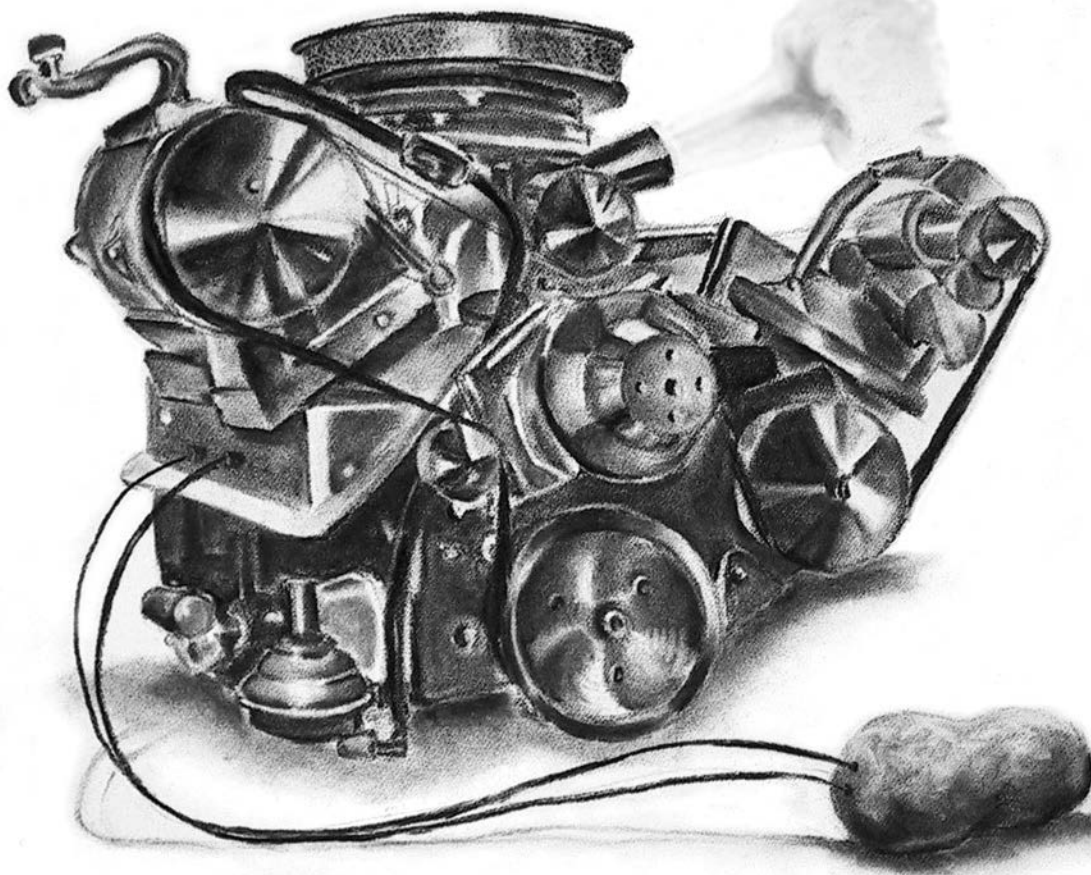


THE BLUE AND WHITE

Vol. X No. VI May 2004

Columbia University in the City of New York



SENIOR CONFESSIONS & REGRETS

by the *B&W* staff

TASTI D-LITE

by Hector Chavez & Jeffrey Farrell

THE MANHATTAN PROJECT

by Micah Springut

THE BLUE AND WHITE

Vol. X

FAMAM EXTENDIMUS FACTIS

No. VI

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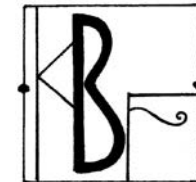
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arranging the occasional foray into typographical science, *The Blue and White* has been largely content to live down to its *belles-lettres* stereotypes. Sifting through the abandoned

medical-waste bins crowding the back stairs of Schermerhorn for our next art project is the closest we've come, thank you. After all, if the questions on our final exams were multiple-choice, how would we befuddle professors with fancy phrases and filigree structure? Worse still, couple the sciences' limited tolerance for "creative" responses with SEAS deflation, and you see our difficulty. Titration? Why no, honey, I might get hydrochloric acid on my cardigan.

That's the way it's been thus far, anyway. But despite the typeface, the obscure nineteenth-century idiom, and the thinly veiled misogynist humor, we're not completely impervious to change. The blue and white wheels, like those on the M86 bus, go round and round, and they eventually revolve, Kuhn-like. So it is now that we test the scientific waters (for acidity, purity, and proof). And here are our results: an exhaustive (and exhausting) survey of the Columbian scientific world.

For those seeking the social sciences, Hector Chavez displays his fine talent for picking up women with sweets in "Tasti D-liteful." Blue J and her much-neglected houseplants tackle botany. And does the pre-med within you demand a long list of something to memorize? Ready your index cards for Lynn Copes' phrenological phantasmagoria in this issue's Curio.

The senior staff, meanwhile, departs from our rigorous adherence to theme in order to leave us with their parting "Confessions & Regrets." The masthead will seem cold and clean-shaven without them, and their brogues are all too large for us, but we look forward to playing dress-up in them. We who still stand on the shore send our love to fill their sails. ☼

The *B&W* invites contributions of original work from the Columbia community and welcomes letters from readers.

Articles represent the opinions of their authors.

e-mail: theblueandwhite@columbia.edu
website: <http://www.theblueandwhite.org/>

CONTENTS

Columns

- 154 INTRODUCTION
- 156 CAMPUS CHARACTERS
- 158 LECTURE NOTES
- 161 BLUE J
- 164 MEASURE FOR MEASURE
- 165 BOOK REVIEW
- 170 CULINARY HUMANITIES
- 174 BOOZE HUMANITIES
- 175 DIGITALIA
- 177 TOLD BETWEEN PUFFS
- 178 CURIO
- 179 CAMPUS GOSSIP

Features

- 159 College Tanking
- 162 Art Trek
- 166 Tasti D-Liteful
- 168 Bombs under Broadway
- 171 Senior Confessions & Regrets

§
Cover by Ajay Kurian

Typographical Note

The text of *The Blue and White* is set in Bodoni Old Face, which was revived by Günter Gerhard Lange based on original designs by Giambattista Bodoni of Parma (active 1765–1813). The display faces are Weiss and Cantoria.

Campus Characters

You might not know the following figures – but you should. In *Campus Characters*, *The Blue and White* introduces you to a handful of Columbians who are up to interesting and extraordinary things, and whose stories beg to be shared. If you'd like to suggest a *Campus Character*, send us an e-mail at: theblueandwhite@columbia.edu.

Christine Luu

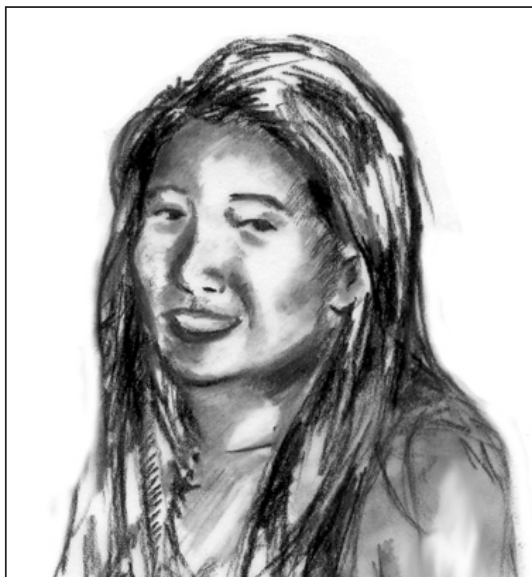
Anyone who dares to make the claim that SEAS students lack personality should meet Christine Luu. She's nice, first of all – a trait that came across with surprising clarity as I stumbled into Starbucks for our interview ninety minutes *en retard*. While rubbing the last remnants of sleep from my eyes, I suddenly recalled that Christine was the new president of ABC, and my heart jumped into my throat: I had been late, and thus *The Blue and White* had also been late! And if she decided to pull tighter the penurious purse strings of ABC, the blame would fall squarely on me. Thus I typed furiously, trying to hide my quaking hands behind the screen of my tiny laptop.

Originally from California, Christine lived alternately with one parent or the other since the age of nine, when a traumatizing home break-in and robbery eventually caused her family to split up. Uncomfortable staying with either parent, she moved in with her sister, only to find herself once again homeless after an impassioned fight. Fortunately, her boarding school – exhibiting a generosity strangely uncharacteristic of a private institution – allowed her to live there full-time. Some years later, while bouncing between this beachside college prep and various “dorky summer minority engineering programs,” Christine met Diane McCoy, a Columbia admissions representative, impressed her much, and subsequently matriculated to the College.

But Christine is much more than just the sum of her unusual fortunes. Here was a 3-2 SEAS/CC student admitting that she had considered Art History and English as potential majors before finally settling on Economics and Applied Math, along with a concentration in Philosophy. During our interview, we

discussed Aquinas (who Christine accuses of being a cheap imitator of Plato, but concedes is a “smart guy” nonetheless), Nietzsche, Van Gogh, and the ethical implications of free markets. When she persuasively argued that the sciences and the humanities should be linked more closely, I couldn't help but lean eagerly across the table.

I was so engrossed in our conversation, in fact, that I left plenty of questions unasked. So if you see Christine around campus – she may be wearing a Columbia visor, “rally-round and upside down” – question her about her fleeting rugby career, summer job at Lehman Brothers, presidency of the Vietnamese Students Association, or moonlighting as a bartender. Ask what it was like to work in a children's shelter in Vietnam, or about her favorite drink – a Sloe Comfortable Screw Up Against the Wall with Satin Pillows the Hard Way. Maybe one day, if you're worthy, you'll be able to buy her one. *-DJK*



Illustrated by Michael Mallow

Colleen Taylor

On the left, a *BBC* correspondent composedly prepared for the February 22 democratic presidential debate to begin. On the right, a *Nation* writer hurriedly jotted down notes. And there, between them, sat CosmoGIRL! political correspondent Colleen Taylor, C'06, “putting on lip gloss and drinking Diet Coke.”

