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More college funding on the way?

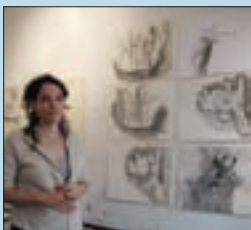
Spectator checked in with U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to discuss the House introduction of the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009.



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Free original theater on your own doorstep

Thanks to an initiative by School of the Arts' director of playwrighting, Chuck Mee, Columbia students earn another chance to catch free, relevant campus theater.



A&E, page 3

Prof Geer practices what she paints at CU

Dedicated to using art as an expression of her personal passions, Columbia alum and professor Tara Geer urges her students to serve their interests in her classes.

Opinion, page 4

Free market criticism: laissez-faire

Jon Hollander demystifies culpability in the economic crisis of 2008.



Sports, page 7

Baseball doesn't take the summer off

Thirteen members of the Lions' baseball team, including Jon Eisen, Roger Aquino, Pat Lowery, and Nick Cox, spent their summers playing in leagues across the country.

Sports, page 7

Soccer rallies in second half to defeat Iona 3-1

With the score knotted at one goal a piece in the second half, sophomore forward Ashlin Yahr score two goals in four minutes to lead the Lions to a 3-1 win over Iona.

ONLINE

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News around the clock

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Patrick Yuan for Spectator

**EXCUSE ME, MR. MAYOR** | At the year's first World Leaders Forum, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg answers a Columbia student's question while sitting on a panel with London Mayor Boris Johnson.

## Businesses bid Morningside adieu

BY SAM LEVIN  
*Spectator Staff Writer*

As the slow summer in Morningside Heights officially comes to a close, it is leaving behind a tangible mark through an array of recently departed businesses.

The shifts among Morningside retailers have created a commercial radius around Columbia's campus that is now filled with boarded-up, newspaper-covered storefronts that sit depressingly alongside a few fresh merchant faces.

On Broadway, the sea of empty retail fronts created in the spring by Fotorush, Tomo Sushi and

Sake Bar, and Empanada Joe's expanded this summer when Jas Mart (the Japanese grocery store), Community Food & Juice (with continued delays in fire recovery), and Morningside Bookshop (the neighborhood independent that plummeted into debt) closed their doors permanently.

Now, a walk down Broadway, heading south from campus, takes a hungry patron through a tour of many resilient restaurants that are struggling to keep their indoor and outdoor seats filled while the former homes of their lost merchant neighbors rot away beside them.

On Amsterdam Avenue, the losses of Cafe Fresh and Bengal Cafe were more quickly replaced by new food vendors who are competing now to feed hungry students.

In June, Jas Mart shut down entirely because its lease was up and the owners had no intention of renewing it, according to broker Jeff Roseman, executive vice president of Newmark Knight Frank Retail.

"Over the years, the company divested itself and now they are no longer really in that business," Roseman said. "They lived out

SEE BUSINESS, page 2

## New York meets London in Low

### Bloomberg, Johnson sign tourism agreement in Low

BY MAGGIE ASTOR AND ALIX PIANIN  
*Columbia Daily Spectator*

Ever wondered what New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's British counterpart is like?

Attendees at the opening of Columbia's annual World Leaders Forum now know, as Bloomberg and London Mayor Boris Johnson held a panel discussion Tuesday in Low Library before signing a tourism agreement.

Bloomberg and Johnson talked economy, the advantages of each city over the other, and past and future collaboration between the two to an audience packed into Low Rotunda. University President Lee Bollinger was also in attendance. More than 300 students were turned away for lack of space.

In introducing Bloomberg, School of International and

Public Affairs professor Ester Fuchs—a member of Bloomberg's Sustainability Advisory Board and former Special Advisor to the Mayor for Governance and Strategic Planning—noted that local politicians like mayors are playing increasingly important roles in world leadership.

"London and New York have long been friendly rivals," Bloomberg said, before launching into a litany of links between the cities. "Both our cities have endured deadly terrorist attacks, and were hit at exactly the same time by ... what morphed into the biggest financial crisis in 75 years."

Johnson—who was born in New York before moving to Britain—followed Bloomberg with a speech full of wisecracks, beginning with a

SEE WORLD LEADERS FORUM, page 2



Patrick Yuan for Spectator

**MAYOR TO MAYOR** | Johnson and Bloomberg banter throughout the event, often quipping about the pros and cons of their cities.

