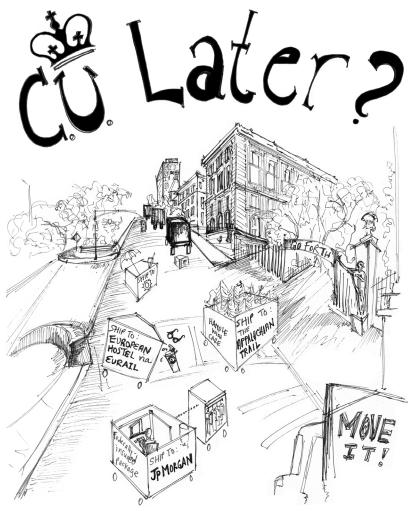
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Vol. XIX No. III May 2013

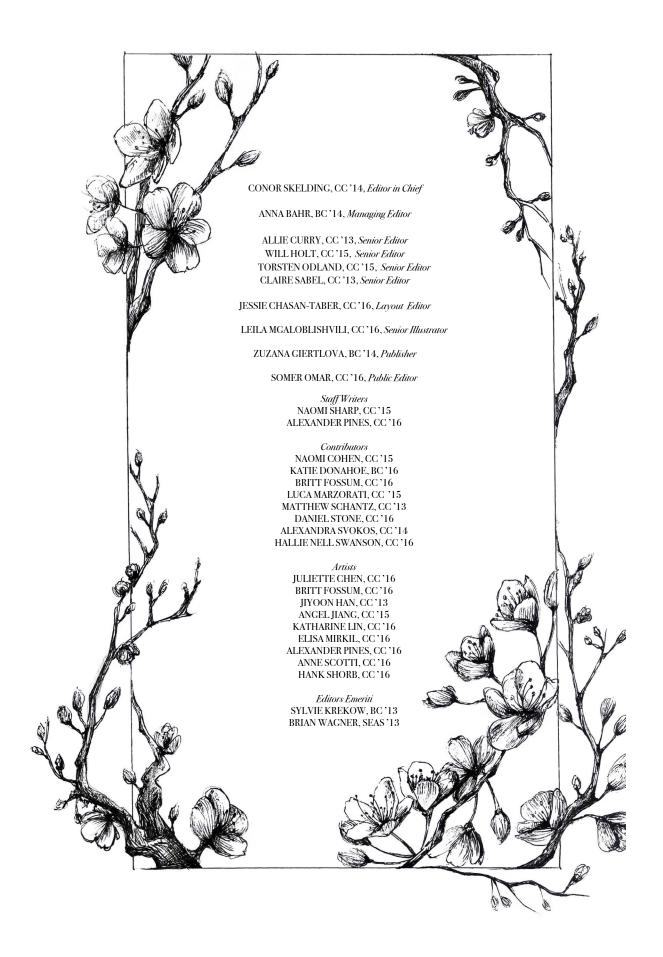


### Lies My Teacher Told Me

What you need to know before you teach for America

Paying it Forward
Pervasive debt at Columbia's nontraditional college

Also Inside: Culture! And Sub-Culture!



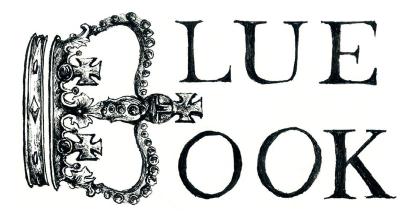
### THE BLUE & WHITE

### Vol. XIX

### FAMAM EXTENDIMUS FACTIS

No. III

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#### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Institutional memory is fickle. For one thing, after four years, the student body will only really remember very spectacular or infamous events, such as Ahmadinejad or the 2007 hunger strike. As for each semester's couple of scandals, they will be documented by campus media.

Harder to preserve is the honest experience of being a Columbia student. Looking at WikiCU's 2007 picture of the Low Steps on a sunny day can tell me that, in 2007, students sat on the Steps on a sunny day. It can't tell me what they were talking about. Nor can it convey how whatever dozens of documented events from around 2007 shaped Columbia back then.

And yet, photos are seductive. They take so little effort and include so much data. Quick-drawing my iPhone, I can take a photo of the Steps without breaking stride. Then, a year later, I can check the color of everyone's shoes, without having wasted any time actually sitting on the steps. Or, I can sit inside for a few hours editing WikiCU, obsessing over the history of Riverside Park without actually walking in it.

Obviously, it's better to sit with some friends on the steps or get some sun in the park: not just for knowledge, but for my own actual, un-quantifiable well-being. If I'm describing this poorly, it's because it isn't simple: it's individualized. It's what gets missed in quality of life surveys, which, out of the approximated experience of all of us, tell the story of none of us.

So, this issue focuses on the personal. Daniel Stone profiles Richard Sun, CC '13 and University senator (p. 9). Naomi Sharp looks into the lives of ROTC cadets, years after the end of the ideological dispute (p. 14). Naomi Cohen rides with Nashoba Santhanam, CC '13, who's driving a yellow cab he until starts in sales and trading (p. 22). Luca Marzorati blows his wad at Empire City Casino (p. 38).

These are all stories about the experiential, not the statistical.

- Conor Skelding

#### **TRANSACTIONS**

#### ARRIVALS

Overly enthusiastic high school seniors

Public nudity, pale flesh, and PDA

Talk of summer plans

Post-9/11 anxieties

Obama's sense of humor

Pupin Boardwalk

The smell of mulch

DEPARTURES

Your motivation

Those pre-Bacchanal jitters

Ke\$ho

Roger Ebert

Senatorial gravitas

Justin Bieber's youthful innocence

#### REVELATION OF THE MONTH

"We play hard, sure. We travel a lot and sometimes conflate 'networking' with drinking."

-Alia Smith, CBS '15, dispelling myths about business school students in The Bottom Line, Columbia Business School's student newspaper.

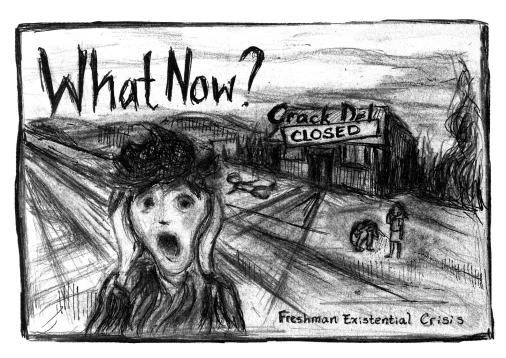
#### BLUE BOOK

At Columbia, there are many important double C's (Columbia College, Bacchanal). So for this issue, the B&W has put together a double C word puzzle. Each puzzle's answer is a well-known two-word phrase, both words of which begin with "C." Each clue is a two-word phrase, in which the first word is a rough synonym of the answer's second word, and the second word is a rough synonym of the answer's first. For example, if the clue is "Society Today," the answer might be "Contemporary Civilization."

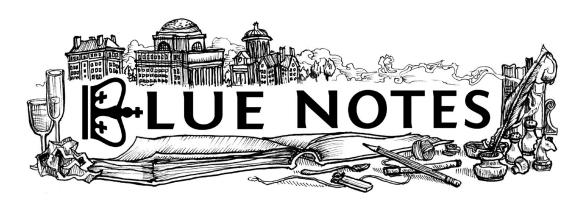
- 1. Sliced Ice
- 2. Drug Bust
- 3. Roaring Lion
- 4. Arts Kiosk (hint: answer is a compound word)
- 5. Injured Rower
- 6. Sales Marker
- 7. Artificial Diamond
- 8. Snug Pug
- 9. Tart Lice
- 10. Letter Loan

Answers: 1. Cold Cuts 2. Crack Cocaine 3. Cat Call 4. Counter-culture 5. Crew Cut 6. Conspicuous Consumption 7. Carbon Copy 8. Creature Comforts 9. Crab Cake 10. Credit Card

#### POSTCARD FROM MORNINGSIDE



Corrections: The March issue's review of Harlem Public was written by Sarah Thompson, CC '16. In the same issue, Elisa Mirkil, CC '16, illustrated the Blue Note on CTV, and Katharine Lin, CC '16, illustrated the graph of library statistics.



I observe two boys fight over a small red fire truck from behind a two-way mirror. They struggled. One is victorious; the other slinks off. This makes for an unusual scene: first, because no one breaks the boys up. And second, because I can see them, but they can't see me.

This is no voyeuristic pastime of mine. I'm visiting Barnard's Center for Toddler Development, which is not your typical preschool. The center, celebrating its 40th anniversary, is a community program that provides a learning environment for toddlers and college students alike. The (smaller) occupants of the classroom range from 1 and a half to 3 years old. Their instructors are a mix of professionals and current Barnard students enrolled in Professor Tovah Klein's year-long, 8 credit research seminar on developmental psychology of toddlers.

The program is the first of its kind—an experiment in combining a functional preschool with research. As such, in 1973, founder Patricia Henderson Shimm struggled to find applicants. Today, there are roughly 50 children enrolled as well as an extensive waitlist. The school is popu-



lar among neighborhood parents, high-profile celebrities (including Sarah Jessica Parker), and Barnard faculty.

The center adopts an unusual approach to child development. "We support, we don't direct," says Professor Klein. Teachers nurture and validate feelings, he says, rather than enforce discipline.

For example: when a child loses the battle for a toy, teachers console him—either acknowledging how much he desired it ("Oh, you wanted that so badly!") or encouraging him ("Next time, say, 'That's mine!'").

This year marks Professor Klein's 18th year at the toddler center; if there's one thing she's learned, it's that "toddlers don't change." Regardless of technological advancements or the latest chic parenting techniques, she says their unconscious objectives are simple: they seek to discover who they are.

I observe a three-year-old announce he has spilled his water. His teacher simply says, "Well, I guess it's a good thing we have sponges!"

-Katie Donahoe

Every month, over Famiglia's pizza and two-liter Erefreshments, the Inter-Greek Council meets in Lerner 569 to talk about upcoming events and remind all of the chapters which forms are due when (e.g., Anti-hazing, Chapter info). The IGC is the umbrella governing body for Greek life; to be recognized as a fraternity or sorority by the university, each chapter must send two delegates to the council. The group's executive board, who did not respond to any of my emails, is composed of the presidents of the three sub-IGC Greek affiliations: the Inter-Fraternity Council, the Multicultural Greek Council, and Panhellenic Association. At a meeting on March 11th, Shawn Patel, CC '15 and president of the IFC, announced to the assembly that, as of Fall 2013, the chapters living in brownstones owned by Columbia will not be allowed in their backyards.

The policy change will apply to AXO, DG, Zeta Psi, Theta, KDR, Lambda Phi, SDT, Sig Ep, Sig



Nu, and Sigma Chi; say "goodbye" to whatever you were planning to do in their backyards next year. However, not all of the Greek-occupied brownstones are Columbia-owned. The brownstones

belonging to ADP and Beta are owned by those chapters' respective governing boards, and, for that reason, they are exempt from the regulation.

The room was filled with a resigned groan as Shawn explained that the ruling is official and there's nothing he, or any of the delegates, can do to overturn it. For '13-'14, at least, the backyards will be off limits.

"Why?" someone asked.

Evidently, due to the neighbors' frequent noise complaints during parties. Restricting access to the backyards will, obviously, prevent loud outdoor parties, but that is only part of the reason. Apparently, even if the party is inside, partiers looking for fresh air or a smoke outside release music and shouting when they open the door.

When asked how the new policy would be implemented, Shawn responded that, while he wasn't certain yet, the new rule would probably (and ironically) be enforced with a loud fire alarm system wired to all of the brownstones' rear exits.

-Torsten Odland

Before I went up to the Hispanic Society of America on 155th Street, I assumed the museum would be devoted to the city's Latin American community. But instead of Diego Rivera, I got El Greco. Founded in 1904, the Hispanic Society projects a decidedly Iberian aesthetic. Walking into the museum's indoor courtyard, I was struck by warm orange walls, elaborate tile work and cool marble surfaces all bathed in yellow skylight. I suddenly felt compelled to flutter a fan and don a mantilla.

The founder of the Hispanic Society, Archer Milton Huntington, built the museum with railway millions from his robber baron stepfather, Collis P. Huntington. The building still bears the younger Huntington's influence: There are no windows, explains the woman giving the Saturday "Tour at

Two," since Huntington believed that "the only windows should be the works of art." She adds, "You won't find any Miro or Picasso here. All art had to be representational." Indeed, it would be quite a struggle to reconcile the cubist and avant-garde with this museum's Old World, Moorish interior. Which makes for a dry tour: my strongest impression was of the joyless host of marble effigies spread throughout the museum.

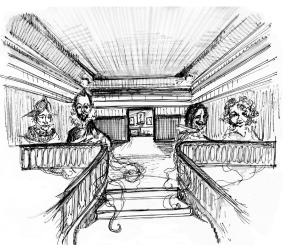
Given the Gilded Age trappings, it's easy to cast Huntington as your eccentric turn-of-the-century American millionaire, the careless plunderer of European treasures a la William Randolph Hearst. However, Huntington was anxious to defy this unflattering image. He bought works that were already in America and, unusual for his time, encouraged hiring women as curators.

For those of a scholarly bent, the Society is a goldmine of Spanish artifacts: Its library includes a first-edition copy *Don Quixote*. But for the more casual visitor, it's enough of a pleasure to roam around the upper levels of the courtyard, gazing up at all the portraits—Velazquez, Goya, and El Greco all have works displayed here.

However, the real highlight is the Sorolla wing. Commissioned by Huntington himself, this end of the museum features life-size panels by the Spanish painter Joaquin Sorolla, which cover every wall in an elaborate representation of the beauty and multiplicity of Spanish life.

Both in terms of its history and collection, the Hispanic Society of America feels like a holdover from another century. But, perhaps more to the point, it feels like stepping into another country.

-Hallie Nell Swanson



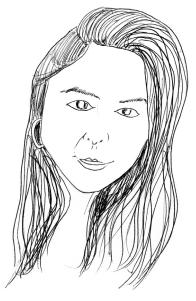
# Campus Characters

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.

#### Lulu Mickelson

Imagine a web of your closest friends and a web of their closest friends. Somewhere near the center of that tangle of people, you'll find Lulu Mickelson, BC '14. Gabrielle Lewis, BC '14, first met Lulu in the Diana Center, when Lulu cheerfully introduced herself. After chatting, Lulu waved goodbye and Gabrielle's then-roommate turned to her and remarked, "Does that girl know we don't have to be nice anymore? It's not NSOP."

