

GS Class Day moves for Obama security, angers grads

BY YASMIN GAGNE AND BEN GITTELSON
Spectator Senior Staff Writers

Heightened security measures for President Barack Obama’s commencement address at Barnard have forced the School of General Studies to move its class day, upsetting students.

GS Class Day will now take place May 13, a day before it had been scheduled. The ceremony will overlap with the Baccalaureate Service, at which some GS students are scheduled to speak, and many students said their families’ travel plans would be affected with only three weeks’ notice.

Obama, CC ’83, will be addressing Barnard seniors on May 15. Had GS Class Day remained on May 14, the day before Barnard’s commencement, GS graduates’ families would have to arrive by 5:30 a.m. to pass through a security checkpoint, GS Dean Peter Awn said in an email on Monday.

“Frankly, I find that unacceptable,” Awn said.

General Studies Student Council President Jacqueline Thong, GS ’12, said that Awn had assured senior marshals on Friday that the date would not be changed, and that she was shocked when she found out it would be.

“Involving students a lot earlier would have been ideal,” Thong said. “This is really, really late. It’s two weeks to graduation. People’s flights have all been booked.”

Thong said she would work with the GS administration to look into other options, which include keeping the ceremony at its original time but at a different venue, or holding it on May 13 but at a different time than the Baccalaureate ceremony. Additionally, she said, having attendees come at 5:30 a.m. for the security check on the original date was “still on the table.”

On Monday night, Thong started a survey examining how the change would affect attendees’ travel plans. As of early Tuesday morning, about 70 percent of the survey’s approximately 100 respondents said the date change would result in either some or none of their family being unable to attend.

Thong said it would be wrong for students not to have their families see them graduate. “We’ll have to work with what we have and see what we can work out to accommodate everyone,” she said. “But it’s going to be really tough.”

She has invited students to attend the weekly GSSC meeting on Tuesday at 7:35 p.m. in the Satow Room to voice their concerns.

Many students said they were upset not only because of the travel problems their families could face but because the change is indicative of the larger issue of GS’s role among the undergraduate schools.

“It feels like we’re being pushed aside or our issues are being disregarded,” Robert Wintersteen, GS ’12, said. “I don’t think it would have been a problem if in February or early March they had said that there was a possibility that it would be moved.”

Hal Levy, GS ’14, said in an email that “the schedule change is understandable, but I can’t say

SEE CLASS DAY, page 2



MATTHEW SHERMAN / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

FUN WITH FUNDS | From left, Engineering Student Council Vice President-elect for Finance Siddhant Bhatt, SEAS ’14, ESC President Nate Levick, SEAS ’12, and ESC President-elect Tim Qin, SEAS ’13, debate changes to the Funding at Columbia University process.

Governing boards to play bigger role in F@CU process

BY LILLIAN CHEN
Spectator Staff Writer

The four undergraduate student councils have decided to allow the five governing boards a greater role in Columbia’s controversial process for funding clubs.

On Sunday, the councils—Columbia College Student Council, Engineering Student Council, General Studies Student Council, and Barnard’s Student Government

Association—decided to allow governing boards to be present at both days of Funding at Columbia University, or F@CU. Additionally, final allocations for club money will need to be approved by 13 of the 16 F@CU committee members and three of the five governing boards.

“What I’m looking forward to is a streamlined process compared to last year,” ESC president Nate Levick, SEAS ’12 and F@CU chair, said, citing “overall smoother operation and more

handshaking with the governing boards so that everyone, not just the councils, are on the same page.”

F@CU, the event where funding decisions are made, traditionally takes place during reading week of the spring semester. This year, instead of a one-day process, it will take place over the course of two days, with the first day being devoted to 20-minute presentations by each council and governing board, and the second day

to deliberations.

“These improvements will result in a much better F@CU process,” said newly elected Student Governing Board chair David Fine, CC ’13.

Every club at Columbia falls under the jurisdiction of one or more governing boards, which are responsible for most of a club’s oversight and funding. The five governing boards are SGB, Activities Board at Columbia,

SEE F@CU, page 2

M’ville B-School receives \$25M gift

Cooperman, Business ’67, is Wall St. CEO, billionaire

BY JILLIAN KUMAGAI
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

Business School alumnus Leon Cooperman will donate \$25 million toward the construction of the Business School’s new facilities in Manhattanville.

The school announced the gift on Monday. Cooperman, Business ’67, is the chairman and chief executive officer of the investment firm Omega Advisors and a member of the Business School’s Board of Overseers.

“The educational needs of leaders and entrepreneurs have evolved, and the new Manhattanville facilities will support Columbia Business School’s commitment to preparing the business leaders of tomorrow,” Cooperman said in a statement.

In 2007, Cooperman funded a scholarship program at the Business School, and he and his wife, Toby, have committed to give half of their fortune to charity. Forbes valued his net worth at \$2 billion in March and his lifetime

SEE MANHATTANVILLE, page 2

Stringer talks role of small-scale politics

BY AVANTIKA KUMAR
Spectator Staff Writer

At the age of 17, high school senior Scott Stringer was the youngest person ever to serve on a community board in New York. Now 51 and Manhattan borough president, Stringer highlighted today’s community boards, the most local of governing bodies in the city, as the types of grassroots political discussion forums he wants to see more of.

Stringer gave the keynote address and a panel of intellectuals discussed the future of the city at an event organized by the School of International and Public Affairs on Monday.

Stringer outlined three “arms of improvement” for New York: fostering community-driven politics, increasing the role of the “creative class” of professionals like artists and social workers, and expanding infrastructure.

According to Stringer, it is necessary to have “institutions that foster a sense of community, a sense of place,” especially in local units such as the community boards. Stringer revived the community board system when he took office in 2006, with the numbers of African-American and Asian-American members increasing by 40 percent. Half of all new members, he said, are under the age of 40. (The average age of a community board member when he served in the late 1970s, he joked, was “around 80.”)

Without community boards, he argued, Columbia’s, Fordham’s and New York University’s campus expansions would have been impossible. “They give neighborhoods a say in their own futures,” he said.

He pointed to a recent proposal by Community Board 7

that would institute new zoning regulations on the Upper West Side—limiting the storefront width of banks and preserving mom-and-pop shops—as an example of both public participation in the design process and a way that community boards can preserve the character of the city.

Stringer also expressed support for greater government transparency, advocating for the open distribution of data from the government.

A potential mayoral candidate in 2013, Stringer took more than a few jabs at Mayor Michael Bloomberg, noting to the amusement of the crowd that the mayor was not allowed to be up for re-election in 2025—a reference to Bloomberg’s workaround of the two-term limit policy in 2008 to

SEE STRINGER, page 2



MATTHEW SHERMAN / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

TAKE THE LOCAL | Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer stressed the importance of grassroots political machines, including community boards, at a forum on cities on Monday.

A&E, PAGE 3

‘SPEARS’ director explains ticket shortage

Pat Blute, writer and director of “SPEARS: The Gospel According to Britney,” cited pre-reserved tickets for cast and special guests and the show’s location for the lack of available tickets.



OPINION, PAGE 4

Packing it up

Revel in the organized chaos of the end of the semester.

Turn your golden silence into words

People can and should voice their opinions in their community.

SPORTS, BACK PAGE

Eisen’s talent and attitude help team

Senior third baseman Jon Eisen’s statistics and attitude make him an integral part of the baseball program.

EVENTS

A History of Samba

Scholar Marc Hertzman examines the Brazilian dance form’s relation to race and its origins in Africa.
Event Oval, Diana Center, 6 p.m.

WEATHER

Today



58°/44°

Tomorrow



61°/47°

After last year’s problems, councils reform F@CU

F@CU from front page

Club Sports Governing Board, Community Impact, and Inter-Greek Council.

“My hope is that what this will do is give the governing boards their rightful place at the table of F@CU and therefore help funnel more money to what is the lifeblood of our campus, which is student groups,” Fine said.

Outgoing ABC president Daniel Brown, CC ’12, agreed. “Having everyone in the room together represents a good step forward,” he said. “Last year it seemed that many of the problems ... could have been solved just by having the governing boards in the room.”

Two representatives from each governing board will also be allowed to participate in the deliberations. In previous years, governing board representatives were not invited to deliberations. Though F@CU meetings are open, non-council members who attend are typically not as involved in discussions.

