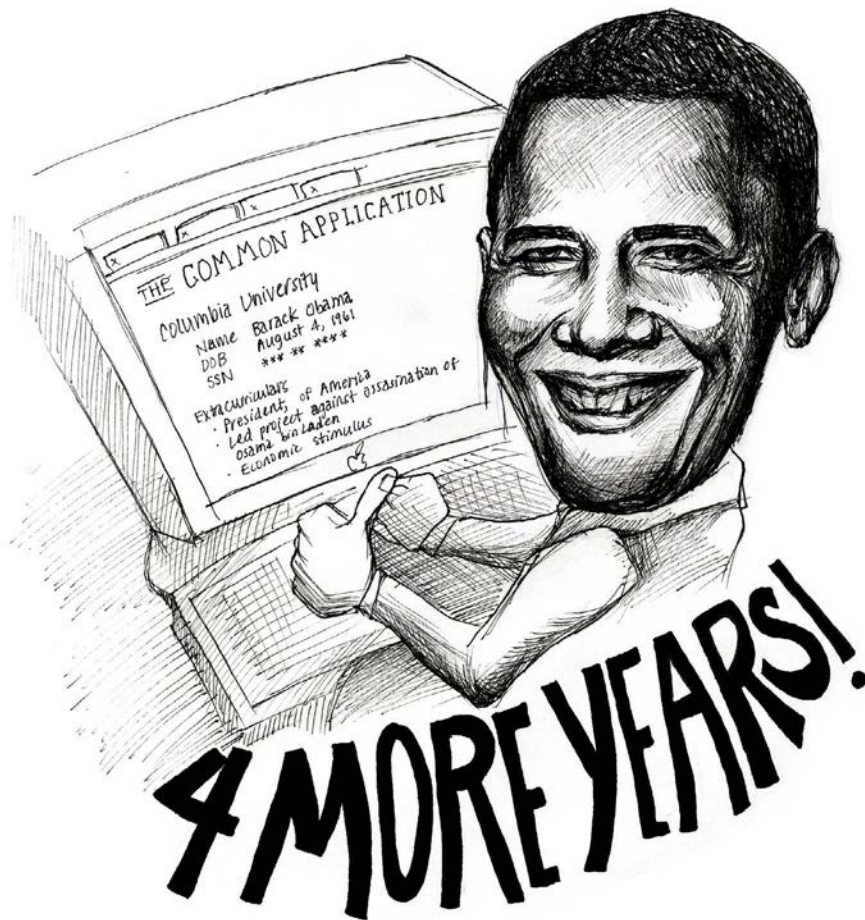


THE UNDERGRADUATE MAGAZINE OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, EST. 1890

# THE BLUE & WHITE

Vol. XVIII No. V

Autumn 2012



## Some Assembly Required

What the Northwest Corner Building Can Teach Us About Manhattanville

## Holding Court

*The Blue & White* Audits President Bollinger's Class

ALSO INSIDE: BARNARD'S RESTRICTIVE NEW FLYERING POLICY



BRIAN WAGNER, SEAS '13, *Editor-in-Chief*

SYLVIE KREKOW, BC '13, *Managing Editor*

CONOR SKELDING, CC '14, *Culture Editor*

JESSIE CHASAN-TABER, CC '16, *Layout Editor*

REGA JHA, CC '13, *Literary Editor*

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WILL HOLT, CC '15, *Senior Editor*

CLAIRE SABEL, CC '13, *Senior Editor*

ZUZANA GIERTLOVA, BC '14, *Publisher*

*Contributors*

KAREN BRILL, CC '16

DEVIN CHOUDHURY, CC '15

BRITT FOSSUM, CC '16

SALLY GAO, CC '16

AUGUSTA HARRIS, BC '15

LUCA MARZORATI, CC '15

ANGELICA MODABBER, BC '16

TORSTEN ODLAND, CC '15

MELISSA O'SULLIVAN, SEAS '16

SOMER OMAR, CC '16

ALLIE PINES, CC '16

MATTHEW SEIFE, CC '16

EMMA STEIN, CC '14

ALEXANDRA SVOKOS, CC '14

*Artists*

JULIETTE CHEN, CC '16

ALISON HENRY, CC '16

LEILA MGALOBESHVILI, CC '16

ALLIE PINES, CC '16

*Copy Editor*

HANNAH FORD, CC '13

# THE BLUE & WHITE

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FAMAM EXTENDIMUS FACTIS

No. V

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# BLUE BOOK

It was with considerable pride, and a veritable dearth of fanfare, that *The Blue & White* quietly launched our very own online archives page a few weeks ago. You can find it at [theblueandwhite.org](http://theblueandwhite.org) (forgive us—we'd have put a fancy QR code here for you but our technological knowledge extends to sending a tweet with a picture in it), where you'll see a list of links stretching back to 2005. Sure, it's incomplete and has a scope of only a fourth of our publication history, but I will point out that 2005 seems like a long time ago when you remember that it's the year the sixth *Harry Potter*—book, not film—hit store shelves.

For a print magazine, the issue of preservation is a serious one. Paper is an eminently perishable product, and despite our best efforts, the lifespan of any issue's on-campus presence rarely extends for longer than a month. The importance of archiving is twofold. Certainly, there is a desire to immortalize the efforts of writers and editors before they are lost to time, or rather recycling bins. But of arguably greater concern is the need to preserve our collective past as a school—the monthly snapshot of campus affairs and goings-on that we at *The Blue & White* strive to bring you.

Most students, be they leaders or not, depart Columbia after four short years, which makes institutional memory difficult to come by. In eight short months, there will be almost no one left to complain about how “JJ's Place was sooo much cooler when it only accepted dining dollars.” It's important to us that we keep these records, whether they be book reviews or accounts of administrative tension. These things matter to us—we hope they matter to you, too. Our time at Columbia shapes so much of our lives and dreams. It's worth the time to find out just what shaped the Columbia you see now.

Brian Wagner  
*Editor-in-Chief*

*In the spirit of deliberative democracy, The Blue & White has reprinted from its 2008 volume electorally relevant excerpts from two Conversations.*

From the March 2008 Conversation with Mark Strand:

*B&W:* Is poetry taken more seriously in other countries?

*MS:* Maybe there's a tradition of caring more for poetry. Traditionally, America's orientation to the world has been largely business, money-making, mercantile... We don't value works of imagination as we value other things. Largely because we're a Puritan culture and we have a Puritan ethic—straight talk, “Why didn't you say so at the beginning?” We mistrust people. We see it in these debates now, a mistrust of language. Criticizing Barack Obama because he's all talk, as if words had no substance. The presumption that deeds speak louder than words is a Puritan presumption. It seems to be Hillary Clinton's. But deeds very often don't speak so loudly, and words do. Think of how Barack Obama's words have mobilized this nation of under-30s. In the Soviet Union you hear of football stadiums filled to hear a poet read—it's possible but it seems unimaginable to me. They must have blocked out every event that night and given 70,000 people free tickets. But I don't think that many people go to poetry readings now

ARRIVALS

- ♦Pumpkin ale
- ♦A bored@butler redux
- ♦A “seaside resort” inspired EC lobby
- ♦Spec’s digitized archives
- ♦Gingerspice lattes
- ♦Instagrams of gingerspice lattes

DEPARTURES

- ♦Our undefeated football season
- ♦Rhea Sen
- ♦Bwog leadership
- ♦Bwog’s blue background
- ♦Barnard’s pool
- ♦Barnard’s fiscal solvency

in the Soviet Union, I think it’s probably just what it is here. The importance of poetry can’t be measured by the number of people who attend readings.

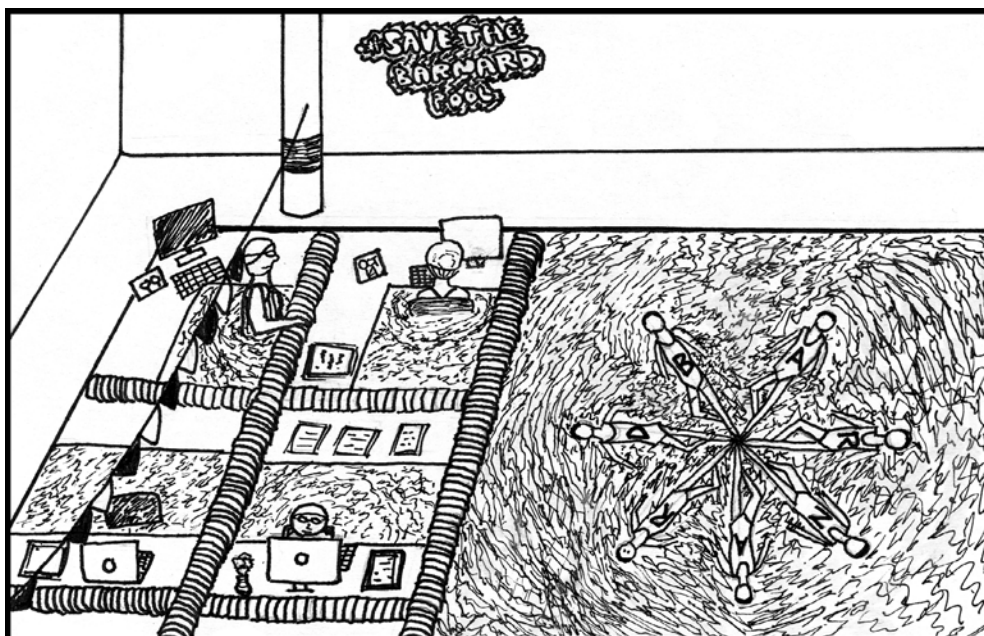
From the October 2008 Conversation with then-Provost and Professor of History Alan Brinkley:

*B&W*: What needs progress?

*AB*: I think there are a lot of things that need more progress. For someone like me, who believes we need a much more progressive view of American life and American government, we need to have a better infrastructure, an intellectual infrastructure, if progressive ideas are going to become more central to the way Americans think about the future. We have this very robust infrastructure for conservative ideas that has been extremely effective and extremely successful, and conservative ideas have really penetrated into our culture in a way that had never happened before, at least not in a few generations. And the left, the liberal world, has not done so well. There’s been a not-any-longer-supportable assumption that liberalism is still the dominant creed in the United States and doesn’t need those kinds of defenses, but it absolutely does need them, and I think more and more people are recognizing that.

So that’s one thing we need, and another thing we need if we want a change in course... is a new President, a new Congress, and at least to have the opportunity for the Democratic Party to try to revise some of the progressive ideas that they have traditionally stood for, that they have not been able to promote effectively in the last few decades.

**POSTCARD FROM MORNINGSIDE**





Hello, Upper West Siders. Columbia students are known for their ambition and talents, but it takes a certain breed of Manhattan’s elite to earn a Columbia degree without attending a single class. As *Gossip Girl* winds down after 113 triumphant episodes and trades the Upper East Side for CW heaven, it’s time to part ways with the alternate-universe Columbians and model New Yorkers made famous by the show. To commemorate the end of an era, imaginary students Serena van der Woodsen, Blair Waldorf, and Nate Archibald reflect on their time here.\*

*Housing:* Van der Woodsen, Waldorf, and Archibald are among the slim five percent of students who spend any of their four years at Columbia living off-campus, and Archibald and Van der Woodsen represent an especially elusive zero percent who didn’t live in University housing as freshmen. All find the commute from the Upper East Side unproblematic, because, duh, chauffeurs.

*Academics:* Despite showing up to fewer classes per week than a DG sister with an antibiotic-resistant UTI, Waldorf and van der Woodsen still had some bones to pick. “I don’t want to use the word ‘bribery,’ but let’s just say either way professors don’t like it. Which is unfortunate, considering certain sartorial decisions made by the Women’s Studies department,”

sniffed Waldorf.

*Extracurriculars:* While none of the interviewees have been spotted in Morningside since 2010 and each declined to comment on his or her student status, the late 2000s witnessed a period of extraordinary campus engagement for the group: Van der Woodsen felt she was a shoe-in for Hamilton House, Columbia’s premier secret society, but was later denied admission. “It’s fine, I joined St. A’s instead,” she shrugged. “Oops! That’s off the record.”

*Employment Prospects:* Those worried about the practicality of a liberal arts education can take solace: Archibald has already acquired a full-time job. He scored a post as editor-in-chief of the poignantly named *New York Spectator* (formerly the *Pinkberry Today*). He says these opportunities exist for any Columbia student. “This is obviously a result of our exposure to the Core and is unrelated to our social status or fictional nature. Also, the study drugs up here are great.”

*\*Representatives of the “real” Columbia University declined to comment on this story.*

— Karen Brill

During the summer months before NSOP, every newly-admitted student receives an envelope bearing the Columbia crown and containing the college essentials. Among those are a letter from Citibank inviting new students to open a Citi student checking account. Upon their Morningside arrival, first-years might stumble upon nine Citibank ATMs on Columbia’s campus—the most prominent pair residing on the ground floor of Alfred Lerner Hall. During NSOP, Citibank is the sole bank allowed on campus.

Curious about this arrangement, I met with Honey Sue Fishman, Executive Director of Business



Illustration by Claire Sabel

Services and Student Center Operations, and Kristina Hernandez, Director of Marketing and Communications in Student and Administrative Services. The pair spoke candidly as we sat around Fishman’s conference table.