This is not an unusual response to Lulu. She has the unique ability to connect with strangers immediately; the depth of her genuine interest in others is surprising to those twentysomethings feeling cool in their post-adolescent apathy. She really does wants to know about your childhood best friend; when you're ill, she'll deliver soup to your door without being asked. A Santa Monica native, Lulu prefers life in New York. It's the density of Manhattan that makes life "all the richer because of how many people you interact with."



Lulu solves problems. Before coming to New York, she headed the environmental club at her high school, where "only 20 out of 3,000 people were riding their bike on an average day." To reduce fuel emissions and clear traffic jams around the school, Lulu started the "Bike-It initiative," which encouraged drivers to ride their bikes to school on designated "Bike-It days." By the time she graduated, "half the school was using bikes on a 'Bike-It day.'"

One year into college, Lulu felt frustrated with established community service opportunities on campus: "You go in for a few hours and realize that your impact is minimal." So she started her own, founding the Columbia chapter of Design for America (DFA) in the fall of 2011. The group collaborates with the larger Morningside Heights community to tackle social problems from the bottom up.

"Instead of volunteering a few hours, you get a team of interdisciplinary students together and you join them with a community partner. From there, you create a product that can work sustainably," she explains. Last year, DFA designed condom packages for local clinics that appealed to a younger audience—an effort they hoped would make proper condom usage cool. While the program does have a creative slant, "Innovate for America" might be a more accurate title, Lulu suggested.

During our conversation, Lulu mentioned accomplishments almost off-handedly. She's a Centennial Scholar at Barnard and was recently awarded the George Van Amson Service fellowship. She turned down a White House internship this summer for the chance to work on maximizing the community benefits agreement of the Manhattanville project, an idea that began as a DFA project. "That's a choice not a lot of people would make," Gabrielle points out.

Lulu takes joy in what she does, and sees herself as a community-builder as much as a community-improver. The Urban Studies major seemed as excited to get to know me as I was to talk with her. She encouraged me to explore different academic and extracurricular paths until I found "that one thing that you always want to learn more about." At the end of the interview, Lulu hugged me and insisted we keep in touch over the summer. I received an email from her the next day with class recommendations and professors she thought I'd enjoy. After telling Gabrielle how the interview with Lulu ended, she laughed: "I'm not surprised at all."

- Somer Omar

#### RICHARD SUN

t the suggestion of Richard Sun, CC '13, we Ameet in the gaudily adorned lobby of Le Parker Meridian on 56th Street off 6th Avenue. Below \$500-a-night rooms and next to non-functional renaissance columns, a maroon curtain hides the Burger Joint. Waiting in the long line to get in, Sun tells me he likes the place partly because you "wouldn't expect to find a relaxed and greasy burger joint at the heart of the hotel." (It's also near Brooks Brothers, where he has been shopping, and the fare's good.) Inside the cramped restaurant, as if to hide the fact that the hotel also runs it, graffiti uniformly covers the walls. Prices are written on cardboard boxes in marker. He orders two cheeseburgers and a milkshake. When it turns out they have run out of milkshakes, he opts for water. Then, we sit.

Sun wears many hats. At Columbia, most know him as one of the three University Senators who represent Columbia College, the man who knocked on hundreds of doors to secure victory in his campaign last year. Those who miss his semi-regular USenate email updates may know him as an RA in Carman, Economics TA, brother of Sigma Phi Epsilon, or member of the Ski Team. Many are also familiar with his collection of hard-to-get internships, including a semester in the White House and a summer working for Columbia's favorite consulting firm, McKinsey & Company. In the past four years, Sun has garnered—along with his impressive resume—a complicated reputation as a public figure on campus.

Sun is unabashed about who he is—a "smart guy" who is "ambitious." Many know of his aspiration to ultimately serve as an elected government official. He does not slickly obscure his efforts, something of a rarity at a school where it pays to be glib; he admitted himself to sometimes taking a "corporate approach" that did not necessarily make him the most popular of people. Several students, who wished to



remain unnamed, told of being turned off by Sun and his directness.

He's not without a sense of humor. Describing his internship at McKinsey, which he called "the greatest summer of my life," Sun said that he had found the work itself very fulfilling and that McKinsey's global presence "made the world smaller" for him. As a third point, he praised the training they gave him, during which he learned, among other things, that "people like things in threes."

Beneath everything, it is clear that Sun cares deeply about what he does and works amazingly hard. His friend Ben Spener, CC '14, likened Sun's position on the University Senate to a full-time job and spoke of him as inspirational. Fellow senator Matthew Chou, CC '14, added that "the amount of time he puts into [his work] is really incredible." Perhaps, confessed Chou, who also told of getting emails at 5 a.m. from Sun, "he sometimes works himself too hard."

The work has paid off. At the end of his senior spring semester, Sun has reached a satisfying plateau. He knows a job at McKinsey waits for him after he spends his summer working as an organizer on the campaign of Democratic New Jersey gubernatorial candidate Barbara Buono. Moreover, as of the day before our interview, he had completed his senior thesis on private-public organization of mass transportation in New York.

Back at Columbia, as we enter through the 116<sup>th</sup> gates and cross College Walk, he frequently stops to greet people. We part beside the CAVA ambulance and he ascends the Low Steps, off to reconnect with a former university senator.

- Daniel Stone





# Should you

Oh, man, I am never getting tired of this. College: what a ride! I pass out at 3, wake up at 10, go out to eat, then do it again—what's that? No, that's not a song lyric, it's just the music of my life, dude.

It is? Asher Roth? Well, whatever, I guess we must both be disciples of the Great Church of YOLO! Except I bet "Asher" isn't a member of the Mel's brew crew.

Speaking of Mel's, how great is Morningside

Heights? I never want to leave. I heard someone say you can get anything you want in twenty blocks, but you know how many you really need? One. I roll out of my brownstone on 114th, pretend to study for a few hours in Butler (210 shout out!), grab some food at the Jay with my homies-OH HELL YEAH, IT'S MAKE-YOUR-OWN-CUPCAKE NIGHT-stroll down to visit my friends at International, grab

some handles of Nikolai, and invite everyone over to get the party started, ice-free jungle juice style. Also, cup and bottle-opener freestyle.

Sorry. Anyway, please excuse me while I go party my face off with my friends, because it's Thursday night and none of us have class tomorrow. BOOMTOWN!

Eeeeeuuuugghhhhh. Okay. Okay. I will admit that the one thing about college that I won't miss is this feeling. Can you hand me that water bottle? Yes, I'm hungover. You can wipe that smug look off your ancient, wrinkly face, though, because I regret nothing. Last night was AWESOME. The bartender let us chug margaritas straight from the mixer at the

Heights at closing and someone pooped out of an EC window. Hahaha! Ugh, my head though. Hold on, let me pop in the shower before we continue this conversation.

Yeah, I know I just walked out, but I forgot that I have to wear shoes every time I take a shower here. And I have to write an email to the people I live with really quickly. Subject: R U SRS?!!? Message: TO WHOMEVER PUKED IN THE SHOWER:

UNCHILL. YOU ARE DISGUSTING AND I HATE YOU. Alright, time to wash off the layer of fratsweat and shame I acquired at Sig Nu's highlighter party last night.

Now that I'm so fresh and so clean—yeah, I know that's a lyric, but I did it on purpose this time—it's time to grab some grub. Fuck. I totally have to read some shit about Judith Butler for a CourseWorks post due tonight at

midnight, and my head feels like it's filled with sand. I can get through this with just a little snack.

NOOOOO! Someone ate my bananas last night! Who drunk-eats bananas? And I just got a text—apparently, it's my turn to clean the kitchen. Why the fuck is this all happening at the same time.

Oh my god. This place is disgusting. Is that a cigarette butt in a stick of butter? And of course the sink drain is clogged. WITH A CONDOM? That's it. I can't take it anymore. Both Butlers can wait, because today I'm looking for whatever job psychology majors usually get. Peace, Columbia!•



**A**FFIRMATIVE

By Sylvie Krekow

THE BLUE AND WHITE





# graduate?

You're really not tired of this yet? Sure, it's been a fun ride at times, but that's the thing about memories: usually only the highlights stick out. We've gotten in a couple of good Bacchanals along the way (literally: a couple). And sure, stumbling home from 1020 at 4 a.m. Friday morning and sleeping in until 2 p.m. is great and all—but on any given week, haven't you lost more sleep over essays than drinks?

Come on, just think about it. There's a whole world out there! For the past four years we've lived in The Greatest City in the World. But have we really lived here? Discounting the one time your "cool" friend took you to that party in Brooklyn (and you complained about the length of the subway ride), you've spent four years within these 20 blocks.

Aren't you excited to go out and live in the real world? Imagine the thrills of eating at more than Chipotle, Milano, and halal; drinking your craft brews somewhere instead of Mel's; the excitement of spending weekends wherever you want, instead of in 209.

Whatever happened to *carpe diem*? The only thing I've *carpe*'d in my four years here was a crippling caffeine addiction and a terrible sleep schedule. It's time to live life! Spread your wings! Think of how much is

out there! The joys of living in a real apartment!... paying real bills... and waking up at the same time... everyday... until retirement...

Holy shit... Our lives are basically over. What's even left? I guess a job, then marriage, kids, retirement...and boom, you're in a home.

I mean, you'll get a job you kind of like in some office somewhere and probably tell yourself that you'll only stay there a few years, at least until you can get settled and have some money in the bank. But then they'll keep giving you raises each year as well

as the occasional promotion, so you'll keep thinking, "Okay, *next* year will be my last."

And then you'll get married and your priorities will change, so you'll forget about that next job and start spending all your energy raising a family... And pretty soon you're paying Columbia or wherever so that the next you eat street meat and finish p-sets. And then, well, your kids are adults, and you'll ask yourself why you spent all that time working instead of watching your children grow up because now they're at their own office job that they kind of like.

And then you'll probably be divorced. So now you're 65 years old, with a lifetime of disappointments pulsing in your frontal cortex, and you resent everyone you've ever loved.

Where does that place you in the "sexy sexagenerian" dating landscape? Definitely not flyfishing in a Cialis commercial. And then what? It's off to Florida with you. Or California, if you planned better. And that's it. What are you gonna do then, write a memoir? Who are you kidding—you don't have anything memorable to

write about. Your most memorable years were probably in college.

Wait. Fuck.

I'm not leaving this place. My

life can't be over yet! I never even had a threesome in the stacks or on top of Low! They can't kick me out yet; I'm not a real adult. I can hardly even feed myself—I order delivery five days a week. No one ever taught me how to pay taxes or fix a leaking faucet or be party to a loving relationship.

Who am I kidding. There's a highlighter party at Sig Nu this weekend. And that is literally making my mouth water. I have no higher needs than getting drunk and drawing on people with markers. I'm doing this forever. Let's order 40s.•



NEGATIVE By Brian Wagner

### TOLD BETWEEN PUFFS

In which our hero's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love

Prepare yourself, reader: here begins one columnworth of shameless onanism. Perhaps it is right that, since your hero need no longer spill

his seed on the ground, he be allowed to indulge himself in this column.

But no matter—your hero is in love.

He met her on a recent Saturday. Verily had been idling his time away in Riverside Park, finally feeling the sun's warmth on his hands and face. He felt plant life all around him, exulting in the turn of the season! Passersby spoke loudly and loosely, the dogs all seemed to be humping one another. It was too much for V.V.; if he did not leave soon, he risked a sun burn, or worse.

Besides, he could pruriently raise his eyebrow at only so many joggers before he got bored. Moreover, he had nothing much in the way of tobacco, liquor, or reading material with which to occupy himself. So, he slogged up the stairs and back into Morningside Heights.

Stopping at a newsstand for a copy of some or other book review, V.V. crossed to Amsterdam. He checked the time and grinned, seeing that it was 3 p.m. There was no better time, he knew, to eavesdrop on uncomfortable casual dates—nor a better place. He dropped his cigarette butt, crushed it with the heel of his shoe, and entered the Hungarian Pastry Shop.

Having ordered his coffee and croissant, he homed in on a seat in the mid-back, facing the door. It looked promising. Sitting down, one couple was within earshot. He waited, settling into the book review. Not long after, he was gratified by the following exchange.

"Baby, don't talk like that. Think of what you'd be throwing away." "Katie, this school wasn't meant for people like me. I'm just a skater."

Hah!

But—what was that? Someone else tittering? Yes! He saw her! She had her own

black coffee and her own respectable magazine. She sat at another table facing him, equidistant from the dull couple. And she

the dull couple. And sho smiled at your hero!

Naturally, V.V. didn't say anything to her; he only pursed his lips and nodded at her, acknowledging their shared triumph.

"Don't I give off a skater vibe?"

"Stop it. You always find a way to doubt yourself, Nick. I knew you were a skater from your hair."

So, after another shared laugh, Verily Veritas had gone off on his business, thinking that that had been that.

But no! Later in the week, he espied her in the Reference Room! And she espied him! And this time, when she smiled, he smiled back. But, naturally, V.V. didn't approach her.

Leaving the Reference Womb, he stopped outside for a cigarette. He looked about. What a glow the sunset always cast over the campus panorama, what a play of shadows!

And there she was again! She, too, was stopping for a cigarette. Now that there was a prescribed opening, he approached her.

"Ah," he said to her, "the University! What could be finer?"

"Truly," she replied in turn, "it is the springtime of life."

"Well-met, well-met!"

Well-met, he mused to himself.◆

12 THE BLUE AND WHITE

### All Brooklyn Beer Tastes the Same

A B&W editor hops down to Brooklyn to see what's brewing By WILL HOLT

Steve Hindy learned how to home brew out of necessity. He picked up the trick from American expats in Cairo while working as an *Associated Press* correspondent in parts of the Middle East that banned alcohol. The hobby became an obsession after he moved back to New York in 1984. Along with his upstairs neighbor Tom Potter, a former lending officer at Chemical Bank, Hindy quit his job and devoted himself to brewing. He and Potter called their first effort "Brooklyn Lager" and had it made by contract at Matt Brewing Company in Utica.

