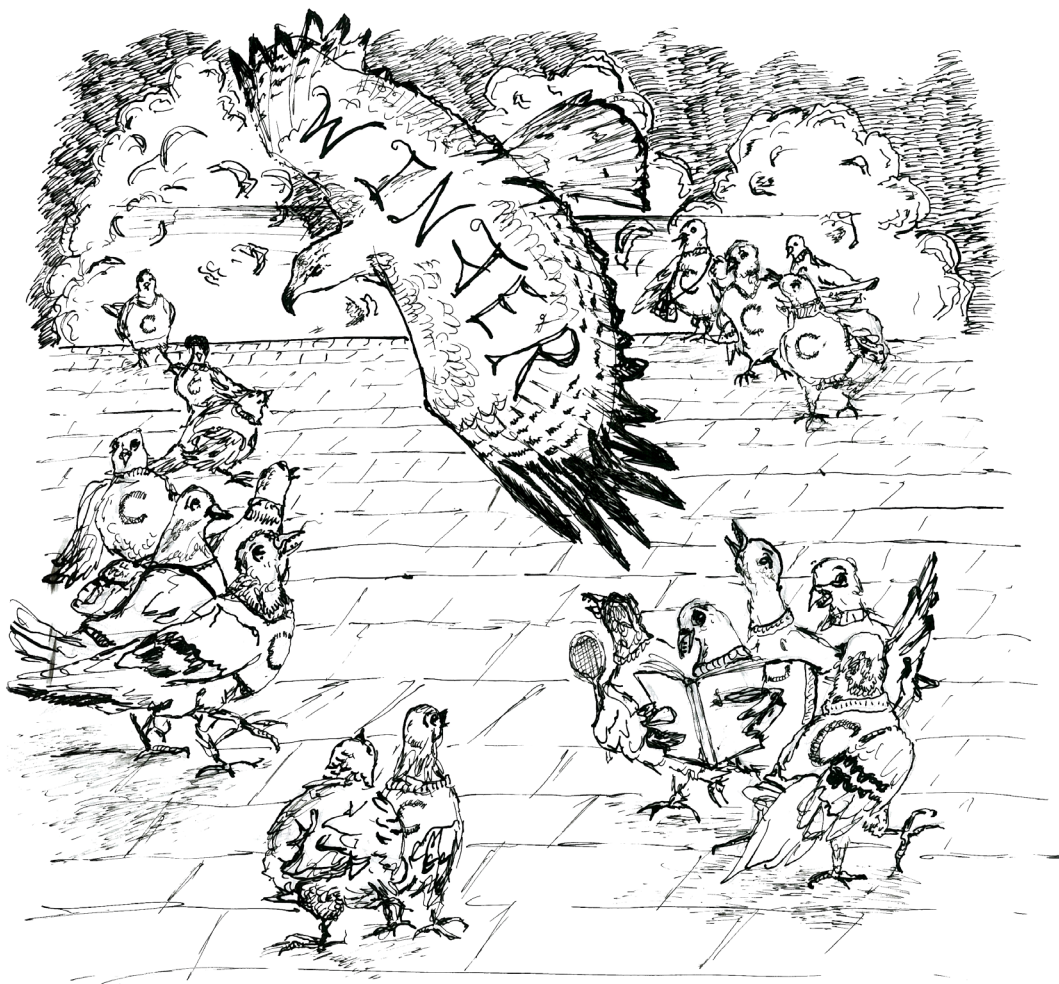


THE UNDERGRADUATE MAGAZINE OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, EST. 1890

THE BLUE AND WHITE

Vol. XV No. III

November 2008



TERRA COGNITA

Study Abroad Special Section

THE CHAIN GANG

Cookie-cutter retail brings the mainstream to Morningside.

By Lydia DePillis, James Downie, and Eliza Shapiro

BONUS PULL-OUT: Map of Hungarian's literary salon

ALSO: GAIL COLLINS, BROTESTS, AND REMEMBER THE LADIES



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TYPOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The text of *The Blue and White* is set in Bodoni Seventy Two ITC, which was based on original designs by Giambattista Bodoni of Parma (active 1765-1813). The display faces are Weiss and Cantoria.

BLUE BOOK

Campus has been quiet these last few months. Now that Obama's win has ushered in a post-racial era in which bathroom stall graffiti is no longer a cause célèbre, life in Morningside is, well, routine. It is as though the entire student body woke up one morning and forgot its legacy of mischief, drama, and buffoonery.

Nearly two semesters without a decent protest, and it is almost winter, for chrissakes, a time when protestors are naturally given to burrowing into furniture and walls for warmth. On behalf of the media outlets starving for scandal, I ask: Columbia, where is thy shit storm?

Given the general air of contentment (read: ennui) wafting down College Walk, the editors of *The Blue and White* have—in the tradition of all alienated, disenchanted youth—gone abroad.

We begin in Kyoto (p.14), where Travis Cone is asked immediately (and unexpectedly) to remove his clothes. Then it's to Paris (p.14), where Ren McKnight is selling Mormonism in a city of “Non, merci bien”s. Hannah Goldfield was good enough to invite us to Buenos Aires (p.15), where she seems to have whiled away the months drinking espresso and arriving late to class. After nearly a semester in Moscow (p.16), Lauren Glover tries to imagine the city as Morningside, and finally we go to Istanbul (p. 16) with Anna Couturier, who has joined an Albanian Gypsy's band, and may never come back again.

For those who remained on this island, we've left you some savory crumbs. In their piece “The Chain Gang,” (p.11) Lydia DePillis, James Downie, and Eliza Shapiro examine why, in the last few years, chains have descended on Morningside Heights, and why Ricky's arrival is worse news than you thought. And in her article “Remember the Ladies,” (p.28) Katie Reedy reminds you that 2008 is the 25th anniversary of women in the College. *The Blue and White* offers its belated congratulations and our condolences that Columbia missed the memo.

Whether you are overseas or in the bowels of Butler (same thing), the November issue aims to remind you of what Columbia once was: a University hell bent on cyclical weirdness. Remember that? Let's have that again.

Anna Phillips
Editor-in-Chief

TRANSACTIONS

ARRIVALS

Enlightened discourse, in the form of the Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life

A challenge to CU Bhangra's dance supremacy, in the form of Orisha

Spectator-LGBTQ feud

The specter of Alan Brinkley's replacement

Fox News, hot on the trail of *C-Spot*

Spunk, in the form of the CubPub

DEPARTURES

Ricky's, for now

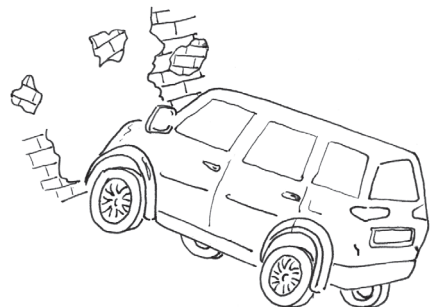
Indus Valley, following a violent assault by an S.U.V.

Repose outside Math

Columbia football's losing streak

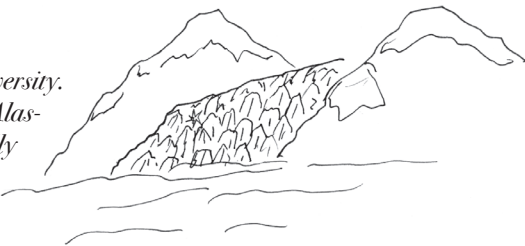
Any lingering shred of Roy Den Hollander's legitimacy

CPU's Presidential Debate aspirations



WORD SCRAMBLE

Somewhere in Alaska, there is a glacier named after our fair university. Columbia Glacier was discovered and named by the Harriman Alaska Expedition in 1889. The glacier has been retreating rapidly over the last decade. Unscramble the professors' names, then use the circled letters to find out where it lies.



GELQUIY

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NEDLOBAC

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REVELATION OF THE MONTH

In addition to tours for parents and pre-frosh, a new type of home invasion has stricken the campus dormitories. According to a resident assistant, “a group of Columbia alums” has scheduled a tour through residence halls this month. These curious alumni have shown “particular interest in viewing multiple Woodbridge suites” belonging to randomly-selected students. Luckily, the RA informed students they were “not required to clean it prior to the tour.”

BARACK OBAMA, BY THE NUMBERS

Years Obama attended Columbia: **2** (1982-84)

Emails sent by Prezbo to donors and alums about Obama after he won the presidency: **3**

Words in PrezBo’s most recent email: **154**

Words mentioning Barack Obama in the Columbia University archives: **Fewer than 30** (two address listings)

Obama’s college papers that have appeared since his graduation: **0**

Spectator stories mentioning Obama during his two years at Columbia: **0**

Years the national media mentioned Obama before first Columbia story about him: **14** (1990, upon his

appointment as editor of the *Harvard Law Review*)

Money given to Obama by Columbia University officials: **\$267,000**

Money given to John McCain: **\$35,000**

Speeches John McCain has given at Columbia: **1** (Class Day 2006)

Speeches Barack Obama has given at Columbia: **0**

Copies of *The Audacity of Hope* in the Columbia University library system: **4**

Copies checked out: **4** (as of printing)

B+LUE NOTES

How to Stage a Coup and *The Black Virgin Mary Coloring Book* sit on a shelf on the second floor of Barnard's Lehman Library, sandwiched between a row of books on scientific theory and the entire Encyclopædia Britannica.

These are the names of a few publications that make up Barnard's nationally renowned and truly extensive women's zine collection, which launched in 2003 and now includes over 2,000 titles. The collection's information book defines zines as "self-published works of personal expression" that do not exist for the sake of profit. Barnard's collection has a particular focus on those published by "NYC and other urban women with an emphasis on zines by women of color."

Recently, a submission entitled *Gendercide #5* put the collection's inclusion policy to the test. The zine, which focused on the subject of femme identity, was published by Milo, a friend of Head Librarian Jenna Freedman. Milo publishes *Gendercide* and other works at the Queer Zine Archive Project, which also began in 2003. The issue with the issue was this: Barnard's collection is composed entirely of zines written by women, or those who identify as women. Milo is neither.

Freedman, unsure whether or not including Milo's zine would be appropriate in light of this policy, opened the matter up for debate on the collection's LiveJournal page. Milo was also made aware of the question, and said that he was "not surprised" by the ensuing debate, but that he "didn't relish it, either."

Zinesters and commenters alike chimed in on the forums. One described the issue as something of a "logic puzzle" that blurred the line of binary gender and questioned the collection's inclusion policy. Zine collection Assistant Jennie Halperin, BC '10, agreed with the "logic puzzle" characterization, and said that she believed the inclusion of *Gendercide* "could open a new Pandora's Box" of gender issues. Ultimately though, she felt that the danger of not including the zine and allowing its message to be lost was more important than strictly interpreting

the guidelines. Zines are about "trying things out," Halperin said.

Freedman agreed, and *Gendercide #5* has earned a home on the shelf. She has no qualms about her decision, and explained that now the collection is "more niche." With *Gendercide* having landed safely, the collection's future appears bright. Perhaps most exciting of all, Halperin has recently created the collection's logo: the prototypical Barnard Woman sporting a Hello Kitty dress.

—Eliza Shapiro

Flipping through a Pottery Barn Kids catalog, it would not be surprising to spy the name Sophia monogrammed across a pink madras duvet or a lavender sham. This observation is even less surprising given information provided on the Social Security Administration's website: Sophia was the sixth most popular name nationwide in 2007. Several other cognates also make the top hundred-list. Sophia's Latina prima, Sofia, trails behind at a respectable 35, while her francophone cousin, Sophie comes in at 82.

Inextricable from Sophie is, of course, its etymological forbearer *sophos*, from the ancient Greek meaning "wisdom." These academic overtones have made the name, especially in its French iteration, a hit at Columbia. In recent years, several professors of the humanities, including Taylor Carman, Mark Lilla,



Illustration by
Alexandra Voûte

and Matthew Jones, have all named their daughters Sophie.

Unassumingly leaning back in his desk chair and pushing his glasses up over his brow, Professor Carman maintained that the name is primarily a tribute to his wife's grandmother, Sophie Germaine. The latent allusion to wisdom, he said with a smile, is "an added bonus."

At the same time, Professor Carman dismissed the suggestion that an allusion to Book V of Rousseau's *Emile* might be associated with the choice of his daughter's name. Sophie attracted Mama and Papa Carman primarily because the soft "ie" of its ending "was more inspired than Sophia, without being either completely overdone or too pretentious." And Sophie escapes some of the popularity of Sophia.