As it turns out, the University makes Citibank compete for its campus monopoly, staging a virtual game of *The Bachelor* in which several banks compete for a shot at love with the checking accounts of rosy-checked first-years. Every three to five years the contract is renegotiated, and Columbia sends requests for proposals to multiple banks (at least three are needed to enter the bidding process). A committee of representatives from several divisions of the university then reviews the proposals.

This is no shady Murdoch scheme. In fact, the committee considers student input, and overhauled the 2003 policy when a plan to combine the CUID with a Citibank ATM card proved unpopular. Nor does the Big Bad Bank have access to your personal information. The mailing is sent by Columbia on behalf of Citibank. Moreover, the contract prohibits Citi from offering students credit cards or engaging in predatory lending practices.

According to Fishman, Citibank’s “international presence and recognition” is especially attractive to parents of foreign students. Boasting the world’s largest financial services network, Citibank maintains a presence in 140 countries. “Parents want to make sure their students are taken care of,” Fishman explained.

I had expected to run up against administrative obfuscation. But, as far as I can tell, this is capitalism at its best. Sometimes a bank is just a bank.

– Allie Pines



Most Columbia students will never hear of the King’s Crown residence hall. Located on 116th Street between Amsterdam Avenue and Morningside Drive, this mysterious dorm houses mostly graduate students—“mostly” being the key word here. In 2010, the University assigned eight undergraduates to the same floor of King’s Crown.

One of its current residents, Manuel Cabrera, CC ’15, is impressed with his lesser-known digs, but remarks that it’s “pretty quiet.” From the freshly painted walls to the “very comfy” special computer chairs, everything is “really nice.” Cabrera continues, “When I came in it seemed like everything was newly redone.”

There are some perks to being an undergrad tucked away among grad students. For instance, the R.A. doesn’t even live in the building. When the eight undergrads residing in King’s Crown had their first floor meeting of the semester, the R.A. had to walk over from her dorm to lead it. Since then, Manuel has yet to see R.A. on duty—or anyone else—patrolling the halls. And because there is no security guard at the front, it is easy to “go in and out as you please.”

The undergraduate’s path to King’s Crown by way of the Columbia Housing Lottery is slightly mysterious. For Manuel, it was a fluke—he made the mistake of accidentally inserting himself into the general selection pool. “By the time it was [...] time to pick, there was only two rooms left in all of Columbia and I got waitlisted.”

To opt into King’s Crown on purpose, however, seems impossible. The only mention of King’s Crown as an undergraduate housing option on the Columbia housing website infers that students are “assigned” to a room, rather than having the option of “picking” in. If you covet quiet solitude, being “assigned” might not be so bad.

– Matthew Seife

# Campus Characters

You might not know the following figures—but you should. In *Campus Characters*, THE BLUE & WHITE introduces you to a handful of Columbians who are up to interesting and extraordinary things and whose stories beg to be shared. If you'd like to suggest a Campus Character, send us an email at [editors@theblueandwhite.org](mailto:editors@theblueandwhite.org).

## JANINE BALEKDJIAN

You will probably hear Janine Balekdjian, CC '13, before you see her. Though diminutive in stature, her voice more than compensates for her petite frame. As Peter Andrews, CC '14 and fellow member of the trombone section in the CU Marching Band puts it, "When we play at games, one of our goals is to be loud. And, let's face it: Janine has a built-in advantage." Her distinctive laugh—forceful and unrestrained—interrupts otherwise half-hearted swells of giggling students in lecture.

No part of Janine is muted. Kaley Hanenkrat, BC '11, describes it perfectly—Janine is "the opposite of apathy." Her passion charges even the day-to-day. She is decidedly against lunch, both the meal and the concept (she resents her body for needing sustenance, because, "It's just such a waste of time!"), and will explain her aversion in a monologue punctuated with emphatic gesticulation. To describe her with simple verbs and adjectives would unfairly dilute her energy. She doesn't talk; she rants. Injustices do not annoy her; they are infuriating. Halfway isn't her style.

Janine is that imaginary student you fantasize about meeting after your Columbia acceptance letter arrives in the mail; her genuine enthusiasm is contagious. On a typical weekend you can find her phonebanking for President Obama, passing through Pennsylvania to canvass for swing voters, and walking women past hostile protesters at abortion clinics in the Bronx. Her writing is regularly published in *The Nation* and The Huffington Post. She accomplishes nearly all of this in heels.

In New York, a city in which indifference is often equated with sophistication, her unabashed excitement offers a refreshing break from post-adolescent arrogance. Janine advocates an alternative that makes engagement feel cool. Her need to share her thoughts feels closer to a compulsion than a con-

scious choice.

"I'm pretty sure I came out of the womb interested in politics," says Janine. Truly, one conversation with her validates the axiom "the personal is political." During her unprecedented two-year tenure as president of the Columbia University Democrats, she has redirected the Dems' energies from an agenda grounded in discussion to one centered on activism. She is responsible for organizing the largest campaign trip in the Dems' history: 200 students will trek to Ohio on Election Day weekend to "knock on *all* of the doors," she says proudly. Peter describes her as nothing short of a "visionary leader."

"If you tell her you are not a feminist, her feelings will be hurt. [These issues are] hugely important to her as a human, not just as a political apparatus," says Zoe Ridolfi-Starr, CC '15, fellow editor of the *Feminist Mystique*—Columbia's first feminist publication, which was co-founded by Janine. This is the most confounding component of Janine's character. For all her investment in partisan campaigns, she equally values personal connections. Hours after





screaming at her Republican peers over ideological differences, she will kick back with them to share a game of baseball and a beer.

I had suggested that we get coffee for our interview. Janine does not drink coffee. She'd rather sip on one of her tens of Twinings varieties—"her fuel." She serves our tea in dainty china with charming heart-shaped strainers. As we finish talking, Janine identifies her only concrete future plan: "I'm just going to keep doing whatever makes me excited and protesting whatever makes me angry. I'll follow my passions." She seems incapable of doing anything else, even if she tried.

—Anna Bahr

### CARL MAJEAU

I'm willing to bet that more than half of Columbia undergraduates know Carl Majeau, CC '13, when they see him: shoulder-length, strawberry blond hair pulled back under a baseball cap, matching chinstrap, rectangular frames, big sneakers, beaded necklace, often something sleeveless. I did.

And it's hard to avoid Carl's distinctive figure if you follow campus music: he's one of the most visible presences in Columbia's music scene. He plays tenor sax in Ace of Cake, a jazz-infused jam band that is arguably the most active on-campus musical group. This semester, Ace of Cake closed Lowlapolooza, a music festival that was the brainchild of Carl and a few friends. When asked what people should know about Carl, bandmate Ilan Marron, CC '13, demurs, "I feel like he's the kind of guy that everybody already knows."

Since being "a character" is often synonymous with being a "caricature," Carl initially comes across as some kind of stoned, zany, neo-hippy. "I'm definitely conscious of my appearance," he allows. But Carl is majoring in Computer Science and this interest, it turns out, is as big a part of Carl's life as his musical projects. The summer after his sophomore year, he worked for Amazon on the Kindle Cloud Reader—an application that allows you to view e-books in a web browser. He currently works part-time at Jotalog, a Brooklyn start-up through which users can exchange tutoring sessions.

It can be difficult to reconcile Carl's musical passions with his technical ones, particularly because Carl's music is so focused on improvisation and spontaneity—two variables necessarily minimized in the execution of a computer program. "I'm sort of bipolar," he jokes. But, in Carl's mind, this bifurca-



tion makes complete sense.

"I've always thought of them as being two sides of the same thing," he explains. Both involve "building up from small, core ideas into these larger and larger levels of abstraction. You start a song with just a little riff; you start a computer program with just a little object." For Carl, they're complementary. Songs and programs have the potential to be anything, but they're both constructed piece by piece. They work toward a self-contained product that makes its own rules. "In both," he muses, "you're trying to create a world within the world, I guess." Because of this structural similarity, Carl's experience with improvised music actually informs his coding: "Experimentation is cool; you come up with serendipities." When coding, he clarifies, "I like to just throw a lot of things out there, and then cull down and take the analytic approach."

During our interview, Carl's only reserved moments come when I ask him about the future of his musical half. Professionally, he sees himself heading into computer science. "I've been thinking about it a lot just recently: do I want to throw it all in and try to become a 'rock star,' or do I want to tread this middle ground?" he asks. He pauses for a few seconds. "I don't know. Music is the thing that I get the most satisfaction out of."

As he approaches the moment in which he will be ejected into professional life, Carl wonders if his path so far—plunging wholeheartedly into two extremely different fields, finding structural commonalities, and achieving in both—is maybe a balancing act that can only be pulled off at college, which is another sort of world within a world.

—Torsten Odland



# Can I Get

Yes, in fact. It was so decent of you to compliment my silly sequined shoes. I just picked them up at this little thrift shop—someone at Urban Outfitters must have copied the design—and thought they were adorable. It's the little things, you know? And do you need a cigarette, too, or will this little spark suffice? Yes, of course, help yourself!

Oh, a dollar! That's so sweet, and also 30 cents more than this Marlboro Light. I always take heart when a stranger offers money for a cigarette; they've acknowledged that they've taking something, and thus owe something. Not to mention that it goes towards my next pack.

Now, you don't have to stand off to the side, uncomfortably trying to avoid me as if we did not just engage in some social interaction and material exchange. Sure, cigarettes are bad, but they can have positive effects for your emotional health when used appropriately. Studies say lack of social interaction shortens your life by three and a half years—as much as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. If I have two cigarettes and I give you one, we will still collectively have two cigarettes. But if I give you one cigarette and we converse for some time, we will collectively have two cigarettes and seven extra years of life.

So tell me something interesting. You're on the eighth page of your 14-page paper due tomorrow—what an accomplishment! I'm writing something, too. It's a one-paragraph analysis of a supply and demand graph. Well, yes, I realize it's shorter than yours, but I always find it takes so much more effort to write these short papers. What are you,

an English major? See, you must not understand "effort" in the same sense as those of us who will be applying to real jobs after graduation. Hah! I kid. Nevertheless, I must admit it's heartening to have someone like you ask me for a cigarette. I can tell you are truly panicked about finishing that paper, so much so that you don't even have the time to buy your own pack of cigarettes like a normal person. You do realize Duane Reade is open 24 hours?

As I was saying, seeing someone as jittery as you desperately seeking a little drag of comfort calms me. It reminds me that I'm not in such dire straits, and that even if I were, I wouldn't have to beg for relief.

You have clearly put me in a position of power. To put it in economic terms you probably won't understand: this is a monopoly, and I am in control. I know you are going to want another cigarette, so you're going to have to sit here and entertain me a little longer. Maybe I don't feel like starting that analysis just yet.

Wait! Don't go back inside quite yet. Listen, you gave me one measly dollar for this cigarette that took so much effort for me to obtain, and now it will be a shorter time before I have to buy more. New York State levies a monetary tax on cigarettes to make up for the negative externalities associated with smoking, and I levy a social tax on bummed cigarettes to reach my optimal balance of physical and emotional health.

You finished yours? Here, take another—I'm really enjoying swapping ideas with you. Wait—I'm out.♦



## AFFIRMATIVE

*By Alexandra Svokos*



# a Light?

No. Right off the bat, no. Because I spotted you stepping out of the library, empty-handed, sizing up your prey. And when you sidle up to me and my cancer stick with that infuriatingly sheepish smile, I know exactly what you want. Your entirely disingenuous compliment on my dumb, sequined shoes that I purchased before realizing that everyone I know in New York who has ever emoted about their future “life in Bushwick” found something similar on eBay (read: Urban Outfitters) is all too transparent. Your odds would have been better, maybe, if you had come out and asked me directly, but instead you insisted on striking up some facile conversation. You don’t really care how I’m doing, and I don’t care to tell you.

I’m not going to pretend that my refusal is at all altruistic. “My blackened lungs are well on their way to collapse! Save yourself!” Please. You’re an adult; it’s absolutely your prerogative to cripple your respiratory system. You are not simply asking me for a cigarette. There is of course the economic end: New York boasts the highest tobacco prices in the country by at least two dollars. A single, precious Marlborough Light costs about 70 cents. I fail to see why I should be taxed for unsolicited social interactions with strangers. And don’t you dare put me in the position of turning down your hard-earned dollar.

But my discomfort stems more from the brief intimacy you’re forcing between two barely peripheral friends. Our “friendship” is predicated upon my possession of something you desperately want. If I give in and offer you a cigarette, I’m allowing you to

smoke me down and stub me out in the two minutes it takes to burn through whatever shallow conversation you’ve contrived. Yes, I did know that *Hey Arnold!* is now on Netflix Instant. You are using me. We both know it, and I have too much self-respect (and too voracious an appetite for my filtered Golds) to roll over and endure a kinship born of your convenience.

The worst part isn’t even that our relationship is transactional: it’s that you see us as entirely separate breeds. Though we may share loooong drags and exhales, we’re both negative ends of the magnet, babe. You thrive on that stalwart superiority complex carefully cultivated around one suspect truth: you don’t really smoke. Your smoking is a foolproof passport out of uncomfortable conversation. At worst, it’s a social convenience, an excuse to waste a little time and chew the fat. But, you’re a rational person—smoking isn’t financially sustainable! I’m the fool still willing to cough up \$14 for a pack knowing full well Humphrey Bogart died coughing up a lung. Why buy when you can bum?