In 1996, the two converted a former matzo factory in Williamsburg into a working brewery where they could take total control over production. Today, they sell beer in 25 states and 20 countries, which makes Brooklyn Brewery the biggest exporter of craft beer in the United States and the 11th largest craft brewery in the country. (In order to be considered "craft," a brewery

must produce no more than 6 million barrels per year. Budweiser produces well over 100 million.)

Like countless other breweries, Brooklyn recently opened an on-site tap room where customers can try out 10 of its beers, any day of the week. Including an overpriced gift shop hawking tee shirts, the facility feels more like a theme park than a working brewery.

Forget buying your brew with dollar bills; they only accept tokens. Those cost \$5 each, or five for \$20. On my visit, a couple of tokens got me a Radius and a Sorachi Ace (the first is a Belgian pale ale, the second a saison). Truth be told, all Brooklyn beers taste the same to me: overly malty with a really weird and tingly mouthfeel. But the Sorachi was a pleasant surprise—a little too carbonated for my liking, but

refreshingly citrusy and grassy.

There are plenty of breweries in the Northeast with better tap rooms—and much better beer—than Brooklyn's. At many, you pretty much drink gratis. But you need only note the \$5 beers and \$4 pretzels at Harpoon Brewery's new Visitor Center & Beer Hall at the Boston Seaport to see where "craft" breweries are headed. Brooklyn is on the cutting edge of these unfortunate developments.

However, despite its Disneyfied aesthetic, Brooklyn gets a few things right. Customers are

> invited to bring their own food. Occasionally a couple of stalls from the neighborhood's outdoor food market, Smorgasburg, will open up next to the picnic tables.

As for the tour itself, it is hardly immersive. The guide, usually a svelte white male in his late 20s, herds guests onto an open floor beneath a tiny crystal chandelier (one of the

few homespun touches in the otherwise sleek, modern space) and delivers a well-rehearsed, 10-minute spiel on the brewery's history. He makes the requisite joke about remembering his first beer, claims that the crying child in the back of their audience is drunk, then takes questions. Afterward, he'll join the crowd for a beer.

It's easy to knock Brooklyn Brewery for straying from its homegrown origins, but I have to concede a grudging respect for what it's managed to accomplish. In 1879, there were 43 breweries operating in Brooklyn; by 1976, that number had dropped to zero. Hindy and Potter have played an essential role in reviving craft brewing and ushering in this city's current beer renaissance. If nothing else, they've given us all an excuse to drink on Sundays.



# Corps Requirements

The day-to-day lives of Columbia's ROTC cadets By NAOMI SHARP

Thristian Vivadelli, CC '15, meets me outside of Carman at 4:45 a.m. He has just rolled out of bed and comes down from his room wearing a navy sweatshirt. A few hours ago, he was working on a University Writing paper. ("The long one," he adds as clarification.)

The sky is dark as we head down an empty College Walk. After years of swim practice, Christian is used to waking up early; in fact, he'll be back on campus by 6:30 a.m. to train with the Columbia

swim team. I ask him about breakfast. "I usually have a granola bar, but I ran out," he tells me.

He opens the door of a black van parked outside the 116<sup>th</sup> Street gates and we climb into the back seat. Like every Tuesday morning, a driver hired by Columbia is at the wheel. Patrick Poorbaugh, GS '15, is sitting shotgun. Abigale Wyatt, GS '14, climbs in at 125th Street.

The commute to the Bronx's easternmost tip takes less than half an hour this early in the morning. We pull up at SUNY

Maritime, the New York City base for the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC), well before the 5:30 a.m. start time for Physical Training.

Two years have passed since President Bollinger signed an agreement with the Secretary of the Navy to reinstate the NROTC program at Columbia University. The ROTC, which includes Army, Navy, and Air Force branches, allows students to attend college while training to become officers in the U.S. Armed Forces. Some ROTC participants, cadets, receive a scholarship for their college tuition on the condition that they commit to a period of military service after graduation.

At Columbia, the controversy leading up to the 2011 decision-a whirlwind of op-eds, town hall meetings, faculty petitions, and national media coverage-was heated. Critics of the ROTC perceived a too-cozy relationship between the military and academy. That controversy has all but disappeared.

"It very quickly became a nonissue here, which is wonderful as far as I'm concerned," explains Vice Provost Rittenberg, who continues to manage the

> implementation of the agreement. "Sometimes lack of interest is a good sign."

Whether or not out-NROTC in New York City.

siders are paying attention, Columbia's decision has made the ROTC a part of campus life. On the first floor of Lerner Hall, vending machines were replaced with the new NROTC office. "We purposely spend a lot of time here because we want to be available to the campus community," says Captain Matthew Loughlin, the commanding officer of the

His reception from Columbia faculty and students has been "almost universally positive, and at a minimum cordial," Captain Loughlin affirms. "There may be people who perhaps were opposed to us being here, but they've been respectful and polite, and we very much appreciate that."

For now, Christian is the only non-GS cadet in the NROTC. He hasn't received any criticism for his affiliation; the way he sees it, "there's some novelty to being the first one."

As the first NROTC students in almost 50 years trickle into Columbia, a quiet beginning to the program has its benefits: "We did not want that



"This girl came up to me

and said, 'If you die in

Iraq, those people will

have justice.'"

to happen under a microscope," explains Professor Jeffrey Kysar of the mechanical engineering department, who leads an advisory committee on issues related to the NROTC. "A student's a student. They deserve their own privacy."

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Floodlights cast a glow over the soccer field. To the right of the scoreboard ("Maritime College, Home of the Privateers"), not far from the edge of the field, is the East River. It's the first outdoor Physical Training, or PT, since winter, and the weather is chilly as the cadets arrange themselves by platoon group to begin formation and synchronized exercises. Unlike the small group of Marines present, who look prepared to use the Navy cadets as dumbbells, the NROTC does PT more for camaraderic than intense physical training. "We're not the chinup service," remarks Captain Loughlin good-naturedly.

All of the Navy cadets wear blue sweatshirts with the Navy insignia on the back. Most of them are students at SUNY Maritime, but some commute from other schools. Like Christian, these students are only allowed to join the

NROTC because their universities signed an agreement with the Navy.

Students have participated in the Army and Air Force ROTC programs independently of Columbia long before the NROTC decision. Air Force ROTC cadet Nico Barragán, CC '13, and Army ROTC cadet LeTicia Brown, SEAS '14, have never communicated with the administration about their ROTC involvement. From Nico's perspective, Columbia and the ROTC are "two different worlds—and they rarely collide."

That may change. The administration is gradually extending its attention to the Army and Air Force ROTCs. "We want to give our students in those programs the same type of support," Provost Rittenberg says.

Only the Naval ROTC program requires a contract with universities as a prerequisite for student participation. Compared to the Army and Air Force ROTCs, the NROTC is a smaller, highly technical program with stricter academic requirements. Besides a Naval Science class every year and Leadership Lab at SUNY Maritime, Christian will take two semesters each of Calculus and Physics, a semester of Computer Science, and a semester of American History at Columbia. With the exception of P.E., he is not exempt from any Columbia Core requirements.

For NROTC cadets, "Columbia has been surprisingly helpful," says Christian. "Usually when I have a question, they get it done pronto." Abigale, who joined the Navy in 2008 and began studying at Columbia this year, also finds the administration "very, very supportive." So far, things have gone smoothly.

"If you hear otherwise," Professor Kysar tells me, "please let me know."

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Every weekday, LeTicia takes the 6:10 a.m. 1 train to the Lincoln Center campus of Fordham College. The Army ROTC has PT three times a week.

LeTicia fell short of the minimum cutoff for situps on her last PT test, so she goes to additional PT each morning before her 8:40 a.m. classes at Columbia.

She comes from a military family: her parents met in the Army and her sister

is a West Point graduate stationed in Korea. LeTicia almost went to West Point herself, but was hesitant to commit to "Army 24/7." Instead, she juggles her biomedical engineering major requirements with the AROTC. "To be honest, I don't sleep," she admits, only half-joking.

After PT on Fridays, the cadets have an hour for personal hygiene and breakfast before their classes begin. By 8:30, most of them have changed into full camouflage uniform and spread out across the Fordham cafeteria with egg sandwiches, Coke bottles, and coffees. LeTicia has a Vitamin Water ("Coffee doesn't work for me," she says), and sits next to the cadets who are running the morning's Leadership Lab. The three-hour lab is followed by a Military Science class, and LeTicia also takes a Military History class. "I feel like people think we learn how to fight, like hand-to-hand combat," she says. "They take out the whole tactical part of it. The main focus is becoming a leader, [but] most people see it as a physical thing."

Leadership Lab is in a small classroom on the seventh floor of a Fordham building. Today's peer-led

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lesson is centered on writing Operations Orders, a specialized format that the Army uses to communicate information and relay it to troops. More experienced cadets take charge of small groups, coaching them through the process ("You just commit that shit to memory," one older cadet advises another). They are all working with the same scenario:

"Enemy operating in two to four-man teams with small arms."

"Our mission is a spot attack. Alpha will be the supporting element and Bravo will be the assaulting element."

LeTicia is leading a three-person group through writing a sample order. "You need something to initiate fire," she instructs a younger cadet. "You can say a whistle—one whistle and we initiate fire."

Initially, LeTicia questioned her decision to commit to the ROTC. "Honestly, I needed a way to

pay for college," she says. She received her scholarship to Columbia from the AROTC after contracting with the military in her freshman year. She says that the ROTC has taught her "mental strength." "I just power through," she

"Five or six inches on a map can be the difference between bombing innocent civilians and the enemy."

tells me. She thinks for a second and adds, "A lot of Fridays I'll just come home and go to sleep until the next day."

Though she stays positive, balancing ROTC and SEAS has been difficult. The best way the Columbia administration could support her, she says, would be to consider ROTC classes for academic credit—a process that is already underway for NROTC classes.

These evaluations are not taken lightly, explains Professor Kysar; a course that receives Columbia credit must be "sufficiently rigorous to maintain Columbia standards." One course, "Ship Systems," has already been approved by the mechanical engineering department and SEAS. It will likely be offered next fall at SUNY Maritime. Though NROTC cadets will have priority for registration, the class will be open to all students at Columbia.

LeTicia hopes to go to grad school while holding a position in the Army Reserves—her Army contract requires her to spend six years in the Reserves or four years on Active Duty. Eventually, she would like to work with soldiers who have lost limbs or sustained other serious injuries, as a civilian on a military base.



Nico gives an assessment of military culture when I shadow him to New York City's Air Force ROTC base at Manhattan College. "Standards are standards," he says. "There's no grey area, there are no excuses." He shows me a cot pushed against the wall of the Cadet Lounge for cadets to practice making their beds. The sheets should be folded at the corners of the mattress to create a 45-degree angle. The bottom edge should be six inches from the end of the bed. "It's measured with a ruler and you get yelled at if it's five," says Nico. "You might ask why it matters—what's the difference between five and six inches? But five or six inches on a map can be the difference between bombing innocent civilians and the enemy."

Nico is the Cadet Wing Commander, the highest-ranked cadet position in the AFROTC. He takes the subway to Manhattan College about five times a week. "When I first got here, I was petrified to tell anyone I was in

the ROTC," he says. Though most people have been supportive, Nico has dealt with negative reactions. The most extreme was after a class during his sophomore year, in which he had volunteered opinions based on his experience with the military. "This girl came up to me and said, "If you die in Iraq, those people will have justice," he recalls.

A Political Science major, Nico understands the spectrum of opinions about the ROTC and is well-aware of the ethical implications of military work. "There are certainly people who have thoughts like, 'Anyone killing anyone for any reason is wrong,' and I totally respect that," he says. "That's a very noble idea. I might not see it the same way, but if someone said that to me I would be like, 'Okay, I understand." Although he draws "a tremendous sense of pride" from his military work, Nico feels a responsibility to remain open-minded.

Nico's Aerospace Studies class at Manhattan College is taught by Lieutenant Colonel Timothy McCaffrey, the commander of the AFROTC in New York City. Because of scheduling conflicts with

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Columbia, Nico takes a makeup class with another cadet.

Today's lesson includes training on sexual harassment, which Air Force members will revisit at least once a year for the rest of their military careers. "If there's a claim of sexual harassment, you investigate it," Colonel McCaffrey says flatly. "Even if you don't believe it. Investigate everything." He reads through a series of scenarios and asks the cadets how they would respond. Some scenarios are ambiguous, including the case of a female guard who reports a male guard for calling her "honey." It might not

be sexual harassment, Colonel McCaffrey concedes, but it still violates military code of conduct. "Does he call everyone 'honey'? Does he call the men 'honey'? She trained as an airman," he finishes. "She deserves to be called by her rank and name."

In another scenario, a female officer accuses her superior of sexual harassment. She reports to their commander, who is a close friend of the accused and insists it must be a misunderstanding. A related military policy has faced scrutiny in recent months, after an Air Force commander used

his authority to overturn a sexual assault conviction against a member of his force. Colonel McCaffrey sees no grey area. "I would expect the commander to be fired whether or not the sexual harassment case was true," he tells the cadets. "She came to him and he did nothing."

After he graduates this year, Nico will go to flight school to become a pilot. Eventually, he would like to work somewhere where he can use the Arabic and Hindi he studied at Columbia. He hopes that the ROTC's relationship with Columbia will strengthen over time. "For LGBT students, there are resources; for students of color, there are resources," he points out. Nico suggests that an ROTC representative on

campus, or an advisor who specializes in helping military students, would provide the support that cadets are currently missing.

He isn't looking for special treatment for ROTC programs—just a little more recognition. "I don't think Columbia needs to cater to us," he stresses. "We're just like any other student group, pretty much."

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It's light outside by the time PT ends for the NROTC cadets. Christian still has swim practice before his full day of classes begins. Swimming

takes up most of his time outside of class and the ROTC, and he is also a member of Zeta Beta Tau. "I don't think any one of those communities would like to hang out with each other," he reflects. "I don't know if they would all click." He adds with an easygoing shrug, "But I make it work."

On the drive back, Christian and Abigale discuss an upcoming uniform inspection for Navy cadets. Abigale enlisted in the Navy after dropping out of college and traveling the country for three years, taking odd jobs—at various points, she was a canoe instructor, a balloon artist, a zoo

tor, a balloon artist, a zoo worker, and an employee at a brownie factory. She knows that at Christian's age, she wouldn't have had the discipline to join the NROTC. "To make that decision at 18 is impressive," Abigale says.