In her four months covering the presidential campaign for the sassy teen monthly, Taylor has grown accustomed to the stares and whispers that accompany her post. And the celebrities. And the political maneuverings. After all, she is a CosmoGIRL! – exclamation point, capitalization and all.

It started simply enough. Taylor's mother happened to work for a doctor who happened to have a son who happened to date CG!'s feature's editor. But it was not all nepotism. In an audition video, Taylor set forth her vision: politics as an “interesting, fun, sexy thing.” The magazine's executive office simply could not ignore Taylor's ginger hair, pastel face, and all-around spunkiness. In short order, she found herself at the Iowa caucus.

But not without a makeover.

As she declares in the May issue of CG!, “Whether I'm on the road or running from class to go a rally, I've figured out how to look good on the fly. You can too!” A little Esprit blazer, Fekkal Glossing Cream, and rosy cream blush, and who wouldn't be ready for a convention?

Perhaps it was these provisions that enabled her, at the New Hampshire primary, to beguile



Illustrated by Ajay Kurian

Tucker Carlson, a “studly” political analyst and co-host of CNN's *Crossfire*. While offering her some career advice, the bow-tied conservative proved quite compassionate, if not gallant.

“Some journalist was trying to get by and he was like, ‘Excuse me, muffin,’” Taylor recalls. “And Tucker was like, ‘What the fuck are you doing?’ And he stood up for me.”

Truth be told, Taylor is no stranger to crude advances. Indeed, she even sanctioned such barbarities by agreeing to appear on the television dating show *Change of Heart*, a “reality” program famed for both its voyeurism and lewdness.

No doubt much of the Columbia community tuned in to UPN at 2:30 a.m. on a Tuesday night last year to see her confess her frustration with Kwame Spearman, C '06, who posed as her obnoxious boyfriend.

“It was your typical sloppy, freshman year, first semester mistake,” she said. “We did it solely for the four hundred dollars and the free dinners, which, incidentally, included way too many free drinks.”

Ah ha! So it is through the excessive consumption of alcohol that the show's producers ensure racy hot tub scenes and clumsy innuendo in each and every episode! Well, partly – most lines, in fact, are scripted and then placed in large bold letters on cue cards.

“One of my actual lines from the show was ‘I love to have sex where I want it, when I want it, and sometimes Kwame just doesn't satisfy me.’ Really.”

Though Taylor might not look back at that half-hour in the on-air limelight with much satisfaction (“It was just a sketchy, silly thing that I'd really rather *everyone* totally forget about”), her ultimate life aspirations still involve network television. Though Tucker Carlson, she recounts, urged her to stay in magazines, Taylor dreams of one day becoming the next Katie Couric or Diane Sawyer.

As for her more immediate future, an interview with John Kerry is allegedly in the works. “Obviously, it's not going to be hard-hitting,” Taylor laments. “These girls would rather read an interview with Chris Heinz [John Kerry's smokin' step-son] than with John Kerry. And that's a shame. But he's a stud, so what are you going to do?” *-ZHB*

LECTURE NOTES PINKER AND THE BRAIN

Stephen Pinker, in addition to having a cool haircut, and a website replete with sultry photoshopped portraits, is apparently a smart man. Having charmed literati and neurobiologists alike with his elegantly worded, well-modulated physicalist treatises (among them *The Blank Slate*, which garnered an avalanche of critical accolades), Pinker has embarked upon a successful lecture tour touting *Slate*, along with some more recent nuances in his thought. The latest of these *tours de force*, given at The American Museum of Natural History, treated what Pinker identified as the three most prevalent pictures of human cognition in Western history, and attempted to dispel both the theses themselves, and what Pinker called “the fear and loathing” such theses had of modern biology.

Pinker began with Locke’s “Blank Slate,” which conceives of the mind as entirely without content before the external world impinges upon it. Ignoring a whiff of question-beggary, Pinker replied first that blank slates “don’t do anything,” and argued that, in order for the mind to successfully comprehend and order the bombardment of sensory input it regularly receives, it must necessarily contain some innate and mechanical systems (Pinker cited “number sense” and general concepts of causation as possibilities). Secondly, he argued that such



Illustrated by Michael Mallow

a theory fails to account for the large similarity of cognitive states across wildly differing cultures. And for those who would criticize the criteria by which he judged such input to be different, Pinker

followed with a strong empirical blow – the fact that the brain is, even at its early stages, a mind-bogglingly complex array of neural patterns. Such complexity, if nothing else would seem to suggest some sort of inbuilt system.

Pinker’s next volley rained upon the second picture of the mind, involving a Rousseau-like “Noble Savage.” This construction, while not strictly a blank slate, nevertheless emphasized the total mutability of the mind, as well as its essential goodness prior to the deleterious and corrosive effects of the outside world (and, one assumes, of modern society). Effectively, said Pinker, this view assumes that man exerts complete internal control upon his mind over and above external influences. This, he argued, was absurd; the statistically provable heritability of psychopathies amongst humans and animals was a direct disproof. And, wryly gesticulating, Pinker added that given the high incidence of violent death among primitive societies and animal populations, it was unlikely that there was anything noble or uncorrupted about man at his most mentally unfettered.

Pinker’s third picture was the most complicated. Emerging from the Cartesian mind-body division, Pinker contended, was a third theory of a “Ghost in the Machine” – some controlling force that, not unlike a soul, exists on a completely separate, nigh-unverifiable plane. Against this, Pinker mounted standard neurobiological objections, among them the contention that intelligence and cognition, if not as predicable or repeatable as mechanical processes, can nevertheless be explained mechanistically. And furthermore, he argued, there *have* been some reasonably complex mind-like AIs (Deep Blue, for example). Pinker, in finishing this exposition, seemed unconvinced critics of his theory had any legitimate doubts; rather, he seemed to suggest that they were merely stunned by what he called “the astonishing hypothesis” – namely, the recent neurobiological assertion that all

LECTURE NOTES continued on page 163

College Tanking

by David J. Kim

Without question, the annual publishing of the *US News and World Report* college rankings is one of the most highly anticipated events of the year. Why, just the other day, I caught my neighbors’ daughter, Susie, skipping an *entire* afternoon of blatantly gratuitous community service just to read the new rankings. As I approached, her eyes filled with tears and she turned to me like a dying man to a priest: why, she entreated me, had Columbia fallen below Washington University in St. Louis? Such pathos struck at the core of my being. My heart was – and nearly remains – too full for words.

I steeled myself and, though nearly choking on the lie, managed to sputter: “Don’t worry, Susie. No college student really cares about those rankings.” But she remained unconvinced. Desperate to assuage her anxiety, I undertook a study of the US News College Rankings. I hoped to discover something that would unquestionably debunk their authority – something to prove to Susie that her preoccupation with the Rankings was unbecoming of a prospective Columbian.

I also had something to prove to myself. Though reluctant to admit as much, I was frightened that a year of Literature Humanities essays had inured me to the practice of making patently unfounded claims; would the legacy of my liberal arts education be simply a tendency to write arch pseudo-journalism and invent fictive neighbors for pretentious literary magazines?

Insecurities aside, my research soon revealed that, in addition to a plethora of arbitrarily weighted and subdivided criteria, *US News* also considers suspiciously-termed “peer assessments.” These surveys, sent to university faculty across the country, ask respondents to evaluate the performance of the other schools listed in *US News*. Their comments – the largest single factor used in determining the rankings – account for 25% of a school’s final score. By toiling many a long hour and exploiting many a dubious contact

of *The Blue and White*, I procured a number of these assessments. Choice excerpts are published below.

“...In regard to student life, I have to say that Columbia is well on the way to realizing a condition of perpetual Mardi Gras. Tasti D-Lite has created a madcap social scene in Lerner Hall, as throngs of freshmen girls to swarm eagerly around it. These girls have, in turn, prompted a host of senior boys to frequent the Tasti D-Lite stand, no doubt in hopes of sampling the ice cream. Unfortunately, here at Dartmouth, the one power generator that New Hampshire allows us does not generate enough electricity to both light the chemistry labs and whip Tasti D-Lite into the refreshingly fluffy and low-caloric state from which it derives its name...”

“...I would like to dispel a harmful rumor currently circulating regarding the University of Central Florida. My colleagues there have assured me that the Admissions Committee’s campaign to include pictures of scantily-clad female students on lawn chairs in their viewbook was completely unsuccessful. Instead, the viewbook now rightly focuses on new and exciting course offerings, such as ‘Shakespeare Quotes for Highbrow Cocktail Parties,’ ‘The Aesthetic of the Sand Wedge,’ and ‘Physics for Idiots: Honors’ – all which are pictured being taken by scantily-clad female students on lawn chairs. As a member of the Committee for Undergraduate Curricula here at Brown, I cannot but commend the efforts of UCF to allow their students full license in exploring a wide range of academic interests.”

“...I cannot help but think that the quality of faculty resources at Harvard has declined significantly since my move from there to the Earth Institute at Columbia University. I will be the first to acknowledge, albeit humbly, the fame that surrounds my person.”

“If my colleagues at George Washington suggest one more time that they were ever offered tenure here at Georgetown but chose to teach at GW instead, I will throw myself into the river at the nearest opportunity, I swear to freaking G-d.”

Susie went to Barnard.

Housing and Dining Move-Out Checklist

Non-seniors: Saturday, May 15 at 12:00 noon.

Seniors: Thursday, May 20 at 4:00 pm.

Before You Leave...

- Return optional RolmPhone equipment to 115 Computer Center or the Housing and Dining Hospitality Desk in Hartley lobby.
- Bag your trash.
- Make arrangements with both Lerner Mail Center and ACUS to forward your mail and bills.
- Clean your room and remove your items from common areas.
- Meet with your RA to complete the Room Condition Report (RCR).
- Seal your keys and the yellow copy of your RCR in your Express Check-Out envelope.
- Deposit your completed envelope in the box at the Security Desk in your building.
- Close your windows, turn off your lights and lock your door.

If You're Graduating...

- Return mailbox key to Lerner.
- Close your ACUS account.

If You're Staying For Interim...

- Pick up authorization card from your RA.
- Be on campus to move when notified by Housing.



Visit www.columbia.edu/cu/reshalls for complete information including bin rental locations, elevator and gate access schedules, and summer shipping and storage options.

