



JASPER L. CLYATT / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

PARTY POLITICS | Michael Steele, former head of the Republican National Committee, spoke to over 100 students Tuesday night.

Gourmet taqueria to open at 108th, B’way by summer

BY CONSTANCE BOOZER
Spectator Staff Writer

Chipotle burrito lovers will have a glitzier Mexican option in the neighborhood by the summer.

Cascabel Taqueria, a Mexican restaurant known on the Upper East Side for its tacos, plans to open an Upper West Side location at 108th Street and Broadway sometime between late spring and early summer, co-owner Elizabeth Gaudreau said.

“We put a New York-American spin on Mexican street food,” Gaudreau said. “Using organic and sustainable food, this is a gourmet taqueria. If you go to a taco truck, it’s just a plain pork taco. We take

every single type of taco to the next level.”

Gaudreau said the taqueria had Columbia in mind when deciding on the new location.

“It was one of the deciding factors, it’s a great fit for the students there,” she said, adding that the restaurant’s current location has a large number of customers who commute from the Upper West Side.

But the restaurant faces challenges moving into the neighborhood, including a number of established Mexican restaurants with slightly lower prices.

“It’s too expensive,” Blaine Harper, CC ’13, said of the taqueria. “I prefer burritos to tacos, and Taqueria [y Fonda] on Amsterdam is amazing – their

\$9 burrito is huge and lasts two meals.”

“We put a New York-American spin on Mexican street food.”

—Elizabeth Gaudreau,
co-owner of Cascabel
Taqueria

John Kenney, CC ’13, agreed that Cascabel – which boasts \$6 wines and a lunch special of three soft corn tacos for \$11.75 – might be too pricey to justify

daily lunches.

“This is a little expensive but could be a nice option once in a while,” he said.

Gaudreau said she thinks the fresh ingredients and dining experience are worth it – she said that though it’s a bit of a walk from campus, Cascabel decided on the location in order to have enough room for outdoor seating at its corner spot.

Both of their locations will feature new chef Daniel VanHeusden, who used to cook for Capital Grille.

Harper said she’s glad a restaurant will be filling the space at 108th Street, though she prefers the Chipotle two blocks uptown.

SEE CASCABEL, page 2

Former RNC chair Steele calls on past

Steele challenges students to make generation’s hard decisions

**BY CONSTANCE BOOZER
AND JACKIE CARRERO**
Columbia Daily Spectator

Michael Steele is no longer the chairman of the Republican National Committee, but he proved on Tuesday night that he can still divide a crowd.

In a speech at the law school, Steele touched on his own upbringing and current policy issues.

“My mama worked 25 years in a Laundromat making three dollars and 83 cents the day she retired. My daddy was an alcoholic, he beat my mama. That’s my story. They shaped my philosophy, they shaped my politics,” Steele said. “What you experience right now is shaping your philosophy and shaping your politics.”

He embraced his role as a controversial political figure, and spoke at length about the non-traditional roles he filled within the GOP.

“As a Roman Catholic, African American, and Republican from DC, I know about conflict,” Steele said.

That was a fitting theme, since the event was made possible by the Friendly Fire Fund, created to invite controversial speakers from all political sides to campus following the 2006 Minutemen controversy. At that speech, by the founder of an activist group monitoring the U.S.-Mexico border for illegal immigrants, 40 protesters stormed the stage in Lerner Hall.

“It’s obvious that Michael Steele is a controversial figure,” Sara Jacobs, head of the Columbia Political Union and CC ’11, said.

“He is an unorthodox Republican, received flak from the media, and offended people in his own and other parties. He wasn’t re-elected, and we thought that because he is not in office he would say things more freely.”

And despite the labels he placed on himself, Steele stressed the need to transcend political partisanship in order to come to solutions for national issues such as healthcare and racial inequality.

“He wasn’t re-elected, and we thought that because he is not in office he would say things more freely.”

—Sara Jacobs,
head of the Columbia
Political Union and CC ’11

“Leadership is required to step up. That’s not Republican and that’s not Democrat,” Steele said. “The challenge is no less different ... Labels are just that, labels. They don’t tell you what you need to know, nor do they help you understand why an action is taken.”

When audience members questioned his avoidance of strict social conservatism, Steele

SEE STEELE, page 2

After false start, Five Guys to open today at 110th St.

BY KATIE BENTIVOGLIO
Spectator Staff Writer

Five Guys burger fans can rejoice—the popular burger-and-fries chain is opening its doors at 11 a.m. today.