"He has four years to come out and be an officer, with all that that entails," she adds. "There isn't another training period. It's interesting trying to develop that identity when you're spending so much time at Columbia."

When we pull up at 116<sup>th</sup> Street, Christian leaves to grab something to eat before he goes to Dodge. He's mastered a skill to get through long days like this one: "I'm a pretty good napper," he tells me. "I can fall asleep in probably thirty seconds."◆



## Lies My Teacher Told Me

What you need to know before you teach for America

By WILL HOLT

When Wendy Kopp first pitched the concept of Teach For America as part of her student thesis at Princeton in 1989, her advisor told her that she was "quite evidently deranged." Nevertheless, the organization got its start just one year later with a dedicated charter corps of 500 recruits.

Kopp's original vision of hundreds of elite college graduates teaching at some of the nation's neediest schools may have once seemed the stuff of fantasy, but TFA has since trained over 30,000 teachers. 10,000 recruits were sent out to schools across the country last fall alone, and the non-profit now boasts over \$300 million in assets. In 2012, *Fortune* magazine named TFA one of the 100 best organizations to work for in the United States.

But many critics question TFA's efficacy as well as the organization's commitment to its founding ideals; some argue that many of TFA's policies threaten to damage the schools they set out to save. For instance, the organization currently sends a third of its recruits to charter schools. Charters, though publicly funded, are generally endowed with more enviable budgets, larger donor bases, and better resources than their district school peers.

Moreover, recruits are often considered poorly trained. Many go on the job with fewer than 50 hours of teaching experience. These new graduates, without formal teaching degrees, are frequently sent to

districts where budgetary constraints led to layoffs of long-term professionals. Because TFA recruits are relatively inexpensive hires, veteran teachers have lost their jobs to corps members.

Many of TFA's critics are disillusioned alumni. Gary Rubinstein, a 1991 alumnus of the Houston corps and a teacher of mathematics at New York's Stuyvesant High School, has been one of TFA's most vocal dissenters.

"I was pretty enthusiastic about what me and my friends did then," he told me about his time in TFA. "My only real complaint was that Teach For America was often exaggerating their success. They were sugarcoating the truth for new recruits, so that those recruits are not well prepared to enter the classroom."

The TFA commitment usually lasts two years; Rubinstein stayed in the Houston corps for four. Despite a few initial reservations, his disillusionment with the organization didn't truly set in until recently. "Back then, it was bad for the corps members because they'd be so stressed out," he explained. "And it was bad for the kids they were teaching, but not so bad that it became a national issue."

Despite such criticisms, TFA continues to have considerable appeal at elite universities like Columbia. According to TFA's website, over five percent of the senior class at more than 130 colleges



and universities across the country applied to the organization in 2012. Harvard, generally one of the top contributors of TFA recruits, had 18 percent of its seniors submit applications last year.

Alex Donovan, TFA's campus recruiter at Columbia and Barnard, explained that while Columbia's statistics do not compete with Harvard's, the University has consistently been a top 10 contributor among medium-sized universities.

"We can't give particular numbers about applications," said Donovan, "but we just had 37 students who accepted their offers. I think the numbers have been pretty consistent for the last few years, around 30 corps members each year from Columbia."

"It may be my own bias," he reflected, "but

I think Columbia does a better job than many schools of creating people who are aware of this issue. Given the proximity to Harlem and the fact that it is the most diverse Ivy,

people here understand this issue and understand the gravity of it, so I do think we get a lot of interest on that level."

After graduating from George Washington University in 2009, Donovan spent three years in the TFA corps. He taught sixth grade math for two years in Houston, then spent another year teaching at a middle school in Bedford-Stuyvesant. This is his first year as a recruiter.

With the help of TFA campus representative Mike Rady, CC '13, Donovan used a CCSC grant to start an instructional development program catered not only to potential TFA recruits, but also to groups like Youth for Debate and Peer Health Exchange. The program hosts biweekly meetings with a TFA alum who guides interested undergraduates in lesson planning and classroom management.

In the fall, Rady will join the Newark corps as a third grade teacher after five weeks of training at the Philadelphia Institute. Rady described his role as campus representative as that of a liaison between TFA and the student body here at Columbia. "That can be everything from just explaining the program itself to undergraduate students at career fairs and classrooms and club meetings, to people I know that I think could be interested in the program," he explained. "I also work with [TFA], giving them

feedback about the perception of the program on campus, so if I think there's something that they can provide, I always share my thoughts with them." Rady and Michelle Diop, CC '13 and the other campus representative, receive what he called a "small wage" for their work.

Both Rady and Zach Glubiak, CC '12 and a first-year corps member at College Prep High School, a KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) charter school in West Harlem, stressed that TFA looks foremost for evidence of leadership in its applicants.

"I think they are ultimately looking for people who are leaders," Glubiak told me. "They're looking for people who express interest in education. There's got to be a certain level of self-reflection

> and drive involved, because there's just no way you're going walk into the classroom that first day and be a natural teacher. So you have to reflect about what didn't go right and fig-

"When you tell people you're working miracles, it's great for fundraising."

ure out how you're going fix that."

It's precisely this notion of leadership that so many people find off-putting about TFA. Many critics believe that the organization as a whole—along with some of its more famous alumni, such as former D.C. Chancellor of Public Schools Michelle Rhee—actively promotes the idea that only TFA's elite corps of recruits can save a fundamentally broken system.

Thus, one of the most common criticisms directed at the program is of the perception that TFA members are eminently better suited to tackling the myriad problems faced by struggling public schools than lifelong teachers seen as mired in the system. The turning point in this dynamic, Rubinstein explained, was Rhee's tenure as D.C. chancellor from 2007 to 2010.

"You have Michelle Rhee out there telling everyone that education in this country is failing," he said. "She's telling everyone that teachers have too much job security—and that if we can just measure their quality with test scores, we can fix things."

"They're perpetuating this notion that the only thing holding kids back are their current teachers," Rubenstein continued. "TFA grew tremendously because people genuinely believed this. When you tell people that you're working miracles, it's great for fundraising."

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According to Rubinstein, TFA's shortfalls ultimately break down into three root causes: an emphasis on charters, a culture of teacher-bashing, and a lack of proper training. For many critics, the limited training is most troublesome.

"[TFA] grew too fast, and the model offers too little practice teaching," said Rubinstein. "TFA's training model has gotten worse over the last few years. If they had a better model, people should sign up. But I wouldn't recommend it for anyone right now. They're not training their recruits properly, so they're damaging themselves and they're damaging the kids they teach."

Still, many recent alumni disagree with this notion. "Yes, the training is short," Donovan conceded. "Five, six weeks seems a little absurd on some level. But I do firmly believe the training is really solid, that it's rooted in research about what are the

best practices for educating kids, what's good classroom management theory, what makes a good lesson plan."

Aida Conroy, CC '13, will be entering the Chicago corps this fall to teach at one of the city's Head Start programs. "TFA has a really great foundation," she told me. "The training is pretty

extensive. I'll be getting my Master's at the same time in early childhood education."

According to Glubiak, "You spend your day [at Institute] teaching, going to professional development sessions, planning for the next day, reflecting on the previous day. It's a pretty intensive five-week program. The aim is getting you as ready as possible."

Critics like Rubinstein assert that many new recruits are missing the bigger picture, which he described as a kind of mission drift. Other alumni and participants may offer more nuanced criticisms, but most maintain that the organization as a whole is of tremendous value.

"I do think some of the criticisms are pretty valid," said Conroy. "In my case, I hope it's a little bit different because I'll be going back to where I'm from and that means a lot to me. Being able to address these issues on a personal level and not just on the theoretical level of policy is really important."

Many of the recruits with whom I spoke have tried to set similarly reasonable expectations for themselves. "Teaching's tough," said Donovan. "Do I walk in as teacher of the year on day one? No. Do I suck on day 20? Probably. But everyone will end up getting better. Institute does provide a good framework on which to hold yourself accountable." Glubiak offered a similar response to the question of preparedness: "When I think about the future, the future for me is next Friday."

Even so, Glubiak said he wouldn't mind staying in education for a while longer. That's not uncommon, said Donovan. According to him, roughly two-thirds of TFA alumni are directly involved in education. "That's 20,000 people," he said. "[TFA] changes priorities, and it gets really talented people invested in working with kids. That's why I think our impact has grown."

"Is it valid to send a bunch of Ivy League kids into areas where they don't really know the issues and can't really relate to the people?"

But how exactly does TFA define "education"?

"It is a fairly broad definition that they use," said James Liebman, the Simon H. Rifkind Professor of Law at Columbia Law School. "They count things like sitting on the board of a charter school or being active in politics in a way that advocates for change in one way or another."

Indeed, one of the principal criticisms of TFA is that many recruits use the program as a stepping stone to elite graduate schools. As Liebman pointed out, many alumni end up in the private sector and maintain only a tangential connection to public education.

Since working as a school desegregation lawyer for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund in the 1970s and 1980s, Liebman himself has maintained a strong personal investment in public education reform. From 2006 to 2009, he worked as Chief Accountability Officer at the New York City Department of Education. Overall, his assessment of TFA was positive.

"It has definitely enhanced the access of public school students in the United States to better teachers," noted Liebman. "One thing that is very true about Teach for America is that it's an incredibly good screener of talent. And their judgments of people

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who are not only smart but actually able to apply their intelligence and get things done is really good."

Rady offered a similar assessment of the organization's overall value. "I don't think you'd see so many graduating seniors so excited about getting into education if it weren't for TFA," he added. "If there's one thing they've done right, it's getting so many talented individuals to go back into their communities to teach."

In interviewing various TFA recruits, I found that many were either highly circumspect or visibly uncomfortable about discussing some of the criticisms that Rubinstein raised with me. Perhaps the most obvious dodge they made had to do with TFA's growing emphasis on charter schools versus districts. "Well, charters are public schools," hedged Glubiak. "That all depends on the region," dodged Rady, "so I can't speak to it."

The distinction is significant, and the fact that TFA now sends a third of its recruits to charter schools is troubling. Corps members are quick to mention that charter schools are publicly funded and that any student can have the chance to attend, but this ultimately fails to address that charters are an entirely different animal. Whether because of motivated parents or motivated kids, the student body at any charter school in this country is fundamentally distinct from district counterparts with students

from otherwise similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Charters do not face the problem of parents who use public education as a kind of day-care in the same way that underperforming districts do. Given these differences, is TFA really allocating its resources where they're needed most?

Conroy expressed justifiable concerns about the unique presence of TFA at elite colleges and universities. Aggressive recruiting at a Harvard or a Columbia fails not only to address a disconnect between educational theory and practice but also diminishes the importance of being able to personally relate to one's students.

"Is it valid to send a bunch of Ivy League kids into areas where they don't really know the issues and can't really relate to the people?" Conroy asked. "I believe that I'm no better than someone who goes to a small state school where they won't have a TFA recruiter."

Nevertheless, there's something unde-

niably valuable about TFA, both for its members and for the students it aims to help.

"I have found that for 90 percent or more of the TFA alumni that I've spoken to—and I've probably spoken to a couple hundred—the experience was positive and in many ways life-changing," Liebman told me. "They often learn something they didn't know. In many cases that's learning how hard it is to do what teachers need to do."

Liebman was quick to add that those who don't continue with teaching can still have a tremendous impact on public education. "You get a law degree, a business degree, or a policy degree, and there are lots of things that you can do with that in the public sector," he said. "I've noticed with the [former TFA] students I teach that they're actually quite interested in public sector work." He concluded: "They're interested in change, and they're actually quite prepared to think about how to engage in change from a kind of tactical, strategic perspective."

Perhaps Rubinstein was wrong to discourage students from applying outright; neither TFA's legacy nor its future can be boiled down to basic talking points. That being said, Rubinstein's criticisms warrant careful consideration. When larger structural problems of TFA threaten to weaken the very schools that need it most, one must question whether the corps has ultimately lost sight of its mission.



### Shifting Gears

A recent Columbia alumnus starts 2013 driving a NYC cab By NAOMI COHEN

Before stepping into the 38-story Bank of America Tower in Hong Kong to begin a career in sales and trading, Nashoba Santhanam, CC '12, took a detour. His destination: wherever you're headed.

Santhanam drives a yellow medallion taxi, a decision that seems to raise the eyebrows of everyone but his parents, who've stopped being surprised by Nashoba's taste in "day jobs." When other students ask about his motivation, Santhanam answers with a routine, "might as well." He might as well explore the city before leaving; he might as well get paid for it. When asked by other cabbies, he explains that money is money. To customers, he calls it just a part-time job—if you call 12-hour night shifts part-time.

Anyone expecting a portrait of a disillusioned Ivy Leaguer, piecing together his soul in the metaphor-friendly alleys of New York, will be disappointed. Santhanam neither romanticizes the working-class mentality nor has any interest in trying out pop sociology.

"I like doing a lot of different jobs," he says, "and it's sort of interesting to do something different. And that's what this is."

Santhanam double majored in Political Science and Economics, graduating a semester early by taking six to seven classes a semester. "I felt like getting my money's worth," he explains.

Over the past two years, Santhanam has been one of Columbia's more prominent voices on national politics, writing editorials about SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act) and speaking for Columbia's Republican element. Last fall, he served as President of the Columbia University College Republicans, significantly raising membership and attendance rates. Early in his college career, Nashoba did Speech and Debate, but quit to make time for the Republicans. But above all, Santhanam reiterated, he kept his head in his books and an eye on finance.

"I was never super into school in the first place," he explains. "Not in a bad way, but I'd much rather have a job that pays than pay money to do work for other people—which is sort of in my mind what school is, because you're paying money and writing papers, and then Columbia keeps all of your intellectual property anyway."

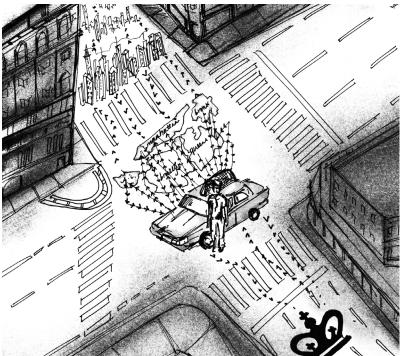
Santhanam has held a job down every summer since the age of 14, when he could legally work. A quarter Choctaw, he traveled when he was 15 to a Choctaw reservation in Oklahoma, where he found employment in a welfare office ("I despise the concept," he adds). There, he stayed with his grandmother's cousin, whom he met for the first time. The next summer, he worked for CUTCO Cutlery of Vector Marketing. He was quickly promoted from selling knives to hiring knife-sellers. As an 18-year-old at the height of the recession, he interviewed the anxious unemployed, most of whom were significantly older than Santhanam himself.

