AGE OF INNOCENCE
Reliving the Innocuous Initiation of Freshmen Past

A PEOPLE’S HISTORY OF OLLIE’S
Uncovering the Sweatshop Ties on 116th St.

ALSO INSIDE: DIY EDUCATION
# THE BLUE & WHITE

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**Cover:** "Columbiana" by Cindy Pan
This issue is, in a way, just one of many welcomes. To our old friends, it is a welcome back—a familiar nod, slightly cramped by the atrophy of a long summer (full of adventure or drudgery), but a nod to help shake off the dust and bring us forth from our stupors into Columbian life once more. To our new friends, the freshmen overflowing John Jay and Furnald and Carman and the LLC, it is one welcome among the many, though not nearly the same as the sugary smiles and warm words of NSOP.

The Blue & White, you see, is written and published by a gaggle of hunched and twisted trolls. With one eyebrow perpetually raised, we have been known to be cheeky, but rarely ever so cheery. And as I look at the roster of stories we have for you now, it seems that sub-consciously we have reacted against the saccharine “best-days-of-your-lives” rhetoric we recall from our own orientations, returning volley with the niggling doubts of a score of combined years at this hallowed institution.

Doubt courses through this ink, if delivered with a twinkle and a smile—Brian Wagner’s, SEAS’13, examinations of the history of labor abuse at local eateries (the new neighborhood is not so bright and shining as its name might imply) (18), to Zoe Camp’s, BC’14, mixed notes on the Columbia music scene (16); to this month’s conversation, which raises questions as to the overall value of a university education in the dawning of a new era (29). On almost every page is writ the question, by coming here, have I just made a huge mistake?

But do not mistake our jaded, prodding welcome. It is not one tinged with poison and ill will, not one begging you to turn away before it is too late, and you repeat our mistakes.

I am writing this editor’s note from a small room in Lahore, Pakistan, hiding from the sun. I have been working on this issue remotely from Islamabad and Karachi, from Nairobi, Kenya and Mombasa, the tea plantations of Tigoni, and even via 3G-Device from the Mara. Other editors and writers have carved out time to contribute to this issue from Germany and the UK, from Florida and California, and even from the most salty and Puritanical reaches of the dreaded New England.

An issue culled from the corners of the earth does not come together easily. And distaste and a will to frighten our new peers is not a force strong enough to lash us together to our little towers back on Manhattan.

This is a welcome of born of worn, tested, and, for that, all the more true love—love tempered by doubt, which inevitably eats through us all and begs of us to flee this place, or breaks and remodels our plans. It’s love made of the resolution of that chaos. And if we shadows have offended with our nagging questions in a time that, perhaps, should be set aside for joy and new beginnings, know that it is not our intention. We can only hope that, in doubt and introspection, you too will come to feel an abiding, if a bit bittersweet, love for this place—for its history, its arcaena, its present and its future.

So we give you this jaded seed of a welcome, and hope that by the fruit it bears, by the circumspect fondness that will grow in the next four years, we spirits might restore amends.

Mark Hay
Editor-in-Chief
Every August, America’s consumer packaged goods industry salivates at the thought of newly independent young adults entering higher education—young men and women on their own for the first time with their parents’ disposable income to burn. Rather than jeopardize their children’s future, parents tack an extra few hundred dollars atop an already astronomical tuition sum to ensure their beloved offspring are comfortable in their strange new surroundings. Trouble is, most first-year housing was designed with the idea that a university education has the greatest impact when the student has nothing but the bare essentials, forcing the poor soul to search within to satisfy his needs. As a result, we have freshmen trying to cram a microwave, hot plate, electric kettle, and George Foreman grill into a space meant for a toothbrush and a pair of shoes. Consider this visual aid while making the thousandth rearrangement of your possessions in your John Jay single.
According to the Parks Department, there are 14 miles of beaches in New York City, but not an inch in Manhattan. Brooklyn, Queens, and even the Bronx have strips of sand by the sea. It’s a reminder that, for all its alluring qualities, Manhattan can’t be everything to everyone.

Statistics, though, as anyone who’s been through Columbia’s housing lottery will know, are rarely ironclad. Walk or bike your way through Riverside Park to 105th St. and you’ll see a summery tableau: sand, beach volleyball courts and a metal gymnasium that appears to have jumped ship from California. Although it lacks a proper waterfront, this is Hudson Beach.

The beach is a surprise. So are the ice cream stand and hula-hoops. What’s happening on the gym, however, is astonishing. Steel arches suspend a long metal column that supports a row of hanging metal rings from which beachgoers swing nimbly. They look less like lawyers and homemakers than stunt doubles for the next Spider-Man. These are “the rings,” the only outdoor structure of their kind on the East Coast.

Built in 2003, with a pint-size addition for kids in 2005, the rings are a unique and little-known feature of the Upper West Side. Modeled after the “traveling rings” on Santa Monica, California’s Muscle Beach, the structure attracts an eclectic crowd of acrobats, energetic children, and the occasional Columbia student.

Corinne Kendall, GSAS ’08, and Nikkie Zanevsky, CC ’07, both used the rings when they lived in Morningside. “When I was in school, we’d come once a week,” says Kendall as she waits her turn. As Zanevsky points out, it beats a dank workout in Dodge. And there is a spirit and community here far beyond even the highest-class gym—the rungs themselves are often decorated with colorful sashes.

“Your goal here is just to have fun and be active,” says Zanevsky. “Exercise is a side effect.” Greg, a visitor from lower Manhattan, puts it best. “It’s like flying. And the better you get at it, the more fun it is.”

—Ian Scheffler

At the start of the Spring 2011 semester, Barnard College eliminated its two designated smoking zones: the first at the north end of Altschul Hall, the other on the north side of the Quad. An SGA vote taken in December 2010 knocked off the zones, which were more than five years old, after a Fall 2010 student poll suggested that a majority of Barnard students supported a blanket ban.

Indeed, the new Barnard Smoking Policy states clearly, “Smoking is prohibited in all college-owned
student residences and all academic and administrative buildings. Outdoor smoking is not permitted within the confines of the campus.” Citing studies on the risk of secondhand smoke, the policy even suggests that students and employees of Barnard consider quitting.

Those Barnard students who spurn this suggestion and head outside the gates to smoke are reminded to “remain mindful of your proximity to office and dormitory windows, and to those passing by.” Given Columbia University’s predilection for protest and culture of dissent, the stage should have been set for an anti-administration demonstration.

By all accounts, however, the transition has been non-confrontationally anticlimactic. There have been no picketers or ironic “Give me cigarettes or give me death!” tees.

On the administration’s end, enforcement has been benign, if not downright sisterly. Says Barnard Public Safety Director Dianna Pennetti, “We are not aware of illicit smoking on campus. Since the policy is new, there may be those who are unfamiliar with or forgetful of the ban. In which case, we’re asking them to put out their cigarettes or to smoke off campus.”

Chief Operating Officer Gregory Brown adds, “As a community, we want to encourage a healthful lifestyle but we do not issue citations to those violating the policy nor do we keep track of repeat offenders. People have been generally cooperative and we don’t see that changing... So far we have had no resistance to the policy and it seems to be going along very well.”

It’s a clever and surprisingly effective application of policy—killing self-styled smoking revolutionaries with softness. And now, happily and quietly, the smoking spaces deep in the bosom of Barnard’s tree lined campus, bereft of ashtrays, are just spaces once more.

—Conor Skelding

What function does the metal throne in the 116th Street station serve? Does it extend beyond its venerated role of crowning the Facebook profile pictures of countless noble Columbians, eager to broadcast the fact that THEY’RE IN THE BIG APPLE? Their duck-faced poses on the angular welded chair right under the blue tiled Columbia University sign behind them boasts to their high school friends, “Ivy League, bitches!” before they come to the unfortunate realization that they, in fact, are not all that.

The chair was commissioned in 1991 after artist and current New School and New York Institute of Technology professor Michelle Greene won a competition in the “Arts For Transit” MTA program. The sculptor titled her piece “The Rail Riders’ Throne,” and chose to place it beneath the Columbia sign.

Considering that the “Throne” looks like it could survive a nuclear winter unscathed (the artist sprayed polyurethane over it to ensure effective immortality), it’s ironic that it was originally designed as a transient piece of underground eye-candy. The sculpture was affixed permanently after popularity overrode its planned one-year stint.

Physically, the throne is aggressively cut, all straight lines, but also somewhat whimsical: the throne of a Dr. Seuss dictator. The MTA describes the linked squares that make up its head as “introducing humor into the station.”

Yet the real humor of the chair is its failure to merge art and functionality. One of the only seats in the station, it is offensively uncomfortable and intimidating to weary subway riders. Its straight back and uncomfortable steel rods stand in antithesis to what the MTA defines as “the subway founders’ design mission: to make the subway a hospitable place.”

Despite its sharp design, the chair’s small size renders it unobtrusive. Few people on the platform pay it any mind at all. Those who do are just passing through, except for the aforementioned freshlings, who are generously pardoned.

—Anna Bahr
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.

Derek Turner

Derek Froeb Turner, CC ’12, is a sucker for the classics. Tall, blonde, and Nordic, the Scottsdale, AZ native’s timeless features mirror his appreciation for traditional institutions. Politically conservative and piously Christian, Derek sets himself apart from his predominantly liberal peers. Perhaps Derek’s beliefs inspire his fondness for one of the Core’s less-appreciated texts—St. Augustine’s Confessions. “I know people often joke about how Augustine worries about stealing those pears, but I really love how earnest he is. He just wants to do everything right.”