## Proposed campus smoking ban sparks debate

BY RAY KATZ  
*Columbia Daily Spectator*

Smokers of Columbia, be warned—your tobacco-tinged days on Low steps may be numbered.

As the Columbia University Medical Center goes smoke-free and the city begins to seek an outdoor smoking ban, the Columbia University tobacco workgroup continues to consider whether or not the Morningside campus should follow suit.

Last semester, the workgroup came up with a proposal that, among other things, would make the bulk of the Morningside campus smoke-free. The proposed ban would be effective within the Columbia gates and would stretch from 114th to 120th streets between Broadway and Amsterdam, excluding the grounds surrounding East Campus, the School of International and Public Affairs, and the School of Law.

Renewed efforts to poll students, faculty, and staff have come after a Columbia College Student Council resolution passed last April in opposition to the proposal. Many members said they felt it would be too difficult to enforce and could be a misuse of resources. Other concerns expressed in the resolution were potential decreases in the quality of student life because of possible restrictions on

recreational activities, such as smoking hookah, and the impracticality of smokers congregating at the campus gates.

Scott Wright, vice president of student administrative services, formed the initial workgroup in 2008.

According to Wright, the initiative to form the workgroup originated with Michael McNeil, the assistant director of the Alice!

HealthPromotion Program as well as Columbia University Health Services. McNeil wrote in an e-mail that he took this step "after the University updated the undergraduate housing tobacco policy to bring it into alignment with New York State law and national recommendations."

The group had no predetermined aim, and after doing substantial research it decided that

the primarily goal would be to gather student feedback.

The workgroup attempted to gauge student opinion by holding four open forum feedback sessions in late April and an online survey. But the sessions were poorly attended, and few students answered the survey.

"The workgroup did good work, but they couldn't back it up with substantive community feedback," Wright said. This same concern was the subject of an opinion piece written for the Spectator last May by two CCSC members.

The aims of the workgroup, as stated in its proposal, are to "update the tobacco-related policies and procedures for Columbia University," "to promote the health and well-being of our campus community," and to "ensure compliance with recently updated city and state regulations."

Now the workgroup, headed

by McNeil, is in the process of finding effective ways to explore campus opinion on the matter by polling faculty, students, and administrative staff, according to CCSC Vice President of Policy Sarah Weiss, CC '10. The group, which met over the summer as well as last Friday, is discussing the logistics that enforcing such a policy would entail as well as issues that may come up concerning Columbia's relationship with the larger Morningside community.

"This is 100 percent about gauging opinion," Weiss said. "Each student has an equal right to this campus, and each opinion should be given equal value."

Wright emphasized that the proposal was just a preliminary look into possible regulation changes. Nobody on the workgroup, he said, had the power to enforce the policy. "There isn't a strong arm mentality here at all," he said.

On campus, students expressed an array of opinions on the proposed ban. Nonsmokers and smokers alike expressed concern for the effects of smoking on non-smoking individuals, but many also emphasized the difficulty of enforcing such a policy.

Others voiced concerns about the fairness of such a ban. "I don't

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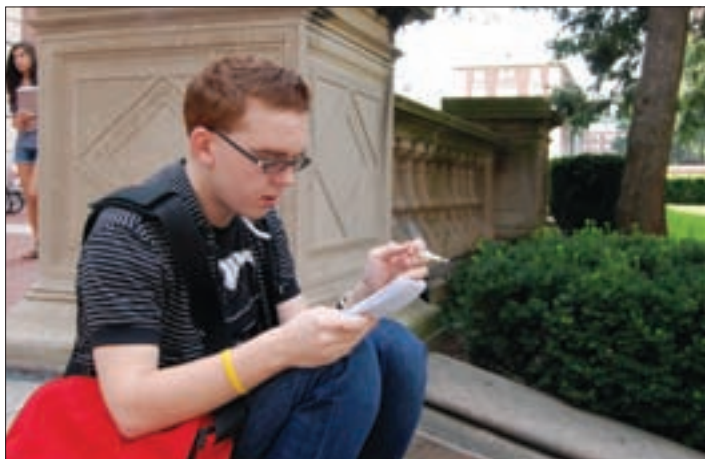


Photo illustration by Samantha Ainsley



Will Brown for Spectator

**SMOKING FOR NOW** | Michael Reed enjoys a study break with a cigarette outside Butler library—a pleasure that may soon be prohibited.