One thing that's remained constant is Santhanam's fascination with the character of different localities. He moved around a lot growing up, spending time in California, Virginia, Connecticut, New York, and Singapore, each of which contributed to his fascination with diversity. He says that sexual and racial differences are in vogue at Columbia, but he finds that they often preclude discussions of geographic, experiential, and intellectual diversity, which he's sought out wherever he's lived.

As a kid, Santhanam was familiar with suburban sprawl. He's candid about the fact that Columbia stood out to him not for its academic prestige, but its urban environment—an environment that his present job takes full advantage of.

The variety and excitement that comes with driving a cab obviously has its associated risks: cabbies are targeted by muggers more than any other type of worker. But for Santhanam, "safe is boring." He has avoided being mugged so far, but the rides are never dull. Once, a man threatened to shoot him for charging too high a fare; another leaned in close to his face and offered to "pay in other ways"; then there was the woman—whom he later realized was a prostitute—who suggested that he pick the destination and take her there. His most dangerous ride: A customer was receiving oral sex in the backseat and Santhanam had to both concentrate on not looking in

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the rearview mirror and not hitting potholes.

Other nights are luckier. Friendly, well-heeled customers, impressed with his conversation, have promised him free tickets to the New York Philharmonic and free food and drink in the Standard Hotel. On one run, he reconnected with a friend of his father's from college. Driving his cab, Santhanam networks with all types. The other day he picked up the former dean of the Columbia School of Dentistry. The interface, he says, is good practice for Bank of America.

In between, there's the mundane: a lot of Columbia graduate students leaving Butler at 2 a.m.; a lot of speeding on roundabouts; a lot of AM radio. He says he's never been so news-savvy. He's also never stayed seated for so long; his doctor requested that he quit to save his back. Back and kidney problems run rampant among cab drivers.

"It is a working-class job," he reflects. "You're hustling on the streets of New York to pick up fares, and you're making five, ten dollars a trip over the course of a night. You could go home with very little money." With an average profit of \$200 a night, he has just enough to pay for his bills and his beer.

"I guess I do sort of fetishize grunge," reflects Santhanam. Still, he doesn't claim to inhabit the life of a cabbie entirely. Though he receives gruff treatment from his customers, he doesn't have a family to support: "I have the working-class experience insofar as I'm working a working-class job."

Santhanam made his first friend in the taxi driver community with his first encounter. When he sat down in taxi driving class, the man next to him challenged him, saying he looked "mad educated" for an aspiring taxi driver.

"If not skin tone," Santhanam explains, "the fact that I'm wearing thick-rimmed glasses and button-down shirts probably distinguished me from most cab drivers." He's learned to counteract this look with an

electric blue New York Knicks hat and says that his part-Indian heritage has helped him blend in.

Of the 80 other students in his taxi class, Santhanam says that two were white; there were no women. Most had thick accents, and many struggled with the English proficiency exam, which he likens to a very simplified version of the SAT reading comprehension section.

When he goes to pick up his car before every shift, he approaches the bulletproof window of "a shitty, dumpy garage" with his license and a cash bribe. Santhanam theorizes that the dispatcher grants cabs to drivers based on cash, seniority, and ethnicity. On his first four days, his dispatcher never gave him a cab.

Santhanam may not conform to widely held notions of the typical cabdriver, but neither does he match the stereotype of an aspiring trader. As much as he says his peers want to label him as a "finance drone," Santhanam has kept this interim period spontaneous. He'll still catch his one-way flight to Hong Kong, but before then, he has made pit stops at Bacchanal, 40s on 40, and Commencement. Cab driving is ultimately one more job for Santhanam—a chance to earn a little money while bidding a prolonged farewell to the city.

### Insider Trading

Looking at Columbia's new internal transfer policy

#### By Alexander Pines

In order to transfer out of SEAS last year, Melissa Ragonese, now CC '15, found herself filling out the Common Application once again. Like other Columbia students who wished to transfer between undergraduate schools, she was required to reapply within the pool of all transfer applicants.

"It was terrifying to deal with the yellow squares of doom and green triangles of hope and wonder again," Melissa admits.

As of this January, however, internal transfer students no longer have to face the Common App; the Office of Undergraduate Admissions has created a new internal transfer policy for students transferring between CC and SEAS.

Before 2013, internal transfers were faced with a harsh and often downplayed reality: while CC and SEAS are part of one undergraduate community, they are separate schools with separate admissions rates. (In 2012, CC admitted 6.4 percent and SEAS 9.9 percent. Since that year, Admissions has only released the consolidated statistic.)

Having applied as a transfer last year under the old system, Ragonese had to prove both that she "fit" Columbia and that she academically merited acceptance. "It really did give the impression that you had intentionally messed up the first time and this was your due punishment—you literally have to reapply to the school," said Ragonese. "I would have felt differently if it had been more internal—it would have seemed a lot more sympathetic."

Even though Ragonese ended up leaving SEAS to study computer science in CC, she is nonetheless grateful to have had the opportunity at a do-over. (It



is worth noting that according to the science department, CC computer science majors must complete only 41 to 44 points, compared to 74 to 75 for SEAS students.)

Under the new system, "When we evaluate internal candidates, we know that the 'fit' with Columbia has already been established," says Jessica Marinaccio, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid. "We are able to focus our attention on seeking to understand the reasons why a transfer between schools would enable the applicant to pursue his or her new goals."

Accordingly, "Internal transfers apply with a special internal transfer application while transfers from other colleges must submit the Common Application for transfers," Dean Marinaccio explains. However, internal transfers must still prove their academic worth—though this aspect of transferring, too, has softened.

In 2008, a SEAS first-year wrote an opinion piece in the *Columbia Daily Spectator*. In it, he described his disappointment that his application went unread when he applied to transfer to CC. Why? His GPA fell short of the 3.5 minimum then required of internal transfers.

According to the current Admissions webpage, "Potential transfers are expected to have a minimum GPA of 3.5 overall; Columbia Engineering candidates are strongly encouraged to have a minimum GPA of 3.5 in their mathematics and science courses." However, according to Dean Marinaccio, "that number is specific to students applying from other college and universities and not for internal transfers." Internal transfers, she said, are reviewed according to "committee-based holistic process" which she did not elaborate on.

It seems, then, that the new policy changes two parts of the internal transfer experience: first, internal transfers are already assumed to "fit" Columbia; second, internal transfers will still be considered if they do not meet the GPA minimum for general transfer admissions.

This year, when Shriya Manian, CC '15,

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applied to transfer from SEAS, she filled out the new application designed exclusively for internal transfers. Unlike the Columbia supplement to the Common App, which one transfer student noted was more like a personality quiz than anything else, the new application is streamlined and does not require an application fee. Forget submitting old transcripts or test scores—Manian only had to provide a list of her extracurricular activities, her current schedule, two letters of recommendation, and answers to three short-answer questions about why she wanted to switch schools.

"Transferring within the university wasn't daunting like I think transferring out could be," she said.

Nonetheless, there remains the ever-present struggle of the Columbia student: the necessity of

tenacious bureaucratic wrangling. Specific information about Columbia's internal transfer process is hard to come by.

"For me, what was most upsetting was that there was no information on how good my chances were, which made it

very hard to plan ahead," said Debattama Sen, SEAS '13, who crossed over from CC after her freshman year. One student mentioned that he didn't even know when decisions would be released until an hour before he was admitted.

When Sen says that she had difficulty gauging her chances of getting in, she means it. Beyond a single paragraph of the Admissions FAQ linking to the correct transfer form, there is no data available about the relative exchange of students between SEAS and CC or admissions rates.

The only admissions rate publicly available is "fewer than 10 percent," which Dean Marinaccio says applies to external and not internal transfers. When asked about the statistics regarding internal transfers, she only offered, "Internal transfer numbers fluctuate on an annual basis, and we do have students applying in both directions between Columbia College and Columbia Engineering."

It's unlikely that the application will come to include Barnard or General Studies transfer applicants. "Applicants to Columbia College and The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science share a first-year admissions application,

and are reviewed by the same admissions committee," said Dean Marinaccio. "The internal application is therefore available to these students because they have entered Columbia through the same process. Undergraduates at Barnard and the School of General Studies are admitted through the admissions guidelines of their respective schools, and thus they apply through the general transfer process."

Many students still find the revised internal transfer process daunting. However, they do admit that progress has been made.

"I still think it's ridiculous to make it so hard to change schools," said Aidan Graham, who will be CC '16 starting in the fall. "But if I did have to use the Common App, I would have felt as though I was even less of a priority to the administration and I probably would have felt more discouraged from applying."

The University strives to make its internal transfer process more accommodating, but considerable difficulties remain. As is typical of technological innovations affecting any substantial portion of the Columbia student body, the process is still bumpy. Several

students reported technical issues during their application.

Columbia's two undergraduate schools provide a unique example relative to other universities, such as NYU, with its legion of schools, or Penn, with Wharton. Therefore, significant pedagogical differences between CC and SEAS should hardly be discounted in weighing a candidate's application. Indeed, it may be telling that a large majority of internal transfers who came forward to be interviewed for this article were students who had made the switch from SEAS to CC and not the other way around. (Read: the difference between admission rates and the relative rigor of each school's computer science major.)

The new internal transfer procedure appears to take a nuanced view of the the CC-SEAS relationship. Unlike the old policy, it acknowledges that the schools form one undergraduate community—hence the "fit" that Dean Marinaccio mentioned—while still distinguishing between a liberal arts college and an engineering school. But, of course, bureaucratic opacity remains a significant obstacle to the would-be transfers themselves.•



ONE SIZE PITS MOST. EXCHANGES LIMITED BARNARD, as NEED NOT APPLY.

### Cub Reporters

### A look at Columbia's "weird" new blog

#### By Britt Fossum

The layout of the Columbia Lion recalls the last iteration of Bwog. Described by somebody in the know as "a knockoff of Bwog," its color scheme and layout are practically identical to Bwog's formerly blue background. This isn't *entirely* intentional, according to The Lion's editor in chief, web designer,

and co-founder Jake Davidson, CC '14. Davidson insists there wasn't much choice in the scheme, "it was either blue and look like Bwog used to, or white and look like Bwog does now." The founders went with the popular vote.

The site began as the pet project of Davidson and former Spectrum editor Stephen Snowder. Davidson explains, "Towards the end of last semester, it became clear that *Spec* was too serious. We just wanted to be weird about it and make weird Columbia jokes." Davidson cites his time at the *Spectator*, especially his role in honing its online presence, as

providing both the wherewithal to start his own blog and the inspiration to take a new direction.

The Lion went live in February 2013 and sustains a balanced diet of three posts daily: "Morning Briefing," "Midnight Snack," and one longer feature. Davidson considers such consistency a "small miracle," given the blog's sporadic meetings and small staff of only nine regular contributors.

By way of a mission statement, Davidson tells me: "Every week we try to take a big campus story and go at it in the wierdest way possible." This goal isn't always executed: a recent post questioning the longevity of Frontiers of Science consisted of vague speculation about how the Core class is "on the ropes," as well as the text of an email sent to all Frontiers students.

At other times though, The Lion does seem

to vibrate to that weird string. Each staff meeting delivers an eclectic, if sometimes incomprehensible, combination of news and inside jokes: The Lion paired coverage of the CCSC elections with a pithy push for its own "Lion Party." Davidson eventually hopes The Lion will supersede Bwog and Spectrum

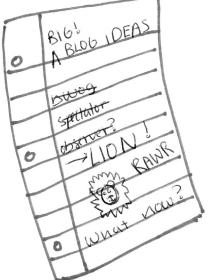
as Columbia's go-to online news source. Still, coverage of campus events is unpredictable. While Snowder managed to interview Bacchanal's famous "fountain girl," The Lion intentionally chooses not to cover every story it hears about.

And so, despite designs to unseat the reigning blog, Davidson has no qualms with driving traffic toward his campus competitors. In his mind, linking to another blog gives readers of The Lion the comprehensive news day his limited writing staff can't always cover. "If we don't have an opinion on it but want people to know about it... we are giving all of our traf-

fic to Bwog or *Spec* for things that we have nothing to say about."

And while The Lion's daily visitor count may not match up with those publications yet, Davidson assures me that site traffic has accelerated markedly over the semester. The editors take that as a sign that the blog—despite a staff comprised almost wholly seniors—might live on.

When asked why he gave his self-consciously "weird" blog such a traditional, school-spirited name, Davidson jokes, "the original name was going to be 'The Observer,' and then that was kind of too obvious. It's just funny cause it's a really lazy name but sounds really authoritative. Almost what I want the blog to be but what it really shouldn't be. I want it to have some authoritative points but also be just the opposite."





### CURIO COLUMBIANA

In 1931, Spectator editor in chief Reed Harris went on a crusade against the Columbia establishment. During his tenure, Harris attacked—among other things—college athletics for corrupting the university by diverting funds from academics. He was ultimately expelled for rabble rousing. In his book King Football, which he wrote soon after leaving, Harris marveled that "an amazing amount of money finds its ways from the pockets and bank account of Alumni into the hands of men whose one greatest interest in life lies in committing a form of legalized assault on any one of eleven opponents that they may meet in the football field." In this indignant letter to the editor of the Alumni News, Lionel Kaufman, the Spectator's former advertising manager, points out the hypocrisy of the Spectator's accusations. The managerial board of the newspaper had a similarly nasty habit of pocketing advertising dollars for personal use.

### The Letterbox

KAUFMAN SAYS "SPEC" EDITORS RECEIVE MONEY

Editor, The Alumni News:

A great teacher who, I daresay, was as well up on his right and wrong as any Spectator editor may hope to be, once said: "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone."

Being myself a former member of Spec's managing board, I can't for the life of me, see how a Spectator editor can denounce professionalism in college athletics, without having his tongue in his cheek.