I may sport a bad nicotine habit, but yours, dear mooch, is equally nasty. When I reach for my pack, I’m looking to spark up a cigarette, not a conversation. I’m not crying for attention, or asking to be approached. I finally got to page eight of my fourteen page paper and it is 4 a.m. I’m tired, I’m cranky, and this cigarette is the brightest moment of my morning so far. You are infringing upon my brief, perfect moment of solace.

So, no, I’m not going to apologize for my well-justified white lie: “So sorry, my dude. I’m down to my last one!”♦



## NEGATIVE

*By Anna Bahr*

# TOLD BETWEEN PUFFS, THROUGH THE YEARS

## *A Look at Our Hero's Past*

**September 2005** On Clarity in Writing: What he hasn't been writing about has been written about in a stifling, pretentious, hothouse style which nearly no one likes and even fewer people actually read [...] Are these the marching orders of a new intelligentsia? Since when does the intelligentsia march? Shouldn't they, rather, amble, or perambulate, or perhaps simply slouch?

**September 2006** On Taking a Year Break: Sadly or fortunately, his sabbatical meandered and shuttered like an extended parenthetical aside—a summer vacation stretched to become a “leave of absence”: a year for living in leisure, for rambling aimlessly as the plot, hopefully, figures itself out.

**October 2006** On Internships: The gauntlet dashed to the ground, Verily vowed to about his brain from the Kantian duty motive to the Gekkovian profit motive [...] The real world is to philosophy, as King Karl wrote, as sex is to masturbation.

**December 2006** On University Writing: Verily last used a lens one particularly passionate summer, when he went to a lost love's front door, spelled her name in honey, waited for the ants, and with the lens's godlike power created an indelible homage. So the prospect of lenses has ever since produced a bad taste in his mouth: restraining orders and burnt honey tend to do as much.

**February 2007** On Converse All-Stars: To point out the genius that lies beneath this façade of conformity [...] It could lead to a new Age, one of greater freedom—indeed, an Age in which the old dichotomy between liberty and equality was moved a step closer to resolution

**March 2007** On Spring Break: Silly Verily, thinking all along that his functional knowledge of both Spanish and the ancient Mayan tongue of Yucatec would enable him to at least be passable in southern Mexico, on his year-long sabbatical.

**May 2007** On Homecomings: Like a chilled chardonnay or a particularly skilled vixen (the perpetual quest for the apocalyptic orgasm being one hobby-horse Verily will never cease to mount), the homecoming should make one, if briefly, forget the altogether limited nature of one's time, whether on earth or even, say, at college.

**September 2007** On Core Requirements: No, the college had always been Verily's home, his nostos postponed far too long, and the transfer was successfully placed. But, coitus interruptus! The unbearable weight of volumes of insipid Penguin Classics on his shoulder!

**November 2007** On Family Visits: Verily tossed a morphine tablet into his glass of filthy port, swilled, and clenched his steak knife.

**December 2007** On Hollywood: Verily's consultation, and he is only slightly exaggerating, has provided the seed of every eccentric European aristocrat in every Hollywood-produced movie of the last ten years [...] Verily did indeed sell out his family, but he doubts recrimination. Since when does a Veritas attend the cinema?

**March 2008** On MTV: Brings to mind one night, during VV's film consultancy days, when Ashton Kutcher and his merry pranksters convinced a soused Verily to sign a contract to appear on a show called *A Shot At Love*, which they told him would be an emotionally-sensitive radio drama set in the 1920s.

**May 2008** On Graduation: Go out in the world: breed, think, and be miserable. He'll be here, remem-



LENS



holding wine



CONVERSE

bering what, after stamped ambitions and the overall callousness of the world, you'll consider your finest years: drug-addled promiscuity, unfortunate facial hair, foolish idealism or foolish irony, as the case may be.

**September 2008** On Summer Jobs: It is this gentleman's conviction that true wealth consists not in making money, but in renouncing and disdaining it. And if he were so interested in attaining this chimera, he would be a factotum fetching coffee with the rest of the rabble.

**October 2008** On Ghostly Obscurity: Why pun and pontificate, in dialects disparate and strange? For isn't the very project of language the transmission of ideas?



WRITING

**November 2008** On Writing: "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!"

**December 2008** On Bubble Baths: Verily has not gone a day without this particular moist

and ambrosial indulgence.

**March 2009** On the Iliad: Historically, Verily had considered Columbia pupils a rather brutish sort; certainly he didn't fancy them capable of fathoming anything as beatific and wondrous as the friendship of two muscled, perspiring, soulful, heterosexual men.

**April 2009** On Illness: "Starve a cold. Feed a fever. Add armagnac and triple Sec to a hangover."

**September 2009** On Iced Coffee: He would rather she not dilute what Verily suspected was an already diluted espresso by pouring the drink atop cubed ices and whizzing the mixture about with a child's straw. There were far less expensive means by which to bring about a brain freeze.

**October 2009** On Halloween Costumes: Oh Certainly, V. mumbled caustically, throw a whimsical hat atop your empty skulls, that will suffice just merrily.

**December 2009** On Apple Products: iPhone [...] therefore I am [...]

**February 2010** On Valentine's Day: Valentine

Veritas is the lone architect of a certain archetype of the Platonic ideal of non-platonic love.

**April 2010** On Finals Week: A veritable hive of intellectual industry; a seasonal hibernation quite different from the one Verily customarily takes in Cannes.

**September 2010** On Fraternities: Any sense of propriety or shame—as well as, indeed, valuables—would best be left at home should one decide to make a visit to a fraternity house.

**April 2011** On Dating: Whole days were lost reflecting on those captivating green eyes, as lovely as an afternoon spent strolling down the banks of the river Neva.

**September 2011** On Getting into Law School: A deal was struck, a bona fide Faustian bargain [...] VV will be making the rounds, coying up to the right professors, and oh so carefully plotting his next move.

**October 2011** On Skipping Class: We needn't death panels; a few more discussion sessions would serve just as well.

**November 2011** On Occupy Wall Street: The masses, in a bewildering proletariat sign language, wiggled their fingers incomprehensibly about some leach one percent.

**December 2011** On Holiday Season with Family: After an hour or so of that crucible [...] our hero managed to hide himself away in one of the lesser libraries.

**February 2012** On the Gym: Deep into that scrubbed linoleum purgatory [...] perhaps the gentle paths of Central Park are more faithfully trod than that hellish track.

**April 2012** On Lent: He does take pride in his own self-governance. And since to renounce the sweet fruit of the vine might be considered blasphemy, he settled on giving up cigarettes.

**September 2012** On his Sister Rushing: If only Greek organizations were named for modern, rather than ancient Greeks, V. might verily award them points for consistency.♦



the gym

# Holding Court

## The Blue & White Audits President Bollinger's Class

BY SYLVIE KREKOW

One blustery October afternoon, approximately 60 students shuffle into 501 Schermerhorn for class. Some fiddle with their water bottles, others heave hefty copies of *Constitutional Law, Sixth Edition* out of their bags. President Bollinger—for the next hour and fifteen minutes, anyway—will become Professor Bollinger. As he glances at the roster and starts to call out names, the classroom falls silent. You can almost hear the collective sigh of relief when he settles on two students, a Mr. Fine and a Mr. Chen. Mr. Fine and Mr. Chen are not relieved. For the duration of the class, they'll have to answer any question Bollinger throws at them, in front of their peers, TAs, and, of course, Professor Bollinger himself. "Mr. Fine?" He calls, smiling. The student raises his hand and begins to speak.

Bollinger is as much a campus legend as he is the face of the University. Many students know him from the parody Twitter account bearing his name, or his widely-discussed (and acclaimed) haircut, before they meet him in person at one of his famous Fireside Chats—that is, if they get the chance. A sighting of PrezBo strolling down College Walk is a gossip-worthy event, chronicled in exclamatory text messages to friends. Students want to know him, impress him, critique him. And so, with visions of trumping the LSAT dancing in their heads, they flock to his class.

Political Science W3285 Freedom of Speech and Press holds a certain cachet among Columbia students, thanks to its unique pedagogy and the man behind it. President Bollinger, who has taught the class for 25 years—first as President of the University of Michigan, and now as the President of Columbia—favors a loose version of the Socratic method, a manner of teaching typical of law schools.

Bollinger arbitrarily calls upon several students at the beginning of class to answer questions about the assigned reading without assistance from their peers. In the words of Mica Moore, CC '15 and an English-Political Science major currently enrolled in the course, "he doesn't do the 'phone-a-friend-does-anyone-else-know-it.'" One CULPA review from March 2005 sums it up nicely: "Remember in

Legally Blonde when she freaks out in her first law class because the professor randomly calls on her and expects her to have read and understood case law? Ok, that's really how law classes work. And that's not even half as intimidating as it really is." Students skilled in the art of classroom equivocation are in for an Elle Woods-equivalent reality check. When asked if he could instantly tell if a student hadn't done the reading, Bollinger chuckles and says, "Yes. Oh, absolutely. Can't you?"

Moore has already been the designated respondent and describes the experience as "extremely nerve-wracking. Because he asks you multiple questions, and it's just you, and he doesn't [accept] a lot of answers." She also notes Bollinger's tendency to "play stupid" in order to "dig answers out of the students." Jessica Eaton, CC '14 and a Human Rights major, was the first person Bollinger called on this semester. She remembers it as "terrible. I've never been so nervous—it'll be a moment I remember for like five years after I leave Columbia."

Bollinger, described by Eaton as "quite cold," was unconcerned with her stage fright. "When he called on me, I said to him, 'I just about died when you called my name.' And he was like, 'Okay, whatever, answer the question.' He wasn't sympathetic at all."

Nevertheless, both Eaton and Moore, who hope to attend law school, found the interrogation worthwhile, and, in Eaton's words, "very effective." Bollinger defends his method, unique among undergraduate classes at Columbia, explaining, "It's certainly not to produce terror. It is because the best way to learn about this subject, which is law, and using freedom of speech and press as illustrations for law, is for people to talk and think about it out loud."

Both students and TAs commented on Bollinger's ability to fiercely question a student to keep them on point, and his intolerance for poorly thought-out or unarticulated answers. "He doesn't tolerate going off topic; he'll cut you off and force you to speak on the topic. He asks you a question, he wants the answer. It encourages such a good learning atmosphere," says Eaton.

CAN YOU REPEAT THE QUESTION?

List

Freedom of Speech & Press

do I have the "freedom" to leave if class runs 3 minutes over...?

Political Science W3285

Professor Lee C. Bollinger PREZBO

"make the case" - 'bo

Fall 2012 unusually flattering lightning

Oh god, there's more?

Halloween? Srsly? →

We will meet on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4:10 - 5:25pm in 501 S. Hermerhorn Hall. Attached you will find an initial and general outline of reading assignments for the semester. We will cover most of the Stone casebook on freedom of expression (Chapter VII). Texts also assigned are the 2012 Supplement Constitutional Law (Stone, et al.) and Uninhibited, Robust, and Wide-Open: A Free Press for a New Century (Bollinger). All books may be purchased at the Columbia University Barnes & Noble Bookstore. No Bookculture?? Capitol LRBOSS

Class attendance and participation are required. The essay-based midterm examination is scheduled during class on October 31<sup>st</sup>. The final examination will be scheduled during finals week, December 14<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> and will consist of essays and multiple choice questions. plz dont call on me

Texts

Stone, Geoffrey, et al. Constitutional Law, Sixth Edition ISBN 978-0-7355-7719-0 ughhh so heavy

Stone, Geoffrey, et al. 2012 Supplement Constitutional Law ISBN 978-145-481-0865

Bollinger, Lee C. Uninhibited, Robust, and Wide-Open: A Free Press for a New Century ISBN 978-0195304398 was actually taken from 2 real case - NYT v. Sullivan

Introduction: History and Theory 1017 - 1038 Prezbo off to Asia - TA's teach class

Advocacy of Illegal Conduct 1038 - 1076

Hostile Audience and Fighting Words 1076 - 1091

Obscenity 1172 - 1201 Prezbo said "fuck" in class!

Lewd and Indecent Speech 1201 - 1223 \* off. hours??

Hate Speech 1223 - 1254 \* Be short & concise

MIDTERM FM ughhh, but kind of allowed October 31<sup>st</sup>

Libel e.g. "Prezbo wears a toupee" 1128 - 1147

Privacy 1147 - 1152

Symbolic Speech 1325 - 1346

Public Forum Doctoring typo alert... unless it's some weird legal thing?? 1255 - 1305 ← all pgs = 2 hrs of reading

Regulation of Political Solicitation, Writ 1346 - 1384

Contribution, Expenditure, and Activity 1094 - 1106

Priority Restraint 1094 - 1106

<https://newcourseworks.columbia.edu/portal/tool/87?off427-8ea8-4f6b-b64e-23b00161196d/printFriendly> 1/2

From a student's perspective, the nerve-wracking prospect of being called on in class cultivates an intense environment—but only until you hear your name. The moment Bollinger finishes with the roster, Eaton explains, “those people are super zoned in, but if your name's not called it's almost like ‘oh, great, my name wasn't called so I can focus on something else.’ So when you walk into class there's a heightened sense of awareness, but then he doesn't call you, and then you go on Facebook.” Moore disagrees, saying that students are more serious than in other lectures, and that, “it's hard to step out of what he's saying.”