That earnestness is alive in Derek as well. Ask him about one of many topics that excite him, and you’ll notice. The way he throws his head back when he laughs, or gushes over Professor William Theodore de Bary mark his genuine enthusiasm. While his reluctance to criticize anyone can make his words sound overly politically correct, his thoughts are always sincere. As Kaley Hanenkrat, BC’11 and former Columbia Democrats president, puts it, “Being friends with Derek is like being friends with a politician who still has a soul.”

A card-carrying College Republican, Derek admits his peers rarely fall in with his politics. Fortunately, seeing directly eye-to-eye with his fellow Columbians is never Derek’s greatest concern. Rather, Derek’s main political aim has always been to promote discourse, understanding, and cooperation among fellow students.

To this end, Derek pens a Columbia Spectator column, “Opening Remarks,” in which he presents himself as “a courteous, though prodding, voice in the campus’ political dialogue.” Operating on a self-described philosophy of “close-mindedness,” Derek strongly maintains his political convictions in the effort to engage with, rather than criticize, the ideas of those who disagree with him. And despite his near-archetypal Republicanism (Hanenkrat describes him as a “a living, breathing stereotype of a Republican, including an affinity for bow ties and Brooks Brothers”), Derek insists he’s hardly ever met with an unkind word from more liberal peers.

Hanenkrat agrees. “The entirety of the past two Columbia Democrats’ boards had immense respect for him.” Citing last April’s controversial “anti-safe space” CUCR flyering campaign, Hanenkrat notes that Derek, the College Republicans’ Director of Intergroup Affairs, was integral in promoting understanding among campus groups during the Safe Space forum. Those upset by CUCR’s flyers “were completely amazed by how diplomatic and kind Derek had been.”

Though Derek argues they are not linked, he exhibits the same compromise in his faith as he does with his political beliefs. President of the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, a multi-faith organization, he argues that “there is no room to rely on tradition or culture—we come together around this experience of pursuing the divine in as unassuming of a way as possible, focusing on scripture as common ground.”

Similarly, by emphasizing understanding, Derek counts himself among what his beloved Jon Huntsman would call the Southwest’s “problem-solving conservatives.” He favors pragmatism and bipartisanship, advocating conservatism with bold personality. “I’m a conservative because I don’t believe that the US’ flourishing comes from the
government, but rather from the unique ingenuity and attitude of our private citizenry."

Belief in ingenuity fuels Derek’s entrepreneurial ambitions. An aspiring Venture for America fellow, Derek is eager to create jobs in under-served areas of the US. But his adventurous spirit is not bound to the States: with a passport stamped in India, Israel, Namibia, and Botswana, Derek says he’s currently looking for a friend to join him motorcycling across Mongolia. Asked if he knew how to ride a motorcycle, he laughed, “No, but that’s what winter break is for.”

—Liz Jacob

ELIZABETH KIPP-GIUSTI

You could spill all of your secrets to Elizabeth Kipp-Giusti, CC ’12. EKG—most friends know her by her initials—“has this sense of being able to relate to everything on some level,” marvels Maddie Provo, BC ’12. Indeed, our conversation darts from hydroponic gardens and immigration policy to pickle brines and the surprising intimacy of jury duty. “She’s just so nurturing,” adds Kipp-Giusti’s “husband,” Emily Tamkin, CC ’12. In their freshman LLC suite family, EKG was mom. Her signature flowing frocks, bear hugs, and cooking prowess enhance her “old soul” vibe. “Maybe I just have this strange impulse to coddle,” Kipp-Giusti jokes. “Here, I’ll feed you an olive.”

The New York native is best known around campus as the Mother Nature of environmental activism who got sucked into student council. “But for a long time I was seriously considering going to conservatory for acting,” she remembers. Young Kipp-Giusti trained as an opera singer and did voice-overs for Ultraman, a Japanese live-action show. She broke into the Columbia theatre scene playing an East German Nazi transvestite. “It was type-casting, clearly.”

“For a long time I had a very difficult time justifying any kind of artistic pursuit because it felt narcissistic. You can use theatre as a tool for conveying ideas that you may not have been able to in paper, but it can be easy to fall into vanity,” Kipp-Giusti explains, enunciating each syllable like a true former Shakespeare camper. “And I think the mark of a good actor is having something to say.”

EcoRep and member of the Greenborough Special Interest Community, Kipp-Giusti has become a leading environmental activist at Columbia. As sustainability liaison to CCSC, she attended policy meetings and penetrated the student council “fortress.” Come election time, she ran with the UniteCU party for executive board as the VP Policy, the number-two position on the ticket behind the president.

Kipp-Giusti soon realized she “was not the right person for the job,” and withdrew the day before the election. “I was disturbed by the thought that I was ruining [UniteCU’s] chances... but the reality of running for the CCSC board is that you have to really feel like you can work together as a team, and it didn’t feel like we were gelling.” Still, she is quick to praise the other members of her former party. Ever committed to the elusive Columbia community, she and a few friends now hope to start “I ate a pie,” a mock eating club and Internet platform for cooking circles.

Kipp-Giusti, initially a neuroscience major, quotes the famous Harold and Maude line, “people are my species,” to explain how she gravitated toward religion. “With the religion major I felt like I could still do the kinds of things I wanted to do with a neuroscience major: explore motivation and how people contextualize themselves in a larger system.” With a Buddhist nun for a nanny, Kipp-Giusti grew up singing in a church choir. “And I desanctify holy water.”

She seamlessly segues from silly to serious: “I do feel like most of my beliefs are predicated on the necessary interconnectivity of things,” she explains. “Everything after that can be argued about, but nothing happens in a vacuum.”

Curious and creative, Kipp-Giusti turned an old acting exercise into a subway ritual. “I list visuals around me and take stream of consciousness notes,” she reveals. It is this keen attention to people that helps hone her hilarious impressions—the Liza Minnelli is legendary. Just as she keeps her audience spellbound, Kipp-Giusti is genuinely listening, hanging on to your every word.

—Carolyn Ruvkun
This calls for more jungle juice. “I’LL BE BACK,” I shout with a jerk of the hand and the most aggressively smiley smile I can muster. The crowd surrounding the bar jiggles like so much John Jay tapioca; textureless, impenetrable. And I thought Gulati’s first “Principles” section was supposed to be scary. At least I’m rollin’ deep like old school, half-expecting someone to offer me a Lunchables trade for vodka as the fifteen of us stare petrified around the playground.

Come on, pull yourself together Allie, there is absolutely no reason to be scared. I’ve spent the summer boning up on my critical theory (and my queer theory, my Marxist theory...uh, et cetera et cetera) and I find this an appropriate moment to ask “WWJ(B)D”—What Would Judith (Butler) Do? Somewhere in this dank, crowded “lounge,” an intricate network of pre-post-gender-normative dudes, there is someone special who can summon the strength to reject Natty Light, wave the bartender down, and grab a girl a drink. If we’ll agree that it’s all a performance, he and I could begin to deconstruct the ever-present subconscious behavior patterns that govern us and all our brethren. And eventually get to bonin’.

Selection is key, too. I guess. Helen’s been blathering on about the dual evolutionary and financial imperatives implicit in any series of bad decisions undertaken between the hours of—wait! Is that him?! Him being the Orientation Leader (gulp!)—my secret text crush who’s been ignoring ALL the other girls in my orientation group. It is, and he’s approaching with a pair of bright red Dixies to boot.

I turn to give Helen the thumbs up—and reassure her I’m completely aware of the power asymmetry behind any gendered OL/freshperson interaction—but she’s nowhere to be seen. Helen pretends she’s too mature for this sort of party, but she also claims she’s already read the first twelve books of The Iliad. Last I saw her she was pretty toasted, and plus, there’s no way she got through twelve books of anything with that sort of iPhone addiction.

Somewhere between this brownstone and the next, and the next and the next (as if I would know the Greek alphabet), I stop thinking about the theory of being drunk. Even with Helen yacking about Gulati—what a tool! When I ask her where we are, she loosens her iron grip only to shrug (“Sigma Sigma Blah Blah Blah”), and my OL keeps pawing at me—and I’ve got a touch of the spins and... I may have read Oedipus Rex way back in high school, but I do remember what drinking jungle juice, I don’t see any issue in going native.

That’s funny, he seemed taller at the last dumb dry event he made me promise to come to and this so-called “juice” tasted a bit less like candy just a second ago. My few conversational inroads (most memorably, “DO YOU LIVE HERE?” and “I’M SORRY, I FORGOT YOUR NAME” and “DID YOU READ FREEDOM?”) stall out and we resolve to—well, it starts as what some cultures might consider dancing and what other cultures definitely consider an act worth three to five at Leavenworth. You understand: time is actually a super culturally relative concept and some cultures orient (like... orientation! ha!) themselves spatially, and I couldn’t really tell you how much linear, temporal time passes with our mouths in very close spatial proximity, but I swear as we help each other past the bouncer to the street that that space, too, is a construct. How else to explain that his bed, all the way across campus, is in fact closer and “an easier walk” than my own sweet double down the block?
Economics is the study of the distribution of scarce resources. Resources very scarce here include: good lighting, deodorant, antiperspirant, combination deodorant-antiperspirant, and the three feet of radial distance that Americans normally require between themselves and others. Lucky for me I'm rolling ten deep with the rest of John Jay 8, thus minimizing exposure to others. Allie, I admit I'm gripping your hand too hard. But your human shield is necessary for my College Party Plan. This way, I keep distraction to a minimum, and as long as we don’t let go of each other, we will fend off strangers and have fun—this is fun, right?

Ugh. Talk about negative externality. That’s the economist’s term for INCONSIDERATE. I can’t believe these two hooligans are grinding up so close to me. Okay, so they might be engaging in a trade that yields them both a net positive return, but I’m not enjoying this one bit. This must be a case of “Market Inefficiency”- Chapter Three (I’ve read ahead) in my Econ 101 book. Government regulation can’t help me right now. Obviously Apple can. I pull out my phone.

