The Perfect Season
Why football fumbles (and who cares)

They’re Watching (Out for You)
Increasing security and surveillance at Columbia

Also Inside: Justice in the City That Never Sleeps
THE BLUE AND WHITE

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theblueandwhite.org

COVER: “Day and Night in Butler” by Alexandra and Grayson Warrick
At Columbia, it’s easy to tell who we want to be. See: the tweedy academics-in-training, groused-up athletes, chain smoking internationals, boat-shoed fraternity brothers, outre’ hipsters, Barbour-wearing preps, etc.

I ran into an acquaintance from freshman year the other day. We hadn’t spoken since 2010. “What are you studying?” I asked, by way of small-talk (figuring by strong chin that he studied economics). “Econ,” he said. He’s got an offer from a bank. “You?” “English,” I replied, before we both paused: “Oh, cool, yeah.”

We live in our in-groups. We share a suite, or a fraternity house, or a Spec office, where we can let ignore whatever group stands against ours. We run around in circles, and those circles rub elbows at 1020 or Beta or Mel’s.

(That’s one very different thing about first semester. We haven’t yet fully created our college selves, and so we aren’t automatically prejudiced against others. I enjoy spending time with my freshman year friends—and if I met them today, we probably wouldn’t be friends.)

But that’s not what I care about now. Of course we dress and think like our friends, and gather in the same places. What I’m concerned about is after graduation.

Because now, when I come upon the pre-professional whose contract is already signed, sealed, and delivered at JP Morgan—and he comes across me, thinking I don’t know what—we do hate one another a little bit.

But we have to be civil: we’re both students here. We were both in Butler last night—we have some stuff in common, even if ideologically we’re anathemic. Even if we talk shit about one another in our groups, we still are part of a community here. So we nod, “Oh, cool, yeah.” Here, the econ major and the gender studies major usually have the decency to appear to take one another a little bit.

But we have to be civil: we’re both students here. We were both in Butler last night—we have some stuff in common, even if ideologically we’re anathemic. Even if we talk shit about one another in our groups, we still are part of a community here. So we nod, “Oh, cool, yeah.” Here, the econ major and the gender studies major usually have the decency to appear to take one another a little bit.

After graduation, once we’ve really self-sorted, this won’t be so.

— Conor Shelding

**TRANSACTIONS**

**ARRIVALS**
- Bollinger in Speer
- Mozzarella sticks in JJs
- Barnard signage

**DEPARTURES**
- Doughnut Plant at Joe’s
- Pizza at John Jay
- Leaves and grass
- Heating (in dorms)
- Another crop of student leaders

**COME AGAIN??**

“If you would never judge that someone was admitted to Columbia on the basis of their skin color or ethnic background, how can you judge that someone else was admitted to Columbia on the basis of their batting average instead of their term as president of their student council?”

— Daniela Quintanilla, CC ’14, in Spectrum

**Across**
1. At CU we’re tweakin’ on ____ ____.
2. Formerly sold at Crack Del
4. Literary society
6. Credible News Source
8. I go for the culture, and the baklava.
12. I love that jacket, ____?
16. I think it rhymes with pukin’.
19. Do any of you guys believe in ____?
21. Eat where you read, talk while you eat.

**Down**
1. That marching band poster was so _____.
5. Philanthropic Community Leaders
7. Why would I go to a party in the ____ ____?
9. The bald head of the CU campus.
11. They lose
13. Our favorite PoMo structure.
14. Don’t you care about pediatric AIDS?
15. The Man Who Knew Too Much (eventually)
18. They allocate a mean budget.
20. I hope it doesn’t rain on my ____ boots.
22. This john jay roll tastes like _____.

Solutions are on page 44.
You may have had the fortune of encountering, on your daytime Broadway sojourns, the community of itinerant booksellers who sell their stuff in Columbia’s shadow. Among them is Larry, who boasts of having sold his wares (via Amazon) to places as diverse and book-loving as Sarah Palin’s hometown and the Singaporean zoo, and who bears a vague resemblance to a beret-wearing Godfather; who, when asked for his name instead spelled out his Gmail and responded to subsequent queries with exuberant proclamations of “I give up!”; and Steve, a former musician and magazine writer who, in acquiescence to your request that he share some with exuberant proclamations of “I give up!”; and...
Columbia's own Dubrovnik-born mad hatter insists that Croatia left an indelible mark on him. "Culturally, I often appear in the U.S. kind of brusque, blunt, which is something Americans don't do, there's a lot of going around things [...] [like small talk] which I learned to love." Though gregarious and sociable, Roko Rumora, CC'14, holds fast to some measure of his Croatian bluntness.

“I don’t fuck around [...] about my opinions on Columbia culture,” particularly, he notes, the tendency toward masochistic self-congratulations: people one-uping each other, comparing their grueling schedules or how little sleep they need to survive. Those anxieties he says, bear minimally on reality.” No where else is [that] as true as within the field of Art History,” insists the Art History major. This toxic comparison, Roko explains, makes him feel guilty; the feeling good—and Columbia’s academic rigor pales compared to Croatia’s entirely meritocratic grading system where “curving and allotting As to 30 percent of a class” is unheard of.

Recalling what he was like as a freshman, Roko dismissively admits “I was overly ambitious in all the wrong ways.” During his first two years at Columbia, Roko served as a CCSC representative. There he felt “disillusioned [...] we talked about problems that aren’t real.” He became frustrated by members’ persistent sense of entitlement, when “half the [class] didn’t know who they were.”

He cautions, “There’s a big difference between making a difference and having a presence on campus. [...] Roko believes he will graduate knowing that he had a presence here, but reserves his difference-making energies for Croatia. For his work in organizing against education inequality, Jared Odesky, CC’15, says “[Roko] was named one of the Top 10 Influential Croats of 2008 and Top 40 Most Successful Croats Under 40 by two different Croatian newspapers.” Eric Schwartz, SEAS’14, insists that “Roko is one of the most Googlable people at Columbia.” I Google “Roko Rumora” and find photos of a slightly lankier high school Roko in a grey hoodie and lose t-shirt speaking into microphones at a Croatian press conference.

Roko tells me that he is now known for his online social presence, where he displays his “knack for presenting things in this kind of faux cynical way that people seem to really enjoy.” One of his more popular Facebook posts reads: “I just stole thirty helium balloons from College Walk on my way back from the gym. I did it just to feel alive.” A lot of the things he does are “attention-seeking precisely because [they’re] somewhere on the scale between extraverted and narcissistic, and that’s fine.”

He spoke that forthrightly throughout our conversation, demonstrating his aversion to vagaries and chat-chit; mindless talk contributed to his decision to leave Columbia as an Oxbridge Scholar. Roko found that Oxford was the “mental equivalent of the P90x workout.”

After returning to Columbia, he steered clear of CCSC and on-campus activities. Instead, he interned at Christie’s, the prestigious art auction house, which provides “a whole host of events and responsibilities.” He makes time to leave campus every week. For international students, “your time is limited.”

I ask whether he is ready to graduate, and Roko unflinchingly replies that he’s ready to work. And unless he finds a job, he will have to apply for a visa to return to New York. He notes, somewhat dejectedly, “I’m going to leave and it’s all going to be across the ocean.”

— Somer Omar

Illustrations by Paulina Mangubat

THE BLUE AND WHITE

DECEMBER 2013

8

BRIANA SADDLER

“I’m always open to entertaining different ideas, and looking into other organizations that I can get involved in and contribute to.”

Coming from anyone else, this earnestness reads like a general platitude from a PR-happy Columbia admissions brochure. But from Briana Saddler, CC ‘14, it has a truthful ring.

Her résumé is chock full of student groups and extracurricular commitments (read: Orisha Pan African Dance, NSOP, and CCSC). Though she’s not certain of what she’d like to do long-term after graduation, she has found herself wondering, how “am I going to give back to Mississippi?”

“In many ways I was very privileged to grow up…with a family that was able to send me here and to give me these new forms of knowledge [...] But I think it doesn’t really mean anything unless I’m able to give that back, in some way, to the place that I came from.”

— Tosten Odland

Illustrations by Paulina Mangubat
Do you know what
you're talking about?

Anna will argue that I don’t know what I’m talking about. Well, fine. Neither does she.

I know that you can’t be alone, and you can’t be together. You stay home, and there’s Facebook—there are the 44 likes on your rival’s status, some of them from your mutual friends. Your rival posted an article somebody else wrote, plus one “sentence” of “analy-
sis” (e.g., “such an important and brave piece”). You go out, and there’s your goddamn friend, tapping away with their thumbs, liking that post, or sending missives to someone who, while they’re not present, is evi-
dently more immediate. Then there are the miserable people whose entire earthly lives are only a break from Temple Run.

Now I’m drinking with friends.

And one of those friends is a self-styled photographer (this means that they own something called a DSLR, which is a camera that costs more than $1,000). And since they are a photographer, they must docu-
mnet their lives (that is called being authentic).

And since they must docu-
mnet their lives with their DSLR, they have assumed the superhuman power of capturing one moment, one perspective, still immor-
ting it. “Immortalizing it” might be overstating it. But it is safe to say that whatever image they “cre-
ate” will last until the end of human civilization. Depending whom you ask, this means between sev-
eral months and several billion years.)

Depending whom you ask, this means between sev-
eral months and several billion years.)

I remember, in 2005, it wasn’t yet acceptable to spend all one’s time in front of a computer. The Internet was still for losers. Now we’re all hunched over our computers. Yesterday I was walking down 39th Street, engrossed by some bullshit email. Somebody yelled at me, “Pay at-
tention!”

Then there are the people who say, “But with Google Books, we can read any public domain book ever written!” To that I say these two things:

(1) When Herodotus’s Histories faces off against every depravity imaginable, guess which wins? What did that widely acclaimed puppet-play say?

(2) That depends on how we define the terms “read” and “book.”