Another name that combined French inflection with ancient Greek meaning, Chloe, was rejected for lacking inspiration. And yes, Professor Carman has also visited the Social Security Administration's website.

Though she is just embarking on her path toward wisdom, Sophie lives up to her name. "She's doing second-grade level math and puzzle workbooks, and she's only in kindergarten," father beamed proudly. But upon asking what Sophie is most interested in, Professor Carman allows, "She'd probably say princesses. And pink."

—Mariela Quintana

Every November, Boone Arledge Auditorium is spruced up with white tablecloths and a jazz band for a very special evening. At this gathering, Columbia College named scholarship recipients get to meet their maker and come face to face with their financial aid donors.

The Office of Financial Aid is realistic about its Named Scholarship program. It states that the award is an addition to résumés and grad school applications. In return, Columbia gets to "showcase your achievements to our generous donors." Applying isn't too arduous: write

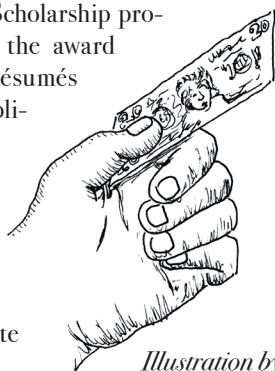


Illustration by Allison A. Halff

down some biographical information and, in a few weeks, you've got your award.

The whole concept is "a little bizarre," one Columbia College senior pointed out, especially since there's no additional monetary reward for selecting a named grant. When asked why they bothered to fill out the form, students usually don't mention that it's good for résumés. Most shrug and say they don't mind giving donors a name to go with their money. Perhaps students participate in the program for the food: a candlelit dinner of salmon, steak, and cucumber-based appetizers are worth the inevitable stilted small talk.

But meeting your sponsor at the gala can be the oddest part of the process. Students in this scenario are like pound puppies or orphans of foreign wars meeting their benefactors. Someone you've never met before (and will probably never see again) picks you apart, gasping at your achievements and nodding with understanding at your hardships. "My, what a life you've had already!" one sponsor said, living vicariously for a moment through a young student.

The supper also gives Dean Austin Quigley a moment to speak out about just how generous the donors are—and how much students need their money. This year's speech was particularly solemn. As Quigley pointed out: "The financial situation has never been so uncertain." The school is anticipating that most students will need more aid next year while donations will shrink.

Some students are a bit puzzled by the sponsors with whom they're matched. "I have no idea why I got that scholarship sponsor," one student said

of her benefactor, a rather militant former College Republican. But most students seemed relatively pleased

with the program, noting that hearing alumni express how much they treasured their time at the University changes their own perspectives about the school. Even the College Republican donor gained the sympathy of his beneficiary: "He clearly loved being at Columbia."

—Anna Louise Corke

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 e-mail at bweditors@columbia.edu.

GARTH STEWART

Garth Stewart, GS'09, is used to attention.

A veteran of the Iraq War, Stewart made headlines in 2003, when he took on “Big Army,” as he puts it. After losing his left leg to a landmine outside of Baghdad, he fought Army policies that would have kept him from re-enlisting. Specialist Stewart's battle has been recounted on NPR, as well as both CBS and ABC News. Congressmen and military officials have listened to his story, as has CNN's Anderson Cooper, who has interviewed Stewart twice, and the *Washington Post*, which has run a series of articles about his saga.

But Stewart is nonchalant about the attention he receives. “I have a publicist,” he said. “She takes care of all of that stuff.”

“That stuff” includes almost weekly fundraiser dinners and charity events organized by the Wounded Warriors Project, an advocacy group for injured soldiers. But on campus, Stewart, who has traded fatigues

for a scholar's uniform of sweaters and horn-rimmed glasses, is hardly a spokesman.

“For the most part, I keep my mouth shut,” he said. The history major says he rarely brings up his service in the classroom, a choice that's informed by his awareness of other veterans who are more open about their tours of duty. “That idea that everyone needs to hear your story—I think it's childish. I've had that itch satisfied.” Nevertheless, Stewart doesn't hesitate

to ask questions in large lectures, even when that means pushing the bounds of classroom etiquette.

Some students are aware of Stewart's past life, and those who have varying reactions. One female classmate, he recalled, was particularly upset by an article in the *Columbia Daily Spectator* that mentioned his platoon's 500-plus body count, an Army record.

“I showed it to this girl and a single tear rolled down her cheek,” he said. “She just said ‘Oh my God.’ She shunned me every time she saw me after that.”

On occasion, he has defended the ethics of his military service to fellow students, even though he has opposed the Iraq War from the start. But for the most part, he finds Columbians unfazed by his war record.

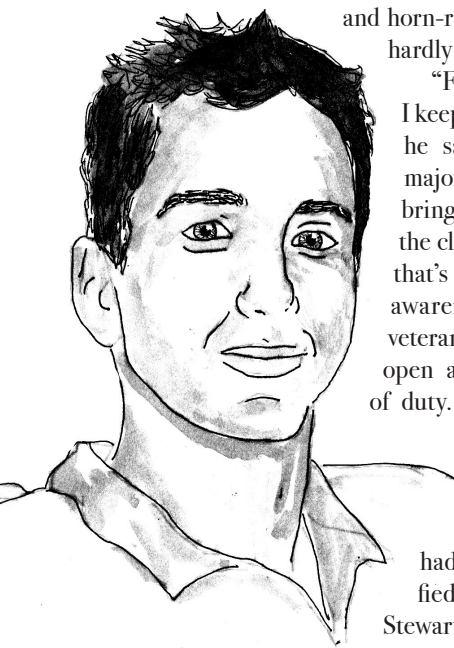
“There have been some people that I've offended, but this is such a compassionate student body at heart,” he said, crediting the University with transforming him from a battle-bitten soldier into a calmer, cooler civilian. “The person I am after three years at Columbia is better than when I first arrived. Columbia saved my soul.”

Raised in Stillwater, Minnesota by ex-Marine parents, Stewart graduated high school with a 1.8 GPA and never considered higher education.

Stewart enlisted in the Army at age 18 and struggled just to survive training. His drill sergeant hazed and humiliated his unit to prepare the young men for the harshness of war.

“I slowly learned to get fucking mean,” Stewart said proudly, recalling a time the sergeant ordered him to carry a 300-pound mortar on his back around camp all day. “It was degrading, all this stupid shit. But at the same time, it worked. I liked how tough I was.” His physical toughness endures; this fall he completed the Marine Corps Marathon despite suffering a flat tire on his handcycle halfway through the race.

With the battlefield behind him, Stewart has overhauled his life and personality. The rage and “hyper-vigilance” of his wartime survival instincts have been replaced by introspection and moderation, he said.



After graduation, he plans on applying to Teachers College.

"The Columbia community has been great about helping me work out of that," he said. "It's what I told people when I came here: I think of myself as a dirty lump of clay. Fucking mold me."

—Jon Hill

VICTORIA RUIZ

For Victoria Ruiz, CC'09, sleeping is giving in. Spring break last year was not a period of convalescence, but an opportunity to explore Mumbai's Dharavi district, Asia's largest slum city. One summer found her selling cherries on a street corner on the Upper West Side, then traveling with journalists in Bolivia and doing research at MIT. Last winter break, she took a turn around the mountains of Guatemala.

Although she is best known at Columbia for her zealous activism against Manhattanville expansion, Ruiz is a truly global citizen who has been saving travel money since her earliest babysitting jobs in her hometown of San Jose, California. The list of places she has visited is extensive: there's Beijing, where she researched the destruction of the *hutong* shantytowns for MIT; Berlin, where she laid out 300 feet of banner in Potsdamer Platz during a conference on globalization; and Cuba, where she conversed with Communists.

Ruiz's lust for life inspires a string of superlatives. A whirl of dance and laughter, she's endlessly ebullient and smiley. But make note—controlled substances play no part in supplying her energy. In November 2007, on the night that the hunger strike ended, Ruiz, one of the central strikers, celebrated with her compatriots and ended up at Pinnacle at 4 a.m., after-partying like someone who had actually eaten in the previous ten days.

The hunger strike was a defining moment for Ruiz's activism. The heart and soul of the anti-Manhattanville movement and a current leader of the Student Coalition on Expansion and Gentrification, whose members know her as "Tia SCEG," Ruiz brought passion to the strikers' negotiations. At one point, Ruiz approached President Bollinger to give him a helium balloon bearing an anti-expansion slogan. Bollinger took the balloon and handed it off to a waiting staffer. Ruiz was genuinely shocked that the President didn't want her balloon: "He just gave it away!" she exclaims. "It made me upset. Then, he just told me 'good luck.' It definitely came of his anger and frustration. I was just like, 'good luck to you too!'"

When asked how successful she felt the hunger strike had been, she mused on the strike's success as an artistic work: "So much beauty came out of it! The collage, the Christmas lights, our tent... there was something very visually beautiful about the whole thing."

But the bulk of her intelligence is not directed toward reverie, and her travels are inextricably tied to her academic pursuits. A double major in Architecture and Economics, Ruiz is actively engaged in research in these fields. "Economics and physical spaces both determine so many people's livelihoods," she said. "Passing mud huts in India, I realized that every part of those huts dealt with dwelling and survival. It got me thinking: how does shelter lead to food, work." To accomplish her hefty double-major, Ruiz has averaged "at least seven" courses each semester she's been at Columbia, and one semester she enrolled in a super-human eleven. "I am pretty intense about my school-work," she said. During her freshman and sophomore years, Ruiz supplemented her classroom courses with dance classes—and even traded work as a receptionist for free lessons at a prominent Broadway dance studio.

Many people are surprised at Ruiz's scholarly ambitions, recognizing her only as a free-wheeling activist. But there are layers within layers of her life's philosophy, which she inherited from her mother: "Everyone has a circle, and your circle is whatever you want it to be... My grandmother's circle was like her family, and my mom's was like her family and friends. My circle?" The question remains unresolved. Next year, Ruiz is contemplating graduate school in California, close to her two best friends and biggest fans, her mother and grandmother. Or maybe she'll end up in Asia, or stay in New York. "Perhaps [my circle] could be community organization, or gentrification, or sustainable architecture... or maybe something else."

—Tony Gong

Illustrations by
Allison A. Hatff



A Love, Professed

Meet the disciples of luminaries past. BY JULI N. WEINER

“I can’t say it better than Virginia Woolf, who said that James was ‘to some an oppression, to others an obsession,’” said English Professor Eric Haralson, ex-President of the Henry James Society, book review editor of *The Henry James Review*, author of *Henry James and Queer Modernity* and co-editor of *A Historical Guide to Henry James*.

Woolf could easily have said the same about Shakespeare, Chaucer, or Joyce. And she may as well have been speaking of some of the Columbia English Department’s more monomaniacal faculty members—professors who spend the bulk of their careers focused on one author. Haralson described the academic trajectory of such professors:

“You spend years of hard, careful work trying to make yourself that expert on Author X, you debate with other established or budding experts on X in a mostly friendly way, you collaborate with them to build up the field of Author X studies. With any luck, you succeed in getting recognized as an authority, and it’s a beautiful thing. It’s all exhilarating, it’s what you wanted, it’s what you thrive on...but now you want to become the newest, shiniest expert on Author Y or Z.”

Michael Seidel, advisory editor of *James Joyce Studies*, author of *Epic Geography: James Joyce’s Ulysses* and *James Joyce: A Short Introduction*, and editorial board member of *The James Joyce Annual*, said there’s a trick to maintaining interest in Author X: “it’s best to obsess on writers who are categorically smarter and more talented than oneself. That way the challenge remains intact.”

English Professor Jean E. Howard arrived in London a Miltonist. She was there on a Marshall Scholarship and immediately took advantage of the city’s thriving theater scene. “I went to the theater obsessively, saw everything I could see,” she recalled. Howard’s newfound love of theater would eventually influence her professional interests. Today, she is on the editorial board of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Shakespeare Studies* and *Renaissance Drama*, the

author of *Shakespeare’s Art of Orchestration*, co-editor of *The Norton Shakespeare*, and former president of the Shakespeare Association of America.

Academic obsessions tend to be fairly self-sustaining; beyond the original novels or poems or plays—which, as any professor worth his weight in tweed will tell you, can and should be read over and over again—there are endless works of criticism and interpretation.

Fellow Shakespearian James Shapiro said that outside of the lecture hall or office, he considers it important to “escape” with material quite different from Shakespeare. “You have to, otherwise you end up living in 1599, which is not all that healthy—but sometimes necessary when you are writing.”