“I was really surprised to hear that they weren’t even in the room,” SGA Vice President of Finance Naomi Cooper, BC ’12, said. “The fact that they weren’t asked to be—that already changes the status of the process.”

Governing board members said they felt disrespected during last year’s F@CU process and that council members did not listen to their presentations.

“The fact that they felt disrespected during the meeting is something we need to change,” CCSC president Aki Terasaki, CC ’12, said.

Having governing board members present the second day will give them the opportunity to answer council members’ questions regarding clubs’ requested allocations, CCSC Vice President of Finance Kevin Zhai, CC ’12, said.

For example, Zhai pointed to issues with last year’s allocation for Community Impact, one of the governing boards. When councils decide to provide less money than governing boards request, they generally cut funds for the boards’ programming before cutting group allocations. But he acknowledged that misunderstandings have resulted

from the absence of governing board members at F@CU deliberations, citing last year’s Community Impact allocation.

“Their board programming is really essential to the success of all their groups because they provide volunteer training,” Zhai said. “Without that training, it makes a huge impact on the success of their groups over the course of the year.”

“It’s important that everyone is aware of these differences so that when arguments are being made, people are conscious of the differences between the nine organizations,” he added, referring to the four councils and the five governing boards.

“My hope is that what this will do is ... help funnel more money to what is the lifeblood of our campus, which is student groups.”

—David Fine, CC ’13, Student Governing Board chair

The nine organizations are very different. For instance, SGA functions as both a governing board and a council. GSSC funding is much less flexible because GS students attend council programming far more than they attend club programming.

GSSC President Jacqueline Thong, GS ’12, who has served on F@CU for the past three years, said she was excited by the addition of the governing boards into the F@CU deliberations. Still, she said in an email, “F@CU is a long process, and getting 16 people to reach a single decision has been difficult in the past few years. With more voices this year, this could be an even more challenging task.”

The amount of money each council contributes to F@CU will now be subject to change, instead of being solidified prior to F@CU. This will allow the

councils more flexibility.

“It allows conversations to be had where council spending and governing board spending are weighed side by side with each other,” Zhai said.

This year, the structure of presentations and the amount of money contributed by each council to F@CU will also undergo key changes.

“Rather than have the governing boards present to the councils, everyone is going to be presenting. All nine stakeholders will be presenting,” Zhai said. “This is to help build a sense of community and to have everyone recognize that we’re all student leaders embarking on a collective enterprise to determine what is best for the students.”

ESC president-elect Tim Qin, SEAS ’13, said he wanted to see this year’s process as a trial run for future years. “If we do it on a trial basis, we can evaluate it this year and see how it works out, and next year, we can maybe extend that or make it a permanent process with tweaks based on how we saw it work out this year.”

Levick also talked about the idea of continuity between F@CU committees. Each year, the committee gains eight new members—the newly elected presidents and treasurers of each council.

“What we’re trying to do is not make some sort of ironclad constitution,” he said. “It’s to start putting some things down on paper to make this year’s process a little better and make it easier down the road, so that each new officer doesn’t have to take a few steps back or start from square one.”

The discussions on Sunday were not a vote. Zhai will codify the consensus into the constitution and the changes will be put to a vote as early as next Sunday.

Fine said that this is a “very important step,” but that student life fees—from which F@CU gets its money—still need to be re-evaluated holistically.

“I think there needs to be a bigger discussion outside of F@CU about student life fees and the way the system operates now,” he said.

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GSers say being bumped is standard treatment

CLASS DAY from front page

that we’re surprised it would happen to GS either. The only time Lee Bollinger looks GSers in the eye is during Class Day. It’s not very reassuring.”

“This makes it even harder to ask our impoverished graduates to support our impoverished school when it’s their last experience with Columbia,” Levy added.

Jennifer Wisdom, GS ’13 and GSSC president-elect, said in an email, “I can’t help but question ... if this was happening to CC or SEAS, would it be allowed to occur?”

Reina deBeer, GS ’12, said that while the changes wouldn’t affect her as a native New Yorker, she was still outraged. It seemed odd, she said, that the change came so close to Class Day, especially since the announcement that President

Obama would be speaking was made weeks ago.

“It’s the president of the fucking United States,” she said. “The Obama security would have had to know about the measures. It just seems odd.”

In an interview earlier this month, Barnard President Debora Spar called the security measures being taken for Obama’s visit “very complicated.”

“We’ve never done anything quite like this before,” she said. “We had a little bit of a preview when Hillary Clinton came four years ago and there were also South Lawn logistics involved—but logistics around a sitting president are going to be monumental.”

Spar said that Barnard is working with the White House, the Secret Service, and the New York Police Department. “They’ve done this before and

they know how to do it,” she said. “It’s just a question of us understanding how to do everything.”

A spokesperson for Facilities would not comment on the details of the security that will be required for Obama’s visit.

Awn acknowledged that the change will be an “inconvenience” and will force families to spend extra money to change their travel plans, but ended his email with a call for graduates to remain focused on the positive.

“If there are any seniors who have faced challenges and come out vibrant and powerful individuals, one only needs to look to the 2012 GS graduates,” Awn said. “This is a time for celebration, despite the circumstance.”

Jeremy Budd and Michelle Inaba Mocarski contributed reporting.

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MATTHEW SHERMAN / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

THE METROPOLIS | A panel of experts, including sociology professor Saskia Sassen (second from right) debated pressing urban issues in a talk at the School of International and Public Affairs.

Panel discusses future of the city at SIPA

STRINGER from front page

serve a third term.

The event featured a panel of experts, including sociology professor Saskia Sassen, an expert on global urbanism, who voiced different perspectives on the central concerns related to city development.

Alexander Garvin, an architect and an urban planning professor at Yale University, emphasized the importance of city planners in shaping the city’s development.

“They must engage in a process that leads to actual changes,” Garvin said, adding that city planning “brings together the forces of government, business, finance, politics, and public opinion.”

Kavitha Rajagopalan, SIPA ’03 and a senior fellow at the World Policy Institute, highlighted the challenges surrounding the immigrant experience. Rajagopalan echoed Stringer’s criticism of “retrograde”

immigration policies, such as the cap on H-1B visas granted to students. The limit on visas, they said, prevents foreign students who studied in the U.S. from staying in the country and working.

According to Rajagopalan, although industry and policy experts have argued for the economic benefits of relaxing immigration policies, “the conversation about immigration continues to be an emotional one.”

Panelist Greg Lindsay, a journalist, said that studying global issues at a city level is important because the city is “quite literally where they are situated.”

He said he was “very pleasantly surprised” by Stringer’s keynote address, although he was skeptical of Stringer’s emphasis on providing open data to the public and enabling cities to be privatized.

According to Andrea Moore, SIPA ’12 and managing editor of SIPA’s student-run Journal

of International Affairs, the panel reflected SIPA’s increased focus on examining city affairs. The journal’s 65th issue covered similar topics, and SIPA recently introduced a concentration in urban and social policy.

“It’s becoming increasingly in demand by SIPA students,” Moore said.

“We couldn’t do an issue, ‘State of the World 2012,’” Ethan Wilkes, SIPA ’12 and marketing director of the journal, said. “But we felt the city was a good vehicle to filter a lot of the issues we discuss in SIPA.”

Audience member Puleng Bothole, SIPA ’12, said she came to learn more about New York City’s plans and was “amazed at what it takes to actually plan a city.”

“The kind of questions that the audience asked truly reflects the passion that they have for the city,” Bothole said.

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Mr. Spectator reflects on ‘Squeaky Bum Time’

SHABAN from back page

Columbia men’s soccer team while writing columns. Every once in a while I would check some of the editors’ notes and even less often I would see some compliments about my columns. Most of them would say something along the lines of, “I loved the way you incorporated a personal experience.” So I took that to mean my best stuff was the most hands-on. First-hand accounts garner the most interest from fans.