Will Brown for Spectator

**PRIORITIES** | Sophomore Marc Szalkiewicz smokes outside Kent Hall while reading. Columbia would have him focus on the book if the ban passes.

## Candidates grace city streets

BY SAM LEVIN AND ALIX PIANIN  
*Columbia Daily Spectator*

Morningside Heights residents and students above the age of 18 hurried to the calm voting booths on Tuesday—in the wee hours before work, on a break in between classes, and some last minute before the polls closed at 9 p.m.—to vote in New York City's primaries.

The unusually wide sidewalk on 97th street between Amsterdam and Columbus—with P.S. 163, the largest site for voter turnout in the local area, at the center—was filled all day with campaigners and confident politicians stopping passersby and just barely keeping their legal distance from the entrance to the booths.

In the mid-afternoon, two prominent candidates straddled the east and west sides of the street with campaign lobbyists stopping voters and uninterested pedestrians approaching from both directions.

Closer to Columbus Avenue, Democrat David Yassky, running for comptroller, told hurried New Yorkers, "This is a tough job and the city is in a tough spot." But, he reassured them that, "I have the best record and the best ideas," and for that reason, he said he has received plentiful endorsements from organizations such as The New York Times and The New York Daily News.

In an interview, Yassky said, "I'm energized. This is my last opportunity to help voters make up their mind." One woman who stopped of her own volition directly asked him why she should vote for him, and he responded with a laundry list of legislative accomplishment—including efforts to reform affordable housing and help fight rising asthma rates.

He said it was even more

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**WEATHER**

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EVENTS — SEPTEMBER 16

Activists Discuss Online Social Movements

Join Executive Director of the Third Wave Foundation Mia Herndon; lead organizer at Domestic Workers United Ai-jen Poo; and President and Executive Director of the Applied Research Center Rinku Sen, to learn about how internet tools can help fight for women's issues.

James Room, Barnard Hall, 6:30 p.m.

Project HEALTH Information Session

Satisfy your inner idealist by learning about an organization that, in its own words, “mobilizes undergraduates to break the link between poverty and poor health.” Volunteer to teach vital healthy habits to people in need.

309 Hamilton, 8 p.m.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“It’s not realistic to censor every harmful action that an individual takes.”

—Nonsmoker Virat Gupta, CC ’12, on a proposed smoking ban

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New act proposed in House to help send more kids to college

BY JESSICA HILLS  
Spectator Staff Writer

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and two members of Congress introduced the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009 in the House of Representatives on Tuesday.

The bill is intended to give the United States the highest college completion rate in the world by 2020.

“This is a really historic day for our country. This is a significant investment,” Duncan said in a conference call with college student reporters Tuesday afternoon.

Also on the call were Representatives George Miller (D-Calif.), chair of the Committee on Education and Labor, and Tim Bishop (D-N.Y.)

“Over the next several days, the House will consider a leg-

islation that’s transformative,” Miller said.

The act—officially known as H.R. 3221—would reform the federal student loan system and the financial aid application process, and funnel additional money to community colleges. It aims to increase the national graduation rate to meet goals outlined by President Barack Obama, CC ’83, who has emphasized the importance of developing a workforce prepared for 21st-century jobs.

“We have to educate our way to a better economy,” Duncan said.

According to Miller, over the next 10 years, the bill would save the country \$87 billion in existing expenses, which would then be directed to the aforementioned programs and initiatives at no additional cost to taxpayers.

The first part of the act proposes allocating \$10 billion to support the Early Learning Challenge Grant, a request for \$300 million in the president’s budget to allocate grants to states to bolster and consolidate early childhood education programs.

“The best investment we can make is on the early childhood investment side,” Duncan said, emphasizing the importance of ensuring three and four-year-olds do not fall behind in their first years of school.

The second part of the bill would switch all colleges and universities to the federal Direct Loan system and, the sponsors said, simplify the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, which is required of all college students seeking federal grants or loans. It also suggests an increase in funding for Pell

Grants, a \$6 billion increase in loans for the neediest students, and the creation of a College Access and Completion Innovation Fund to ensure that first-generation and disadvantaged college students are able to graduate.