“What r u tryrnyng to say?” Not helpful, Allie. Tuck iPhone back into hypoallergenic case, case into (fully washable) purse. Allie’s an English major and she’s a nice girl, but sometimes I feel that we speak two different languages. I’m going to have to talk to her about diversifying her intellectual portfolio outside of the New Yorker so she can keep up with my lingo. And it’s not like Freakonomics is that hard to understand. Far cry from Benjamin Graham’s Value Investing, at least. She should like reading, right? Until then, here is a metaphor for your qualitative, Dante-obsessed brain: THIS IS LIKE THE SECOND CIRCLE OF HELL.

Anyway, I’ve calculated three drinks to be the quantity such that the marginal utility of the last drink is maximized (law of diminishing marginal return!), so no, Monsieur Fratboy, I do not want your Jungle Juice. For the layman economist, that means I’m at the perfect place to gorge happily on Koronets and not boot it.

Time to snack, and yet Allie keeps wandering further away. She’s making eyes at that average-looking guy three feet away. Fine, pursue him, the shakiest of investments, but that judgmental face you’re giving me is totally unwarranted. My super-sized pizza carries but a fraction of the beer calories you’ve had to consume in order to convince yourself tonight that tomorrow you won’t wake up. Don’t be delusional! Let me lay it out for you: you want to maximize ROI (that’s Return On Investment) and minimize risk. For your average risk-averse individual, Koronets is obviously the smart choice.

And also, consumption is good for the economy! While we’re nominally no longer in a recession, unemployment in America is still at a high 10 percent (a conservative estimate, that!). When I buy a slice of pizza, I increase consumption, increase demand, increase GDP, and with more production, more jobs are created, and there is more growth. Fret no more, Ben Bernanke, I’ve personally solved our economic crisis. Send the Nobel to my Lerner mailbox.

Where did that girl go? I go on my tiptoes, see her head floating towards the door and—surprise, surprise—another head is close behind.

Opportunity cost, my dear Allie.
Ah, the start of the Fall Term; what could be finer? Furnishing new lodgings, catching up with old chums unseen since your own VV left for the Vineyard, and enjoying all those activities peculiar to the start of the academic year at our fair University that make us true Sons of Knickerbocker. But alas, as Verily Veritas peruses the class directory and orders this term’s Moleskines (who could take notes on inferior paper?), he does so acutely—tragically, even—aware that a veritable volume of less luscious paperwork looms nigh...

Now, your own VV had always intended, upon matriculation, to spend a good number of years traveling—making the Grand Tour, etc.—before returning to The City to try his hand in some sort of business venture with, naturally, the help of some dear family friends and the gentle cushioning of what he had learned since his earliest Prep School days to refer to simply, and of course discreetly, as The Trust. But alas, the economy takes some sort of a turn for the worst and quicker than you could say “Newport,” old Daddy Veritas (a veritably avaricious viper of a man!) is up in arms about “bootstraps” and what one ought to do with them—sheer Bolshevism!

Well old VV does not mind telling his dear darling readers that the thought of slaving away in... well in what, some coal mine or some such, unable to afford even such basic luxuries, nay necessities, as his Brooks Brothers line of credit was enough to make one’s stomach turn. The strain even had its effect on Verily V’s poor pup Wagner—the dear could hardly touch the food the cleaning girl leaves out for him and, finances be damned, your own VV was compelled to resort to his emergency foie gras rations, the little rascal’s favorite, to fend off starvation for his despondent canine companion.

Finally, in desperation, a woebegone VV, feeling himself the proverbial Prodigal Son, sought out his Father at that bastion of potent paternal power: The Club. Over Hennessey—as these sorts of affairs always are—a Faustian bargain. Goa, Biarritz, even Paris (even Paris!), it would all be foregone and, save for a mere month in Newport (bootstraps or not, August is August), your own VV was to abstain from any sort of vacation (any leisure at all, really) upon matriculation from our University, and would attend Law School, perhaps our own, but (frankly) preferably that of our Crimson neighbors to the North (your VV has never considered himself one bound by such superficial social mores—at the sight of beige at his last white party, for instance, Verily verily barely batted an eye—but sometimes name does matter) in exchange for a reprieve from the certain calamity of a mid-twenties spent with an insufficient allowance.

And so this Fall Term, your own Verily Veritas intends to do his utmost to ensure acceptance to an acceptable institution, and he does not mind telling you: dear friends will be called. With little Wagner in tow, a relieved but dedicated VV will be making rounds, cozying up to the right professors, and oh so carefully plotting his next move. In these trying times, it seems, one can do little else.
Age of Innocence

Reliving the Innocuous Initiation of Freshmen Past

BY CLAIRE HEYISON

Though this year’s freshmen may have had to navigate the perils of “mandatory” NSOP events and John Jay cuisine, they’re lucky to be entering the Class of 2015 instead of that of 1915. Freshmen of the early 20th century were beset by myriad (yet strangely sophisticated) hazing rituals from the second they set foot on College Walk.

Upon their arrival, incoming freshmen to Columbia College and the School of Mines (now SEAS) were required by the university to wear a freshman beanie at all times, a tradition that lives on, but is only casually enforced (read: not), in SEAS. Though the beanie was intended to instill a sense of camaraderie, it was also an efficient way for upperclassmen to identify, and therefore torment, newcomers. As early as 1901, upperclassmen formalized frosh-baiting by distributing pamphlets entitled “Rules for Freshmen” along with the beanies. Though the content became more creative with each passing year, the classics included a ban on wearing Columbia colors, bringing girls on campus, and sitting on the grass or the steps. Freshmen caught flouting the rules were swiftly brought to justice.

If lucky, the offender was condemned to row crew with toothpicks or roll a peanut across College Walk with his nose. The less fortunate were kidnapped, taken to New Jersey, and paddled by a group of cloak-wearing sophomores who called themselves the Black Avengers.

The first-years were forced to gamble even more of their rights during the annual Cane Spree (or Cane Rush), wherein a freshman and a sophomore held onto one end of a cane—a common accessory for undergrads of the period—and were rushed by their entire classes. The class with the most hands on the cane at the end of the melee won the spree, but sophomores used the opportunity to wrestle and trample the freshmen. The stakes were high; if the freshmen did not win two out of three sprees, they could not carry canes or smoke pipes on campus. And, bereft of such paraphernalia, as noted in a New York Times article from 1901: “[The freshman’s] swagger must depart...for what college man can swagger properly unless he is with a pipe and walking stick.”

While the boys across the street were busy tugging their canes and spanking each other, Barnard ladies were at work composing an ancient scrapbook, the Mysteries, which was passed down to the younger class at an annual midnight ceremony. Incense, candlelight, flowing robes, and secret oaths were all present, used to spook gullible first-years, but the actual ritual consisted of nothing more than nostalgic toasts proffering advice, good luck, and “eulogies” for the death of their first year.

Today, few (if any) campus-wide hazing rituals still exist; Columbia College students’ interest in freshmen beanies waned in the ’60s, “Rules for Freshman” pamphlets disappeared after 1925, the Cane Rush was abolished by the sophomore class council in 1887 after the death of one of the participants and was replaced with less hazardous competitions, and the Mysteries were banned by the Barnard administration after a girl broke her arm. The freshmen of yore, however, would probably have chosen beanies and Cane Sprees over that most dreaded of modern freshman hazing rituals: Frontiers of Science.

(To see an excerpt from the Mysteries, go to page 21.)
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A ROMANTIC EVENING IN JOHN JAY

BY CONOR SKELDING

Cassy’s eyes bore back into me from across the ketchup bottle, unfathomable. They’re blue: blue as her pastel-colored plate and mug. It seems like just yesterday that she first spoke up in Lit Hum, but that was a Tuesday, two weeks ago.

“But, maybe Achilles wasn’t a coward, maybe he had another reason not to fight.” Her blue eyes had flashed—at me? Had she perhaps been inviting me to be braver than Achilles, brave enough to win her?

After class I was back in John Jay mulling over Greek heroes of yore, and I looked her up. She’d kept only her profile pictures public. Alluring. Making a duckface in a CU sweater in front of Low, celebrating at her high school graduation with pointer and index spread in a “V for Victory” sign, screaming at a Beefeater in London. So yesterday, after a prolonged examination of the Iliad, I met her outside of Hamilton, aimed my Eros, and asked her to dinner.

And now here we were. She’s quiet, but our eyes are locked. I study her face. The fluorescent lights, rather than expose her flaws, highlight her perfect skin. I think she must have been an athlete in high school; her Columbia tee fits well. And her blue jeans, they say, “I am not wearing skinny jeans now, but I could.”

“Dijon mustard.” She picks the exotic blend for her grilled chicken panini rather than the “ballpark mustard” of the huddled masses. Just the way she says, “Dijon” in perfect French (and she only spent two weeks in Europe!) sends me reeling. This is the Ivy League; I marvel.

I’d pulled out all the stops: talked to Dining for a tablecloth, a corner table, and two chairs in working order. They came through spectacularly, although only with chagrin did I learn that one can’t hire the whole place out. I need to find a way to slip that in, to say that I wanted to go that far. How is her panini, sharp with Dijon?

“It’s fine.” Goddammit, she is cool. One minute we’re discussing the Masterpieces of Western Literature with a relevant philosophy professor on the top floor of Hamilton; the next we kindred souls are nestled comfortably, dining in the mahogany majesty of John Jay.

We’ve covered the tired pleasantries: she lives in Carman, she’s from some part of Jersey, she is considering creative writing. I could care less about that; she could be a prospective Political Science major, and I’d still pine for her. I want to know the her in her. Would she walk Riverside Park with me tonight?

