Love Me Tenure
Why a beloved Barnard English professor packed off for Brown

Short-Term Memory Loss
Operation Ivy League and why you buy your weed off-campus

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**THE BLUE AND WHITE**

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*theblueandwhite.org ✃ COVER: “Spectacle” by Louise McCune*
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

When she was so moved by a piece of literature—and she was so moved often—Mrs. Jarzab would pause her reading to solemnly note: “Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

She was our dour, ironic 7th grade humanities teacher, and she did not suffer fools. She put a stop to bullshit and horseplay with trademark disdain and her icy glare. Smart contributions she rewarded with her solemn nod; especially intelligent comments merited her tight-lipped smile. She was a hard-ass whom we didn’t know whether to love or fear, and whose approval we craved.

She drew the same lesson from Lear, or The Good Earth, or Our Town, and she would prompt us: “Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts…”

We would dutifully shout back, “ABSOLUTELY.”

Mrs. Jarzab made skeptics of us, even if in part by leading us in repeating her dictum in unison. We were kids, after all. She may well have been a tyrant, but she didn’t wield absolute power. If a student managed to prove her wrong, she acknowledged and was proud of it.

Fortunately, no one—not even Lee C. Bollinger—holds absolute power over this balkanized University. Accordingly, Volume XIX Number II of The Blue and White features campus power brokers large and small.

Both of our Campus Characters—Sarah Darville, editor in chief of the Spectator, and Sam Warren, captain of the women’s crew—ruled over prominent student groups (p. 8). Naomi Cohen and Claire Heyison examine the tenure committees that hold the academic power of life and death, shedding light on the departure of one esteemed Barnard professor (p. 13). Daniel Stone recalls Papa Nubling, whose gentle jibes chastened John Jay residents’ misbehavior in the early 20th century (p. 20). Zach Hendrickson tells about the ten percent of your classmates blessed with perks you didn’t know existed, and how they were chosen (p. 32). And, as always, Campus Gossip helps the medicine go down (p. 43).

—Conor Skelding

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COME AGAIN!?

“I want to be David Remnick when I grow up.”

—Rikki Novesky, editor in chief of The Eye, in her Twitter bio
UNDERGRADUATE DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES
We all need a reliable way of assessing the prodigious from the prodigiously normal. In observance of nascent Class of 2017, the editors present the following chart of developmental milestones. Happy reading, parents!

By the end of your undergraduate’s first year, your undergraduate should:
- be able to take the 1 to Times Square.
- know all the words to “Empire State of Mind.”
- have ordered booze from Crack Del.

Advanced undergraduates will:
- take 2/3 to Times Square.
- own a tote bag from The Strand Bookstore.
- have asked their parents for a subscription to The New Yorker.

By the end of your undergraduate’s junior year, your undergraduate should:
- joke about being an alcoholic.
- talk about their classes as if they were meaningful.
- have eaten more Milano sandwiches than they would be proud to admit.

Advanced undergraduates will:
- be an alcoholic.
- have had one meaningful sexual relationship.
- “do brunch.”

By the end of your undergraduate’s sophomore year, your undergraduate should:
- know when to call something “heteronormative.”
- have memorized all beer pong formations.
- understand that cool to have “gone to Brooklyn” last night.

Advanced undergraduates will:
- have a self-diagnosed anxiety disorder.
- “know a guy.”
- talk about 1020 a lot.

By the end of your undergraduate’s senior year, your undergraduate should:
- have secured employment.
- have begun Infinite Jest.
- have been mis-quoted in Spec.

Advanced graduates will:
- have completed a thesis.
- have tried to quit smoking.
- have made plans to “just take a break and travel.”

POSTCARD FROM MORNINGSIDE

MARCH 2013 Postcard by Alexander Pines
CTV just isn’t what it used to be. Founded in 1974, CTV stands as the second oldest college television station in the country. Today, few people have even heard of it. The floundering station is a far cry from its late-'90s golden age, when it was considered a cultural staple at Columbia. According to Eliana Levenson, the Vice President of Scripted Programming, CTV is “going through a sort of revamp.”

Everybody used to watch CTV. As late as 2002, the channel sported twelve different shows, including a claymation series and several serial dramas. The station gained national attention by capturing footage of the Minuteman stage-rush of 2006, which was run by several major news networks including Fox. But now CTV is down its last show: Sofa’, its semi-regular news program.

Under Eliana’s leadership, CTV is attempting to expand its programming. The station recently developed two scripted shows: Floorcest, a melodrama in twenty-minute segments about the trials of crushing on one’s floormate, and Life Bytes, which centered on the role of technology in modern relationships. However, neither gathered much of a following (in part because CTV is only available through the Columbia cable package, which costs $135 per semester).

After shutting down (and looping the Return of the King DVD menu on Channel 37 for weeks), the big push for the relaunch of CTV is coming this fall with a new comedy about Greek gods and goddesses. With all of the current planning, a shopping spree at B&H, fresh story ideas, and a growing staff of around twenty students, Eliana is confident that by next semester the channel will be back to its roots.

But promoting awareness of the station on campus will be an uphill battle. CTV leadership is hoping to tackle the problem of limited viewership by establishing an online presence. From here on, all of the shows will be available on Youtube and the soon-to-launch CTV website. Members hopes that new equipment, plots, and talent will usher in the station’s long-awaited rebirth.

— Matthew Seife

“T he strange part was the rationale for construction in the first place,” admits Dr. Nicholas Christie-Blick of Columbia’s Earth and Environmental Sciences Department, describing the glassy geodesic domes in Oracle, Arizona that rise out of the desert like something from a science fiction dream. Originally, the center—named Biosphere 2 after Biosphere 1 (the Earth)—was used for environmental research. The experiments aimed to examine how humans interact with ecology by “enclosing” teams inside the domes for up to two years. The mission’s novel combination of field work and Survivor-style reality show was beset by invasive ants, illness, and allegations of pseudoscience, as it emerged that the researchers could not survive without outside interference.
I met an Irishman named Patrick on a Friday evening at O’Connells Pub (popularly referred to as Cannon’s, the surname of its previous owner). I walked into the 108th Street bar ready to stake out a decent place to sit. The lighting was dim, and quiet conversation mingled with the noise of ESPN.

On this unusually quiet Friday night, a total of three parties: a group of high school girls sipping bitchfaces (one of O’Connell’s signatures and an adjustment from the girls’ previous Pinkberry tradition), a couple eating movie theatre popcorn, and Patrick.

No younger than 80, Patrick has the virility of a 60 year old. I sat on a nearby stool and tried to put my social graces to good use: “Do you come here often?” He turned, struggling to see who I was through his cataracts (or so he told me), and said that he usually comes here during daylight hours, when it’s quiet. Patrick was wearing a beige trench coat and a small backpack, packed with water and food for the hike from his home on 75th Street to the pub. He walks the whole 1.65 mile stretch every day so he can make it to Cannon’s before dark.

Determined to find out who else would travel so purposefully to this pub, I returned the next Saturday night. This time the bar was packed. There were several more parties, many of which had inconceivably traveled further than Patrick’s 1.65 miles to get to Cannon’s. A trio of elementary school friends from Vancouver, all named John, were visiting the city and thought they should test their bravery by going to a bar so close to Harlem.

With Patrick’s conspicuous absence, the average age of the Cannon patrons hovered around 35. It seems like Cannon’s attracts some fans willing to put some distance between themselves and home base.

Columbia students, however, were notably absent. Perhaps this scene of confused maturity isn’t worth the trek from 116th to 108th.

—Britt Fossum
—April Maro
Campus Characters

You might not know the following figures—but you should. In Campus Characters, The Blue and White introduces you to a handful of Columbians who are up to interesting and extraordinary things and whose stories beg to be shared. If you’d like to suggest a Campus Character, send us an email at editors@theblueandwhite.org.

SARAH DARVILLE

When I asked her how Sarah Darville, CC ’13 and Spectator editor in chief for the 2012 calendar year, kept sane under the pressure of running Columbia’s daily paper, Maggie Alden, CC ’13 and Sarah’s managing editor, thrust her phone in front of me. “I have a video to show you,” she said. Taylor Swift erupted from the phone’s speaker, accompanied by an image of Sarah jumping up and down on a red sofa in Spec’s office, curly hair exploding with each leap. When the video ends, Maggie laughs. “[Working with Sarah] was one of the most positive experiences I’ve had in my life.” Unpretentious and unrehearsed, Sarah inspires those around her with a (usually) quiet confidence.

“I’ve been a huge journalism nerd since I was a kid,” Sarah admits. Before becoming a voracious reader of grown-up newspapers, Sarah recalls reading Time for Kids. In high school, Sarah served as editor in chief of her school paper and bought a subscription to the Columbia Journalism Review.

Sarah hesitated to join Spectator her freshman year. “I thought I was going to become some new person when I got to Columbia,” she explains. But the feeling only lasted a moment. Sarah joined the paper almost immediately, working briefly in copy-editing before moving on to reporting. After two years covering the Manhattanville expansion and education in Morningside, Sarah was promoted to editor in chief.

Sarah seems embarrassed when I ask her about the difficulties she faced as editor in chief. “[Running Spec] wasn’t torture,” Sarah clarifies. “We were eating pizza and putting together a newspaper at night. [Speccies] aren’t working any harder than any other people with jobs.” But the case with which Sarah rehearses the hour-by-hour schedule of her days as editor attests to the discipline it took to hold her position. After waking up around noon and battling the 300 to 400 emails she received daily (maybe squeezing in class, time permitting), Sarah’s real day started at 6 p.m. “Anything before 6 o’clock was not real,” at which time Sarah headed to the Spec office, where she attended her duties until the paper was ready to print: 1 a.m. on a good night, 5 a.m. on a bad one.

Among her staff, Sarah is revered for her ability to give respectful criticism. “She has this technique,” Maggie continues. “If she has something harsh to say to someone, she’ll touch them or put her hand on their shoulder to mute it. I don’t think she knows she does it, though.” It stands as a testament to this interpersonal warmth that, when I asked Maggie what she would consider Sarah’s biggest contribution to the paper, instead of naming a particular story, Maggie reflects on the positive energy Sarah brought to the office every day:
“[Sarah] was conscious of the way that Spec can be an unwelcoming place, and doing everything she could to change that.”

Sarah decompresses by taking long walks through Morningside Heights. But there is no sharp line between her life at the office, and her life outside. The journalistic impulse comes naturally to Sarah. “I don’t have any ideological agenda about journalism,” Sarah explains. “I do think journalism can do good in the world. I think it can do good at this University.” On one stroll, Sarah heard gospel music pouring out of a dilapidated building. She noted the location and gave it to a fellow Speccie to investigate. Eventually Spec ran a video profiling the youth group that practices there.

— Matthew Schantz

SAM WARREN

Sam Warren, CC ’13, is not one to spend all her
time in Butler. Or Avery. Or any other library on
campus, for that matter. Why? “Let’s just say I spend
a lot of time rowing. But I also spend a lot of time
thinking about rowing. And training for rowing,” she
offers earnestly, between mammoth bites of a Milano
sandwich. Warren has largely dedicated her time at
school to the Columbia Women’s Rowing Team, of
which she was named captain.

“People are always freaked out about the
amount of time, and how early we wake up, and
that we’re dry [during the racing season],” she says,
admitting to the slight insanity of her schedule.
“But,” she continues through mouthfuls of a quickly
disappearing M2, “It’s just who I am. I can’t imagine
not doing it . . . I wish that people understood that
it’s way more than just a game for us—it’s a lifestyle.”
Rowing has been Warren’s lifestyle for years. She has
rowed for the Junior National Team and attended the
elite U23 (under 23) National Team last summer.