Former president of the New Chaucer Society Paul Strohm said he “wouldn’t rule out” a 14th century text

as beach-reading, but enjoys authors like Thomas Mann, Don DeLillo, and Thomas Pynchon. Howard takes refuge from the late Elizabethan by re-reading Austen. Still, as Haralson, the James expert, admitted, “My wife teases me that I don’t read anything written after Hemingway, or Proust, or Djuna Barnes.”

But even escapism—if that’s what you call Thomas Mann—has its limitations. Some professors reported that they’re inclined

to view other writers through the prisms of their authorial obsessions. Shapiro admitted as much with respect to Shakespeare. “It always seems like he got there first,” he said.

On the other end of the Shakespeare spectrum, Howard said that while she draws parallels between the Bard and other writers, she “wouldn’t always want to see [other work] through Shakespeare.” Seidel simply said, “Writers deserve their own prisms.”

For authorial authorities, the obsession is the escape. “When you can teach Shakespeare all your life, you’re a lucky girl,” said Howard. Shapiro echoed her sentiments. “As obsessions go, it’s a pretty rewarding one—a lot better than spending eight hours a day on Facebook or trading gold futures.” ♦



Illustration by Sonia Tycko

The Chain Gang

Cookie-cutter retail brings the mainstream to Morningside.

BY LYDIA DEPILLIS, JAMES DOWNIE, AND ELIZA SHAPIRO

“How many banks do you need on one block?” Asked Morningside Heights Assemblyman Danny O’Donnell. The answer—judging by the Washington Mutual, Citibank, Chase, and Banco Popular, all of which are stationed on Broadway from 116th St. to 110th St.—is about one per block.

O’Donnell has lived in Morningside Heights for more than a decade, and has become increasingly concerned about the “drugstorization” and “bankization” of the neighborhood.

Lately, an increasing number of Morningside’s independent businesses have closed or relocated and been replaced by chain outlets that you might find in Nolita or New Jersey, Staten Island or San Francisco. The Wrapp Factory is now Empanada Joe’s. Casbah Rouge is now Chipotle. Kim’s Video is now Ricky’s. The bars Mona and Roadhouse are now Pourhouse, an offshoot of the original Village Pourhouse, located near NYU. Two years ago, the West End became Havana Central, which has branches in Times Square and Union Square.

The prevalence of chains cuts both ways: It can be a natural consequence of neighborhood development, as businesses and new franchise owners decide that the consumer base can support the outlet. Harlem crossed a threshold in 1999 when Starbucks opened a store on 125th St., and the growth of chains has spread to West Harlem and up to Hamilton Heights.

But with remote ownership, a chain store is unlikely to donate snacks to a children’s library read-aloud, or underwrite a Columbia student group’s event, or advertise in small-scale student publications. While the *Columbia Daily Spectator* has printed ads from Chipotle, Havana Central, Pinkberry and Ricky’s, none of these businesses have advertised with other publications this year.

“Chains are way less likely to advertise in non-*Spec* publications,” said *Fed* publisher Sophie Litschwartz, CC’09, who has tried unsuccessfully to get ads from a number of chain stores on Broadway and Amsterdam. The manager of Empanada Joe’s, for example, isn’t the person who deals with advertising. “When you try to go the next step in the chain,

they’re not interested,” she said.

According to O’Donnell, it would be unreasonable to expect higher-ups in national chains to see the benefit of investing in the community. “It’s not just a question of who it is, but who’s making these decisions” he said. “No matter how good a manager is at Rite Aid, they’re still just a cog in the wheel of Rite Aid.”

O’Donnell said that he receives regular complaints about the growth of chains from constituents, who say chains make the area less attractive for residents and prospective residents alike.

“It is a very, very bad thing,” Carolyn Birden, head of the West 110th block association, wrote in an e-mail. “Given that so many students are from mall country, I wouldn’t be surprised if the chains were being courted.”

While few applaud the chains, many see their growth as a sign of the neighborhood’s progress. Wassim Malaeb, who has worked at Samad’s for 25 years, said that, when he started working there, “you didn’t want to walk around the neighborhood,” it was dirty and dangerous. Now it looks “more like a middle-class hangout.” Hong-Shou Ma has been the owner of Janoff’s, a typewriter and stationary store, since it opened in 1980 on Broadway and 112th. He said that when he started, the neighborhood was “filled with drug addicts and homeless people,” and the chains “come along with the prosperity we have enjoyed.”



The Morningside village is a constructed reality. Columbia, the largest landowner in the area, has a stated mission of fostering locally-owned businesses and keeping the neighborhood balanced. This often involves renting spaces at below-market rate prices in order to keep these independently-owned shops in business. In 2006, a storeowner told the *Spectator* that the University requires proprietors to submit business proposals and comply with certain stipulations in exchange for their favorable rental terms.

But while Columbia owns much of Morningside Heights, it does not own all of it; most of the side street buildings are privately owned. With the exception of a few buildings, Broadway's storefronts are owned by Columbia and University affiliates between 111th and 123rd Streets. On Amsterdam, Columbia owns the majority of storefronts between 115th and 122nd.

As a landlord, Columbia insulates the neighborhood from the architecturally homogenizing influence of chains. "A lot of the architecture depends on what the store owner wants," said Professor Andrew Dolkart, the newly appointed Director of Historic Preservation at the architecture school, and author of a history of Morningside Heights' buildings and development. "Chain stores want to have the cookie cutter appearance, but landlords get to determine how their fronts are shaped." The University has been an active landlord in this regard. "Columbia has done amazing restoration work on their storefronts over the last 10 years," Dolkart said, "They're much more conscious of the look of the buildings. Any store that moved in would have to conform."

Though the University would not answer specific questions for this article, the Public Affairs office released the following statement: "Columbia has a working policy of supporting locally-owned businesses and while some businesses may be part of a chain, by and large we continue to favor locally-owned business. Columbia considers a variety of local needs before making a decision on the type of business that can become a business tenant. Beyond that, we do not comment on our negotiations."

However, Columbia wavers in its support of local stores. Chains in University-owned buildings include D'Agostino, Morton Williams, Washington Mutual, Chase Bank, Aerosoles, and Ricky's. Campo, which replaced Pertutti, is the only one of its kind but is owned by an outfit called the Restaurant Group, which controls four other eateries in the city.

To many students, the most puzzling example of a chain's recent arrival is Ricky's, the garish costume and makeup merchant that opened briefly for the Halloween rush before closing again to construct its permanent, makeup-centric interior. Ricky's replaced Kim's Video & Music, the uptown outpost of a now-defunct St. Mark's Place staple that also closed due to declining revenues in the age of Netflix.

Occasionally, Columbia does respond to community desires. Dolkart said that about a decade ago, when the University was looking to fill the storefront, it circulated a survey among Morningside residents. When they expressed a desire for a liquor store, International Wines and Spirits was born.



"The explosion of chain stores is relatively recent," said Dolkart. "They all came pretty late to New York. In some areas of the city—SoHo, Broadway, the Upper East Side—they've become dominant."

According to Community District 7 chair Helen Rosenthal, 27 percent of the 560 stores on Broadway between 59th and 110th are chains.

A summer 2008 study conducted by the non-profit think tank Center for an Urban Future found that Starbucks and Duane Reade were the biggest chains in Manhattan, with 186 and 139 stores, respectively. Duane Reade's growth has been rapid, but the growth of Starbucks has been phenomenal. It opened its first store in Manhattan on 87th and Broadway in 1994, when Duane Reade already had a sizable foothold.

The driving force behind the spread of chains is high rents, which rose gradually after the post-9/11 slowdown, and peaked in the months leading up to the financial crisis in October. The average market rent for Manhattan commercial real estate in September 2008 was \$65.40 per square foot, up from about \$40 in early 2005 (at this rate, a store

the size of the Starbucks on 115th St. would pay over \$110,000 per month in rent). Large national chains have the capital to enter these markets before their franchise starts making money, but it's a bigger risk for independent owners.

"Up until ten years ago, no one would pay these prices," said Peter Arndtsen, chairman of the Columbus-Amsterdam Business Improvement District. He added that lately "stores stay empty for

stores. In the 80s, she said, Papyrus—Morningside Books' previous incarnation—"sold books like crazy," but now fewer people are buying.

Sometimes, businesses can survive by moving off the avenues. Rack & Soul on 109th moved around the corner, to be replaced with a Verizon Wireless store. According to owner Michael Eberstadt, the location is less visible to passersby, but he's paying about half as much in rent. Moving further uptown is

another survival tactic. Upper Broadway has "cheaper rents and is much less crowded than Broadway" said Jenny Ko, who owns the patisserie Chokolat on 124th St. and Broadway.

As the influx of chains continues, independently owned businesses have had to adapt to survive. In 1999, Essam Moussa opened Global Ink, a magazine shop that stocked every kind of publication from all over the world. Eight years later, sluggish sales forced it to close. In its place, Moussa opened a children's shoe store called the Shoe Tree—a response to both rising rents

and the increasing numbers of children in the neighborhood. "Buying magazines was not people's first choice," Moussa said.

It would be an understatement to say that the next several years will be difficult for Morningside's small businesses. For some, yielding to market forces as Global Ink did, could be the key to staying alive. But many of the small shops will have to hope that Columbia keeps rents low. Recently, Morningside Books posted a note in its store saying it was in trouble. In the evenings, the store's owner, Peter Soter, often stands outside, hands in his pockets, surveying the neighborhood he grew up in. His store is one of the many that trust in Columbia's goodwill—the University has given him repeated extensions on rent payments—but depending on Columbia is inherently risky.

Should Morningside Books fail, it would be tempting and profitable for Columbia to bring in a chain. It's difficult to know what to expect of the University when it advocates for small businesses, but brings in a Ricky's. ♦



Illustration by Lorraine White

a long time" because landlords hold out for the businesses that can pay the market rate for their spaces, as well as remain stable for the duration of a 20 or 30-year lease.

The neighborhood is somewhat insulated from economic volatility because Columbia doesn't live or die with Wall Street. Its students are captive customers who are often unmotivated to spend their cash anywhere besides Morningside.

Morningside's demographics also work in favor of the chains. Census data for the Upper West Side (which the immediate Columbia area matches more closely than the rest of its own community board district, which extends up to Washington Heights) show that the percentage of residents under age 18 is rising. That means more children and more families. Morningside has also become more affluent: In the last decade, the average income has risen 18 percent.

Anna Perez, an employee at Morningside Books since 1979, spoke wistfully, comparing the neighborhood now to the way she remembers it two decades ago, when it was stocked with cheap restaurants and

Terra Cognita

Columbia is The Global University, right? Right. And how better to go global than to spend semesters scampering across the globe as if it's a giant geodesic dome? THE BLUE AND WHITE traveled long and far, east (campus) and west (campus), to find those who have studied abroad in the great cities of the world: Moscow, Paris, Istanbul, Kyoto, and Buenos Aires. So stop skipping your early morning language class, and secretly read this instead.

JAPAN

"Are you okay with taking off your clothes in front of other people?" my Japanese host mother asked.

"Uh, not particularly," I managed to respond.

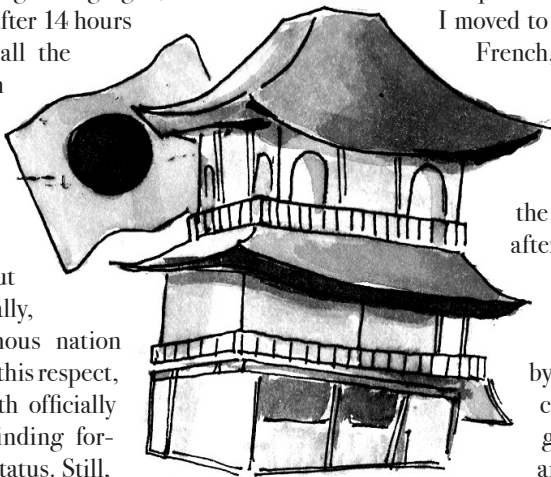
"Well, I guess you should go upstairs and get a change of clothes then, if you're going to go with Papa," she said, referring to her husband, who works at a kimono company. We were headed to the springs. It was my first day with my host father and we were about to get naked in a semi-public setting together.

The *onsen*, or hot springs, is a huge place. After taking off our shoes and paying for admittance, we strip naked in front of men of all ages. Given my exotic fiery-red hair, I thought I'd be self-conscious. I wasn't, since there's evidently a universal social code that, when naked in public, men avoid any and all acknowledgments of their nudity.

Compared to other Columbians, I am poorly traveled. Before last spring, I had never been to a non-English speaking country. Moreover, I come from Kentucky, a state that is roughly 92 percent white. But it was not until I was flying over the Bering Strait, en route to Kyoto, that the thought sunk in: I may be in over my head.