\$12 billion would go to strengthen community colleges as part of Obama’s American Graduation Initiative.

“Community colleges are the unpolished gem along the education continuum,” Duncan said. “They can help the entire country get back on its feet.”

Another piece of the bill supports the expansion of online education as a way to make college accessible to everyone, especially in these tough economic times, when many young people are working full-time jobs.

Putting the legislation in per-

spective, Bishop noted that the U.S. has fallen to sixth in the world in number of people attending college, and, he said, only half of those students will graduate.

“That doesn’t bode well for our future in terms of our workforce being as competitive as it needs to,” he said.

The act was announced on the House floor Tuesday, and Miller and Bishop said they hoped to complete the amendment process by Wednesday afternoon.

Both said they anticipated more difficulty passing the bill in the Senate than in the House, but expected to have the act to the White House for Obama to sign by Christmas.

“We want to build a culture of college completion at every single college and university in the country,” Bishop said.

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Smoking ban: a real possibility

FROM SMOKING, front page

think it’s fair to people who smoke, but I personally wouldn’t be opposed to a ban because it wouldn’t affect me,” David Shin, CC ’11, said.

“I don’t think it’s necessary,” Virat Gupta, CC ’12, a nonsmoker said. “It’s not realistic to censor every harmful action that an individual takes.”

But the policy will have an effect on the campus whether it is enforced or not, according to McNeil. “Policies that limit where, but not if, a person uses tobacco tend to be correlated with lower tobacco use rates,” he said.

McNeil noted that all permitted smoking locations in the proposal are within five minutes of every campus location and that the workgroup includes both smokers and nonsmokers.

McNeil also emphasized the negative impact of outdoor secondhand smoke, as written in the 2006 U.S. Surgeon General’s Report, and wrote that a final set of recommendations will likely be complete by the end of the 2009-2010 academic year.

Chatchapon Chiaravanond, CC ’13, stood smoking this afternoon outside of Lerner Hall. When asked how he would feel about a ban, he said “I’m a smoker, so I’m against it.” He shrugged his shoulders. “There’s not much else to say.”

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WLF returns to Columbia

FROM WORLD LEADERS FORUM, front page

laundry list of ways in which London was ostensibly superior.

“Far be it from me to rub in our success in winning the Olympic Games,” he said to laughter from the audience, referring to the 2012 Summer Olympics, for which New York also made a bid.

“We gave you ‘Billy Elliott,’ you gave us ‘Hairspray,’” Johnson continued. “We gave you mad cow disease, you gave us swine flu.”

After the panel, Bloomberg and Johnson moved into a cramped room in Low, where they signed a two-year tourism agreement intended to boost travel between New York and London. Under the agreement, each city will provide advertising for the other, and the respective tourist arms of New York and London will help each other hold publicity events.

According to a press release from the London mayor’s office, Americans made almost two million visits to London last year, and the United Kingdom is the number one source of international visitors to New York.

“History is littered with British people who have come to New York and experienced tragic or comical results,” Johnson said.

“There’s an excitement about London that I think can take place in New York,” Bloomberg added.

The conference also gave Bloomberg and Johnson a chance to compare notes on mayoral governance, and one British reporter pointed out that Johnson had spoken out against mayors serving more than two terms, as Bloomberg wants to do.

“Actually, I think I was talking about London,” Johnson said.

“My point is, he probably said that before serving,” Bloomberg lobbed back.

But both mayors were sure to emphasize how the futures of their respective cities, especially economically, were interconnected, even as they poked fun at one another.

Quipped Johnson, “You are our proudest creation.”

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Tuesday’s street-side primary campaigns close with two runoffs

FROM PRIMARY, front page

exciting in the morning when several candidates were courting votes on this single street. On Tuesday night, results showed that Yassky received 30 percent of the vote and will face a Sept. 29 runoff election against competitor John Liu, who had 38 percent of the vote. (If no candidate takes 40 percent of the vote, a runoff is required).

Up the block towards Amsterdam Avenue, Richard Aborn , democratic candidate for District Attorney , told approaching voters that he would focus his efforts on racial issues, youth crimes, cycles of violence,

and gun prevention.