As for graduation plans, Warren says she’s
“looking forward to making the team again this
summer” and hopefully “making the senior team in
the future,” but is uncharacteristically demure when
it comes to throwing around the big “O” word. “I do
have Olympic aspirations,” she concedes, but denies
that she is explicitly “training for the Olympics.”
Then, interjecting, “You’re going to think I’m such a
fatass after this—I got a roll to go with my soup,” and
pulls out an enormous hunk of bread.

How much, exactly, does an athlete like Warren
have to eat on a daily basis? “Oh my God. The amount
of food that I have to consume is ridiculous,” she
says, tearing into the bread. “I eat breakfast, then I
eat about two sandwiches every day, and then dinner.
Interesting fact: I don’t like dessert. Which I guess
doesn’t help me gain weight. I’m all about looking
good. No, I’m not. Don’t put that in there. That was
a lie.”

Despite her confident and somewhat intimidat-
ing exterior, Warren is surprisingly self-deprecating.
She makes it clear that her number one priority is ath-
etics—although she does devote much of what energy
she has left over to her major, Art History.

“I really love going to museums and seeing
art. It doesn’t really fit in with my jock personality,
but I have a sensitive side,” she insists. Her favorite
museum in the city is the Met; it’s “so big, and you
can just get lost in there.” Suddenly, her eyes widen,
and she repeats, quite seriously, “Literally: you can
get lost in there.”

In her own words, when she is not spending
time on the water or wandering museums, she is
simply “trying to not fail school.” Though you might
expect Warren to maintain the level of intensity
she does in the boat in all areas of her life, the con-
summate crew leader brushes off the assumption
with admirable candor. “I’m incredibly stubborn and
critical, so I’m pretty hard on myself and I strive to be
perfect, at least at rowing. That doesn’t count for the
rest of my life.”

— Sylvie Krekow
I know I should be working on my paper, but I'm just too hungry to think straight. Good thing I brought this Milano tuna melt with me! (I have no idea why more people don't eat in the library—feeding the mind and the body at once is my favorite way to multitask.) This pasta faced narp next to me is kind of side-eyeing me now, though. Whatever, I bet he's the type of person who does crosswords while he poops (I prefer texting).

Ooh, laptop's dead! I'll have to ask the nerd. 'Scuse me, is that your charger? Can I borrow it for a sec? Mine's lost. Or stolen, but I like to stay positive. Thanks. Okay, back to this paper. So much depends/upon/a red wheel/ barrow/glazed with rain/ water—oh my god, glazed with rain/water? That is so, so beautiful. Wow...

Speaking of which, that reminds me: I'm super thirsty. Luckily I have this Venti Double Chocolaty Chip Blended Crème Frappuccino to quench my thirst. And I bet it tastes a lot better than some wheelbarrow runoff! Haha! Oh, sorry—didn't realize I was laughing out loud at my own joke. There’s no need to glare, though. Sheesh. Back to Williams.

_Beside the white/chickens—_um, whoa, speaking of chicks, haaaay! Look, my best friend Becca just showed up to say hi! I had no idea she studied here! And I am absolutely dying to hear about what happened to her last night at Mel’s. Girl, you know I saw those pics on Facebook! Haha, oh my god, yes, I totally got all your Snapchats! The cutest!

Oh, me? I texted him but he never texted me back. I know. It's like, what is up with Columbia guys, right? You know what they say—they're either gay or taken! Haha! Also, the guy next to me? Super. Weird. Yeah. I don't know why he keeps staring either. It's like, I may be single, but I'm not necessarily looking, right? Especially while I'm working! Anyway, I should get back to this paper, Becs.

SHHHHH.

Um. Did this campus nobody actually just shush me? I mean, I get that it’s the library, but aren’t we all so stressed out that a quick chat with a friend is probably good for our collective sanity? Also, it’s not my fault that I run into so many friends. Ugh, stop. I should be totally Buddha about this—I’m sure he’s just jellie.

Gosh, forgiving people just feels so ... cleansing! Like eating a gluten-free muffin after a run.

_Ugh, I should really start digging into this poem. But I can’t work without my jams—Miley, where you at? The last time I freaked out, I just kept lookin’ down/I st-st-stuttered when you asked me what I’m thinkin’ ’bout ... wait, where is the music coming from? SPEAKERS. The entire room just heard me listening to “See You Again”! Haha, I’m so embarrassed! Except not really! LMAO._

Headphones def in now. Problem solved. Music really helps me chill out and focus. William Carlos Williams, imagistic, American Realism, here we go. It gets at some deep ... flaws in the way we all try to characterize... What book is the shusher looking at? Wait! Oh my god!

_Is that narp working on the same paper as me?! I say something: “I didn’t know we were in the same class. Tell me about your essay!”_

**AFFIRMATIVE**

_By Sylvie Krekow_
say something?

I know the feeling better than I’d like to admit: I’m staring down a poetry essay that I can only hope to dash off before deadline. I’ve just swiped into Butler, climbed up the stairs, caught my breath, and staggered into the Reference Room. Hoping against hope for a seat, I find one! And that little victory helps me to brace myself—I let myself believe I’ll get this thing done.

Unpacking, I sit and think: nobody fucking talk to me. Hunched over, I begin to close read.

And what do I smell but tuna? What do I see but one of my fellow students tearing into a monster-sized, overpriced melt, an expression of gleeful perversity on her face! The gargoyle!

—There’s some kind of underlying unity in this poem...perhaps not unrelated to the irreducible unity in human experience...

“Scuse me?”

Slowly, begrudgingly I meet my neighbor’s taunting smile. The tuna-muncher asks if she can borrow my charger super-quick. Seeing that my battery is responsibly charged, I hand it over.

—The poet examines his object with such attention...perhaps seeking to understand the fractured macrocosm through a purer microcosm...

THSSSSSOORR
THSSSSSSSOORR
THSSSSSSSOORR:

a God-awful sucking sound from my right. The repeat-offender is sucking at the dregs of an outsized drink from Starbucks THSSSSSSSOORR

—How does the interplay between the natural and artificial—between the animate and inanimate—help us understand the poem’s belief in universal harmony?

Oh, and now another plucked white hen has come to join the sandwich-eater! Welcome, Becca. Yes, it is so funny that I saw you in Mel’s one night and in Butler the next! What delicious juxtaposition! They peck over their night.

And, surprise—tunabreath is single! And she is, quite predictably, I must say, blaming it on the Columbia man. Maybe we’re a little too busy trying to penetrate the mysteries of literature to be endeared by your loud and unwelcome presence.

Now she’s loudly munching that hateful green Starbucks straw, which happens to be—you guessed it—my last straw as well. I’m mad as hell, and I’m not going take it anymore! The Reference Room is a Yellow Zone. That means beverages in spill-proof mugs. This is not OK. This nonsense ends with me! Emboldened, I turn to my right, put my finger to my lips, and let loose a shush:

SHHHHH!

Oh god. I feel my confidence farting out of me. I lost control; I said I wouldn’t do this anymore. Couldn’t I have stuck to the program and openly kept glaring at her like everyone else? Now I’m getting disapproving glances myself! I only wanted to help civility return to this library. Eh, tu, tabellmates?

As she turns toward me, her eyes plead to me—for a split second, she is wounded. Quickly bringing her guard up, her face hardens. Becca straightens up and emits a single stifled, haughty, “Hmph.” She saunters out. My nemesis silently looks at me and then turns back to what I presume to be political science reading.

Halfway through typing the header to her paper, she opens iTunes. Her laptop tinnyly plays “See You Again,” and it takes the fool about seven seconds too long to realize that her headphones aren’t plugged in. Now they’re in, and she’s looking at cat pictures.

—“so much depends upon...”

She says something: “I didn’t know we were in the same class. Tell me about your essay!”

Illustration by Brit Fossum
Verily Veritas had been holding forth on the inhumanity of the advising system. You see, a month ago he had ascended to the fourth floor of Alfred Lerner Hall and entered the Center for Student Advising, which blazes with such brightness. Things were, as usual, a bit complicated with V.V.’s enrollment status.

V.V. had stood before his advisor’s office, that primum mobile of his intellectual formation, where he was rebuffed. He’d simply needed advisor approval of his—ahem— independent study in the—ahem—close reading of Joyce’s love letters.

“Just reach out to us. Schedule an appointment through our new web form.”

“Surely, sir,” V.V. pleaded, “we could complete the requisite paperwork here and now.” But there was no intercessor to be found for him, and V.V.’s prayer went unanswered. He dirtied his hands, used the web form, and one week later received his advisor’s official blessing to—academically—dirty his hands.

So what recourse was left him but to declare “Non serviam”? Exhausted, he dirtied his hands a third time: he published a screed in the opinion section of the Daily Spectator.

But that was weeks ago—allow V.V. to bring you to the present, reader:

A classmate had put it so bluntly, her words an explicit indictment of V.V.’s opinion piece and her brevity an implicit indictment of Verily Veritas’s penchant for the ponderously prolix. She had simply written, “You are mean.”

(V.V.’s coat was cut in the latest fashion and wholly unfrayed. She could only, therefore, mean that he was spiteful! Bilious! Hyper-critical!)

Your hero’s tongue was—for once, if not for all—truly tied. He was conflicted. On the one hand, he was resentful! She’d never seen “mean”! He could show her “mean” in vivid relief! But on the other, he was a little hurt—he’d never meant to be mean. Had he? Had he, by his attacks on everyone and everything in the College, brought himself into ill-favor with the students? V. called for a meeting with his critic, and they met for a drink.

She had folded in her lap. She looked evenly across the table at V.V. He raised his glass to his mouth, but only pretended to drink. Scripture reads, “Wine gladdens the human heart.” And it does; but so, too, can it unsettle the human stomach.

V. felt dyspeptic.

Meeting her eyes, V. folded his own hands in his own lap. She demanded: “You like Columbia, don’t you?”

Could she be baiting him? Of course he did! He loved Columbia! Why else would its failings spur him so? If he had so brought himself into ill-favor, it was on account of that mischievous goddess, Miscommunication. (V.V. had met her at least once before, when, on one golden day on the Vineyard, he’d failed to win an apple inscribed, “For the Nicest.”)

Couldn’t she see that he loved it? He only expected it to be more than one more back-patting way-station between here and the great networking event in the sky! He only believed that a community could and should be founded on more than community dialogues about community! He only thought we shouldn’t have to hoot like apes every weekend in a futile attempt to resist the crushing anomie!

She concluded: “There’s no sense in making enemies. Not when it’s unnecessary.”

Your hero sighed.

12
Love Me Tenure

Why a beloved Barnard English professor packed off for Brown

BY NAOMI COHEN & CLAIRE HEYISON

“T’s a body blow,” says Barnard English chair Peter Platt. “But we’re big and we’re strong. We have to pick up the pieces, and we’re doing that.”

Platt is referring to the loss of former colleague Bashir Abu-Manneh, whom he helped hire in 2003—and who, in November 2012, was denied tenure by his department, effectively ending his employment at Barnard.

While students were quick to voice their resentment toward the tenure decision by circulating a high-profile petition demanding his reinstatement, Abu-Manneh’s colleagues in the department have largely refused to speak on the matter. Abu-Manneh, too, declined to comment.

Abu-Manneh taught a number of courses, including Cultures of Colonialism: Israel/Palestine; Global Literature; Postcolonial Theory; and Marxist Criticism. He was the only Barnard English professor who specialized in postcolonial literatures and the only professor on campus who taught a course built exclusively around Arabic literature in translation. While Abu-Manneh’s deep engagement with Marxist theory and Israel-Palestine was new for many students, his openness and dynamism attracted students of disparate viewpoints. Abu-Manneh is remembered as having the rare ability to strike a pedagogical balance that was neither dogmatic nor apolitical.

“Atypical,” says Platt of his role in the department. “I’ve always been a big fan of his.”

As Abu-Manneh was a campus favorite, his dismissal has invited speculation regarding the tenure process that led to his rejection. In all cases, candidates are evaluated along three distinct criteria: teaching, research, and service. Linda Bell, Provost and Dean of the Faculty at Barnard, stresses, “Nobody can pass the Barnard tenure process without distinguishing themselves in all three areas.”