The first thing I noticed upon disembarking was the typical series of airport greeting signs, welcoming me. Bleary-eyed after 14 hours in a 747, I deciphered all the greetings I could. Each one said "Welcome to Japan," except the one in Japanese, which read: "Welcome home."

Japan is an international commercial hub, but this culturally, linguistically, and ethnically homogenous nation remains highly insular. In this respect, living here has ways—both officially and unofficially—of reminding foreigners of their outsider status. Still, Japan has its welcoming touches.



Illustrations by Allison A. Halff

After a steam bath, a jet pool, and a sauna so hot that even breathing the moistened air was painful, my host father figured it was time to go. "It's getting pretty near time for a cold beer, isn't it?" he said. I heartily agreed.

Afterward, my flesh still stinging from the heat of the water, we nodded in appreciation at the attendants on the way out, and went home to drink and eat ourselves into a coma—the ideal post-meal status—wrapped in a state of contentment and satisfaction that the *onsen* had set in motion. Though now (usually) fully-clothed, amongst my Morningside counterparts, I cannot help but think that maybe I could get used to that lifestyle.

—Travis Cone

FRANCE

From the balcony of my apartment in Metz, France, I can see a Catholic cathedral and a Protestant church, almost side-by-side. And while the very juxtaposition of these two buildings suggests a history of change and reformation, there is something else worth noting: both dominate the skyline, but at this point serve as little more than tourist attractions.

This paradox has been on my mind since I moved to France over a year ago: The

French, a reputedly non-believing people, walk daily through cities replete with religious remnants. The streets, schools, and even the cities are commonly named after saints and other Catholic ideas. And yet many of the people I speak with every day on those very streets, by those schools, and in those cities refer to organized religion as one would describe an outdated ride at an amusement park: "*J'ai fait tout ça*" – I did

all that.

Why, you may be wondering, do I talk with people daily about their faith? I'm an American in France. Why don't I just go sit out on my balcony in a pair of pointy shoes with a cigarette and a bottle of wine, reading *L'Etranger* and shouting "bonjour!" at passersby? Well, besides the fact that I already converted to French shoes and already read Camus, I am a full-time volunteer missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and I share a message that God is our Father who loves us, that Jesus Christ lives, and that a prophet of God, a man like Moses, walks the earth today.

Of course, these are all very big claims. And they seem to become even bigger when I state them to people of a culture that may or may not even hold a general belief in a supreme being. What do you do when something that once permeated every aspect of society and occupied a position of strong daily importance falls into the realm of empty tradition?

I'm about to leave the internet café and walk back into the commercial plaza by the St. Etienne cathedral. Scaffolding covers half of the cathedral's sandstone exterior; the building is slowly being cleaned and renewed by a long process of sandblasting. Half of the façade is a proper yellow, and you can see the awesome workmanship of centuries past. But the other half, at least for the time being, is blackened with time and defaced by graffiti.

They won't finish the cleaning project before I'm transferred to another city in a few weeks, but I hope that when I come back to visit Metz in the future, they will have taken off the scaffolding and the building's exterior will shine anew.

—Ren McKnight

ARGENTINA

I am already thinking about the things I will miss. I've been in South America since May and the things I miss about home are starting to gnaw at me. It doesn't help that my body, accustomed to 21 years of crisp, chilly, autumnal November is disoriented by the intense, impending Argentine summer, which is

beautiful but feels misplaced, almost artificial.

The things I will miss about Buenos Aires mostly involve food. Milanesa: beef pounded thin, battered in egg and breadcrumbs, then both fried and baked. My host family eats it once a week, served cold with a salad of lettuce and tomatoes. Empanadas, which can be purchased on just about any block of the city, although the style and quality can differ greatly. I prefer baked over fried, filled with chopped meat, hard-boiled egg, and olives, or sweet corn. And then there are the steaks. It's true what they say about Argentina: steak is what's for dinner. There is nothing so tantalizing as the smell of thick cuts of beef roasting over hot charcoal, nothing so satisfying as each juicy bite of my favorite meat-centered meal: ribeye, accompanied by French fries or a puree of squash and washed down with a great Malbec.

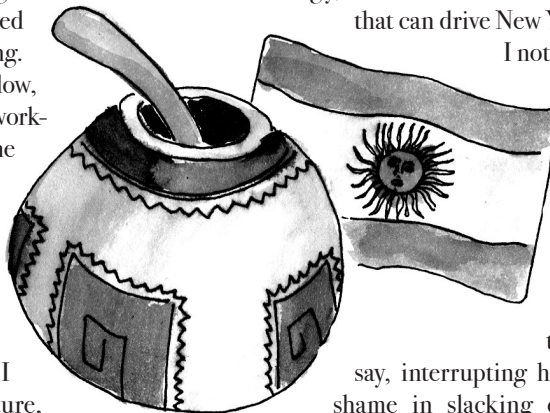
I will miss sitting in cafés for hours in the afternoon. The wait staff *never* drops the check before you ask for it, an invitation to linger over espresso and *medialunas*, which are modified croissants, sticky with a sweet glaze. This leisurely, relaxed manner is the way of life here. Buenos Aires boasts a vibrant energy, but it lacks the sense of nagging urgency that can drive New Yorkers to madness.

I notice this most in school.

My classes at a small film university are challenging, but if a student rolls in an hour late to a two-hour class, no one bats an eye. "Hey, how are you?"

the professor might say, interrupting his lecture. There's no shame in slacking off: when questioned about their progress on the readings or the films, students answer honestly, knowing that they will be gently scolded, not chastised or humiliated, for falling behind. No one's defending the efficiency of this system, but no one's jumping off the roofs of any buildings, either.

I can't see this attitude catching on at Columbia, but I will take home—in addition to as much *dulce de leche* as can fit in my suitcase—a virtue I never quite mastered before living here: patience. I thought the lines at Duane Reade were bad; then I met Farmacity, the Buenos Aires equivalent. Argentines are more concerned with smelling the flowers than getting to



their next destination. And why wouldn't they be, when chronic lateness isn't considered a personality flaw?

Though I've often daydreamed of being reincarnated as an Argentine school-girl—effortlessly stylish in a short plaid skirt, Converse high tops, v-neck sweater slung carelessly around my shoulders, with my waist-length hair swept up in a faux-silk flower—the most unexpected thing I will take home is pride in being American. I have never felt as patriotic as I do living here. Argentines may have loathed our politics before Election Day, and they think it's *really* weird that we eat eggs for breakfast, but when it comes to our language, our constitution, and, most noticeably, our culture (both high and low), they're hard pressed to deny their admiration. I feel lucky to call the U.S. home.

—Hannah Goldfield

RUSSIA

It was hard not to feel homesick on November 5th. While my friends were reveling and downing champagne in the streets as they celebrated the election results, I was in the former capital of the Soviet Union, chugging black coffee at an American-themed diner.

Longing for New York, I began to frame my field of vision so that Tverskaya, Moscow's main drag, looked like Broadway. Surprisingly, it wasn't difficult. Look up, and there's industrial scaffolding! To the left, an overpriced French café and The United Colors of Benetton! Across the street: George Clooney in a wristwatch ad! It was bright and bustling and, momentarily, I felt at home. But then a pack of mangy stray dogs ran out of a metro station and shattered my daydream.

It's not that Moscow itself is mangy. In fact, it's quite the opposite. Glitz and face control are operative words here. I was once told that there was "no room" in a completely empty sushi restaurant when I walked in wearing a t-shirt and jeans. Feeling underdressed is a way of life here for most American students.

So I was not thrown by the sheer filth of the stray dogs, but by the irony of seeing them at all, in a neighborhood akin to a more ostentatious Midtown

Manhattan. It's contradictions like these that make life in Moscow both exhilarating and disconcerting. My senses are overloaded with mixed messages. The city seems to smell like delicious pastry and stale

cigarette smoke at once. Moscow is a city of ten million people, but the streets are nearly silent. Pedestrians speak in hushed voices. The six lanes of traffic on Tverskaya are mysteriously devoid of honking and sirens. Turn off one of these wide boulevards lined with casinos and clubs, and you're on a one-lane swerving road where a 17th

century mansion sits next to a 12-story concrete apartment house. On my block, there is a Soviet-style grocery store, which sells only basic food items from behind a counter.

Around the corner, there's the Russian equivalent of Balducci's.

Moscow changes its mind about what it is every couple minutes and every few blocks, and its inconsistencies are more than aesthetic. At the Moscow Art Theater School where I'm studying, all men and women are expected to achieve the utmost physical discipline, as they train in rigorous acrobatics. However, when my group first arrived at our dormitory, the men had to carry everyone's suitcases up the five flights of stairs. Why? Because it's Russia, and as the poet Fyodor Tyutchev wrote, "You can't understand Russia with your mind." Or with any of your five senses, I'd say. So, what can you do? Throw back all the glorious contradictions, and chase them with vodka.

—Lauren Glover

TURKEY

Down near the Galata Tower, right at the end of Istiklal Caddesi, there is a small music district populated entirely by guitar makers. The neighborhood is a musician's heaven: acoustics, mandolins, guitars, and traditional ouds in every available window space, heavy metal axes with enough bells and whistles to put Eurovision to shame. The stretch of shops from Taksim to Tünel brings Sufi music, Arabesque, jazz, and European techno together, creating a cacophony that is essentially Istanbul.

Brikem's shop is not like the rest. It is open and sparsely populated by a handful of guitars in vari-



ous states of disrepair. When I first arrived, the owner's friends were gathered, working their way through an old blues standard. A young, long-haired man played the hand drum, a girl with a tattoo on her forearm and a flowing skirt strummed a guitar, and an old man with cratered, tanned skin plunked away at the bass.

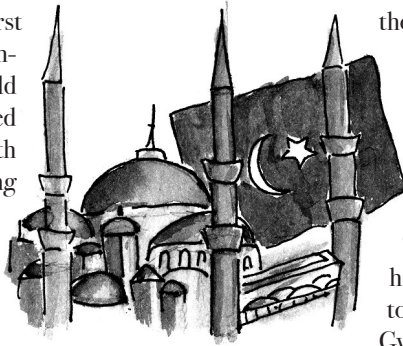
As I listened, Brikem returned. With his pony-tail and scraggly-beard, this 28-year-old looks the part of the guitar maker. I scanned the instruments along the wall and came to rest on a 60-year-old acoustic with two big scrapes and a worn-away veneer. The guitar made a sound that seemed destined for lyrics like "My baby left me. My baby left me in the street...."

Brikem took hold of a guitar, plugged it in, and began to play a simple blues chord progression. I took the hint and followed along, feeling as out of place as the Southern soul music we were playing. As we finished, Brikem pulled me aside, saying:

"We have a concert on the 18th."

Wonderful. I would love to see you play.

"*Hayır*. No. We. You. Us. We have a concert on



the 18th."

Efendim? Pardon?

"Yes. You are in our band."

The following night I made my way back through the streets to Brikem's workshop. Inside, Brikem muttered about how

Turkish people can't pronounce his name. He pulled up a chair and told me that he was an Albanian Gypsy. As I looked around at the other band members, I realized that I

wasn't as out of place as I had thought: Brikem was a foreign Gypsy, the Bohemians were outsiders within Turkey, and I was a disoriented college student from New York City.

It's been four months now. I have spent most nights at the studio with Brikem and the band. Every evening I leave wondering if I will ever be able to understand these people and their blues-riddled lives. Till then, I can find comfort in knowing that, even in Istanbul, people find some common ground when they hear "My baby left me. She left me all alone..."

