mean, the vibration— I could hardly read my gauges.

_B&W:_ I know you fly simulators before you go into space, but when you’re actually there, is it difficult to get used to?

_GJ:_ We can only simulate about 30 seconds of zero gravity in this airplane that flies big parabolas we call the “Vomit Comet,” but we really can’t simulate continuous zero gravity. So, when I first got to space, it was like a wonderland. Everything’s floating and it’s like a physics playground up there.

But the fluid that’s in your inner ear is also floating around and confuses the brain, so most people get a little bit nauseous, and some people actually get sick. We didn’t have any of that on our flight, but I did feel light-headed for about a day. Over time, though, our bodies are really adaptable, and within a couple of days, I was zipping around the space station and I had no use for gravity. In fact, I was dreading the moment I had to go back and feel the bonds of gravity on my body. I remember the first night I came back, I could hardly sleep because I felt like the bed was pushing me toward the ceiling. I wasn’t used to that sensation anymore.

_B&W:_ You’re preparing now for an upcoming mission. Tell me some about it.

_GJ:_ The official date is July 29, and we’re taking a very interesting payload on [shuttle mission] STS-134—it’s the alphamagnetic spectrometer, a very expensive, very complicated experiment. It’s probably on the order of the Hubble Telescope, probably the biggest science that we’re going to ever do on the space station, I would think. But this experiment might be delayed, which could cause my flight to get delayed, so I view July 29 as a date out there, but I wouldn’t put my paycheck on it.

_B&W:_ You were closely involved, I understand, with the teams that looked for the cause of the _Columbia_ explosion. Do you remember where you were when you first heard about _Columbia_?

_GJ:_ I know precisely where I was—I was making breakfast for the family. I was making what we call “Daddy Breakfast.” It’s fried eggs on toast with cheese in the middle and bacon. I had the TV on, and I was timing it so we would watch the landing during breakfast. All three kids were up, and they were 5, 8, and 9—young kids—and my wife was there, and then we saw the fireworks. It was just crushing. I just finished making breakfast, cleaned up, and went to work. It was a Saturday morning, but all of us knew we were going to work that day.

It scared the family, and I think in some ways, they thought that I wouldn’t ever fly in space and were slightly relieved, maybe, but they were even more fearful that if I did fly in space, that could happen to me. But, before my flight two years ago, I sat them all down and let them fire questions at me directly. I told them the risks and how we thought we’d overcome them. I was a fighter pilot and I fought in a war; I lost my buddies and I was exposed to that kind of risk on a day-to-day basis at times, so I was desensitized to it more than my family. They just married or were born into this situation, so it was very difficult.

_B&W:_ What sort of things did you and your team do to investigate?

_GJ:_ My team was looking closely at the thermal protection system. We made some assumptions that were overly liberal, and they didn’t take into account some of the debris that is out there in the ascent environment. We had to involve the whole group to understand that actually it could have been a problem, and so we had to build a test to prove it.

We had a gun that would shoot pieces of foam at tiles and the reinforced carbon-carbon panels on the leading edge of the shuttle. On one momentous day, we took a piece of foam that was about two pounds and fired it at 600 miles an hour at the wing, and _bang_—it broke a hole in it. That was the smoking gun, if you will.
I do still know it could have been something else, but all the evidence pointed in that direction.

*B&W*: Recently, President Obama announced he was proposing a cancellation to the Constellation program, which has left the future of American manned space flight up in the air. How does this decision affect you? Do you think it’s the right decision?

GJ: [Laughs] There are some people—the majority of people in my office—that think it’s the wrong decision. I’m not willing to say that because I don’t have enough information. I think the pragmatic truth about manned space flight is that you’ve got human beings that need their jobs, that have morale issues, that have professional aspirations, and to cut off the design of the next vehicle is going to have a profound impact on the workforce in the manned space program, including the astronauts.

However, whenever you cut the dragon’s head off, it opens up new opportunities. We’re going to package up what we learned in the Constellation program, and that will certainly be an input, a starting position, for whoever builds the next vehicle. It’s not like we lose all that work. Secondly, I think that the privatization of space is inevitable, just like any other form of transportation. We’re going to have competition and a free market system with the best ideas coming forth. I believe that new program can develop in roughly the same timeframe that Constellation would have.

It’s a complex issue. As a government employee, I find it a little bit difficult to strongly oppose the executive branch in their decision-making because they have a lot more information than I do. It’s an honor to be an astronaut and having an opinion is fine, but I also have to balance that with the fact that my job is to fly whatever vehicle they tell me I need to go fly.