For Spectator, just as all college publications, is the most professional of all Columbia's extra-curricular activities. In a normal year, the amount of money pocketed by each member of Spectator's managing board can put to shame our average football man's income from scholar-ships, odd jobs on the campus, etc.

Last year, under the leadership of the most ardent champion on amateurism in Spectator's history, through no fault of the managing board, the paper was blessed with a deluge of competitive tobacco advertising. And the result, I am reliably informed, is that each member of the managing board pocketed about a thousand dollars in "excess advertising revenue." And though the sum may vary each year, the method of operation doesn't. As a matter of fact, I can even name one editorin-chief who borrowed against what he expected—too optimistically—to be his share of the profits. And to the best of my knowledge, he hasn't yet returned that excess sum to King's Crown.

While we have a committee for investigations, how about investigating Spectator? And all the other "non athletic" activities whose leading figures are supposed and expected to "make something" on the side?

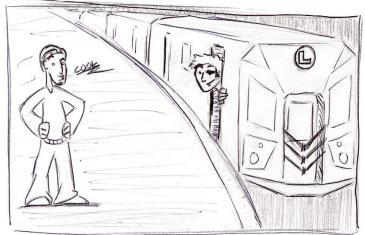
I know two wrongs don't make aright, but I insist that the main difference between athletics and non-athletic emoluments is that the former aren't concealed as carefully as most of the latter.

If Spectator's system is right, then our athletic system is right. If not, by all means, let's reform both of them. But don't let Spectator's editors sit like holier-than-thou, lily-white angels, and cast aspersions on the football authorities for operating on the same financial basis that they themselves use.

LIONEL M. KAUFMAN, '30C

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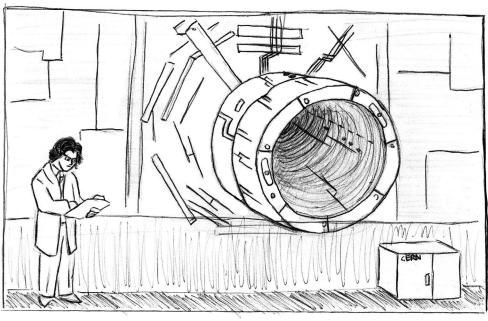






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Cartoons by Hank Shorb & Matthew Schantz

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### Paying it Forward

Pervasive debt at Columbia's nontraditional college By Anna Bahr

This is the final installment of a three-part series on the experience of student debt at Columbia. To review the first two pieces, which examine student loans in CC/SEAS and financial aid for international students, please visit www.theblueandwhite.org.

Just two years ago, Peter Awn, Dean of the School of General Studies, described the limited financial aid available to GS students as "untenable." That year, GS students received, "percentage-wise, functionally half the financial aid dollars that [were] available to Columbia College students," a dearth cornering GS undergrads into a future of student debt. Today, GS has surpassed its \$25 million fundraising goal as part of the university-wide Campaign for Undergraduate Education—92 percent of which Awn estimates will expand the aid pool in the form of scholarships and grants. With this addition, he believes "the school has turned a corner."

Awn's optimism for the future of Columbia's nontraditional undergraduate college surprised me. Nearly every GS student I interviewed shared a common grievance—the same frustration echoed in opinion pieces in the *Spectator* and desperate Bwog comments for years—that the value of a Columbia degree is compromised when it demands that scholars be borrowers.

When Hal Levy, GS '14, graduates, he will owe nearly \$160,000 in private student loans. "If I don't go bankrupt, at the very least I will have no spending money for ten years. I'll probably be wearing these same ratty clothes, trying to pay off my loans," he sighed. GS prides itself on being one of a kind—a unique education, nonexistent at other Ivies, in which a diverse collection of nontraditional students earn traditional bachelor's degrees. But its current program remains a feasible option for only one kind of student: he who can readily afford it.

No GS student expects charity. But they do expect parity. They pay the same tuition fees as their peers who arrived directly from high school. But Columbia College, a 250-year-old institution, has the benefit of an accumulated endowment; GS, formally established in 1947, has a much smaller

reserve. In the 2012-13 academic year, CC and SEAS awarded over \$122 million in scholarships and grants to 3,000 undergrads; GS distributed \$16.4 million to 1,050 students. Roughly, GS's aid has half the purchasing power of CC and SEAS.

In the mind of Stephanie Keogh, GS '14, the problem feels as moral as it does practical. "If you are graduating with \$180,000 to pay off, Columbia should feel accountable for that ethically. If [President Lee C.] Bollinger is talking about equality and affirmative action and he can go to sleep at night thinking he's done everything he can to protect GS students, he's wrong," she explained.

Of the 1,500 GS undergrads, approximately 70 percent receive financial aid. It's a striking statistic, but the amount they are apportioned deflates the admirable quantity of scholarships. Fifty percent of CC and SEAS students receive aid from Columbia, with an average grant of \$40,441. During her first period of enrollment, the average GS student will



"I can be optimistic

about a future, but

you're the one who has

to pay your bills now."

typically receive between \$7,000 and \$9,000 in grants. Since GSers pay on a per-credit basis, this may cover the costs of a part-time student, but for the 68 percent of GS students enrolled full-time, grants absorb only a fraction of the annual \$44,090 tuition fee for a 34-credit schedule. That figure stands without factoring in the additional cost of housing, food, personal expenses, and Student Life and Health Services fees. For the remaining third of GS students who take classes part-time, these mandatory costs accumulate and multiply as GSers inch toward graduation.

Still, while GS students may be unfairly indebted relative to their CC and SEAS peers, they are rarely misinformed. GS encourages accepted students to meet with a financial aid officer who helps

them through a cost-benefit analysis evaluating potential aid options from the university, federal government, and private lenders. If the costs outweigh the benefits, aid counselors often recommend that recent admits consider accepting admission else-

where. But these meetings often take place before students have received their full financial aid packages. More importantly, because institutional aid at GS is allocated based on merit, rather than need, many students hope that their academic achievements will pay off via a monetary reward—an incentive which surely contributes to GS students consistently earning the highest average GPA of Columbia's undergraduates.

Meanwhile, CC/SEAS students are endowed with financial aid that boasts a "\$0 borrowing expectation" and guarantees to "meet 100% of demonstrated need." (For more on the slippery rhetoric of CC's financial aid, see "Buy Now, Pay Later," the first installment of this series in the Winter 2012 issue of this magazine.)

Spencer Badesch, GS '16 and a former professional ballet dancer, works 30 to 40 hours a week at an AT&T store. Were he a CC student, he would almost certainly qualify for substantial aid. He struggles to keep up with a workload designed for undergraduates who can afford to make studying a full-time job. Spencer, already \$25,000 in debt, emphasized his emotional strain: "I'll have a massive heart attack. I'll be dead before I graduate, I'm so

stressed." Spencer was recently told that, even if he had a perfect, 4.0 GPA, he would only receive around \$500 more in aid annually.

This is not news. GS is undeniably and laudably transparent about its limited resources. For many students, the decision is more emotional than rational: "I knew I was going to be screwed, but [an acceptance at Columbia] is an offer you can't refuse," said Levy. But the value of a degree can fluctuate. When you're juggling a job, school, and trying to make rent on time, is the Columbia name worth it? "I hope so. It might have been more responsible for me to move to Alaska and become a political organizer," said Levy, only half-joking.

It's not just the seductive Ivy League degree that attracts students to GS. It's that the school

> provides an opportunity to study not as a night student, or through some online iteration, but ostensibly as a regular undergrad. From Army veterans to students who took time off after high school to pay their family's electricity bill, many GSers

thought their chance to study as an undergrad at a school of such prestige had long since passed.

So, students get creative. Badesch told me he considered getting married to boost his aid package. He receives no financial support from his parents. But until he is 24, Badesch will be considered a dependent by the federal government. "Independent" students, who do not report parental income, typically appear to have greater financial need and are more likely to receive grants and subsidized loans. A marriage license would knock Spencer into the "independent" column.

On GoFundMe.com, a personal fundraising platform akin to Kickstarter, Kambi Gathesha, GS '14 submitted the following entry: "Currently, I am in danger of not being able to return to Columbia University to finish my undergraduate studies and receive my degree due to exorbitant tuition costs. Despite the generosity of my particular institution... it is unable to give me more money."

Gathesha is deeply committed to Columbia and a well-known figure on campus. After graduating from Juilliard's theatre program and performing professionally with artists including Beyonce, Usher, and Pink, he found his way to GS. With a year and

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a half left until graduation, Gathesha ran out of the funds he needs to finish his degree and was in danger of withdrawing. His webpage seeks donations towards the \$40,000 he needs to graduate—a sum that would supplement both his financial aid package from GS and his federal loans. And while his image recently graced the front page of the *Columbia Daily Spectator*, Gathesha is no longer listed in the university directory as an enrolled student.

In Stephanie Keogh's experience, phasing

in and out of enrollment at GS is standard practice. Keogh reported that many of her friends in GS take credits every other semester-working several part-time jobs during the semesters they spend away from Columbia. There's a catch. Studying as a parttime student delays graduation, subsequent entry into the full-time, salaried workforce, and the financial security to repay debt. "The fact that you have to drop out-not because your grades aren't good enough, but because you can't payis humiliating. It's shameful," said Keogh.

The GS administration can hardly be cast as indifferent to low-income students. The small size of the college limits the bureaucratic distance between students and administration that can define CC and SEAS. One of the goals of GS, says Dean Awn, is to be "as transparent as humanly possible [about the realities of debt]." Whereas James Valentini, Dean of Columbia College, invites students every month or so to a brief window of office hours, Awn spends his spare time in the GS lounge, mingling with students. He knows them by name, and his empathy for their financial juggling act is in earnest. Keogh thinks that GSers recognize the sincerity of his commitment: "The financial well-being of his students and housing [for GS] are *literally* all he thinks about."

But Awn has been Dean of the School of General Studies since 1997. He has the privilege of institutional memory—countless points of comparison that demonstrate majors structural and cultural changes to GS over the years. During our interview, he returned time and again to the abject social discrimination faced by and "pathetic" financial resources available to GS students during the college's earlier years.

Awn cleaved to the message: "Look how far we've come." And justly so. GS *has* made remarkable strides, and shows no sign of complacency. Curtis Rodgers, GS Dean of Enrollment Management, acknowledged that the college's recent fundraising

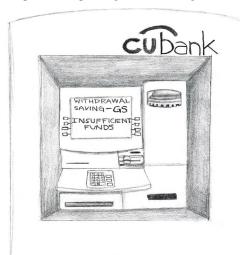
success is "just the beginning of a long-term effort to increase the funds available for GS financial aid." General Studies aims to achieve a proportionally equal discount rate-the amount of tuition funds returned to students in the form of aid-as Columbia College. In 2009, The Owl Magazine, the alumni magazine of GS, cited the rate as roughly 40 percent for CC, and only 22 percent for GS students, suggesting parity still remains a somewhat distant goal.

One of Dean Awn's personal triumphs is a

much improved social relationship between GS and the traditional colleges. In Awn's mind, as he told the *Columbia Daily Spectator* earlier this year, "the final steps in synchronizing Columbia College and GS curricula" and reconciling the colleges' cultures comes down to two structural changes: renaming the School of General Studies and including Lit Hum and Contemporary Civilizations as graduation requirements for GS students.

But Levy sees the feeling of social isolation, a common phenomenon for GSers, as directly related to a disparity in financial freedom. "GS can't solve the problem of us not being in the larger community until they solve the problem of financial aid," he explained.

Over the past two years, in an internal review process similar to the recent overhaul made by Columbia College's Office of Financial Aid and Educational Financing, the GS Office of Educational Financing has undergone what Dean Rodgers described as "significant restructuring," including



expanding office hours from 10 hours per week to 40, hiring three additional aid officers, and, for the first time, offering institutional aid for the summer semester to eligible GS students.

The broader economic outlook for indebted GS students is bleak. Not only is the cost of living in Manhattan more than twice the national average, but interest rates on federally subsidized loans are expected to double on July 1st due to mandatory federal budget cuts. This increase from 3.4 to 6.8 percent interest rates could add an average of \$5,000 to what current students pay on their loans. Two-thirds of American students today graduate with loans exceeding \$25,000. Of the 10 GS students I interviewed, most fit into the 10 percent of graduates nationwide who owe more than \$54,000 in loans; six of them will be over \$100,000 in debt.

A self-described realist, Awn is well aware of the endemic GS debt crisis. After all, he's been managing the same problem, with new progress and new setbacks, for the last 16 years. Awn candidly offers, "I can be optimistic about a future, but you're the one who has to pay your bills now."•

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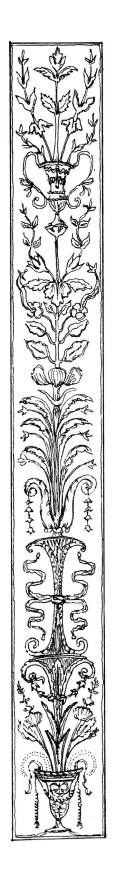


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## Measure for Measure

### THE QUIET

The quiet, the slow, the emergence the stealth but the lovely, the evolution, The steady. all 10 fingers on the not quite ready.

The neck, the violins the strings uhhhh
Cello, vibrate, shake shhh, [gasp]
Hummmmm (inhale) ummmm mmmm (adjust)
Brush, brush, rustle, touch - holldddd

- Alessio Mineo

### Measure for Measure

#### TIME LAPSE

Look: the light, poured iris glistening, brilliant blue through the windowpane.

You ought to look up more often. You would see the world & sometimes the sea

revolve. Only by vanishing will you know all about the quick sparrows over

the black earth. I heard you once, the mingled measure of your voice, inquiring

how you were born. Fine birds brought you, slowly spinning through versions of lives before—

there. There you are stone, there you are tenderness. Look, I'm still here & all you have.

I don't think of you often, but when I do, I think there is no rightful way by time.

Last night's rain tongued the creek's surface, made the wind & far trees listen, ashamed.

Tell me we'll never get used to it all.

-Nim Gumaste



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# It was Baroque, McVicar Fixed It

Giulio Cesare changes its tune at the Met Opera By Alexandra Svokos

Giulio Cesare by George Handel April 4 - May 10 Metropolitan Opera House

We have lost the ability to take the Baroque seriously. Between its countertenors with unnaturally shrill voices and the oft-parodied, aristocratic harpsichord, it is difficult for the modern audience not to giggle. The narration is tedious compared to genres: arias repeat the same lines in slow, tentative phrases; Baroque opera is the stereotype of antiquated dullness that keeps many from considering any type of opera enjoyable.