To an observer, the student dynamic feels fairly typical of any lecture. I counted one sleeping student, and someone in front of me kept furiously refreshing her Gmail. But the majority of participants seemed engaged and interested in what Bollinger had to say, and a slim percentage of students seemed to hang on his every word—which perhaps speaks less to the content of the class than the character of the man teaching it.

A local celebrity in his own right, Bollinger is an obvious draw. Moore admits that her interest in registering was partially because “it's PrezBo, and I thought that'd be cool.” Eaton agrees: “I think it's something people want to check off their bucket list.” But both also recognize him as a First Amendment heavyweight—an accomplishment substantiated by his frequent appearances in the assigned textbook.

“I've thought about this field [freedom of speech] for years and years, and I continue to think about it. In some ways, I can't stop thinking about it. So it's just part of me,” says Bollinger. Along with believing in the importance of the subject, and the importance of preventing academic administrators from “los[ing] touch with their field, their scholarly interests, their writing,” Bollinger says he teaches the class to relate to the student body.

“I think it's also very important for people who are in academic leadership positions to continue to connect with students. Tonight I'm having an undergraduate Fireside Chat, and those are wonderful, but I think you should do it in the way that is the core mission of the place—that is, teaching. I really feel it's integral to what it means to be a president of a university.” Bollinger admits that he is unable to hold office hours due to his administrative obligations. He does claim to “see students by appointment”—much to the surprise of several of his students. There is perhaps a distinction between how accessible Bollinger sees

himself, and how accessible his students think he is.

Freedom of Speech and Press runs on Bollinger's clock. Students cannot ruffle him, and he refuses to acknowledge chance distractions—such as an errant Snapple bottle rolling down the center aisle onto the floor beside him. Everything happens at his pace. He allows students to ask him a question at the beginning of class on anything—the reading, his opinion on a legal issue, or general life advice. This can be tiresome. Moore recalls once, “he spent half of the class talking about his own experience with the Supreme Court. It had nothing to do with what [reading] we did.”

But some students value Bollinger's digressions. Recently, a student asked him about taking time off before law school. According to Eaton, Bollinger “gave a really, really long answer, like a life guidance answer. In the end he advised you to take time off—he spoke about how you get into the routine of life, which you can't imagine now, but you will, and you'll fall into this pattern of life that's almost impossible to escape once you have children, and a wife, and so on.”

The mystique surrounding Bollinger extends to his classroom. Moore says that part of the reason why his method of teaching is so intimidating is because students are hyper-aware that he's not merely a professor, but the president of the entire University (this consciousness is perhaps reinforced by the presence of his personal bodyguard, who escorts him to and from class every day). Bollinger's class isn't just full of First Amendment enthusiasts; many sign up solely due to the President's reputation on campus, not his reputation in law books, and one CULPA review warns students about the “annoying PrezBo sycophants” that tend to populate the class. Bollinger says “many students” have asked him for recommendations (which he offers to write for anyone in his class)—reinforcing the notion that, to some, his name speaks more loudly than any well-cultivated relationship with a less famous professor. On the one hand, Eaton says, students want to impress him “because he is *the* First Amendment scholar—he's not just anyone teaching this material.” On the other hand, “he has a status. He comes in a suit, and a tie, and he's very professional-looking. Very regal, almost.”

Still, being Columbia royalty doesn't mean Bollinger can't crack a joke. He is not without a sense of humor, frequently (and somewhat gleefully) swear-



ing to illustrate free speech cases. He introduces hypothetical scenarios with statements such as, “I’m an occasional user of cocaine.” But he demands seriousness from his students, and keeps them on edge.

Kate Finke, a TA for the class pursuing a degree in communications, says she was taken aback by his self-deprecation; he regularly “make[s] jokes at his own expense.” Moore says she doesn’t have a “clear idea” about his personality: “He’s funny sometimes, but it’s a nerve-wracking type of funny. He’ll give you really funny hypothetical situations, like, ‘What if I were walking down the street and someone yelled, ‘You’re a stupid jerk, PrezBo!’ at me,’ but then he actually wants an answer that’s extremely serious, so it’s kind of disarming.” This tension between funny and serious is best illustrated when Bollinger concedes that students call him “PrezBo”—but only outside of class. In class? “Never.” He can, with a calm smirk, fluster students, asking follow-up questions like, “What do you mean by that?” and “Where are the cases?” During a recent class, one student stuttered to a stop and asked, “What’s the exact

question?”

It seems from his commitment to the class and desire to stay in touch with those who take it that Bollinger sincerely cares about his students. At the end of every semester, he invites his students to dinner at The President’s House on Morningside Drive, and he personally responded to grant an interview the same day I contacted him. But there is something about Bollinger—his reputation, perhaps, or his confident, unshakable demeanor—that demands respect and, often, makes him an uncriticizable character: you cannot trip him up, you will not stump him—and part of you doesn’t want to.

His generosity is tempered by his guarded exterior and distance from the student body at large, and perhaps the best summation of Bollinger’s character comes not from a student’s perspective, but from a personal anecdote. Once, Bollinger told the class that he used to read cases to his children as nursery rhymes when they were going to sleep. In the end, “it worked out well—they both went to good law schools.”♦



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# It's Getting Hot in Here

*An Engineering Ph.D. Endeavors to Cool down Claremont*

BY SOMER OMAR

Every winter, New York's steam-heated residential buildings catch a fever. The outdated heating technology provides one, uncontrolled gust of heat, a third of which will be wasted, leaving residents in significant discomfort. Marshall Cox, a Ph.D. candidate in electrical engineering and a Columbia housing tenant, rolled up his sleeves this summer and ventured to break the fever raging in Columbia's notoriously steamy residences.

"Used by Romans!" is how Cox decries the outmoded, steam heating method that much of Columbia housing uses. An artifact of obsolete technology from the early 20th century, the problem with this method of temperature adjustment is that the user loses control of how much steam heats your room; it operates on an all-or-nothing basis. Furthermore, double-paned windows, intended to reduce wasted energy, actually facilitate over-insulation and excess heating. The only way a resident can cool down his or her room is to open those windows, which annually wastes, Cox estimates, 400 million dollars worth of energy.

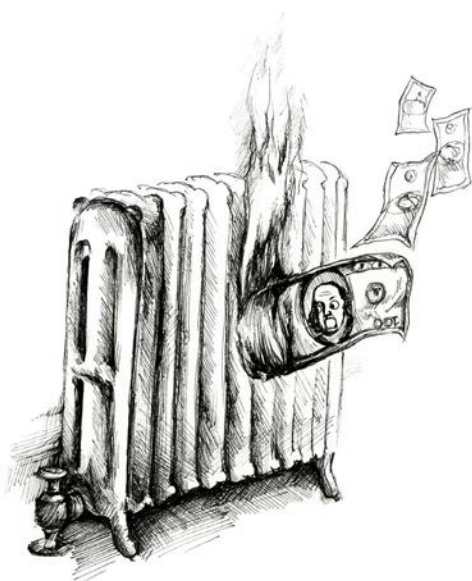
Cox, exasperated by the discomfort of dorm life, realized that the heating dilemma was an obstacle for other students living in Columbia housing. After speak-

ing to an academic advisor about potential solutions, he built a prototype of an instrument that would allow students to control their ancient and unforgiving radiators. He knew that to fix the overheating problem, he would need to engineer something that could better match the room's temperature to an appropriate amount of heat, instead of providing an overpowering blast. Currently, even the central system is uncontrollable.

The first step to fixing the problem was to program a device called an Arduino. This is an open-source computing platform that relies on an input-output linearity, meaning the user tells it how to react (output) depending on specific information it receives (input). Cox then installed fans on bottom of the radiator to distribute the machine's heat throughout the room. He establishes the temperatures of the room and radiator, respectively, as the input information for the Arduino processes and determines whether to activate the fans. If the radiator is hot and the room is cold, the Arduino will activate the fans, and if the room is already hot, the fans remain off.

Cox patented the heat-controlling mechanism through Columbia Tech Ventures (CTV). In most cases, entrepreneurial Columbia students would only patent their products through CTV if they used material or labs belonging to the University, but Cox designed and created the heating device independently. He nonetheless chose to patent the mechanism through CTV because, in exchange for branding the device a Columbia product, they filled out all the requisite patenting forms without charge.

After patenting what began as a relatively simple device, assembled with pocket money and material found in hardware stores (Arduinos only run about \$20), Cox's mechanism won the MIT Clean Energy Prize, a prestigious national competition, under the company name "Radiator Labs." His accomplishment drew a great deal of attention, especially from former Director of Environmental Stewardship at Columbia, Nilda Mesa, who helped to coordinate Cox's expansion into Columbia Housing. She saw an opportunity in the relationship between an ambitious entrepreneur and a housing system with chronic maintenance problems.



They agreed an undergraduate residence hall, and its residents, could be ideal candidates to test Cox's system.

Then came the email at the beginning of the school year: "Dear 47 Claremont Resident, Your building has been specially selected to test out a new technology..." A prewar building housing mostly sophomores and juniors, Claremont is notoriously plagued by severe temperatures, spews of steam, and rattling pipes. In the past few weeks, Cox and his team, which consists of himself, his twin brother, and two other engineers, manually installed prototypes of his sensors in every Claremont room to collect data about the current heat problems.

When asked about the recent installation, residents remain ambivalent. One senior still has "no idea what it is." The device's temperature regulation function will not be activated until January, however, so it may be a while before Columbia can gauge how appreciative students are for the chance to participate in this experiment. Nonetheless, if the prototype runs smoothly, Cox hopes to expand the mechanism to the rest of Columbia Housing and thereby save the University tens of thousands of dollars in wasted energy.

According to Cox, there are around 14 million apartments in the United States with dysfunctional heating systems and the vast majority of these are heated

with steam. He reckons the borough of Manhattan alone accounts for about 20 percent of the country's steam heating systems, which is not surprising given the city's high concentration of prewar buildings. He estimates that the U.S. annually loses upwards of five billion dollars worth of fuel, or about 0.5 percent of our national expenditure on oil. Overheating is a massive energy problem nationwide. Ironically, change has been slow because steam-powered radiators are extremely difficult and expensive to convert to the more modern and less wasteful hydroponic heating mechanism.

Cox's device could very well solve this widespread problem. Moreover, if the prototype in Claremont goes well, Cox could stand to become enormously successful by selling the mechanism to other large universities, or even to various city residential complexes. His venture is a welcome alternative to the popular Internet-based start-ups that have multiplied in recent years (recall the redundancy of a profusion of textbook exchange sites). The DIY approach, and focus on a local issue, stand to show all Columbia students that if there is a problem, it is possible to be proactive. Cox doesn't need to couch his project in terms of a grand narrative of brilliant invention. To him, it's straightforward: "I'm an engineer, so I just built something."♦

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ONLY FOR COLUMBIA STUDENTS

# The Battle of Harlem Heights

*History's Eminent Domain*

BY WILL HOLT

Heading up Broadway from Columbia's main gates, the neighborhood gets quieter. The bustling foot traffic around 116th Street dies down, and the chatter of conversation is largely replaced by the sounds of passing cars. With Hamilton Heights sloping up in the distance, one can almost imagine what this part of the city looked like before buildings were constructed, before the network of streets and sidewalks spread out across the rolling hills and valleys of the Hudson shore.

Along the stretch of pavement across the street from Barnard, a bronze plaque is embedded into the southwest corner of Columbia's Mathematics building. Measuring about six square feet, it was once the same green that colors the roofs of the Morningside Heights campus. Now, the plaque has been weathered down to a dull, metallic brown.

Carved in relief at the center of the plaque, a soldier stands in the midst of a battle scene. He brandishes his sword, leading a charge of men in motley uniform against an enemy better dressed and superiorly organized. There is nonetheless a sense of optimism about the image, with its impression of rally and imminent victory. The words engraved along the base of the plaque are barely legible from more than a few feet away: "To commemorate the Battle of Harlem Heights, won by Washington's troops in this site, September 16, 1776. Erected by the Sons of

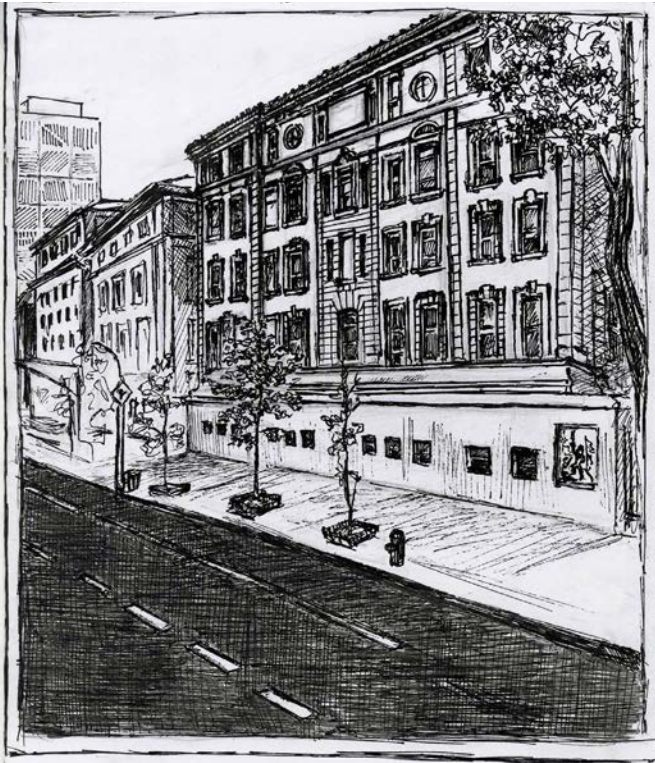
the Revolution in the State of New York."