Columbia University Student Services

BLUE J *Uprooted*



As the spring waned, the Blue J realized that she had to vacate her Columbia nest and find a new roost for the summer. But as she packed her feather pillow and GSEU pamphlet-blanket, the J suddenly realized that she would be unable to carry her six houseplants home.

The Blue J is not the only one at Columbia facing this plant-storage dilemma. An untold number of Columbia students decorate their dorm rooms with houseplants, which help distract them from our stone, concrete, and steel-themed campus. And why not? Houseplants are inexpensive, and can be purchased at one of those garden-variety street fairs that appear unexpectedly in the neighborhood. But unless one summers in New York or drives home, it is extremely difficult to transport the plants elsewhere at the end of the year. So where, the Blue J wondered, can Columbia students store their budding buddies during the summer?

First, the Blue J attended a meeting of the Community Support for Agriculture (CSA). To her chagrin, the J discovered that CSA is not concerned with supporting plants, but rather with *eating* them. Consequently, she found the two members present, Jennifer Goldstein, B'05, and Callie Rubbins-Breen, C'07, callously unsympathetic to her plight. "Plants are part of the holistic ecosystem of the College," asserted Jennifer. "If you can't take them with you, then you should let them go free." The J asked if houseplants could survive on their own. "Probably not," replied Jennifer, "But once you're done grieving for them you could buy new ones." Feathers ruffled, the Blue J took flight, curtly refusing the complimentary carrot that the two CSA members had offered her.

The Blue J soldiered on to the College Boxes booth, where she met the resident product-placer, Matthew Urbanek, C'04, and his sidekick, Rob Tobkes, C'05. After the J explained her plant-storage problem, a round-robin

discussion on the matter commenced.

Matthew quickly pointed out that "it costs \$35.10 to store a box for the summer with College Boxes. Plants typically cost a lot less than that, so it doesn't pay to store a plant unless you have some sort of emotional attachment to it." And if? "Then," Matthew replied, "the absence of your plant over the summer would make you grow fonder of it, and it will appreciate in value. It would therefore pay for you to store your plant." Rob, however, asserted that plants would probably die in the box. "But," he chimed, "You could store cacti, because they can survive without water." That's true, the Blue J conceded, but even cacti need sunlight. "Our boxes are climate-controlled," Rob replied. "So they won't overheat. But I guess they still need sunlight."

The trio continued to ponder possible plant storage options. Thinking aloud, the Blue J noted that one can induce plant hibernation by sealing a plant in a plastic bag and putting it a refrigerator. While hibernating, most houseplants can survive for months without water or sunlight. "We can store refrigerators!" cried Rob euphorically. "But we can't plug them in," countered Matthew.

Finally, Matthew hatched a scheme: plant islands in dorm lobbies. The J felt that this idea would kill two bats with one stone, as students would have a place to store their plants, and the dorms would have a new green décor. But who would feed the plants during the summer? "You can't trust people," replied Matthew. "You can only trust computers. So all we need to do is reprogram those automatic cat-feeders so that they can water plants." And, if plant-owners feel uncomfortable leaving their plants in the Matrix, Matthew graciously offered one more idea: "People can pay me fifty dollars, and I will take care of their plants." ❀



Illustrated by Michael Mallow

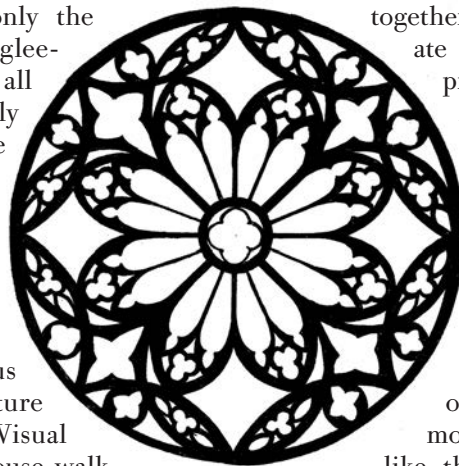
Art Trek: The Next Generation

by Cara Rachele

Art history puts me to sleep. Yes, I'm taking three classes in the department, and yes, I stay up nights fantasizing about the legions of brilliant (and nubile) undergraduate boys who will someday fall hopelessly and charmingly in love with Professor Rachele. I can see them already, fainting in droves when I lecture on Courbet. All that adoration, all the four o'clock siesta-classes, and all those overwarm, over-crowded, and under-lit classrooms would be endurable, were it not for the slide projector's lulling hum. That soporific sound destroys and dullifies my dreams. Imagine my delight, then, to discover that Kodak has recently ceased production of the Carousel slide projector, thrumming instrument of my academic (and amorous) undoing!

What, however, will replace it? Consultation with the Avery librarians revealed a primary source tucked away in a dusty corner of Schermerhorn - the man responsible for the "innovations" doomed to keep me in sleepy darkness and out of the PhD program: Robert Carlucci, Director of the Art History Department's Visual Media Center. I flounced in and politely but pointedly inquired whether he intended to replace the Carousel with something still more obnoxious.

Kodak's decision was only the tip of the iceberg, he gleefully informed me - soon, all images would be digitally documented, many in three dimensions. Instead of just scanning old carousel slides into a computer (rendering obsolete anxious teaching assistants performing experimental surgery on cantankerous machines while the lecture grinds to a halt), the Visual Media Center can now mouse-walk



Illustrated by Cara Rachele

you through a mosque in Istanbul or unwind a Chinese handscroll.

The VMC started off inauspiciously in 1995 under the executive direction of Professor Stephen Murray with a little bit of money from everywhere. How advanced was digital technology in 1995? Well, Super Nintendo was only four years old; the earliest VMC projects were designed for Art Humanities, and were just as stultifying - choppy three-dimensional renderings of old warhorses like Amiens Cathedral and Raphael's *Stanza della Segnatura*. The latter project attempted to accurately represent the additional dimensions Raphael implied in the work - so that a concept as complicated as dimensional superposition might pierce the darkness of both the classroom and the indolent Art Hum student's mind. Digital teaching was going to wake up the room.

On the strength of this initial success (if you can ignore the fact that the projections looked like beta versions of DOOM), the VMC received yet another grant to digitally photograph 360-degree views of over two hundred architectural sites. These QTVRs (Quick Time Virtual Reality) were created from thirty-six

run-of-the-mill digital photos stitched

together on a computer to generate what roughly amounts to a pictorial sphere. They're then mapped onto a floor plan of the building or site, which is in turn uploaded onto the VMC's webpage.

Some of these websites belie their age - the one devoted to St. John the Divine doesn't allow you to look up into the shadowy vault or down to the mosaic floor, but other QTVRs, like those taken at Frank Lloyd

Wright's Fallingwater, permit the user to jump from view to view - almost as if walking through space.

Almost, but not quite. Even the most oblivious Art Humanities prisoner couldn't mistake digital images, however detailed or interactive, for the genuine article. The new technology, however, does open up an entirely new can of aesthetic worms. While a yellowed Picasso slide is at least consistently so, that same Blue Period harlequin could traverse the whole spectrum depending on which computer is used to project it. And, with digitized facsimiles slowly replacing their marcescent sources, is it possible that we may one day forget the red in Matisse's *Studio*?

Carlucci allayed my budding professorial fears. While the VMC staff does edit the images for color and light - and also to remove obtrusive passerby - they make every effort to keep their interventions to a minimum. But the QTVRs are beautiful as artwork in themselves, often more so than the pedestrian slide photograph. Consider the documentation of the Parisian *Sainte Chapelle*. Since the Visual Media Center generally operates on the goodwill of a site's management, they're unable to empty out a space. People are digitally removed later, but as the *Sainte Chapelle* is continually brimful with picture-snapping German men in socks and sandals, it was

simply too crowded. The resultant QTVRs, with floating feet and amputated gawkers, recall early nineteenth-century photographs where the trace of an inattentive maid crossing during the two-hour exposure would later conclusively prove the existence of ghosts to generations of silly housewives.

Though my sense of scholarly entitlement wished to keep these images all to myself, the Art History department has bigger plans. Not only will the digital image library (which as yet only includes still images but could easily incorporate QTVRs) be significantly more accessible to other departments - so walking tours of pre-Haussmann Paris could be incorporated into European history lectures while cave-art warriors writhe and dance in Anthropology - but the entire collection will be independently accessible to the whole university community come next fall through a new library database. It's entirely possible that the PhD candidates and I will have soon have the solemn cavern of the Avery Library reading room entirely to ourselves. ☼

In the meantime:

Visual Media Center:

<http://www.learn.columbia.edu>

Database Access:

user name: ahar

password: 826sch

LECTURE NOTES continued from page 158

thoughts, and even all emotions, have strictly biological causes.

What, Pinker then asked, was supporting all these patently silly theories? His answer was what he smilingly called the "fear and loathing" of the abovementioned hypothesis. Such feelings, he said, emerged from four primary worries about what a strictly biological account of man might imply: inequality, imperfectability, determinism, and nihilism. Fears of inequality, countered Pinker, unrealistically paint the alternative as numbing homogeneity. Fears of imperfectability, he argued next, were equally misplaced - simply because individuals have unavoidable flaws does not

mean societies cannot evolve to counteract them (presumably while avoiding pure totalitarian or Orwellian solutions). Determinism, too, proved to be mistaken, once one admitted that cause and effect were initially human inventions to begin with, constructed precisely to present us with indissoluble worries (and perhaps, to provide philosophers with indissoluble tenure). Nihilism, too, was felled by Pinker's bedazzling rhetoric, dreamy smile, and flowing locks. Unfortunately, as a committed nihilist, this staffer had long since stopped listening.

-Caleb Vogensen

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

MY LIFE

The city to be captured is inside of a room. The enemy's plunder isn't heavy, and the enemy won't carry it off because he has no need for money since it's a story and only a story. The city has ramparts of painted wood: we cut them out to paste them in our book. There are two chapters or parts. Here is a red king with a golden crown climbing onto a saw: this is chapter II; as for chapter the first I can't recall anymore.

—Max Jacob

Translated from the French by Michael Paulson



The Battle Cry of Mediocrity

In The Presence of Mine Enemies: War in the Heart of America 1859-1863.