Assistant manager Michael Morales said the opening of the Morningside Heights location at 110th Street and Broadway had been delayed by construction work.

“We were experiencing construction problems and had to close early,” Morales said of the store’s brief opening on March 12, over spring break. “Morningside Heights is a hard area.”

The delay may also have been for legal reasons, since Department of Building records show that the building didn’t have an updated Certificate of Occupancy until this past Monday.

“Right now we’re busy just trying to get this place ready and clean,” an employee said Tuesday afternoon before ducking back inside.

With the “Sorry, we’re training!” sign finally gone and employees organizing the store, people like Brittne Rivera, GS ’14, were ecstatic that the restaurant—known for its intense fanbase—is finally opening.

“When I first came here, I wrote a letter to the company begging them to open a Five Guys on the Columbia campus,” Rivera said, adding that she became an avid Five Guys fan while living in Washington, D.C.

Her husband JJ Rivera, GS ’14, noted the constant stream of students and local residents on Tuesday checking to see if the

SEE FIVE GUYS, page 2



JASPER L. CLYATT / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

ALMOST READY | Employees were busy cleaning and organizing the restaurant in preparation for Wednesday’s opening.

OPINION, PAGE 4

Get some

Why Columbia students need to get laid.

The nobler arts

Stephen Wu argues for the importance of the humanities.



SPORTS, PAGE 6

Columbia to send nine fencers to NCAAs

The Light Blue fencing squad will be well represented at the NCAA national championships this year, as nine Lions were selected to compete.

EVENTS

Sustainability in NYC and Shanghai

Panel discussion about the economic and environmental choices world-class cities need to make.

Faculty House, Presidential Room, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

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Meet over 100 professionals working in film, publishing, and graphic design.
Low Library Rotunda, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

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Today



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STEELEY GAZE | Michael Steele spoke about his identity as a black, Catholic Republican in his speech at the law school Tuesday.

Steele talks former job, past experiences in speech at law school

STEELE from front page

responded that it was all part of his former job.

“It is part of the balancing act that I had to maintain as chairman. I would be sent into one meeting telling me we got to fight against abortion and then would be pushed into another meeting saying we need to focus on economics,” he said.

On whether gay marriage should be decided at the federal level, Steele emphasized that it is something for the younger

generation to decide. “I don’t have the answer. I didn’t have the luxury as the chairman to get in that nuanced argument,” he said.

Many members of the audience said afterwards that Steele seemed too wary to make a gaffe and avoided answering most of the audience’s questions.

“He made a lot of idyllic generalizations about what politics and the party should be,” David Glendinning, CC ’14, said. “There were only one or two questions in which he actually brought up specific issues relevant to him.”

“He dodged more of the tough questions, which is natural of any speaker,” said Jacobs.

But other spectators said his sincerity and openness about discussing his upbringing left a positive impression.

“I’m not a Republican, but I like Steele and I respect him. I think most African Americans think that if you’re a Republican you sell out. It’s like once you climb to the top of the ladder you don’t turn back. But I’m impressed by some things he’s done and said and he doesn’t forget where he

came from,” Abshir Kore, a first year law student, said.

The event was put on by CPU and co-sponsored by 12 student groups, and CPU members said they were pleasantly surprised at the attendance, since CPU has experienced low attendance for some notable figures’ speeches in the past.

“It was a huge success for CPU,” said Alex Frouman CC ’12 and CPU director of operations. “The capacity of the room was 124 people and we were clearly over capacity.”

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Five Guys to open for lunch today serving fries, burgers

FIVE GUYS from front page

store had opened yet.

“It’s just that good that you see kids and adults lining up to see if it’s open,” he said, adding that he appreciates the blackboard where the store notes where the day’s potatoes have come from.

“We were experiencing construction problems and had to close early.”

—Michael Morales,
Assistant manager

A number of passersby who stopped to look inside said they had never eaten at Five Guys

before, but were interested based on its reputation.

“I’ve heard it’s good, but I haven’t eaten there yet,” Sasan Norouzi, Architecture ’10, said.

Dan Kang, SEAS ’14, said that even though he has given up ground beef for 2011, he’ll still be lining up for the fries.

“As everyone says, it’s delicious,” he said.

With a location directly across from Mel’s Burger Bar, Five Guys might provide some healthy competition, but Kang insisted that the real debate is between Five Guys and In-N-Out, the famed West Coast burger joint.

“I think it’s the equivalent of an In-N-Out burger,” Kang said. “To me it’s the same, but I have friends who argue about it.”

Brittne Rivera, however, said Five Guys wins. “It’s way better than In-N-Out,” she said.