I believe that is the direction sports journalism will go. We already see some first-hand narratives when athletes agree to interviews on television, radio, or podcasts. Some of the most entertaining sports programming has been ESPN’s “30 for 30” and HBO’s “24/7” series, which are hugely popular documentaries that have received awards for their raw coverage of sports stories. What I hope to see soon are written accounts, recaps, and even opinion columns from some high-profile athletes. Imagine if Peyton Manning wrote a story about the offers he

got from teams in free agency and why he chose Denver. What if Dwight Howard explained his opinion of his coach and teammates in 1,000 words? Sports pundits spend hours and hours dissecting players’ and coaches’ press conferences, interviews, and even tweets when really the meaning of what they say could be explained through writing. Plus, sports geeks like me would go nuts for a chance to read something like that.

I realize many professional athletes like to keep to themselves—and for good reason, too. But there have got to be plenty out there who enjoy the spotlight and would be happy to write. It wouldn’t even have to be personal stories written by the person who is under scrutiny. If players wrote about issues of their teammates, opponents, or even about a whole different sport, it would still be successful because it would tell the story from an athlete’s perspective. If anyone has any sort of power in the world of sports journalism, please make this happen. It would be awesome.

OK, so I lied earlier when

I said I would stop the thank-yous, but I’ll be quick. Thank you to the staff here at the Spec. I know I only attended one meeting all year, but I still appreciate you. My columns certainly needed lots of editing, and I’m very grateful you gave the podcast the green light. Thank you to the entire Columbia athletics department. I am very proud to have spent the last four years working with and being a part of such a passionate organization. I truly believe more and more success will continue to come to this school and I hope the relationship between paper and athletic department continues to grow as a result. Last thank you goes to anyone who has ever read my column. Anytime I got the chance to hear, “Hey, I saw your article,” it gave me a pretty great feeling.

This is Mr. Spectator 2012, signing off.

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B-School hits one-third of M’ville fundraising goal

MANHATTANVILLE from front page

charitable gifts at more than \$200 million.

“Leon Cooperman’s generosity toward the Business School has given students the key to a door that would otherwise have been closed to them,” Business School Dean R. Glenn Hubbard said in a statement.

Administrators said last spring that the Business School had a \$400 million fundraising goal for two buildings in Manhattanville. Henry Kravis, Business ’69, gave \$100 million for the project in October 2010, the biggest donation in the Business School’s history.

Based on public gifts, then, Cooperman’s pledge brings the school one-third of the way toward its ultimate fundraising target.

“The Business School is very ambitious on its fundraising goals for Manhattanville, but it’s important to be thinking that you have to put it in the context of what’s available,” University President Lee Bollinger said in a February interview.

The two buildings, which are being designed by the firm



HENRY WILLSON / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

CRANES LOOM | Construction moves forward at the future site of the Business School on the Manhattanville campus.

Third baseman helps team with positive attitude

EISEN from back page

“I think it’s good to have a little adversity ... when you look back, the good moments look so much better,” Eisen said.

And there were plenty of good moments.

In Eisen’s second season at Columbia, the Lions won the Lou Gehrig Division title and made it all the way to the Ivy League Championships.

“When we clinched at Penn the weekend before was probably the most excited I’ve ever been in a baseball game,” Eisen said of the series that led up to the Ivy League Championships.

Not only was the team successful, but Eisen also posted his

strongest individual season in 2010. He earned an all-Ivy honorable mention and led the team in runs, hits, and batting average that year.

This season has been another good one for Eisen. The senior is hitting .320 on the season, leads the team in runs scored, and is second in hits. In addition to his statistical contributions, the energy Eisen brings to the clubhouse has been very important for the Light Blue.

His positive attitude is not lost on teammates like senior right-handed pitcher Pat Lowery, who has played with Eisen for four years at Columbia and also played with him the summer after their freshman season.

“He’s just always a guy that’s laughing and smiling, when everybody else is down he’s picking the team up,” Lowery said of his long-time teammate. “That’s just the kind of guy he is.”

Given his love for the game, it’s not surprising that Eisen has found a way to continue playing ball next year. Eisen is leaving for Zurich at the beginning of the summer.

Eisen’s experience playing at Columbia and his optimistic attitude are both likely to help him as he starts a new chapter of his life playing in a nation not known for its baseball prowess.

As for the sport and the University, neither could hope for a more enthusiastic ambassador.

Diller Scofidio + Renfro, will be located west of Broadway between 130th and 131st streets.

Executive Vice President of Facilities Joe Ienuso said in a March interview that the Business School buildings were in the process of “schematic design,” which “will provide conceptual renderings first to make sure that program elements are

satisfied.” Diller’s architectural designs would be released in April, he said.

One construction worker was killed and two were injured on the future site of the school when a building slated for demolition collapsed in March.

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Barnard senior’s play delves into non-normative sexuality with wit, depth

BY KRISHNA HEGDE
Columbia Daily Spectator

LGBT art has typically benefitted from its ability to walk well-trodden thematic ground—like the triumphs and pitfalls of adolescent love—without immediately appearing as clichéd as heterosexual work. Often, non-normative sexuality is novel enough to make entirely conventional romantic storylines seem new and exciting.

Recently, however, popular culture has made queer sexuality common fare. The LGBT mystique has evaporated somewhat, leaving room for artistic voices that would previously have lacked legitimacy. As queer becomes normal, the LGBT artist is becoming simply an artist, and stereotypical gay adolescent experiences are becoming simply stereotypical experiences. Denial, coming out, and other points on the archetypal gay trajectory are becoming gloriously accepted—and, consequently, trite.

“Sure,” a play written by Cassandra Adair, BC ’12, sometimes exhibited this tendency. Fortunately, it featured more than enough well-intentioned, energetic performances and witty writing to maintain its audience’s consistent engagement. To its credit, the work didn’t fall into the increasingly popular alternative of crafting stereotypically “edgy” and off-kilter teenagers, an approach that can often feel just as formulaic.

Instead, “Sure” presented the stories of five emotionally stable teenagers from relatively

supportive backgrounds. In so doing, it isolated the theme of burgeoning, alternative sexuality—and the pressures it causes—from other adolescent issues. The play, which was performed at ADP from April 19-20, took the form of a stage reading, with each of the five stories inspired by an interview with a queer Columbia student. Each performer conveyed the difficulty and joy of opening up—not only to parents and peers but also to himself or herself.

Predictably, the most complex and engaging characters dealt with both parental expectations and their own confusion over romantic attraction. As Chrysanthemum James and Lucy Ambrogio, respectively played by Lizi Myers, BC ’15, and Andrea Lopez, CC ’12, displayed these spontaneous bouts of detachment and longing in their characters’ evolving relationship. Other characters were shown at different points of coming out to their parents, all of whom were sympathetically played by Katie Craddock BC ’13 as “Mom” and Lorenzo Landini CC ’13 as “Dad.” Unfortunately, the script glazed over the instances of their revelations.

Some characters were given less dimensionality than those mentioned, yet their scenes provided much-needed comic relief for the otherwise heavy-handed material. As Tate Jacobs and Ryan Cooper, Hari Nef, CC ’15, and Chris Evans, CC ’15, played such a scene in a way that delicately veered from the sentimentality.

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ZARA CASTANY / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

RETHINKING SEXUALITY | “Sure,” written by Barnard student Cassandra Adair, integrates real life anecdotes from the LGBT community for a mix of different perspectives and performances.

CTV showcases three standout student-written shows exploring college life

BY ANATOLE ASHRAF
Spectator Staff Writer

A young student journalist faces off against a section of the mafia operating on campus. A group of friends and floormates deal with the pains and cringe-inducing laughs that come from complicated romances in close quarters. A middle-class student with a mixed-race background tries to find her place at an elite north-eastern university.

All three are coming soon to a residence hall lounge near you on April 30, when Columbia University Television will host a preview screening for the spring 2012 season. “The O.C. Club” from CTV president Andy Seife, CC ’14, the third episode of “Floorcest” from Eliana Levenson, BC ’14, and “High Class Problem” from second year MFA student Anthony McDonald will play.

“A lot of shows right now cater to one audience. But the world really isn’t like that. New York really isn’t really like that.”

—Anthony McDonald, writer/director of “High Class Problem”

The shows’ directors have poured a lot into their work. Seife has been developing the idea for “The O.C. Club” since high school. It was only once he joined CTV that he began the script for the pilot and started production with CTV News reporter Chris Canales, CC ’14.