In his production of Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, which had its New York premiere at the Metropolitan Opera this spring, director David McVicar attempted to confound that stigma. In doing so, he also confounded rationality, narrative balance, and the level of sophistication expected of a Met audience—but no matter, so long as the audience stayed engaged through the typically plodding four and a half hour show. McVicar presents a giddy interpretation, bursting with life, color, and spectacle.

Following Julius Caesar's time in Egypt, the production sets up the Romans as parodied British imperialists. While always clad in red, the Egyptians go through multiple costume changes: trying on

stereotypical Indian, Moroccan, and Middle Eastern ensembles. The Egyptians are inhabitants of conquered foreign lands, where none is distinguished in their exoticisms to the dense imperialists. This divide persists through the end, when Caesar and Cleopatra emerge triumphantly in 18<sup>th</sup>-century finery—in a production of absurdities you may as well throw the soprano into a full-skirted, gold-lined gown.

That soprano was the remarkable Natalie Dessay. She clearly

enjoyed the playful role of Cleopatra. To meet and seduce Caesar, she slinks in a short, black flapper dress, complete with dark sunglasses and a cocktail (what time period are we in again?). She enters in a brightly colored Bollywood-inspired set (where are we again?). Mocking her brother, Ptolemy, in "Non disperar," she and two hype girls do a dance that includes walking like an Egyptian, shaking their heads, and wagging their fingers. Dessay whizzed through coloratura phrases, though not without effort in the higher notes—a sad reminder of her chronic vocal troubles. Still, her voice was bright and fully colored. While the rest of the singers lost power at the four hour mark, Dessay was astonishingly consistent throughout.

Few countertenors measure up to David Daniels—his singing was passionate and technically brilliant. One of his major arias was used as a point of self-mockery. In "Al lampo dell'armi," rebels rally outside while Caesar—as any Baroque hero would—lengthily observes his situation. Meanwhile, Cleopatra and a soldier run about in a frenzy, trying to both placate Caesar and remind him that he's singing with enemies at his door.

On the other side of the frivolity are Cornelia and Sesto, Pompey's widow and son. In the trouser role, mezzo-soprano Alice Coote stunned with a beautifully lush voice. But McVicar did not give the

pair much to work with in the way of dance routines or stylish backdrops.

These motionless scenes of dragging sob songs were effective foils to McVicar's bells and whistles. Contemporary audiences have short attention spans, and

the incessant stimulation they crave is not native to the Handel opera.

With this unstable sea of physical comedy, absurdity, and parody, McVicar reinvigorated the form. Already a technically marvelous opera, with his direction and a solid cast, *Giulio Cesare* became a dazzling experience.

# Reminds Me of Teen Spirit

Meat Puppets' fourteenth album Rat Farm rocks exactly like you thought it would By Torsten Odiano

Rat Farm by Meat Puppets The Royal Potato Family iTunes, \$9.99

Rejoice, ye disaffected. Seminal alt-rockers Meat Puppets have released a new album of guitar music, perfect for college students and dads. In considering *Rat Farm*, I need to maintain a distance of "critical irony,"—I repulse myself—because over the last year I've become acutely aware that I'm exactly the kind of person who likes alternative rock. And

Rat Farm (Meat Puppets' fourteenth) is unshakably an alternative rock album.

Not that it is not alternative in the way the term is used today (which has no real meaning). I can't think of a contemporary rocker who isn't an "alternative" rocker if they aren't earnestly neurotic or self-aware enough to be called "indie," or not religious enough to be called "metal." *Rat Farm* is alternative in the sense that, musically, it plays like a relic of the early nineties, except all the bored kids have become tired

and folksy. In this sense, alternative rock is my personal undoing—an aesthetic sweet spot, an honest older brother, pulling me in for a long, forgiving hug: "Come here, you little weirdo." Alternative rock bands like Dinosaur Jr. and Meat Puppets have convinced me that there's something horrible and beautiful about the way I feel, who I am—a feeling that is only expressible through electric guitar. Though less angsty, *Rat Farm* has a few moments that spark my sense of vague but indefatigable longing.

But the album certainly has its weaknesses. Some songs are just duds ("Original One," "River Rose"). Also, it's distinctly frontloaded melody-wise. The Byrds-y folk element that guides the structure of most songs is sometimes a recipe for stupidly simple

music (e.g. "Sometimes Blues," the chorus of "Rat Farm"). Curt Kirkwood's vocals became more and more bland with Meat Puppets' major-label releases in the mid-nineties, and the onset of "old man" timbre hasn't made his delivery much more interesting. The singing on *Rat Farm* fluctuates between unaffected neutrality and annoying urgency. Except for "Waiting," the one track on which Curt's resigned vocals fit the tone of the song perfectly, *Rat Farm* is resolutely a guitar album. Listened to on those terms, it's a pretty good one, but "holistically": the album's boring.

The record is full of jangly and chunky riffs; sighing, distorted choruses; creative song structures; bizarre and badass tones; and solos of every variety. On "One More Drop," Rat Farm's homage to hair metal, Chris's roiling, bluesy interjections are perfect enough to come off as parody, but blown out enough that the solo seems only to add thickness to the atmosphere. "You Don't Know" has a muted, croaking, jangly tone in the verse that melts into a calm wave in the chorus. My favorite track has to be "Down"-a

song whose core is a mournful country with some psychedelic touches, rounded out by an honest-togod spiritual guitar solo right in the middle. The section sounds like a voice trying to console itself.

Rat Farm is not a historic guitar album by any means. But it is surprising, funny, and sometimes amazingly emotive. If you're someone who believes in the fundamental rapport between overdriven guitar and the human soul, there's much on Rat Farm that's worth listening to.

Despite it's overall blandness, *Rat Farm* was satisfying, but only in that it touched on a few of my favorite alt rock motifs. It's not something I see myself coming back to: there are plenty of albums that do the same thing better. But "Down" is a keeper.•



## Ante Uptown

# Horsing around at Empire City By Luca Marzorati

If you're ever feeling lucky, take the 1 train all the way north. Get off at Van Cortlandt Park. Make sure your wallet is rife with crisp bills, peel off a few, and catch a ride to Empire City, a massive casino complex just north of the city line in Yonkers.

Tonight, on the train ride up, my friend and I meet a man with a hat that reads "DANGER: THIS VET IS PROTECTED FROM YOUR MEDICATION"; unperturbed by the train's impending reversal south, he stays in his seat. Below the station is not a park, but the dirty intersection of  $242^{nd}$  Street and Broadway. Cars idle aimlessly and Manhattan College students loaf around, ducking into bodegas for beer, cigarettes, or whatever else Manhattan College students buy at 7 p.m. on a Friday night.

We look to hire a car. A cabbie standing under the subway tracks offers to take us for \$15. We decline, and walk up the block, searching for cigars. As we emerge empty-handed from the corner store, a car in the middle of an intersection honks—it's our recently-rejected cabbie. We pile in the back seat, unsure if our initial rejection brought our fare

down. Our driver, built like a boar, burps frequently, and asks us if we are going to the "cassssino," stretching the "s" for no apparent reason. We tell him we're starting with the horses. A slickster in the passenger seat with a billowing cream shirt and dark sunglasses says nothing for the entire ride. His relation to the cabbie is unclear.

We arrive at Yonkers Raceway,

adjacent to the casino, as the sun sets. The breeze whips around the half-mile oval, and crowds of old men huddle under the heat lamps near the betting windows. Before we even place a bet, we are asked to prove our age. We do, and though 18 is New York's betting age, we seem to be the only gamblers under 50.

Both Yonkers Raceway and Empire City seem neutered: this isn't Churchill Downs or Vegas. Not to say that it isn't free-market; it just isn't as fun. For instance, the track features harness racing, where a jockey trails his horse on a two-wheeled cart called a sulky. Harness racing is slower (and considerably duller) than thoroughbred racing, where jockeys directly mount their horses. The unwieldiness of the carriages makes starting position, not speed, paramount.

Out in the cold, at least, the action is live. I check my program and go with Speed Bomb, a fast starter with 9-to-2 odds, in the fifth race. Speed Bomb never loses the lead, coasting to a victory. I prance to the betting booth, hoping for some admiration from the sour-looking old man behind the



He gives us his rigmarole—

most gamblers have one-that

involves jokes about a train

accident, a phallic tattoo, and

a plastic piece of shit.

counter.

I'm disappointed. "Race's not official," he snaps at me. Apparently, there is a delay from when the winning horse crosses the finish line to when the tellers can pay out bets, as officials scan the video of the previous race, checking for equine hijinks. Chastened, I linger a few minutes, then collect my score.

My luck turns, and I lose the next few races. After a while, only a few dozen other degenerates remain huddled together, protecting themselves from the gusty wind off the adjacent maze of highways, counting a dwindling supply of bills with print-blackened hands. In the red, my friend and I bet the same horse: Imperial Count, a black stallion who has finished in the money in seven of his last eight races.

Walking away from the betting counter, we're approached by a large black man wearing a light

brown tracksuit. He gives us his rigmarole—most gamblers have one—that involves jokes about a train accident, a phallic tattoo, and a plastic piece of shit, which he produces from his pocket a the punch line that we don't understand.

Imperial Count takes off at 3-to-1 odds; if he wins, we'll enter the casino playing with house money. The race is close, as Imperial Count and the favorite, Calchips Brute, stay neck-and-neck. The horses accelerate, the rumble of hoofs nearing the grandstand. Standing at the finish, we see our Count stick his nose forward, crossing the line fractions of a second ahead of the Brute. Victory is ours—and it pays \$7.70 on a \$2 bet.

The space more resembles Chuck E. Cheese than Monte Carlo. Inside, Empire City is a "video lottery casino," featuring thousands of video slot machines. The few table games that do exist are also played electronically, individually.

Since receiving a gaming license and opening its doors in October 2006, Empire City has installed over five thousand "video gaming machines." The casino gives about half of its net winnings to the New York state education fund. In the last fiscal year, this sum topped \$275 million. The casino's latest reports indicated that the average gambler loses at an 8 percent rate.

The floor is dominated by slot machines of various thematic merit, from the cinematic (*The Hangover*) to the cartoonish (*Smash the Pig*). Unlike poker, a game of pain tolerance, the slots require a player who doesn't know, or doesn't want to know, that the odds are against him. Sitting in rows, drowned out by blinking lights and repeated jangling, all the lucky people look like beady-eyed drones, gambling mechanically, each in their own cubicle.

We walk upstairs, where the casino has table games, sans tableau. Each player gets a booth with a touch-screen, facing a buxom computerized dealer. Every few rounds, I notice that she is replaced by a new digitized sex bomb. We settle in at the roulette table, and watch the cash we earned on the ponies slide into the slot, earning us a stack of virtual chips. The guys next to us have their boards filled, playing several lucky numbers at once, along with odd,

black, or whatever else they think of. Quickly, my friend puts all his money on red, and the ball comes up black. He sighs, and sits down on a nearby couch, more than happy to see someone else mathematically assured to lose.

Slowly, my chip count accumulates. I'm taking most spins off, but somehow, I have a rhythm. I've doubled my count when an idea pops into my head: outside the Columbia gates, I'd seen a cab careening up Broadway, blaring rap, with "Magnificent Seven" written across the side in peeling-off lettering. I put my chips on multiples of 7, the ball comes up 21, and my chip count skyrockets.

The oxygenated air and deliberate lack of clocks at the casino makes it impossible to tell how many hours remain before the 4 a.m. closing time, but I think my luck is about to peak. I drag all my chips to red. Thinking better of it, I try to cancel, but the shapely virtual dealer has already announced, "No more bets," crossing her hands over her chest, as if to scintillate the players into betting more, thereby impressing her. I know that my fate is sealed. The ball flirts with red, skips a few pockets, and ends up black. Tired and broke, I stumble into a cab, and start the long journey home. •

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## Varsity Star Goes Pro

### A conversation with Greta Gerwig

#### By Anna Bahr

In her Senior Wisdom, Gerwig, BC '06, offered this piece of hard-learned advice: "I'm a douche-bag if I say I go to Columbia." Since graduating, the 2004 Varsity Show star and Tea Party improvalum has worked with some of the truly great luminaries of contemporary film, from Woody Allen to Whit Stillman. She was described by The New York Times film critic, A.O. Scott, as "the definitive screen actress of her generation." Gerwig is charming, natural, and remarkably level-headed about her success. She took some time to chat with managing editor Anna Bahr about harsh critics, getting stuck with the "Hollywood's indie darling" brand, and why Los Angeles sucks.

The Blue and White: I feel like you're at Barnard all the time. I saw you speak at the opening of the Athena Film Festival a couple months ago and there were rumors of Frances Ha being shot here in the fall...

Greta Gerwig: I shot *something* at Barnard in the fall but *Frances Ha* was all done up at Vassar. You saw me speak? Oh my God, I was terrified. I don't know why I guess I don't usually speak in front rooms like that.

B&W: What is it like coming back?

GG: I loved Barnard. I loved going to school there. It changed my life, which sounds like I'm overstating it, but I'm not. Barnard College and The Varsity show were the two formative things in my life. V-Show especially in terms of the people I met and that uniquely collaborative spirit that translated into what I was doing later. I thought they were the funniest coolest people ever and I wasn't as funny or as cool as they were. I was an okay singer and

*B&W*: Do you ever miss it? And by it, I mean being back in school?

dancer and was okay at being funny and cool.

GG: Two years out of college, yes, I missed it. But not now. There is definitely a time when you stop talking

about your life in terms of college and it stops being the kind of thing you invest in. It's a nice thing to be able to frame your existence around something new. I love Barnard and will always participate in it and support it but I'm happy to have distance from that part of my life.

B&W: I'm curious about how Barnard, or, more specifically, going to a women's college, has informed how you choose your roles.

GG: I loved going to a women's college. I went to an all-girls high school too, so I'm all about ladyschools. On one hand, actors do make choices based on their artistic leanings and personal attractions to roles but on other hand I have to work to make money. And I get where I get. So, if I were to design a career that were to reflect my feelings about women, I might not necessarily have [worked on all of the films] I have done. But I do try to do films that portray women

a s dynamic humans, not just vipers. And I would like think that has more to do with having gone to college in a metropolitan area and thinking about these things just as a person than from having attended a women's college. What comes from Barnard is that I feel an obligation to write and create my own work, to develop my own voices and stories, and not just speak words written by someone else. All

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an okay



the pressure I feel to be the author not the mouthpiece—that's Barnard.