*B&W*: Why should we keep sending humans into space?

GJ: Americans are an exploring people. The great power of exploration is that you’re learning new things you never knew were there to learn. Lewis and Clark had a $2,500 budget and their mission was to find the Northwest Passage. They did not find the Northwest Passage, and they spent $32,000, over 10 times the budget. The Congress and the politicians then were irate that they spent 10 times the budget and didn’t find the Northwest Passage, but we know from history how important Lewis and Clark’s expedition was to the development of our country. Flying in space is the next frontier, so just purely for the sake of exploring, I think that makes it worth it.

But there are also secondary benefits, and those are the benefits of expanding technology. Right now, I’m sitting in my house, talking on a cell phone that’s channeling through satellites in geosynchronous orbit, some of which were delivered by space vehicles. We are high-tech because we’re expanding the frontier.

Also, when we’re out in space, we can learn a lot about our planet—things we can’t really understand without getting off the planet. One example is the alphamagnetic spectrometer that my flight’s taking up there. We can’t determine if there’s naturally occurring antimatter because we’re cloaked by an atmosphere that, if there were antimatter, would turn it to energy before it got to the ground. So, we have to have a cosmic sensor like this experiment that’s away from the Earth so we can study this stuff and better understand our universe. The possibilities are endless for the things we can learn by living out in space.

Our planet does not have infinite lifetime, either, so if we want our species to continue on for millions of years, eventually we’re going to have to colonize some other planet. It’s going to be a long process to be able to do it, but the first steps are going back to the Moon and then to Mars so we can work on the skills that enable us to get there. I think it’s vitally important to our nation to continue the space program.  

"The great power of exploration is that you’re learning new things you never knew were there to learn."
NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK
Continued from Page 17

According to Dolkart, Columbia should continue that tradition, with a building of the moment that leaves behind the “timid” architecture of the late 20th century. Such timidity, he says, resulted in “ill-proportioned, boring, and misconceived, in my opinion, buildings like Schapiro.” In comparison to buildings like Schapiro, which mimic brick and limestone, the Northwest Corner Building’s disregard for the McKim style has angered some preservationists. But Dolkart argues that “just because a building uses some of the same vocabulary that McKim used doesn’t make it appropriate.” McCaughey agrees, adding that the upper end of Columbia’s campus, built mostly in the ’50s and ’60s, is “one big mistake.”

The science building confidently declares its own existence, standing out from the campus and tall above the city. But the Diana’s goal is different; even as a modern building, Weiss and Manfredi designed the building and surrounding plaza to nuzzle comfortably into the Barnard landscape. “Landscape architects,” as Weiss and Manfredi are called, attempt to use buildings and landscaping together to create feelings of wholeness and connection between the two. Weiss and Manfredi see Barnard’s campus with the addition of the Diana as “a spectrum” representing around the lawn the architecture of turn of the century Barnard and Milbank halls of the ’50s and ’60s in Lehman and Altschul, and the 21st century in the Diana.

“The Diana didn’t have the problems that Lerner at Columbia did,” said Karen Fairbanks, chair of the Architecture Department. Since a number of brick buildings of similar height and matching green roofs stand around the South Lawn, Lerner’s simplified imitation preserves the quad’s continuity. The Diana represents a departure both from Lerner’s imitation and from the most recent addition to the quad, the Journalism School student center and cafe, designed by Professor Fairbanks’ own firm. The university expressed a desire there to have the glass be almost devoid of frame, so that “it almost disappears, in order to respect what’s already there, McKinn’s coherent work.” But with the Diana, Fairbanks noted, “we had to negotiate other problems. We had to reconnect a campus that was not coherent in a lot of ways.” Indeed, the Barnard campus used to be “bifurcated by the plaza of Altschul and Macintosh, the old building on the Diana site,” said Weiss. “So the first thing we wanted to do was to allow Barnard to experience the whole of the grounds.” The wedge shape and diagonal lines across the campus façade are meant to draw your eye from the gates at 117th towards the once hidden Milbank. “The idea is that the campus should unfold in front of you,” says Vice President of Administration and Capital Planning Lisa Gamsu, “the grade difference between Lehman lawn and Milbank was really softened by Weiss/Manfredi’s sloping step design, so as to unify the view.” Smiley’s favorite place on the campus now is the narrow space between Altschul and the wide end of the Diana, near Milbank. “You walk into that and it’s almost as if you’re in an ancient place,” he says. “It has the density of an old city, where public space gets quite compact, and it’s a canyon sort of feeling that is coherent without being uniform.” Weiss and Manfredi, Smiley and Fairbanks all agree that the Diana gives the interior of the Barnard campus a distinctly “urban” feel that it previously lacked.