“It’s a really fucking long script,” Seife said. According to Canales, it is approaching movie length at 68 pages.

Heavily influenced by “The Sopranos,” the show follows an Italian mafia family operating out of Columbia University. “The O.C. Club”

borrows from reality. It smacks of Operation Ivy League, and the protagonist is a student journalist who investigates for a school paper known as The Watcher.

Naturally, “The O.C. Club” contains plenty of violence, adult language, and nudity.

In producing the show, Seife skirted a few rules. One scene involved a chase from Woodbridge Hall—the crew was strictly forbidden from filming in the halls—all the way to Riverside Park.

“We had to do it one take,” Seife said. “We knew that once we left they wouldn’t let us back in.”

“Floorcest,” written and directed by Levenson, features seven friends getting frisky with floormates. The actors bring energy and enthusiasm to awkward situations.

“I’ve always wondered what would happen if you hooked up with someone from your floor,” Levenson said.

But “High Class Problem,” written, produced and directed by Anthony McDonald, his brother Andrew McDonald, and friend Andrew Verdi, is devoted to a different sort of realism. According to Verdi, the show will explore contemporary class and racial issues. It has received the most official buzz of the three, including first place at the 2011 Hollywood Screenplay Contest.

“One thing I wanted was for the show to be diverse,” Anthony McDonald said. “A lot of shows right now cater to one audience. But the world really isn’t like that. New York really isn’t really like that.”

Andrew McDonald agreed, adding that it’s “the right time for a strong female lead.”

Levenson hopes the screening will draw campus television and film fans and unify its sundry shows into one brand. “We’re trying to get our name out there,” he said.

For Levenson, it’s also just a way to see what everyone is doing.

“I think there’s a lot of people on campus who like TV and film, and so we really want to make sure that when we do a screening it gets a lot of people to come,” she said.

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF REMY ZAKEN

GIMME MORE | Students lined up outside the TIC box office to get tickets for the fourth performance of “SPEARS” after the first three sold out within minutes.

Director says ‘SPEARS’ tickets scarce due to pre-reserved seats

BY LESLEY THULIN
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

After tickets for the highly anticipated “SPEARS: The Gospel According to Britney” sold out within 54 seconds on April 15, speculation about the musical’s marketing strategies grew.

“We sold out quicker than Gaga,” Remy Zaken, CC ’12 and cast member, wrote on the show’s Facebook event page at 5:02 p.m., a mere two minutes after the sale opened. “Gaga sold out in 50 seconds. We sold out in 2 seconds.”

“Actually, it was 54 seconds,” the show’s assistant producer and ticketing coordinator, Rakhi Agrawal, BC ’14 and Spectator writer, said in a statement.

Some people took to Bwog to comment that the tickets sold out so quickly because only a few were released.

“Never have I seen such blatant, manufactured hype,” one person wrote on April 17. Another comment called the situation a “stunt.”

“SPEARS sold out because Pat is reserving most of the seats for ‘industry’ people,” one person wrote.

A breakdown of the numbers of tickets pre-reserved for special guests and cast members does show that the majority of tickets were earmarked beforehand, though creator-director Pat Blute, CC ’12, denied that it was “an intentional marketing tactic.”

“In that first round [of ticketing], there weren’t as many tickets as people would’ve liked, just because

of how small the theater is,” Blute said.

The show, an original work that narrates the life of Jesus through Britney Spears’ music, will be performed in the Glicker-Milstein Theatre from April 27-28, which seats 75 people.

Blute also guaranteed two tickets for everyone in the cast, crew, pit orchestra, and production team because “it’s important that everyone is able to get tickets for their family and friends.”

But this drastically limited the number of available seats.

“When you look at the entire weekend of ticketed seats, when there’s only 225 seats, you take 100 out of the equation,” he said.

SPEARS was funded partially through a Kickstarter campaign, which provided money for lights, special effects, costumes, sound equipment, sound operators, and promotion. More tickets were taken out of the pool because Blute also guaranteed tickets to donors who gave “a significant amount.” As of April 23, 78 backers had pledged a total of \$6,026.

Blute also set aside tickets for administrators and “industry people.”

“A lot of administrators are attending, and they wanted to book seats ahead of time. And as far as industry people go—things along that nature—I can guarantee that’s less than 50 seats,” Blute said.

Blute insisted that he and his team have been

SEE SPEARS, page 7

RECIPE

De-stress with bread pudding

By Selby Byashimova

With the onset of finals, what could be better than a delicious food break with friends? Though somewhat unconventional, bread pudding’s mix of strong vanilla and spicy flavors makes it a delectable treat. Best of all, it’s easy to make!

To prepare bread pudding for 8-10 people, you’ll need:

- 9 cups bread cubes
- 1 cup nuts and/or dried berries
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract (1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon, optional)
- 4 tablespoons melted unsalted butter
- 2 cups whole milk
- 2 cups half-and-half

Preheat oven to 300 F and spray a baking dish with a cooking spray. Cut bread to bite sized cubes—any dry, chewy bread works. Add 1 cup of nuts and/or dried berries (dried fruit works too, as long as its sliced) to taste.

To make a perfect custard, beat eggs and sugar on high speed in an electric mixer for four minutes. Add vanilla extract, butter, milk, and half-and-half. Spice with ground cinnamon or lemon/orange zest to taste. Beat mixture and gently pour into pan. Make sure that it’s evenly distributed and the bread cubes are under the surface. Let pudding sit for 40 minutes so the bread can absorb the custard. Bake for 40-60 minutes. To make sure that the pudding is well cooked, insert a toothpick in the center after 45 minutes. If it comes out dry and clean, it’s ready.

Let the pudding cool for about an hour and serve it with fresh fruit or ice cream.



BYASHIMOV BYASHIM FOR SPECTATOR

GET IT WHILE IT’S HOT | This bread pudding recipe is sure to make finals week a little less stressful, particularly when served with ice cream as seen above.



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Raise your voice and speak

Before I came to college, I thought of myself as a pretty opinionated person. While I wasn't on a debate team or a member of a political organization, I'd done some thinking about my convictions, both large and small and was pretty confident I could articulate them if need be. When I got to Columbia, however, I soon realized that I was nowhere near as good at communicating my opinions as I thought. From NSOP week onward, I was surrounded by people who had much more experience speaking their minds than I did, and when they asked me "What do you think?" about some pressing issue, my answer usually wasn't a stunning masterpiece of rhetoric. More often than not, I stammered and tried to synthesize my thoughts into a few sentences—but by the time I turned this into something vaguely resembling my opinion, the other person had stopped listening. I had to face the facts: I was great at knowing what I believed, but communicating it to other people? Not so much.

At first, I shrugged this off. Did it matter that much if I couldn't really communicate what I thought? Is there anything wrong with being seen as an unopinionated person? On a campus with a history of social activism, where comment sections get heated and political groups get controversial, it seemed like adding my opinion to the mix was just too much. Nobody would notice if a random English major with



KATHRYN BRILL

Ever the Twain

Using the Core in politics

BY MARIA GIMENEZ CAVALLO

The purpose of Contemporary Civilization is to urge us to think about our present-day situation through the lens of the philosophers who came before us. Just as the Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution to secure our civil liberties from an abusive government, CC was created to give us the necessary tools to become independent thinkers and prevent indoctrination by institutions. This is not a class meant only to serve as fodder for cocktail parties, but one that makes us examine our own principles and prepares us for determining the course of our nation. As Columbia students and U.S. citizens, it is important to use the ideas we develop in the classroom to inform our choices when voting in New York's presidential primary today, Tuesday, April 24.

In describing the origins of the Core, Jacques Barzun explains that the idea was "that the study of politics, of government, of popular movements, could perhaps train a group of people who, if they got into government, would go about settling affairs otherwise than by war." This is especially pertinent to us now as our country has been fighting for decades in one undeclared war after another. Rather than promote ourselves as policemen of the world and try to "civilize" cultures that are different from ours, we might try being a model by showing how democracy works.

With this in mind, we should realize that it would be more beneficial to have a leader who would offer friendship through free trade to other countries rather than invade them. This accords with Adam Smith's perception of exchange as the foundation of society, believing that people are self-serving and will generally only benefit one another to get something in return. Tellingly, Smith had also advised against any form of fractional banking, bailouts for the banks, and the overprinting of paper money. Alas, the government's failure to heed this kind of warning is perhaps what has severely impacted our economy. Just imagine in what better shape our nation would be if our recent presidents had examined our CC texts.