Constance Boozer contributed reporting.

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JASPER L. CLYATT / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

COUNTER SERVICE | Locals will be able to buy burgers and fries from Five Guys on Broadway starting at 11 a.m. Wednesday.



ZARA CASTANY / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

TACO TIME | Taqueria Cascabel, known for its tacos on the Upper East Side, will open an outpost in the neighborhood by summer.

Storefront at B’way and 108th St. to become Taqueria Cascabel

CASCABEL from front page

“MoHi is pretty well-rounded, there are tons of restaurants already,” she said. “But I can’t imagine anything else here. I’d hate to see a bunch of clothing stores in the area.”

“I rarely go to Chipotle, but if it were a choice between

Chipotle and this place? Chipotle,” she added.

Kenney said he’d rather see more fast food chains come to the area, but that he’s still excited about Cascabel coming.

“MoHi is lacking fast food – I know these are lower-quality options, but sometimes it’d be nice if there was a Mickey D’s

or BK somewhere so we could get cheap food really quickly,” he said.

Cascabel, which the restaurant says gets its name from “hot chili peppers that jingle and rattle when shaken,” does have convenience on its side.

Sherill Marie Henriquez,

CC ’13, said she’d be up for visiting the restaurant, which will have counter service with seating areas.

“I don’t know why not to go,” Henriquez said. “I’m always willing to try anything once since I never cook.”

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A message from the Editorial Board

In light of recent events in Japan, the Editorial Board would like to extend its sympathy to individuals whose lives have been impacted by the disasters, and to students with friends or family who have been affected. We urge readers to donate to the Red Cross through its website (<http://tinyurl.com/CUcares>) and keep themselves informed as events in the region continue to unfold.



Follow this QR code to make a donation on the Red Cross website.



SPEC SPORTS



ENJOYING LONG WALKS ON THE BEACH

SINCE 1877

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THERE'S NOT ENOUGH ART IN OUR SCHOOLS.

NO WONDER PEOPLE THINK

CARAVAGGIO

IS A GUY ON THE SOPRANOS.

It's hard to believe. Here's a 16th-century Baroque master whose bold naturalistic painting style first created a sensation, then a movement. A guy whose life was filled with the turbulence and excess of more than a dozen Mario Puzo novels.



If you're looking for Caravaggio, you're very, very odd.



A self-portrait of Caravaggio as Bacchus. Honestly, he wouldn't last 10 minutes on The Sopranos.

young artist he struggled for years to make a living. He was angry. Yet the angry contrast between light and darkness in his work is the very reason why it now hangs in countless museums around the world.

If nothing else, it's a case study of the importance of having art as an outlet. Unfortunately, one we're fast removing from our kids' lives.

and immortality in his art. But does the average kid on the street even know who Caravaggio is?

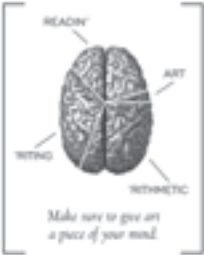
Fuhgedaboudit.

Too bad. Especially when you consider how much our children can learn from the conflicted life of a great artist like Michelangelo Caravaggio.

He grew up in less than ideal circumstances. Most of his family died in the plague. Much of his youth was misspent on the mean streets of Rome. And as a

If the arts are indeed a vital part of your child's education (and studies show you believe they are), then you should demand his or her fair share. To find out how to help, or for more information about the benefits of arts education,

please visit us at AmericansForTheArts.org. Because, as Caravaggio would tell you, life without art is torture.



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Timeless humanities

Having recently gone through, with so many of my classmates, the unpleasantness of formally extracting a course of study from the dizzying myriad offered in the academy, the inevitable question arises of what, precisely, one does with a degree in Classics or English literature or, the granddaddy of all useless disciplines, Philosophy. Historically, the humanities have collectively occupied the pinnacle of Western education. Today, they are under siege from the forces of pre-professionalism and the sciences, though the latter does so surreptitiously, and, I think, potentially even unwittingly.

Most, I imagine, have no quibble with the assertion that modern pre-professional schools and degrees at the college level are antagonistic to the humanities. Barring the once-in-a-generation David McCullough, the humanities are not perceived as the surest road to riches or a secure vocation. To that end, one can decamp to Stern or Wharton and graduate after four years, diploma in hand and under the impression that Virginia Woolf is an indigenous canine of the Tidewater.