Lee C. Bollinger and the Undergraduate Committee on Global Thought’s committee on online education, will hypo-
critically say that MOOCs mean democ-
ratization of education. Tell that to the English adjunct at Big State U who’s lost his job because the Senior Associate Dean of Quality Control decided it’d be more cost-effective and brand-strengthening to license a “Harvard-
quality” Shakespeare lecture than pay him $6,000 per semester. And then tell that to the poor sons of bitches around the globe coughing up for that MOOC who, unlike students at a particular school in Boston, can’t actually talk with this renowned Harvard Shakespearean.

Food and sex. That’s all we’ve got.

AFFIRMATIVE

By Conor Skelding

So we underwent 1999/2000. Y2K. I was eight years old then. That was pre-9/11. That was back when the phrase “checking my email” had discrete meaning. Now, we read incoming emails within 30 sordid seconds of their arrival.

You’re trying to care for the human soul and come off as condescending. That derisive brand of dogmatism—the easy dichotomy of hero and villain, of the dumb people who post vacantly on Facebook and the smart people who live in the Real World—
makes meaningful connection practically impossible.

I don’t have the data to disagree. Sure, the Internet might be destroying my ability to focus. It’s totally possible that I’m less inclined to read the classics when there’s so much goddamn interesting “critical theory” about Yeats. That is bad. But it’s worse to continue the tradition of intel-
lectual arrogance that tells us the Western canon is Good and everything else is Less Good.

In fact, it seems to me that you’re guilty of the facile Facebook arguments you revile: instead of name dropping Histories (we get it! you took Lit Hum!) and vague references that tell us Yeezus! That is bad. But it’s worse

to apply Herodotus’ work to your rationale. As far as I can tell, you’ve swallowed names without digesting thoughts. Engage with the texts, don’t score smart points with vague references.

I, too, worry that the “online classroom” elimi-
nates those special academic exchanges when you really learn—conversations with professors over cof-
fee or after class, not with a spotty Skype connection. I agree that it’s legitimate to protect the interests of the intellectual elite: the words of Aristotle and Woolf and Baldwin can’t be lost to Temple Run. But for such perennial insights to endure, their magic might be best preserved through a new medium.

Of course, the Kindle might boast some sub-
jective superiority over the iPhone. Maybe reading online is OK but texting crosses a line? I can’t keep up with your scathing scoring system.

At least the illustrious webpages of the New
York Times style section agree you know what’s up: (“Online, RU Really Reading?”, “Generation Text, Living on a Screen”). Tell me you haven’t rolled your eyes every time the paper rolls out its new take on narcissistic millennial life.

And yet, here you are, frantic that kids can’t unplug, instead of wondering why they’re stuck to screens. I’m concerned you don’t recognize that the time you spend ranting about cellphone addictions might be better used considering why that dependency is attractive.

It’s not being plugged in that distracts us from present-mindedness, it’s fear of judgment. When I’m alone in public, my immediate instinct is to pull out my phone and mindlessly scroll through email. Not because I’m braindead, but because I suffer from an irrepressible anxiety of being purposeless. Maybe, more honestly, it’s an anxiety about the unsolicited pity of passersby. “Why doesn’t he have anyone to be with?”

Yeah, it’s silly to quantify your likeability by racking up comments on your compulsive photo-uploads. But it is sickeningly self-righteous to accuse me of conceit or superficiality because I haven’t yet learned to be comfortable alone with my thoughts. And if I get a little joy from a retweet, I’ll take it where I get it.

When New York City installs padlocks on all of its telephone poles to protect texting-and-walking folk from cracking their skulls open, I’ll mourn with you.

But food and sex is all we’ve got? Spare me.

NEGATIVE

By Anna Bahra

for someone who believes “words mean some-
thing,” Conor should think more carefully about his own. Frankly, I find your chaotic argument to be as offensive as you find the thoughtless framing of shared Facebook articles (“Important” and “Brave”). I’m really not sure you know what you’re talking about—it’s hard to, when you don’t take time to see between extremes.

December 2013

Illustrations by Angel Jiang
Hailed cast on College Walk from 116th Street, Verily Veritas passed the usual dozens of bulletin boards, every one papered with posters from several departments, institutes, centers, etc., every one advertising various lectures, talks, panels, etc. on global issues across the globe.

Pander away, V. V. muttered; he’d attend not one of those talks. He wanted some goddamned rigor—too much to ask, perhaps, in 2013, in the age of Twitter, in the age of screens. But he wanted it.

(Screens! Big screens! Hand-held screens! Screens through which one sees the world, and which got between one and the world in the process! Tahrir Square! #OWS)

Spare him, readers. Spare him. For Christ’s sake, spare him. V. V. won’t be live-tweeting for it.

“Booting up his MacBook Air, Verily Veritas groaned. Christ, if his personal computer wasn’t the sexiest thing in his life. (And how fucking sad was that, as impersonal as it was—as identical was it was to the other seven MacBooks at his table in the Reference Room.)

The tempora, the mores... There was nothing for it.

The professor were forever unanswered and misunderstood.

How many fathomed the hours poured into that masterwork?

How many imagined that degree of devotion? No—dilettantes, everyone, and not of the right sort.

“You deserve it!” That’s what they—his peers—told one another, constantly. That’s what his peers told one another, on special occasions, e.g., on the fifth straight Thursday night they drank away with jello shots. That’s what they told one another when they absconded to France for a year to “figure things out.”

Instead, his fellows tweeted and re-tweeted. They liked this, that, and the other on Facebook: “Thirteen Reasons You Should Get Out of the Library and Go Out”; “Nine Ways Life After College Is Not Like College”; “Ten Simple Strategies For A More Healthy, Happy, Productive, Meaningful, Spiritual Life.” They checked into Butler Library on FourSquare, but checked nothing out.

Colloquium. Lopor—or I speak. In an age of digital dialogue, your anti-hero talked with everyone and no one.

In the important thing, therefore, Tom had his way, and went back to the dormitories triumphant.

But the question was not popular. This was serious business.

“I move you,” said Tom, “that we pass a by law or something, making it a misdemeanor to We shouldn’t give them comfort and aid."

It began, I believe, among our enemies, the non-fraternity men. They wish to make us ridiculous."

“Not in freshman year,” contradicted Woolsey. “There’s a prerequisite for American History.”

“Our refer to the professors?”

“English and math.”

“You refer to the professors?”

“Not in freshman year,” contradicted Woolsey. “There’s a prerequisite for American History.”

“I know,” sir—I should have Contemporary Civilization first, but I wanted American History, and nobody noticed the mistake till the Dean sent for me, and then it was the only course I was passing, so he let me stay. I wish I had more of it, instead of this stuff in Contemporary Civilization.”

“Stuff, eh?”

“But pardon, I suppose it’s all right, but I thought from the name it would be contemporary, and now they say we can’t appreciate the present unless we take a glimpse at the past. This week we’re just leaving ancient Egypt, on the way up to Greece.”

John Erskine, CC 1900, is best known as the founder of General Honors, the course that went on to become Literature Humanities. Erskine innovatively argued that classic texts could be read in translation and discussed by undergraduates. Less known is his 1934 novel Bachelor of Arts—the story of Alec Hamilton, who arrives at Columbia College immature and arrogant and leaves, four years later, a man.

As a freshman, Hamilton is frustrated with college and takes his concerns to the respected Professor Woolsey, prompting the following exchange:

“What are your courses taking?”

“English and math.”

“Let’s stop there. What’s the matter with them?”

“They don’t get anywhere, sir. I’ve had a lot of English. But that’s all right—I’m used to it. I can write five hundred words an hour—that comes to only eight and a third words a minute. That ought to satisfy the Department, if you can believe what they say in the catalog. The math’s hard, but that’s all right, too. I’ve always flunked math. I’m taking a lot of history—American.”

“In an age of Twitter, in the age of screens! Screens! Screens! Big screens! Hand-held screens.

In the tone of the final scenes in the novel, Alec, now a senior, watches his friend Tom raise serious business at a meeting of their fraternity, Phi Phi Phi.

Tom struggled on. “One last thing I want to speak of. Another danger to our reputation. I’ve noticed a lot of you fellows say ‘frat’ instead of fraternity. The custom is spreading over the campus. It began, I believe, among our enemies, the non-fraternity men. They wish to make us ridiculous. We shouldn’t give them comfort and aid.”

How much should we give them, sir?—I should have Contemporary Civilization first, but I wanted American History, and nobody noticed the mistake till the Dean sent for me, and then it was the only course I was passing, so he let me stay. I wish I had more of it, instead of this stuff in Contemporary Civilization.”

“Stuff, eh?”

“But pardon, I suppose it’s all right, but I thought from the name it would be contemporary, and now they say we can’t appreciate the present unless we take a glimpse at the past. This week we’re just leaving ancient Egypt, on the way up to Greece.”
They’re Watching (Out for You)

Increasing security and surveillance at Columbia

BY NAOMI COHEN

Three years ago, in the years before public scrutiny of Facebook’s privacy policy and majority opinion about the National Security Association soured, a Columbia student posted a comment on his Facebook wall about Julian Assange. The comment was a joke about Gossip Girl. Non-political.

In a matter of hours, the student received a message from Columbia University Information Technology (CUIT) in his Cubmail inbox. The message strongly suggested that he take down the post. Words like “Julian Assange” attract unwanted attention. Heeding CUIT’s words of caution and took the post down: The student asked to remain anonymous.

As headlines shift students’ attention to federal and transnational surveillance, it becomes easy to forget the potential for data mining and monitoring on Columbia’s own campus network. Columbia-provided Internet, email services, and physical security are set up to protect students outside threats. The university does this job well: according to the first Blue and White illustrations about Julian Assange, the student posted a comment on his Facebook wall about Julian Assange. The comment was a joke about Gossip Girl. Non-political.

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The most effective determinants of security policy are public scandals. Public Safety surveillance escalated after PETA protested animal testing on College Walk in 2003 and after 2006 when student and non-student protesters stormed the stage during a talk by Jim Gilchrist, the head of the Minutemen border vigilante group.

Vice President of the Department of Public Safety Jim McShane was hired months after the first protest and promoted months after the second; throughout his tenure, he has increased the volume of security cameras on campus by 50 percent.