We who have been enlightened by the Core have a duty to think for ourselves in this upcoming election rather than believe what we are fed by the mainstream media.

With the recent passing of the NDAA and the recent proposals for SOPA and CISPA, Americans are increasingly losing their civil liberties in the name of national security. In light of this, it is important to remember J.S. Mill's definition of liberty as "protection against the tyranny of the political rulers," which is also the definition of our Founding Fathers. It is far too easy for a society to fall into tyranny when its citizens unquestioningly comply as their constitutional rights are being taken away. Rather than allow ourselves to drift into a police state, we need a president who will abide by the constitution and restore the America that this nation was intended to be.

CC provides us with opposing viewpoints on the political spectrum, some of which clearly make more sense than others. However, rather than train us to believe one paradigm, the purpose of this juxtaposition is to teach us to critically make our own opinions. Friedrich Nietzsche would encourage us to question the motivation of the government rather than simply trusting that the ruling elite will do what is best for us, and Immanuel Kant would want us to put all of our current political assumptions to the test and be able to defend them against opposing arguments of reason.

We who have been enlightened by the Core have a duty to think for ourselves in this upcoming election rather than believe what we are fed by the mainstream media. As a first-time voter, I intend to support a candidate whose ideas correspond to the political theories I found most convincing in CC, and therefore I can have a clear conscience in knowing I am a patriotic citizen.

The author is a Columbia College sophomore majoring in film studies. She is the co-founder of the Youth for Ron Paul chapter at Columbia University.

no campus clout answered "I dunno" when someone asked her what she thought about Obama. With so many passionate, articulate people surrounding me, there was no way anyone would pick my opinion out of the crowd. Surely the people who agreed with me would speak to these issues and communicate their views with a poise I couldn't muster. People could speak for me, right?

However, as I continued to learn and get involved in student groups, I realized that this wasn't exactly true. No matter how many people argued and debated things in larger forums, that still didn't change the fact that my friends wanted to know what I believed. Most people think that understanding someone else's convictions is a crucial part of getting to know them, and by shrugging off questions or mumbling my way through answers, I was keeping myself at arm's length from my friends. Sometimes, the views I held were stereotyped or misrepresented, and it became impossible for me to stand by and refrain from clarifying or challenging these misconceptions. And other times, particularly with campus issues, I looked around and saw that while some people represented viewpoints that were similar to my own, there were also things I had noticed that no one was talking about. In other words, my voice did matter, even in a place crowded with other voices.

Accepting that I needed to put my opinions out there didn't solve my articulation problem, though. What did? Things like writing this column. By forcing my opinions to fit in a relatively small space, be edited and proofread, and then read, mulled over and occasionally excoriated in the comments section, I learned more about the process of communicating beliefs than I would have expected. I discovered how to put my feelings into words, what made a strong argument, and how to make things compelling to others.

Checking off and checking out

In less than 10 days, classes will be over. Exams will be upon us. Finals week will be a short, sharp, dirty fight to the end of semester. Then the shutters of the summer will fly open, and we will leave campus and lead our glorious, non-academic lives—but first, we have to survive move-out.

Freshpeople among us will perhaps never have witnessed this phenomenon. In a lot of ways, move-out is exactly like move-in, with two major exceptions: One, you have amassed two semesters worth of stuff since September, and two, you have a very real, very finite deadline for getting all of it moved.

Do not underestimate this process. Most of us have not gymmed our way to healthful, weight-lifting muscles this past year. And our books, like the people who wrote them, are heavyweights. Re-discovered will be the graveyard of bottles and oceans of dust bunnies that have spawned in the time you weren't paying attention.

There are several ways to make your last few sleepless days on campus less miserable.

You will sweat, you will cry, you will steal empty cardboard boxes off the streets at midnight because you've run out of packing materials, and (if you're really disorganized), you will break down so that your suitemates take pity on you and pack for you. If you're an international, you'll probably almost miss your flight, drunk on



PO LINN CHIA

Ever the Twain

I began to feel more confident about giving my opinion when asked for it. And while I didn't start arguing with everyone and everything in sight, I did begin to talk about politics, religion, and the red flags on South Lawn with a minimum of mumbling.

Our classes can teach us how to write an essay or do a problem set, but learning how to make our opinions heard is something we have to tackle in our own time.

We may be surrounded by confident, passionate people who can spout off rhetoric at a moment's notice, but that doesn't mean that we should leave the discussion to them. Rather, it means that we should strive to bring our own opinions forward in a compelling, articulate manner and practice speaking for ourselves. Our classes can teach how to write an essay or do a problem set, but learning how to make our opinions heard is something we have to tackle in our own time. Whether it's through joining a debate society, arguing with that one guy in your seminar, or applying to be an opinion columnist for the Spectator, I challenge us all to practice being opinionated, so that when the time comes when we need to speak, we'll be able to make sure we're heard.

Kathryn Brill is a Barnard College junior majoring in English. She is a member of the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. We Should Talk runs alternate Tuesdays.

exhaustion and bad timetabling (don't laugh; it's happened). Without a doubt, you will:

1. At some point, lose the tiny envelope that you're supposed to use for checkout;
2. Run out of packing tape and wonder if normal scotch tape will do the trick;
3. Bribe friends staying on campus to hold your stuff for you;
4. Haul 60,000 tons of stuff everywhere. With your bare hands.

There are several ways to make your last few sleepless days on campus less miserable. The most efficient way, by far, is to have parents who own cars. You could probably rent them out to people who have to cart their stuff down Amsterdam in the sweltering heat to the distant cavern of Manhattan Mini Storage. Many other forms of campus storage will come with big boxes that they will whisk away and make reappear at the start of semester.

By far the best way, though, is to shed as you go. Keep the bits of the Core you care about, but sell back your books. Sell all of them. You say you'll read them again; you never will. What you can't sell, donate. Give and Go Green will happily take many (large) items off of your hands, such as (enormously heavy) fridges and (ridiculously space-consuming) appliances. Your wardrobe could also probably use some liberal spring cleaning.

The bag that you'll need when you leave campus will really only contain a few things: your documents, your electronics, your wallet, the few clothes you need to look presentable at the other end of your journey, and the expectation of a summer off to recuperate and re-energize. Go home. Unpack. Sprawl. We'll all have earned it.

Po Linn Chia is a Columbia College junior majoring in East Asian studies. She is chief of staff for CMUNNY and a member of the Global Recruitment Committee.

Ever the Twain runs alternate Tuesdays.



JASMINE MARIANO

The Columbia Daily Spectator accepts op-eds on any topic relevant to the Columbia University and Morningside Heights community. Op-eds should be roughly 650 words in length. We require that op-eds be sent exclusively to Spectator and will not consider articles that have already been published elsewhere. Letters to the Editor should be no longer than 350 words and must refer to an article from Spectator or The Eye, or a Spectrum post. Submissions should be sent to opinion@columbiaspectator.com. Please paste all submissions into the body of the email. Should we decide to publish your submission we will contact you via email.

Senior Columns

Former Spectator staffers share their experiences and thoughts before graduation.

Us versus ‘us versus them’

BY DEREK TURNER

Three years on the Spectator opinion page teaches you a lot about what language and style resonates most with readers. In the many semesters that I have spent putting my thoughts on the page—first in my column “Opening Remarks” and then as a regular contributor to the Canon—I have come to understand the value of communicating in a way that consciously avoids alienating language. Coming to Columbia as a conservative, I was told that my matriculation amounted to infiltration into enemy territory. My friends’ parents would take me aside and suggest that maybe I shouldn’t attend Columbia, given that it might poison my Southwestern values. Joining the College Republicans, I saw the language of “us vs. them” being reinforced. I was told that as someone to the right of center, I was a persecuted minority, a victim, and the underdog trying to disarm a system working

Crossing boundaries real and imaginary with Spec

BY JESSICA HILLS

In the four years since I showed up at the Spectator office during freshman orientation, I’ve crossed the Great 125th and 96th Street divides, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Chinese Wall. On each of these journeys, Spec has stayed in my metaphoric back pocket, in the form of an inquisitive lens and a notebook should breaking news (like the new 16 Handles at W. 99th St.), or the urge to write, arise. My freshman year as a city news reporter is memorable, not only because of my first Spec Dinner, but also because President Obama was elected. On inauguration day, I was sent to the watch the party outside the Clinton Foundation office on W. 125th Street and Lenox Avenue. My assignment was to compile “person on the street” interviews to contribute to a larger piece about reactions to the inauguration throughout the paper’s coverage area. Seas of people gathered in front a jumbotron that frigid Tuesday morning to celebrate the election of the first black president. Shirts, hats, banners, and noisemakers flooded the air and the sidewalks.