The more interesting tension is between humanities and the sciences, both social and physical. Science is probably not the ultimate destroyer of souls that those who champion arts and letters would claim, but it surely does not generate progress unyielding—as it trumpets—without some corresponding loss. The sciences seek definitive answers and excel in reducing things to naked, constituent pieces: Two and two are four as surely as hydrogen and oxygen combine to become water. The element of mystery that pervades the cosmos exists only out of ignorance—it is meant to be uncovered and, ultimately, conquered. After all, if mankind can totally understand the universe, then he may rule it most completely, obliterating the need for those things that transcend himself.

Were I under house arrest, I know I would rather have Eliot's Harvard Classics over a slide rule and a problem set.

The belief that everything is solvable and quantifiable is not necessarily by nefarious design. It is simply the structure of the sciences. It thrives on the forward motion of research, and, by that virtue, manages curiously to perpetuate and destroy itself ad infinitum. Discoveries about voting patterns of immigrants in southeastern Peoria or breakthroughs in genetic sequencing are exciting and tangible, whereas a discourse on The Politics is less so. The point of the classics is not necessarily to expand on them, but to understand what they say and to import those lessons into personal history.

Humanities are cherished at Columbia, perhaps uniquely so. We hold a recognition about their exceptional beauty and enduring truth. Why else, indeed, would the school put their students through a serious literary, philosophical, musical, and artistic sequence if these subjects had nothing to offer? There is something elegant, no doubt, in the order of a Taylor series and something satisfying in an equation that resolves neatly, but even conveying that charm mandates the humanities to give them voice. Order is a philosophical idea, and to describe beautiful things in coarse language is somehow to degrade them.

Ultimately, the humanities, I think, enrich our lives in a way that science simply cannot. Before swarms of SEAS students angrily protest, however, I hastily add that I am immensely grateful for modern advances. But were I under house arrest, I know I would rather have Eliot's Harvard Classics over a slide rule and a problem set. Put simply, great books—the bedrock of the humanist tradition—improve our souls. They do nothing more than that, for they are worthwhile in and of themselves. The defender of the humanities who would describe its concrete benefits, like “better critical analysis,” is offering the wrong apology. The humanities orient us towards what is good, the highest end of all.

Science, ultimately, cannot talk about what is right. It can develop the nuclear bomb, but cold technology serves little purpose if it is not guided by proper reason. Should science ever truly reach its goal of fully analyzing the world, what, then, is left? One could, I suppose, make marginal improvements in machinery or minutely refine skills, but one can contemplate tragedy and comedy, old age and youth, with deep passion for perpetuity. It is not the liberal arts that are dated and defunct, but ironically the sciences, which move and break down so often. Today's newest theories and technologies are, in an instant, obsolete. First and permanent things, however, remain constant. The humanities are painted as static, whereas they should be properly regarded as timeless instead.

I do not pretend to know how to reconcile the differences between these two camps, and both have something to contribute. Perhaps the two are not so deeply opposed, but need conjunction. The Core has both scientific and humanist requirements, after all, and good majors, I found, hopefully blend both elements. Yet, in the end, to be humane is to have some special insight into fellow man, and to have chanced onto what is, and always will be.

Stephen Wu is a Columbia College sophomore. The Remnant runs alternate Wednesdays.



STEPHEN WU

The Remnant

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

I write to underscore several points addressed in Derek Turner's column, “A Debate Aborted,” regarding the Columbia administration's cancellation of the debate on the ethics of eating meat. Further, I hope to express a serious area of contention with Columbia administration for canceling the debate on absurdly hypocritical grounds.

As a student who planned to attend the debate, I was shocked and disappointed that the University had shut down this important event. As Derek has articulated, matters of ethics are explored far less often at Columbia than they should be, considering their significance in our lives. Yet whether or not one feels that dialogue about issues of morality must be of high priority to the University, it seems almost trite to point out that freedom of speech and open discourse should be.