“I think it’s a wonderful device,” said McShane. “I’ve worked very hard to increase the number of cameras.” There are now almost 3,000 cameras on Columbia property—rumored to be the highest concentration of security cameras in Manhattan. McShane declined to comment on the strategic placement of cameras, but said that updated technologies now allow cameras to zoom in on high-resolution images that automatically show up on the central office monitor when an associated building alarm goes off.

According to a Public Safety officer, who asked to remain anonymous because of privacy stipulations in his contract, buildings under construction have significantly more cameras than older ones. Another member of Public Safety, who asked to remain anonymous for job security, said that many have audio capabilities, adding that all campus phones are tapped. One skilled member of the tech crew that installed the cameras now works for the State Department.

After a protest-turned-scuffle two years ago, Public Safety was told to alter its strategies. “The University wants Public Safety to move away from confrontational situations,” said the Public Safety officer. In response to these demands, the officer said that Public Safety is increasing its preventative measures to avoid active intrusion. “Our role is to protect, observe, and report.”

Where video surveillance is inadequate, Public Safety deploys plainclothes sergeants. These sergeants stand in areas most targeted for theft or, according to the Public Safety officer, record their own videos at student rallies.

One such sergeant, Branko Yurisak, has a reputation for recording videos of Public Safety officers shirking duties while on the job. The Director of Morningside Operations used this footage to fire Public Safety officers who were supposedly underperforming, according to several officers. Yurisak, who declined requests for an interview, described his job as “quality and integrity control”—a general function of all Public Safety supervisors.

Public Safety surveillance affects anyone on Columbia property; Internet and data surveillance affects anyone with a Columbia U/M or who uses the university network; that includes Wi-Fi and information resources such as university computers and servers.

CUIT manages all routers, switches, and cabling for computers, TV’s, and cell phones on campus, so it is privy to all information passing between these devices. Live information, including Internet browsing, connections between computers, and illegal downloading, can potentially be catalogued in the system, which also stores logs of IP swipes into buildings, Social Security Numbers, and financial data. CUIT technologically capable to locate students through their phones’ Wi-Fi connection.

Because a student wouldn’t know if his or her information was intercepted, examples of the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) or Public Safety exercising its privileges can potentially be catalogued in the system, which also stores logs of IP swipes into buildings, Social Security Numbers, and financial data. CUIT technologically capable to locate students through their phones’ Wi-Fi connection.

According to McShane, the department is in contact with the 26th precinct—and Student Affairs—every day, conducts joint investigations, and holds “a very positive collaboration.” Among the senior Public Safety administrators, Hanif said that the neutral response of Morningside Operations used this footage to fire Public Safety officers who were supposedly underperforming, according to several officers. Yurisak, who declined requests for an interview, described his job as “quality and integrity control”—a general function of all Public Safety supervisors.

CUIT maintained all records, switches, and cabling for computers, TV’s, and cell phones on campus, so it is privy to all information passing between these devices. Live information, including Internet browsing, connections between computers, and illegal downloading, can potentially be catalogued in the system, which also stores logs of IP swipes into buildings, Social Security Numbers, and financial data. CUIT technologically capable to locate students through their phones’ Wi-Fi connection.

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students through the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVIS) as a condition for the university hosting students from abroad. Columbia, as a certified school, is obligated to report changes in student information and events that could jeopardize students’ visa status. As a high-profile, globally-focused, elite university, Columbia attracts non-OGC intelligence gatherers that hold enough authority to demand the information directly.

CUIT’s occasional use of cloud services raises additional privacy concerns. At the end of 2012, Lionmail moved onto Google’s GMail infrastructure, which means disclosure of information to US courts or other forms of government requests and surveillance depends on the discretion and security model of Google, not only those of Columbia.

The Federal Bureau of Investigations only has to file with a judge for a search warrant, which requires more specifics; request metadata, which is tougher to decline legally; or use CIPAV, a spy-ware tool that is authorized with the approval of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. The OGC can only respond to requests for information from any agency on legal terms.

While politically-oriented groups may be suspicious of attentive eyes, Public Safety views itself as a watchful parent. Another Public Safety officer, who also asked to remain anonymous for job security, reported that, since the Minutemen protests, “any protest or rallies has plainclothes officers to keep outsiders who may come inside and try to interrupt what is going on.” The bigger and more controversial the event, the more officers are present. Requests for student privacy in spaces like dorms and libraries tend to be respected: video cameras are only installed at the entrances, though Resident Advisors and security guards are expected to report certain sightings and activities.

CUIT is much the same. “They don’t re-garnish their mission to protect individual students’ privacy on their own computers,” said Internet security specialist and computer science professor Steven Bellovin. CUIT’s job is to make the university’s computers and networks secure.

Despite adaptive policies and routine monitoring for compromised data and unauthorized access, the Information Security Office will never be able to secure the system entirely. “Everything is broken and old and crusty,” said a Columbia alumnus and security researcher. As in any large IT infrastructure—especially one with such diverse needs as Columbia—bugs are inevitable.

Leakage happens. In both 2007 and 2010, thousands of Columbia-affiliated Social Security Numbers were leaked. At the Chaos Communication Conference in 2010, German hackers presented how to reprogram and extract data from the same type of smart card as the Columbia ID.

The CNet kiosk computers installed around campus are also infrequently updated with security patches, which means any bugs CUIT doesn’t recognize could give hackers administrative access. The kiosks use sizeable pieces of software like LibreOffice, Firefox, and XFCE, which provide a large vulnerable target that security specialists and hackers can potentially exploit.

Bellovin said that, while CUIT works to stay ahead of hackers with amateur-to-moderate skill level—he listed teens, virus writers, and disgruntled employees—they likely do not have the capability to catch “advanced persistent threats” (APTs). The term is commonly referred to espionage agencies that employ skilled hackers who can avoid almost all detection.

“It is certainly possible that foreign governments are trying to hack into Columbia University, either because they want [...] some technical information, or because they want to keep tab on their nationals,” said Bellovin. “I haven’t heard of such things, but the repeated suggestion is that certain governments are doing this thing for economic espionage.”

Much like a spike in thefts that prompted Public Safety to email Columbia with safety protocols last month, growing concerns over data security prompted CUIT to advertise safety protocols all semesters. In October and November, CUIT updated its entire policy library, which now “formalizes the risk management program which we have launched, and defines the controls required to mitigate [data insecurity],” said Medha Bhadokar, Chief Information Security Officer.

The new policies clarify terms, consolidate guidelines from previous policies and from the medical campus, and, based off of research and discussions this summer, establish rules that facilitate even more consistent and effective monitoring. All policy changes must be approved by the Administrative Policy Advisory Council, which consists of representatives from all departments and schools, including Bhadokar, and are soon after published online. CUIT is not obligated to notify the school of any changes.

No University policy represents a contract, according to the Essential Policies website, “What the University is saying is, ‘Trust us,’ and the reader gets to pick,” said Columbia law professor Eben Moglen, who is on leave to lead a lecture series entitled Snowden and the Future. Because Columbia is a non-profit, it “basically sustains no regulation of any kind” except for peremptory control in the New York State courts, which is rare. CUIT follows the OGC’s command, which largely responds to the university president and the Trustees: “their opinion is, for most purposes, final,” said Moglen.

Students have so many points of contact with the University, be they on or off Columbia property, that they cannot avoid all video surveillance or potential interception of data. Even if Students for Justice for Palestine avoid Lionmail, their rallies still require event reviews that mandate Public Safety presence.

CUIT does offer a few services that can be used “not as some point, but as a shield,” according to Moglen. An easy tool: kiosk computers, which are used by multiple people without requiring log-ins, make it difficult for CUIT to locate individual student activity. To remain incognito, the kiosk user must not log into university accounts and should choose a kiosk out of sight of cameras and with physical access not impaired by an ID card swipe.

For the more advanced: CUIT supplies “shell access” to a Unix system it operates called CUNIX via the heavily encrypted and secure SSH protocol. Such access allows users to securely tunnel Internet traffic through Columbia’s network. For example, a student studying abroad in a country with Internet censorship could connect to the Internet securely through CUNIX.

To anonymize all Internet traffic, students may use Tor, a system originally developed by the US Naval Research Laboratory that hides users’ IP addresses. To encrypt emails and attachments, students can use Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) via the free open source GNU Privacy Guard (GPG). Encryption services tend to demand a certain level of proficiency, but they currently offer the best way to keep personal information private.

Students less concerned about hackers and university use of data can still opt to protect their information from third parties. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects educational, personally identifiable, and directory information; the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) protects medical information; and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA) protects financial information. Once a student requests these protections, CUIT cannot disclose the relevant information to a third party without prior permission from the student.

“One of the things that is true in living in a surveillance society is there is no departure of surveillance,” Moglen said. “Surveillance becomes a way that everything works, and because everything works a little differently, it works differently everywhere those things are.”

When presented with the choice between security and privacy, CUIT listens to the lawyers of the OGC; Public Safety follows the command of NYPD veterans. Neither is infallible: CUIT is constantly catching up with its own system, and Public Safety is constantly testing and purging its own staff. Both also rely on a strong relationship of trust with the student body.

The more places these departments can access, the greater their monopoly of student data, and the more effectively they can do their jobs—and the jobs of others. Unless students learn encryption and dodge university services whenever they can, all they can do is evaluate. The student whose casualty reference to Julian Assange on Facebook may accept Columbia’s watchful intervention as friendly.

Assange might not...
Postbac to the Future

The students who are changing the chemistry in pre-med classes
BY CHANNING PREND

“Fuck no. I would probably be failing all my classes if I acted like I did as an undergrad!” Sarah Karron, GS ’15, exclaimed. “When I was in college, I went out at least four nights a week.”

I first met Karron at Professor David Reichman’s Gen Chem office hours. She seemed aggressive, and I avoided making eye contact with her at all costs.

“Will we be expected to know this for the midterm?” “Does this principle extend to polar covalent bonds?” “Do we need to be comfortable applying this model to heteronuclear diatomic molecules?” “bonds?”

“Will we be expected to know this for the midterm?” “Does this principle extend to polar covalent bonds?” “Do we need to be comfortable applying this model to heteronuclear diatomic molecules?”