I assumed a mutual excitement about Obama would unite the Harlem crowd and myself in my quest for good quotes and their opportunity for published self-expression. However, when I mustered up the courage to finally approach a woman with two children, my “Hi, I’m from the Columbia Daily Spectator,” was interrupted by “I don’t want to talk to anyone from Columbia” before I could even ask her about Obama. My freshman year came at a particularly contentious point during the Manhattanville controversy, and this exchange was representative of how many people north of campus felt about Columbia’s encroaching presence in their neighborhood. Reporting for Spectator allowed me to understand issues like Manhattanville from all perspectives by interacting directly with the people affected by my university’s decisions. Beyond my love of writing and interviewing, this lesson in empathy cultivated a passion for working within the West Harlem facet of the paper’s coverage area, particularly on education policy.

After writing my way up to the positions of associate news editor (a.k.a. Expert All-Night-Puller), local schools beat chief, and senior staff writer, I packed my bags and lived out my Francophile dream of moving to Paris. A semester abroad meant a hiatus from the office conveniently located next to Pinkberry, but it also meant the opportunity to seek inspiration for my writing outside of familiar places and people. My straight-newsy style was replaced by a travel blog—an experimental medium for me—and that led me to apply to be a columnist again upon returning from the City of Lights.

And so although my first three years on Spec had involved long subway rides and transatlantic flights, those treks were simply preparation for traversing the Chinese Wall—that infamous barrier between the news and opinion sections of a newspaper. Once I started writing a column, first called “Class Notes,” and now, “Urban Dictionary,” my task became finding the facts and formulating coherent opinions. My biggest challenge has been taking issues that deeply move me—public schools, Occupy Wall Street, foreign language studies, Mad Men—and making Columbia readers care, too.

Since my assignment at the inauguration watch party in January 2009, I have believed that anything that goes on in Morningside Heights, the Upper West Side, or West Harlem is inherently “Columbia-relevant” because students do not exist in isolation of the other people who live, work, and study here. But I know that, as students, we often have the luxury of becoming so wrapped up in Plato and Said and finding an empty seat in the library that we don’t immediately feel the urge to interact with our broader surroundings.

In my job interviews, I convey what Spec has taught me about utilizing teamwork, working under tight deadlines, and telling a coherent story. But, less tangibly, it has taught me how to empathize, how to ask difficult questions, and how as a journalist, I influence the political process by enabling readers to view an issue from diverse viewpoints.

The author is a Barnard College senior majoring in political science and French and Francophone studies. She was a news beat chief for the 133rd volume, an associate news editor for the 134th volume, and an opinion columnist for the 135th and 136th volume.

against me. Faced with this narrative, I adopted a defensive stance, ready to call foul on any pernicious liberalism coming my way.

This mentality was proven unproductive. By the time I took to the opinion page, I had befriended many students who would fall under the category of “radical liberal” and found that they were not, in fact, out to get me. To the contrary, they responded well when I presented my ideas in a way that used common vocabulary, demonstrated a willingness to learn, and employed questions—not prescriptions—as a primary driver of ideas. These respectful practices produced fruitful conversations even between members of two extremes.

Having discovered this, I used my column to be the “opening remarks” to a larger conversation. With questions acting as the starting block for a discussion, my opinion pieces attempted to get the students to consider some of the conflicts and tensions that I saw simmering around campus. I aimed at the fundamental questions—the forks in the road that most students had not thought about because the path had seemed so clear and full of consensus that the decision had not seemed worth making. Is the concept of “open-mindedness” flawed? On what do we base our identities? Is moral relativism

a given? Is the secular classroom really a healthy environment for ideas? How do we create sustained political discourse? What is a truly “safe space”? Do professors know what’s best for us? Do we have a moral obligation to return home after graduation? Is there such thing as a “calling” or life purpose? What does it mean for Columbia to be an American university?

Do not turn your ideological opposites into your ideological opponents. Meet the people you disagree with.

By asking questions and being clearly respectful, a writer can undermine the “us vs. them” mentality that is responsible for much of the conflict we see in the public sphere today. If a reader feels that a writer is caricaturing her point of view, using language that betrays a sense of superiority, or approaching the topic presumptuously, she will stop considering the ideas behind the words. That only

aggravates the alienation of ideological conflict. The act of eliminating these factors cuts through superficiality and cultivates an atmosphere in which both sides feel that there are no “stakes” or fights to lose in the discussion. It becomes what these conversations should be: an exchange of ideas based on their merit not their reputation.

To the future opinion writers at Spectator and, more broadly, the participants of intellectual discourse on this campus, I have some advice. Do not turn your ideological opposites into your ideological opponents. Meet the people you disagree with and befriend them. Learn what irks them and avoid those things while still communicating your ideas. There are so many ways to voice your opinion with passion without losing the ear of your listener—it’s worth the effort to learn how to do that. You won’t be the only one who benefits. The whole community will too.

The author is a Columbia College senior majoring in political science and anthropology. He was an opinion columnist for the 133rd, 134th, and 135th volumes, a member of the Editorial Board for the 135th volume, an opinion blogger, and a Canon contributor for the 136th volume.

Making a personal impact

BY MADINA TOURE

When I joined Spectator in September 2008, I was merely interested in writing stories. The idea of being an editor in chief, managing editor, deputy, or even a beat chief seemed so scary and intimidating. I was hesitant to become a deputy because I knew that the job was a huge responsibility. At my first official beat chief meeting, I was so nervous. I was so used to just being a listener. As the weeks went by, I started to feel very differently about leadership. It felt great to know that I could be a source of guidance for my beat chiefs. I enjoyed watching them grow as reporters, seeing them face the struggles that I faced when I first started reporting. I began to see leadership as something positive. I also knew that I had reservations about being a leader because I’ve always had a very reserved personality. I always felt that the best leaders were always outspoken, outwardly confident, and assertive. But being a deputy gave me an opportunity to shine and to see that I was a leader in my own way.

I’ve always appreciated my role as a reporter. One of my proudest moments in my college years was when one of my sources said, “I trust you, Madina.”

Over the years, I’ve become genuinely interested in learning about people, issues, and organizations across Columbia. I see every story as an opportunity to learn something new. Spec has enabled me to cross paths with extraordinary people—students, professors, faculty, administrators, and incredible journalists. It was an easy way to see and be a part of everything at this school. Now that I’m graduating, I feel that I’ve got the perspective of a student but also the perspective of a reporter, which is so elevated in comparison. I know and understand so many different things, like why Barnard and Columbia are separate institutions today, what it means to be a student at the School of General Studies and how it fits into the University, how student council works—I even know a large number of veterans on this campus, and I’m not even a veteran.

I’ve always appreciated my role as a reporter. One of my proudest moments in my college years was when one of my sources said, “I trust you, Madina.” I felt like I had a responsibility to this source. I loved the emails I got from sources about how they appreciated a story I wrote because it was about an issue that really affected them. As a news reporter, it was sometimes hard for me to report objectively and keep my personal views aside. After spending an entire year covering the School of General Studies, it was hard to not feel some sort of attachment. I started to feel like more than just a beat chief but an activist, a spokesperson for the school if you will. Whenever I heard or read something negative being said about GS, I couldn’t help it, I got offended. It felt so bizarre because I’m a Barnard student, so you’d think I’d just focus on my own school (which I do, of course), but it seemed like injustice to me. My impression was that GS students were like all other students at this school—smart, talented, hardworking, etc. My curiosity always got the best of me. I always felt personally affected by everything that I wrote about, even if I wasn’t directly implicated.