—Anna Couturier

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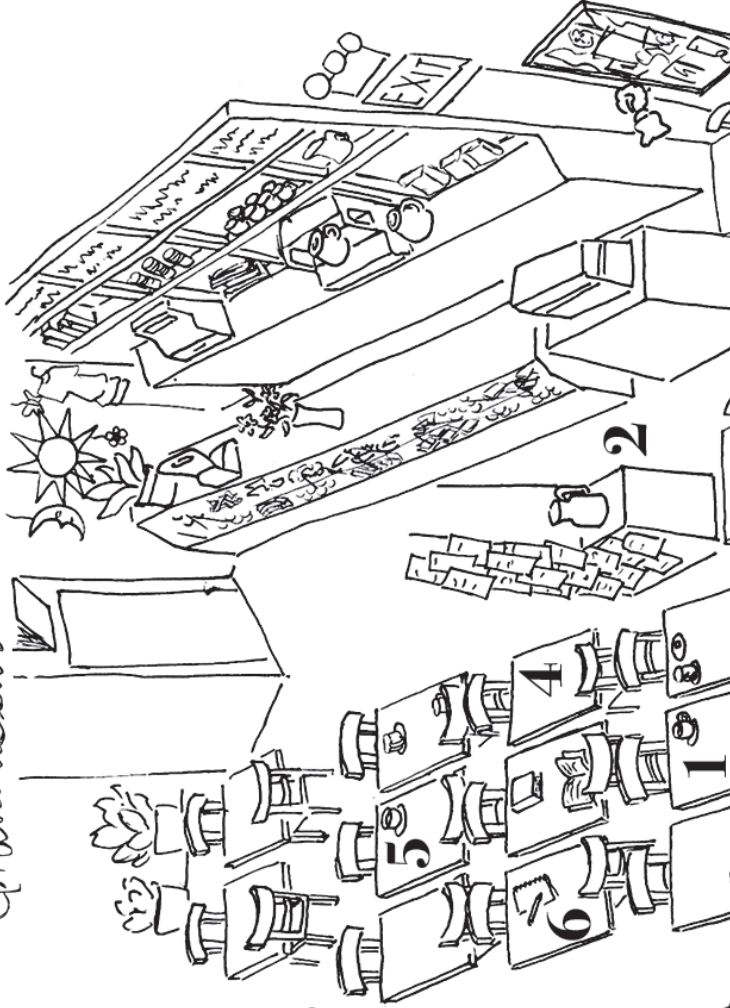
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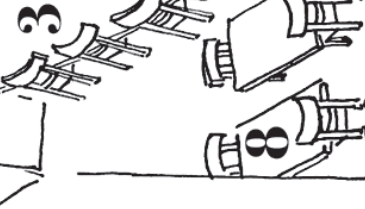
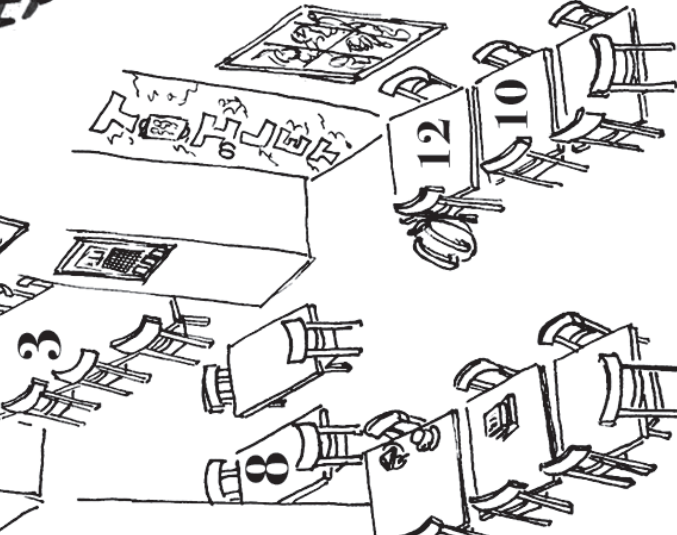
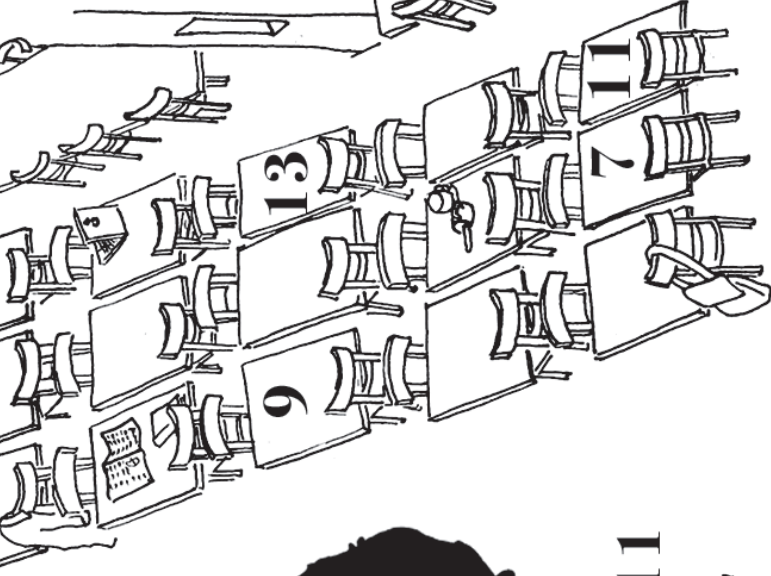
Amy Goodman





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Rirka Jalchen



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Cynthia Naim



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Marco Roth



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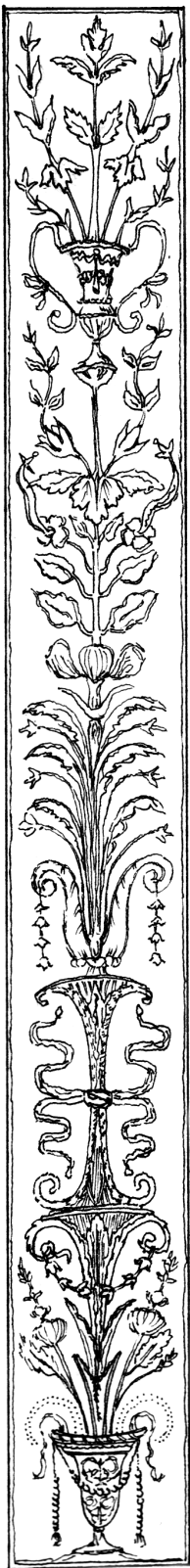
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Jodi Picoult



7

Keith Lessen



MEASURE FOR MEASURE

THE THIRD PERSON

In Euskadi, thank you clatters like a train just under the street
Eskerrik asko eskerrik asko eskerrik asko eskerrik asko,

It's stamped on the cocktail napkins she collects from every bar,
Some with addresses, a picture of olives, the head of a wincing boar.

Toothpicks and napkins litter the floor like cherry blossoms on Elizabeth Street.
Ines, who says *love* so it rhymes with *stove* tells her to throw them down,

The man will esweep them. So she balls one up and lets it go
Between the boots of locals yelling across their cider and *pintxos*.

She is a long way from New York in this picture,
Smoke rises like a sentinel from every hand at every table.

She's not looking at the camera and neither is Ines,
Her mouth is open and so are her hands. She might be ordering *chipis*,

Or a *Mosto!* She might be saying thank you in English, or swearing.
In this picture you can't tell what part of her is missing.

—Lizzy Straus

TOLD BETWEEN PUFFS

In which our hero sees himself clearly.

Verily Veritas sat perched on a rather voluptuous Eames, an extravagance he indulged some years ago after a particularly besotted Boxing Day. Fingertips resting squarely on his Smith Corona, your hero found himself sequestered in a rather desolate and dreary Writers' Bloc. The muses had not been allies of V.V. as of late. Still, your hero was On Assignment, and if he were strained to produce twenty score and ten words without Homer's Calliope, then *so-vi-et!*



The Blue and White was, *bien sur*, M. Veritas' pamphlet *de préférence* (even in the face of his editor's vulgar penchant for reversing the r's and e's in words like some sort of dyslexic anarchist—a pitiable character flaw.) [Whatever. —Ed.] O, Verily bled bleu and blanc, but his repeated invoices also remained blank. Only later did he discover that his was an *amateur bono* position, and that his expenses (one [1] bottle of Glen Garioch, 1958; one [1] Entenmann's Raspberry Danish Twist, 2006) would not be reimbursed in their entirety, or at all.

And so, thoroughly recessed, your hero had deigned to ... to ... freelance. Shuddering, Verily recalled the boasts of English majors as they deposited onto the Hamilton Hall stairwell, showboating their paltry inches in dog-eared copies of *Columbia College Today*. V.V. had sent word to *Unfurnished Lofts Magazine*, an impressively *enbonpoint* Nolita-based publication dedicated to the subtle gluttony of white space. The Negative Meaning Editor immediately patronized your hero with an assignment and an advance.

Verily sat in his own unfurnished studio, with nary a conjunction or article. *Breadth ... is ... width on its side*, V.V. typed cautiously. "Shame!" he intoned, "a wasted deduction!" Our hero had been enlisted to problematize the color red, not pen a Euclidean expose. Verily decided to Tele-Phone his editor.

After several iambs of rings, the sound promptly abetted and gave way to nothingness.

"Cheerio," V.V. offered into the receiver. Still, that silence, the Sirens' most deafening inflection.

"This ... 'red.' I'm, just, rather unclear as to what

I'm looking for," our hero admitted.

Thus spake Sara, V.V.'s Bennington-educated, Saybrook Manor-born editor: "The,"—Verily could hear her suck the fumes from her Gauloise—"color."

Verily was more confounded than ever. "Well, then. No need for histrionics," he huffed, and returned the receiver to its cradle.

Dejected, he took solace in a batch of freshly baked madeleines, prepared by the mother of his roommate, Brendan.

Recollections of halcyon evenings reading nursery rhymes (all, V.V. recalled with tenderness, thinly veiled attempts at advancing the Empire's colonial aspirations) came rushing to the forefront of his consciousness. With respect to the matter of "colors," young Verily had rejected the rainbow-shaped schema proffered by the nuns, dismissing the notion of a polychromatic universe as mere allegories of weak-minded political correctness fetishists. Instead of using crayons, as was the prescribed fashion when learning "color," Verily had written in thick black ink on all his assignments the name "Henry Cabot Lodge." (He had done the same on the electronic voting device on November 4th.) Our hero, unable to justify his dark pronouncements, had been forced to repeat grade two. Twice.

In a flurry of revelation, Verily put two and two together (mathematics was never V.V.'s *métier* either.) His pre-adolescent mortifications at Conglowses, his difficulties with *Unfurnished Lofts'* direction, and all those stiff jaywalking levies! Your hero was *color-blind*. O, the impossible rightness of seeing! Where were the brooches of Iocasta when Verily needed them most?

And with a liberal swig of his single malt, Verily regained his linguistic swagger. His colorblindness, our hero decided, only further confirmed him in his manhood. "I'll just write about absolutely anything then! And simply say it's about this 'red!'" V.V. declared. "I do it all the time for *The Blue and White*—and not a soul has noticed!" [We noticed. —Ed.]

—Verily Veritas

Lady in the (Campaign) Van

New York Times columnist Gail Collins has been on the campaign trail for nearly two years, following the race for the presidency and reporting with unmitigated glee on the gaffes and sheer buffoonery that have made this election such good copy. Recently, Collins sat down with *The Blue and White* to discuss her post-election plans, the end of baby boomers in the Oval Office and why she owes William Henry Harrison a house.

THE BLUE AND WHITE: You've been on the campaign trail for roughly two years, how has the traveling been?

Gail Collins: I kind of stopped three or four weeks ago. At this point they're only doing one event a day. And really, when you're following these people around, you don't see much you can't see on CNN. It's not as sweet as people think it is. You don't usually get to see the candidates in any other setting than the stage. Once in a while you can talk to staff.

B&W: You wrote about Hillary's campaign a fair amount, did you get to talk to her?

GC: At the very end, when we were flying back from South Dakota, she came to the back of the plane, and she was standing there with a cocktail, in the aisle of the plane, telling jokes and talking with reporters. It was like it was 20 or 30 years ago, when candidates actually interacted with the press.

B&W: Were you supporting her initially?

GC: Columnists aren't supposed to support a candidate. When I came onto the editorial board under Howell Raines it already was the rule. I presumed the thinking was that the only endorsement should come from the editorial board. So you're really supposed to kind of dance around it.

B&W: Do you think Hillary will run again?

GC: She might. I think she's in a good place right now. She looks better. She sounds better. She's a really good senator. There are two kinds of people in the Senate. Some just arrive there in the process of moving up, and think it's all sort of endless and boring. And then there are the ones who just throw themselves into it, who make it a calling. The Jack Kennedy model and the Ted Kennedy model. Obama was the first kind – never really wrote much legislation and never really

put himself out there. I think Hillary maybe intended to be the first kind and turned out to be the second.

B&W: You wrote in one of your columns that the defining saga of this election would be the role of women and families in politics. Do you still think that?

GC: No, I don't think that anymore, but it was true at the time. The defining saga is the changing generation. It's the worldview of the main baby-boom generation giving way to the people who came a little later. The WWII generation stayed around for like 50 years, and I really thought that the baby boomers would get a good 30 or 40 year run, but they're done.

B&W: But you're a baby boomer, doesn't this bother you?

GC: Yeah! We only got two presidents, really. And one of them was George W. Bush.

B&W: When you're following the campaign, is it you and a bunch of 20-somethings?