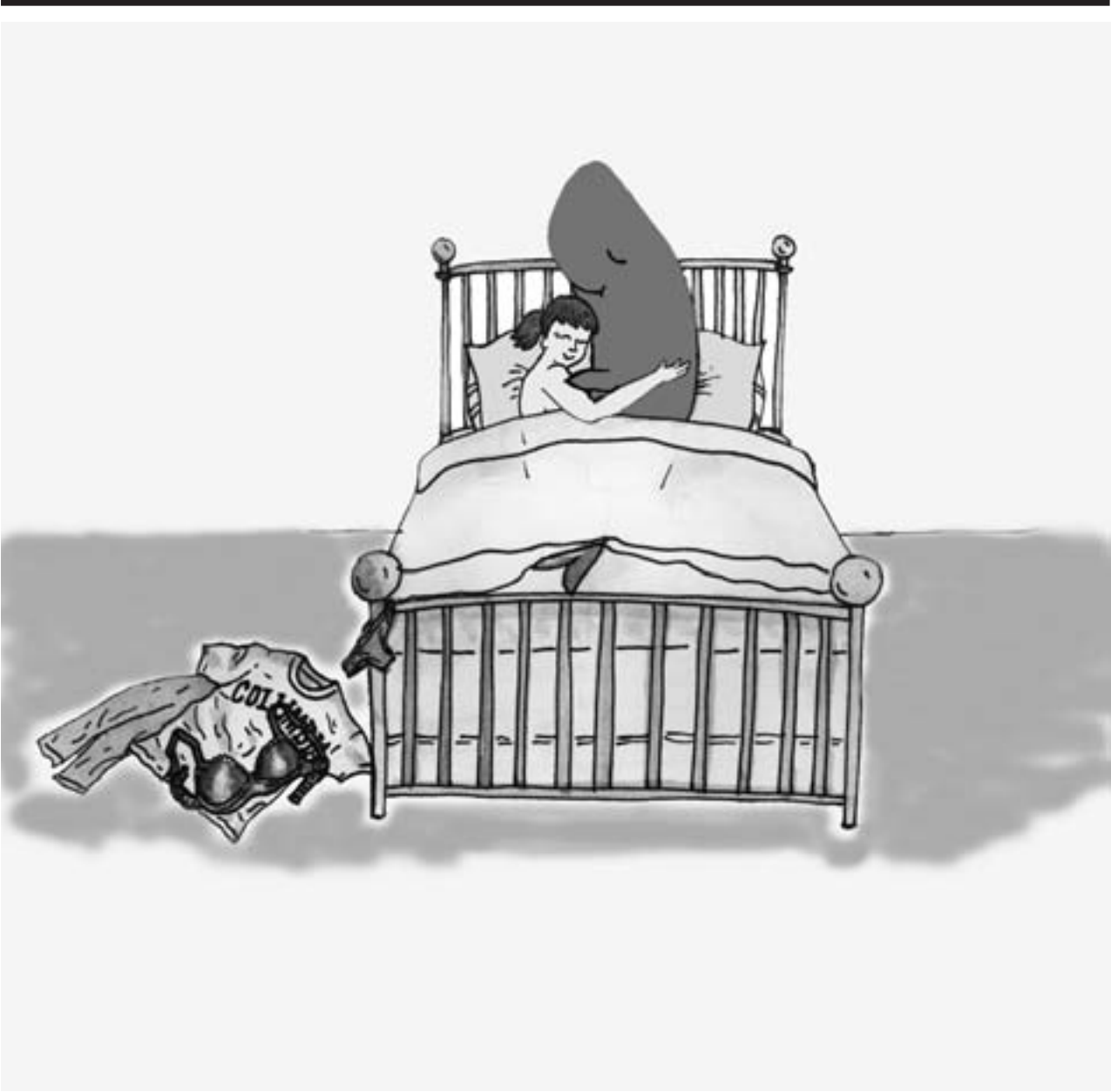
Denying PETA vice president Bruce Friedrich permission to speak on campus was not only shameful with regard to the University's supposed mission of engaging the minds of students, but it was also utterly hypocritical. How can Columbia

administration claim that Bruce Friedrich is barred from campus based on “security concerns” when holocaust denier and human rights violator Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was invited to speak on campus, in the interest of promoting free speech?

The University's cancellation of the debate was effectively a form of censorship that should infuriate us all. The University had no right to shield us from the exchange of ideas regarding animal cruelty and environmental sustainability that might have been explored at the debate. If the administration feels justified in publicly closing its doors to a speaker with views which threaten Columbia's reputation (perhaps they thought Mr. Friedrich would bring up Columbia's notorious animal experiments?), who is to say that behind closed doors, they are refraining from other forms of censorship as well?

Sincerely,

Liat Segal, BC '11
March 23, 2011



AMALIA RINGHART

Squeeze somebody

BY ITTAI ORR

A letting go is in order. The pressures of Columbia and the city are so taxing that the students of our fair institution, stifled by their own insecurities and deficiencies, become sour and cast their impossible self-standards onto everyone else—in effect creating a chaste, Republican wasteland. Before you dismiss me as a silly, melodramatic loner (which may be true), you should know that when I consulted my therapist last week about the issue of Columbia loneliness and abstinence, she answered that yes, in fact, this campus is for some reason plagued by a widespread sexual drought. Furthermore, I spoke with a Gay Health Access Program (GHAP) representative about sex at this school—he collects this data as part of the HIV tests he administers—and even individuals he called really hot reported having sex maybe three times in the last year. This is unacceptable. So at the extreme risk of revealing my own preoccupations with my lack of human and sexual interaction (which I humbly admit are very real), I will now ask an unanswerable and perhaps unjustified question: Why do Columbia students have so little sex?