“I’ve got a nine AM tomorrow.” Ah, she is devoted to her craft. Is it a fiction workshop? A gathering of introverts poring over and tearing apart one another’s pieces, baring their innermost secrets, daring to criticize somebody else’s?

“UWriting.” There is something to be said for pragmatism: walking isn’t always strolling, after all. She’s finished her panini; would she humor me and have some Froyo? The Irish Mint is reputedly quite the palate-cleanser.

“Yes, only a bit though. I’m low-carb.” How her body is her temple. And it shows, even through her modest jeans. Modesty! The gem of all virtues. Truly this girl is circumspect in all matters.

“I hope this is aspartame; I can’t deal with an insulin spike before I go to bed.” Why she ought to follow John Jay culinary carbohydrate loading. In any event, there are more ethereal pleasures to be had. God and man in harmony often create beauty. Videbimus lumen.

Would she like to see the sun set over Morningside from JJ 15?

“No.” •
BEYOND BACCHANAL

Making the Band

HOW CAMPUS MUSICIANS ARE TAKING MATTERS INTO THEIR OWN HANDS

BY ZOE CAMP

“College music” is a nebulous term, born of the legendary kids who spent their undergrad years honing their craft in the campus microcosm before exploding into real world success. College music scenes are as much the product of their student surroundings as their larger geographic context.

At Columbia, we face the bizarre combination of dire campus circumstances and a city with one of the richest music scenes in the world. It’s just not as simple as throwing a bunch of kids in a cramped double and waiting for a REM or a Radiohead to, as a Chia might, manifest itself overnight. Columbia students confront competing local scenes, a shortage of viable gig locations and practice spaces, and a particularly picky crowd to please. But despite such setbacks, several student groups have found a way to circumvent these roadblocks and make a name for themselves.

The sheer number of options for live music in New York City makes for a competitive market that often sees marquee acts overshadowing the small student band. With Madison Square Garden’s big-name draws and Brooklyn’s intimate venues so close and accessible, it’s no surprise that many students might choose a Fleet Foxes concert at Radio City over a gig held by a student band in an East Campus townhouse.

Jonathan Tanners, CC’11, a blogger and former WKCR DJ, considers Columbia’s prime location “a blessing and a curse” and reflects on its effect on the Morningside scene. “With such an embarrassment of riches all around us, it can be pretty easy to look anywhere but campus for music,” Tanners said. “I think whatever there is of a Columbia scene certainly suffers from the infinite possibilities of New York nightlife,” he added.

However, Tanners also pointed out that the abundance of concerts is not so hindering “that Columbia bands don’t have fans and followings in their own right.”

One such band is Life Size Maps, a power-pop trio headed by Mike McKeever, CC’11. The group has played campus events like Battle of the Bands, but has for the most part chosen to break outside of the Morningside Heights bubble. In addition to playing a series of showcases at CMJ’s annual Music Marathon last fall, the band has spent nearly all of the summer performing at various Brooklyn venues like Union Pool and Death by Audio. Working within the Brooklyn scene instead of competing against it, the band has managed to garner a larger audience while still retaining its collegiate charm.

Despite more mainstream success, McKeever remembers their humble beginnings. “We started out and we practiced in the Carman laundry room. We moved on to local bars in M-side and were psyched when we started playing venues downtown and in Brooklyn. Since then we’ve played a lot of different types of shows, from grimy Bushwick warehouse parties to dives.”

Another barrier to a strong Columbia music scene is campus itself. Even with Lerner Party Space and the (recently-reduced) handful of frat houses available for concert space, many students and musicians find the venue opportunities on campus lacking, citing bureaucracy and red tape as perpetuating factors that make im-
promptu, low-key concerts (the type that help to spark larger music scenes) difficult. It’s a problem amplified by the number of non-bar concert halls in Morningside Heights. This has led many campus musicians to take D.I.Y. approaches to concert planning.

At the forefront is the Columbia University Society of Hip-Hop (CUSH), a large collective of hip-hop enthusiasts who hold monthly meetings (referred to as cyphers) in the rooms of the IRC house. With traditional practice spaces scarce, the members of CUSH took to Facebook to organize meetings and events in IRC spaces. Now, CUSH repeatedly draws crowds of 30 to 50 people at its meetings—an impressive feat for any campus group, much less a bevy of rappers.

“There aren’t really strong places for [artists] to network, get to know each other, and make moves with each other,” explained Ace “Tha Pyro” Anderson, CC’11, one of CUSH’s founders. “That was the reason that motivated Mpho Brown, CC’11, Jon Tanners [the blogger and DJ noted above], and me to create CUSH—as a way for people that love Hip-Hop music, and make it, to network with each other.” The collective’s efforts paid off, and at the end of last spring, the group opened for Das Racist and Snoop Dogg at Bacchanal, drawing probably the largest crowd a campus band has ever seen.

Alex Silva, CC’10 and member of the band Face of Man, believes the problem for Columbia musicians is less about finding like minds and more about what happens thereafter. “Columbia is a great place to start a band. I think it’s a hard place to really maintain and grow one though,” he said. Face of Man came together through connections forged in the music department, the jazz performance program, and WKCR. He describes the social networks at Columbia as fertile ground for a music scene to develop, but says that space constraints can inhibit the power of these networks. He recalls perpetual difficulty finding space to practice, which he explained can make it difficult to realize musical projects fully and creatively. It can however, lead to some inspired, if fleeting, alternatives. “I had some friends that hosted a performance in the tunnels under the business school, for like 5 minutes at least.”

Although Columbia was indispensable to the formation of Face of Man, Silva noted that out of school, “it’s a lot easier to maneuver as a musician.” Their self-titled EP, which was mastered by Joe Lambert (Dirty Projectors, Panda Bear, Deerhunter) and debuted this summer, has already received significant attention from critics, yet the band remains relatively unknown on campus.

As in all things creative at Columbia, there is no lack of talent or enthusiasm in the music scene. By all rights, Morningside Heights could have a thriving little college band culture. But a lack of space, or rather lack of willingness to make space, for bands to practice, perform and develop themselves locally pushes them into a wide set of alternative routes. They find their own spaces, perform behind closed doors, or move far off-campus. They make names for themselves in Brooklyn, but fail to gain a following on campus as well. Columbia will always produce a wayward band or two, but if we want those bands to stay local—to create a Columbia music scene, we must find a way of providing them a room and an audience.
A People's History of Ollie's

**UNCOVERING THE SWEATSHOP TIES ON 116TH ST.**

**BY BRIAN WAGNER**

It’s not uncommon, late on a weekday night, to see deliverymen in dorm lobbies, bearing food from restaurants only a few blocks away. You might spot a scene like this: “Fourteen dollars,” the man says to a slouching undergrad in sweats. Fumbling through his pockets, the student unearths a $10 and a $5. He grabs the food and slinks back to the elevator. Nobody tips well anyway. It’s supposed to be “free;” not like he needs it, you think.

The unpleasant reality is that the deliveryman does need it, and your ignorance is not surprising. Many college students live on modest budgets, but the living conditions of your local deliveryman pale in comparison. Ollie’s, and at many other Asian-American restaurants on Manhattan’s Upper West Side, has in the past provided workers with labor conditions comparable to working in a sweatshop—not something most Americans picture as a standard feature of their neighborhood. Workers were subjected to gross overtime hours without compensation, paid dramatically below the minimum. Large portions of clocked hours would disappear without reason when payday arrives. And all of this still happens right around the corner from your dorm room.

On March 29th, 2007, Ollie’s was sued by 43 workers who accused the restaurant chain of violating minimum wage laws. According to the New York Times, employees reported working as many as 65 hours per week while receiving a mere $400 in wages for the month. This amounts to a minuscule hourly rate of less than $1.60. Despite claims to the contrary, including that of Benny Li, manager of the 68th St. Ollie’s, that the restaurants pay the workers the state-required $4.60 an hour (for tipped employees) and schedule them for eight hours a day, employees continued to protest. They were backed by the Justice Will Be Served! campaign, the Chinese Staff and Workers Association, and several other activist groups.

Many workers followed the example of the original 43: By mid- April, the Upper West Side saw protesting employees outside of several Ollie’s (44th, 68th, and 84th), as well as Saigon Grill, and Our Place. All accused the Asian-American restaurants of underpaying. Dubbed “the deliverymen’s rebellion” by the New York Times and “The great Asian-Food Apocalypse” by New York Magazine, it seemed as though the dominoes of Asian-American labor abuses had begun to fall.

The causes of these protests originated in a string of protests by Asian-American restaurant workers—
not on the Upper West Side, but in Chinatown—in the earlier part of the decade. In late 2003, a lawsuit against New Silver Palace resulted in a back wages payment of $2.9 million to 17 workers. That restaurant was closed by February of 2007, when the Chinatown restaurant 88 Palace was ordered by a judge to pay $700,000 in back wages. Victories such as these motivated the uptown workers to stand up to their employers, as well as a network of organizers who had experience and notes to pass on.

But why the sudden shift in the location of the restaurants being protested? Northern Manhattan’s unending desire to follow the trends of the SoHo area aside, Hunter College Professor of Asian American Studies and Urban Affairs and Planning Peter Kwong attributed this to the trouble Chinatown restaurants were having with pricey rents and a decline in tourist attraction. This, he claimed in a *Times* article from 2007, resulted in many of the restaurants, accompanied by their tough working conditions moving uptown: “In Chinatown the restaurants play hardball with their workers, and the same attitude prevails in these new restaurants.”