GC: [Laughs] Yeah. The last time I talked to Hillary, she said, "When you were on my plane, it was the best days of the campaign." And I thought, "God, that's not likely." And she said, "Because it was the only time there was somebody else my age. These young people, they don't know what Sputnik was, they've never heard of these things!"

But yeah, everyone is 25 years old. It's always been a hard job, but in the olden days people could only file their stories at the end of the day and then everybody would go out and have dinner and drink. It was kind of a social experience. Now you're filing and blogging constantly, and often all you have to work with is the stump speech and maybe a few minutes with a staff person.

B&W: What's been your favorite column that you've written about the campaign?

GC: When Hillary dropped out I wrote a column about what she had actually accomplished – about how important it was that she’d gotten people used to the idea of a woman as commander-in-chief and chief executive, and that was a huge thing even if she’d never actually hold the office. There were so many people – mainly women – who had cared so much about her candidacy and needed someone to say that. A lot of them were the women’s rights people who had been fighting their entire lives for the cause, always being made fun of for being too serious or too whatever. She meant so much to them. They needed to hear how well she’d done, that it had all been worth it.

B&W: What do you make of the claim that *The New York Times* coverage has been biased in Obama’s favor?

GC: The McCain people feel that way but I think they’re saying that now about the media in general. I’ve never worked on the news side of the paper and I certainly can’t speak for them. But the idea that reporters who are covering a campaign have an interest in being unfair to the people they have to deal with on a daily basis just isn’t realistic. We really do have a strong ethic of keeping the news side impartial and fair, and keeping the opinion to the opinion pages, although it’s much harder to maintain the clear line now that we’re creatures of the web.

It became difficult when Obama started doing very well, and McCain was doing badly. You always expect that after a week or two that narrative will change and the other guy will start pulling up but it never did. It became hard to concentrate on anything but those polls. At that point there really did seem to be too much time spent, particularly by the TV networks,

arguing with the candidates just about whether or not the polls were right. And I’m thinking who cares? In a week we’re going to know.

I’m so ready for this to be over right now. I loved this campaign; it was the best campaign ever.

B&W: Why is it the best campaign ever?

GC: Well first of all, it’s so rare to have a presidential election in which neither party starts out with an anointed candidate. I really thought it would be Hillary and Mitt Romney, because they were the ones with all the money. But then Obama came out. That saga, the Hillary vs. Obama saga, was so great! You had two people who were not only pathbreakers, they had extraordinary stories. If you tried to sell either one as a fictional character, nobody would believe it. And they were really amazing to watch on the trail, especially when Hillary caught fire toward the end. And the

Republicans started off with what they thought was going to be a pack of stars and they all imploded, each in his own unique

weird way, until McCain was pretty much the only one left standing. And then you had those two amazing conventions – the Democrats worrying about whether Hillary and Bill would behave, and then whether Obama could deliver on the big speech. Then McCain suddenly producing Sarah Palin out of nowhere. Conventions are never interesting, but these were. And then there was the economic meltdown and you got to see the two candidates dealing with a big crisis right in the middle of their campaigns. Journalistically speaking, it’s just been a great year.

B&W: Was there a moment that was emblematic of your total experience?

GC: I remember listening to Obama give one of his stump



Illustration by Eloise Owens

speeches in a not-too-big hall in New Hampshire before the primary. There were so many people in this very old building, it really felt as if the balcony was going to collapse. I was with a group of reporters, and we were all saying: “Wow, can you imagine how wild it’d be if he got elected?” Not one of us really believed it could happen in a million years.

B&W: When you were following the campaign, did you get to spend a lot of time talking to voters?

GC: I tended to do it a lot during the primaries. After a while you do it just to be social but there’s a limit to how much the world wants to know about what individual voters say, and you can work up a very misleading narrative if you take 20 people at a rally someplace and weave them together as if they represented anything more than 20 people at a rally. This year, it’s been deeply depressing what things people will say straight out to you about why they wouldn’t vote for a black person.

But as a writer, I tend to approach the whole story from the perspective of being a voter, rather than as a political insider.

B&W: A *Slate* writer wrote a while back that you see politics as a kind of absurdist theater. Do you think that’s true?

GC: Partly. You know, I’ve been doing this a long time and somewhere along the way I decided I wasn’t going to do it in a way that made people feel that all politicians were crooked and everybody was a jerk and that they just might as well all bang their heads against the wall. Partly it’s absurd, but it’s all very human and occasionally wonderful.

B&W: Your columns are very detailed—there are almost always small stories that you tease out of the campaign. How much reporting goes into them?

GC: That’s really why it’s worthwhile to travel—you just go around and look for stuff like that. There’s always something that happens—like the audience in Youngstown that started drifting away when Sarah Palin stopped speaking and McCain came on. Or the

economic roundtable in Zanesville when even Hillary started to nod off.

B&W: You’ve written a book about gossip—did the campaign this year strike you as particularly nasty?

GC: Well that’s the good thing about history. You can always look back on the 1820 campaign and say no, no, no, it was much worse then, ten times worse. The one big thought that came out of that book, *Scorpion Tongues*, is that sensationalism is actually driven by the economics of the media. At times when there’s a great deal of undercapitalized media, political writing tends to be very sensational. Back in the early 20th century it didn’t cost much to start up a paper and even a medium-sized city might have a dozen dailies. And you got a lot of headlines about politicians’ sex lives, and shocking charges about the people who were running for office, and the political writing was overheated. Now, it’s very much the same with all the blogs and web sites.

“What the hell are
we all going to be
opinionating about if
there’s nobody col-
lecting the news?”

B&W: How has the internet changed newspapers’ opinion sections?

GC: In many ways they’re more popular than ever. I worry so much about the news side getting eaten up, because it’s so expensive and the economics of internet-based newspapers are still so shaky. But what the hell are we all going to be opinionating about if there’s nobody out there actually collecting the news? Andy Rosenthal, the editorial page editor, and I have often said that if we thought that the complete destruction of the *Times* opinion side would save and make healthy forever the news side, then we’d do it in a second.

We still don’t really know what writing for the Internet will be like as the form matures. When I was the editor, I went off looking for new, young columnists and I really couldn’t find any. The art form of producing 800 words, twice a week, for a specific deadline just isn’t something many younger people have ever wanted to learn to do. So whatever evolves, it may be that...it may be that we have columns of 300 words, or 50 words.

B&W: I think a lot of people like to think that all the *Times* columnists know each other pretty well and go

for drinks after work. Is that completely untrue?

GC: Well, at the *Times* Nick Kristof and I – and now Charles Blow – are the only ones who really come into the office in New York. We don't go out for drinks together but last year we organized a Valentine's Day columnist party, just to prove we could all be social.

B&W: Have you missed writing about New York at all?

GC: After the inauguration I may go back to doing more of that. Barack Obama is not funny. So I'll write about New York or Congress. If Rudy Giuliani runs for governor, that would be a great thing.

B&W: Who's your favorite columnist?

GC: The first person I ever read and loved was Ellen Goodman. Most of the columnists then were sort of pontificating about great events, but she wrote about very large issues in a very intimate, personal way. I love all my fellow *Times* columnists. I'm in awe of the way Nick Kristof will go to the worst places in the world, over and over. He's there every year. And one of the many things I admire about Tom Friedman is the way he takes on a really massive issue – the Middle East, globalization, the energy crisis, and then goes at it again, and again, and again with different stories.

B&W: You seem to do the opposite: start small and get big.

GC: Given the size of the columns, it's usually better not to have too big a topic. I've been trying for a long time to write about the whole issue of work versus family tensions, and how it's played out in the campaign. I interviewed Michelle Obama, who keeps going around having roundtables about this, and who is really down on the idea of women thinking they can have it all. And then you've got Sarah Palin and her five kids, and all the plane flights Palin billed Alaska for when she took her kids with her on trips, claiming the children were on official state business.

Then there was Jane Swift, who the Republicans deputized as a kind of Palin defender. She had been acting governor of Massachusetts when she was preg-

nant with twins. And she wound up trying to run the state with three small children, and Massachusetts is the only state that does not have a governor's mansion. So she was living three hours away from the capital. And she got caught using the state helicopter to get home to see her kids, and leaving her little girl with her aides while she was working. There was a huge uproar. Her career was destroyed, she's still trying to climb back up. It's so ironic that she went through this and then there's Sarah Palin, who did all the same things and was rewarded with the vice-presidential nomination.

But anyway, as you can see by the way I'm running on, there's too much stuff there. The column died from an excess of information.

B&W: What are your post-election plans?

GC: I'm just finishing this book that's a sequel to *America's Women*. It's about what happened to women over the last 50 years and I think it's going to be called *When Everything Changed*. After

that I'm supposed to do a short biography of William Henry Harrison. The *Times* is putting out a library of biographies of the presidents, and they asked if I would do one and I said I wanted to write about him.

B&W: Why him?

GC: Well, he died less than a month into his presidency so his story is all politics and no policy, which suits me pretty well. Harrison came from near Cincinnati, where I'm from. When I was on book tour with *Scorpion Tongues* I was staying with my parents and telling them the story about how Harrison had campaigned as this humble soldier in a log cabin when he was really a very aristocratic guy with a fancy house. And my father was sitting there and he said: "Yeah, that was a really big house." And I asked him how he knew about the house and he said: "Oh, I tore it down." He worked at the power plant and the Harrison house was on the plant property, and they got worried that the historic preservation people would discover it and get in the way, so they decided one night just to bulldoze it.

So I kind of felt like I owed William Henry for his house.

Interviewed by Anna Phillips

"If Rudy Giuliani
runs for governor,
that would be a great
thing."



DIGITALIA COLUMBIANA

These excerpts were culled from Columbia Class of 2012's Facebook correspondence. We encourage our readers to submit their own digitalia finds to us, via e-mail, at theblueandwhite@columbia.edu.

Me from the outside; crazy, speech about everything,
driven, leader, creative, always thinking, big heart
Not a job—but a calling and mission?

Can I streak my hair purple and wear green sneakers as a 'lawyer'?



*you want it, you got it, toyota
everything's coming up roses...*



I nervously checked my watch every few minutes hoping that the MTA would have no surprises for me. I needed the train to move swiftly during the next half hour because I was going to attend my first opera and it was set to begin at seven thirty. My last class had ended at six and I rushed to eat dinner, get dressed, and make it to the subway. All this took a bit longer than I had hoped but it was still possible for me to get there on time.



does existence not become like some poor and pathetic
payment plan of patience some choreographed leap of
faith

where you hope somewhere in the end
to proverbially reap the fruits of your labor?



I started to speak. "Hold on asshole," he said interrupting me and putting his hands behind his large head, "I'll let you know when I'm ready to hear your whinin'. I hear your sister's in town," he went on. I nodded slowly. "Back when that whore still had some traction me and the boys

used to ride her like a camel," he paused, "two at a time," he snapped his fingers, nudged the goon to his right and winked at the one to my left. Clearly Mario had never spent much time around camels.



Can you imagine about choosing any traits of babies? If you can choose any traits of babies, can you design your baby?



The most prototypical uses of the word claim are "to demand" and "to assert." In this passage, Newman died of cancer, in other words, cancer took his life, as if cancer asserted his life was on its hands, and demanded his life determinedly.

(My eyes were glued to this headline read by the person sitting next to me on the subway. I didn't know this expression and I felt scared because cancer seemed to have a huge power that a big movie star could not resist.)



Mario Salvio was wrong—the operation of the machine can be a glorious thing. Throwing your body upon the gears really isn't necessary: embrace it for your own ends. At least if that machine is Facebook.



I seemed so out of touch with this particular demographic and I even considered that Columbia may have been making a rather vain attempt to culture me and have me be assimilated by this stuffy crowd, equally or maybe even more concerned with appearances as they

were with the actual music we were about to hear. All these thoughts were fleeting and I was well aware of their semi-ridiculousness.



Reality is different between movies and novels. Human is not computer robots.



Visible struggle! Finally reconciled, finally decided:
SHIFT IN GENRE!



My troubles with the argument.
Phrase “whatever is understood exists in the understanding”
This is true. Greater question: Does it exist in REALITY???



The Magistrate seems like nothing more than a very stubborn old man. He incessantly bemoans the persistence of the women and their insolence, and does not for a minute take their requests the least bit seriously.



It seems preposterous that at the beginning of the last century, Upton Sinclair, to cast light upon the horrors of the meat-packing industry, would write *The Jungle*, a novel.



I wanted to discuss with him the reason for camp, to tell him that it existed solely for his pleasure. I realized though that this kind of conversation could never actually materialize.