My theory is that many of us here are tangled up in self-interest and self-doubt. Beyond just the easy explanation of our external pressures (the promise of success and the cool, harsh city of winners beyond our gates), there are some forms of insecurity at this school so baffling that they're nearly impossible to articulate. An attractive female friend of mine told me about a situation in which a drunken Columbia boy needed to prove his manhood by challenging her to hand-to-hand combat. I wonder if he might be representative of a whole swath of the Columbia community, so uncertain about his own sexuality that even in his most unconscious state, he's unable to approach a girl for sex and opts instead for a kind of sadomasochistic power struggle.

So in our private insecurity, we take every chance we get to reject and scorn each other, redirect our libidos, and scoff at the sexual—intellectual geeks who somehow manage to scurry unnoticed from one classics course to the next, ignoring the scurrying geek in ourselves and seeking

only a utilitarian ego-boost in our classes as opposed to the unexpected thrill of a beautiful idea. Plato is not alone in his belief that the love of wisdom and the love between humans are inexorably linked. If we let ourselves love what we learn, we would start to love each other and learn from each other. In the words of Viktor Frankl, “Don't aim at success—the more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue... as the unintended side-effect of one's personal dedication to a course greater than oneself.” Taking action out of passion, it seems, is the true road to happiness. And what's more passionate than making love?

Why do Columbia students have so little sex?

Last semester I took a seminar in which we read Melville's Moby Dick and I remember landing on a passage that totally shocked me out of my Butler stupor about the sensual joy of squeezing spermaceti out of globules harvested from the head of a sperm whale. At some point Melville bursts into this euphoric thought: “Let us all squeeze ourselves into each other; let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and sperm of kindness.” How telling that no one else at the seminar thought this passage was significant, and smirked at me for finding it inspiring. This op-ed is in part a defense of Melville, who was against the condescending voices of abstinence. In their fear of being rejected, or revealing any kind of embarrassing, sentimental desire, these squares are simply missing out.

What we need is a bit of confidence and pride in our school and in each other. We are so blessed, so capable, so bright, and so squeezable. We have the capacity for such passion, such revolutionary force in the world. Let's drink passionately from each other's cups rather than cower and detest everyone else and ourselves. Give up your anxiety, O Columbia, give up your solipsism, your condescension, and go have sex with somebody.

The author is a Columbia College junior majoring in English and film studies.

STAFF EDITORIAL

Counsel for the Council

This is a narrow window of opportunity—Columbia College Student Council (CCSC) nominations have opened, and they close this Friday, March 25th.

If you are like many other Columbia students, knowing that may not be enough to motivate you to involve yourself in campus politics. Student council nominations rarely get a large response, and when it comes time for elections later on in the spring semester, there usually isn't much of a choice between candidates, as few students run.

Why isn't there greater interest in our student councils? It certainly isn't a sign of apathy on our campus—if anything, Columbia students are passionate about campus life and would love to see changes in dining, housing, and the other usual suspects that come up frequently on the platform.

The problem seems to be, in part, one of communication. Students receive an email (a “Growler”) with information on the nomination process, but such an email can easily be overlooked. Candidates do their part in advertising themselves, plastering their faces from East Campus to Lerner, but the project of informing the students and explaining their visions for the council needs to happen much earlier in the process, when the playing field is open.

This lack of communication is not confined to the weeks leading up to elections but is instead a more widespread problem of CCSC. Outside of weekly emails, there is little effort on the part of CCSC to acquaint students with their activities and update them on their goals. A student who has not been in CCSC from the beginning of his time at Columbia, then, will likely not run, as he would have little knowledge of CCSC's accomplishments and potential.

CCSC needs students with ingenuity and a willingness to depart from the same, stale goals and plans of attack. We have seen too many candidates whose main claim to success is “experience in navigating Columbia's bureaucracy.” Why not students who can bring some creativity to the table, who will find other ways to communicate to students and update

them on their goals and progress? Why not students who will find a way to use CCSC's space on the television screens in Lerner to draw undergraduates into their projects? Why not students who will stand outside Lerner or Butler and talk to students face to face instead of simply sending an email with a survey—a survey that has been, incidentally, a step in the right direction for CCSC.