Move ahead to November 2007. The past couple of months had seen lawsuits against Flor de Mayo (Chinese-Peruvian), Republic, and other Asian restaurant groups, all backed by Justice Will Be Served! Additionally, in May, Ollie’s closed its 44th St. location, which is where a large portion of the protest’s organizers had worked. Though at first it might have seemed like a victory (one less sweatshop in the world is a good thing), the closure left workers unemployed. Many of them—such as Jerry Weng, 28 years old at the time—came forward saying that the president of Ollie’s, Tsu Yue Wang, had called the protesting workers to tell them that they were blacklisted and would have trouble finding future jobs. Refusing to bow to his threats, protesters could still be seen in November outside of the 84th St. Ollie’s chanting “No justice! No noodles!”

The drama finally made its way right up to the Columbia gates in December of that year, when labor notices appeared on the walls of the Ollie’s at 116th St. According to a *Columbia Daily Spectator* article, the notices detailed employee schedules, wages, break times, and procedures for clocking in and out. The damage done to Ollie’s reputation by these notices was further undermined by protesting activists outside of both the 116th St. restaurant and the gates of College Walk, who insisted that Ollie’s was still not treating its employees fairly, despite the still-pending lawsuit. “For [Wang], he’d rather continue to exploit workers than to make amends...The owner continues to retaliate against the workers,” said Josephine Lee, CC’01, the coordinator of the Justice Will Be Served! campaign backing the workers’ protests.

In early January 2009, a lawsuit was filed by workers at Tomo Sushi & Sake Bar, another Columbia dinner spot located at 110th and Broadway. Tomo was also owned by Tsu Yue Wang, the tycoon responsible for both Ollie’s grease-soaked fried rice and the poverty of many Asian immigrants living in New York City. Then in February, a string of demonstrations followed an announcement that Tomo would soon be closing, because, manager Dee Loke claimed, the “rent [was] too high.” No one believed him. Joint demonstrations between workers from both Ollie’s and Tomo labeled Wang as the “Sweatshop Boss.”

The workers’ months of perseverance and protesting paid off in March 2009, two years after they first brought action against the restaurant. The State Labor Department announced that Tsu Yue “Sweatshop Boss” Wang had agreed to pay $2.3 million to 813 Ollie’s workers, at the time the department’s largest settlement ever negotiated for a single case of wage violations. It was announced that this was the result of a Labor Department investigation that had begun in 2006 (and had no doubt been helped along by the protests and lawsuits in the following years). The victory, however, covered only three Ollie’s locations and did not include the Morningside Heights restaurant.

As a kicker, the Labor Department also found that
Wang owed 100 workers at Tomo (Wang had unsuccessfully denied that he was affiliated with the restaurant during the investigation) $1 million, but the restaurant was closed by that time and the fight to recoup the wages continued. M. Patricia Smith, the state labor commissioner, called the case “sickening” and told the Times “under no circumstances can a company cheat its workers out of the money they have worked for and they have earned.” At least, it can’t do that forever.

Wang’s influence in Morningside Heights Asian cuisine was not just limited to Ollie’s and Tomo. His influence also stretched to the restaurant next to Ollie’s, Caffe Swish. While there was a protest outside of Swish in early 2009, the workers never brought legal action against Wang. Then, months later, Swish closed down under mysterious circumstances, only to reopen later as Vine, which is what it remains today.

"While there was a protest outside of Swish in early 2009, the workers never sought legal action against Wang. Then, months later, Swish closed down under mysterious circumstances, only to be reopened later as Vine, which is what it remains today."

Wang filed for bankruptcy. By this time, the Ollie’s on 84th St. had also been closed (with another opaque excuse from management), but the bankruptcy did involve Vine, despite the listing that the restaurant is owned by another corporation called Bu Yao Pa LLC. Wang attempted to use this front to disguise his connection, but was ultimately found out.

These circumstances, while suspicious enough on their own, are even more dubious when the responses given to the Spectator reporters are thrown into the mix. “Mr. Wang is our only communication with other Ollie’s restaurant, and Mr. Wang hasn’t told us anything about it,” manager Frank Chang of the 116th St. location responded when asked about the bankruptcy. Anson Lum, a manager at Vine, claimed he had heard nothing about a lawsuit, bankruptcy, or even Tsu Yue Wang when asked by the Spectator. As explained by Tony Tsai, a member of the Chinese Staff and Workers’ Association: “We know this [bankruptcy] is not true. [Wang]’s a billionaire, and there’s just no way.”

The issue, after receiving such consistent attention and support from 2007 to 2010, has died down in recent months. There are occasional protests outside of Saigon Grill, but no further developments on the Broadway side of campus. The National Mobilization Against Sweatshops ignored requests to comment on current conditions at Ollie’s. According to Malcolm Culleton, CC’12 and a member of Sweatshop Free Upper West Side, the Ollie’s conflict has been “settled.” Involved in campaigns at Ollie’s or Vine, they no longer continue to talk to workers from other local businesses to determine whether or not illegal labor conditions still exist in Morningside. Meanwhile, Wang’s counterpart at Saigon Grill, Simon Nget, was imprisoned earlier this year, convicted of abusing workers and falsifying business records. Somehow, You, the “starving college student,” have serious considerations to take into account as you pick up your phone late at night to satisfy your craving for cheap chop suey. Students need to realize that they can take votepledged to be sweatshop free; avoid places with past histories of labor disputes or frequent labor protests; tip your deliverymen.

—Additional reporting by Samantha Herzog, BC’14, and Peter Sterne, CC’14.
I was told there would be a cat. After asking a few friends if any of them had ever stepped inside Possibilities @ Columbia—one of those places that seems to exist as just a sign and a window-front, not an actual store—only one of them replied that she had. She told me that she visits that shop on Broadway between 111th and 112th streets once in a while to see the cat and the slew of young children that often roam the store. College students will do just about anything to see cute animals, toddlers included.

Columbia has a habit of trapping its students in a vortex of never ending work, constant motion, and rollercoaster-like emotions. Such extremes make it easy to forget not only that there is a world outside Columbia, but that world exists along the same streets we consider part of our campus. Though we make use of a number of local eateries and shops, we pass many storefronts every day without actually walking through their front doors.

Although my friend had shone a small light on the atmosphere of Possibilities @ Columbia, what the store actually sold was still a mystery (adorable animals and tiny toddlers perhaps? One can only hope). So instead of walking past that obscure store with the @ sign in its title as I have so mindlessly done for the past two years, I decided to actually walk in.

Unfortunately, neither animals nor humans under the age of five were anywhere in sight. What I did find, however, was nothing short of a child’s dream. Walls of Nerf guns, action figures, baby-dolls, hula-hoops, and every other nostalgia-inducing toy line the right end of the store while displays of stuffed animal Dalmatians and giraffes take hold of the left.

Zaiida Syeda, the soft-spoken woman who has been working at Possibilities for the last five years, says that they do not often see Columbia students at the store. She noted, helpfully, that, “mainly young children and families shop here because we are a toy store.” But once Halloween rolls around, the holiday on which anyone can put on a Spider-man mask and be a kid again, the store fills with students searching for costumes and decorations.

I thought of the other Morningside stores I was missing out on, gems I has previously disregarded as just part of my walk to class. Mondel’s Chocolates has been around since the beginning of time—or, more accurately, since 1943. It is even famous for being a favorite of Katherine Hepburn, a fact that the owners of Mondel’s do not let you forget by proudly displaying her quote of approval in the store and on their website. But for many jaded Columbia students, Mondel’s is just a small, unremarkable store they walk past on their way to The Heights—the one that always displays window of a bizarre mix of chocolate, dolls, stuffed animals, and posters.

The idea of Mondel’s is cute—a cozy mom and pop chocolate store that was once graced by acting royalty—yet it hardly ever graduates from existing as just an idea. Impatience and fear of the unknown are what seem to drive Columbia students away from the store, as Christine Petrini, BC’13, notes, “I find myself thinking about it whenever I need to buy a little thank you gift for someone, but then I figure it’s probably pricier than just heading to Morton or Westside to find something equally yummy for a cheaper price.”

There are many stores in the Morningside area that, like Mondel’s, blatantly do not cater to the college student demographic, and it seems to
be a miracle that they are still in business. At a cursory
and thoughtless glance, Bank Street Bookstore on the
corner of 112th and Broadway looks as if it could
be a respectable alternative to Book Culture or the
Columbia Bookstore. But upon further inspection it
becomes apparent that this bookstore is “for Children,
Teachers, and Parents” (as the large blue awning so
firmly tells you). Other than students studying early
education, there seems to be no other reason for a
Columbia student to shop here.

Contrary to popular belief, the toddlers who play
on College Walk are not magically dropped onto
Columbia’s Campus every summer and spring for
students’ entertainment. Morningside Heights is a
real-life neighborhood with real life families who have
real-life young children that help keep stores like
Possibilities, Mondel’s, and Bank Street Bookstore
alive.

Columbia students walk past these stores as they
seem to have nothing to offer to a college student, but
there’s actually a world of benefit in store for a student
with the time to stop in once or twice a semester. With candy, toys, and children’s books, the places
that no one goes around Columbia actually provide
a welcome respite from that weird limbo between
childhood and true adulthood that college students
find themselves stuck in.

Excerpt from the Mysteries (pg 13)

Though the Mysteries scrapbook
is currently yellowing in the Barnard
Archives and the professors are likely
long dead, some of the verse sounds like
an imaginative ancestor of CULPA:
In Latin we have Mr. Knapp
His course, it is really a snap:
For he does the work
And you, you can shirk
Or else you can take a short nap
LAND GRABS

The Row over Frat Row
Vying for Columbia’s Prime Real Estate
BY SYLVIE KREKOW

Most Columbians don’t even know we have a frat row, but it exists—the row of brownstones along 113th and 114th are home to the chapters of Columbia’s (rather small) Greek community. There is a smattering of outliers, like Zeta Beta Tau (ZBT) on 115th, or St. A’s (formerly Delta Psi) on Riverside. But the vast concentration of fraternities and sororities sits within a two-block radius of prime Columbia real estate. However you feel about Greeks at Columbia—love them; love them just for their raucous, beer-drenched parties; or hate them for the same reason—their brownstones are as unique as the history of the area surrounding them.