Installed in 1897, this plaque stands as one of this neighborhood's few reminders that it hosted one of the pivotal battles of the early American Revolution.

The text offers a date and a few reverential lines about the battle but little else of substance. On the surface, its depiction is correct. The Battle of Harlem Heights occurred on September 16, 1776, but it was no outright victory for the Americans. It can be better remembered as an opportunity for our fledgling nationalists to save face.

The Battle of Harlem Heights occurred just one day after the Continental Army was largely disgraced at the Battle of Kip's Bay. That early skirmish along the East River was an embarrassment for General Washington's forces, one that had the potential to sink American morale for good. Under heavy artillery fire coming from British warships on the river, the Americans on shore panicked and ran from their posts without firing

a single shot. Washington had no choice but to make his own retreat northward. The British took southern Manhattan while the Americans fled to what was then called Harlem Heights and is now Morningside. It was here that they made one of their first substantive assaults against the Redcoats, but the reality of the battle hardly



*Illustration by Leila Mgaloblishvili*

lives up to patriotic folklore.

Much of the fighting in the Battle of Harlem Heights took place around present-day 120th Street, just west of Columbia University's Upper West Side campus. American forces met the British near 106th, and were pressed as far north as 125th, at which point the Americans, under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Knowlton, broke off the skirmish rather than risk a full engagement. Even so, the battle was decisive in restoring confidence among the soldiers of the Continental Army. It also marks the first real instance of cohesion for forces directly under Washington's command; the trajectory of his career would not have been the same without it.

The American losses, however, were numerous. Knowlton, widely considered to be America's first wartime intelligence expert, fell in the conflict. It is his decorated image immortalized on the worn, bronze plaque outside Mathematics.

Henry Phelps Johnston's 1897 study of that day, *The Battle of Harlem Heights, September 16, 1776*, describes the skirmish as "one of those minor successes in

our Revolutionary War which counted for much in stimulating the drooping spirits of the American soldier or in effectually disturbing the plans of the enemy." According to Johnston, the battle ranged "up and down hill and over fields and fences and through lanes and orchards"—a profoundly different Morningside Heights from that which we know today.

This work points out an important fact: a satisfying account of the Battle of Harlem Heights has long been missing. The parameters of the battle's physical site are fixed with only the slightest degree of certainty. Some sources are quick to mention that much of the fighting took place in a buckwheat field in the area that is now occupied by Barnard. Johnston, however, describes the location as "heavily timbered" and notes that the existence of such a field is only "alleged."

The names applied to this area in various accounts of the battle are often at odds. A report from General William Howe, commander of the British forces, describes a planned approach "by way of Vandewater's Height"—by which he most likely means Vandewater's farm, now Morningside (the Vanderwaters

were the Dutch family that originally owned the area). Furthermore, any mention of "Claremont Hill" in such accounts probably refers to the current site of Grant's Tomb. This location was later known as Mt. Alto, which happened to be the "country place" of Johnston's uncle, Bache McEvers. Where horses and other livestock once trod, now the double-decker buses of CitySights NY lumber, though one can safely bet that the tour guards aren't going to mention either Knowlton or McEvers.

Descriptions of what exactly constituted the "Harlem Heights" of Revolutionary fame are nebulous at best. But then, New York has never been known for preserving its past. There is a world of difference between the City That Never Sleeps and its neighbors, Philadelphia and Boston—both renowned for their monumental homages to the Revolutionary War. This

**The definitive constant  
of New York is change:  
a perennial plowing-  
over of the city's his-  
tory, a blinkered charge  
into the future.**

is the kind of place where an office building from the 1930s can be referred to as "old New York," and a neighborhood like Morningside Heights can apply for historic designation largely on the basis of buildings constructed at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Perhaps this isn't so terrible. Kenneth Jackson, Columbia's Jacques Barzun Professor in History and the Social Sciences and author of *The Encyclopedia of New York*, ranks among the city's preeminent historians. Relative to Boston and Philadelphia, he does not hesitate in offering a rather high estimation of Gotham's value to the historian.

"New York is much more historic than either of those cities," Jackson said. "Philadelphia may have been more significant at the time of the Revolution, but New York was what was fought over. Boston was where the thing started, where you have Bunker Hill and Lexington and Concord, but both sides really struggled for control of New York."

"Now the important things have decamped from Boston and Philadelphia," he went on to say. "The competition's coming from places like London or Tokyo. Just for example, neither Boston nor Philadelphia has a major bank. The Revolution was their moment. They're clearly very important cities, but they're not what they expected to be."

In downtown Boston or Philly, it's impossible to walk for fifteen minutes without running into a

Benjamin Franklin impersonator in newly-fashioned colonial garb and bifocal glasses from LensCrafters. Independence Hall and the Old State House may be two of the oldest public buildings in the United States, but they are ultimately nothing more than tourist attractions. One may wax eloquent about “living histories,” but does this not cheapen the histories of these two great American cities?

Jackson described this situation as follows: “Until the last half-century, history was for the losers. New York did not have time to worry about the past. It was always moving forward. Immigration, transportation, architecture—in any field you can think of, New York has been at the forefront.”

As an enduring testament to change before all else, New York is perhaps the more suitable city for the student of history. This reading of New York features prominently in a piece that appeared in the *New York Times* on November 11, 2011, in which novelist Colson Whitehead reflects upon the sheer subjectivity of the average Joe’s definition of *his* New York.

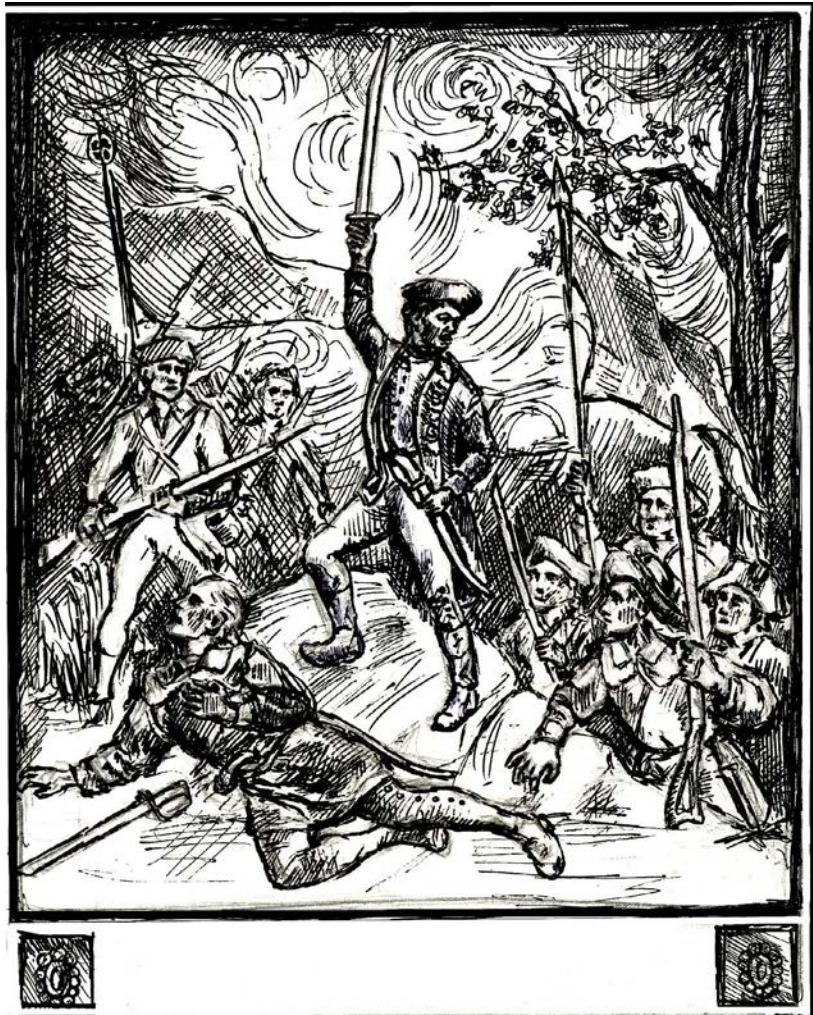
“No matter how long you have been here,” Whitehead writes, “you are a New Yorker the first time you say, ‘That used to be Munsey’s’ or ‘That used to be the Tic Toc Lounge.’”

To call this “living in the past” would be a misinterpretation of Whitehead’s meaning. Rather, it is having one’s finger on the pulse of a city that is continually reinventing itself. The definitive constant of New York is change: a perennial plowing-over of the city’s history, a blinkered charge into the future.

However, Jackson was quick to warn that the forces at play in Boston and Philadelphia have begun to make their way to New York.

“Now we’re more concerned about the city’s history,” he said. “Keeping things the way they are—which is a problem. You have excessive concern with historic preservation. Change was always the great thing about New York, but now people want to freeze it. If we can’t build something more important than what’s already here, what does that say about us?”

We should be relieved that historical reenactments of The Battle of Harlem Heights do not interrupt our daily walks to class. The plaque on Columbia’s Mathematics building, neglected as it seems, offers a more useful reminder of this city’s history: the chance to imagine that history without becoming fixated on the past, like Boston or Philadelphia. New Yorkers can still look up from the shore of the Hudson and say, “That used to be Mt. Alto; that used to be Vandewater’s farm; and this used to be Harlem Heights.”♦



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Fly away from the hustle and bustle of the city into this LUXURY abode

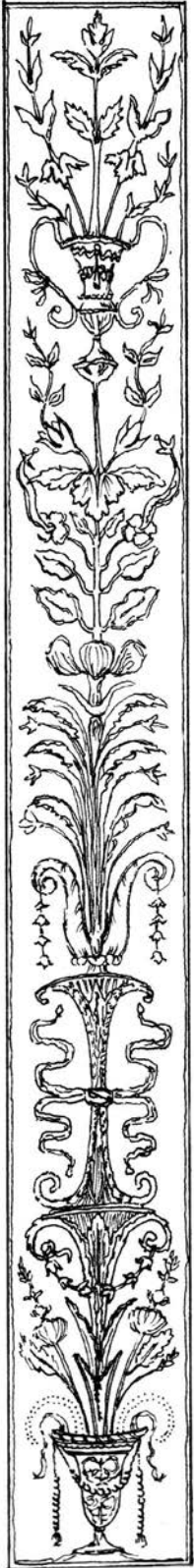
- \* Recently renovated, with fresh mud, dry twigs, and lint from a small freshman's cardigan
- \*Nest sure to make "dat beak" drop
- \*8th branch fly-up boasts bird's eye views of Riverside Park & Hudson River
- \*Local dining options include plenty overconfident squirrels, fatass pigeons, and Koronets krust©
- \*Oversized nest fits the whole family, with room for up to 12 eggs

- \*cats are NOT ok - purr
- \*it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
- \*Location: COLUMBIA (1 TRAIN)
- \*Fee Disclosure: \$50 Credit Check/3x Rent To Move-In
- Listed By: HAWKMA (216)-QUENHAWK



College Walk ([google map](#)) ([yahoo map](#))

- it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests



# MEASURE FOR MEASURE

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## AT SEVEN, SCHOOL

My first smart  
snapped like a windstorm,  
swelled on my skin,  
burnt umber and coal.  
Then, I never thought  
so much pain could exist  
hidden in limbs,  
tucked into tendons.  
I know more now –  
the pain of coffin lids,  
of doors locked shut –  
of us.  
Somehow, we always remember  
our firsts, like they were carved  
into our backs:  
those first curling scars.

–Emma Stein



# MEASURE FOR MEASURE

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## SAVANT

Feeling split in two: like a ruffled sundress caught on a branch,  
and you twist free, your body dappled with air.

When did you first leave?  
When did you first lie awake at night, sleepless in the weight of skin?  
Because the air conditioner kept you up: and you lay awake,  
because skin weighs too much: skin unclothed and sweating.

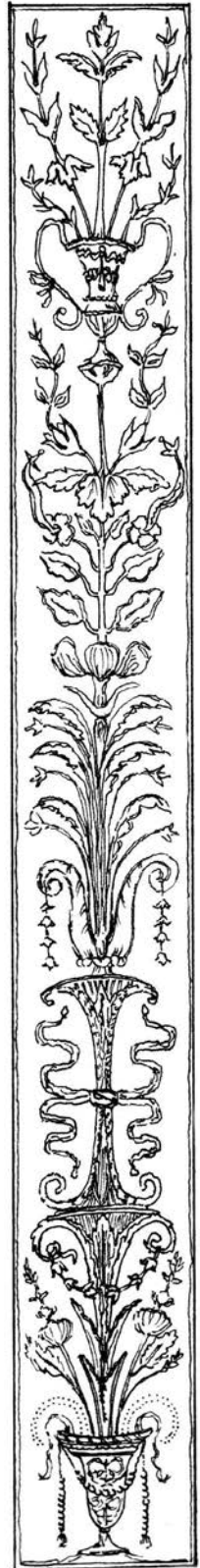
The first time we spoke,  
the words beaded up on your fingertips  
and slid down and congealed at our feet, lost in the folds of your dress.