“Yeah … what about you?” I stammered.

“Members of the postbac community are bound by a shared and deep commitment to academic excellence,” said Victoria Rosner, Associate Dean of the Postbac Program.

“Whoa.”

Choi put it more bluntly, “We’re all trying to get good grades.”

With acceptance rates as low as 2.1 percent for the top medical schools, its not surprising that postbacs are so concerned with their academics. “Med school admissions is less holistic than undergrad,” Hart commented. “GPA and MCAT scores are some of the most important factors.”

The postbac program has many resources to help students through this ruthless application process. “We have a staff of full time advisors, study groups, academic tutors, MCAT prep, and even some linkage programs that allow students early placement into selected medical schools,” Rosner listed. These opportunities result in nearly 90 percent of Columbia postbacs being accepted into medical school upon first application.

This statistic, however, doesn’t always comfort. “I’m trying not to think that far ahead,” Karron stated. “Right now I just need to make sure I don’t fail all my classes.”

Postbacs share many of the same goals and values. “Students in the program feel an immense amount of camaraderie,” Rosner declared.

For many, these relationships are confined to the classroom though. “We see each other in office hours and at study groups,” Hart stated. “But the foundation of these friendships is essentially doing work… and bitching about classes.”

“I think there was some sort of postbac Halloween party recently,” Andrew Proto, GS ’15, noted. “However, no one that I spoke with actually went.”

Haveneyet 309, are inherently different. “The postbacs really capitalize on the resources available to them,” Professor Reichman said. “But many of them have been out of school for years. They don’t have an immediate grasp of the material, like a freshman who took AP Chem last year.”

To make up for this discrepancy, postbacs will continue to overachieve in Gen Chem classes throughout Columbia. “It’s never too late to pursue something you’re passionate about,” Proto exclaimed. “Oh God, that sounded so cliché. But it’s actually true!”

Illustration by Anne Scotti

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Singing Praise

Speaker Series

Coming undone at the Cloisters
By Naomi Sharp

“Transcendent” was how one visitor to the Cloisters, quoted in the New York Times, described “The Forty Part Motet.” Other publications were similarly affected, characterizing the sound piece as “haunting” and “achingly beautiful.”

The recording starts with muffled voices. Then a breath, a cough, a rustle, a quiet laugh. It seems at first like the sounds are coming from the people circling the oval of speakers, but the muted chatter comes from the speakers themselves. After a few minutes, a voice in the background says, “We’ll go through it one more time, really go for it, and then we’ll take a little breath.” Then silence, before one person begins to sing.

Heads swivel towards the sound. Some do—other listeners stand still, eyes closed, through the eleven-minute piece. A few people lie down under the crucifix hanging from the ceiling, as though stargazing. Couples gravitate towards each other, holding hands, and parents scoop up their toddlers. A couple couples.

More voices pick up and harmonize, weaving in and out of the piece. It’s beautiful music. Hearing the sound swell to fill the small chapel would be moving from underwater. Everything moves slowly.

Depending on where and how you stand, on whether you move, the piece sounds differently each time you hear it. Cardiff chose a 16th century a cappella choral piece, Spem in alium numquam habui (“In No Other Is My Hope”), by Thomas Tallis, a Tudor composer. Tallis wrote the piece for forty singers, giving each of them a slightly different part. In the exhibit, a recording of the eleven-minute piece plays straight through.

Technology doesn’t replicate the energy of a live, human performance. But a live performance has limitations too. Some things are socially unacceptable: you wouldn’t jump onstage to feel the hum of an amp with your fingers or hover over some unlucky singer. By replacing the people with speakers, which are even about the height of an average person, Cardiff offered listeners the chance to hear the piece from over a singer’s shoulder. To listen from the place a chorister would, or as a conductor. That was the heart of the exhibit for me, why it was so good. Technology didn’t erase the human element; it reminded everyone of it.

The Forty Part Motet is the first work of contemporary art ever exhibited at the Cloisters. The sound installation, created by Canadian artist Janet Cardiff, found a temporary home in the Fuenteiduena Chapel, to commemorate the Cloisters’ 75th anniversary.

Cardiff chose one of the oldest surviving pieces of music, in the 15th century motet for 40 voices, composed by Thomas Tallis around 1556. The piece has echoes of Tallis’s voice. The piece sounds pretty much the same as it might have 500 years ago.

The Federalist, and The Columbian.

Illustration by Angel Jiang

December 2013

Lerner Better

Architectural Indigestion

Students stop expecting space in their student center
By Daniel Stone and Sean Augustine-Obi

No one really likes Lerner Hall; the building’s cold plexiglass facade doesn’t inspire fondness. Unfortunately, Lerner is the only building on campus that every student must enter with some regularity.

The building the hard sell.) But students’ regular awkward encounters with the space have engendered a collective rejection of the building, and the sense that the building is an obstacle to be worked around.

Recently, much has been written about space-related issues at Columbia. In November, the Spectator published a two-part article in which they interviewed deans, members of the student council, and the president of the Student Wellness Project. It searched for sources of disillusionment about the perceived lack of community space on campus.

The student council presidents there shared their views on the space problem. “If we cannot increase the space we have, maybe using the space better,” is the best alternative, said Siddhant Bhatt, SEAS ’14 and president of ESC. “It’s so hard to have one place to be students together. A lot of community can be found just by creating spaces to mingle. We see Lerner as a place that hasn’t been doing that so far,” said Daphne Chen, CC ’14 and president of CCSC.

A later editorial suggested that students form an undergraduate committee to more clearly define community and discuss the misallocation of space.

In an interview, Scott Wright, Vice President of Student Services, advocated an increase in “open space”—space that is not reservable for events and has no glass partition separating it from the rest of the building. Wright said that in order to implement these sweeping changes, multiple spaces including the package center would need to be vacated, which would inconvenience most if not all undergraduates who receive mail during the school year. As a result, the changes would have to be completed during the summer. Without a detailed proposal, however, it is difficult to estimate the costs of the aforementioned renovations. Nevertheless, Wright hopes to make his ideal into a reality over the summers of 2014 and 2015.

The discussion about problems of space on campus has been characterized as being more of an issue of perception than actual substance. However, a pattern has emerged whereby formerly student-run spaces have been repurposed for administrative functions. For example, on Lerner’s 5th floor, now home of the Office of Student Development, Residential Programs, and Multicultural Affairs, only a few rooms can be regularly reserved by students on Lerner’s website. On the website, rooms 568, 569, 570, 572, 573, in addition to the Satow Room and Black Box Theatre, are designated as reservable space through University Events Management for student group meetings and performances.

Yet the floor plan shows only rooms 505 (the Student Government Office) and 510 as a “Student Group Resource Area.” For groups that regularly use this space, such as Jester, The Federalist, and The Columbian,
A recent move to renovate the SGO into more administrative office space has displaced them, forcing these clubs’ presidents to clean out their archives from what was seen as a permanent storage space to personal locations. In a building which once had several rooms dedicated to specific student groups, the SGO was the last staple of continuity that persisted regardless of leadership changes or reservation issues with UEM.

The alleged war over space has led some to declare that after the Business School eventually moves to its new Manhattanville location, Uris Hall will be the next battleground for claims to space at Morningside. In an interview, University Senators Matthew Chou and Akshay Shah downplayed the level of discussion about Uris. An annual report issued by the Campus Planning and Preservation Committee implies that administrators would reallocate vacated Uris space based on the ad hoc needs of students, rather than servicing long term claims. Given that the B-school’s building at Manhattanville has yet to be funded, the senators believed that the “conversations would only begin when construction does.”

Focusing instead on campus discourse about currently available space, Chou and Shah praised the efforts of the Student Space Initiative, a project begun in 2011 that qualitatively surveyed students from five schools about their opinions on the availability and quality of space. By incorporating their findings with those of the recently conducted Quality of Life survey, the two senators hope to create a more detailed picture of the space situation on campus.

What’s next for space at Columbia? Will new administrators and offices keep pushing students out of Lerner? Or will renovations that incorporate student input manage to create a reasonably pleasant space for students to gather, as Scott Wright insists? Perhaps the most realistic conception of space is the University Forum on the Manhattanville campus, where undergraduates and graduate students of all schools would interact, rather than compete over space, as in the Watson Library. While the direction of the space discussion remains unclear, administrators seem to be aware that there is in fact a problem—now the onus is on students to delineate what changes must be undertaken.

The student center often contains as many outsiders as actual students.

Before Lerner, Ferris Booth Hall was Columbia’s student center. From 1927 until the building’s completion in 1960, student groups primarily occupied the cramped fourth floor of John Jay Hall. FBH’s opening was greeted with hope. “For the first time,” the Spectator announced, “activities are not merely tenants in a University structure designed for another purpose. They are located in a building designed especially for them.”

The editorial board went so far as to announce that the new building signaled “a new era in Columbia history.” But three decades later, sentiment about FBH sobered. Roger Lehecka, CC ’67, and Dean of Students at the time of Lerner’s conception, explained to the Spectator, “[t]he expansion of the undergraduate student body and the popularity of on-campus residence halls rendered [FBH] inadequate for students’ needs.”

Lerner’s construction accompanied a shift in the university’s ideology in the nineties, marked by the tenure of then-University President George Rupp. Lehecka says that through the 20th century, institutional emphasis shifted from the college to the university.

“Rupp was the first president in the 20th century to say that it was a mistake not to have the college at the center of things,” and “what became Lerner Hall came from the conviction on his part that the whole ship had to be turned,” said Lehecka. With Alfred Lerner’s donation of $25 million secured in 1995, construction finally began on the new student center.

The disconnect between Lerner’s intentions and its structural reality

Bernard Tschumi, dean of Columbia’s School of Architecture, was selected as the new building’s architect in 1994. He is responsible for Lerner’s ultimate physical facade.

In the book Glass Ramps/Glass Wall, Tschumi wrote that “the needs and dynamics of student life had far outpaced [FBH’s] spaces and conceptual design”; the new design was intended to correct this.

The ramps were, surprisingly, meant to provide space for organic interaction—to simulate the effect of the Low steps. The mailboxes that line the ramps, moved there from dormitories, were meant to attract all students to a single place.