Edward Ayers

W.W. Norton & Company

430 pages; \$27.95

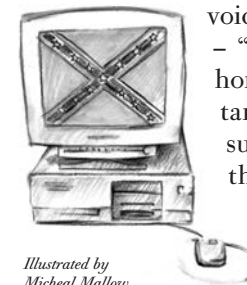
Edward Ayers, dean and endowed professor of history at the University of Virginia, recently received the prestigious (and Columbia-funded) Bancroft Prize for *In The Presence of Mine Enemies: War in the Heart of America 1859-1863*. Based on his prize-winning “Valley of the Shadow” online archive of primary documents, the book traces how Civil War-era events radicalized two similar and moderate counties.

This record of success has only one blemish: the book isn't very good.

Instead of a dry, informed study of Pennsylvania's Franklin and Virginia's Augusta Counties, *Presence* is a forced and overwrought tale. The choice of title, lifted from Psalm 23, is just the beginning of the bludgeoning the reader suffers from the twin sledgehammers of pastoral cliché and epic narrative.

The book clearly attempts to make history accessible: it is largely a story told through diaries and letters and newspapers, with historiographical discussion and anything not part of the narrative relegated to the endnotes. This lack of commanding authorial voice provides an insightful grunt's-eye view, but the reliance on individual, often myopic viewpoints frequently deprives the reader of historical context. In an attempt to alleviate this problem, Ayers ends each chapter [??] with long italicized passages that provide a wider, more traditional perspective, but which read as mere sweeping generalizations.

The weirdly ostentatious PBS-voiceover tone of the passages – “[l]aw and right, duty and honor, fate and history, so tangled only weeks before, suddenly aligned for both the North and the South” – seem to reach out to a general readership. But despite the sweeping



Illustrated by Michael Mallow

generalizations and sentimental style of these passages, it is often unclear what audience – or point, for that matter – Ayers is targeting.

For example, one such section matter-of-factly notes Southern aims of annexing Cuba for slave purposes in about two words, without any background. Not to underestimate our great country's historical literacy, but how many men-on-the-street-who-liked-*Cold-Mountain* know anything about the Ostend Manifesto? (What? Exactly.) And if the book isn't really for general readers, why is the next paragraph a short and mollycoddling biography of Jefferson Davis, as if no one had any idea who he was?

And with such historical background pushed away unwoven into the body text, Ayers further sacrifices the book's all-important flow. That sacrifice, however, fails to provide its intended insight, and merely throws off the rhythm.

Even when the book stays on beat, it is undermined by a shoddiness stemming from its unyielding narrative thrust. A blatant example is Ayers' treatment of Frederick Douglass' alleged warning to John Brown not to march on Harper's Ferry. Ayers mentions the event as if it were just another matter of fact, and not sourced only from Douglass' 1881 autobiography (while a fantastic book, its retelling of personal events, like most autobiography, shouldn't be taken as Gospel).

True, that might be nothing but harmless sloppiness, but the book is rife with similar examples. At one point, Ayers reveals that in 1860 the poorer Augusta County farmers voted for the Constitutional Union Party while richer slaveholders voted for the Southern Democrats. Somehow, the next sentence concludes that “few obvious connections appeared between economic standing and voting behavior.”

So, how did this pile of purple prose peppered with “huh?” moments win the Bancroft, a prize not normally reserved for popular history? Well, it seemed original: not only does Ayers turn the intriguing case study into a

BOOK REVIEW continued on pg 172

Tasti D-Liteful

by Hector Chavez & Jeffrey Farrell

"Excuse me, Miss, I'm writing an article on Tasti D-Lite. Would you mind if I asked you some questions?"

"Is this for *The Spectator*?"

"No, I'm from *The Blue and White*..."

"Oh, really?!"

It's always a bit of a cheap trick to exploit the name of this illustrious and noble campus publication when striking up a conversation with girls on a lonely Wednesday night. The scenario takes a sharper turn for the shameful when one considers the backdrop for this opportunistically heady journalism: the queue of fair and perfumed patrons of the Lerner Hall Tasti D-Lite.

Here in the upper summits of Ferris Booth reigns the dashing maverick of all on-campus snackeries, a stronghold of the most formidable of low-guilt frozen milk-products purchasable with an immediate swipe of Dining Dollars. Stuck somewhere between an Artificial Allen and a Yummy Yearly, Tasti D-Lite once presented himself as a calorically benign frozen-yogurt alternative, promising his followers all the dubious merits of quasi-ice cream without the fat. There seemed to follow a brief flash-and-clatter whistle-blowing scandal which forced the treat to admit of some nutritional impurity, but his followers remained strong all the same, dutifully returning to the tempting call of creative flavors and crowd-pleasing toppings.

Since the locale's inauguration at the beginning of the academic year, *The Blue and White* has noticed a certain dearth of Y-chromosomes of those waiting in line at the Tasti-D. Initially the *B&W* shrugged off the anomaly as a bizarrely persistent statistical irregularity and continued scoffing at CNN from the leather seats of Lerner's fourth floor. Over the months, though, the siren-like giggles and whispers from

the Tasti D-Lite procession continued to trouble the *B&W*, until curiosity at last demanded some seriously coquettish investigation into the matter.

Some Tasti-D employees were first interrogated for a behind-the-scenes evaluation of customer makeup. Annie Tracy, C '06, a former Crema Lita employee who defected to Tasti D-Lite, sees the female phenomenon as the combined product of a comparatively greater sweet tooth and a certain tendency toward nutritional conscientiousness. But the staff at Tasti-D has also found the percentage of male customers to be on the rise. This trend may best be attributed to the "Tasti D-Lite by association" theory, where bumbling young men buy the snacks only after following a friend's lead or by stumbling across the eatery while torturously ascending to their mailboxes.

For some hard facts, however, it was up to the *B&W* to examine the frozen-yogurt concupiscence firsthand, following the sage procedures of teen magazine group interviews for the correct style and phrasing. A taste of our findings follows.

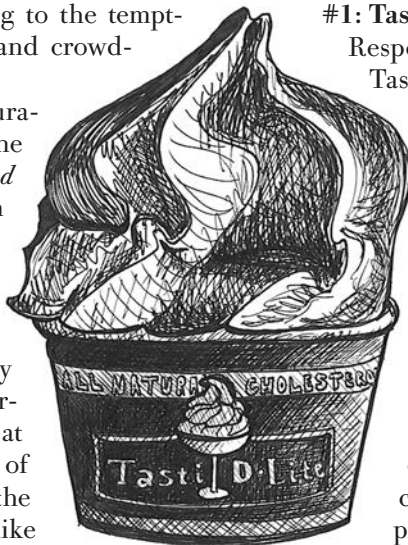
Questions Asked While Lirting Voice Up in Girlish Fashion After Practicing in the Mirror for Two Hours:

#1: Tasti-D fits into your life how?

Respondents unanimously praised Tasti D-Lite for its flexibility. Indeed, it offers satisfaction at the most crucial of moments, whether that is at the odd hour of a violent and sudden craving after dinner, or for dinner.

#2: Without looking at the ingredients list, tell me some things you think are in this.

For being fans of this wonderful little miracle food, the customers turned out to be surprisingly skeptical of the Tasti-D anatomy. Guesses ranged



Illustrated by Katerina Vorotova

from "soy product and NutraSweet," "really weird milk from aliens," and "artificial flavors and color," to a very cautious "xan...tham gum?" Tasti D-Lite product actually contains none of these. Boasts the website, "If an ingredient is not good enough for Mother Nature, then it is not good enough for Tasti D-Lite." Whatever that means.

#3: Rank the following men's fashion accessories: a) Diesel Jeans b) I-Pod c) Tasti D-Lite card.

In the majority of cases, the jeans fell behind as fashion statements, leaving the iPod and the Tasti-D card in a tussle over womens' hearts. The card offers one distinct advantage: its owner has access to a free Tasti D-Lite. Those with a special hankering for frozen dessert may be wise to try and rouse the bearer's generosity.

#4: If you were going to marry a Tasti-D flavor, which one would it be, and why?

The consensus clearly points to chocolate as the preferred spouse. One Jax! Russo, C '04, admits to desiring the hand of a certain Mr. Chocolate Pudding "because he's smooth and rich."

#5: If your relationship with Tasti-D were long distance – say, if it were on Amsterdam, – would you still eat it?

Here we begin to see the young woman's love of Tasti D-Lite begin to falter. Separated by an entire cross-town block, most respondents admitted they'd rather settle for a relationship with less hassle, i.e., Häagen-Dazs or Crema Lita.

#6: If, on the second date, Tasti D-Lite wanted you to meet his parents, would you think things were moving too fast?

As the *B&W* was quick to learn, Columbia girls are not ones to be rushed into commitments! "Too fast," judged one *étudiante*. "Yeah, definitely too fast," concurred another.

#7: So what do you think of [that hussy] Crema Lita?

One respondent provided a diplomatic reasoning behind the unanimous indifference toward C-Lita. "It's not bad," she offered. "It's just that their flavors aren't great." Another was less shy and shot straight at the glaring problem: "Crema Lita is dumber, more airy. There's more substance to Tasti-D."

#8: If Tasti D-Lite was your boyfriend and forgot to give you a Valentine's Day card, what would you do?

Forgetting to acknowledge that special someone on the official Day of Love is either outright folly or spite, and such a transgression would not go without repercussions. "I'd give it the cold shoulder," decided a student. "Dump him!" cried one. "Eat him," said her companion, with an icy look in her eye.

To his credit, Tasti D-Lite would hardly consider making such a mistake, and his track record clearly shows an unparalleled success with a certain devoted demographic group on campus (and he's not even that great of a dancer). Besides making the Ferris Booth Commons a delightful place for chatting with the daughters of Alma Mater, this "creamy delicious" eatery also inspires steadfast fidelity among its fans, even if it did forget the Valentine. "I wouldn't care," confided a starry-eyed admirer. "He's been so good to me. We celebrate our love everyday." ❄

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Bombs under Broadway

by Micah Springut

Those who think they know the story of Columbia's Manhattan Project have it all wrong. Storytellers are too prone to speak of ultra-secret experiments, perilous radiation, and concealed "rock-hewn vaults beneath the physics building," as the *New York Herald Tribune* once described it. Or to assume that "the offices and laboratories where the work was carried on at Columbia were just as much militarily restricted areas in New York as the Imperial Palace was in Tokyo." Wrong again, *Herald Tribune*: the Manhattan Project was not the shadowy saga we want to think it was, but rather an absurd comedy with an unconventional cast of characters.