Despite the modern effect, the Diana is more concerned with the campus that predated it than the Northwest Corner Building is. The Diana looks inward to the Barnard campus and invites the Broadway pedestrian to peer in as well, while the science tower surges up and surveys the world to the east, west, south, and especially north. Smiley calls it “a monolith; a very precise and powerful interpretation of sciences and technologies and their place at the university, and the university’s place in the city.” Drawing on the things that fascinate the modern architect – broken form, re-imagined materials, and daily interactions – Moneo and Weiss/Manfredi created a pair of buildings as foils for one another. They reflect a conversation between academic approaches and grand philosophies, a series of ancient pairs: the vertical landscape and the horizontal declaration; the centering force and the brave outlier; the observant eye that looks around and the eye in awe that gazes up.
I was lucky enough to discover a lasting passion at an early age. On my first day of sixth grade, Señora Rosalia Miller taught me how to shake my hips like a Latina. Then she taught me how to describe what I was wearing in Spanish.

The meaning of a wink, real or burlesqued, lies not in knowing the rules governing how to wink, but in the winking, or the interpretive response to the winking.

For me Kant’s theories and ideas are surprisingly accessible and understandable. Maybe this can be derived from the German translations of the keywords that my edition offers.

THE TRAGEDY OF WOMAN’S EMANCIPATION

It felt as if I was born and bred to be a Princeton Tiger. As a five-year-old, I refused to walk through Princeton’s Fitz-Randolph Gate because the superstition held that if you did you would never graduate. And being a student there was all I dreamed about; it was where I was going to have the ultimate college experience. Within Fitz-Randolph gate I would find happiness. With its cherry blossoms and sea of polo shirts, it was my Oz at the end of the yellow brick road of high school.

I think your opening works really well to draw in the reader of your essay. By stating that “the walls of my parents’ home no longer exist,” you really make the reader want to know what happened to those walls.

So, I’ll say this–this semester I’ve joined the Tae Kwan Do club and I intend to attend at least one meeting from a different cultural group. It’s nothing radical and I still can’t say I don’t dread feeling uncomfortable, but well, it’s a start.
Complaints for a Worse Year

Too feral at breakfast. No time for oatmeal. The only vegetable in this deli is lettuce. I find each paper already packed with crazy man’s ink. The headlines all concern salmon; the crossword is filled in: all W’s. I know you tugged all morning to fit into those pants, and meant the stare as validation. Even my kneecap has a stutter. Road as tongue, sidewalk as dentures, and this wind is nothing but tap water. Thought I saw a friend in a liquor ad, but she just had the same neckline. It’s a colloid month. Fall poses somewhere in Minnesota, wasting its charms again, gazing sentimentally into the dumb eyes of ducks. I might have enjoyed all the wheat fields in new places: growing on trees, falling from trees, hammering trees with dry play. I’ve been asking around for something to title fundamental. Let’s lay out this city along one gravelly boulevard. We’ll call it Main Street, and it will take a long time to get to work. Tomorrow morning I swear I’m walking into a deli full of windows and caviar. Everyone feeds me and I chew with the wonderful intention of a staircase. No rain but the fabric: dangling from scaffolds, caught on backsides, imagined waving on a heavy clothesline in a far emptier state.

—Marshall Thomas
SOUND GRAMMAR

seacow, and desolate are one syllable apart, like many things made closer at home – flower and mug, pity and rug. These are portmanteau concepts pretending not to be lonely, like mum and dad “sitting in a corner,” eliding themselves, but here separated only by an “and.” The end, on paper, is mere syllable, but nearer, too. So does writing abridge us, make us closer? I write of home, its varied enunciations of the same flower that broke your mug, the same pity that was swept under the rug. All the same objects, objectively different. Though it seems: when a German shepherd and a Sony LCD 40” TV were added to our house, home cannot be anymore different – through Skype – the abrasive hisses hiss out one and the same syllable. Turning, you ask of each new object in my room – flowers strewn in the mirror, my face thinner with prophylactic rust – who is that man behind! – yet I am mute. You try to shout against Freud’s black and write dictation of the past: his grammar of selves – the in-between love – and of late, my absence. He predicted me as I started to write... So why do you act, as if the countenance of self against the other, was more erotic? I knew it. After all, when all at home turns syllabically indifferent, it is I, who is silent, changed.