In the cab that day, outside of the station, you looked at a vendor,  
you told me, “He must not have a family, but if he does,  
at least they’re well fed.”  
And you ran your hand up my thigh and looked me in the lips.

Feeling came first: skin on skin and weight,  
bottomless weight, that tangled itself in the bunched folds of your dress.  
You asked, “Should I just take it off?” And I said,

“Yes.”  
There will always be that space in between words,  
where silence draws us on like the smell of perfume.

—*Devin Choudhury*



# Post No Bills

## *Barnard's Restrictive New Flyering Policy*

BY AUGUSTA HARRIS

Visitors to the Barnard quad will notice something different in the buildings' elevators. Freshly painted and newly endowed with buttons that actually light up when pushed, the elevators exhibit one even more jarring difference: the absence of flyers that once papered the walls.

Walls covered with ads for cheap textbooks and free pizza are part of the undergraduate experience. They are the crucial props used to legitimize every "college" movie. But on September 10, Barnard's Housing department sent the entire student body an email announcing new changes to the college's posting policy that severely restrict flyering. The blast stressed the policy shift as a safety measure intended to prevent an alleged "fire safety hazard."

First, the updated policy limits the placement of flyers: "No postings are allowed inside of elevators, on elevator doors, or on the area around the outside of elevator doors (where the call buttons are)." In the words of Rachel Ferrari, BC '13 and Representative for College Relations for the Student Government Association (SGA): "Quad elevators are crucial." They keep first-years informed and involved. Web campaigns target specific groups, and when updates are made on short notice, there is no guarantee that potential attendees will happen to see the change.

The policy also vaguely insinuates that "student organizations may be liable for violations of

the Posting Policy." The definition of "liable" is left to question, as is the severity of the threat posed to student groups.

The policy feels particularly calculated considering its ostensible focus on fire safety. There have been exactly zero fires caused by stray flyers in Barnard's collective memory. When asked multiple times over two weeks, the administration failed to provide any paperwork demonstrating the hazard that flyers pose to fire safety and denied such paperwork's existence outright.

Student Life refused several inquiries about the process of appraising posters and administering punishments for flyering. According to the policy, "Any alleged violations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis." Amy Zavadil, Title IX and Community Conduct Director at Barnard, would not discuss the bases upon which such cases would be judged.

Fire hazards seem to be a reasonable concern—but the policy regulates the content of flyers, as well as their location,

mandating that "all postings [...] be approved." Students must visit the third floor of the Diana to have their flyers authorized by Student Life.

Many student groups view the new requirements as an unnecessary obstacle to getting out their message. "You hand them your flyer and they read it over creepily thoroughly," said Audrey Massman, BC '14 and Minister of Propaganda of the Philolexian



Society. “It’s really a pain in the ass to go to the third floor of the Diana because we flyer for our weekly meetings. Barnard is only getting every other week,” she said. Columbia’s campus sees a more diverse collection of flyers. And they see them weekly.

But according to Zavdil, the new policy is a means of streamlining the flyering process. “Those wishing to have a flyer or poster approved can have a member of the Student Life Office quickly review the sign. The process has been running smoothly and so far no postings have been denied approval,” she wrote in an email.

She goes on to say that the Student Life Office is “looking to make sure that [flyers are] compliant and [do not] contain profanity, vulgarity, or derogatory statements directed at a person or group, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.” This, unlike that of the fire hazard minimization, is a more probable reason why Student Life is regulating the content of flyers.

The administration ignores two basic principles of undergraduate life: firstly, the last-minute tendency of students who will not find the time to get flyers approved; and secondly, the much more important idea that universities ought to incubate free speech—a notion dear to President Bollinger.

“Sometimes we make jokes that are weird, and I’m scared to get the flyers approved,” said Massman. “Not because Barnard students are not capable [of appreciating the jokes], but because I don’t want someone hovering over me while I have to get the flyer approved. I’ve only taken them very boring flyers.”



The origin of this new policy is hard to identify. Discussion about the update began in the spring of last year, according to Ferrari. The former posting policy still referred to the Diana Center by its previous student union iteration, “The McIntosh Center.” Clearly it was in need of updating. Malvina Kefalas, BC ’14 and Vice President of Communications for SGA, said that the policy changes began during discussions with facilities.

In fine print, changes to the posting protocol have far less to do with fire risks or updating names than with policing content. On Barnard’s Finance

and Operations website, the official policy runs a lengthy nine-points over two pages, and speaks to the college’s desire “to uphold the aesthetics of our campus.” Zavdil went on to add that the policy comes “in response to student concerns about overcrowded bulletin boards.” Zavdil added, “To clarify, Barnard does not have a ‘censorship policy,’ but rather a ‘Posting Policy.’”

Zavdil and other administrators also expressed concern regarding the fire-safety hazard posed by stray flyers. “We are not aware of fires caused by flyers but posting inside elevators is not allowed, per the admonition of fire department officials who inspected the campus elevators and determined that posters present a fire hazard,” said Zavdil. Sun Min, Barnard College Media Relations Director, echoed Zavdil in a more blunt fashion, saying that posting in the elevators presents a danger which “[s]eems

**Fire hazards seem to be a reasonable concern—but the policy regulates the content of flyers, as well as their location.**

straightforward and I think your readers will find that makes perfect sense.”

Though there have been no flyer fires at Barnard, there is at least one documented at Columbia: on the night of Friday November 5, 2010, a Carman resident reported a late-night case of arson at the seventh floor bulletin boards. Despite this, Columbia’s policy remains accomodating.

Back at Barnard, however, there is much more work to be done. Where facilities once routinely removed an entire wall of flyers every few days in one clean sweep, workers are now required to sort through posters, check for the requisite stamp, examine the stamp’s expiration date, and remove any offending flyers. “We question how enforceable this policy is,” Ferrari said, regarding the workforce needed to do this job sufficiently.

Members of Student Life are saddled with the additional responsibility of approving and stamping posters. How exactly these posters are evaluated remains unclear—higher-ups in the group did not allow the students in Student Life to be interviewed.



How is it that this policy, which hinders the capacity of student groups to creatively advertise on Barnard’s campus, slipped past students’ noses? Where was student leadership? Apparently the SGA was as clue-

less as the student body until housing sent out the email. The only groups clued in about the new policy, besides housing, were Student Life, Title IX, and Facilities.

In Spring, Sarah Steinmann, VP of Student Activities, sat on a committee to discuss the updated policy but was not asked to attend a meeting after May. Most significant decisions for this policy were made over the summer.

JungHee Hyun, BC '13 and Committee Chair for the Representative Council, said at the September 24 SGA meeting, "We were engaged at the beginning, but then we were backside during the process."

As of September 21, Kefalas seemed convinced that this policy is likely to change next semester. "We should not have undue anxiety about the stringency of the posting policy before we know its staying power and before we attempt to work to resolve the issues students may have with it," she said.

However, the issue was raised suddenly, and change to the policy may be closer than a semester away. On October 21, 2012, the Executive Board of the Student Governing Board (SGB) announced on its Facebook page that it had "voted to not comply with Barnard College's Student Life office's Posting Policy."

The statement criticized the Barnard administration for failing to consult either the SGB or SGA, and for setting the policy in place over the summer. It continued: "Administrative screening of student speech prevents an uninhibited, robust, and wide-open market of free expression on Columbia's campus."

According to the statement, Student Life enacted the policy in part "to actively prevent the

occurrence of 'bias incidents'," a reason no Barnard administrator offered to *The Blue & White*. The policy does not mention fire hazards.

The next day, the Activities Board of Columbia (ABC) joined the SGB in its non-compliance. In an email to all ABC groups, ABC President Saketh Kalathur, CC '13, promised that ABC would accept full liability for any sanctions Student Life placed on a group for disregarding the posting policy.

The day after that meeting the SGA held its weekly meeting, part of which was devoted to discussion of the quietly-enacted flyering policy, which was suddenly in the spotlight. Kalathur spoke, as did David Fine, CC '13 and SGB chair.

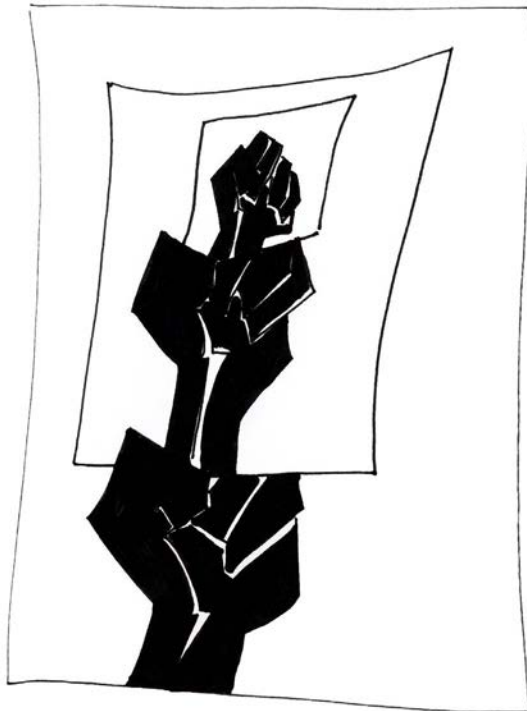
Fine noted that the SGB represents 100 Barnard-recognized groups and emphasized the need "to force the issue." Student Life, he said, "wouldn't change the policy until next semester. [...] To my board, that is not acceptable."

Kalathur told the room that "we asked groups to post as you please," he said. "ABC will take full responsibility for the sanctions."

When contacted by email after the SGA meeting, Kefalas said that she did not have "any real knowledge other than what SGA

was explicitly transparent about," which was the same thing Student Life has been explicit about: this policy, which is "not censorship," will be reviewed next semester.

Students and administrators should look to Barnard's mission: "Living and learning in this unique environment, Barnard students become agile, resilient, responsible, and creative, prepared to lead and serve their society," and consider how closely this policy aligns with such a core value of the college.♦



# Some Assembly Required

*What the Northwest Corner Building Can Teach Columbia About Manhattanville*

BY CONOR SKELDING

“Did you know there’s a 15-story coffee shop by Pupin?” asked a bumbling but blunt Dean Valentini in last spring’s 118th annual Varsity Show.

Most undergraduates visit the northwest corner of campus to disburse disposable income at Joe the Art of Coffee. Some attend class in the building’s single lecture hall or study in the Science and Engineering Library. And although only a few (relative to those who associate it with a high-ceilinged espresso bar) consciously consider the building an interdisciplinary science center, that is its intended purpose.

As the University planned and built the Northwest Corner Building, the central administration deliberately considered and tested the physical and academic planning processes. Whatever could be learned from the new science building would be put to work further uptown. As one University Senate report put it, the Northwest Corner Building was a “training run” for the ongoing Manhattanville development, President Bollinger’s signature project, and part of his ongoing effort to remake Columbia as a “global university.”

A Senate committee was tasked with following the process and understanding the intersection between physical and academic planning at the Northwest Corner Building. But the committee had one eye on another interdisciplinary project: the Manhattanville campus. They recommended that the Northwest Corner Building’s physical planning process be emulated at Manhattanville, but that academic planning be better managed. Though intended to bring together diverse disciplines, the Northwest Corner Building still has no guiding institute or director. Instead, its labs are partially filled by several departments, without, for the most part, explicit cross-fertilization.

The Northwest Corner Building was also conceived of as a bridge to Manhattanville: an article in *Columbia University Record* explains that the clear glass room on the building’s top floor “acts as a beacon toward the neighborhood and Columbia’s

new Manhattanville campus.” It is so: from the “beacon,” one can see cranes at work uptown. Situated across campus from South Field and the inward-looking seminar rooms of the original plans of the architectural firm McKim, Mead, and White, the Northwest Corner Building was intended to “face outward” toward West Harlem and Manhattanville, as Bollinger told the *The New York Times* in 2008.

## THE BRIEF LABOR OF THE NORTHWEST CORNER BUILDING

The 2001-2002 Annual Report of the University Senate’s Physical Development Committee delivers the conclusions of the Science Space Group (SSG), a faculty committee of the Physical Development Committee (PDC). The Phong Report, the SSG’s final product, recommended that a new science building be raised “on the northwest corner of the Morningside campus.” The idea was not new; as early as 1924, McKim, Mead, and White drew up plans for a science tower on 120th St.

According to a USenate staffer, “there do not seem to be annual reports for that committee [the PDC] for 2003, 2004, 2005, or 2006.” (The 2006 report was eventually located.) In the first three of these less-accounted-for years, two more committees reported that lack of lab space, in quality and in quantity, was hindering Columbia’s scientific research and faculty recruiting.

Given the dearth of annual reports, it is fitting that in Academic Year 2005-2006, the PDC, tasked with reporting on “the intersection of physical development and academic planning,” “decided to take a different and more systematic approach to its work.”