While these three expansive categories are known, because tenure deliberations are confidential, cases often invite drama. What’s more, Barnard tenure protocol requires that candidates be reviewed first at Barnard, then at Columbia. Since every step of the process is confidential (and since there are many steps), where and why a candidate was rejected is often obscured.

According to multiple sources, Abu-Manneh was initially approved for tenure by the Barnard English department. By Barnard’s tenure committee, and since the case went over to Columbia, presumably by President Spar.

Abu-Manneh’s dossier then went to the Columbia tenure committee, which recommended that the Provost reject his case. While rejection at this stage is usually final, Abu-Manneh’s colleagues appealed to the Columbia Provost to return the case to Barnard in fall 2012. These appeals are considered on the merit of “evidence of substantial scholarly growth,” or publishing.

Because he had only published one book during his eight years at Barnard, the same panel that approved Abu-Manneh once before was now backed into a corner, as a process which was once based on three criteria was now whittled down to an evaluation of his publication history.

Of the four candidates considered for tenure in 2012 at Barnard, Abu-Manneh was the sole candidate that was denied. According to Professor Frederick Neuhouser, Chair of the Philosophy department at Barnard and a close friend of Abu-Manneh’s, “after maybe years of serving Barnard and Columbia with great energy, Bashir is feeling very betrayed by the tenure process.”
If most stories have two sides, the ones involving tenure have closer to twenty. Depending on who you hear it from, the villains and heroes change every time.

In trying to unravel the Abu-Manneh case, three main narratives emerge:

The first is that Abu-Manneh was a great professor, and that his ability to engage students in both academics and activism should have taken precedence over his publication history. Perhaps because Barnard defines itself as a small liberal arts college, many of those interviewed agree that dedication to students and teaching should come first.

The second holds that tenure criteria at Barnard are no different than tenure criteria anywhere else: “Publish or perish.” During Barnard’s end-of-year reviews, which can serve as course corrections for tenure-track faculty, Abu-Manneh was probably advised that he accelerate production. Despite multiple reviews—one per year, with major reviews at the end of his third and sixth year—his bibliography remained thin. This narrative holds that the tenure denial may have been disappointing but was not unexpected.

The third narrative suggests that tenure review is simply a flawed process at all universities and colleges, and at Barnard specifically. Had the tenure process been independent of Columbia’s input, had the criteria for granting an appeal not been so narrow, and had evaluations been less subjective or confidential, things might have ended differently for Abu-Manneh.

These are issues which affect every tenure case at Barnard. Abu-Manneh serves as a particularly poignant example of how the qualities that make for a beloved educator and scholar can get lost in layers of bureaucratic procedure.

When she heard that Abu-Manneh had been denied tenure, former student Nancy ElShami, BC ’10, immediately launched a campaign to win him back. Her online petition to reverse the decision attracted nearly 400 signatures, many accompanied by messages attesting to Abu-Manneh’s profound impact. Maya Wind, BC ’13, says she “was devastated” when she heard the news. Gabriela Siegel, CC ’13, puts it simply: “Bad choice, Barnard.”

ElShami’s petition, though intended for the administration, impacted the students: word spread about the school’s enigmatic snub of an inspirational professor. The petition, which questions Barnard’s “commitment to intellectual freedoms, diversity, and teaching,” led some signatories to reflect on the role of Abu-Manneh’s nationality as a self-identified “Palestinian from Israel,” his politicized subject matter, and his personal activism—such as his multiple contributions to the radical Z-Mag and israeli-occupation.org—in the tenure decision.

However, no matter his personal political views, Abu-Manneh’s former students laud him for encouraging debate in class and maintaining a non-hostile academic environment. Former student Sarah Lipkis, BC ’13, says she was initially afraid she would be penalized for her pro-Israel views but instead, after taking two of his classes, recommended him to pro-Israel friends and wanted to enroll in more.

Abu-Manneh’s legacy extends far beyond the English department: he chaired the Barnard Film Studies Program, served on committees for Africana Studies and Comparative Literature, and was active in the Center for Palestine Studies (CPS). In 2010, Abu-Manneh approached Neuhouser to create the Barnard Forum on Emancipation and Politics, which aimed to challenge identity politics with an unapologetically Marxist analysis. These efforts to enrich students’ lives and create forums for discussion outside the classroom took place mainly in the two years leading up to his tenure review.

“Unfortunately, in the current academic climate, those things which should be as important to developing yourself as a scholar may have taken time away from some of the other things that perhaps his department wanted to see,” says Professor Kaiama Glover, Assistant Professor of French at Barnard and another close friend of Abu-Manneh’s. “I can only conjecture about that, but I can say that he didn’t slow down at all in terms of activism, engaging with students, and bringing intellectual nourishment to

“After years of serving Barnard and Columbia with great energy, Bashir is feeling very betrayed by the tenure process.”
this campus.”

Platt says he recognizes this type of case from when he was a student at Yale. Then, he didn’t understand how scholarship mattered more to tenure committees. Now, as a professor, he does.

When it comes to filling a spot permanently, Biology professor Paul Hertz, who served as acting Provost at Barnard from July 2011 to September 2012, maintains that good deeds and diversity of thought will never compete with a promising bibliography: “Service is really great in a dossier, but it doesn’t get anybody tenure, anywhere. People often have great ideas. They read a lot. They synthesize a lot. But some people get blocked and just don’t publish the stuff. And that’s the same as not doing it.”

Columbia professor of Arab politics and culture Joseph Massad, who faced public scrutiny several times after rumors of intimidating pro-Israel students in class, was nevertheless granted tenure because he fit the traditional criteria. By the time of his tenure bid, Massad had published more books than most of his colleagues. Besides having a reputation opposite to Abu-Manneh, he had an opposite experience with the tenure process: Massad was reported to have been initially denied tenure when he was evaluated in 2009, a decision that was then reversed after an appeal.

Whereas Massad’s case only went through one tenure review, Abu-Manneh had to go through two: one at Barnard and one at Columbia.

Tenure review for a Barnard professor begins in the candidate’s department, where all tenured professors anonymously vote on each candidate. If the candidate passes the vote, the decision then moves to Barnard’s Advisory Committee on Appointments, Tenure and Promotion (ATP), which advises the Barnard Provost on the candidate’s qualifications. Once approved by the President of Barnard, the case material is sent to the other side of the street. There, it is reviewed by the analogous Columbia department and the Tenure Review Advisory Committee (TRAC), Columbia’s advisory body that is comparable to ATP. With their respective recommendations, the Provost consults with the presidents and Columbia’s Board of Trustees to make the decision final.

According to multiple sources, it was TRAC that rejected Abu-Manneh for tenure, in either the spring or early summer of 2012.

Though Barnard’s process is asymmetrical in ceding judgment to a third party, the Columbia review has historically exercised little influence on the decision. Hertz also says that Columbia’s Tenure Review Advisory Committee (TRAC), which replaced a messier ad-hoc process in 2012, remains in conversation with Barnard during its deliberation. “If the discussion is heading toward a negative decision, they [TRAC] invite the chair of the Barnard department to come and meet with them and have a discussion. So my impression is that they would never vote no at one meeting.”

TRAC’s mandate, according to its chair, sociology professor Peter Bearman, is procedural as well as substantive. Neuhausser, who served on ATP from 2008 to 2011, says that the criteria that TRAC uses to evaluate candidates remain obscure. “It’s a very fraught system,” he says. “Some people both at Barnard and Columbia are worried that the kind of review that TRAC is actually carrying out is different from the kind of review that we thought it would be when it was sold to us.”

After TRAC voted negatively, Abu-Manneh was given another chance. In the fall of 2012, Barnard’s Department of English reviewed his case again.

According to terms of the appeal, Abu-Manneh was re-evaluated solely on his published works. But between the spring and fall of 2012, there was little time for him to significantly bulk up the first few chapters of his next book. “At the end of the sixth
year, if the person has not produced a body of work that the department thinks is worthy of tenure, the clock will run out,” says Hertz. “There’s really no time left, at that point.”

The final decision therefore rested on both the generosity of a narrow procedural clause and the goodwill of Abu-Manneh’s colleagues. Despite the well-defined codes and structures laid out in the tenure guidelines, Platt says that in evaluating a candidate’s contribution to his or her field, much is up for interpretation.

In 2001, departmental politics paralyzed the Columbia English department, making national headlines. The concern was that the content, rather than the quality, of published material was weighing too heavily in tenure evaluations, feeding an existential conflict pitting practitioners of mid-century new criticism against their post-colonial colleagues. The New York Times reported that “the political debates turned personal, with each side accusing the other of no longer being able to distinguish the quality of a candidate from his or her ideology.”

The deliberations of the Barnard Department of English will remain confidential. Because Platt was on leave during the final moments of Abu-Manneh’s case, English professor Achsah Guibbory was the acting department chair. She declined to comment.

According to multiple sources, it was TRAC, Columbia’s review committee, that rejected Abu Manneh for tenure.

The Barnard English department is expecting to fill Abu-Manneh’s position in two years. While it has the largest faculty at Barnard, the new hire will set a certain academic tone, just as Abu-Manneh’s denial of tenure made a statement about how his department would define itself. While it is certain that the position will be granted to scholar of postcolonialism with its amorphous and expansive nature of the postcolonial field, it is almost as certain that the subject matter will differ from Abu-Manneh’s particular areas of expertise.

“For me,” says Neuhouser, Barnard’s remaining resident Marxist, “the big loss is a loss of a certain intellectual perspective that I think is becoming increasingly rare on college campuses, not just at Barnard or Columbia.” The Barnard Forum on Emancipation and Politics has not survived Abu-Manneh, and the English department has lost an anti-colonial voice in its Western-focused faculty.

Abu-Manneh isn’t adrift though: less than one year after leaving Barnard, he’s secured a visiting professorship at Brown University.

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“BRO, IT’S JUST SO HARD TO FIND NATTY LIGHT IN THIS URBAN ENVIRONMENT”

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16

Comic by Hank Shorb and Matthew Schantz
In Curio Columbiana, sallow-faced editors call forth anecdotes from the archives. See the Columbia that was! Reconsider her as she is! This excerpt—first published on November 3, 1892, in Vol. III, No. 4 of The Blue and White—relates an episode in which The New York Times accused the editors of failing “to foster class spirit and to arouse a sounder college feeling in Columbia.”

[“New York Times” Correspondent from Columbia, October 30th.]

“The need at Columbia is an excellent news journal. The Columbia Spectator amply upholds the standards of college journalism at Columbia, but affects a literary rather than a practical style.

“The Blue and White, the new paper, cannot be considered either a representative of the college or a trustworthy news reporter, while by its attacks on everyone and everything in the college, it has brought itself into ill-favor with the students.”

The above item of information was conveyed to readers of the “College World” page of the New York Times last Sunday, under the head of “Correspondence from Columbia College.” Needless to say the gentleman who wrote it is on the Board of that paper at Columbia, which “affects a literary rather than a practical style.”

It is the usual characteristic of the editors of college journals to “fight fair,” if it is necessary to do any fighting at all, and it is with feelings of the deepest regret we find that such is not the practice of at least one of the Board of our “esteemed contemporary.”

We could forgive the aimable remarks made by the aforementioned gentleman (who, by the by, is addicted to writing doggerel verse of dubious originality upon sentimental subjects) were it not that his sole object in referring to The Blue and White at all was to make a little more money, it being the custom of the Times to pay forty cents an inch for news. So the gentleman is “in” that sum by his scathing remarks, and we congratulate him upon the acquisition of his wealth. It is not our intention to dispute his assertions; we have no need to.
Awesome Hipster Bar

A B&W reporter reviews Harlem Public

BY APRIL MARO

Harlem Public
3612 Broadway

The descent to the 116th station, the swipe of a MetroCard—a more than familiar Friday night routine. The uptown side of this platform? That’s new. We think we might be the first Columbia students in the past century to venture to Hamilton Heights for a night out. (We are not.) Upperclassmen tell us that Harlem Public beats 1020 by a long shot, and Yelp reviewers describe Harlem Public as an “oasis” and “my happy place.” Because my happy place usually involves alcohol too, the bar seems worth a try.