Yet, as Daniel Immerwahr, CC ’02, noted in the pages of this magazine during the early years of Lerner ("Understanding Lerner Hall," May 2001), “we must remember that Tschumi was contracted to building a student center, not a vanity project.” His theoretical plans largely fell flat. Most notably, the shift from post to email seriously undermined Tschumi’s scheme for the building.

Lerner aspires to be Columbia’s student center, but who would consider it purely such? Students have little business with the administrative offices that occupy much of the building. Today, less than half of the original student group space, largely relegated to the SGO on the fifth floor of Lerner, remains open to students.

Because rooms in Lerner can be rented by the public, the student center often contains as many outsiders as actual students. Although a portion of the Student Life Fee—$62 per student—goes toward the building’s upkeep and debt service—it still needs to maintain itself financially by renting out space to third parties during business hours. Harrison sees an upside to this. For one thing, it breaks the illusion that Columbia exists within a bubble. More practically, “the fact that Lerner is a conference center lets Student Services work directly to the benefit of students.”

LERNER BETTER

The Blue and White

December 2013

Illustration by Alexander Pines
President Bollinger arrived at Columbia in 2002 and brought a team of administrators with him from the University of Michigan. One of them, Robert Kasdin, is PrezBo’s right hand man, Senior Executive Vice President. Under Kasdin, several other executive vice presidents and central administrators toil, who Bollinger recruited while at Michigan.

The timelines illustrate “Bollinger’s people”: above each’s timeline is their position at UMICH. Below it is their job here.
Night Court

Justice in the city that never sleeps

By Luca Marzorati

22-year-old Hispanic male, charged with attempted robbery and assault in the third degree.

He’d had a long day. Fifteen hours ago, he’d sworn by a friend’s house to pick up a DVD. He stopped in a bodega to get a bag of cigarette tobacco. The cashier told him that the store didn’t have loose tobacco. The man became angry, reached behind the counter, and grabbed at the register. The cashier pulled out a hammer and struck him in the head—his face is now caked with dried blood. This morning, he sat for an hour in the first row of the courthouse gallery of 100 Centre Street, hands cuffed tight, head down. This was his second trip downtown in two weeks. Ten days ago, he caught a petty larceny, his first offense, a light punishment. Now, he was looking at a felony. The fight was on video. He didn’t even bother running. His foot up on a bus seat stuck in place, police: NYPD, New York Courts, Department of Homeless Services.

You notice the coats first. The steady parade of defendants marched into New York Criminal Court dressed in faded, puffy coats, too heavy for the early fall. Many of them were picked up in the early hours of the morning, in subways, buses, or off the street. They bear the marks of urban poverty: few family or community ties, no money or home address, and rap sheets rife with petty crimes—trespassing, shoplifting, unlawful solicitation.

This is night court. A few courtrooms at 100 Centre Street, the hub of criminal-justice in Manhattan, stay open late. Night court is not for petty crimes—trespassing, shoplifting, unlawful solicitation. The cops would arrest the defendants with the marks of urban poverty: few family or community ties, no money or home address, and rap sheets rife with petty crimes—trespassing, shoplifting, unlawful solicitation.

He was about to walk out a free man. He’d missed a few court dates—he was sick; he had memory loss; his grandfather died; he had to go to Puerto Rico to arrange the funeral. But now, he was going to settle it all down with a few guilty pleas—maybe get it knocked down to mandatory treatment and probation. The judge went through the formalities—she was required by law to make sure he knew what he was doing. First charge: trespassing. He hesitated, but admitted, yes, he had been trespassing. And, yes, on those few occasions, he had some heroin on him. But, on the final charge, for drug possession, he balked—there were needles in his bag—it was only residue, it wasn’t his. The judge didn’t have time for nuance. Residue is enough for a guilty verdict. “You either had heroin, or you didn’t,” she said. He wouldn’t confess. The judge barked out a trial date. The bailiffs led him back to jail, shaking his head.

Despite the nonchalance of the court employees, defendants take advantage of their day in the spotlight. A hospitalized man in a wheelchair (accused of slicing a fellow patient in the face with scissors) seemed to sleep through his arraignment. That is, until the judge set bail at $5,000, at which point he cursed her out until he was wheeled away.

An older man listened nonchalantly to an interpreter tell him that he’d been charged with unlawful possession of ammunition while spending time in New York. He grinned and bounded out of the courtroom after being released without bail—it was unlikely he’d be back.

A man with four domestic violence-related convictions didn’t go down so easily. Accused of pushing a 5-year-old and taking a video game the child was holding, he repeatedly screamed, “I just wanted my property! Please! Your Honor!”

A defendant accused of harassing his mother by slipping a photograph of a dead bird under her door began raising his hand after he was told not to do so. He was released without bail—accused of slicing a fellow patient in the face with scissors seemed to sleep through his arraignment. That is, until the judge set bail at $5,000, at which point he cursed her out until he was wheeled away.

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Arraigned

County—New Jersey—in early October. Now, he kept his face down. The question was, why had it taken him a month to be arraigned? The defense argued that he was held in custody for an unnecessarily long time, exempting him from bail. The judge flipped through her case documents. The prosecutors flipped furiously through theirs—they couldn’t come up with an answer. The judge suggested that the prosecutors get the Bergen County cops involved on the phone; she thought they might know what was going on. It was 1 a.m. No one was picking up the phone. The judge went with her gut. The state had a strong case. He’d have to wait until morning.

After a while, I became attuned to the composition of the crowd. Women—mothers, sisters, girlfriends—waited for hours for their loved ones’ case to be called. Because communication between defendants and spectators is not allowed, women slipped notes to the defense attorneys, or mimed an eating motion to their downtown devotees. Children looked tired. Having family in the crowd helps the defense attorney stress “family ties”; visible support bodes well for the defendant. A string of indigent men, convicted of unlawful solicitation on the subway, crammed in the back row and chatted loudly until they were kicked out.

Sometimes, bit players in the legal dramas show up. A young woman changed her mind hours after filing a domestic violence report against her boyfriend. She came into court, only to be told by the witnesses identified him. He had a criminal record. He chronicled his high-profile criminal debut on Facebook, said he was bringing an "amp" (gun) to the park. The cops showed up at his apartment in the Bronx. Huddled inside, he continued to post: "FEDS AT MY DOOR IM GOIN OUT WITH A BANG!!!!!!! TAKE MY SOUL!" A witness identified him. He had a criminal record. The defense attorney’s only argument against a bail was that he had yet to miss a court date. He was remanded without bail.

I began to notice subtle, nightly changes in the courtroom dynamic. Some judges took great pride in moving through many cases rapidly—by my count, one magistrate racked three convictions in less than a minute. It was impossible to predict what the defendants, assembled in the bullpen theatre, had allegedly done.

Late one night, I noticed a man with a fair complexion, seemingly waiting. It was only when he heard a specific name and docket number that he rose to his feet, revealing a camera and a microphone. At the same time, a well-dressed Asian man took the stand for the people, replacing a string of young prosecutors. This was different.


16-year-old black teenager, charged with two counts of attempted murder, assault, reckless endangerment and criminal possession of a weapon.

The cops got him this morning. The state accused him of shooting a .22 caliber handgun into a crowd of ice skaters at Bryant Park. He wanted to steal a 20 year-old’s coat. He was rebuffed, came back, and shot eight times. A few bullets hit their target. A few missed. A 14 year-old bystander was hit in the back. He chronicled his high-profile criminal debut on Facebook, said he was bringing an "amp" (gun) to the park. The cops showed up at his apartment in the Bronx. Huddled inside, he continued to post: "FEDS AT MY DOOR IM GOIN OUT WITH A BANG!!!!!!! TAKE MY SOUL!" A witness identified him. He had a criminal record. The defense attorney’s only argument against a bail was that he had yet to miss a court date. He was remanded without bail.

I wondered whether Dunton noticed the coats of the defendants around him. Perhaps their crimes were once motivated by foolish teenage pride. But today, their coats were falling apart—the leaves were changing, and at least arrest got them out of the cold. According to police, the coat Dunton wanted was $680, yellow-and-green. How long until it would have faded?*

Wilson

In which Andrew and Wilson settle in

By Torsten Odland

This is the third installment of "Wilson"—a novella attempt. The first two chapters can be accessed at theblueandwhite.org in the Orientation and November 2013 issues.

Andrew couldn’t imagine why Wilson would want to have a girlfriend. He was intolerant of the idea, and found Wilson’s romantic schemes increasingly frustrating. What could he have been missing? As much as Andrew belabored the point, Wilson seemed unable to perceive the inherent incompatibility of his stated goals: “You tell me every three days that you have no time, you don’t want to get B’s, you want to chill with the Chill Team. How are you going to fit a girlfriend into that?”

“I think I just need to break up with you.”

“Either the relationship will suck and it won’t be worth it, or—and I think this is more salient—you will drive yourself crazy trying to hold everything together. Unsustainable.”

Sometimes Andrew wondered if he was supposed to want a girlfriend too, but he shook off the feeling, as he did the other speculative worries—worries about worries—he was full of.

Every now and then, usually while fried, Andrew would re-deduce the proof, toy with it while he lay in bed, and again it would emerge sound and clear: he was happy. There was enough evidence, anyway, that he was satisfied, especially since they’d begun hanging with Greg, Anna, Joe, and Shelly, who Wilson referred to affectionately as “the Chill Team,” in reference to all the weed they smoked. What else was there to say?

Thursday night was typical. Wilson invaded Andrew’s room around seven, obsessively intent on showing him the “most important” Rick Ross song—part of Andrew’s ongoing, hermeneutic, involuntary “Rap Education.” He might have continued for an hour, had Andrew not reminded him that they’d been invited to a “VIP smoke-out” in Joe’s room.

They walked through cold, moonlight campus to Carman and bounded up the stairs, while Andrew mulled cheerfully over the fact that Joe never demanded reimbursement—he could simply afford to be generous. Opening his door with a grin, Joe nodded to them—“Gentlemen.”