Rather than “talk generally” about several buildings, the PDC intended to tell one building’s story thoroughly and holistically. The Northwest Corner Building, they declared, was the “natural choice,” as it had only recently been begun, but was far enough along to be examined.

The PDC’s comprehensive report, issued February 23, 2007, was titled, “An Examination into

the Physical Development Decision-Making Process: The Northwest Corner Case Study.” It looked backward over the “training run” so far, and advised how decisions might be better made uptown.

The Case Study narrates how swiftly the idea of an interdisciplinary science building ascended from faculty committees to the Trustees: in June 2004, the Trustees approved the Northwest Corner Building along with the rest of the 2005-2009 Five Year Plan, which strategically delineated the University’s major construction projects for those years. It stood apart from the other Plan’s projects in that it fell short of the important criteria that “[f]inancing [be] in place.” Years later, at the April 11, 2008 Senate meeting, Bollinger “said construction is proceeding before all needed funds have been raised, though there has been an anonymous \$20 million gift for this purpose.” As the recession began, funding became a major problem.

In early 2005, Bollinger selected Rafael Moneo as the architect (who, the PDC took care to note, “asked that there be more faculty involvement [with physical planning].”) Three years later, in the summer of 2007, Columbia broke ground. Four years after that, *The New York Times* reviewed the building. The review called Moneo “a priestlike figure” and the building “a work of healing.”

#### A LACK OF TRANSPARENCY

Though the report found the planning process had been “[i]n many ways [...] exemplary,” it made a point of criticizing it in two ways: firstly, for insufficient communication between the administration and faculty and secondly, for a lack of administrative transparency.

The review cited one administrative mishap as emblematic of both concerns. In 2003, then-Provost Alan Brinkley issued to faculty a request for proposals (RFP) for future research that might be undertaken in a new science building. Predictably, the faculty promptly produced a slew of suggestions. The committee found the request for RFPs “admirable,” but it noted that by 2007 “there has been little subsequent communication with the faculty regarding

the outcome of that process”—and no communication at all between 2003 and 2005. The RFP’s robust bottom-up flow of information was not matched top-down, resulting in, among other gaffes, “faucets without sinks.”

But this lack of faculty consultation had a more serious repercussion than sinkless faucets (indeed, faculty in the Northwest Corner Building were eager to note that such infrastructural errata were quickly corrected). Administrative opacity and indifference to faculty consultation put the driving interdisciplinary vision of the building in jeopardy.

In November 2010, two residents of the building, Rafael Yuste, Professor of Biology, and Ken Shepard, Professor of Electrical Engineering, were brought into the Senate by the Campus Planning and Physical Development (CPPD) Committee. The pair called for “some kind of Center” to govern the building as other laboratories were

governed. The center would ensure that the building fostered interdisciplinary research, rather than simply housed professors from different departments. In the same month, biology professor and Northwest Corner Building researcher Brent Stockwell told the *Spectator*, “I was advocating for that. Many of us were.” Faculty had been lobbying for such an institute since the building’s planning stages.

Yuste told *The Blue & White* in an email that the lab space is being allocated “without an overall plan or vision.” If the building is to be “more than the sum of its parts”—to follow its initial interdisciplinary vision—Yuste believes that, “it is necessary to create an institute with a director and a mission to harness the interdisciplinary talent at the university and coordinate the research activities, fundraising, grant writing and new strategic hiring into the available NWC space.”

The pervasive lack of funding for the project hindered the formation of such an institute. In November 2010, David Hirsh, then Executive Vice President for Research, told *Spec* that “it takes, in my view, funding we simply don’t have to support an institute structure.” Executive Vice President for Arts & Sciences Nicholas Dirks took the position that if a Northwest Corner institute existed it could not

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“While there may be a capital project development process at Columbia, it is little understood by players outside of that process.”

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“both strengthen the departments and strengthen interdisciplinary science.” That is, an interdisciplinary institute would undermine departmental independence.

The faculty of the PDC found fault with this. Though it recognized the need for senior administrators to be able to act “unencumbered by excessive bureaucracy,” it ultimately espoused a commitment to faculty oversight. The report insists that the Senate was founded “to protect the interests and concerns of the internal community and in order to provide a forum for necessary deliberation.” Throughout the Northwest Corner Building’s planning and development, faculty did not know how to make their voices heard, or where decisions were being made. “While there may be a capital project development process at Columbia,” the report drily determined, “it is little understood by players outside of that process.”

Brinkley, who stepped down as provost in 2009, recalled that, “I know David [Hirsch, former Executive Vice President for Research] continued to talk to faculty, but I’m not sure that there was as much communication as there was in years before [the 2003 RFP].” This is the lack of top-down communication that the PDC review cited.

“Money was a big problem,” he added. The recession of the late 2000s made it hard to populate the labs and necessitated the postponement of long overdue renovations the faculty had expected, especially in Pupin. It also made necessary cosmetic sacrifices. In addition, when Arts & Sciences had trouble raising the money to hire new faculty, floors

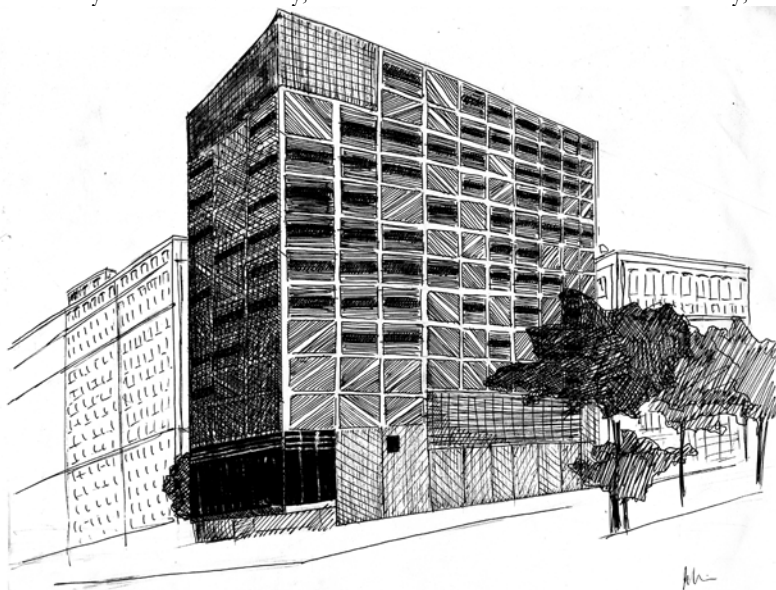
were effectively sold off to whichever department could raise and hand over the \$1-2 million necessary to install a professor soonest. To this day, floors 10 and 11 are unfinished, though they’re assigned to the Physics and Chemistry departments, respectively.

Overall Brinkley doesn’t “think this was a bad process.” On “any project like this you’re going to have troubles, here and there. But I think this was a very good thing to do.” He concluded: “I think the only problem with it is that it’s not big enough, but it’s as big as you can get it on the campus, and you know the really big buildings are going to come in Manhattanville.”

#### LESSONS LEARNED DOWNTOWN, BROUGHT UPTOWN

A June 2010 report of the Campus Planning Task Force is entitled “Manhattanville and Academic and Physical Planning at Columbia University.” Referencing the PDC’s 2007 report, the CPPD noted that its mandate had been expanded to encompass “both academic planning and oversight of the physical plant,” the two items the PDC comprehensively studied, at the Northwest Corner Building.

This new report identified “lessons learned” from the construction of the Northwest Corner building which would be applied at Manhattanville. The CPPD called for: transparent governance; a two-way flow of information between faculty and administrators, and a timely response to faculty suggestions; and, uncharacteristically, that planning should seek the best return for the University, “even if that is not



measured in dollar terms.”

In September of this year, the CPPD concluded, as faculty had, that the Northwest Corner Building “needs the kind of oversight a department would normally exert over its own space,” and announced that an interdisciplinary institute was finally in the works. It also explained that renovations in Pupin are underway.

The Executive Vice President for Research, Michael Purdy, reflected on what was learned. “I think we learned that there is a lot more science programmatic planning needed.” Noting that “the construction process was excellent” at both sites, at Manhattanville, Purdy intends to match robust infrastructural process management with research management. He said, “We need to do programmatic planning for science and research with the same degree of thoroughness, and I think we are a position to do that in the Greene science center,” home to the Mind, Brain, and Behavior Institute, the first Manhattanville project. Purdy also confirmed the existence of a nascent Northwest institute: “[W]e’ve had conversations with the faculty in the Northwest Corner Building about the creation of one or more [interdisciplinary] institutes. This is a central part of the Arts & Sciences strategic planning effort.”

To that end, though the MBBI will not open until June 2016, an institute is already organized. Purdy explained that many top-level faculty are

already on board, and that Tom Jessel, professor at CUMC and co-director of the MBBI, is a communicative and cooperative leader. There is time and intent for faculty to be more included in the process, he said. “You’ve got to build consensus support for everything, you’ve got to have everybody supporting the decisions, and that takes time,” he added.

Moreover, according to *Columbia Magazine*, the generous Greene family donated \$250 million to the MBBI in March 2006—two years before Bollinger announced the anonymous \$20 million donation for the still-unfunded Northwest Corner Building. Purdy said that his office is still searching for a donor.

Dialogue between planners, funders, and researchers appears as though it’s set to improve. “Communicating internally, within this university, is a challenge,” Purdy conceded. He aims to address this challenge: in addition to an executive committee chaired by himself and Jessel, and including researchers across faculties, Purdy said that “we are in the final stages of the search of an executive director for the Mind, Brain institute.” Within six to 12 months, Purdy estimates, a small staff will be fully devoted to the MBBI, and will have “time to communicate with everybody, make sure everybody knows what’s going on, make sure all the decision making processes we use are transparent, and hopefully have a better process.”♦

—*Additional reporting by Sally Gao, CC ’16, Luca Marzorati, CC ’15, and Angelica Modabber, BC ’16.*

### Glossary

**2010 Campus Planning Task Force Report:** studied the intersection of academic and physical planning at Manhattanville

**2007 PDC Report:** examined the planning and construction of the Northwest Corner Building; lauded the construction but cited a lack of administrative transparency and communication

**Campus Planning and Physical Development (CPPD) Committee:** the new committee resulting from the April 2010 merger of the CPTF and PDC

**Campus Planning Task Force (CPTF):** ad-hoc committee founded in 2003 to provide for faculty and student participation in Manhattanville; absorbed by the PDC

**Executive Vice President for Research:** reports directly to the President; has overall responsibility for a broad spectrum of research projects in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities

**Mind, Brain, and Behavior Initiative:** will open in June 2016 at the Jerome L. Greene Science Center; one of the first ventures at the new Manhattanville Campus

**Physical Development Committee (PDC):** established by the Senate to monitor the intersection between physical and academic planning in new construction, and how new construction affects the non-Columbia community

**University Senate:** University-wide legislature that represents faculty, students, and other interests, and that rules on a broad range of issues; the Trustees must approve Senate decisions.



# Radiohead

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## *A Conversation with Ben Young*

BY CLAIRE SABEL

*The director of WKCR-FM, Ben Young, CC '92, is known at Columbia's student-run station by the moniker HBA. From this vantage point the jazz historian has overseen generations of student programmers serve, as he once did, and continues to do, the station's mission to broadcast "The Alternative." The "other names" that Young bestows on the station's student DJs (including yours truly, Corn-Wolf), are just a small part of what goes into making WKCR a world apart from Columbia, and a renowned New York City institution.*

*The Blue & White:* So, why do you give people nicknames?

Ben Young: Pfff I don't know if I give people nicknames, I observe the nicknames that, in the best cases, come along with people from their earlier times or that are elicited by their actions. Every once in a while I might be the primary conduit for somebody to have a nickname. But I don't know, I guess I dig 'em. There's partly—You know we have a jazz saying, 'Necessity is mutha—'

*B&W:* Could you spell 'mutha' please?

BY: M-U-T-H-A. At various points there have been multiple people with the same first name in close quarters at the station [WKCR]. My name for instance was shared by five, count them five, other people at the station in 2006. So it would have been silly for us to have not differentiated ourselves by assigning names to others.

*B&W:* At what point did you start going by a name other than your own?

BY: I think we all have nicknames all the way back, you know, of some sort. The lasting one that people use for me now, here, goes back about fifteen years, I think, something like that. I was in a work environment once where that was bestowed. Lots of people with strange names in that environment, 'Pork Chop' and the like.

*B&W:* What kind of work environment was that?

BY: I worked for a record company, for a jazz record company, I was the director of research at Verve Records.

*B&W:* Has either the culture or the purpose of the station changed since the time when you were an undergrad to the time that you direct and marshal us undergrads?

BY: That's a good question. The answer has to be yes. But, in the long view of history we probably would remark more on the things that haven't changed more than the things that have changed. And also that there's probably less change in the last twenty years than there was in the last thirty or forty years. Yeah...things are different a little bit, the purpose or the mission of KCR in the most fundamental way is not really changed.

*B&W:* What about in terms of audience? There have to be less kids now, at Columbia, listening to the radio, then there were when you were a kid at Columbia listening to the radio.