We discuss strategy on the subway; we’ll just run the four blocks from the station to 149th. I’m ashamed to share that I have pepper spray in my purse, and my friend quips that 60 percent of the time that people try to use it they end up spraying it in their own eyes. I pray that I’m in the 40 percent.

We pass about twenty cops in a four block span. “But this is Harlem. At night!” I remind myself, and pick up the pace. Wind, wet, and suspicious of every passerby, we finally find the bar. We’re certainly imagining the worst—no one even approached us—but we tap our feet and anxiously wait for the bouncer to clear our IDs.

Once in, we perch on bar stools, sipping on $7 lagers because we’re unfamiliar with this situation: cheap liquor isn’t the MO here and there’s only one couple ostentatiously making out. We’re clearly through the looking glass.

While standing around, we’re standing out. Some people look like they’re taking a break from their high-power jobs in the Financial District; others like it’s their first time out of Williamsburg. A few have gray hair that wasn’t dyed that way as fashion statement. I haven’t seen this much flannel since I left my home in Appalachia. The racial composition, however, must leave everyone wondering, as one Yelp reviewer put it, “Where did all the white people come from?” We feel like we’re PrezBo’s minions, gentrifying Harlem simply by being here, as this bar just doesn’t represent the public of Harlem at all.

Our blatant fib about being grad students doesn’t help much in bringing us up to age with the other patrons. “Have you met my friend?” No—we are once-overed repeatedly before being ignored. Macklemore gives way to Vampire Weekend, followed by the White Stripes, Bright Eyes, and Michael Jackson. We imbibe the music and the drinks in mason jars while sticking our fingers in the place’s signature peanut butter bacon hamburgers—amazing, by the way.

Sober as all hell, because we’d rather guzzle a bottle of vodka bought for cheaper than our two Guinesses, my friend—who vehemently denies she’s a hipster—and I discuss the bar’s popularity with Columbia upperclassmen. The allure seems to be that it’s a daring adventure (but not really) and that one gains hipster cred by venturing above 120th, but we’re maybe too mainstream to fully appreciate these sentiments. Perhaps Columbia students escape campus alienation at this uptown niche.

A Yelp reviewer predicts that this marks the culmination of the trend of gentrification: “Given its success marked by a consistent full house, I expect a good flow of similar establishments to follow suit in the near future.”

Illustration by Juliette Chen
The Bard of Livingstone

Whose firm but gentle hand kept the men of Morningside in line

BY DANIEL STONE

One October morning in 1926, a large, bespectacled, stooped-over man posted a notice on the lobby bulletin board of John Jay Hall. It announced:

While the age of chivalry is past and romance is at a low ebb, yet, we must protect the formally timid, but aggressive sex and must not tempt the ladies of tender years into moral turpitude. The anatomy the youthful male must be hidden from the charming daughters of Eve as long as possible.

A lady, mother of two daughters, living on 114th Street, implored me to request the Apollos of John Jay Hall not to disport themselves in front of their windows in a state of nudity.

Take heed, ye despooiers of female virtue, and cover yourselves, or the demand for opera glasses will go up in the neighborhood.

By the end of the day, every Columbia College student had read it.

The author of the message was Frederick Nubling. From 1917 to 1934 he served as manager of Columbia’s dormitories, a position involving everything from overseeing a large staff of maids and porters to, crucially, ensuring that students did not steal the shower curtains. In his cramped office in Livingston—now Wallach Hall— “Papa,” penned the notices of admonition that earned him fame.

Nubling endeavored to put an end to the students’ misdeeds in his notices with a learned word and sparkling sense of humor. The resident of John Jay 10 who regularly fired his pistol at midnight became a “desperado”; the student who removed nozzles from fire hoses “a pyromaniac or aquamaniac.” The stunts themselves were considered in light of the French Revolution, Hegel, and the Bible. The ordinary was elevated to the extraordinary, and the happenings of the dormitories reported by “Papa” became the business of the entire student body.

Word of the erudite custodian of Columbia’s dormitories came to extend beyond campus. Articles about such incidents at Columbia in The New York Times and New York Herald were leavened by excerpts of Nubling’s declarations. A particularly charmed reporter at the New York Post wrote a feature about the “janitor-in-chief” that was syndicated to the Milwaukee Journal. Earl Sparling of the World-Telegram described the “professor without portfolio and an instructor extraordinary.”

Nubling, a modest man, never made much of the attention. His efforts reflected a noble cause: for all their humor, the messages were his means of tolerantly keeping the fairly autonomous realm of the dormitories in order. Without the unsigned declarative memos and freely issued housing probation of today, he succeeded.

Nubling was born in 1863 in Basel, Switzerland. His father participated in the revolution of 1848 and left some of the old ardor to his son. As a student at the Basel Gymnasium in 1880, a young (and intoxicated) Frederick delivered a fiery speech in the spirit of Marx and Bakunin. He spent the next three days in jail on bread and water as punishment for his outburst. Three years later, he was on a ship bound for New York.

In the early days, Nubling drifted from one Manhattan household to next as a “high class kind of broom sweeper.” He found his inability to speak...
MISCHIEF MANAGED

English professionally crippling, and enlisted the help of a tutor, who taught him Shakespeare and Milton. He then got a job as a doorman at a fancy hotel, but was fired when “he addressed the patrons in his Elizabethan style.”

However, by the late 1890s Nubling had climbed to the estimable position of steward in the household of New York financier Henry Marquand. In 1917, he went from managing the households of the wealthy to those of their children when he assumed the post of Manager of the men’s dormitories at Columbia.

For years, Nubling issued his manifestos and students reveled in them. Many were published in the light-hearted “Off-Hour” column in the Spectator. Some students became devotees of Nubling, among them George Delph, CC’23. In an affectionate column, Delph described how he wished that when he finally “stepped up to the Judgment Seat, in fear and trembling,” he “would see Papa Nubling looking kindly down.”

Others opted to make light of the already absurd by featuring Papa prominently in various parodies of the Spectator. In the Jester (then very popular and profitable), Nubling was made author of every article of the Columbia Daily Jester, while an April Fools edition of the Barnard Bulletin, Barnard’s answer to the Spectator, had Nubling describe finding “dark green keys . . . reminiscent of those used by Ulysses on his return from the Virgin Islands.”

Sadly, Nubling’s spirit seemed to fade in early thirties. The gaps between postings lengthened, while the notices themselves grew short and perfunctory. Fantastical stories turned into lists of missing items. Then it stopped, and Papa vanished. In a tearful 1933 editorial, the editors of the Spectator described what Nubling meant to Columbia College:

Papa Nubling supplied the only bright spots when matters grew somewhat too warm for comfort. His salty comments, published in these columns or posted on the walls of the dormitories, afforded the undergraduate body rare joy and some solid cogitation.

Finally, the editors condemned the source of Nubling’s end:

Who told Papa Nubling to shut up? Whoever it is, he is the most unpopular man on the Campus. There is much to that man in Livingston Hall. He must not be relegated to obscurity because he is part of the intellectual tradition of this College.

The end came. In the spring of 1934, Nubling announced his retirement. His eyesight had deteriorated. A special pension was arranged, and Nubling told the Spectator about his desire to live out his last days “somewhere in Long Island, with a garden and bushes and trees and a place to go swimming.” He likened his fate to that of Cincinnatus, the Roman ruler who took up the plow after war.

On June 4, 1934, Nubling’s last day at Columbia, the University’s greatest gathered to bid him farewell. Herbert Hawkes, Dean of Columbia College and Professor John Coss, the originator of Contemporary Civilization, attended the ceremony. Even University President Nicholas Murray Butler, whom Nubling had long admired, delivered a speech.

Four months later, the Spectator dispatched a reporter to interview Nubling. Retirement suited him poorly. His cataract confined him to what he called a “stupidly aimless life.” Yet Nubling was happy to receive the emissary from Morningside. “I like to think that maybe students still remember old Papa Nubling up there,” he said. “In my dreams I am always with Columbia and her students. Then I am happy.”

Illustration by Juliette Chen

THE BLUE AND WHITE
The following is one of Papa Nabling’s notices, printed in full for the pleasure of the reader.

As to scratches and other disfigurements on phone-booths of the Residence Halls.

There is a time when to scratch and when not to scratch. Like the Hens, some of us must scratch for a living.

Dogs and monkeys scratch for fleas. Moses scratched a rock in the wilderness and good clear water spurted forth.

There is an old saying to wit:
Scratch my back and I will scratch yours.

At an examination and at Commencement time names are sometimes scratched, much to the disgust of their owners.

Scratch a lady’s back and you make a friend of her.

This procedure however is not advisable as to mules.

To scratch any part of your anatomy in the presence of ladies is a sign of moral collapse.

And while the poet Heine babbled about cutting the name of your beloved into the bark of every tree, yet nowhere, gentlemen, absolutely nowhere, are you asked, exhorted or importuned to scratch your name into the phone-booths of your Alma Mater or she will become a maratre instead.

Massawa Restaurant has been a New York City favorite for 25 years. The restaurant serves fine Eritrean and Ethiopian food that is nationally known. It is a family-run business and has many loyal patrons that have enjoyed the food for years. Offering exotic dishes from spicy to mild and from many vegan favorites to tasty meats, our patrons are known to be coming back for more especially since we open late.

Students can enjoy 20% off with a CUID

• Lunch Specials (M-F, 11:30-4) • Brunch (Weekends, 11:30-4)
• In-House Dinner (10% off) • Catering
Measure for Measure

Snow

With my work done,
and a room full of all the things it took me a lifetime to buy,
and the general terror of having nothing to do,
I started walking and got to the park
and, desperate, asked the girls on the swings

Is there something naturally more authentic
about childhood?

They looked to the tallest,
strong-eyed and blonde, to respond:
Not in the sense you’re using it. Childhood is something you invented
when you stopped being excited about finding yourself. It has no meaning to us.

Really?

The one in the middle became frustrated:
You think we have a sense of purpose, one purer than yours, but we
don’t. I don’t need a reason to be excited for tomorrow. Maybe you do,
but that’s not our problem.

I nodded:
I think I do.

Oh! The eyes of the 3rd girl
ballooned. It’s supposed to
snow tomorrow!

At this they rushed back
into the excitement their age demands,
and I understood that this was my cue.

Next morning I got up to watch,
and imagined trying to explain it to a little boy.

Is the sky falling apart?
Yes. But look,

it’s becoming something new on the grass.

— Torsten Odland
**Measure for Measure**

**In My Nissan**

In high school, my brother and I would cruise around our county for hours listening to Marvin Gaye’s “Let’s Get It On,” because we were really funny.

The streets ran like a tangle of yarn that had been dropped by a careless bird, and every Friday night we would put on “Good Times, Bad Times” and try to trace out the pattern that 2009 is working on America. One night we counted all the houses with red doors.

We’re back in the driveway, calling it quits at 12:30, and when I open the door the light conjures my face in the windshield.

— Torsten Odländ
Short-Term Memory Loss

*Operation Ivy League and why you buy your weed off-campus*

**BY TORSTEN ODLAND**

In the early hours of December 7, 2010, the following students were awoken and arrested for drug dealing by NYPD officers: Harrison David, SEAS ’12; Chris Coles, CC ’12; Stephan/Jose Vincenzo/Perez, CC ’12; Michael Wymb, CC, ’11; and Adam Klein, CC ’12. Specifically, they’d sold: marijuana, cocaine, LSD, ecstasy, and Adderall. The bust was the culmination of a five month long investigation of the students, from whom undercover NYPD officers bought $11,000 worth of drugs over the course of 31 deals.