He surprised me though; he started talking to me. I was able to relate to him the purpose of camp and my aim of ensuring his enjoyment at camp. He began to fully participate in the activities, enjoying himself at camp and ensuring that I had indeed fulfilled my aim.



Barack Obama, speaking at Columbia? Most Columbians thought hell would freeze over first. And McCain? Why

would he bother? But there they were.



The incredible excitement surrounding the 2008 election presents a unique opportunity for the next president of the United States to revive a robust idea of citizenship. Hopefully he will grab it.



Wreath
Scepter: King’s College Seal
Bible
Outstretched arms- towards library, vulnerable, asking
Lamps on seat: wisdom and teaching
Face: Serious, intense
Cloak: academic, but defined as those of classic sculptures.
Foot: Left foot stepped forward like that of Greek Art
Back facing Low Steps, Parthenon like qualities gives the Alma Mater a much more classic look. It belongs there.



I would like to dissect Anselm’s argument and add my own ideas as to why God exists. I feel like Anselm had great ideas but they were not thorough.



I will compare the “Standing male worshipper” to the other members of the Tell Asmar votive group as a means of speculating further about the figures (whether mythical or actual) who were privileged enough to attain a lasting depiction of eternal devotion.



I would also love to see someone take on the canon forming in the genre of books written by pollsters.



Since residence halls are the epicenter of student life, it is essential that these machines are the first to be given swipe access. Most of the vending machines without swipe readers are in residential halls located a few blocks away from the South Field area of campus. If a student does not have the appropriate amount of change on hand, this student will be unable to access the snacks and drinks sold in the vending machines.

Remember the Ladies

A quarter century of women in the College goes uncelebrated.

BY KATIE REEDY

Last May, the 40th anniversary of the 1968 protests unfolded with panel discussions, parties, and the full support of President Bollinger. *Columbia College Today* ran a lengthy cover story that looked back on the protests, greybeards showed up to reminisce, and the *Columbia Daily Spectator* produced a multi-page supplement. But amidst the hubbub about 1968, another anniversary this year was completely overlooked: 2008 is the 25th anniversary of women at Columbia College.

When asked why we had not seen a silver anniversary commemoration, apart from an article in the University's magazine *The Record*, Ken Catandella, Executive Director of Alumni Affairs at Columbia College, said that the College, the athletics department, and the alumni association planned to sponsor a "series of events" commemorating co-education in the spring semester of 2009. He added that the springtime celebration was appropriate because March is Women's History Month. Why the commemoration did not occur in March 2008—both Women's History Month and the 25th anniversary year—is still a mystery.

Planning for these events began in late October, and appears to be as haphazard as their timing. According to Catandella's planning committee agenda, there will be a "25th Anniversary Lecture and Reception" and a possible gallery show, which is marked as to-be-determined. Other events in the series include a women's basketball game, and two mentoring events; all three were already scheduled, and are now being corralled into the anniversary celebration.

But the women of the class of 1987 would like something more. "The issues raised by going co-ed finally woke the university up to the unmet potential of Columbia College," Kyra Tirana Barry, CC'87, said. "Perhaps a booklet [sent] out to alumni about what specific Columbia College women have accomplished as graduates over the last 25 years with appropriate articles and profiles would be a good commemoration."

Columbia's decision to admit women was late and

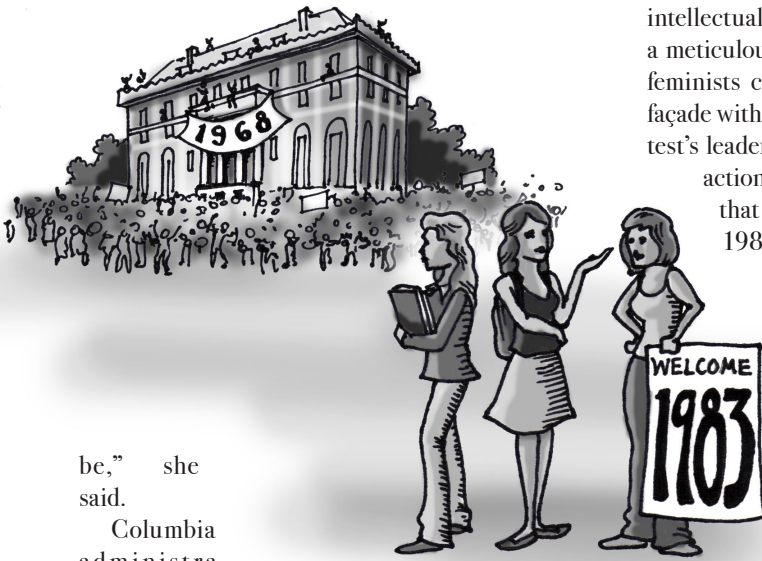
grudging, so the fact that women have thrived—the class of 2012 has a breakdown of 52 percent female to 48 percent male students—is, to many alumni and students, well worth celebrating. With Barnard intent on remaining a separate, single-gender institution, the University's board of trustees for years seemed to feel that it would be redundant to open the doors of Columbia College to women. Furthermore, in the decades leading up to the decision to become co-educational, the men of Columbia worried that women in Core classes wouldn't be able to cut it. The college did not admit women until 1983, long after Yale and Princeton went co-educational in 1969 and Radcliffe completely merged with Harvard in 1972.

When the first co-ed class graduated in 1987, the *New York Times* wrote an article about how the first women to graduate from Columbia College had actually—contrary to many people's expectations, apparently—succeeded. "They withstood... the initial uneasiness of sharing athletic and residential centers with male students and they became accustomed to being one of just a few women in classes filled with men," the article stated.

Claire Shanley, CC'92, who directs the multimedia company Orbit, is frustrated by the University's failure to acknowledge the progress made since 1983. She suggested that the oversight is rooted in embarrassment. "One of the interesting things about Columbia is that it's steeped in history. It's the sense that you're becoming part of this tradition," said Shanley. As a result, she said, Columbia maintains a certain "unwillingness to reflect on exclusion" inherent in its identity.

One male CC alumnus agreed. "Why aren't they celebrating the 25th anniversary of coeducation?" he asked. "Because Columbia is embarrassed to have taken so long to get around to it. Columbia will wait until it's such a long time ago no one can remember that it's not long ago enough, like 150 years or so."

Noreen Whysel, CC'90, a freelance website consultant, put it more charitably. "My feeling is perhaps we've become so used to women graduating from CC. That it isn't top of the radar, even though it should



be,” she said.

Columbia administrators invariably declined to characterize the delayed anniversary celebration as an oversight. In fact, the prevailing view seemed to be that women are so fully integrated into Columbia that acknowledging them is irrelevant. Cantandella questioned the necessity of alumni networks that are geared toward women. Of Columbia College Women (CCW), a sub-group founded in the 1980s within the larger CC alumni association, he said, “When [it] was formed it was because there were so few women graduates—they had no women peers. Today what you find is that young alumni don’t differentiate.”

Donna MacPhee, the newly appointed Vice President of Alumni Relations for the University and a CC’89 graduate, said she considers women a special-interest group within the alumni association. “Whatever program exists, be that Latinos, or CCW, or athletes, those programs are important in bringing people together.” All of these groups merit attention, and for MacPhee, the events planned for women in March 2009 sufficiently serve this purpose.

Other alumnae, however, stress the difficulty of breaking into the vast old boys’ network that dominates the Alumni Association. Shanley is involved with CCW’s Mentoring Program because she hopes to provide young women with the advice and support that she felt she lacked as a CC student.

According to the *New York Times*, in 1989, women briefly overtook Columbia’s ultimate paean to male

intellectual achievement during graduation. With a meticulously painted 140-foot banner, a group of feminists covered the names chiseled into Butler’s façade with those of famous female authors. The protest’s leader was arrested and later released, but the action exemplified the heady identity politics that informed the experience of women after 1983.

As a student, Shanley said, she was always aware that women were separate and not entirely equal at Columbia. She remembers attending a scholarship dinner where, “It was just all these alumni—and their wives. There are moments when you remember that at some point you were not part of the grand plan of the University.”

Earlier this year, Barnard students indirectly acknowledged the anniversary. Sarah Besnoff, BC’09, the president of the Student Government Association at Barnard, said that Barnard’s admissions office put together a photography retrospective showcasing the 25-year-long athletic partnership between the two schools. “At first I hadn’t realized that the reason it’s a 25-year anniversary [of Barnard students playing on Columbia’s female sports teams] is because of the 25 years of women in the College,” Besnoff said. “It’s not explicit.”

Besnoff offered a different view of the statement that Columbia admitted women in 1983: “At Barnard there’s a realization that Columbia has always been co-ed,” at least since the founding of Barnard in 1889, she said.

Some Columbia alumnae, however, feel that there are limits even now to the college’s acceptance of co-education. “It bugged me that we didn’t have an Alumna Achievement Award last year, and no one seemed to notice,” Whysel said.

Whysel is a coordinator of the Columbia College Women’s Mentor Program, a networking project that pairs current CC women with alumnae. She said that CCW had to plead with male alumni for support, and, that this resistance has carried over into the lackluster 25th anniversary recognition: “No one [is] pushing the milestone,” she said. Sometimes, recent history is the hardest to remember. ♦

Illustration by Stephen Davan

A Million Little Pieces

Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary
Museum of Arts and Design
Entrance at Columbus Circle and 8th Ave.
Take the N° 1 to Columbus Circle

I was examining El Anatsui's enormous "Skylines"—a glittering African tapestry of gold, yellow and red metal squares made from foil salvaged from the necks of liquor bottles—when I saw a middle-aged woman plant her foot squarely over the line marked in tape on the floor, reach out and stroke the sheet of metal. This woman wasn't a kook, unaccustomed to the non-touching credo of museums; she had simply satisfied an urge felt by every visitor of the Museum of Arts and Design's "Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary" to tactically appreciate the works in the exhibit.

"Second Lives" features the work of artists who manipulate everyday materials such as old shoes, chairs, and shopping bags, establishing new meanings for these overlooked items. The result is an exhibit that, at its best, challenges the viewer's relationship with the commonplace and with the artist's process; at its worst, the shocking materials used in some works draw attention away from more subtle pieces. Regardless, the viewer is drawn into considering the art, wondering just how many rubber gloves it took to make that dress.

Transforming an everyday item into a object of art often requires a massive accumulation of smaller parts, like the huge botanical assemblage of Q-tips and rhinestone-dotted plastic forks constituting Soyeon Cho's mystical and gigantic "Self-Portrait 2." The plaque next to Do Ho Suh's "Metal Jacket" reads "3,000 metal dog tags," while Jill Townsley's enormous, slowly-collapsing pyramid, built of rubber bands and disposable flatware, is made of "9,273 plastic spoons."

Even where the material data is not posted, the viewer is forced to consider the art by the numbers. Tara Donovan, one of the stars of the show, offered shimmering stalagmites meticulously crafted out of clear buttons. The piece, entitled "Bluffs," astonishes

because of its eerie beauty, and because you wonder how many hundreds of thousands of buttons she had to glue together.

Each of these maximalist works is gorgeous and impressive in its own way, but viewing them as a group dulls the diversity of material and process. It also reduces some pieces to an obvious interrogation of consumer culture, like a chandelier made of old glasses frames, or worse, to novelty, like a hundred records cut into butterflies.

Rather than relying on accumulation, some of the most successful works simply recontextualized everyday objects with delicate modifications. For "The Invisible Enemy Should Not Exist (Recovered, Missing, Stolen Series)," Michael Rakowitz used Arabic advertisements and food cartons to construct models of items looted from Baghdad's National Museum of Iraq. Fred Wilson's quiet "Love and Loss in the Milky Way," is a Greek-style sculpture of a woman standing on a dinner table amid an arrangement of milky white bowls and cups. A black mammy cookie jar in the corner, with exaggerated black and red features, provides all the color in the piece.

"Second Lives" is the inaugural exhibit of MAD's newly remodeled home at Columbus Circle. Although the new space allows for ample natural light

and twice the gallery space of its old location across the street from MoMA, the scale of many of the pieces of "Second Lives" makes the exhibit feel cramped. The familiarity of the materials gives the impression of the home of a compulsive pack-rat.

Perhaps the best part about "Second Lives" is the sense of awe at the moment when the source material is discovered, be it human hair or dime-store trinkets. With so many of these works, the transformation is almost unbelievable. Like that woman, I wanted to touch the tapestry, whose metal squares and strips shone like fish scales, to see for myself that it was just foil collected from garbage-bound liquor bottles. But, since they were no longer garbage, I didn't, and turned to look at a chair made out of quarters instead.