The administration, as well, needs to help CCSC achieve its potential, giving council members more power and opportunity to affect changes on campus. The ability to navigate bureaucracy is only helpful insofar as it actually means something, and it's likely that some students are hesitant to run due to an impression that making a real impact is impossible.

So before Friday, sit down and think of the things about your daily life at Columbia that you wish were different, as well as ways that you would change those things if you had the chance. Find that Growler and follow the link, or google “CCSC Elections” to learn more information or nominate yourself. If you decide that running for CCSC isn't for you, vote in April when elections occur. CCSC has a great deal of potential, and now is the time to tap into it.

Columbia blues during March Madness

I don't know about you, but I'm pretty darn happy to be a student here at Columbia. Great education, great city, great people. But as a sports fan, March can be the toughest month to bleed light blue. Year after year, the onset of spring carries with it certain doubts about the awesomeness of my soon-to-be alma mater.



JACOB LEVENFELD

Eye on the Ball

Columbia freshmen who grew up on a healthy diet of SportsCenter and College GameDay know what they're in for. It's not really a place for tailgating or face painting or season-ticket lotteries. Our marching band is a well-meaning joke, our high-profile varsity teams are average, but it's all good because no one around campus really seems to care and because some of the great things about Columbia go a long way toward offsetting this unfortunate apathy. Still, some of my classmates have never heard of Baker Field, others don't know how to find Leven.

For those of us who do know the difference between Dodge Hall and Dodge Fitness Center, small tinges of admissions regret inevitably taint the month of March. The Columbia football season covers us from September through Thanksgiving, at which point it's replaced seamlessly by basketball. Say what you will about the success of these teams, but they're fun to watch. Their league records may hover around .500, and they're probably not winning any Ivy titles in the near future, but they often make things interesting against top teams and leave plenty of room for analysis and discussion.

Since a thrilling end to the basketball season in early March—including a loss to Yale in double overtime and a season-ending blowout win over Brown—there hasn't been much to get excited about. I'm glad the baseball season is underway, and I'm even happier that we've got a pretty solid team, but realistically I'm not going to pay too much attention until the Ivy League opener on April 2. I mean seriously, how can I calculate ERA and talk about stolen bases while there's still snow on the ground? So, for those 27 intermediary days, all I've really got is March Madness.

It's tough. Now don't get me wrong, the NCAA Tournament is the best event in college sports. The hard part is recognizing how exciting it is while not getting too depressed that we go to a school that never competes in it. It's nice that the Ivies get to send a representative, but with Princeton sent packing after the first round I'm really just a college student watching college sports that have absolutely nothing to do with the college I attend.

I want to know what it's like to go to a Final Four school. I want to know what it's like to go to a school where all my best friends know all about the basketball team, where everyone knows the athletes by face, where my college is featured on prime time on ESPN. School spirit is a big part of college, and we really don't have any of it.

So March Madness, the only real solace I can find in this lengthy stretch between February and April, is not all fun and games for a Columbia sports fan. It's also a nasty little reminder that our education may be elite and our campus may be America's greatest city, but our college experience is not typical and is not everything it could be.

Even professional sports don't provide much of a refuge during the interminable month of March. Football is obviously out of season and spring training is kind of meaningless. Thank goodness the NBA and NHL playoff races are so incredibly competitive and exciting this year.

I guess there's only one way out of this quandary. Clearly, March wouldn't be so depressing if our basketball team would just win the league, make the damn tournament, and hang in there for a few rounds. Then people would have to start caring, right? Wait—maybe it's better that we never make it. It means we won't have to find out the answer to that question.

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ADRIENNE HEZGHIA/ STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

FIRST-TIMER | Freshman Mel Rodriguez, pictured on the right, is one of the four first-year fencers who will represent the men's team at the national championships.

Young fencers head to Ohio State to compete in nationals

BY SPENCER GYORY
Spectator Staff Writer

Nine Columbians will go toe-to-toe with the top fencing talent in the country on Thursday through Sunday (March 24-27) at the 2011 NCAA National Championships at Ohio State University. The men will fence on Thursday and Friday while the women will fence on Saturday and Sunday.

Columbia will be sending junior Sammy Roberts and sophomore Lowey Deidro in sabre, sophomore Lydia Kopecky and freshman Katya English in epee, and sophomore D'Meca Homer in foil to Columbus.

On the men's side, four freshmen—Bo Charles and Alex Pensler in foil, Alen Hadzic in epee and Mel Rodriguez in sabre—will represent the Light Blue.