They smoked, played 2K Basketball, went out to buy forties, and returned to their seats in front of the Xbox, sipping luxuriously on their malt. Joe was a genuine gamer and swept Andrew and Wilson in every round. Though he colored it with an ironic tone, he was an irrepressible pedant and liked to lecture the two of them after each game: “I want you to understand why I won”; “Don’t take the three unless you know it’s for real”; “You get so worked up, Andrew—your dudes are flailing. Relax. The joystick is like a clitoris, you need a gentle touch.” Eventually Greg, wearing his perpetually backwards hat (a bizarre combination with his aristocratic checks), returned with Shelly and a bottle of wine, which occasioned another bowl.

Wilson fiddled with the music cue, converting it to Rick Ross, while the other four sat across from each other on high-lofted twin beds. Andrew was filled with some lighter-than-air drift, from the shivering, purple AnCo poster to the laughing faces across the room, sweet and slothy, there’s no I in Chill Team, he thought, oh my god.

Shelly, whose ponytail bounced whenever she opened her mouth, extended everyone an invitation to a frat party she’d heard about. “Absolutely not,” Wilson interrupted from Joe’s desk. They went over the (imagined) guest list, the pros and cons—“No”—the consensus was slowly turning into “What the hell?” shrug, especially once Joe (who had been dying for just this opportunity) sweetened the deal by offering to roll a blunt—“Absolutely not. We’re not that kind of people.”

“What kind of people? It’s the Asian frat, bro. That’s fucked up.”

Wilson balled his fist.

Once they met Anna, got to the brownstone, wove their way through the smoke on the stoop, and pled their case to the large-listed bouner with no personality, there was nowhere left to go. Every orange hallway and room open to the public was crammed with men and women using all the available

The Blue and White

Illustration by Zane Bhansali

December 2013

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Illustration by Zane Bhansali

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oxygen. Wilson had only come to prove that the whole thing was a bad idea.

“Those boys aren’t even going to bat an eye at us. We forgot to put on our low-cut black dresses,” he whined. He gestured to a girl two inches away. “Look at this shit!”

Joe asked around about “the beer,” and they began to force their way upstairs, where it was a swamplike 110 degrees. Wilson took a look at the dance floor—the green lights illuminating only flashes of skin, the unending pumping of thick fists, the predictable thunder of the house beat, the synth repeating four obvious bars, the stupid grinding idiot DJ, bouncing blonde hair, sunglasses, bouncing blonde hair,—the green lights illuminating only flashes of skin, the unending pumping of thick fists, the predictable thunder of the house beat, the synth repeating four obvious bars, the stupid grinding idiot DJ, bouncing blonde hair, sunglasses, bouncing blonde hair,—the green lights illuminating only flashes of skin, the unending pumping of thick fists, the predictable thunder of the house beat, the synth repeating four obvious bars, the stupid grinding idiot DJ, bouncing blonde hair, sunglasses, bouncing blonde hair,—the green lights illuminating only flashes of skin, the unending pumping of thick fists, the predictable thunder of the house beat, the synth repeating four obvious bars, the stupid grinding 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The Perfect Season

Why football fumbles (and who cares)

BY HALLIE NELL SWANSON

It's the last game of Columbia's football season at freezing cold Baker Field. There's not much going on except the 9th birthday party for a kid named TJ. Not much of a crowd here (Brown's may even be larger), and most of the Columbia supporters present are more focused on the future of Columbia football than the match at hand.

A plane, presumably hired out by an alumnus particularly desperate for victory, circles overhead carrying the message: "THX SENIORS GO LIONS LUV U!! MANG & MURPHY...JUST GO!"

Columbia will lose the game 48-7, rounding off what student blog the Lion has called the "perfect season," the first winless season since 1987.

Athletics inhabits a strange place in life at Columbia—simultaneously segregated from the student body at large, while ostensibly representing it. The football field is a hundred blocks north of campus, a division that feels wider still when the values of the team appear incongruous with those of the community. During NSOP this year, Bwog tweeted Thomas Callahan, offensive lineman and the team's current representative on the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee: "The only time people go to the games is when you get 4 free beers before you walk in," he says.

Sam calls the student body's relationship to football "a unity of apathy, in that everyone's united by the fact that they don't really care about the football team." But Sam cares; he can rattle off past scores and events in the team's history. Columbia is by no means universally apathetic about our football team. If we weren't interested, no one would debate why football is here and how it will continue.

This conversation came to a head on November 20, when Spee ran two letters to the editor against another one: the first, a letter from a collection of militant alumni led by Jake Novak, CC '92, calling for Athletic Director M. Dianne Murphy and Mangurian to be fired; the second, a letter from President Bollinger, responding to a previous Spec editorial demanding the same dismissals, in which he reasserted his support for the athletics administration.

The alumni openly stated their financial investment in the team: "The signatories below include three Columbia Athletics Hall of Fame members and several substantial donors to the University," they wrote. They added: "We are ready and willing to do whatever we can to get Columbia a win and assuage this "public embarrassment." If the alumni prioritized prestige and money, Bollinger's letter emphasized community, noting that interest in Columbia athletics and a desire to see us win "has not always been the case, and we are still overcoming decades characterized by a different set of expectations," a mentality that Novak—who said the letter was "undeniably written for [Bollinger] by the Athletic department"—called "patronizing."

"They consider the athletes, students and alumni who want to win to be an oddity and a joke," Novak said. "Take your meds, Lee, then lock yourself up in your styrofoam tower," went one comment to an op-ed he wrote for Spec.

Why do we care so much? Partly because of money, partly because the football team supposedly represents Columbia culture.

Culture

Plenty of students see the perfect season as a source of ironic pride. "Columbia's come tantalizingly close to perfection almost every year, but today their dream was realized," one posted on Facebook, tagging it "feeling accomplished."

The massively positive comment response to an article by Alexandra Skosos, Editor in Chief of Bwog, which announced the end of Bwog's football coverage, revealed that many students would be happy to eradicate the team altogether.

This hostile climate can be partially explained by the publication of last year's tweets and the arrest of Chad Washington for an alleged hate crime against an Asian-American student, events which make the football team look like a bunch of horrible racists.

But students have been anti-football for a long time, and having a team that is objectively horrible fits well with Columbian cool-cucumber syndrome.

Peter Andrews, head of CUMB (the Columbia University Marching Band) disagrees. The marching band is notorious for belittling the team, but Peter says it's a misperception that CUMB hates football. The relationship between the two is "tricky" but the band "is not rooting against them."

In 2011, before entering another final game against Brown with a 0-9 record, the administration went on the defensive and CUMB was banned from the final game after singing "we always lose, lose, lose" to the tune of "Roar, Lion, Roar."

After an overwhelming student response in favor of CUMB, the decision was overturned. The band played; Columbia won the game. Why did students rally around CUMB and not the football team? The band might be assholes, but they're our assholes. Apparently, the guys on the field aren't.

Reacting against student apathy or antipathy, "There's definitely been a conscious effort on Athletics' side to rebrand the way they've been perceived since May," says Sam. "The way that things left off last year, at graduation, football was a mess."

In this day and age, that means a full-blown social media blitz. A campaign to get Columbia Athletics the most Facebook likes in the Ivy League ('10K by opening day') was achieved in early September ("WE DID IT!") exclaimed the text accompanying a special graphic on gocolumbialions.com. Lions posters and event cards come emblazoned with the hashtag #TURNITBLUE, which I have yet to see used non-ironically by any non-official Columbia source.

Perhaps the rebrand is meant to remedy last year's scandal over football players' uses of social media. CU Football's last memorable hashtag debut was introducing Chad Washington as the team's guest tweeter on #WingmanWednesday.

When I ask Darlene Camacho, Associate Athletics Director for sports information/media relations, if this is the case, she says their number one goal on social media is “best practices,” but adds that different institutions have different standards. At Harvard, she says, the official football Twitter will link to players' personal accounts, but "here, that's considered unprofessional."

According to Sam, Camacho followed many of the players involved in "Tweetgate" on her personal account, which was promptly made private as the tweets were being published.

At the Brown game, the screen helpfully reminded us to hashtag away. As it happened, the most Twitter buzz the team got was after that last loss, from sarcastic students.

The athletic department had four months to be like, how are we going to respond to this, and I guess that's what they chose," says Sam of the campaign. "I get it, but at the same time I think it's corny [...] it's
not really doing anything for their brand.” On the @ColumbiaLionsFB twitter, meanwhile, Camacho liveblogged each game from the pressbox (“*longestfinalminutecounter*”).

The account also posted a photo of Roar-eers and Mangurian serving dessert at Ferris Booth Commons (“*turntable*”), photos of the cheerleaders and players going on the Today Show (“*WhatDidTheFoxSay*,” “*TURNITBLUE* of course”), and photos of the team visiting the tech startup bitly (“*#GeekingOut*”). (Noteworthy, neither Washington, nor Callahan, nor any other tweeters were included in these field trips.)

This year also introduced video advertising, notably a one-minute promotional spot called “A Doubled Magic.” In addition to presumably using money that came from our student life fee (Athletics accounts for the largest portion of the fee: $390 of the $1,396 total, according to Spiegel), these materials promote a certain image of Columbia that feels out of step with how students see themselves.

When I asked Camacho and Spiegel what makes Columbia football different or special, the two exchanged a glance and seem uncomfortable, like I’ve asked something extremely controversial. Almost guiltily, Camacho’s first instinct is to compare it to Alabama: it’s harder to get people to games here, whereas “there’s nothing else going on in Tuscaloosa,” she says, adding she wishes more that Athletics and the student body would “marry” a bit more.

Banning the band in 2011 and responding defensively to student media doesn’t do much to help an already rocky relationship. It’s a frustrating position, but why the instinct to compare Columbia to Alabama? Should defining the spirit of the university itself—”So what do you or your team arkadaş is doing, a network which “gives students” a voice, charging alumni “if you’re the chief executives, lawyers, doctors, Wall Street traders.” Years after graduation, former players go on to donate to Athletics.