I spent a huge chunk of my time reporting and writing during my four years at Barnard. Time and again, I think about how much time I spent doing Spec and wondering what this year would have looked like if I hadn’t done it. But when I try to imagine it, nothing comes to mind. It’s never been a matter of choosing whether or not to be here, I just always felt that being here was the right thing for me to do because I know that I’m always going to have an impact. After all, that’s exactly what I want to do with my life.

The author is a Barnard College senior majoring in French languages and literature and philosophy. She was a news beat chief for the 133rd volume and a deputy news editor for the 134th volume.



Confidence to take on chaos

BY AMBER TUNNELL

When I stepped through Columbia’s gates as a first-year, I planned to major in physics. I expected four years of working on problem sets and conducting lab experiments.

However, I struggled through the freshman physics classes and pulled all-nighters, worrying about how the next three years would go if I stayed in science. That summer, I journeyed back home to Tennessee, full of doubts about Columbia and, more importantly, myself. I honestly didn’t want to come back.

In an endeavor to save my college experience sophomore year, I decided to change my major to English and philosophy—a path that, in hindsight, fit my personal interests much more than physics ever did. But I still seriously questioned whether this was the right choice for me.

In the midst of this academic confusion, I threw myself into one of the extracurriculars I dabbled in freshmen year—Spectator. In my first year, I had written a few news articles on topics such as grade inflation and the Core. But, sophomore year, I started writing regularly. I attended the monthly University Senate meetings and interviewed faculty and students about a range of campus topics. And, for the first time at Columbia, I felt like I belonged here.

That December, I decided to run for campus deputy news editor. After obtaining the position, I worked with a plethora of passionate people to put out the paper everyday.

Honestly, I can’t say I loved every second of it—the job was demanding, the days long, and schoolwork often became a bit too optional. But, I would do it over in a heartbeat.

I was a student by day, a journalist by night. I learned so much about Columbia—from the intricacies of the administration to the major student issues. I met an array of amazing people I never would have talked to on campus otherwise.

The people I worked with at Spectator also appreciated my English and philosophy double major and had made some of the same life decisions as I had. They assured and supported me

during the time I most needed it.

Working at Spectator also gave me back some of the confidence I had completely lost in myself at that point in my life. I was empowered by being able to tell other peoples’ stories, by telling of their successes and, sometimes, failures. When I felt powerless as a student in an intricate and alienating system, Spectator empowered me and molded me into a person I was proud to be.

After my tenure as a deputy editor, I studied abroad in London. During spring break, I traveled throughout Europe—visited 10 cites and seven countries—where I bonded with Columbia students also traveling abroad and met a myriad of interesting strangers. This adventure was one of my best experiences through Columbia, and I wouldn’t have had the self-confidence necessary to take advantage of it if it weren’t for Spectator.

I was a student by day, a journalist by night. I learned so much about Columbia.

In March, I wrote a lead story for The Eye about post-graduation choices and how many students seem to not be following the path that would lead them to the most happiness. My time at Columbia—and Spectator—has taught me that the journeys are what matter in life and not the ultimate résumé-bullet or paycheck.

Through Spectator, I have had the opportunity to discuss people’s passions and achievements with them numerous times over the past four years. These people have given me the confidence that, in life, it is never worth settling for the easiest path—it is only through trials that we can even begin to find ourselves.

As I graduate in a few weeks, I will know that it was my years at Spectator that gave me the confidence I need to go out into chaos that is the real world. I may still not truly understand myself, but Spectator has put me on the path to begin to and, for that, I’ll be forever grateful.

The author is a Columbia College senior majoring in English and philosophy. She was a news beat chief for the 133rd volume and a deputy news editor for the 134th volume.

Longer Ivy League season needed

BY RYAN YOUNG
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

For the second straight year, Columbia baseball was eliminated from division title contention before reaching its final week-end of the season. While one could make the case that the Lions have just not measured up talent-wise these last two years, it is more likely that the fluky nature of the Ivy baseball season has been a greater factor.



Simply put, 20 games in baseball often will not determine who the best team is. Yet that is how many Ivy baseball games there are each year, and unless the league decides to cut into nonconference play, 20 games is as many games as the teams can play, logistically speaking. With only four of those games left, both Cornell and Dartmouth will clinch division titles if they win one of their four games this weekend.

Meanwhile, most Major League Baseball teams have played 16 games, just like the Ivy squads. If the MLB were starting its playoffs, the Nationals, Dodgers, Blue Jays, and White Sox would be among the unlikely candidates to make the postseason. The Orioles would only be half a game out, while the Angels and Phillies—both perpetual contenders—currently sit in last place. When you check the final standings come October, chances are the better teams will rise to the top over the course of 162 games.

A lot of this is attributed to the streaks that every team encounters over the course of a long season. If the Angels ride a hot streak, their 6-10 start to the season will long be forgotten. This is not the case in Ivy baseball.

In fact, it is almost necessary to get off to a good start in order to claim a spot in the Ivy League

Championship season. Assuming the Big Red and Big Green hold on to win their divisions this weekend, in the last five years, eight of the last 10 division winners will have held the best record in their division after the first two weeks of Ivy League play—interdivisional play.

“Those first two weekends, the crossover games, are very important, as far as who gets the advantage there, because when you go head-to-head, it’s pretty rare that somebody gets swept,” head coach Brett Boretti said. “A lot of times when you go head-to-head, it’s going to be even as far as the splits, you might take three out of four and win a game here, but those first two weekends are big.”

Cornell took advantage of its first two weekends by going 7-1 against the Red Rolfe Division this season. In the three seasons prior to last season, the Lions had held the best record in the Lou Gehrig Division after the initial eight games, and they won the division in two of those seasons.

Indeed, divisional play can be tough, since the teams become familiar with each other after four games in one weekend. Furthermore, they seem to be evenly matched as they are constituted. Even the defending champions revealed great flaws this weekend in losing three out of four games at Robertson Field. Princeton pitching allowed over 50 base runners during the weekend series.

The luck of the schedule also plays a role, and it has not helped the Lions in each of the last two years. Last year, the Light Blue had to play on the road to face the Tigers on their run to the Ivy title, and this season it had to do the same at Cornell. Columbia lost three of four in each series, while they won three of four against each of the two teams at Satow Stadium in each of the last two seasons. The Lions are clearly a better home team, where they

have won eight of their last 10 games.

If Columbia had split the series with Cornell—maybe if it had held on to its lead in the final inning of the series opener—then with a sweep of Penn this weekend, the Lions would still be able to tie the Big Red for the division title. For baseball, a game where every pitcher has a rough outing at one point, there is a lot of weight put on single games in Ivy play.

Despite all the variables, Cornell’s season certainly warrants a Gehrig Division title.

The Big Red leads the league in ERA, on-base-percentage, runs, hits, extra-base-hits, and stolen bases, and is tied for the league lead in home runs.

“I think they’ve been the best baseball team in the league,” Boretti said. “They’ve done a great job pitching and they play with a lot of energy. They got out of the gate pretty good and they’ve been playing very well, give them a lot of credit. Their starting pitchers have done a great job, they’ve got some guys who really work the count well, and [outfielder Brian] Billigen and [utility player Chris] Cruz have done a really great job in the lineup.”

The Big Red played an easier nonconference schedule than most of its Ivy counterparts, and the fast start seemed to build confidence for all of its young players.

As a young team, the Big Red will surely be a force for the Lions to deal with next year, but with just a 20-game season, anything will be possible once again.

Columbia finishes off its non-conference slate when Fordham visits Robertson Field at 2 p.m. on Wednesday.

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FILE PHOTO

THE RIGHT EDGE | Nicole Ross will represent the USA during the 2012 Olympic summer games.

Columbia fencers to compete at Olympics

BY SPENCER GYORY
Spectator Staff Writer

Since May 2011, dozens of fencers have competed in eight World Cup events, three national events, and Senior World Championships to determine who will represent USA Fencing at the 2012 Olympic Games in London. Of the 20 American fencers traveling across the pond this summer, four will be Columbians.

Nicole Ross, who will graduate in fall 2012, and Nzingha Prescod, CC ’15, will travel to London to compete in women’s foil, while James Williams, CC ’07, and Jeff Spear, CC ’10, will compete in men’s sabre.