BY: Yeah, but then again, the drop off was much steeper before I was here than since I was here. Even in my time, it was hard to find a non-KCR involved person who was sitting around at home listening to KCR.

We've probably been losing ground on the core of listeners in New York, because more and more people are coming into New York who wouldn't care—who are not seasoned New Yorkers, not people who grew up with the music. Those people, the cats who would remember the music of the 40s, 50s, and

60s—that was the new music that KCR was onto in its first years—they’re obviously dying out. They’re a dying breed and they’re being replaced probably not as fast as you’d wish, and by people who come from different places. Just like the general geographic turnover of New York, folks move here from other places. So that’s part of the transition, and the usual change of how it is that people listen to us.

*B&W:* What’s your understanding of the WKCR brand within the Columbia community? Because it’s pretty well-established outside of the Columbia community.

*BY:* Yeah, it’s multifarious, strange, always frustrating, I think. And to try to qualify all those things, from the end backwards: For a lot of people on campus, while they’re head-down doing their studies, music is a functional thing, and this I think is still the majority of people on campus. [Music] is what you listen to to get you through the day, getting from point to point, exercising, whatever. And that’s kind of a different viewpoint from where we’re coming from. We’re not serving that audience, or at least not deliberately trying to serve them. And so that’s going to so-called alienate, or you know, set aside, a great deal of the campus community, *a priori*, as we like to say at Columbia.

And the frustrating part would probably be the fact that we are engaged in deep, hopefully, comprehensive, very deep studies and research relative to music artforms, and there are other institutions on campus that are ostensibly committed to the same artforms, and-or to the same research. And that we don’t share as much turf, information, resource, energy, or even populations with those people is always strange.

There are positive conjunctions, sometimes. On paper, it always looks like there should be more and there aren’t. Lit Hum, even. That’s a thing where forty years ago, the Lit Hum review was done on the air, in the evening, because that’s one of the things you could teach without having to show anything. You have professors introducing their clips, and the significance, and people do their study that way. And radio means something different obviously, and KCR means something different, so that’s not going to happen now.

*B&W:* Turning to the language of the station, and of larger jazz music culture, do you feel like you have different voices for different parts of your job or your life? And is that part of learning to use to your voice in the way that radio asks you to?

*BY:* It’s a great question. I have never, ever thought about that. I mean, the principle that strikes me right away, is get the point across. Supplemental to that, whatever needs to be done to get the point across, then use that to get the point across.

It’s funny because a lot of our mission is to try to take a music that is hyper-academic, or at least the surrounding, the trappings of it, and the discourse about it, is probably over-academicized, over-intellectualized, and try to bring that down to people’s level—down, ha ha—try to bring that into the level of people who maybe aren’t part of that academic world or that discourse; not alienate them, but bring them to an understanding of



the fundamentals of it, and even of the higher points of it, without losing them. Conversely, we take what has often been thought of as an entertainment form, and at various times rather demeaningly presented—I'm speaking about the whole panoply of black music—and make a conscious study of this as an art form.

And in that case you use the language of what it means to speak about masterpieces, and to speak about creativity, and the cause and effect related to those things. So I've got no problem—I ain't got no problem with none of that Corn-Wolf! Whatever it takes, and some of it is just getting people to keep it real, right, or keeping it real with whoever your audience is. I think we all shift gears a little bit on radio, and probably shift gears between a soliloquy presentation and an interview—I was in an interview yesterday where I'm sure that I did some things that were rather casual just because part of it is, how are you going to make the most of the interview, vis a vis establishing a meaningful rapport with the interviewee? Change gears as necessary.

*B&W:* Do you enjoy being asked questions? It seems to me one of the keys to building an artful interview is wanting or feeling you know what's going on on both sides of the conversation. And constantly willing to be surprised by what's going to come out both from your mouth and the other person. Do you think it's important to be interviewed as much as you are interviewing?

*BY:* No. I mean for me personally that's not important. I think you've made a very good point or you have a great attitude about it—that I'll become a better interviewer by answering some interview questions. I totally agree with you, I think that if we establish that there are two poles where one is like a lecture

that somebody reads verbatim, and the other one is extemporized, there's a lot more room for surprise of improvisation, or extemporaneous speaking. I do like the thought that there are things that come up while talking, even just a way of situating something or maybe a whole idea, that I wouldn't have thought of otherwise. And so I do enjoy it from that perspective.

Part of the job that I've joined up with is trying to call attention to stuff that's not being called attention to. Part of my role is to take anything that I have, any interview opportunity, and use it as a mirror to deflect some light onto something that I think is significant. KCR is significant, so we are that conduit. But if people just listen to this interview or read it or whatever, and then said 'Oh that's nice,' and then flipped back to the news, then the mission is not accomplished.

But people might have heard me say 'Oh they talk about black music as an art form, how interesting, let me go listen to that and see what these clowns are saying.' That's where we should be leading with this. You know, that kind of thing. Or if you said, 'Okay, enough about you, let's talk about Cecil Taylor,' or something like that, I'd say, 'Absolutely right.'

*B&W:* Well since we have this segue dangling in front of us, [Young giggles], is there anything you'd like to say about Cecil Taylor, or, more broadly, why KCR should be deflecting attention to black music as an art form? Because even if that's common knowledge, it's not explicitly stated as often as you might like it to be.

*BY:* Yeah yeah, I hear what you're saying. Well the first score, I'm involved in a very deep, very deep micro-level study of Cecil Taylor's work. I have that same problem that graduate students have where you walk into a coffee shop and say, 'What's your dissertation about?' and you have a paragraph to try to nail it...I have all sorts of little microscope-level things



that are in my mind about how they relate to the bigger picture, and I hope that that will manifest as a big treatise one day.

Meanwhile, the only meaningful connection I can make is to say that Cecil Taylor is one of the giants of art who walks the earth right now, and like all of us who walk the earth, won't do that forever. Thankfully he has been heard even in this year, in this city, and I think is not performing again until California, in about a month. But the meaningful part is for people to engage with that music. And you can drop the needle, so to speak—sorry I use KCR terminology—drop the needle on YouTube! Drop the needle on YouTube anywhere where Mr. Taylor's music is presented and there's a lot of choices for getting a meaningful taste of what it is we would talk about. As for the orientation of KCR toward black music...It was here when you got here, it was here when I got here. Some of the people who helped steer the station's identity in that direction are still here, who were the founders.

*B&W:* Is there a racial divide that maybe you're alluding to, in the way that people appreciate this music, and the way that people study this music? That is, maybe latent or maybe explicit; I don't know because I'm not a scholar of it

*BY:* I would try to honor two of my teachers, direct and indirect I guess, by saying: there are racial divides all across our whole cultural thing, and part of the job that each of us faces every day, every minute of every day, is to get beyond that. I say a couple of my teachers by pointing out that this was a Bill Dixon viewpoint that I grew up under, and I believe completely. He would say "this is a racist society." So we just start from that viewpoint and then do what we can within it.

While at the same time, there is a faculty

member, I think still on campus, who I would be honored to think that she might come across these words some day—I haven't spoken with her in 20 years, but she knows that I believe in her, and she might still have a vague sense of who I am—I studied with her twenty years ago—Barbara Fields, in the History Department, who teaches very cogently, along with her colleagues, that race is only there if we put it there. Meaning that it doesn't exist as a scientific phenomenon, it exists as a social phenomenon, and that that's where it becomes incumbent on the individual to let race into the picture only as much as we want it to. So maybe more to what you're getting at, we make race distinctions as necessary in talking about music. And that's one of the beauties of radio: the music doesn't have a race.

The cultures that our ears are connected to are coded and recoded, and miscoded to want to hear things that we don't hear. But the sounds themselves don't have a race until you tell people that they have a race. And when we use the phrase 'black music'—well some people have given up on it completely and said 'No that actually wasn't the right word, it's not really the word you want to use, because it leads people down the wrong road...' It always has led some people down the wrong road, and it may be true that it's just not the right word because it's not gonna get there. But I think that hopefully that phrase 'black music' would lead us to an understanding that what we mean is not a black person making sounds, but any people making sounds within the tradition that is inarguably traceable to black culture. So the sounds need to be observed and understood with and without race. The sounds are what they are, they belong to the spectrum that we might call black music.♦

*This interview has been edited and condensed.*

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# DIGITALIA COLUMBIANA

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*These excerpts were culled from documents left on Columbia's lab computers. We encourage our readers to submit their own digitalia finds to us, via email, at [editors@theblueandwhite.org](mailto:editors@theblueandwhite.org).*

Childhood is like a boat filled with sweet candy but also filled with sadness.



This photograph, taken at the 2008 Beijing Olympics depicts the naturalism and realism of the human body. In the foreground, the main subject is yelling in what appears to be excitement. His mouth is open and neck is strained, putting all of his energy into this shriek of triumph. The subject's outstretched arms are at such an angle so that he is neither relaxed nor nervous, but rather tense from adrenaline. His muscles and veins bulge throughout his arms extending to his fingertips which procure an image similar to raising arms in triumph, symbolizing greatness. Our main subject stands out for several reasons. First, he is in the center of the photograph and fills up the majority of the screen. Second, the cameraman in the background has his camera pointed at only our main subject. He is trying to capture the emotion of this victory. Third, our main subject is the only subject in the photograph without an article of clothing on his torso. As idealized in modern America, this subject portrays a sculpted, strong body. It is tense and flexed which represents strength and masculinity but it is also symmetrical; a feature that women wish to find in their partners that is in accordance with physical attractiveness.



Would you rather be a geese or an eagle? Geese and eagles differ sharply in their appearance and lifestyles. A goose flies gracefully and is beautiful in its own right but unlike the eagle, the goose does not have a propensity for leadership and honor. Eagles are circumspect, like Penelope, and they are almost always in solitude with a countenance of absolute

determination and focus.

Upon exiting the building one enters into the more chaotic "in your face" streets and structures of the Big Apple, which makes Grand Central somewhat of a sanctuary for the city in the sense that one feels overwhelmed by the perceived open space being generated by its ceilings and extravagant design (i.e. marble floors, fantastic clock, arches, etc.). To me Grand Central is a manifestation of American adventurism and the infinite possibilities that lie in travel represented by the immensity of the Grand Concourse.



My friend thought that the concept of the study was interesting, especially when I told him about the results from the "pizza study."



Though it may evoke mixed reactions from across the world, the Mona Lisa by Leonardo Da Vinci will forever be considered a masterpiece for it is unique in all aspects of art. Many consider it the most talked about, most criticized piece of art over the past few centuries, for there still remains many questions surrounding who this person is and how she relates to its creator, Da Vinci. There have been books and movies created because of this renowned speculation about the Mona Lisa because of its permanence in society. If we examine the portrait, there are some minor details that may catch the naked eye, such as the gloomy, hazy background overlooking the figure. In addition, many wonder if in fact, this person is Da Vinci himself disguised as a woman. Though there have been many theories by scholars surrounding this mystery, we still cannot pinpoint the answer to this question and it is possible that we may never truly know.♦



## CAMPUS GOSSIP

### GOING BANANAS

A gang of four freshmen were recently reprimanded for stealing eighteen bananas from Ferris. They were told that they would be expelled if they did it again, because taking bananas is equivalent to stealing Columbia property. A disconcerted student remarked, “it’s funny that committing sexual assault gets you suspension from campus activities, but bolstering your potassium leaves you out on the streets.” Indeed.



### TIED UP

According to a jubilant (male) SEAS senior, the young gents of the Fu Foundation get free Vineyard Vines ties with the SEAS logo on them. Lest you mumble something about “gender equality,” relax: the ladies get scarves (the same ones everyone else gets at homecoming). Progressive!



### GO BACK TO YOUR ANTHRO CLASS

Two black Beta brothers were sitting on their house’s stoop, between the columns, which were recently repainted their customary red, white, and blue. A passing (white) member of the IRC paused in front of them. After taking a breath, she asked in disbelief, “How dare you paint your house these colors? These colors have stood for the oppression of colored peoples for centuries.”



### CHICKEN HERO

A tipster describes a “touching scene” at the 114th street halal cart outside of St. Luke’s: a man walked up to the cart, ordered, and then paid the man an extra fifty cents, saying, “I owe you from last night. I bought a chicken gyro at midnight.”

### SWING AND A MISS

A group of softball girls allegedly broke into ZBT, the baseball frat, and pranked the boys by covering the floor near the stairs with oil. When they woke up early for practice, several boys slipped and one even cracked a rib. The chastened girls agree that it had all the hallmarks of a bad prank: danger, stupidity, and, most gravely, “it was not even funny.” Maybe they should have just put a giant water balloon above the door, “like in *The Parent Trap*,” mused the tipster.



### YOLOLOL

A CC professor, whose enthusiastic nature earned him the description of “Chris Traeger from Parks and Rec,” by one of his students, recently asked the class, “So, would you guys say Epicurus is the YOLO text of CC?” There was much simultaneous ROFL and SMH to be had after said question.



### FOREVER ALONE

Posted on Bored @ Butler’s Global Page

Anonymous\*:

“Hey columbia serious question, how does it feel to not be #1 in undergraduate teaching?”

Anonymous\*:

“Dartmouth is an awful, anti-intellectual place”

Anonymous\*:

“Really? I was wondering how we got the highest future median income.. must be because of how anti-intellectual it is.”

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