In the 1930s, Columbia's physics and chemistry departments were among the best in the country. It was during this time that Enrico Fermi and Leo Szilard, two of the world's earliest dabblers in atomic fission, arrived here and began a notoriously uncomfortable relationship. Fermi, a fastidious academic, woke at 5:30 to accommodate his busy schedule of classes and lab work. Szilard preferred soaking in bathtubs to exerting himself on lectures and experiments. According to *Scientific American*, he "often appeared at Columbia only in time for lunch, after which he would drop in on colleagues, posing insightful questions and suggesting experiments *they* should try." Unsurprisingly, many of Szilard's colleagues considered him a nuisance. "You have too many ideas," a fed-up I.I. Rabi once told him, "please go away."

While occupying the same laboratories, Fermi and Szilard's personalities collided as frequently as the atoms they were studying. Their face-to-face collaboration was so

unworkable that George Pegram, chair of the physics department, had to assume the role of a go-between.

Nevertheless, their work on harnessing the power of the atom was in perpetual motion: on the night of January 25th, 1939 in the basement of Pupin Hall, John Dunning and Enrico Fermi successfully split the uranium atom. Five weeks later, in 718 Pupin, Leo Szilard and Walter Zinn proved that a self-sustaining atomic chain reaction could occur.

As Columbia's resident scientists were discovering the secrets of atomic fission, Szilard learned that the Germans were conducting their own experiments with uranium. As a Jewish immigrant from Hungary, he immediately recognized the danger and sought government funding for Columbia's research. After obtaining Albert Einstein's endorsement, Szilard sent a letter to President Franklin Roosevelt urging him to support atomic weapons research. Roosevelt responded with a grant of \$6,000 – the first federal outlay for nuclear research. The Manhattan Project was born.

But not without its complications. Indeed, bureaucratic incompetence almost aborted the project. The US Army, with its peculiar brand of wisdom, decided not to give security clearances to Fermi and Szilard. Basing their investigation on "highly reliable sources," army investigators concluded that Fermi, a refugee from Mussolini's Italy, was "undoubtedly a fascist," and Szilard, a Hungarian-Jewish immigrant, was "very pro-German." The intelligence report even spelled Szilard's name two different ways, neither one correctly. The problem was resolved only when

the White House ordered J. Edgar Hoover and his F.B.I. to "verify their loyalty." The Army's quest to deny Fermi and Szilard clearance to work on their own ideas had failed.

The main task of the project in 1940 was to achieve a controlled nuclear chain reaction. The scientists soon realized that the seventh floor of Pupin lacked enough room for their sub-critical reactor (a graphite-uranium lattice cube used to test the effect of neutrons bombarding uranium). They would need something the size of a barn, and found the equivalent in the somber basement of Schermerhorn Hall. The geology department was ordered to vacate the space, and the project continued.

Yet moving seven tons of graphite bars and uranium cans to this new space was no easy task. They were neither strong enough to move the material by themselves nor well connected enough to obtain speedy security clearances for outside workers. At some point, a teacher in the physics department had the idea to get some Columbia College kids to do the manual labor. When the call went out to the University for some "big husky men" the Buildings and Grounds Department turned up a pair of football players.

"And it was a marvelous idea," recalled Fermi excitedly, "it was really a pleasure for once to direct the work of these husky boys, canning uranium, just shoveling it in – handling packs of 50 or 100 pounds as easily as another person would have handled three or four pounds." Fermi continued: "And in passing along these cans fumes of all sorts of colors, mostly black, would go in the air." Did the football players know they were lugging history? In 1960, a WKCR interviewer interviewed one of the football players. "When Paul and I were carrying the graphite," he said, "we often wondered [what it was], and we did ask some engineers about it, but they were mysterious and evasive. But I do recall some talk about smashing the atom... As a matter of fact, I was pretty uninterested."

Misleading incurious football players about the nature of the project was one matter; keeping a lid on the numerous clandestine activities was quite another. In 1942, about

200 scientists, along with numerous recently graduated alumni, were at work on the project in Schermerhorn, Pupin, and Havemeyer Halls. According to Fermi, suspicions were raised when men working on the atomic pile "started looking like coal miners. The wives they returned home to began to wonder, and no answers were forthcoming from their husbands."

Nevertheless, the government knew that there was one powerful tool they could rely on to maintain secrecy: apathy. George Pegram proudly related Columbia's ingenious security procedures: "While the pile was here, no guards were set over it," he said grinning. "We asked the government whether it should be guarded, and we were told that less attention would be attracted to it if no special precautions appeared to be taken. As it happened, no one showed any interest in what a few scientists were doing in the basement of Schermerhorn. In fact, no one seemed particularly curious at any time – not even when lack of space for the gaseous diffusion work of Dr. Dunning forced us to take over garages and finally apartment houses on Morningside Heights."

In 1942, a number of concerns compelled the Manhattan Project to move out of Manhattan. The first of these was Columbia's space crunch (sound familiar?). Even the cavernous basement of Schermerhorn was not large enough to build an atomic pile capable of reaching chain reaction. The threat of invasion and sabotage was also an alarming concern. With Nazi commandos landing on Long Island in the summer of '42 and the repeated spotting of a German U-boat in New York Harbor, the War Department was forced to consider the repercussions of information falling into the wrong hands. Most ominous, however, was the threat of an accident. Enrico Fermi once pondered from his window in Uris Hall that the energy his experiments would ultimately unleash could make all he saw disappear. So the project was moved where more room was to be had, where German forces were less threatening, and where a nuclear accident would do less damage: the University of Chicago. ❄

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CULINARY HUMANITIES

THIS BUD'S FOR YOU

Early in his childhood, Pontius Palate realized that he was well-endowed in the gustatory sense and took to his kitchen, like post-modernists to their Derrida. In time, admiring fans began to remark that he was a superhero in the culinary world. They all marveled, too, at his ability to place any truffle or Bordeaux within twenty kilometers of its origin. And, given only a minute's notice, he could turn even the most sad-looking vegetables in the bottom of the fridge into Crunchy Vegetable Salad "Anchoïade," or perhaps *Fricassée* of Artichokes. He was *that* gifted. Pontius's rightfully enlarged ego was, however, recently humbled by a scientific discovery.

As it turns out, only a quarter of the world's population has the ability to taste all there is to be tasted. These so-called "super-tasters" have more taste buds than the average person and are thus better equipped to distinguish between different flavors (and, in addition to the basic four tastes – sweet, sour, salty, and bitter – the super-tasters are more likely to detect an additional savoury flavor, which the Japanese call *unami*). Their extra taste buds make super-tasters especially sensitive to bitter foods, such as broccoli and brussel sprouts. Interestingly, most of us were super-tasters in our youth, which is why children often find the taste of green vegetables unbearably bitter.

Naturally, Pontius assumed that he would be one of the keenest of the super-tasters, and quickly went to the kitchen to test himself. Covering the inside of his mouth with blue

food coloring, which sticks to the tongue but not taste-buds, Pontius took a magnifying glass and counted the number of pink spots to be found within a seven millimeter circle. To his utter shock and disappointment, Pontius could only count thirty-two taste buds

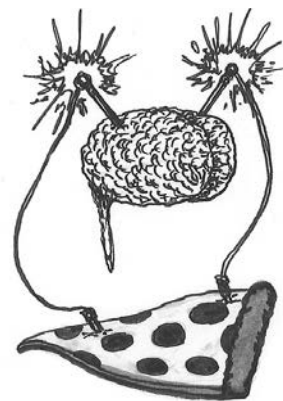
– three shy of the minimum threshold for super tasting ability!

Suddenly, Pontius' whole world seemed thrown asunder. Without certainty of superiority in all things gourmand, what's a chef to do? All those times Pontius had cooked for friends, had lectured them on how to properly baste, had implored them to try things unpronounceable – had they simply smiled and encouraged him out of pity? Did they secretly taste the pinch too much of garlic that Pontius had dropped in the stew?

After delving deeper into the matter, Pontius discovered that his despairingly average sense of taste may have been genetically predetermined. As it turns out, over 70% of super-tasters are women. What could possibly explain this unfair distribution? Slathering food coloring on *The Blue and White's* own Blue J, he found that she was a super-taster. (She tried consoling Pontius with the suggestion that maybe this was to compensate for her lack of lips.) Mephiscotheles, a fellow normal-taster, postulated that males brought the condition upon themselves by leaving the females to feed the children. Women, over time, were selected for an enhanced sense of taste so that they could detect bitter-tasting toxins in their children's food.

Now, Pontius is not one to engage in stereotyping, unless, of course, it's with regard to Korean food. Therefore, he quickly gathered evidence suggesting that science may be misguided about the culinary superiority of females, in much the same way as it had been about the Atkins diet. Alain Ducasse, Eric Ripert, Daniel Boulud, Jean-George Vongerichten, Mario Batali, Kurt Guterbrunner – a quick survey of New York's culinary landscape yields not a single member of the fairer sex! That made sense: every young gourmand can recall that sad and inevitable moment when, while entertaining a lady friend, he discovers she cannot even tell his béchamel from hollandaise. Smiling, Pontius noticed the bitter taste in his mouth had vanished.

–Pontius Palate



Illustrated by Craig Hollander

Senior Confessions & Regrets

Along with the many term papers she will write, the many Sparknotes she will read, and the many John Jay omelets she will ingest during her four years as an undergraduate, the average Columbia student will almost invariably break not a few rules, utter not a few taboos, and stuff not a few skeletons hastily into her closet. What follows, then, are five B&W staffers' earnest attempts to come clean about their less-than-spotless pasts. Please pardon their occasional frankness, and do keep an eye out for burning bridges.