In the Office of Special Narcotics’ original press release, they referred to the sting as “Operation Ivy League.” Though Police Commissioner Ray Kelly denies ever using it, it is the name that stuck.

Students from 2010 remember “OIL” as a “big deal.” Operation Ivy League united the Columbia community in confusion; the atmosphere on campus in the days after the arrests was described to me as a “collective daze”—OIL was “shocking” and “upsetting” and everyone was talking about it.

The responses to “Five Students Arrested in Drug Bust, “Operation Ivy League,”” Bwog’s first article covering the story, demonstrate how intensely Columbia students felt about the issue: “My thoughts go out to the countless individuals in the Greek community who fight everyday to show the truly positive side of their fraternity or sorority, only to have actions like this essentially reset the process. It’s an absolute shame”; “My heart goes out to the desperately poor people from third-world countries who risk their lives smuggling drugs inside their bodies because they have no other option. My heart does NOT go out to Ivy Leaguers who got caught.”

For the Columbia students who were there, OIL was an unforgettable event, about which many still feel strongly, both in support of or in disgust with the arrested. It’s remained campus news for two years—Bwog published updates about each of the accused’s court cases, and still keeps campus posted when Jose Perez appears on network news to talk about the dangers of Adderall.

Two years from now, almost all of the undergrads who remember the atmosphere on campus in the days after the arrests will have graduated. Which begs the question: Does Operation Ivy League matter to Columbia students anymore? Let me put it this way: In Columbia history, can we put Op. Ivy League in the same category as “that time Snoop Dogg played Bacchanal?” Did it permanently impact the lives of Columbia students, or is it another “legendary moment” that ultimately amounts to a memory?

The answer is complicated. The arrests did have one immediate effect on life at Columbia that has persevered: Operation Ivy League made it a lot harder to buy drugs. I met with a student (and self-professed drug enthusiast) who, on condition of anonymity, explained that “the Five” were neither the highest nor lowest figures on the Columbia drug distribution chain—only the most well known. The student laughed when I asked if they’d ever heard...
the five names in connection with each other before the bust: “They were ‘the campus drug dealers.’ Everyone knew... [Perez] used to put what he had for sale on his Facebook statuses.” The network of dealers once included many students selling out of their dorms on a small-time basis, and though the bust only took five players out of that network, it sent a message to everyone else: you’re taking on a serious risk. “Everyone got scared. Multiple friends of mine—I had just been picking up from friends—stopped dealing after [the Five] got arrested.”

This infrastructure has yet to be reestablished. “It’s still harder to buy weed,” the student sighed. Much easier, they allowed, than immediately after the bust, when entirely new lines of distribution had to be formed. Instead of business with off-campus distributors being confined to a few student dealers, the users themselves had to search for new hook-ups. This often meant venturing into unknown, “sketchy” parts of the city. “I went from going next door [in my dorm], to picking up in public restrooms, where you had to knock a certain amount of times,” the student elaborated, “or getting into cars with people I didn’t know. Once I had an experience with like, fake police.” [Picking up weed] got a lot scarier.”

But demand for drugs remained constant. Thus, more reliable connections were slowly built with off-campus dealers, and, for marijuana at least, this arrangement remains most typical at Columbia. There are a handful of campus dealers, but, of the pot smokers with whom I spoke, the majority buys from adults in the Morningside Heights area—a profitable new domain for a limited number of non-affiliated dealers who capitalized on the new market after OIL. Less standard drugs, like LSD, are more difficult to come by; if there are reliable dealers, they don’t seem to be very well known among the student body. Still, over the last two years Columbia’s drug economy has returned to stability.

Operation Ivy League’s other major impact was internal. Because Jose Perez, Harrison David, and Adam Klein were members of Pi Kappa Alpha, Alpha Epsilon Pi, and Psi Upsilon, respectively, and dealt out of their fraternity houses, Columbia stripped the three chapters of their brownstones. The buildings were reserved for transfer students in ’11-’12, and became part of general housing for ’12-’13. Next year the brownstones will once again be reserved for specific communities. Last November Student Affairs awarded them to Alpha Chi Omega, a sorority; Lambda Phi Epsilon, an Asian-interest fraternity; and Q House, a special interest group dedicated to creating a safe living space for members of the LGBTQA community.

For the then-current members of Pike, AEpi, and Psi U, Operation Ivy League obviously had an enormous impact on social life at Columbia. They lost their communal homes and vacated “frat row.” And though the substance of their “fraternal bonds” may not have changed, it’s difficult to separate the character of a fraternity from its “house”—something that, in the cases of these three frats, will mean something very different for all of their future members. But the impact isn’t strictly limited to Greek Life participants: “frat row” means something different than it did in 2010. The number of fraternity houses on 114th (including ADPi) dropped from 6 to 3 in 2011. In 2010, “frat row” meant 114th; now it means 113th.

The classes of ’13 and ’14 underwent their formative years (and their NSOPs) in a different environment, and ’15 and ’16 are about to go through the same process in reverse, as the brownstones revert from general student housing to “communities.”

OIL evidently does have a residual presence in our lives at Columbia, but though our neighborhood and drug culture may be objectively different, it’s a difference that’s easily absorbed by the system. We buy drugs from different people, but at its worst this new arrangement is an annoyance—Columbia students still buy and use drugs as they did before OIL. Granted, 114th has fewer parties, but second- and first-years have only ever known it that way, and now there’s 113th St. Besides, Greek life still exists; in fact, since the bust Columbia’s recognized two new sororities (A01 and Gamma Phi Beta) and one fraternity (SAE). The number of students going Greek is at an all time high, and in fact has increased 19.2 percent since the spring of 2011, immediately after
Operation Ivy League. Though our environment was reconfigured, our lives have returned to a (new) normalcy.

For that reason, it’s difficult for first and second-years to imagine how much of a “big deal” the arrests seemed for students at the time. The Bwog article “Everything You Need to Know About Operation Ivy League” (meant as a kind of primer for new students) has a heading titled, “Is this why my parents were worried when I said I was applying to Columbia?” But this way of putting it confused me—my parents weren’t terribly surprised by the news of the arrests, and I applied in 2010. OIL didn’t have any impact on Craig Ruziaka’s, CC ’16, application process either, he assured me. “It was only when I was working over the summer that I learned about the bust,” he said. “Didn’t worry me. It probably won’t affect my life.” He only knew OIL as “a drug bust”; when I stopped Craig outside of Carman to ask if he could talk to him about Operation Ivy League, he replied, “I’ve never heard of it.”

For those of us who weren’t students at the time of the arrests, I think it’s safe to say that the whole thing seems pretty banal. Surely it should come as no surprise to anyone that Columbia is host to drug dealers—there are certainly drug users—nor that drug dealers often get caught. The mass confusion felt on campus hardly seems like a reaction to the case itself and its minimal impact on Columbia’s social ecosystem. The confusion was likely a reaction to the fact that the NYPD seemingly targeted and certainly publicized the bust as a crackdown on “Columbia frat boys”—and then across the country, instantaneously, the news media had a collective orgasm.

Though not all outlets gloried in the class stereotypes inherent in the story as bluntly as the New York Post (e.g. “five students at the prestigious college—some from wealthy families—made stacks of cash by peddling a wide range of narcotics”), one is hard-pressed to understand why a paper like the Las Vegas Sun would cover something so insignificant as college kids slinging dope beyond the fact that the story was a perfect storm of privilege. Suddenly, Columbia’s identity was thrown into the national news spotlight. The arrested weren’t just drug dealers; they were “Columbia student drug dealers.”

Many Bwog and Spectator comments focus on Columbia’s reputation, some asserting that the arrests will devalue our diplomas in some way. The media made the bust indissoluble from the image of “Columbia University.” So it’s not hard to see why students seemed to react to the news so personally—it had to do with our identity as Colombians. To cite an extreme case, on the Columbia Daily Spectator’s article “Five students in custody after drug bust” one comment (which tops 1,562 words) begins, “I consider myself, for all intents and purpose, a typical Columbia student...I have used, and probably will continue to use, weed, adderall, LSD, MDMA, cocaine, tobacco, alcohol, DMT, and tons of other drugs.” But Columbia’s identity hasn’t changed. At least the perceived value of a CU degree hasn’t—admissions in the three years since the arrests has been more competitive than ever before.

Operation Ivy League still matters, but not in a way that’s as monumental as it seemed to in 2010. Its effects are subtle unless you go out of your way to take a look at the history. The nature of change in a college setting is such that within four years the new becomes the normal. The class of ’17 will know the brownstones as belonging to AXO, LPE, and Q House; fifteen years from now the people living there will mostly likely never learn that their brownstone experience is all thanks to three unfortunate student drug dealers; and who knows who lived in the houses before Pike, PsiU, and AEPi. But of course, all of us live amidst thousands of small institutional adjustments, many of which can be traced to individual events in the University’s history. Operation Ivy League matters, but only as much as the countless events that went into shaping our current experiences at Columbia—often invisible and soon forgotten.

Illustration by Anne Scotti
When grass gave way to garbage on Upper Campus

By Will Holt

Columbia’s Upper Campus is about the most miserable-looking place in Morningside Heights. In the space outside the Northwest Corner Building or Pupin, you’d think that you were standing in fascist Italy or the dystopian London of A Clockwork Orange. A few halfhearted attempts at green space and one too many broken bricks don’t exactly scream “livable design.”

But the real blight is that hellish, stinking pit between Schermerhorn, Fairchild, and Mudd. Ironically referred to as “the Grove,” the Columbia Facilities website describes the area as the University’s central waste management and recycling facility. A series of dumpsters emit a putrid smell of rot, while rumbling trucks in low gear make noisy deliveries to the entrance on Amsterdam Avenue at all hours. Here one finds both the digestive and evacuation functions of the University.

Surprisingly, the Grove wasn’t named by some dark humorist. Rather, the nickname is a holdover from the original McKim, Mead & White campus plan: the Grove was an expansive, tree-covered park stretching along the northern end of campus—above Schermerhorn, Havermeyer, and University Hall (since replaced by Uris)—to 120th Street. The original Grove was just about the only green feature of the McKim design, which began at 116th Street and included no plans for what would become South Lawn.

McKim imagined two terraces roughly conforming to the slope of the landscape, with Low Library occupying the top of the hill and the Grove at its base; University Hall was to be the northernmost building on campus. The original sketches of that building are stunning, and The New York Times predicted in 1915 that the building “will rank second only to the [Low] Library in impressiveness.” It would house the offices for student organizations and other activities as well as clubrooms (think Lerner, only functional). At both sides of the building, two flights of granite steps would lead from the campus down to the Grove, which was conceived of as an oasis in the midst of an urban university.

Of course, University Hall was never completed as McKim had designed it. In 1959, the Business School received permission to demolish the building’s single completed story and use its foundation for the construction of Uris Hall. True to form, Columbia scrapped its plans for what would have been its most beautiful building on campus for what is one of its ugliest.

In a 1977 piece on the history of the Morningside Heights campus, the Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians noted that, “the Trustees did not see the urgency of the problem of providing for a coherent expansion.” McKim had never intended for the Grove to be paved over, but that soon became an imperative. Columbia was running out of space.

On November 13, 1924, ground was broken in the Grove for two buildings intended to house the physics and chemistry departments. According to Lionel Moses, the architect put in charge of this development by University President Nicholas Murray Butler, “There will be room for five more buildings in the Green. They will be constructed as needed.” At the time, the newly constructed Pupin was the largest building of its kind on any university campus, and Moses imagined his design at the cutting edge of science and engineering.

Observing these developments, The New York Times wrote in 1925: “That block between 116th and 120th Streets, Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue, where patches of grassy campus were preserved, is fast changing in appearance. Short of the fountains...
and the figure of Alma Mater, it soon will be almost solidly built up.”