Recent dramatic events aside (hint: it had to do with drugs and fraternities losing brownstones), frat row has been a rather consistent stretch of real estate, with fraternities getting moved in and kicked out on a tight cycle throughout Columbia’s history. Although members and staff of Greek life are tight-lipped about such incidents in order to avoid sullying the good name of mixer-throwing frat bros everywhere, several fraternities have gained and lost brownstones due to both good and bad behavior. In a 2005 article by the Columbia Daily Spectator, Fiji (Phi Gamma Delta) was kicked out for “behavior that was not consistent with the standards of the Greek community,” according to coordinator of Greek affairs at the time, Kyle Pendleton.

Of course, behavior “not consistent with standards” of Greeks at Columbia is pretty vague, and although Fiji couldn’t be reached for an official comment, rumors abound as to why they were kicked out, including whispers of an incident with an axe in a door and heroin consumption. And this is not to pick on Fiji—several other frats have been kicked off frat row, such as the now defunct Zeta Psi in 2007, or Beta (rumored to have a “meth lab” in the basement, according to several sources), which was kicked off campus and then reinstated (they continued to own their house independently of Columbia housing and are the only fraternity besides ADP to own their own brownstone). At the time, Alpha Chi Omega (the only Panhellenic sorority to have a suite in EC as opposed to an actual brownstone) and Delta Sig were the main contenders for Zeta Psi’s old house. As with most of Greek life, much of the process of deciding who would get a coveted brownstone was shrouded in mystery. Somehow, on January 30th, 2008, Delta Sig was awarded the brownstone on 113th that used to house Zeta Psi.

Although the official line is surely that Delta Sig got the house because they were the most upstanding young Greeks on campus, the scuttlebutt is that two of the members had families who made significant contributions to Columbia and had ties to the University. And this incident does not even begin to cover the fact that none of the traditionally non-white Greek organizations have ever been granted a brownstone.

What makes the drama that goes on surrounding housing on frat row so intense? Why are the brownstones so important to these organizations? One anonymous Greek had this to say: “Despite all of the noise and the trash that piles up on the weekends, I think there is a valuable social dynamic that exists on 114th and 113th street. Anyone who has watched Hey Arnold! knows about the phenomenon of ‘stoop kids.’ In the warmer months, when it’s pleasant to sit outside, the stoops on frat row provide a casual social setting for interactions between students.”

But another Greek had this (again, anonymous) comment: “FRAT ROW ruuules! Nothing like the good ol’ days of sipping loko with my bros.”
I first read Simon Schama in high school, where he was held up as the high priest of the historical chronicle on account of *Citizens*, his telling of the French Revolution. Although this was his area of specialization, he went on to write two very well received books about the Golden Age of the Dutch Republic and a study of Zionism. All this should be giving you some indication that he is an academic superstar, effortlessly shifting from one topic to another. Despite a move to more popular writing in recent years (several television series and popular history of art books) he still managed to put out a highly regarded historical work, *Rough Crossings*, which argues that the need to protect slavery motivated the American Revolution.

So to open a collection and your academic hero, much less a high powered historian, proclaims that “the American hunger for ice cream has always been an ache for a prelapsarian way of life that never was,” in a vignette on ice cream for *Vogue* that also features a recipe for “carrot, apricot, cardamom and saffron kulfi” is bemusing, to say the least.

Schama is a very famous historian. He is also, I learn through reading *Scribble, Scribble, Scribble*, a contributor to *Vogue, The New Yorker, and Harper’s* among others. He is a foodie. He’s travelled widely (his author picture was taken in the North Korean demilitarized zone). He has a sophisticated and at times exasperating vocabulary, and he’s very fond of making sweeping proclamations about the American character. Prelapsarian means before the fall from Eden. Kulfi is a milk-based frozen dessert from the Indian subcontinent.

48 of Schama’s essays are collected under assorted gerunds: “Travelling,” “Cooking and Eating,” “Remembering” etc. which imply a lot more commonality between the pieces than there actually is. Included are a few speeches from various prestigious events, a handful of longer reportage-style essays and reviews, some contributions to anthologies and catalogues, and several newspaper columns. This makes the book very difficult to read straight through, for trying to follow Schama as he dons his many hats and leaps from topic to topic with seemingly inexhaustible aplomb proves exhausting. The *Scribbles* are better suited to the occasional brief encounter. You can quite easily chuckle your way through Schama’s account of the gargantuan Queen Mary 2’s transatlantic cruise, or his keynote speech to Harvard’s Phi Beta Kappa chapter on the art of oratory, which is a delightful exercise in the craft itself.

The writing in *Scribble* is mostly non-academic. It’s lighter and more humorous, with the exception of some art criticism—Schama’s second most significant realm of expertise after straight history (unsurprisingly, he knows his Dutch painting)—and significantly more palatable than his food writing. He’s also no foreigner to the world of journalism. He served as a cultural critic for the *New Yorker*, and was recently appointed a contributing editor to the *Financial Times*. In his introduction to the collection, Schama describes journalism as the breath of fresh air he desperately needed to rescue him from drowning in historical archives. I actually found this to be the most rewarding and insightful writing of his whole collection. This is probably because Schama really likes to write about himself. Dipping in and out of his essays, jumping from a food column to a reflection on Hurricane Katrina, I learnt a surprising amount about Schama, who has stayed with me through the sunny weeks whereas much of his cultural commentary has faded.

Schama was a vision in flannel trousers and snake-skin belt as a lad. He grew up in Golders Green, in the vibrant Jewish community of east London. He had a rollicking good time at Cambridge, where his voracious intellectual and cultural appetite was nearly satisfied. He had a lot of girlfriends. These details come up time and again in the most unexpected places, and weave his far-flung prose together in a narrative that is actually consistent and quite personable. What we learn most of all about Schama though, is that he revels in the written word.
This serves him well in small doses, but is hard to forgive after 400 pages, by which time Scribble suffers from an excess of ego.

Schama has made quite a name for himself in Britain as an observer of America. Some such writing is included in the collection, under the heading “Testing Democracy.” To illustrate the arbitrariness of these headings, this section comprises four pieces for the Guardian on major American events, one on a British election, and a long essay on Anti-Semitism published on the web. Definitely the least interesting part of the book, to American readers the section comes across as patronizing and at times nonsensical—recall the proclamation that a taste for Häagen Dazs is the USA’s wish to absolve original sin. It’s worth noting that in Britain, Scribble was published with the subtitle: “Writing on Obama, ice cream, Churchill, and my mother” whereas in the USA it became “Writing on politics, ice cream, Churchill, and my mother.” Schama very much buys into the European fascination with Obama, and the flexibility in subtitling goes to show that he generalizes liberally to grab attention—Obama does not feature prominently in the book. In the dramatically titled “The Civil War in the USA,” he pronounces America divided between the “Wordly” and the “Godly,” which sounds cool, but it only takes one look at Mitt Romney for such a flimsy claim to be dismissed.

It’s not that Schama has got his facts wrong, but he’s writing with a British audience in mind, one that’s fascinated by “the American dream,” or “the American character.” Having grown up in both England and America, I’m somewhat sympathetic to this, but given that Schama has spent so long in the USA, teaching at Harvard and now “teaching” at Columbia in the Graduate School of the Arts, I’m left wondering why he won’t let go. In his review of the book version of The American Future: A History, David Brooks accurately diagnoses Schama as a self-appointed “Brilliant” writer, an outsider who proclaims outrageously pretentious insights into America by virtue of his own brilliance. This probably sounds familiar to readers of the requisite de Toqueville, who, Brooks rather brilliantly quips, “introduced the genre and ruined it by actually being brilliant.”

Schama can be brilliant, but it’s rarely on display here. Besides the wonderfully spirited introduction, my favorite piece in the collection is his short essay, which serves as the introduction to J. H. Plumb’s “Death of the Past.” Plumb was an eminent British historian and mentor to the young Schama during his time at Cambridge. He was famous for championing history that was accessible to those outside of the academy, and making the case for history as a “public craft” that engaged with the present. Schama has clearly served his legacy well in this regard, and the combination of very enjoyable personal narrative and rigorous, swift analysis in this essay is refreshing. Perhaps if he hadn’t set his sights on covering every aspect of culture and politics, encompassing every possible human action under zinging headings, the book as a whole might have been more successful. He knows his writing is pretentious, long-winded and self-indulgent. But I can forgive him because he not only admits this, but revels in it, and seeing some one who you can take so seriously let loose across the page can be fun. Fun aside, grammatically these irksome headings in their exuberant enthusiasm capture the character of the collection. They employ the continuous aspect of the verb, otherwise known as imperfect.

Illustration by Adela Yawitz
Maybe it isn’t new to you. This security-check-in-check-out existence. This metal detector beep and suitcase handle inertia existence. This “please switch off your mobile phones” and “please fasten your seatbelt” and “in case of an emergency landing” existence. This meticulously designed discomfort, this intricately orchestrated jetlag, this eighteen-plus-ID-please airplane wine intoxication existence. Because, what with swing-sets and paper-planes and twinkle twinkle

Of course it isn’t new to you, watching your mother through closing glass, and this airport terminal may as well be the door to your eighth grade summer-camp, because she’s still smoothing down your hair, telling you to stop biting your nails, warning you against strangers, asking if you packed your toothbrush, and asking if you’ll please just call us once you’ve checked in, okay? all at once.

Please don’t cry, mama, please. It’s embarrassing.