I confess: Four years of the Core have made me less of an Aristotle. At times when I should have eaten little, I have eaten too much. At times when I should have said little, I have said too much. At some of those times when I should have said little, and have said little, I have nevertheless eaten too much.

I confess: Talking about confessions makes me hungry.

I confess: Columbia has, with its vaunted administrative oversight, allowed me to foul up. I failed to write a thesis, opting instead to compile an exhaustive lexicon of absurd philosophical phrases and neologisms that now exceeds fifty pages. I have, at times, taken classes I knew I wouldn't like, precisely because I knew I wouldn't like them, but should. I have never written an honest, forthright CULPA review, but I fumingly append my first drafts of papers with *ad hominem* attacks on my professors. Only a few of them have been mistakenly sent out.

I confess: The fact that I have not yet been expelled is a testament to the fact that no professor has ever read to the end of one of my papers.

I confess: I have watched too much C-SPAN not to be a PoliSci minor, and in the absence of titillating pornography I can now successfully masturbate to Strom Thurmond filibustering.

I confess: I have spent hours gazing at Mapquest's satellite captures of Manhattan with my door locked, my windows closed, and my shutters down, in broad daylight. I am often taken by the sudden fear that somewhere, out there, someone is trying to steal my precious essence. And when Mapquest catches them on a refresh, it's game over.

I confess: I have spent much of this confession wondering, silently, in the back of my mind, whether or not the Pope's confessor, Monsignor Stanislaw Michalsky, had a confes-

sor. If his confessor was the Pope, I have wondered, some back-scratching may have been involved. I also confess I will likely use this as an excuse for why this confession is unfinished, or at least why the editors will have to splice in something punchy at its end.

–Caleb Vognsen

§

After four years at this university, I have a few things to confess. As to my character, I confess that I am, in fact, hopelessly awash in moral ambiguity. I once appropriated a wheelchair outside of St. Luke's, had someone sit in it, and pushed him down Amsterdam until a one-legged man down the street induced guilt, fear, and a burst of adrenaline which propelled me several blocks away. Also, I've pilfered napkin rings from Esca, an umbrella from the umbrella bin at the Gucci store in Florence, and the *New York Times* from the inhabitant of 607 River every day for the last three months. Likewise from the inhabitants of 1312 EC, 6AC Wallach, and 8C5 Hartley, my junior, sophomore, and freshman years, respectively. I confess to engaging in prostitution of an intellectual kind, "helping" high school students with history papers at the rate of \$50/hour, after which I engaged in drawn-out debates over the relative depravity of intellectual versus physical prostitution. To my recent horror and chagrin, I have also become best friends with a Republican.

As to my qualities of mind, I can now admit: I am certifiably a dork, a huge one. Oh sure, I may steadfastly refuse to talk about anything remotely literary with you, especially in a bar. I may pretend I spent Saturday morning recovering from a hangover. Well, I may have been hung over. But I was up. Or at least laying in bed, reading something literary. I swear. I drink in Butler, especially during times of high stress, such as Tuesdays. I

also drink at the Oak Bar, on the off-chance that I will meet some dapper old gentleman who will marry me, and, putting aside those ridiculous notions of female liberation, let me be a housewife. Towards this end, I have pretended I know how to cook, and also how to write, the combination of which somehow resulted in *The Blue and White* ceding me their Culinary Humanities column. I don't think this had anything to do with all my promises to sleep my way through the masthead, but one can never be too sure about these things. While confessing to digressions of an amorous nature, I must also plead guilty to the accusation that I hooked up with a freshman (okay, two). Additionally, I have a crush on Professor Frey, my nextdoor neighbor, and two editors of this magazine. I think that's it.

—Erica De Bruin

§

Ladies. That's my main regret. There were a few for the taking, but I said "naw," and kept searching for "the one." Too late came my realization that a ho is a ho. I don't really mean that, of course, it's just that you've asked for my regrets. And I regret not being a dick, because girls like dick. "Why do they always go with the asshole?" Well, the asshole is aggressive, while the others wait. So I guess I regret waiting. But waiting for what? I don't even wear a watch, so when my cell phone is broken, I wait until the sun is overhead. Then I know it's time for Spanish Lit, every semester, 1:10 – 2:25. Except when I was in Spain for a semester. Then I lived Spanish lit. And every book started with a glass of *sangría*. So I guess I regret not having spent an entire year abroad. I was always outside in Seville. I should have spent more time outside here. I regret not having a lounge chair – that would have been all the encouragement I needed. Of course, had I gone to the gym more and gotten a six-pack, I would have wanted to show off, which would have led me to buy the lounge chair. So I guess I regret spraining my ankle so many times. I don't regret playing basketball (that would just be fucking silly), but I do regret not declaring for the NBA draft as an underclassman. That would be due to laziness, so I guess I regret that I never got around to fixing that flaw. But

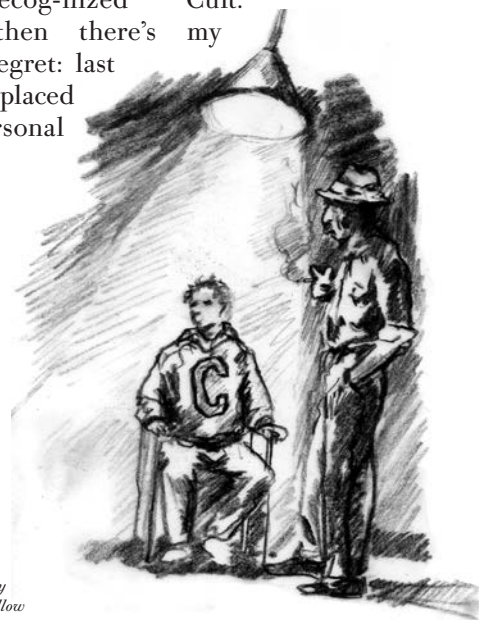
I had shit to do. I regret eating at Pinnacle for a year. Never trust the cash register there. I regret not getting everyone's name at Strokos, because after about \$800, you would think I'd have a better relationship with the cooks than, "Ja ja ja. *iYo no soy el mariconcito!*" I wish I had found HamDel earlier. I regret abstaining from extracurricular activities. But, again, apathy's the theme, so by regretting lethargy, I guess I regret myself. Not likely. I regret not flossing "bloody" into that last phrase. I should have hooked up with a Brit. And there's no reason my transition from Sandler to Cusack should have taken so long.

—Aaron Schwartz

§

So we turned this magazine over to Catholics and now they have us making confession. Well, bless me, Mater, for I have sinned: I confess that always used CubMail because I was too intimidated by Pine. I confess that I unhesitatingly voted for Rick Lazio over Hillary Clinton. I confess that I'll leave Columbia 30 pounds heavier and 9,000,000 brain cells lighter (damn you, Martin Brothers Liquor Store).

And you want to hear about this old-timer's regrets, too? Very well, dear reader, I regret never writing the following articles: "St. A's-sholes: No, I will Not Wear a Tie for You," "East Campus Elevators: the Time-Sucking Machines," and "KCCC: The SGB-Recog-nized Cult." And then there's my main regret: last year, I placed a personal



Illustrated by Michael Mallow

ad in *The Blue and White* directed solely at our resident multi-multi-millionaireess Liesel Pritzker, C'06. After reading my ad, Ms. Pritzker reportedly remarked: "this is exactly why I'm not listed in the directory anymore." Therefore, in hindsight, I regret addressing my personal ad to Liesel Pritzker. I really should have offered to whore myself out to all female millionaires on campus.

But don't get me wrong. I have no regrets about failing to attain "marketable skills" at Columbia. Sure, I can't calculate the influence of Bahrain's GDP on American dairy farmers, build an artificially-intelligent killer robot, or use chopsticks properly. But, I had the opportunity to study what I love (death, destruction, and the wonders of imperialism). And, I have faith that my familiarity with military history will serve me well in the real world. All companies, I assume, need an in-house expert on the War of 1812, just in case their employees are impressed into the British Navy. And what will those econ-engineering whiz-kids do when they're accidentally transported back in time? We'll see how well their precious skills impress Napoleon or Frederick the Great.

—Craig Hollander

§

I missed class this morning. Skipped class, I should say. I arrived ten minutes early, stood contemplatively before what would become my professor's desk, and then decided that I simply could not bear to live through the ordeal. I wish to qualify this obviously frivolous confession with accusations against my professor's teaching ability and probable moral fiber. How trifling. Actually, perhaps it's worse than trifling. Perhaps it's erroneous to begin with. Are my described actions even confessable? Presumably confessable-ness entails wrongness. But was I wrong? Better still, was I justified? (Huzzah for casuistry!) I normally hate skipping classes because, believe it or not, I worry that I hurt teachers' feelings. After all, they have feelings. But you know what? They've been hurting my feelings! The scenario normally runs like this: I plow through the reading, slide into class early, position myself front and center – eager fingers quietly dancing above my Palm keyboard – and then the teacher wastes my time for

eighty minutes by holding the class in perpetual digression or by stopping every seventeen seconds for more questions from people who didn't even begin the reading – wretches they are! This describes about one third of my college experience. But that's not what cultivates my present cynicism or what makes me deliberately miss class. Certain unforgivably horrid experiences are what have roused my ire.

The worst was first semester Contemporary Civilization. I actually went through two different instructors in one semester; the overall result was militant vexation followed by lingering depression. I vividly recall the class on Thomas Aquinas. The teacher listlessly listed Aquinas's three types of law on the chalkboard, speechified lengthily about them, and then heaved a thoroughly satisfied sigh. We laughed, we cried: twas all very quaint. But wait! Aquinas cites four types of law. He even titles his sections after them. Anyone who read the table of contents would have known about this. I heaved a thoroughly unsatisfied sigh. There was howling and gnashing of teeth. I then discovered, and frequently rediscover, that in situations like these I almost certainly lose my composure, forsake my better judgment, and unleash my opinions on the teacher and class. But such was my experience – every damned class! I spent the first weeks after our final exam huddled in the fetal position, bubbling spittle from my mouth, and murmuring something about Aquinas's divine law. Should I feel surprised, then, by my present willingness to miss class? Senioritus meets bitterness.

—Allen O'Rourke

BOOK REVIEW continued from pg 163

cinematic "epic," he also utilizes his innovative "Valley of the Shadow" project.