—Sasha de Vogel

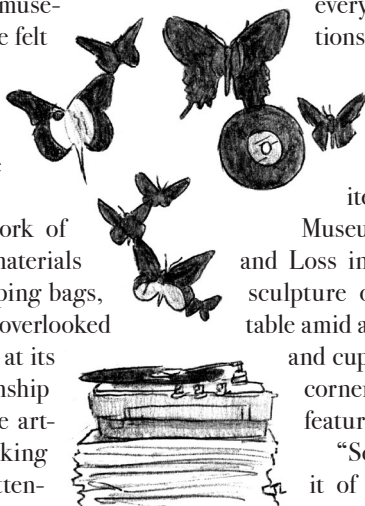


Illustration by Jenny Lam



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Change They Don't Believe In

Across the street from the Apollo Theater, Gary sells Obama shirts from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day. In this dwindling economy, hope seems to be the only thing selling in New York. A week before the election, Gary said that the Democratic nominee brought him a daily haul of at least \$200.

Tourists were snatching up the T-shirts in preeminent celebration of a historic victory, but the Harlem vendors selling the Obama brand remain ambivalent about his legacy. They peddle hope without much hope for themselves.

Gary grew up in Harlem and back in the B.C.—Before Change—era, he planned to vote for Obama. But he could not shake a certain pessimism.

“I believe in him, but I believe in assassination history,” he said. “Any time a minority holds a position of power or looks like he might change something, and we feel like we can do something and get up out of here, they don’t want that for some reason.”

Another street peddler, who requested anonymity because he has been ticketed for vending violations, was even more skeptical. He hawks shirts that proclaim “Yes We Can,” but he doesn’t share the popular zeal. “Nothing’s gonna change. Politics is just a game,” he said. “I got to eat, just like you.”

Many vendors are used to the presence of a reporter—every news organization in the country had swung through Harlem to capture the pre-election excitement. But the enthusiastic stories that have come out of 125th St. often don’t reflect the feelings of the people who spend their days there.

When I mentioned a recent *AM New York* cover story titled, “Hope in Harlem,” the anonymous vendor’s lips twisted in an expression of disgust. “Hope in Harlem? I wanted to throw that paper in the garbage. Hope in Harlem? What kind of hope can there be if people don’t have jobs?” he said.

Not everyone on 125th St. is so cynical. Gary’s friend D—short for Donald—who works at the nearby pawn shop, pointed to shirts featuring Obama’s face

in pink with HOPE written in blue gemstones underneath. “That,” he said, “is history.”

But D and Gary, who both asked that their last names be withheld, worried that a change for the good on the national level could make things harder for them; they feared that racial profiling could worsen. “The cops will say about us, ‘They’re gonna think they’re powerful,’ and they can’t let that happen,” Gary said.

Hope still seemed alive a few yards down the block, where Sun and Steve have been selling their own silk-screened Obama apparel since the Democratic primary concluded in June.

The T-shirts “are gonna sell even better after he wins,” Sun said. Indeed, a week after the election, Obama merchandise was hotter than ever. “Before it was like 20 degrees, now it’s like 100 degrees,” explained Steve. “Before I had time to talk to you. Now I have too many customers. Just stay and watch.”

Whether or not they buy the hype, it is in the vendors’ best interest to amplify it. “When this man comes into office, everyone’s gonna have a job,” Steve said. “Obama can create a new economy.”

The financial crisis is a looming problem for these men, who work on the margins of the economy. So is the University’s expansion into Manhattanville. “Soon all of this is going to be Columbia,” Steve said. He added that he and Sun would move farther north by December, when a Marriott hotel will claim their spot.

Those who make a living from selling Obama T-shirts have to live with all kinds of mixed messages. On the one hand, few believe that Obama can fix the economy, but voicing this kind of hope generates enthusiasm that sells T-shirts. Since the election, Steve’s bestseller has featured an image of Obama as a muscled boxer, standing over a fallen John McCain. Under the scene, the shirt reads, “Down with the old, and in with the new.”

—Yelena Shuster

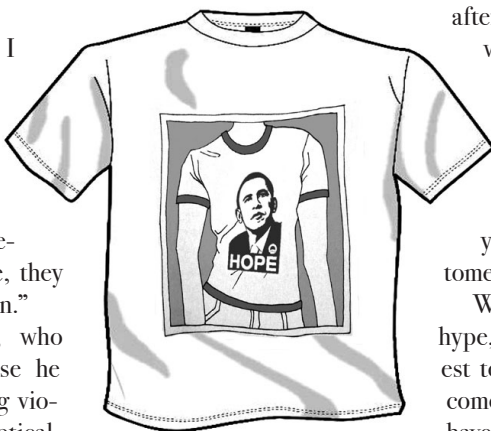


Illustration by Wendan Li

"ROAR, LION, ROAR!"



BROTESTS

THE BLUE AND WHITE, *in its long hours dutifully trolling the Rare Books Archive, has discovered a missing chapter from Stand, Columbia, the University's official history. The chapter, entitled "Our Legacy of Protest" offers a purely factual explanation of why at Columbia, the ideal in body are bold in ideology.*

Our students first asserted their political selves in March 1905, when the city's transit worker union went on strike. A coterie of muscled athletes and fraternity brothers sang "Roar, Lion, Roar" as they stormed the Interborough Rapid Transit employment office, effectively "derailing" the scheme of this cabal of Wobbly Papists.

These pioneers forged the path retread by the protesters of 1968. Infuriated by the prospect of exercising side-by-side with the notorious denizens of Morningside Park, a band of hardy young men installed themselves in Low Library. In counter-protest, several members of the now-forgotten "hippie" subculture formed a circle around the building, attempting to direct the reek of their long hair through open windows and "stink out" the athletes.

Just when it seemed the two sides had entered an endless détente, alumni donations began to pour in. In a few short days, the upstanding robber barons of Wall Street, enthused by the uprising of these true "sons of Knickerbocker," drove fundraising literally "through the roof"—an airlift bound for a typhoon-stricken island was redirected to just above Low Library, where it dropped rations of bacon and Muscle Milk to the rejoicing victors. Within a week, Columbia's GDP had surged past Liechtenstein's, and the administration was persuaded to acquiesce.

Thus began the University's Reconquista period. Columbians watched in delight as the money from their eminent domain war chest spoke. Before the end of the decade, Columbia rule was no longer the exception across Upper Manhattan.

In those heady, moneyed years, academic departments saw all their needs satisfied. Back then, even a discipline like "Ethnic Studies" could obtain funding, to the chagrin of the New Establishment. But by April 1996, the campus once again hungered for reform, and a heroic cadre of students organized a two-week-long eat-in to dismantle the department. The University decided to "play ball" with the athletes, agreeing to strip one professor of tenure for each hot dog the first-string quarterback could down in a ten-minute period.

Sated, our frat-boy activists—"fractivists"—stayed quiet, awaiting a new mission for a new century.

Circumstances finally coalesced in September 2007, when President Mahmoud

Illustration by Shaina Rubin

Continued on page 34



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From page 33

Ahmadinejad came to campus. The footsoldiers were thrilled at the sight of fascism's bold, new face. Wholeheartedly embracing the liberal media's moniker for the school—the University of Tehran-West—the athletes began to sniff around for a cause.

They found it when a few community organizers, clinging to the northernmost tip of Inwood, negotiated a halt to the construction of Manhattan's fortieth Vitamin Shoppe. They rallied with a cry to stop this “violence against our fitness physique.” When the fractivists discovered that the few remaining Ethnic Studies instructors, who supplemented their paltry incomes by taking on janitorial duties, had taken to whitewashing the work that student-bards published on bathroom walls, the campus erupted.

In a righteous fury, the fractivists marched from their brownstones to the South Lawn, where they erected a tent city, a striking symbol of their powerlessness. The movement was immediately popular, thanks to its coincidence with Homecoming Weekend. Rally girls cheered on as pitchers and point guards downed energy supplements—once again striking against hunger. A jocular new mascot, Slurpee the Octopus, the walking, talking manifestation of our credo that “greed is good,” rocked the celebrations.

Opposition was limited to a few cave-chested intellectuals who hurled books at the tents in an attempt to “drop knowledge” on the rowdies. In a miracle of righteousness, divine forces intervened and caused each book to fall from their typewriterly wrists before the arc of the toss was complete.

And so the best and brightest, the burliest and buffest, soldier on: for sustenance, for domain, for God...for Columbia!

—By Alexandra Muhler



CAMPUS GOSSIP

Upon noticing the recently-installed "Wu's Sushi Bar" in Nussbaum & Wu:

Girl: "Wu must be asserting himself."



Ballpoint pen in a tear in the fabric covering an old armchair in a niche in 303A Butler:

IF YOU ARE WAITING FOR A SIGN, THIS IS IT.

Inserted after "sign," in different handwriting:

THAT WE NEED NEW CHAIRS



Male student: "I've decided to become a divorce lawyer."

Female student: "A divorce lawyer? How does an engineering degree help that?"

Male student: "I don't know, but I got it from TV. I've decided to make most of my life decisions based on soap operas."



In Dodge Gym, two exercising friends find themselves at a fork in the road.

Guy: Wait! What time is the debate tonight?!

Girl: Nine o'clock. Why?

Guy: ...and what time is the *Project Runway* finale?

Girl: Oh shit.

Guy: What?

Girl: It's at nine!

[Both pause over this conundrum.]

Guy: I guess I'll just watch the debate online tomorrow.



INCREDIBLE MEDICALS

Boy: Smile, you've got crabs!

Girl: Is that what the doctor said to you?



THERE HAD BEEN BLOOD

The following article was published in the October 25th issue of the Columbia Daily Spectator. Nothing has been excerpted.

"A man was left injured after an incident early Saturday morning outside an apartment building on 101st Street and Riverside Drive.

Witnesses to the incident, which happened shortly before 1:00 a.m., did not know the cause of it, though a pool of blood was visible on the sidewalk outside the building. Columbia University Public Safety officials said they had not heard of anything happening, and the New York City Police Department did not have a report filed on the incident or any knowledge of it.

Kavitha Davidson, BC '09 and Spectator sports editor, said both police officers and an ambulance were called, though by about 1:30 a.m. the scene was cleared and the police officers had left. The scene was visible from the window of a nearby apartment building. Witnesses said it took approximately 20 minutes for the injured man to be taken into the ambulance. It was unclear why

he was bleeding.

Davidson said it appeared that the ambulance was taking the man to Mount Sinai hospital.”

In other words, “we randomly stumbled across some dude with blood, and thought people would want to know.”

AN UNFORTUNATE
PRODUCT OF
THE OFFICE ZEN
MEDITATION RETREAT

Overheard outside Milbank

“I feel like I really would be sharing a lot of my being if I gave someone my résumé.”

A Blue and White staffer sent the following request to Facilities

REQUEST:

The right handle of the right sink does not work properly and needs to be pushed in in order to turn the water off.

My request is not urgent; you may respond within 3 - 14 business days.

RESPONSE:

HANDLE WORKS FINE. INSTRUCTED STUDENT HOW IT SHOULD WORK.

Columbia Facilities Management, teaching students how to use the bathroom sink since 1754.

THE MIDTERMS ARE MURDER

A Spring 2009 comparative literature course called “Literature and Torture” is taught by one Joseph R. Slaughter.

squirrel that had wandered into the Mathematics building; one of them offered the young rodent some advice: “No, this way! You can have a life out here!”

Overheard in the River lounge, 3:15 a.m.



Guy: No way! You like chocolate too?!

Girl: (inaudible reply)

Guy: Yeah I know right? The way it melts in your mouth and stuff?

AT WORK IN
BROOKLYN

On Halloween night in deep Bushwick, a crowd of several dozen bicycling hipsters were congregated outside of a warehouse

party. Open containers abounded among the group of loiterers, and the building itself was a squat hosting an illegal party. Soon, an NYPD van trawled past the scene. Two policemen in glared at the crowd, which began to disperse under their steely gaze. Suddenly, the police in the passenger seat craned his head out of the window: “Hey, I see you Waldo!” he shouted gleefully. A scrawny hipster male in a striped red and white pajama looked down and then up, slightly offended, but not arrested.

James Franco, the man who turned us all into stalkers, is seriously committed to building his résumé. And while he should be proud to list an MFA from Columbia under Education, he should probably hesitate to append a recent prize under Awards. *High Times* has just proclaimed the actor the “Stoner of the Year,” purportedly only in recognition of his role in *Pineapple Express*, in which his character lives to get high. At Columbia, he’s earning a master’s degree in creative writing, which has pretty much the same implications.

Several students were attempting to route a baby

Climate...it’s change you can believe in!