Such observations were prophetic, pointing to an inevitable trend at Columbia toward blind, unstoppable growth. The original plans for the campus included much more green space than exists today, including rhododendron gardens and a fountain in the Avery Quadrangle. Today, much of the campus north of Low has been paved over and heavily developed.

A letter dated August 5, 1926, from Butler’s office to one Henry Lee Norris, Esq., Director of Works, included notes on the University’s building program for “the next few years.” Butler’s plans featured the “erection of buildings for general and scientific purposes on the east side of the Green” as well as another “project on the Green for Chemical Engineering.”

Unfortunately, Butler’s plans were rudimentary at best, and the subsequent arrangement of buildings on upper campus proved chaotic and poorly managed. Various projects in the area was built piecemeal, culminating with the Northwest Corner Building in 2007 (designed as a metaphorical bridge between the Morningside Heights campus and the recent developments in Manhattanville). The construction of Dodge Fitness Center in the 1960s signified the real death knell for the Grove. McKim’s lower platform was demolished and built over: the original two-tier arrangement of upper campus was turned into a single level.

In 1966, the Times rightly described the developments on upper campus as “uncoordinated and undistinguished,” suggesting “a kind of do-it-yourself planning based on a lack of administrative understanding of urban planning as a process, or as a source of superior design.”

Limited space and other difficulties surrounding expansion have always been two of Columbia’s thorniest problems. Concerns about the character and integrity of the surrounding neighborhood have long meant that the University has had to make high-intensity use of its existing land, while also paying tribute to the original Beaux-Arts designs of McKim, Mead & White. More recently, preservationist groups like the Morningside Heights Historic District Committee and the Coalition to Preserve Community have fought long and often bitter battles over developments like the Northwest Corner Building and Manhattanville.

All urban universities have to grapple with the inherent limitations of their location. As this article is being written, both New York University and Fordham have embarked on massive expansions in Manhattan that have pitted them against their respective neighborhoods of Greenwich Village and Lincoln Square, as well as a litany of preservation groups across New York. The ongoing construction of Columbia’s Manhattanville campus has incited protests from not only local residents and business owners, but also University students and faculty.

But the quest for ever larger endowments means finding ever more space. As Butler realized in the 1920s, greater revenue requires expansion, and the development of the Grove was seen as an imperative for the continuing success of the University.

The most important consideration for any school is not whether such developments should take place, but rather how they can be carried out intelligently. On this front, Columbia has a notably poor track record. Instead of green space, we get a garbage pit; instead of a useful student center, a useless series of vertiginous ramps. As the University moves forward with its Manhattanville expansion, the history of the Grove deserves its consideration.

Illustration by Anne Scotti
Breaking Up Is Hard to Dizzle

Deciphering CUSH’s split from the IRC

BY ALEXANDRA SVOKOS

“We currently don’t exist on paper,” John Lubeen Hamilton, CC ’13 and one of Columbia University Society of Hip-Hop’s most recognizable members on campus, explained. Originally started as an Intercultural Resource Center (IRC) Committee under the administration of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, CUSH was formed as a group that celebrates hip-hop culture, with a dedication to social justice—a seemingly paradoxical mission statement given that hip-hop is historically characterized by gang violence, sexism, and drug use. CUSH cultivates safe spaces, attempting to reconcile a socially controversial genre with the institutional principles of the IRC through critical dialogue. Its acronym-name seems to confuse the two goals: it’s unclear whether CUSH is attempting to grow a brand of hip-hop that adheres to progressive principles or is honoring music it loves while ignoring its unsavory foundation.

As most current members will attest, the founders—Acc Anderson, Mpho Brown, and Jon Tanners, all CC ’11—began the group as a more formal forum to hang out and talk about their favorite music. The group created a tradition of public events: cyphers, slam poetry showcases, discussions, film screenings, and new album listening parties. In previous years the cyphers—open events for freestyle rappers—drew crowds of 30-50 people, with a dozen rappers in the “circle” at its height.

Last semester CUSH split from the IRC, leaving the group in a sort of limbo. The official reason was that CUSH’s board did not host the required minimum of three IRC members. However, tensions with the IRC may have also contributed to CUSH’s dismissal.

CUSH president Kenneth Hicks, CC ’15, speaks openly to this: “My big thing as a person is being honest and dealing with reality rather than tiptoeing around things.” In early fall, an IRC member made a complaint that there were homophobic comments made at a cypher last year, although he didn’t specify who made them. The IRC member also mentioned “problems” with board members of CUSH who have since disassociated from the group. IRC residents supported their fellow member, blocking communication with CUSH and barring them from easy access to hosting events in the house. CUSH attempted to meet with the complaining resident, but—for unrelated reasons—he left the IRC.

Because the details of the discriminating comment were hazy, CUSH was put in a difficult position: how does one arbitrate a conflict grounded in ambiguity? Marta Esquirin, manager of the IRC and senior associate director of Multicultural Affairs, asked offended IRC members to meet with CUSH, but they chose not to respond.

The homophobic comment openly defied the governing tradition of CUSH: the “Ten CUSH Commandments.” The first commandment states, “Respect the safe space”—an active attempt to eliminate invidious statements concerning gender, sexual identity, and class. These topics may be the cornerstones of mainstream hip hop, the appreciation of which is the stated purpose of the club, but if a commandment is broken at a cypher, the crowd is quick to call the performer out. If he or she repeats the offense, a board member takes him or her aside. It’s a rare occurrence, most often coming from irregular members who stop in at cyphers after the commandments are explained. “For the most part I don’t ever hear anything that makes me feel uncomfortable at the cyphers,” said Kyara Andrade, BC ’16.
Without a regular meeting space, attendance lagged at the few events CUSH was able to have and casual members all but gave up on the group.

Faced with the loss of IRC Committee status, dedicated members gathered to re-form as a proper club. They will apply to become an ABC group next fall. In the meantime, Hicks communicates with Esquilin, who has been helpful in Reserving spaces so the group can continue to function. This semester, they held a pattern of events every Thursday: a town hall meeting, discussion, and cypher.

At CUSH’s first town hall, on February 21st, the members were asked what they’ve been listening to lately. The group discussed each mentioned artist—The Weeknd, ASAP Rocky—at length and with impressive detail. CUSH members, particularly the men, are highly versed in hip-hop trivia. This knowledge, noted Gabrielle Davenport, BC ‘15 and official “CUSH Scribe”—a title created because Davenport took issue with the term “secretary”—creates the only major gender divide within CUSH. “There’s definitely a boys’ club feel—you know, they’re all sitting around talking about this idea, or spewing facts at each other, and half the time I’m like, ‘What...?!’ I just don’t spend all my time reading information about new artists.”

The divide is emblematic of the CUSH paradox. It’s goal is to integrate groups of people into a hip-hop brand whose language and culture largely stands to marginalize and diminish those same groups. CUSH hopes to ameliorate the gender divide through discussion. And, at least to a degree, it succeeds: Davenport writes for a hip-hop blog, where she worries about not being on top of the scene and thus being dismissed as an ignorant girl. “In the real world of real hip-hop, it definitely plays out differently than it does in this insular ‘CUSH at Columbia’ scene.” She is much more comfortable admitting unfamiliarity with the industry in CUSH than outside of it, because CUSH, maybe foremost, wants to democratize the discussion of hip-hop culture, or as they put it on their Tumblr: “make the...appreciation of hip hop culture a force to unite students.”

For women’s history month, Andrade planned a “Women in Hip-Hop” discussion. With Davenport’s help, she brought in Ebonie Smith, BC ‘07, who works as a producer at a studio in Harlem. She reserved space in Lerner through Columbia’s Unrecognized Group Support, and a crowd steadily trickled in between 7 and 9 p.m. on March 7.

Sitting in a circle, the group was asked about the first female hip-hop performer they were aware of; a list of the classics: Lil’ Kim, Lauryn Hill, and Missy Elliott. Andrade walked through a prepared PowerPoint presentation. She said she wanted to “focus on the history of women present in hip-hop, either as rappers, producers, or execs,” rather than the tired diatribe of women’s poor representation by men in hip-hop harped on in professional analyses and reviews.

The presentation devolved into an open forum for attendees to assert their own theories: Foxy Brown had no longevity because her appearance was “gimmicky;” Lil’ Kim was too representative of an era to have a long career. What about Azealia Banks and Nicki Minaj? Nicki is under Lil’ Wayne’s wing, who will support and protect her, but Diplo’s support of Azealia is much less apparent, leaving her on her own as she picks fights on Twitter and makes a name. But does this indicate that women need a male counterpart to become a popular artist?

On February 28th, CUSH held “The Unplugged Cypher” in a room on the main floor of the IRC. The board unanimously contends that having cyphers in that specific space is essential. The group holds religious attachment to the narrow room, partially because non-Columbians can enter the IRC without IDs, allowing members’ friends, amateur freestylers from around Manhattan, and curious passersby to more easily participate.
These are the IRC’s loudest events. Led by drummer Ethan Kogan, CC ’13, a band played live beats as rappers passed around microphones and freestyled. Without IRC or ABC backing, CUSH survives on persistence and friends. Esquinil helps with organization and the IRC; Sigma Nu brothers have offered their house for event space; guest speakers work pro bono; and Kogan regularly gathers a student band to play for free. They’re “willing to play for the sake of playing, because they love music and they want to be a part of bringing that to campus,” Hicks explained. “There’s not much like what we do on campus. There’s no real space where you can rap for the sake of rapping or play an instrument for the sake of playing it, but you can at CUSH, and people appreciate that.”

Kogan and his friends played beats off popular tracks, including lots of Kanye West (“Touch the Sky” and “I Wonder”), leading the packed room to cheer in recognition at each new song. The circle was small and Hamilton was working hard through a sore throat. The crowd chanted along to a recitation of Lauryn Hill. A piece of construction paper hung on the wall, where participants scrawled goofy pictures and strong phrases: “Hip-Hop Is Power,” “RAP IS NEVER WACK.” The freestylers took a break and asked attendees to form a circle and play a game where one person said a line and the next had to respond in rhyme, until the rhythm was broken. Student photographers circled the crowd to document dreamy portraits for CUSH’s Facebook and Tumblr.

One young man freestyled for his first time to pats on the back from veterans and loud cheers from the crowd. A man in a slick suit heard the music from the sidewalk and stopped inside. He politely requested the mic and murdered the beat to the room’s rowdy surprise. Before leaving he passed a business card to board members, asking them for alerts the next time an event was held. Daniel Omachoni, CC ’16, was strong and steady in the circle for the full two hours. 9 p.m. closed in and the cypher wrapped up.

“This has been something dope,” Hamilton panted, sweaty. Hicks, himself not a performer but largely credited for the survival of CUSH, took a mic to thank everyone for coming. “We’ll be doing this again,” he grins. It would appear nothing could prevent that.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>The board lays out their “Ten CUSH Commandments”—titled off Notorious B.I.G.’s “Ten Crack Commandments” and used for over two years.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Respect the safe space.</td>
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<td>II. Respect the crowd.</td>
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<td>III. Respect the artist.</td>
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<td>IV. No hogging the mic.</td>
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<td>V. No biting.</td>
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<td>VI. No battling or fighting.</td>
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<td>VII. If you talk about money, we wanna see it!</td>
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<td>VIII. Go hard or go home.</td>
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<td>IX. Be creative.</td>
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<td>X. Have fun!</td>
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ONLY FOR COLUMBIA STUDENTS
The Chosen People

A look into the Columbia University Scholar’s Program

BY ZACH HENDRICKSON

“You were chosen for a reason.” This is what Dean Lavinia Lorch, the director of the Columbia Undergraduate Scholars Program and my academic advisor, told me in our first meeting together. I was one of the ten percent of incoming freshmen selected for the Scholars Program each year. We were assured that we were scholars among scholars; that we were better than our classmates.