Of course, he also overdoses on "God Bless America" tripe (think "rolling hills" *ad nauseum*) and, oddly for a scholar, chooses not only to go light on historical judgment and interpretation, but to go so far as to sometimes let the narrative get the better of the history. While occasionally compelling, *In The Presence of Mine Enemies* will ultimately find itself in the absence of any friends.

—Avi Zenilman

BOOZE HUMANITIES

WELCOME TO THE MONKEY HOUSE, TWO IDS PLEASE

As much of the intelligent and well-informed readership already knows, Columbia scientists have for some time been using baboons and macaques in laboratory research. Their goal? To discover and isolate a form of torture capable of turning even the preserved stomach of a Grand Inquisitor. To this end, they have removed eyeballs, implanted metal pipes in skulls, and on the whole, have made mammalian life rather unpleasant.

But not every experimenter's research is so "cutting-edge." Some scientists, curiously, are investigating the effects on primates of a more traditional, antebellum antiseptic: alcohol.

In early July of 2002, Carol C. Cunningham, biochemistry Ph.D. and professor at Wake Forest University, released his groundbreaking research conducted with the "help" of monkeys. Hoping to gain insight into the progression of alcoholic liver disease in humans, Dr. Cunningham studied oxidative damage to the liver and the development of collagen fibrosis in his primate colleagues.

But unlike Columbia's more coercive and invasive techniques, there were no gruesome surgeries or needless casualties in this experiment. "One of the unique features of using these monkeys as a model for alcoholic liver disease," Dr. Cunningham said, "is that these monkeys self-administer alcohol."

Cunningham found that when provided with booze, monkeys behave pretty much the way humans do – that is, drunkenly. Some are social drinkers, partaking only publicly and

in small doses. Others are moderates, enjoying the gifts of Bacchus responsibly. There is the occasional lush, sporting a white baseball cap, for whom the other monkeys seemed concerned but whom they were afraid to confront. In fact, Cunningham observed, they parallel the spectrum of alcohol consumption observed in *Homo sapiens* with one exception – "we don't have any monkeys that don't drink... they all drink something."

Mephiscotcheles, however, protests; Cunningham's monkeys, at least, parallel the Columbia spectrum. And worse: while Columbia students, after four years of insensible inebriation, graduate to investment banking and apéritifs, Cunningham's potatious primates ah... can look forward to an eternal Orientation Week. "We've worked out some procedures that allow us to analyze during the periods they are on the ethanol. We can carry out these studies indefinitely."

–Mephiscotcheles



Illustrated by Craig Hollander



DIGITALIA COLUMBIANA

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

Paul : Est-ce que vous écoutez « un melon » quand je dis « un oignon ? »

Claudette : Paul ! S'il te plaît, sois raisonnable !

Paul : (à Claudette) Qu'est-ce qu'il est fatigant ! (à le serveur) Qu'est-ce que vous allez apporter maintenant ? Un pamplemousse ?

Serveur : S'il vous plaît, monsieur.

Paul : Non ! Je suis allergique !

Claudette : Paul, tu es de mauvaise humeur ce soir. Je pars. Sois sage ! (Elle part)

§

In the movie *Field of Dreams*, a voice whispers to Kevin Costner's character, Ray Kinsella, "If you build it, they will come." For Costner's character, Ray, "it" was a baseball field, for Rockland County "it" was the Tappan Zee Bridge.

It is obvious that the person is different, an animal—something wild that should be kept or allowed in the city because it might be dangerous and because the city is not the place it belongs in (home). Coyote needs to be set free and return to its proper niche.

§

The sun was setting, casting a bright haze on all the people in motion. What must be guarded against is the sun setting on the thoughts and aspirations of certain people for trivial reasons and to provide these views, these experiences, and these restorative capacities of the park to as any people as possible through the art of accommodation.

§

On the other hand, although I might be healthier I would lose all enjoyment of food since I wouldn't be able to perceive any of the five primary tastes—salt, sugar, sour, bitter, and unami (Grey 244). Because I did thoroughly enjoy food, the loss of this cortical area might well cause me some psychological problems like depression at the loss of enjoyment of food, especially if I'm with others who are talking about how good a certain restaurant or food is, knowing that I will never be able to experience tastes anymore.

§

A knife becomes a knife because it has to be violent. If there were no need to be violent, if there were no need for him to assert his authority, he wouldn't need to be a knife.

Auntie Harriet and I just entered the movie theater. As we sat down in our chairs, she breathed in, squinted her eyes, and clasped her chest. I knew what she was going to ask me. "Boyo, can you pass me one of my pills and get me some water?"

§

By the way, I really didn't know how you would take to this material before we started studying it. Indeed, about the only thing that I knew about your understanding of the material is that if each of you knows someone else in the class who understands the material, then at least two of you know the same number of other people in the class who understand the material. Then again, I knew that long before I knew you ;)

§

He glared as the pebble rose and plummeted and remembered the lesson taught last week in his sixth grade science class about a penny gaining so much velocity through the speed of falling from the Empire State building that it could kill someone on the street if it landed on them, and he imagined the pebble hitting Vertrex in the head and killing him. Then the unspoken war fought between them for the last year would cease, and Marie would belong to Roland.



"We'll just stay in your room, honey."

Don't let this happen to you.

Book Carman Hall Parents' Graduation Housing for May 16-20.

For rates, regulations and listings of other nearby accommodations,

visit

www.columbia.edu/cu/reshalls/graduation

Ma famille et moi, nous habitons à Riverdale, NY, dans une petite maison. J'ai une grande famille: j'ai cinq frères! Ils s'appellent David, Alex, Joseph, Jonathan, et Samuel. Samuel est le plus jeune dans la famille, son bar mitzvah est la semaine prochaine, nous allons avoir une fête. Donc il a besoin de faire la vaisselle !

§

There is an expression that we use to describe, em, Catalans. It's, em, "Catalans make bread from stones."

§

Gandhi: I see now, what your point really is. And I am saddened to have to say that your ideology arises out of a fundamental lack of trust in the human race.

Jinnah: [turns around to face Gandhi, who has also risen from his chair.] It is easy to trust the oppressors when you are aligned with them!

§

Cattle thievery was highly ritualized in traditional Sakalava society, and was considered a test of masculine skill and bravery that signaled a youth's readiness for marriage.

§

By self consciously applying connotative ornamentation continuity of formal expression is broken deterring evolution.

§

In the final analysis the question remains as to weather lack of ornamentation is ornamentation itself.

§

Among political scientists and scholars who study 'nationalism' (using Blah's definition: Blah) much attention has been devoted to determining the various ways in which nationalist movements or programs manifests themselves in different contexts and under different preconditions.

§

Chambers advocates for increased adaptation to "sustainable livelihood thinking," a paradigm that facilitates causal connections between each process involved in the debate, and its respective impact on livelihoods

§

Although Elena seems shy inside the classroom one of her friends told me that she is "a wild woman" outside. Although I wouldn't exactly call her wild, she definitely seems to be well adjusted socially. She belongs to one of the cliques in the class called the "Cheetahs" and seems to have no problem fitting in with her classmates.

§

Though the technology of washing machines, dryers, and presses developed in a classically modern industrial way, the phenomenon of the laundromat is somewhat more unique.

III. Social significance of the Laundromat

A. A place to meet, or just agnowledge, strangers

B. The hypnotic pull of the spin cycle

C. The leveling influence of folding underwear in public

D. [insert possibly nonsensical social/architectural commentary that "suggests" X (i.e. I need more time to think about this)]

§

A breeze kissed leaves on the trees, shifting their branches without a sound. A child's high-pitched giggle cracked the silence. A wave of laughter followed; a mother had lost to her children at a game of tag. They sat and snuggled on drying blades of their autumnal lawn. A shaking rumble felt beneath the earth joined a deafening roar, which slashed the air. The mother's strong yet trembling arms locked her children in an embrace of protection, shielding their eyes and shutting their ears. They were too young the learn of enmity and destruction, of terror and murder. Alas, she could hide it no better than could the laughter of a child. They heard and joined in the chorus of screams.

§

Jung wrote in his essay, "Woman in Europe," that "Neither politically, nor economically, nor spiritually, is she a factor of visible importance" (116). He goes on to explain that women are not meant to be anything more than the sidekick, always erotically bound to men. Women are not of importance and are therefore not seen as competition to men. This idea is not only horrendous to my sensibilities, but it is also not logical.

§

TOLD BETWEEN PUFFS

Verily K. Veritas has, for yet another year, succeeded in putting the "cad" in "academic," but it is time once more to let rest his churlish pen. This fills him with anxiety, naturally, and not a little fear. What will he do now? Few organizations are so desperate for extra copy that they will allow – as *The Blue and White* has for so many iterations – the publication of this uncensored, highbrow frippery. Verily hazily and guiltily remembers as examples entire paragraphs on entirely fictive love affairs, and whole articles devoted insensibly to the genius of Rilke (with passages that seemed suspiciously English-papery upon reflection). Such indulgences are not found in the quotidian miasma of adult life.

Why, just yesterday, and in the same vein, Verily was asked by some indecorous young scab what he wanted to be "when he grew up." Verily bristled. Was he not already grown? And did he not for that matter already cut the fine figure of a man? Every phase in Verily's life has been marred by those who tell him he will "grow up" as soon as he evolves beyond it. Such talk is silly, and it entirely absolves one of the responsibility and immediacy that attends every significant moment in one's life. Most people who phrase such a question in such a way, after all, spend their entire grown-up life attempting to relive their childhood – or at least accruing hoards of money sufficient enough to allow them to sleep with children, while bribing any and all local law enforcement.

In light of such unpleasant recollections, and such impeccable logic, it was not unsurprising that all Verily did in response was say "rich," and slap the youth's face with his finely wrought velvet dueling glove. Pistols at dawn, indeed.

So, in speaking of the dawn – to sequit non-sequitorily – things draw to a close, and it is all Verily can do to hope that things will not also close to a draw. There are, unfortunately, a disproportionate number of mountainous molehills that still remain. Verily has yet to discover how to keep his celebratory cigar aloft and arid while braving treacherous Scyllae and Charybdi – which is



another way of saying that he cannot smoke while passing the swim test. Also, there is the nagging likelihood of unemployment, since few companies on the up-and-up are seeking a maudlin dilettante who is persistently on the down-and-down. With any luck, Verily will endear himself to an aged heiress, and become a kept man. With anything other than luck, Verily will see you all in the bread-lines.