On Columbia’s second annual Giving Day (October 23rd, for no particular reason), the Columbia Alumni Association encouraged alumni to donate through a table showing which departments are “winning” (athletes competed on Facebook). Football gathered $211,973—3 percent of the total donations. They did similarly well at the first Giving Day.

Giving Day allows donors to contribute to a department within a specific school—one of which was named “Athletics.” Without the option to donate to the athletics department, this money might well go to the College instead. Although enthusiastic Columbia boosters like Jimmy Sherwin donate to Athletics and purported apathy, game attendance is actually increasing. Barry Neuberger, Associate Athletics Director, has been with Columbia for nine years and noticed the change. There were 2,000 students at Homecoming this year, a level of attendance topped only by Commencement. Who exactly attends these games is a bit of a mystery—Peter goes to them all, and says he can’t spot consistent trends. Spiegel says he’s there for Columbia football fans “whether they’re 5 or 50.” It turns out we do have 5- and 50-year-old fans. We’re missing the 20-year-olds.

Neuberger is also responsible for the Student Rewards Program, the prizes you can get for attending a certain number of games, which he likens to a “frequent flyer program.” (Top prizes: Dell laptop and Delta Shuttle tickets.) Nobody seems ever to have completed it, so it’s not a likely factor in increased attendance—but even if it is, these incentives demonstrate the assumption of Athletics that an organic Columbia fanbase will never develop.

It is unfortunate that the Athletics department has difficulty engaging with the student body, and vice versa, because they’re right about one thing: football can bring people together.

Neuberger suggests that games help us “share and enjoy common experiences with people you might otherwise just see in the hallways.” His idea of using football games to “start a friendship group” is wildly optimistic, even absurd, but there was a certain solidarity as I froze at Baker Field, watching the Lions lose the last game of the season. The sense of community emerged from irony, awkwardness, and amusement. What could be more quintessentially Columbia?

Until Athletics understands or chooses who it represents (students or athletic alumni), no amount of tote bags, hashtags, dedicated weight rooms or Facebook “likes” will bridge the gap between football and the non-athletic community.

Angry alums, influential donors, The New York Times, and the athletic department itself have drastically different visions of the purpose of football. The team should be about something bigger than itself—the team should be for us. Right now, no cultural change will follow a change on the scoreboard.

Football could be an unlikely, doggedly futile rallying point for Columbia. If it is to succeed, we need a different point of entry—we’ll come and cheer, but only on our terms.

**Columbia Football Coaching Records**

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I.

I always knew Matt was watching porn when he didn’t answer my texts.

He used to tell me about what kinds he liked –
even tried to show me a few favorites,

but I was only fourteen

and there were too many limbs

and I didn’t understand how that girl could possibly be comfortable.

He laughed at my immaturity,

but his face still turned a bright red before he slammed his locker and stormed away when I pointed out that he couldn’t get Sophia to talk to him in real life.

The Internet grasped what I could not and lent him a hand

which satisfied him until he found out that Ashley would give him blow jobs under the stairs if he told her that they’d be together forever,

and the Internet remained faithful, coming back again when Ashley decided that fucking John in the Chipotle bathroom during lunch would be classier (because his forever was longer).

II.

“It’s really fine.”

(But your lip is pulled tight into a thin white line and you’re tapping your foot again)

“It doesn’t matter.”

(But I can see your eyes tracing the creases in the shirt that I borrowed last night)

III.

So if best friends are forever

and the Internet is forever

is the Internet your new best friend?

— Michelle Cheripka
NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT

In Studio

How architecture students find solidarity in suffering

BY JULI BRANDANO

This is her fourth consecutive hour in the architecture design lab. Fatema Maswood, BC ’15, is exhausted. Her vision becomes blurrier with each click through images of urban farms, and her caffeine high is beginning to wear off. She sits in front of a giant Mac monitor. Except for the hum of the printers and the occasional manic, late-night laugh, all is quiet. She’s researching an “edible schoolyard,” an organic garden that provides food and hands-on farming opportunities for kids. She has spent weeks visiting meat markets in preparation for a final project about food systems. (She finds more inspiration in a hanging cow carcass than the average passerby.)

She’s been doing these late nights on the fourth floor of the Diana for a year and a half, either in this room or the architecture studio down the hall. And as painful as it often is, she loves it. As Fatema puts it, “It’s the best thing, but it’s a torment. It follows as painful as it often is, she loves it. As Fatema puts it, “It’s the best thing, but it’s a torment. It follows”

Fatema leaves before the shut-off," says Dylan. But professors are not concerned with congratulating hard work. During final critiques of projects, students defend their work to the professor and a guest critic who knows nothing about the student’s process. In this professional space, the student cannot rely on the teacher’s familiarity with the countless outlines and sketches that informed the piece’s structure. It’s terrifying, and often discouraging, but this is one of the only academic spaces on campus where students receive a full ten minutes of face-to-face feedback. The Architecture department is the exception to this rule. Rather than beginning a critique with “This part worked quite nicely, but...” an architecture professor might simply begin by looking at a project and asking aloud: “Really?”

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The Blue and White

Illustration by Angel Jiang

DECEMBER 2013
The Blue and White

In looking through your body of work, your interests are ridiculously varied. You cover everything from endangered languages to the environmental impact of China’s megacities to guerrilla art. What’s the common thread?

RP: There’s no justification for it. I’m the common thread, for sure. It’s very eclectic. It’s very much based on following my nose. My total interest in things I come across. I’m always looking for stories that haven’t been told. I try and investigate things that are hiding in plain sight. Internships and endangered languages are both examples of that. These are what I see as massive phenomena that if you point them out to people, they aren’t necessarily arcane subjects, but they need someone to map them out, to flesh them out, to bring them in and do more detailed studies. A lot of people say that journalism in the digital age should be about starting a conversation.

B&W: The new-age pragmatist.

RP: Absolutely. There’s a pragmatic view there. You aren’t airyly talking about abstract ideas. You immediately buy a domain name. There’s a telescoping between thought and action. You can immediately organize, immediately make something practical of an idea. The world of the so-called “little magazines” also reflects this. Think, The New Inquiry, n+1, Jacobin, Dissent... So, this middle-distance space I’m talking about is

still fleshing itself out. It’s not easy to make a living there. But there’s a need for people to comment on and research and bring out these issues from a more independent place. I feel in my writing that I’m not beholden to any interest group. I’m beholden to my readers and to all thinking people and to the people I interview.

B&W: Obviously one of the great things about the fluidity of the Internet is that you don’t have to be pegged as an expert in any one thing. Are you at all afraid of becoming the Intern Guy more than a journalist or a thinker?

RP: You want to stay in the conversation you’ve started. But there’s nothing I want to see less than more rehashing. As soon as you’re pegged as an expert voice, you can spend all of your time responding to media requests and repeating the same message and trying to make it fresh, but it ends up that 99 percent of the work that’s published on the topic is recycled material. The goal I have is to start conversations and put them on solid footing—bring together people and material and bring lots of voices into the conversation. I don’t want to be a talking head. But there’s also a personal motivation. I wanted to get involved in other, crucial causes. If you take my writing on intern labor, it’s a product the US is exporting willingly to the rest of the world. It’s a far leap from willing to the rest of the world.

B&W: Did you read 21/? I just read the review and was really struck by the idea of sleep being the final frontier on which the free market is encroaching to capitalize on every ounce of utility from the worker.

RP: Yes! But of course there are also so many products being sold right now around sleep. How do

audience, you’re creating it for yourself.

B&W: So, contemporary Internet journalists are responsible for cultivating and curating an online persona through which they sell their own writing. And it’s a line that really blurs recreation and work. Especially when you’re someone who is not independent, but works for a media institution or outlet, at what point do your personal tweets stop being work and start being a leisure activity?

RP: It’s a huge question. What are the boundaries of work? Can leisure survive? Leisure was arguably a special product that flourished in the 20th century, and it’s not clear what form it’s going to take in the future. I love that sticker that you see around: “The Labor Movement—from the people who brought you the weekend.” With the decline of labor, you also see the decline of organized leisure time. And a concerted effort to make work disappear, or seem to disappear. Part of it is work’s new immateriality. Everything is happening on a screen in front of you. You have to be judging what is a billable hour and if you have anyone to bill it to. People are now in the position to figure out how to draw the line themselves. If you’re working for an employer, there should be a certain amount of pressure on that employer to establish those boundaries. It’s probably harder if you’re on your own. If you’re a small business-owner or an independent contractor, all space and time can be filled with work and tasks. There are different solutions. Commercial fisherwomen or goldminers who work incredibly hard without taking a day off for months and then you’re back in port and take a couple of weeks off from thinking about work. But it’s increasingly hard to take a break from the grind.
you sleep better, sleep therapy, sleep disorders, the pathologizing of sleep...

B&W: Right, but it’s not like that proves an interest in promoting good health. Selling a healthy lifestyle book is as entrepreneurial as selling Starbucks.

RP: The question is whether those countervailing forces, those antitheses, can stand up against the forces they’re trying to counteract.

B&W: You say you see it as the employer’s responsibility to act as one of those forces, to enforce some kind of boundary—which is obviously not in their best interest in a strictly free-market sense.

RP: I think if you did a Google search on “quality of life” you wouldn’t see a lot of searches back in the 19th century. It’s a recent term. The interest in work-life balance is coming up in a time when we don’t have those things. The fact that we have terms from an indication that we’re doing poorly at them. But these aren’t radical issues furthered just by people who are skeptical of capitalism. Capitalism itself, as a reform within the system, will have to address the basic health and safety of its workers. There is a larger rebalancing going on—trying to figure out that balance. I think it should be addressed in a political framework, because it’s a labor issue. But people are also trying to address it just by having more psychologists available in the workplace, or through yoga, or whatever.

B&W: What about the kids for whom unpaid internships really will put their résumés at the top of the pile? Like, on an individual level, if a student has the financial means to take an unpaid position, does it make much of a difference for them to abstain from it on principle?