But it wasn’t long before I met at least a dozen people who made my greatest accomplishments seem like child’s play. And though they may have had a couple of patents by the age of 16, they hadn’t been named “scholars” by CUSP.

There are many rumors regarding the nature of the Columbia Undergraduate Scholars Program, the overarching organization that oversees the programming for John Jay, Kluge, and C.P. Davis Scholars. Many say CUSP is something more than a recruitment tool; others assert that underrepresented populations are more heavily targeted by CUSP as a way to boost diversity on campus. Certainly, it’s not something often discussed outside of awkward NSOP conversations. “Wow that [insert incredible internship, research work, innovation here] that you worked on sounds really incredible! Are you in the scholars program?... No? Oh, um well, yeah I don’t know much about it either. Sorry.” These types of introductory missteps are all too common among scholars. Being a member of CUSP goes quickly from being a point of pride to a potential embarrassment.

However, I should note that in researching the program, I came across as many different opinions and outlooks as I did people. Ultimately, CUSP is like anything else at Columbia—for each person that finds some aspect of the program great, there are three more that hate it.

That said, nearly everyone interviewed described the same first experience with CUSP. After much fanfare, a young, unassuming pre-frosh discovers that, much to his wonder, there is a third page to his initial Columbia University acceptance packet. This third piece of paper does little more than notify a student that they have been named a Scholar and that there is some money involved. A quick Google search for “Columbia Undergraduate Scholars Program” will bring you to the following description: “Scholars distinguish themselves for their remarkable academic and personal achievements, dynamism, intellectual curiosity, the originality and independence of their thinking, and the diversity that stems from their different cultures and their varied educational experiences.” Nothing more is said until we all arrive on campus and are flung into the exciting world of CJS, speaker series, and Summer Enhancement Fellowship opportunities. These are the three defining programs of CUSP.

The first program, CJS (Columbia Journey Seminar), is a group of roughly 15 scholars who meet every other week to discuss selected readings that connect in some way to the theme that has been chosen for the year (the theme for 2012-2013 is “Play and Performance”). There are eight Journey Seminars which are led by four different graduate student mentors (GSM) with backgrounds from a wide variety of fields, such as philosophy and anthropology. Scholars are expected to show up to every
session, to do all assigned readings, and to submit a small amount of written work via CourseWorks to keep “good standing” within the program.

After meeting with students, it became clear to me that experiences vary wildly from GSM to CSM. One student described being harshly chewed out by her graduate student mentor after missing a session in her first semester as a scholar. Plenty of others said that the Journey Seminars were what they considered to be the most valuable part of CUSP. One such student was David Morales-Miranda, a first-year Kluge scholar. “I really do like getting to hear everyone’s perspective on the different readings that we do,” said David. “We have engineers, we have artists, we have history majors, and everyone else. We all chip in to really analyze Play and Performance. I think it’s really the Graduate Student Mentors who push us along in our growth.”

The second aspect of the program is the CUSP speaker series, a set of high-profile lectures throughout the course of a year that also roughly relate to the year’s theme. Speakers this year have included Andrew Delbanco, James Green, Joseph Stiglitz, Anya Schiffrin, and James Ramsey. The lectures are held in every imaginable lecture space on campus—CUSP attempts to familiarize young scholars with the campus as well as with high-ranking academics—but they are not open to the public. Personally, I’ve found the speaker-series to be my favorite part of CUSP. We often got the chance to meet with the speakers afterwards in a more informal setting with refreshments (i.e. free food). When else would a freshman majoring in human rights get the chance to shake hands with a Nobel Prize-winning economist?

The opportunities available to someone as a scholar are astounding. The chances for networking are fantastic, and CUSP backs up students who pursue unpaid internships and individual research projects with cold hard cash. The Summer Enhancement Fellowship is a grant available to all scholars, freshmen through seniors. It is widely understood that almost all scholars who apply receive some amount of money, though that amount varies between $400 and $5,000 depending on how the student intends to spend the grant.

Many scholars, especially upperclassmen, highlighted the grant as the most valuable aspect of CUSP. Torsten Odland, CC ’15 and a John Jay scholar, expressed his appreciation for the CUSP grant system as follows: “I don’t think that my parents would just pay for me to live in New York and do an internship. So if I was just limited to the things that could support me living here, I don’t know that I would be able to take a position I’m actually interested in.” Paying internships are a hard find for young college students, but CUSP provides just enough money for many to be able to pursue their interests and commit to their dream internships.

CUSP was born from two multimillion dollar gifts given to the University by television mogul John Kluge. Kluge had attended Columbia as a German immigrant in the 1930s by way of a $1,000 scholarship. He paid his bills by working as a secretary for his roommate, who happened to be the son of a Chinese diplomat. To repay the University for all it had given him, and to provide a similar opportunity to students who had overcome great odds, he established the Kluge Scholars Program in 1987. The Kluge Scholars Program originally aimed to give students from underrepresented backgrounds—with whom Kluge strongly identified—the chance to achieve at an Ivy League institution like Columbia. Therefore, in its earliest days, the scholars program targeted African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans (the most underrepresented communities at Columbia at the time of the program’s founding).

The only similar program at the time was the John Jay Scholars Program. Founded in 1968, the John Jay Scholars Program was a recruitment tool intended to attract high-achieving students at a time when things were looking grim for the University. Neither program was as formalized in structure or in content as CUSP is now, and since the creation of CUSP there are no longer any racial or ethnic distinctions differentiating between scholar groups. Furthermore, since CUSP’s creation, international scholars (previously Global Scholars) have all but been absorbed into John Jay and Kluge, becoming
JJ-International or Kluge-International.

The two scholars programs joined in 2000 by Senior Assistant Dean Lavinia Lorch, when she created the overarching structure of CUSP that exists today. Lorch is almost single-handedly responsible for managing all programming of CUSP as well as attending to the academic advising duties of half of all scholars (the other half are advised by Dean Lorch’s partner Kristin Gager). She is a true believer in a liberal arts education, striving to maintain an educational supplement that will develop the student as a whole and impart a desire to engage critically with the world. This mentality is the driving force behind CUSP, informing nearly every aspect of the program.

Lorch was not alone in her work; she worked closely with a group of 15 others, comprised of Deans, financial aid reps, admission reps, and more. As Dean Lorch would say, “Anyone who had a stake in it was there.” She affectionately recalled that in the beginning, the idea was to take CUSP scholars from “cradle to grave.” This meant a comprehensive four-year program, complete with summer programming, and a feeder aspect to push students into graduate and PhD programs. Though much has changed, the original idea remains the same. Said Lorch: “Our mission is to optimize [a scholar’s] experience and to help [that individual] fulfill [his or her] potential as an individual. It’s like a little college within the college.”

This concept of a college within a college is what many Columbians find so troublesome about CUSP. Why is it that a small group of students has access to such incredible resources and opportunities while others do not? How is it that someone can be deemed a scholar based on nothing more than their entrance application?

Gabriella Zacarias, a freshman at Columbia College, discussed the difficulties of being part of a program that, for better or worse, divides her from her peers: “I really think CUSP is specific [with students it chooses] . . . But I also meet other people who are very brilliant, and I might mistake them for being a scholar. But they aren’t. In that regard, no, it isn’t fair.”

Questions about CUSP’s fairness should find an answer in the selection process, all of which is handled by the Office of Admissions. Not even Dean Lorch knows the criteria used to select students for the scholars program.

“If it were up to me,” said Lorch, “I think that this would be a wonderful program for everybody.” Unfortunately, the human resources and funding are simply not there. Besides, CUSP is funded entirely by private gifts that come with specifications about how the money should be used.

But while scarcity of funding may justify CUSP’s exclusivity, one thing became increasingly clear during my investigation: Scholars generally believe that the administration should do more to ensure that students fulfill their responsibilities as scholars. “Make sure that people who didn’t put in the effort to be a part of it during their freshman year are no longer a part of it,” said Akunne Daniels,
a sophomore in CUSP. “I think that there should be some basic minimum standard that is upheld.”

Other suggestions from scholars about how to improve the program include requiring an in-person interview before being officially accepted as a scholar, allowing other students to submit an application to become a scholar, and doing a better job of emphasizing a scholar’s role in the community. During my meeting with Dean Lorch, she made sure to point out that scholar feedback is something that she and her associates take quite seriously.

The program is doing its best to be dynamic and to change according to what students wish to see out of the program. In the last few years, CUSP has added a new requirement for all freshman members: a walking tour of Harlem. The idea is to connect scholars with the community around them and to establish a dialogue between the students and our oft-forgotten neighbors. CUSP is also looking at ways to allow more students to take part in its programming. Recently, the CUSP administration decided to open up the speaker series to all students. Registration forms for next year’s speaker series will soon be available on the CUSP website.

So while CUSP most certainly divides students based on qualities that still remain unknown to us, it does not do so lightly (and it is most certainly not done for any dark elitist purposes). Simply put, the program can only fund so many people. CUSP ultimately wants what everyone on campus wants: a real liberal arts education that focuses on co-curricular development, not just future employment opportunities. It wants to establish a community at a school that is often criticized by its students for feeling cold and detached, and it wants its students to reach their greatest potential.

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**ARTS INITIATIVE AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**

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

A conversation with Jimmy Failla

BY NAOMI SHARP

There are rarely any consolation prizes for getting the middle seat on a plane—but, as staff writer Naomi Sharp found on a recent Spirit Airlines flight, sitting next to and meeting Jimmy Failla was one of them. “Maybe we all forgot to pay the extra fee for departure,” he joked, as his fellow passengers on the notoriously cheap airline grumbled about delays. Failla is not a worryer. As he puts it, “things don’t stress you out that much once you’ve driven a cab in New York.” The stand-up comedian, radio host, and soon-to-be author will chronicle his experiences as a cab driver in his first book, scheduled for release in the fall of 2013. This B&W staff writer from seat 10B (who, she has been informed, sleeps like his dog), sat down with Failla to hear his take on offensive humor, New York City, and why the best conversations in the world are between prostitutes and cab drivers.

The Blue and White: Your book is called Follow That Car: A Cabbie’s Guide to Conquering Fears, Achieving Dreams, and Finding a Public Restroom. Which is the hardest of the three?

Jimmy Failla: Definitely the restroom. It’s not even close. What is the easiest? Achieving dreams.

B&W: Really?

JF: Yeah, because you can adjust them. I had different dreams before I started driving a cab. It started out like, “I’m gonna sell this screenplay,” and “I’m gonna host the Tonight Show,” and then twelve hours later it was like, “I do not want to get stabbed doing this.”

I drove a cab for nine months in 2008, before the birth of my son. I originally drove it because I needed the money and I wanted to learn things, and then I kept driving it because I was crazy. And you have to be a little nuts to drive a cab.

B&W: Most other drivers are a little nuts?

JF: It really depends. There are a lot of guys driving cabs that are geniuses in other countries that aren’t licensed to practice heart surgery here. Then there are a lot of guys who are driving cabs in their 70s and 80s. It’s a lifestyle for a lot of people. You have two twelve-hour shifts you can work, but you do whatever you want during those twelve hours.

B&W: You do stand-up comedy. Do you think that New Yorkers need comedy more than other people?

JF: We have more self-made problems than the rest of the country. The rest of the country’s really easy-going. They aren’t as competitive as us, they aren’t as judgmental as us, and I think they live a better life in the sense that they’re not as bothered by a rat race.

Do New Yorkers need to know how to laugh more? No. But I think they laugh easier, because they’re more self-aware. I just think it’s that we are a lot darker.

There’s so many of us. There’s such a cross-pollination of classes here. A cab’s the best example. You’ll drive a billionaire, and then you’ll drive some borderline homeless person. You’ll drive a pro ball player, but then you’ll drive a hooker, and then you’ll drive a nun. I’ve driven a nun and a hooker back-to-back. I’ve driven Clay Henry, the beer-drinking goat.