After finding out she would be heading to London, Ross felt a wave of emotions.

“I think whenever you achieve something that you’ve been trying to do for so long, a certain amount of confusion comes after achieving that goal,” Ross said. “As much as I’m completely thrilled, it’s only beginning to hit me that I’m going to the Olympics—which is something I’ve worked towards literally my entire career since I was nine years old. There is also exhaustion and relief in that feeling.”

Ross was born and raised in New York City. She has trained with Simon and Irene Gershon out of the Fencers Club, the oldest continuously existing organization in the Western Hemisphere dedicated exclusively to fencing, since she was nine years old.

Ross ended her tremendous Columbia career by becoming the 2010 NCAA Individual Champion in women’s foil in 2010.

Making the Olympic squad culminates a grueling 18-month-long process for Ross. While she has continued to live on the Upper

West Side, Ross stopped taking classes in order to focus on making the Olympic team and train with her personal coaches in Chelsea.

She has focused on preparing herself mentally for perhaps the most intense event in the sport of fencing. She credits her efforts with helping her earn a spot on the squad going to London.

“The thing I have been working on the most and most proud of is my mental edge, my ability to focus in during important and intense moments and my ability to deliver an important result at a really crucial moment,” Ross said. “I’ve been working a lot at the sports psychology, mental aspect of the game, which has really elevated my level.”

Ross will travel to London with fellow Columbian Prescod.

Prescod finished Olympic qualifiers in second place and is currently ranked No. 15 in the world. Prescod won a silver medal at the 2011 Pan American Games and won gold at the Cadet World Championships in 2008 and 2009.

In her first season with the Lions, she earned first-team all-Ivy League and was named the Ivy League’s Rookie of the Year. Prescod will return to Columbia in the fall to compete for the Lions as a sophomore.

The 19-year-old foilist from Brooklyn trains with Buckie Leach at the Peter Westbrook Foundation out of the Fencers Club.

Ross, who has fenced with Prescod for a number of years, said she has come to respect her fencing ability and work ethic.

“We grew up fencing together,” Ross said. “She is one of, if not the, hardest working members of any team I’ve ever seen. She is constantly at practice before everyone gets there. She leaves after

everyone else leaves. She has a great positive attitude about fencing. She is extremely technical and one of the best executors out there because she has such a great feeling for the game.”

Williams will also travel to London and represent the red, white, and blue on the men’s sabre team, in what will be Williams’ second trip to the Olympics. In 2008, he traveled to Beijing as an alternate and earned a silver medal in the team competition—the first medal for an American men’s team since 1984.

Williams, who is coached by Yury Gelman, will be the third seed in London.

Spear will travel to London as an alternate on the men’s sabre team. This accomplishment adds to one of the most successful careers of any athlete in Columbia’s history. Spear majored in evolutionary biology, graduated with a 4.07 GPA, and was named 2010 Columbia College salutatorian. In addition to his scholastic accomplishments, Spear was the 2008 NCAA Individual Champion in men’s sabre and was named a first-team All-America athlete by ESPN The Magazine.

This past season, Spear acted as an assistant coach for Columbia’s fencing team.

Prescod, Ross, and Williams will compete individually in a direct elimination tournament, and all four of Columbia’s athletes could see action in the team portion. Each attending U.S. squad will compete against seven other teams from across the globe in 45-touch relay bouts to determine the team champion.

Competition will take place from July 28 to Aug. 5 at the ExCeL Center on the shore of the Thames just outside London.



DOUGLAS KESSEL/ SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

PAT ON THE BACK | Pat Lowery has pitched well, but he was unable to lead the Lions to the Ivy title.

‘SPEARS’ crowd to include VIPs, admins

SPEARS from page 3

working to open up more seats to the public.

“My goal has not been to make it an exclusive, non-Columbia event,” he added. “What we’ve been doing as well is just kind of trying our best to get as many people to even come and just check out rehearsals, because there’s definitely been an intense amount of interest.”

Though Blute says that the Glicker-Milstein Theatre is a “phenomenal facility,” he “would’ve loved to have put the show under a larger venue for the campus.”

The producers added a fourth performance for Friday, April 27 at 10:30 p.m. in order to accommodate the growing demand. Seventy-five tickets were put on sale at the TIC on April 20, according to Agrawal.

“You had to be at the TIC, in person, at 1 p.m. on Friday to get a ticket,” she said. “The last tickets were sold at 1:04 p.m.” The same rules for the online ticket purchases applied—only one ticket per CUID. People had been in line since 11 or 11:30, she added.

The show will not have standing room because of the theater’s fire code, according to Agrawal. “In terms of a waitlist, we still haven’t figured out the logistics yet,” she said.

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Athlete and journalist, signing off

As much as I am dreading all of these graduation ceremonies and receptions that create such unwanted nostalgia, I am actually happy to write this senior column. Maybe it's because I've only been at the Spec for one year rather than four, but I'd like to think it's because I've truly enjoyed the experience.

As I wrote in my debut column, this was something that I've been a fan of for a while, and I figured I would try my hand at it. I don't think it turned out as bad as it potentially could have, and I'm quite proud of the Spectator Sportscastr, which I helped found and host along with Zach Glubiak and Mrinal Mohanka. I do want to thank those guys—I know this would not have been possible without them.

Don't worry—this column isn't going to be a sentimental appreciation recap of my short time here. Instead I want to write about the future of sports journalism. Now I haven't studied sports journalism, or any journalism for that matter, but the knowledge I have of it has come to me through following it and now doing it myself. I believe sports journalism (columns, previews, recaps, and even podcasts!) exists to re-create the magic of sports for those who may not have been at the sporting event or who want to see it from a different angle. Naturally this re-creation of an event is best done by someone who was there. This has typically been done by reporters who sit in press boxes or by fans who want to voice their opinions. In the future, I predict this will be done by the players who create the events themselves.

This hypothesis is based on the uncommon role I had this past year. I was a student-athlete as part of the



RONNIE SHABAN
Senior Column



DOUGLAS KESSEL/SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

ON THE BAG | Third baseman Jon Eisen led the Lions in hits, runs, and batting average in 2010 when the team clinched the Lou Gehrig Division title.

Eisen's work ethic makes him invaluable for Lions

BY ELI SCHULTZ
Spectator Staff Writer

After nearly four years of Columbia baseball, senior third baseman Jon Eisen's college career is coming to a close.

A vital part of the Lions' program ever since arriving in Morningside Heights and starting 38 games as a freshman, the Nashville, Tenn. native has amassed some impressive numbers. His career batting average is .328, and his career hits and runs totals—of 185 and 115, respectively—both rank among the top 10 in Light Blue history. On both defense and offense, Eisen is one of Columbia's most

valuable players.

But the numbers fail to capture what Eisen truly means to the team. Notwithstanding all his physical abilities, Eisen's mental approach to the game is what has really set him apart.

"Work ethic," head coach Brett Boretti said when asked about what makes Eisen unique. "Always been one of the first guys out here to the field."

The winner of the team's 2011 Mr. Hustle award, Eisen's scrappiness consistently causes trouble for opposing pitchers. Eisen is known for never giving up on an at-bat, and for battling back from pitchers' counts to somehow end up on base. He has a remarkable

capacity to make runs out of disadvantageous situations.

In an early April game at Harvard, Eisen managed to cross the plate in the fifth inning despite the fact that the Lions could not manage a single hit in the frame. Eisen was hit by a pitch, and then advanced to second on a wild pitch. He then took third on a sacrifice fly, and scored on a groundout, giving a stagnant Light Blue offense a much-needed run.

"He's made himself into a pain in the butt as a hitter," Boretti said. "He's our toughest out."

Despite his pesky ability to get on base and score, Eisen has faced his

share of adversity in his time playing at Columbia.

Like many of his teammates, Eisen struggled to play up to expectations in 2011. The Lions entered the year as heavy favorites to win their division, but stumbled to a third place finish. Eisen hit .258 that season, a far cry from the .383 average he posted as a sophomore.

"I hurt my hamstring a bunch of times throughout the year," Eisen said. "I wasn't hitting the ball that well."

But the third baseman did not allow the frustrations of a difficult season to affect his love for the game.

SEE EISEN, page 2

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