The format of the NCAA Championships consists of both a team and individual portion. In each weapon (foil, epee, and sabre) there are 24 fencers. These fencers face off in 23 five-touch bouts against all other fencers in the same weapon. For each victory an individual earns one point for his/her

school. The school with the most total points from its combined individuals' performances wins the team title. There is only one National Champion because the men's and women's scores are combined.

Perennial powerhouses Ohio State and Penn State—who is the two-time defending National Champion—are the favorites to win the team title, along with Princeton. Those three squads are the only schools to have the maximum of 12 fencers competing. Columbia will likely finish somewhere in the top 10.

The top four finishers in the round-robin are then placed in a direct elimination table. The winners of the semifinal bouts move on to the final individual bout while the losers share third-place. The winner of the final bout is the individual National Champion. All four fencers earn first-team All-American status.

Columbia has had 33 NCAA Individual Champions, including most recently Nicole Ross in women's foil in 2010, Jeff Spear in men's sabre in 2008, and Daria Schneider in women's sabre in 2007.

Head coach George Kolombatovich believes that Columbia's fencers have a shot at competing for the individual title but recognizes that is nearly impossible to predict who will win in each weapon.

"On any given day we have people who have beaten all the other people there. They have also lost to them," he said. "Trying to pick a winner out of 24 people in an elite group of competitors is [very difficult]. There are so many good people there."

Co-captain Sammy Roberts said, "All of us are just trying to go in and do the best we can and hopefully come home with some All-Americans and just make sure we give Columbia a good name."

Most would describe the Lions this season as young but very talented. For Kolombatovich, having such a young squad is foreign territory.

"This is by far the youngest team we've ever had," he said. "We have one junior. I've never gone to the NCAA's without a number of seniors."

The weakness of this inexperience might be seen at Nationals where the competition is as intense as it comes.

"When someone goes to a thing like this it is a little overpowering," Kolombatovich said.

Roberts, who earned honorable mention All-American honors last year, said, "NCAAs is a really intense competition where there is a lot more pressure. Everybody wants to win 10 times more than they do in other competitions. Every single person has a lot of drive and a lot of heart. You need a competitive edge to your fencing."

Yet this experience could pay dividends down the road for the Light Blue. "Having a team this young is a wonderful thing because these individuals will have so much more experience over their next three seasons," Kolombatovich said.

When describing the team's mindset, Kolombatovich said, "I think everybody is loose and well-prepared. They have been working hard. When you train hard you are going to have a level of success."

Ohio State will play host to this event in their French Field House and St. John Arena. Highlights from National's will be run on Saturday April 30th at 1 p.m. on CBS.

Senior swimming star to cap off decorated career at NCAAs

BY REBEKA COHAN
Spectator Staff Writer

Now that he's created a name for Columbia swimming in the Ivy League, it's time for Adam Powell to do the same for himself.

The senior qualified for the NCAA National Championships due to his impressive performance at the Ivy League Championship meet, where he helped the Lions notch a third place finish behind Princeton and Harvard. Now Powell will hit the water one last time as he heads to Minneapolis this weekend to swim in the 50 free. To qualify for the Zones, the senior swam the event in 19.62 seconds, which is currently tied for 12th in the NCAA.

This is not Powell's first appearance in the NCAAs. Last year, he finished 34th in the preliminary race and was unable to advance to the finals—so it came as no surprise when he qualified for his senior season. This year, however, expectations are higher.

"Adam has been thinking about this meet ever since he climbed from the pool at last year's NCAAs in Columbus, Ohio," head coach Jim

Bolster wrote in an email. Bolster believes Powell will perform well at the event, especially after having had two-and-a-half weeks to train specifically for this race.

No matter the outcome, Powell has had an extremely impressive season. The NCAA Zones are the metaphorical icing on the cake.

"Adam has had an amazing year to date and the NCAA meet is the pinnacle of college swimming" Bolster wrote. "It has been his quest ever since he arrived on campus to make a name for himself at the highest level." It would seem that Powell has succeeded—at the Ivy Championship meet, he secured the Harold Ulen Career High Point Swimmer Award in recognition of his strong performance through his entire swimming career.

Now Powell has one final opportunity to make waves in the world of college swimming. "We think he has the goods to get the job done in Minnesota and we are looking forward to watching him," Bolster wrote.

The contest will be held at the University of Minnesota between March 24 and 26. The event will kick off at noon.



JASPER L. CLYATT / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

GRAND FINALE | Senior Adam Powell will compete one last time this weekend.