B&W: Excuse me?
JF: Yeah, yeah. From Texas. I drove a guy, I picked him up on 14th street, and his goat was drinking beer. Long-neck bottles of beer.

B&W: You drove a drunk goat.

JF: A drunk goat.

B&W: Was that your strangest passenger?

JF: I had a woman get in with two sock puppets, and only communicate with them. That’s up there. I had a guy in my cab who was in the plane that crashed in the Hudson. I dropped him off at LaGuardia and I had his flight papers still in my cab when he got out. And when I heard the flight number, I was like, I know one of those guys. I had someone leave a bag of cocaine the size of a pillowcase in my cab. That was the scariest thing.

B&W: Your book is a collection of the different advice that you got from passengers in your cab.

JF: It’s the best advice I was given while driving a cab. And I did not solicit it. I’ve repeated it to other customers to get feedback on it, but only if it came up in conversation. If somebody got in and was really depressed, I might share a depression strategy that somebody gave me.

A woman once explained to me spiritual currency. She said it was basically just the power of compliments—like, if you are really feeling awful and you can just bring it upon yourself to go compliment somebody, you’ll see them animate a little bit more, and it’ll make you aware of your own power. Because you know how depression kind of tells you you’re pointless and you’ve got no wherewithal to do anything? She called it spiritual currency.

B&W: What’s the best advice you’ve ever gotten from a passenger?

JF: Dennis Hopper basically told me that your whole life is just about being authentic. Just surround yourself with people you can be yourself in front of. Date the person who makes you feel like yourself, hang out with the people who make you feel like yourself. If you’re policing yourself, if you’re editing the content of your life so it can fit into this little cookie cutter that these people have built around you, it’s not sustainable.

B&W: What’s the worst advice a passenger ever gave you?

JF: Take the 59th street bridge to LaGuardia. That is definitely the worst advice. You’re never getting there. That is like vehicular purgatory.

B&W: The jobs that you’ve done all require you to interact with people in some way. Is reading your audience a skill that you think you have naturally, and to what extent did you develop that consciously?

JF: The best conversationalists in the world are the best listeners—they’re not the best talkers. If you listen to your audience, they tell you what you want more of. I think I’ve acquired that skill—I got used to listening to people. In a cab, you can tell where they want to go in conversation if you’re listening. If you’re driving, you won’t get there.

“Even though technology is driving us away from human interaction, our instincts prefer a person.”

The best conversations on this planet have taken place between cab drivers and prostitutes. They’re the only two people in society who truly interact with everybody, and get to know the city the way a proctologist gets to know a patient. Everybody a hooker picks up—they know, within a minute, what that person’s life was. They know if it’s a cheating spouse, they know—let’s say you’re a male prostitute. The minute you pick up a customer, you know if he’s a married guy claiming to be straight. They know your demographic when they look at you, because they do it in such volume that it becomes impossible not to know.

You can tell when someone wants to buy something from you—emotionally or physically, whatever it is—and they don’t know how to reach for their checkbook, so you get it out of them. You can tell when somebody wants to unburden themselves.

B&W: So if people tell you some sort of confession,
are they usually the ones who start that conversation?

JF: Most people talk to you. If you talk to them, they talk back. Because instinctively, we want to talk to people. Even though technology is driving us away from human interaction, our instincts prefer a person. It’s like when you call customer service and you have to shout the prompts into the phone. There’s nobody in that moment that doesn’t wish they had a person. Do you know how many people a day scream “Give me an effing person!” into voice prompts? Because your instincts are people. People want people.

People just need to unburden themselves. People confessing to cheating is the biggest thing, because they need to get it out of their head. They assume they’re never going to see you again.

B&W: What’s your favorite story you put in the book?

JF: I had a pregnant woman who was fleeing a bank she had robbed. She confessed the whole thing to me on the way to Newark Airport. She moved up to New York to meet a guy, only to find out that he was married with a kid. She was stuck in New York and figured out three weeks into it that she was pregnant, and didn’t have anywhere to live. And she was going to put the kid up for adoption. She told me that, and she cried. She left a tip in an envelope—$2,000 and a note that said “Thank you for everything.” And I have the receipt. I kept it to this day. She told me, “I’m keeping this kid. I made $31,000, and I’m gonna go live in the middle of the country.” She was like, “I know I got away with it.” She was hardcore.

It wasn’t about the money because I gave back the money, but you feel a weird obligation to the person. I probably could have helped the police and given enough detail [about her], but I wasn’t contributing to it. If someone had said to me, “You’re doing six months in jail,” I probably would have done them [the jail time].

B&W: How does spoken humor prepare you to write—do you think that translates?

JF: You learn how to position your reader, because comedy’s a trapdoor. You want to make sure your audience is standing over the trapdoor when it opens so they can fall through it properly. And I think in real comedy, because you’re competing with discussions and drinks being spilled, stuff like that—because you get used to fighting through so much, you develop an economy with how to get audiences to where you need them to be standing. There’s a lot less resistance in the book than there is in real life. I think if you wrote a book first and then tried to do stand-up, it might drive you crazy, because as an author you’re used to having their eyes.

B&W: What’s the worst joke you’ve ever told?

JF: Topical humor is always the most offensive joke you can tell. That’s the one thing that’s horrifying about comedy clubs to people who don’t frequent them. Everybody in the world grieves differently. And a lot of people in the time of a tragedy want to hear jokes about whatever it is we’re all grieving about, because that’s their cathartic way of getting through it. It’s not something I want to take away from these people. It’s also not something I want to celebrate, but I think they’re entitled to it, if it’s not malicious.

B&W: Like after 9/11 happened, the late-night shows stayed on and pretty soon afterwards started—

JF: Oh, and the comics were horrific. I was just starting comedy. When I was watching the comics downtown, blocks from the World Trade, there was a guy who was Iranian. He opened his set with dynamite strapped to his chest, and said, “I want to open this show by doing something in the name of Allah.” I mean, that’s pretty heavy. And we’re talking like a week later. But people laughed at that for an hour, because there was something unburdening about it. You can do a joke about everything—the only time people really give you a hard time is if it’s really not
funny.

B&W: There are some people who say anything can be funny, and then some people who say, “A rape joke is never funny, ever. It’s never okay.”

JF: It’s really tough. I get why, because there’s a sensitivity to it. So yes, you have every right to say there’s no such thing as a funny rape joke. But you don’t have the right to take the laugh away from the five thousand people that do. They have a right to laugh, you have a right to your offense. The two just shouldn’t mix.

Comedy of all things cannot be written and regulated for the people that get offended. As a comedian, you’re supposed to be who you would be in your regular civilian life if there were no repercussions. That’s what we give to the crowd, that’s the cathartic thing we’re trying to give them. That 45 minutes when they don’t have late bills, or a bad relationship, or some crazy student debt, or whatever it is. Our job is to give them those 45 minutes where they can laugh at those things instead of being tormented by them. That’s kind of like our societal contribution.

B&W: Cab driver, radio personality, standup comic—those are very male-dominated professions. Do you have any insight into why that is?

JF: Societal attitudes have evolved, and these are older professions. I think comedy and cab driving are specific to a certain lifestyle, too. Comedy’s really lonely. You’re on the road, a lot of weird hotel living. If driving a cab paid enough actual good money, I would never do anything else. It’s the best job in the world. Your brain is never not stimulated. You interact with 35 one-man demographics a day, so your perspective is constantly getting sharper. You just realize how much of the world there is that we don’t know about. There are people in scuba diving suits repairing pipelines under the ocean. Military counterfeitters, guys that run speak-easies. There’s just so much life out there that you’re not privy to.

I think your whole life is really this quest for perspective and authenticity. One of the coolest guys I know has driven a cab for 55 years, and he sleeps in a taxi garage between shifts. And he’s not in denial, he just gets it. He’s a self-actualized human, he just gets what makes him tick and he’s faithful to it. And cab driving has definitely taught me this—you are who you are. You have these limitations, these flaws—it’s not to say you can’t challenge them, but there’s something inside of you that makes you who you are, and if you can just figure that out, you enjoy your life a lot more.

You know how in comedy you want to distract people from their problems? I think the allure of a cab is because they can unburden themselves to a stranger, you’re giving them a chance to be real for fifteen minutes. Or ten minutes—depending on how you drive. •

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

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That being said, the Parthenon was therefore the basis of my definition because it is one of the more prominent and most identifiable representations of Classical architecture. By timeless appearance, I meant to convey any style that is still replicated today. Features that add to this timeless appearance include characteristics such as columns, metapes, friezes, the grand size, and the material (stone). As a quick disclaimer, I did not know there was a difference between the capitalizing and non-capitalizing of the “c” in Classical architecture.

Its we are together at this Burger Palace or we are together less. We are here or we part and we go home, and nobody’s pushing too hard in either direction. They just chew and chew, sometimes synching up with their loved one, sometimes swallowing their meat too large because there is something to say that can not wait. Another, better, use for the mouth.

Let’s get a real kitchen! Let’s become the type of people who are excited by appliances!

It never would have occurred to me that American cheese is not in fact cheese, and I found myself interested in where the line between cheese and phony substitute is drawn.

I don’t agree with David Foster Wallace’s argument that everyone should speak in SWE (Standard White English) to converse in the world. If one only spoke this dialect, and had to communicate with people of different social classes, they would fail terribly. However, the ability to switch between dialects and communicate with more social classes, is more valuable and overall, brings more successful in the world.

Unlike the Ms. Cleo of the world, police officers need to have some defensible reasoning behind their actions, especially when these actions intrude on one’s fundamental rights to liberty and freedom.

Today, we’ll be talking about, you got it, how much people suck. Today, I heard another retro Disney slogan, ‘Building a happier tomorrow from the best of yesterday.’ I just heard this thing mixed into the audio-ads in the subway, and at first, I was like, I get that. Someone gets it. Sift the gold from the gravel of all the yesteryears and just build a better future, right? And then it turns out it’s all for a stupid fraking photobomb thing. Now, Disney has drones following you around all the time in all of its happiest places in the world, and all you need to do is pay a small fee to download the pictures. Am I getting this right? You don’t even pay and the drones still follow you around, snapping pictures of you. Get Big Brother one of those Mickey Mouse hats, because 1984 got nothing on this.

I think it is fitting that you begin and end your piece with the word “Snap!” Your prose is quick, witty, fluid and definitely has some pop.

In poems, more is always less, unless you find a way to cheat. Last night, I played a game of chess with Stanley Kubrick.

In this strikingly obvious dialogue, these poets warn their fellow men-folk to beware the universal temptress waiting to be unleashed from their sexual counterparts.
CAMPUS GOSSIP

MANHATTANVILLE AIN’T CHEAP
The following is a short answer question from the application for the Columbia College Senior Fund Executive Committee: “Your classmate is hesitant to give to the Class of 2014 Senior Fund. She feels that Columbia already has enough money and doesn’t think her gift will make a difference. What information would you share with her about the importance of supporting the Class of 2014 gift to the Columbia College Fund?”

GENDER NEUTRAL RESTROOMS
Awash in the bright light of morning, two girls ran into one another in front of Lerner. They rehashed their nights, and the second’s anecdote ended, “...and that’s the best experience I’ve ever had in the Delta Sig bathroom.”

IT’S NOT YOU, IT’S ME
Outgoing ABC President Saketh Kalethur, CC ’13, sent a farewell email to student groups. It contained 11 sentences and 12 uses of the word “I.”

DEFINITELY ON RECORD
The following is an excerpt from a mid-semester progress report sent from Sammy Roth, CC ’14 and Spectator editor in chief, to allstaff@columbiaspectator.com:

[...] the Eye [sic] has done more than ever to make its articles Columbia-specific, while still staying relevant to a wider audience. In other words, our content has been fantastic, and we should all be proud of it. Let’s keep working in the second half of the semester to make sure that every article we publish is thoroughly reported [...]
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