But in all seriousness (something that, we assure you, Verily has been storing up until just this moment), Verily intends to join those he cannot hope to beat. Vowing to Carpe the Dime as well as the Diem, he is now purposed to more corporate shores. Still, before thanklessly abandoning this collegial crèche of caring and community, Verily would like to assure each and every one of you – with the tactless exception of certain people in certain places who did certain things to certain grades – that Columbia has been the Ogygia of his Odyssey. Smoke he was, and to smoke he will return, but Verily will exhale the sounds of your names and the shapes of your faces in every puff hereafter.

–*Verily Veritas, who has been C. K. Vognsen, and A. P. Venkatesan before him, and B. D. Letzler before him, and numberless others before them, but who is forever.*

Congratulations, Seniors. You may have won the battle, but you have not yet won the war.



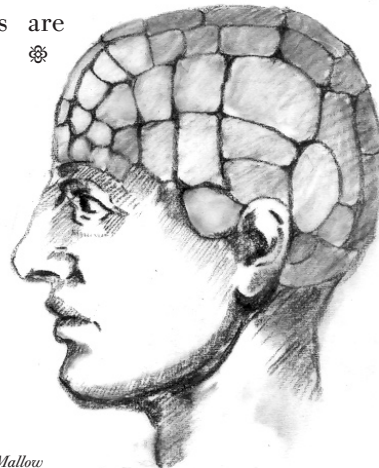
CURIO

Ah, Phrenology – the study of human behaviors and personality characteristics measured by the size and shape of the cranium. Founded by Franz Gall around 1800, phrenology became widely used to determine criminal tendencies as well as occupational inclinations (“have a large bump on your left parietal? You’ll make a great doctor! But watch that temper...”). Finally, in 1866, the field received its long-overdue recognition with the founding of the American Institute of Phrenology in New York. A diploma granting institution, it trained hundreds of students to travel around the country (and the world) measuring skulls, giving detailed descriptions of personality traits to anyone willing to pay their fees. In the 1940s, the discipline’s pseudoscientific methodology finally exposed, the Institute forever closed its doors. But whatever happened to all those skulls it collected over the years? No doubt, a few became decorative flourishes for a lucky lab assistant’s kitchen. But fortuitously for a curious intern, the rest of the collection was donated to the American Museum of Natural History, where it still resides. In the bowels of the museum, each skull is housed in a box, labeled with its original phrenological description. The B&W, as a service to its readership, offers below some of the finer cranial-character analyses in order that you might find a label that fits your skull. —Lynn Copes

A friendly, but proud Negro
 Devoted wife
 Powerful, stubborn and unreliable Romanian
 Belgian, a good mimic
 Almost an idiot
 Female, too prudent and timid
 Not overcautious, very combative
 Hindu, socially and religiously inclined
 White man, destructive and secretive
 Japanese, finely organized
 A selfish child
 Negro, very musical
 Bright Chinaman
 Austrian, not very sociable, evasive
 Religious man, irregular skull
 Very fond of music and wants to acquire
 Digger Indian, harmonious intellect
 Very stubborn, yet child loving Indian
 Indian of the better type
 Female, hesitating type of head, fond of offspring
 Little conscience
 Low type of humanity
 Irish, impulsive, religious, shrewd
 Obstreperous Peruvian
 Good man and devil-fearing Negro
 More Animal than man, very cunning

Better type of British
 A coarse white man—small intellect
 Good quality, but savage in type
 A physical coward, very selfish
 Remarkable skull
 Colored mulatto, energetic and excitable (diseased)

[N.B. The Institute didn’t know any information about the owner of the skull before it was received. A cursory study of the material at the AMNH today reveals that nearly all of the sex and racial classifications are incorrect.] ❄



Illustrated by Michael Mallow

THE BLUE AND WHITE



CAMPUS GOSSIP

CORRECTION! *The Blue and White* extends its heartfelt apologies to Craig B. Hollander, Editor Emeritus, for omitting his byline from the *The Fall of Berlin 1945* review in our preceding issue. As he as yet remains unemployed, we wish to give all résumé-padding credit where due.

§

Professor Daniel Chiarelli recently told his Music Hum class that “people who played [Dungeons and Dragons] are really into Wagner’s *Ring Cycle*.” One student promptly asked the Professor if he had played Dungeons and Dragons. “No,” he quickly exclaimed, “I played with my sister’s dolls.”

§

A shivering staffer noted early one recent morning that the Wallach fire alarm resonates at the F# above middle C. Neighboring buildings have not been studied; however, *The Blue and White* ardently hopes that Van Am Quad will play “Roar, Lion, Roar” when set ablaze

§

ENGINEER WITHOUT SCRUPLES?
 Mohan Ramaswamy, E’04, the Vice President of Funding for the Engineering Student Council (ESC) and secret ruler of ABC, won

the grand prize (two round-trip tickets to Europe) in the Engineers Without Borders raffle. Although the *B&W* is certain that Mohan would never fix the raffle in his favor, Vijay Sundaram, the president of SEAS, wasn’t so sure. Following the raffle drawing, Vijay dashed an e-mail off to Mohan, exclaiming: “You SHADY SHADY bastard... if ESC funds had anything to do with the ‘results,’ I best be your goddamn date to Europe.”

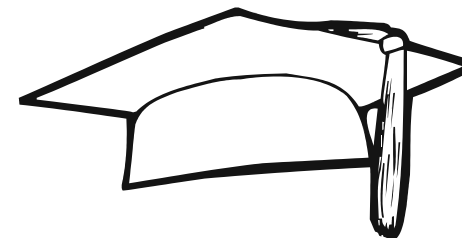
§

Several proudly promiscuous members of the senior class have formed the “Columbia Cycle Club.” To “hit for the cycle” and attain membership in this club, one needs to hook up with a first-year, sophomore, junior, and senior in the span of an academic year. One of the club’s founders asked senior Medha Goyal, who has not hit for the cycle, what someone who hooked up with members of seven different Columbia classes would be called. “A whore,” replied Medha.

§

According to one of his TAs, Political Science Professor Robert Jervis once received a rejection letter from an academic journal, which reviews articles anonymously, stating that he “tried to be like Robert Jervis, and failed.”

Congratulations to the Class of 2004!



Best wishes from Housing and Dining for everything that lies ahead...

Columbia University Student Services

A poster advertising a Kingsmen concert proudly proclaimed, "We exercise less discretion than [the infamous Fed cartoonist] Ben Schwartz." As evidence, Kingsmen printed the following rhyme on the poster: "I'm *schwitzin* like a *schwartz*/ I wanna piece o' matzah/ get me a potato/ I'll eat it like a latke/ you know how I do/ I'm the lyrical Jew."

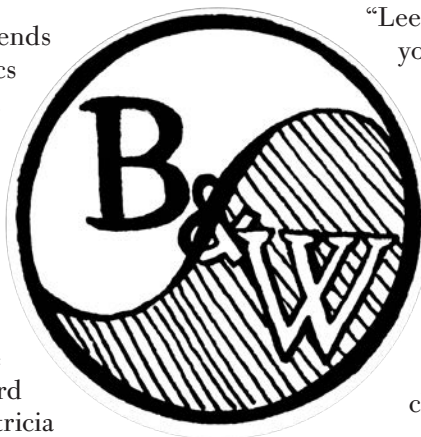
Please note that *schwartz* is the Yiddish word for "black," and is considered a derogatory racial term. Although *The Blue and White* applauds Columbia's recent decision to offer a Yiddish Studies major, it's a darn *schanda* we have to kvetch about such trafe.

§

There is a Columbia tradition (yes, we have some) that, at the end of the commencement, graduating students in the University toss a symbol of their school in the air. For instance, Barnard typically throws teddy bears, and SEAS usually lets fly a swarm of paper airplanes. Columbia College, however, has no consistent object. So it falls to the Columbia College Senior Class Council to choose something for their classmates to hurl. This year, *The Blue and White* has learned that the Council has considered a variety of options, including the following: Trojan condoms, bouncy balls (because they're fun), and crumpled resumes (to symbolize our shattered dreams). As of now, the Council seems to be leaning toward having the class throw paper crowns, possibly from Burger King.

§

The Blue and White extends congratulations to Classics Professor Gareth Williams, for winning the Mark Van Doren Award, and also to Philosophy Professor Philip Kitcher for his receipt of the Lionel Trilling Award. The *B&W* would also like to issue its own accolade – the Wife of Philip Kitcher Award – to Philosophy Professor Patricia Kitcher. And, to them both, the Good Humor Award, but only on the condition that they promise not to get mad at us.



On a flyer next to the computers in the main Butler lab:

"WANTED: The guy who's been bombarding the network with the "worm" that produces files like: Mafia... Starwars... Cracker... Love... etc. If you know who he is, turn him in. Your loyalties should be to the student body trying to get its work done, not to a criminal. There are no moral issues in turning in a crook. Your moral obligations are to the law-abiding students.

Profile of this degenerate:

He is probably...

- * a loner
- * without a girl friend
- * uncomfortable in a social environment
- * stricken with poor self-image
- * very unattractive personality
- * angry because all people are better than him

If you know this guy, turn him in. This loser is costing people a lot of time and money. He belongs in jail, not in a university."

In other news, the entire SEAS student body was recently rounded up by security for questioning.

§

While urging the overthrow of capitalism and the disbanding of Columbia's imperialist administration, one *B&W* staffer noticed ragged proletarian humor, both tasteful and otherwise, running rampant among the signs and slogans brought out for the cause of unionization. Some prize sign picks:

"Lee: Your politics are as bad as your haircut." While word has been simmering for a while, this is probably not the best way to break it to him outright.

"Milosevic/Bush/Bollinger: Pioneers of Electoral Innovation." Bazing! And remember how Lee joined that Supreme Court brief to ethnically cleanse Kosovo?

§

A... it's Ainsley's real middle initial! ☼