* 

It may have been fifth grade, and it may have been because of *Catcher in the Rye* and you may or may not have been grounded at the time, when you decided with some vehemence that New York City would be home. And now of course it isn’t new to you, this Empire State, this Frank Sinatra, this bohemian rhapsody existence. This tourist double-decker, I love NY, fanny pack existence. But remember that first touch-down? Remember when the ocean carpets gave way to your Lego-ideal? More blocks than you’d ever imagined, strewn haphazardly, just like you always liked. An open invitation to reconstruct the world according to your infantile preferences. Cabin crew, please prepare for landing.

“Welcome to New York” existence. Insomniacs’ anonymous existence. Snooze-button and Port Authority existence.

* 

It will make artists of us all. It will make poets of us all. It will be shamefully easy.
MEASURE FOR MEASURE

*\

E.B. White knew this. And Albert Camus knew this. Salinger knew this and Fitzgerald knew this. The Wu Tang Clan and Nicki Minaj and Jay-Z knew this. Woody Allen and Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac knew this. Now I know, also, this best-kept secret, this giant conspiracy of literacy; I know, also, how to make it here. How to make it anywhere.

Here’s the secret: if you want to be a writer, coming to New York is the cheat-code. It’s the shortcut; it’s the bribe. If you want to be a writer and you’ve come to New York, you’ve written off writers’ block. If you want to be a writer, and you come to New York, you’ve essentially demoted yourself from “author” to “transcriber;” the stories will take care of themselves, you just have to jot them down as quick as possible, memorize them between train transfers, grab whatever pen is closest and blanket your forearm in fiction. Learn this language. Grab whatever character is closest and write them down. Hide your handkerchiefs in hexameter. Layer your Grand Central layover in lists. Love-letters. Dear New York. You are the most generous of giants. You are the strangest of friends. The most manic of all muses. Yours, truly.

Because look, here’s the thing. It’s just no longer new to you; this reluctant-to-grow-up, I miss-my-mother existence. You just don’t have that kind of time. Transatlantic phone-call at 3 am because the city’s too big for you, too big like your father’s shoes, too big like difficult to walk in, tripping and stumbling all the way from Midtown to midnight to mid-life. It can’t possibly be new to you; this crisis-stricken, dusk-the-color-of-homesick existence. Jaywalk honky-tonk existence. Transfer is available to the 1, 2, and 3 existence, so stand clear of the closing doors, so come outcome out wherever you are. I could make you a list of all the churches in the city but you know that God is only real if the lights change exactly when you want them to. God is in the garbage trucks, dream-state rumbles at the crack of dawn. Skyline on a postcard existence. Too tired to say anymore than “fine, thank you” existence. Listful and listless existence. Humility and bodega man existence.

— Rega Jha, CC’13
MY BROTHER HAD THE BIC DIPPER ON HIS BACK

My brother had the big dipper
on his back until a doctor
removed one star with a glinting
silver scalpel and sewed up

the sky, leaving a puckered line,
a rip in the cosmos, a cosmetic flaw.
Both words come from kosmos,
the Greek for “order” and here we are,

all out of it. Cells outdo themselves
and become malevolent. You tell
me how that makes sense. Stars
explode and become us. You tell

me how that could be
more wonderful. Heavenly body
confusion spoils a melanin
swelled constellation. It

shouldn’t be so easy to discern
the corporeal from the celestial.

— Kate Walsh, BC’13
DIY Education

After graduating 5th grade, Dale Stephens decided it was time to take his education into his own hands. Using the “unschooling” method, Dale created his own curriculum and taught himself using textbooks and free online resources. Dale, now 19 years old, aims to apply those same self-directed methods to higher education. Winner of one of the prestigious Peter Thiel scholarships, Dale is the founder of “Uncollege,” a movement that aims to challenge the idea that college is the only path to success. He found a moment to sit down with The Blue & White contributor Matthew Schantz to discuss “Uncollege,” the Internet, and the future of higher education.

The Blue & White: When did you launch Uncollege?

Dale J. Stephens: I launched Uncollege January 23rd, 2011 and it’s been about six months since it launched. Uncollege has gone from a blog with me explaining my frustration about higher education to a global social movement.

B&W: What’s the main objective of “Uncollege,” and how are you pursuing that goal now?

DS: An important goal say in terms of what we work on?

B&W: Yes.

DS: The main objective is to change the notion that college is the only path to success. A smattering of things that we’re doing include writing a book. We’re working on creating a free software which will provide education mediums. We’re in talks with existing universities and colleges about how they can use the Uncollege approach to reinvent their student experiences.

B&W: Do you think the Internet played a large role in the Uncollege movement and, if so, how?

DS: I think the Internet has contributed in a larger sense to what education is about. Education used to be about the acquisition of information. Over the years, information has gotten cheaper. Education is currently undergoing a transition from being about the acquisition of information to about the application of information. I think that’s why you’re seeing so much press about the role of education and technology. Because we can use technology to facilitate that transfer of information, so that humans can focus on the application.

B&W: I remember, on your website, you wrote that the value of college is that it proves competency in a certain area, signals to society that you’re ready to enter the workforce, and shows you can work with other people. These professional aspects are surely central to college’s value, but there have been arguments that people, left to their own devices, will pursue only the information that will lead to success or high returns financially because of the pressures of society. They don’t have the incentive to pursue knowledge that will make them functional in other walks of life. A cross-disciplinary approach, such as a liberal arts education, will make them more functional in other walks of life. Do you think the humanities and the liberal arts have a place in the Uncollege movement?

DS: I don’t see Uncollege as being contrary to what’s traditionally seen as liberal arts. I do think it’s valuable to become a well-rounded human being, but I don’t think that precludes being self-directed. I think you’ll find that individuals, given the opportunity to choose what they want to learn, are not necessarily going to pursue the things that
THE CONVERSATION

will bring them financial return. The entire goal of the liberal arts model is predicated on the idea that humans are interested in multiple topics. We’re not just set up to go into college and to major in economics and not think about anything else for the rest of our lives. In the same way, I’ve seen that unschoolers, who are basically doing Uncollege at a pre-higher education level, will learn about a wide cross-section of things in an interdisciplinary way. They gain that liberal arts education from the world.

B&W: I was wondering what kind of things you pursued in your own unschooling career. How did you decide those were the right things to focus on? How did that shape your current philosophy about education?

DS: I left school in 6th grade because I was bored. I had spent all of 5th grade going back and forth and doing daily dittos but not actually learning anything. I felt like what I was learning in the classroom was so divorced from what I was doing in real life. In many ways, I think the experience I had as an unschooler directed my final decision. It really prepared me to thrive in the real world. The skills and the aptitudes I developed as an unschooler—to have a way to go out and find educational resources myself instead of having them just given to me—train me with the initiative, passion, motivation, and networking ability: soft skills and emotional intelligence that are required to navigate the real world.

B&W: Did you ever pursue something later and feel like you were playing catch-up with traditional students?

DS: I ensured that I met the same requirements as anybody who would have graduated from a traditional high school. I never felt like I was playing catch-up. There may have been some catch-up in the sense that I learned the same things in different ways, but ultimately it was the same information.

B&W: Returning to Uncollege as a movement that says there is an alternative to college, would you say that the main problem with college is that it’s economically inadvisable today, or that the material taught in college is too disconnected with the skills that are useful in today’s job market?

DS: I think the latter is the biggest problem—that college isn’t preparing its graduates for success. There was a study done by Northeastern University with undergrads that found that 22.4 percent of college graduates are unemployed. And another 22 percent beyond that are working in jobs that don’t require a college degree. It seems crazy to me that we’re paying so much yet learning so little.

B&W: You said earlier you were working with some universities to redesign curricula. Can you talk a bit about that?

DS: Yes, there’s a university in Spain I’ll be working with this coming year; to build a university from the ground up and design a student experience that lets students gain those skills and take the first faltering steps out from behind their desks and into the real world.

B&W: What kind of things will you be doing differently? More project learning? What kind of things will you do to break out of the traditional model?

DS: Imagine for a minute you went off to college and first semester you took four courses and the second semester you took three courses but for your fourth course you were given the learning outcomes you were expected to meet at the end of the semester, but you had to find a different way from the traditional structured formal learning environment to meet those outcomes. Either you’re going to do an internship or do a service project or an independent study or create a collaborative learning group. And slowly, more and more of your classes would be self-directed. So that by the time you finish your college experience, you’re directing your own education and won’t flounder when it comes time to direct your own life.

B&W: You write on your website that leaving college isn’t for all students. What would you recommend a young student do to decide whether college is the right fit or if they should take a more Uncollege approach?

DS: It’s a question of considering your learning style, your educational goals, and your educational
background. It’s not a question for individuals who have come out of a traditional learning background, from public school going all the way through, I wouldn’t recommend dropping out of college. The transition from being a traditional learner to self-directed learner is not an easy one. Similarly, I don’t recommend keeping cadavers in your garage—if you want to go to med school, college is probably a wise decision. But I will say that I think med school is already following an Uncollege approach. You’ve got residencies and practices and over time students take their education beyond the classroom.

B&W: Regardless of whether they choose to take an Uncollege approach, do you have any advice for first-year students?

DS: It’s ludicrous that society expects everybody to know exactly what they want to do by the time they’re 18. It’s a little bit crazy that we haven’t taken steps to help people know themselves better. And college is supposed to do that. College has become this rite of passage to adulthood where people are supposed to find themselves, but it’s incredibly difficult to find yourself in an environment that abdicates all responsibility. At college we’ve usually got parents paying our bills, and people cleaning our bathrooms, and other people cooking our meals. If people really want to find themselves, whether they pursue college or Uncollege or go out and take a job or an internship or whatever it may be, the place to learn those skills and find yourself is really at the college of hard knocks—real world experience.

B&W: What kind of resources did you use to educate yourself, and what resources would you recommend to students looking to better learn about themselves?