—Nicholas Wong
CAMPUS GOSSIP

COHERENCE?

Three British hipsters drinking Oren’s walk by Lerner.

Bloke: “I just want to deviate from the mean! I don’t know where to fit in.”

COMMUNICATION?

Overheard at 118th and Amsterdam, two guys are speaking a mysterious language. Their friend interrupts:

Girl: “Stop! Stop speaking fucking Na’vi!”

CONSIDERATION?

The following email was forwarded to The Blue & White listserv, whose members were, thankfully, unaffected by the news:

“Dear [Redacted],

“We are terribly sorry to have to inform you that we used the incorrect list of applicants when sending out the Directing MFA audition invitations. Thus we are actually unable to offer you an audition for the MFA in Directing at this time.

“We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused and greatly appreciate your understanding.”

To be clear: MFA in this case stands for Mother Fucking Assholes.

COMMUNITY?

The Blue & White recently received the following Facebook invitation from the upstanding gentlemen of Psi Upsilon:

“Subject: Reminder: The Party is On

“Here’s the rundown:

“Things we have:
“4 beer pong tables
“3 simultaneously lit hookahs
“600 beers
“1 DJ
“24 extremely fucking pumped bros

“Things we need:
“You

“I think it speaks for itself. The fun starts at 10:30 tomorrow at the Owl House. Be there, because these handles aren’t going to drink themselves.

“P.S.: Girls, if you are feeling thirsty, swing by a little earlier to get first dibs. I’ll pour you the drink myself...”

And remember to leave your consent at the door.
THIS ECONOMY DRIVES US ALL TO DRINK
On a not-very-recent Tuesday night, a friend of the Blue and White found himself, as many inevitably do, seated at the bar of 1020. Across the room, in a shady booth, our tipster spotted what at first seemed like a superannuated grad student—who he soon realized was none other than Nobel Laureate and Columbia Professor Joseph Stiglitz. What was the former Chief Economist of the World Bank doing in a saloon of such base disrepute? Drinking beers, allegedly—and keeping pace with our Bostonian-livered tipster. As the economist and his entourage moved to exit, our now-soused informant approached him and uttered, “Professor Stiglitz, I love your work!” Fooling no one, he replied, “I don’t know who you’re talking about, kid,” and slipped out the door.

A befuddled foreign student gets a history lesson from an American friend:

Foreign Student (FS): “What were the ’60s?”
American Pal (AP): “The ’60s were just really chill.”
FS: “What about the ’70s?”
AP: “The ’70s were like the ’60s. They were even more chill.”
FS: “And the ’80s?”
AP: “The ’80s? The ’80s were side ponytails.”

Further documenting the sweaty, nauseating underbelly of grad student life is this tale of a recent debauch. The scene stunk of booze, and Philosophy Hall, that venerable old dame, was lit up in red like a fallen woman. Your TAs danced among the pianos and New Yorkers of the Grad Student Lounge, the dark bags under their eyes jiggling to the world beatz of M.I.A. A passing undergraduate tipster, though initially intrigued, was not quite tempted by the sad tableau to enter the mush.

CONSIDERING GRAD SCHOOL? CONSIDER YOUR FUTURE.

A selection of dissertation titles from the English Department in the last five years:

“Vendible Shakespeare.”
“Chaste Rebellion: The Disobedient Daughter in Antebellum Literature.”
“Fagin’s Incorruptible Apprentice, The Monster With Two Heads, The Unsinkable Chuzzlewit, And The Dispossessed Young Gentleman Of Blunderstone Rookery: The Dickens Orphans From Allegory To Autobiography.”

An amorous young man was seen delivering a large, red package of gourmet chocolates to his beau in Broadway on Valentine’s Day. Rather than earn her passionate affections, though, the Valentine’s gift seemed instead to evoke only her passionate anger: “You know I don’t like almonds!” she was later heard shouting to her forgetful lover, who was later spied sleeping—alone—on the couch in the floor lounge.

Two males were studying for their Music Hum final in a dorm kitchen area.

Student 1: “What’s that word for half-speaking, half-singing?”
Student 2: “Uh... I think ’swastika.’”
Student 1: “That doesn’t sound right. I mean, isn’t that—?”
Student 2: “No, I’m pretty sure it is because that word really stood out.”
Student 1: “Huh. Maybe so.”

The word to which they are referring is Sprechstimme.

The Blue & White can’t fathom how those finals turned out.

The SGO...it’s a safe space!