B&W: It's interesting you say that because you wrote the screenplay your most recent film, Frances Ha. It must be an impossible

challenge to transfer a person you created, whose brain you know so intimately, to a character onscreen whose entire life story you have to show to people who don't know her in two hours...What's different about performing a character you wrote?

GG: Well, I wrote it with Noah [Baumbach]. People think I only wrote it. I wrote a bunch of characters too. I didn't just write it for myself. I had to not think about playing it in order to write it. It's ter-

"In New York, everything is possible. In Los Angeles, nothing is possible."

rifying to constantly have your own inadequacies as an actor at the forefront of your mind while writing because then you won't write anything because you're just thinking of the ways you'll mess it up. So I was just trying to write characters that are true and interesting and trying to tell a story and then deal with the acting later.

GG: It is hard. It is difficult. You know, stand up comedians write their own material all the time and can get heckled and can be funny about it, but comedy is built into what you're doing. What I'm doing is not always meant to be funny. The big thing that helped was the other actors. Casting other people you think are right. Because I'm a big believer in that you find your performances through the people you work with. You need them. That's your only access to the laws of the scene—it's through the other person. You don't build a character that's separate from the people you're doing it with. You build on your own [character] and then bring yourself to the scene in the most open way possible. [The film] ignites when you start acting with the other person. That made it a lot easier because you have this amazing lack of selfconsciousness. You're not acting in a bubble.

*B&W*: I would imagine that criticism is far more affecting when it's for a piece that personal. How do you steel yourself for something like that?

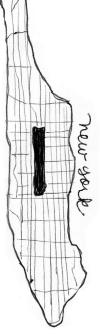
GG: Having written it, you care a fuck of a lot more. It's like night and day. I mean, on some level you're not responsible for a project you don't write and didn't direct. It's someone else's work. But when you write it, it's your blood and marrow on the page. When people try and give me suggestions [on characters] and are like, "What about this thing?" I'm like, "Don't talk about my people like that. I wrote that." I've collaborated on other people's stuff before—I've co-written other films—but those films never felt as much a part of me. This project was the best I could possibly do. This is my best material. This is

not an experiment. I gave it absolutely everything. This film took so fucking long to shoot, so fucking long to write. If you don't like it, I don't have anything better.

B&W: In that same vein of ownership over your work, it must be strange to be associated with move-

ments that you are not directly the creator of. One day you're associated with mumblecore and then it's New Sincerity and then you're called, like, "Hollywood's indie darling." Do those associations change your self-perception and the choices you make in roles?

GG: Not at all. It always happens after the fact. You make what you're making and you make the best possible choice based both on your artistic leanings and your economic reality and later people say, "Oh you're part of this thing or this thing," but there's no way to anticipate the analysis of what you're doing. I think when you start learning about



[it]—that's when actors can start going a little crazy. And you can see it in their work. They start trying to anticipate a reaction or game the system or feel out what will be their position in the history of what film is. Once you start down that road you're sunk. Because it's something other than the thing that you're doing, that you care about

*B&W*: And yet, as you say, there are economic realities as an independent film actor. I would imagine it's difficult to just roll with your aesthetic or artistic ideals.

GG: It's definitely possible if you live differently than I do. I don't live extravagantly. But I want to have a gym membership. I like to go to the theater. I like to go out for drinks. You can make whatever you want if you want to live on a bare minimum. But I make choices also based on what I want in the world. Which includes drinks. But yeah sometimes you just

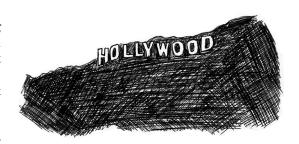
need a job. You have to work a certain number of days on a union shoot to get your health insurance.

B&W: I wanted to ask you about *Greenberg*. I'm from Los Angeles and, as unre-

alistic as I found Ben Stiller's walking the vastness of the whole city, I loved that the film showed Los Angeles without those mandatory shots of the

Hollywood sign. For me, one of the great moments in that film is when Florence [played by Gerwig] is talking to the people in the car behind her to let her into their lane. I have definitely had days in LA where I have only spoken to people in different cars than me. That's a special kind of lonely.

GG: I love that movie so much. It was a huge thing for me to get that movie. It changed my life. I loved the character of Florence so much and I was desper-



ate to play the part and was so glad I got it. One of the things I learned from her is that people wear their cities in their bodies and on their faces. Her particular isolation and depression and vulnerability has to do with the way Los Angeles makes its citizens transport themselves. They are all so separate. If you put that same character in New York she would have been a different person. She would have carried herself differently. She might have still been depressive, but she wouldn't hunch in the same way or speak softly in the same way. When we were shooting in

LA I went there early and I spent time there working as a personal assistant for people and I experienced the feeling and melancholy of LA—and the unexpected beauty. By the time we were shooting I felt like I understood it for

my performance.

"I'm always looking for that vaguely Upper West Side therapied life."

*B&W*: You've talked a lot about how special it was to work with Woody Allen on *To Rome with Love* and your fandom for his films. If there's one thing he's famous for it's capturing that specific '70s New York intellectual art-scene aesthetic. How did your reality of the city match up to his?

GG: I love New York. Films were a huge part of wanting to live in New York City. Particularly [Allen's] movies. Woody Allen makes movies about Woody Allen. It's not as if my reality matches up to *Manhattan*. But I do think I have thought out and have nourished the '70s New York he's depicting in terms of choosing a variety of friends and artists and going to museums and dinner and the theater and being critical and funny and bright and engaged. And walking everywhere. That feeling you have of living in the world around people who make you excited—that's always what I'm attracted to in his films and that's what I'm attracted to in life. I've found it it helps

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that I went to school here—you don't have to be alone when you first get here. There's a sense of community. I'm always looking for that vaguely Upper West Side therapied life.

B&W: And? Are you getting closer?

GG: I live downtown. So not there yet. But I do know a lot of people on the Upper West Side. Definitely getting closer.

B&W: You mentioned feeling a distinct sense of community when you came to school. I feel like Columbia can often be a really difficult place to find community. No shared space, lots of distant groups of people... Did you feel comfortable here right off the bat?

GG: Not really. Not until my sophomore year. After freshman year I got a nannying job and I stayed over the summer. That was hugely important. It changed everything. Freshman year I had a good time but I was

scared I didn't know as much as everyone else—that I wasn't as smart as everyone else. I think everyone feels that way. I had friends, but I didn't find my groove totally. I would leave campus, but I didn't see the city as much as I wanted to. So that summer I lived in a living room for \$400 a month and worked as a nanny where my hours were 10-6 and the rest of my time was free. And I walked the shit out of the city. I had friends on the Lower East Side and I would walk the length of [the East Side] constantly. And in the summer there's so much free shit. Like music in Bryant Park—all this great stuff. Though I was lonely, I was connected to what the city had to offer. I was a part of the organism of the city. And by the end of it I thought, "I'll never be lonely again."

*B&W*: Yeah, every part of the structure of LA makes that feeling impossible. There is no cohesive organism.

GG: Right. It's more disparate... It's hard to feel like there's anything you belong to in LA. I never feel successful there. In New York, everything is possible. In Los Angeles, nothing is possible. I remember my favorite moment was taking the red line to Times Square and then transferring between the 1/9–it's just the 1 now–to the 2/3. Everyone was walking together and you just feel like you're the center of everything.

*B&W*: It's amazing to watch the types of people shift between lines and cars. That synchronized chaos is so awesome.

GG: Yeah totally. It was great. Getting to know the city that way grounded me. After that I had a better base to get involved sophomore year with Varsity Show and I found my people. I was writing plays. I found a different group of girlfriends. I still see the Varsity Show people all the time.

*B&W*: I would be amiss if I didn't finish the interview

by repeating the most important question in Bwog's Senior Wisdom list. In 2006, you were asked if you would rather give up oral sex or cheese. You said cheese. Now that you're a little older and a little and wiser, are you sticking to your guns or do you want to change your answer?

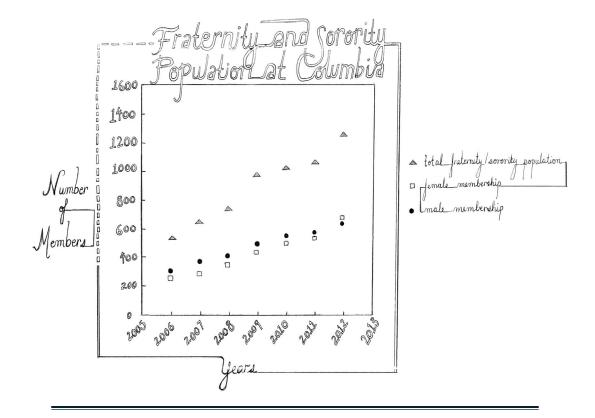
GG: Do you guys still ask that? Jesus. Uh. [laughs] I don't know. I think I probably chose that the first time because I thought it was sexy. But there is no sexy answer to that question. I don't know what my answer is now, but at least I know I feel comfortable enough to not have to answer just based on what's sexy.

B&W: That's the pinnacle of maturity.

GG: I feel so proud.

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.







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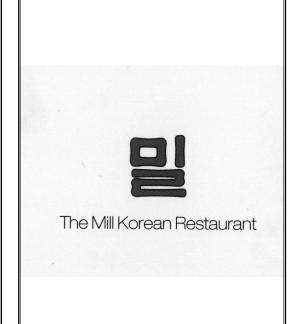
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ONLY FOR COLUMBIA STUDENTS



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### DIGITALIA COLUMBIANA

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

Unofficially, what you will read is my exit strategy for those transient conversations when I am accosted by the recurring question, 'how's the job search going?' – asked by the ones I try so hard not to punch. What I write is not for them. It's for the unemployed, insane, and the free. I write for the thirty-year-old infants of the new American Dream. Barf.

2

This book is personal residue. The pages are hopefully saturated with more humanity than horror, bound by the ridiculous day-to-day hustle and the runoff of sloppy nonsense. The writing is my lingering foul in the wake of what I find fancy. I mean to be a consoling palm on your wrist and warm by twisting, leaving the friendliest of Indian burns.

do

if chrenreichs soln comes to light, the maid industry will die, and the very people chrenreich was trying to defend will lead even worser lives. as she said herself, maids have no choice but to work as a maid, they would not have "chosen the work for themselves," so they would have nowhere to work and support their family.

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Knowledge: Montaigne knows everything from hearing it from someone else who heard it from yet another removed source. Everyone has a limited knowledge and one cannot know everything all time. All perspectives are limited and everyone takes in different things from seeing a situation.

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dinner from 11 last eve is now a mouth-muscle lick of sandpapera breath of fresh hooker her point about umc kids does not make sense be kids who cannot clean is not necessarily bad

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I'm from Jersey I say whats up bro How ya doin' My names Frankie bones

I love theta And DG And all the other girls In SDT

Started as a pledge
Now we're here
Started as a pledge
Now my KDR crew is here (strum 4x)

When I got to school
I was like OH MY GOD
Then I read the core and was like...... Hooolyyyy
Shittt this is harddddd!!!
But I killed my hard work and beat adversity
So vote for me as Mr. Fraternity

oil

I simmer to a scummy boil at 58 % idiot & he's good to me at least 100% of the time. I huff the fermenting pillow soaked in residual musk to savor his plump ass.•

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### **CAMPUS GOSSIP**

#### **PLEDGERISM**

A recent episode of *Law and Order: SVU*, "Girl Dishonored," involved a fraternity forcing their pledges to "poonspeed," *i.e.*, "eat pussy while wearing a swimming cap and goggles"—an act lifted directly from Pike's leaked scavenger hunt.

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#### HORRIBLE BOSSES

When the publisher of the *Spectator* and former president of Sigma Nu disapproved of Andrea García-Vargas's sex column for Spectrum, "C.U. in Bed," he posed as an alumnus and wrote nasty comments on her articles.

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#### THANK GOD FOR SPARKNOTES, RIGHT?

At a recent public appearance, Gary Shteyngart, novelist and School of the Arts professor, talked about reading, and how boring it is. "I know lots of English professors," he explained, "and many of them tell me they are finding it hard to finish a 300 page novel." Let us hope that Mr. Shteyngart refers only to English professors at other universities.

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#### SECRET SERVICE

Two senior boys have been going to St. A's parties for the last year with a handful of business cards. Not that that's unusual. What is unusual is that the cards include neither name nor contact information, but only an Illuminati pyramid alongside a Latin phrase. The pair finds the "douchiest looking poseurs" and sneak the cards onto their person—in cigarette packs, back pockets, purses, *etc.*—in hopes that the poseurs will think they've succeeded at being tapped for a secret society.

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#### **ILL BEATS**

Before his performance at Bacchanal, Macklemore was throwing up in the green room. He was just sick.

During Macklemore's performance, a girl peed at the very top of Low Steps. Literally pulled her shorts down and pissed. There was urine everywhere, even on her Delta Gamma fanny pack.

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#### TIME TO FACE THE MUSIC

A senior in Columbia College was called into a judicial hearing for illegal downloading, and replied: "Although I am free to meet on May 3rd, I request that the meeting be canceled and issue dismissed by all. As I move closer to graduation and am prematurely hounded for alum donations, it seems that such formality over a small matter could only sour my memory and gratuity." The Office of Judicial affairs representative replied that he looked forward to meeting on May 3rd.

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#### LANDED GENTRY

Cleo Abram, CC '15 and member of St. Anthony's Hall, overheard in the Hungarian Pastry Shop, said, "My sister decided not to go to law school and be a farmer. But she's really conflicted about using her inheritance to start a big farm in Vermont."

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#### TRADING DOWN

At the end of a reading from her new book *The Magic Circle*, professor Jenny Davidson was looking for a bar to retire to. A grad student suggested 1020, but she said it was too "sordid." They went to Lion's Head instead.

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#### "TOASTER" OR "RISE?"

Walking home from 1020, one student came across a homeless man sleeping face down on a sewer grate. "This is too perfect," she whispered to herself, Instagramming the moment.

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1020... it's sordid!◆

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