DS: There are a host of resources on the Uncollege website that we are making more robust. Not only can you find educational content through things like Foursquare and Khan Academy, you get access to other individuals through Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook. You can find ways to replace parts of that traditionally college experience on your own terms.

B&W: I looked through some of the resources you provide on your site and they’re great—you have lectures and all sorts of things—but sometimes you’re still lacking that one-on-one with a professor. What would you recommend for students who are seeking someone, whether it be a mentor or an instructor or a group, for a more seminar-style discussion?

DS: One of the great places is studentmentor.org, but when you’re going to seek out someone who has knowledge or expertise, you have to go find them. The great thing about the Internet is that you can access those individuals—you can send anyone an email, or you can send anyone a Tweet. The question of collaborative learning is still one that needs to be solved. I know of a couple groups that are working on solving that, but it’s not yet solved. There’s a startup called Skillshare that is organizing real-world classes that are taught by a teacher, but they haven’t gotten to the collaborative learning stage. We are at an inflection point where the Internet has provided platforms and people are starting to use it as a means to directly help education. Instead of just putting lectures online, people are starting to use [the Internet] to organize those real-world courses.

B&W: When you talk about the “problem of collaborative learning,” do you mean the problem of collaborative learning online or the problem of
collaborative learning in general?

DS: The problem of creating collaborative learning groups in the real world outside of academic institutions.

B&W: Do you feel there’s any financial commitment to unschooling and Uncollege? Whether or not the degree is worth a lot, for many it’s at least something tangible they’re working towards. Could that lack of financial security ever derail a self-guided student?

DS: There are two parts to that question. One, self-guided learning is not free. There are costs you’re going to incur, but those costs are much less than if you were to be in an institution. I, as an unschooler, spent between three and four thousand dollars a year. And that went towards engaging in classes or traveling. While it’s true that every year of education correlates to a higher salary, it’s questionable whether that’s going to be true in the future because we’re facing a bubble [in higher education] that’s as bad if not worse than the housing bubble. Student loans are unbelievable. When we have 24 million college students who are each graduating with an average of $24,000 of debt it’s hard to see what the future will be. While a bank may be able to repossess your house, the bank can’t repossess your education. We may think that higher education lives in an ivory tower, but I think it really lives in a glass castle and that glass castle is just starting to shatter.

B&W: Is Uncollege better for people who are working towards jobs that don’t require college degrees, or is it beneficial for all in today’s economy?

DS: I think Uncollege is beneficial for everyone, because it’s not about a specific learning approach or a practice. It’s about taking charge of your education, so that whether you’re in school or out of school, you know precisely what you’re doing, why you’re there, and how you’ll get there. It’s about the process—whether you’re inside of an institution or outside of it, you’re developing the skills, emotional intelligence that will prepare you to thrive in the real world.

B&W: Where do you see the Uncollege movement going in the future?

DS: I have no idea. Two months ago Uncollege was a blog; today it’s a global social movement. In another year there will be a book published. It’s exciting to be at this inflection point, where both people inside of institutions and outside of institutions are starting to realize that—things need to change.

B&W: Returning to the role of the Internet—on the website you talk about new ways of signaling thanks to sites like LinkedIn, where you can take an Uncollege approach and still show that you’re a viable work candidate who has strong skillsets that are traditionally shown through college degrees. What’s the time increase for employers parsing the background of an applicant without a few reliable heuristics—whether it be college or a high school diploma—and how do you plan to provide the same level of assurance through your ventures?

DS: Employers are increasingly having a hard time choosing amongst employees because there are so many people going to college and graduating with 3.0 GPAs that they have no way to distinguish between applicants. There are four or five groups working on solving that, that are working on coming up with an easy way to quantify what it is that people do, but we’re not there yet. The one thing that is easy to do with an Uncollege approach, if you choose to learn completely outside the institutions, is to prove yourself through real-world accomplishments. If you can show something that you built on the Internet or something that you designed or a photograph or a project that you built or interned with a company or did something tangible.

B&W: Do you think there will ever come a time when there are so many start-up entrepreneurial types that it’s more difficult for the job market and human resources to really parse through all of that?

DS: I think we’re heading towards the free-agent economy that Dan Pink talked about in A Whole New Mind. In that world, yes, I think people are going to be forging their own paths. Uncollege is just the first step. Once you see people forging their own paths through an educational program, then you see them forging their own paths through life. •
Title: Space Porn

Opening Scene: Steele/Jin: A long long time ago, in a galaxy far away. A group of freshmen and their leaders, MUCH LIKE YOURSELVES, were sitting around a firepit, on mars enjoying spacemores.

Campfire:

Person #1: Isn’t it fun that we’re all hanging out in a group together in space?

Person #2: Yeah, this is great.

Steele/Jin: Suddenly Aida & Joe’s lock eyes from across the campfire (Aida & Joe lock eyes). Here in space, with no one to stop them; they can finally let their inhibitions blast off. Since days on campus/ since summer’s start they had been imagining the day they would get to space college & meet the humanoid of their dreams. Never had Joe seen such a beautiful humanoid in all his life; and now that he was grown up and in space. THE DAY HAD FINALLY ARRIVED (Joe: lets get freaky)

I experienced the writings of Etty Hillesum as personally instructive. As the thinkers I discuss above had their romances in subtlety and with self-cultivation, I have had my own romance with Etty-as-teacher. Shyly, I approach her writing.

I am committed to my education because like my black belt, with higher education will come respect, honor, and confidence.

I saw the show the Boondocks. That show made me think about race for the first time. I began to wonder if all African Americans were like the ones represented on that show. Luckily I had a teacher that told me the real history of African Americans and I soon realized that lack people were not always how they are portrayed on TV.

Instead, the arguments of both sides are scientifically inspired, with the professional papers maintaining that the attacks are being carried out by a large, but already known sea creature, and the lay side holding it is due to a more monstrous, and as of yet unknown, creature.

My new home resembled a hotel, it surrounded by black iron gates, a crumbling playground, and roaming chickens. As I aged I comprehended that the lack of people and deteriorating surroundings gave me a sense of loneliness.

I have come to realize that television is an invention, which has resulted in more harm than good.

Humans and Robots: What’s The Difference?

As I sat at the table of the lunchroom out of the corner of my right eye I saw a pencil and from the left I saw a slightly white sheet of paper. Pencil and paper really did not matter to me right there at that moment. But the pencil was not just a pencil, it was more like a visual art piece created on the pencil as a decoration put into the palm of my hand.

I did the math because I KNOW you shifty bitches and there will only be 16 extra large dry bags once each animal group gets the 6 you need; to inspire some of you to take an actually personal-sized dry bag, I put the DOPEASS NEW DRY BAGS JD BOUGHT behind the big ones. They are mega-lime-green. However, I repeat, THE LIME GREEN BAGS ARE PERSONAL BAGS so don’t take one and try to put food or something in it.
CAMPUS GOSSIP

LOVE IN THIS CLUB
One busy Saturday night at EC, several Columbia girls were spotted passing back their IDs through the metal grate to their Barnard friends, who used the IDs to swipe in and skip the sign-in process. Really adds a whole new meaning to the phrase “Club EC.”

SPACE HIPPIE
Has anyone else noticed that the oldest “life learners” always take Astronomy and Cosmology classes? The Blue and White was trying to earn a science credit when this little old lady in “Earth, Moon, and Planets” complimented us on our bright orange shirt and offered us some of her trail mix.

CHASE UTLEY FAN PLAYS CUPID
On the 1 train at 110th Street circa 3 am, an older student is trying to convince an obviously underage girl to come drink with him.

Questionable Senior: “Come on, I know a place you can definitely get in.” (Blue and White is willing to bet it’s Tap-a-Keg.)

Underage Girl, obviously uncomfortable, shifts in her seat, sandwiched between Questionable Senior and an inebriated gentleman wearing a Phillies hat and Sixers t-shirt: “I don’t know, it’s kind of late.”

Questionable Senior: “You’ll have fun, and I’m a good guy, I swear. See, Philly guy likes me.”

Philly guy: “Go on, he looks like a solid dude.”

The girl rises slowly as the train lurches into the station, and looks wistfully at her now empty seat as she slinks toward the door. Philly guy hiccups and smiles, obviously pleased with his match-making abilities. The pair exits the train as the other seasoned New York commuters, determined not to involve themselves, stare at the floor.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN “CUE PEOPLE”? 
Two freshies walking in front of Butler:
Girl: Yeah so she came back with TONS of bugbites all over her arms and legs. And she’s not really an outdoorsy person. My friend calls her honorary CUE. She’s much more like us, like how a CUE person would typically be.
Guy: Yeah, I totally know what you mean.

FALSE START
First year on COÖP: “Getting into Columbia was the hard part, the easy part will be figuring out what I want to do with my life.”

NOT A COLUMBIA SPONSORED WATERING HOLE
At 1020, a customer holds up a Columbia ID: “Do you guys take flex?”

The bartender: “No, we don’t take fucking flex. Who do you think we are? Campo or The Heights? You just made my night.”

Take pride in the fact that you’ve never asked such a stupid question. If you have, please submit it as Gossip.

(B)ROWING OUT
The business school didn’t really need those kegs for their graduation, but the rowing team did—so they stole them for a kegger in an EC suite.

The French Revolution ... it’s mathematical.
Take a break, Mediterranean style.

Welcome to Vareli. A neighborhood restaurant that’s also worth the trip from almost anywhere. Have a seat at our 20 foot polished copper bar and enjoy a beer, some wine or fine Mediterranean small plates and full meals. Or maybe you’d like to sample some of our extraordinary artisanal cheeses and charcuterie. Or head upstairs to our comfortable and casual dining. Whatever your mood, Chef Amitur Mor and Sommelier Richard Bill are here to take very good care of you.

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