RP: Most people are still going to act in their own immediate interests and that’s understandable. For any given person, if you have the means, an internship can be a lesson, and maybe it’ll lead you to that great gig or full time job. That has to be recognized. But people have to confront the impact of unpaid labor. The job you’re taking on is illegal. You’re working as a scavenger—that’s not a word people think about in our generation. But you’re walking into an office and taking what was once paid work. For people who have the means to do it, it’s hard to resist, but there has to be a certain consciousness about what that choice means. That will at least take some of the enthusiasm out.

B&W: To what degree is it the responsibility of students to organize around unpaid labor? Even if the Internet is on their side as an organizing tool, why might it be more difficult to mobilize around unpaid labor than, say, a more formal labor industry?

RP: I think internships, unpaid labor, the consequences of the new economy, these things are hitting young people like they’re hitting no one else. It’s tough because students don’t see these wages as being owed to them. They see themselves as students first and foremost, not workers—even though the vast majority of them are working jobs that were once paid positions. It’s wage theft.

People don’t realize that intergenerational inequality is happening today. There are retired people who are struggling, but they are also taken care of by a substantial safety network was built in the 1930s and has grown with Social Security and Medicare. There are no protections or policies like that for young people. Politicians spend a lot more time in assisted living facilities than on college campuses. And that goes way beyond who’s going to hit the voting booths. It speaks to where the arc of young people is. There are many different groups that can play a role in fixing the internship economy and rolling back the economy of unpaid work. Young people have to be willing to stick their necks out. There’s a collective action problem. We’re only going to be interns for a few months or years, there’s a hope that this will go away quickly and soon you’ll be in charge of interns yourself and moving in your career. It’s not a lifelong battle like, say, the feminist or Civil Rights movements. With that stuff you can say, “I’m always going to be a woman,” or “I’m always going to be black,” so investing time in this kind of work makes long-term sense. I do think there’s a dawning recognition that the precariousness of the workplace might last a lifetime.

B&W: Do you think it’s even possible for students to organize around a union structure? Or has that system lost too much power?

RP: I don’t think we’re going to see an intern union anytime soon. But young people can learn a lot from the history of labor unions—this whole civilization of labor that flourished so much in the 19th and 20th centuries. Obviously we’ve seen very little strong labor legislation in recent years. We’ve seen the department of labor at the federal level being eroded and having fewer enforcers or the same number of workers for exploiting labor market and new forms of labor like internships. It’s impossible to keep up with capital and the changes in the market for employers to get cheaper labor.

Interns have contributed hugely to the world of “alt labor.” Their organizing is flexible and improvised and mobile. It’s exciting for people who care about inequality. But classical unionization is also difficult because of logistical practicalities of internships. The length of time it takes to certify a union and get around the roadblocks put up by politicians and employers is the length of an internship at least. Even if you started organizing on day one, it would take well beyond the summer to pull everything together. So you need more flexible strategies to deal with that. It could be through advocacy groups or flash mob-style organization. Imagine if all the DC interns walked out. It would bring the government to a halt. Now that’s a shutdown I’d like to see.

B&W: Meanwhile, you have the young female intern who sued her employer for harassment but wasn’t protected by law because she wasn’t technically an employee. And now the NY state legislature is proposing some elaborate additional loophole law to protect interns from discrimination and harassment. Wouldn’t it be easier just to pay them?

RP: It’s very shocking to people to hear that unpaid interns are not protected in the way that workers are. People understand that unpaid interns are working in offices as much as workers are. When I started telling people about interns suing their employers over sexual harassment—also for discrimination against age and race—they were outraged. People immediately feel there’s something wrong with the fact that interns are not considered employees under the law. Of course you want people to be protected against harassment. But the nature of the powerlessness stems from the fact that they aren’t getting paid. The real issue is the constant violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Thousands upon thousands of interns are hired illegally and in a legal limbo.

There’s a clear power dynamic. Mostly young women working for older male bosses. The only trustworthy study on this approximates that three quarters of unpaid interns are young women. It’s good to see politicians acting on issues of internships in any way, but usually, if you sue, the intern is literally thrown out of court. It doesn’t matter if you were sitting at your desk for 60 hours doing the same work as anyone else.

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

Illustration by Leila Megaloblishidi

December 2013
Paying the Bills

Eden Salon and Spa

- Hair services = 20% off
- Facial = $90 (Christine Valmy product)
- Keratine Treatment = $250
- Pedicure + Manicure = $28
- Threading = $8
- Wax = 20% off
- Japanese Straightener = $200

The Hungarian Pastry Shop

1030 Amsterdam Avenue

Monday-Friday 7:30am-11:30pm
Saturday 8:30am-11:30pm
Sunday 8:30-10:30pm

Sponsored in part by the
Arts Initiative at Columbia University.
This funding is made possible through a generous gift from
The Gatsby Charitable Foundation.

The answers to the Blue Book crossword are as follows:

Book Culture

536 West 112th Street
broadway at 114th st.

Book Culture
526 West 114th Street
between Broadway and Amsterdam
Monday-Friday 9am-11pm
Saturday 10am-9pm
Sunday 10am-6pm
212-865-1588
bookculture.com

The Mill Korean Restaurant

2901 - 2905 Broadway @ 113th Street
(212) 882-2798 (212) 662-2150
www.universityhousewares.com
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DIGITALIA COLUMBIANA

These excerpts were called from documents left on Columbia's lab computers. We encourage our readers to submit their own digitalia finds to us, via email, at bwgossip@columbia.edu.

Low Memorial Library is the center of Columbia University. Visible from almost any point on Columbia grounds, Low Memorial Library is literally the focal point of the main campus. Aside from its location, what draws visitors almost immediately to Low upon entering the main campus is its regal, divine presence.

There are many differences that exist among American women. Of course, factors including race, sexuality, age and social status separate one person from another and these make it difficult for women to consolidate.

As time passes, it seems that the acceptable amount of hair on a girl’s body seems to shrink ever further. We shave our legs (lower and upper halves), armpits, and even sometimes pubes, arms, and unibrows. Apparently, it’s sexy to be completely hairless except for the hair on your head and your eyebrows. In other words, it’s sexy to look like a pre-pubescent twelve-year-old, but preferably with large breasts. Why is that? Are all men just perverts?

Let’s break this down: shaving correlates with looking more juvenile. One process that involves the evolution of a species to look like a juvenile version of themselves is domestication. This is analogous to shaving – it creates an image of domesticity and “girliness.” It essentially creates the image that women are younger, less experienced, and more impressionable than they actually are. This is 2013 – should not be necessary today.

PropONENTS OF SHAVING

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Proponents of shaving have two main arguments: they say that it is a trapping of civilization and that the smoothness of the skin that follows is more than worth the effort of shaving. To address the first issue, many European women don’t shave their armpits. But do we say that we’re more cultured and civilized than the Europeans because we shave? No, actually, we usually think that it’s the other way around. And, in what way does being hairless correlate with degrees of civilization?

Hugeness and softness. This Giant, this thing. Our thing, whole and together that we climb and we tell each other that we can keep the shells making their own way into the weave of his clothing but we will never pick him apart. There will be no thinning out here of this body of this Giant on this familiar shore because he belongs to us now.

Although I am only a freshman and do not have any formal experience, I am aware that I have a passion for the effects of psychoactive drugs on the human brain. I hope to one day become a Behavioral Neuroscientist that studies the future implications of drug abuse. I hope to one day become a Behavioral Neuroscientist that studies the future implications of drug abuse. I hope to one day become a Behavioral Neuroscientist that studies the future implications of drug abuse. I hope to one day become a Behavioral Neuroscientist that studies the future implications of drug abuse.

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

A number of faculty call the Spec the “Speculator,” for its creative and consistent misquotes.

THE WRATH OF KHAN

During a recent lecture for his large introductory sociology class, Professor Shamus Khan attempted to invoke audience participation by asking students if they could name the nearest bodega. One student was particularly eager to answer. “Crack’dl!” she shouted. When Khan asked why it was called that, someone in the audience said, “Because they deliver beer!” Khan could only shake his head and reply: “Crack is not beer... Next semester he will be teaching a course titled, "Elites in America.”

A student, bordering on blackout during a particularly rambunctious night at at Morningside bar, started chatting up a stranger, who generously offered to sell him some freshly cut molly. The student, having no cash, promised to stop at an ATM. He forgot. His memory abruptly returned the next morning, when this new acquaintance tracked him down, held him at gunpoint, and demanded his wallet and cellphone.

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COOL BOSSES

At a management consulting interview, one Columbia College alumna interviewed a Columbia College senior. By way of establishing “fit,” the former asked the latter what her favorite Morningside bar was. The latter said 1020. The former was impressed.

St. A’s hires former NYPD officers to man the doors at its parties. As one of the few non-Columbia-owned buildings in Morningside Heights, noise complaints called into 434 Riverside Drive are referred to the police department, not Columbia Public Safety. Perhaps they have found that blue bloods can’t talk with the NYPD quite like former boys in blue.

One man punched another in the lobby of a building on W. 107th Street. He was knocked clean through the two doors, down the steps, and onto the pavement, only to see the door close behind him.

The Spectrum editor, at an Eye production night: “I don’t read Bwog; I just read the headlines to see if they’re covering things that I’m about to publish.”

OPINION EDITORS—EVERYONE’S GOT ONE

When a recent post on the Columbia Lion criticized the Spec for running repetitive pieces on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and called for a stop to the repetition, a Spec deputy opinion editor quickly fired back on Facebook. He wrote: “Really? Is the Lion really making demands of Spec? Really now...Stephen Snowder, Lion EIC] doesn’t seem to believe that—or even that there’s any point in writing opinion pieces, because they do nothing. But that’s all right—there’s definitely value in using your publication’s raging inferiority boner as the inspiration for an opinion piece.” The post was soon deleted.

The next morning, the Lion scooped Spec on its lead story about ZBT’s suspension.

SCHOOL SPIRIT

During half-time at the football game at Cornell, the Columbia University Marching Band played John Cage’s “4’33.” During their performance Cornell fans boomed, and after the game a drunk Columbia alumnus told the band that they were “undisciplined” and had “disgraced” their Alma Mater.

Employees at both Oren’s and the Dodge Fitness Center clock in by means of a fingerprint reader.

bwgossip@columbia.edu.

December 2013
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