“I tell people that one out of three African American men spend their life in prison, and they say thank you for raising that issue,” he said in an interview.

“I am very confident,” he said as a hurried woman declined his invitation to chat saying she was already going to vote for him. “We have something you can’t measure, called voter intensity.”

Paula Diamond Roman , local Democratic district leader and member of the Broadway Democrats , said that she was disappointed by the turnout on 109th street, where she was volunteering. She added that she was not surprised, since primaries are

typically slow and this year police cracked down on posters, which help spread the word.

Because of recurring cycles of violence and dissolving state budgets, Roman said that the District Attorney position was crucial in a time when criminal justice is in need of serious reform. Democrat Cy Vance won in the primary, and will bypass the general election, since no republicans ran.

In the highly-contested democratic public advocate race, Norman Siegel, who has represented parties prosecuting Columbia’s Manhattanville expansion, lost to candidates Bill de Blasio and Mark Green, who

are expected to compete in a Sept. 29 runoff.

More locally, incumbent City Councilwoman Inez Dickens, who represents Morningside Heights, beat out democratic competitors Landon Dais and Carlton Berkley with 65 percent of the vote. Incumbent Councilman Robert Jackson also won.

“I think in light of fiscal issues, this year it is especially important that we elect thoughtful intelligent policy-oriented officials who will think through issues and not just respond at the spur of the moment,” Roman said Tuesday mornings.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg,

who was on Tuesday’s republican ticket, vying for a controversial third term— speaking today on Columbia’s campus—echoed Roman’s emphasis on the importance of the primaries. “When you have a city that is so dominated by one party, the primary is essentially the general election,” Bloomberg said. He also added his desires to see the primaries converted to open elections. As an independent who will face off with democratic victor and current city Comptroller William Thompson in the general election, he said, “You sort of feel left out of the process.”

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Winds of change buffet businesses in Morningside Heights

FROM BUSINESS, front page

their obligation and had no interest in continuing,” he said. Roseman said that he hopes they will sign a deal with a new commercial tenant within 30 to 60 days, adding that he has spoken to a myriad of interested merchants, including food vendors, clothing stores, electronics outlets, and cosmetics businesses.

Roseman—who does not represent the storefront a few doors north where the Empanada Joes’ decaying façade still remains—said that he thinks their lease is not finished at that location. He speculated that they are still paying rent even though

their doors have been closed for many months.

Community Food & Juice has remained shut down significantly longer than the owners anticipated because the reconstruction of the space after the fire was more intensive than they had initially expected, according to proprietor DeDe Lahman. She added that they have taken the summer to redo the kitchen and fix some pre-fire problems in infrastructure.

Lahman said they are aiming to reopen by the end of the month. She added that the menu, setup, and feel, will virtually be the same when they do.

Delfino Galvez, a worker at

the new Mexican restaurant, 5 de Cinco, which replaced Bengal Cafe on Amsterdam between 110th and 111th streets, said that the previous Indian restaurant had done very poorly and ultimately could not stay open.

“They went out of business— couldn’t pay rent anymore,” he said.

“We are very affordable— hopefully we will do better,” he said. They opened over the weekend, and he admitted, while looking around his entirely empty restaurant, that it has been a slow start. But in six months when they have secured their liquor license, he is more confident that they will thrive

on Amsterdam.

Also on Amsterdam, Cafe Fresh—owned by Columbia—closed down in July, and a month later, Cafe Bagutta, which launched a full makeover, took its place. So far, the restaurant has been fairly successful, according to current manager Jennifer Slater.

Columbia declined to comment on the closing of Fresh, but the new cafe, with a somewhat similar menu, is under entirely new ownership. Slater said that business has been slower than they expected, considering the initial construction investment, but she, like many local proprietors, is hoping that the recent influx

of students will prove to be the perfect medicine for survival.

LaVerna Fountain, associate vice president of communications for Columbia University facilities, declined to share the volume of commercial vacancies the University currently has, but she said in interview that they are mostly talking to local businesses to try to fill the empty spaces. “We have a community of people we need to serve, and we are really committed to supporting local businesses.”

When asked if Columbia would ever bring in a chain, she said, “It’s not a rule, but it would be an exception.”

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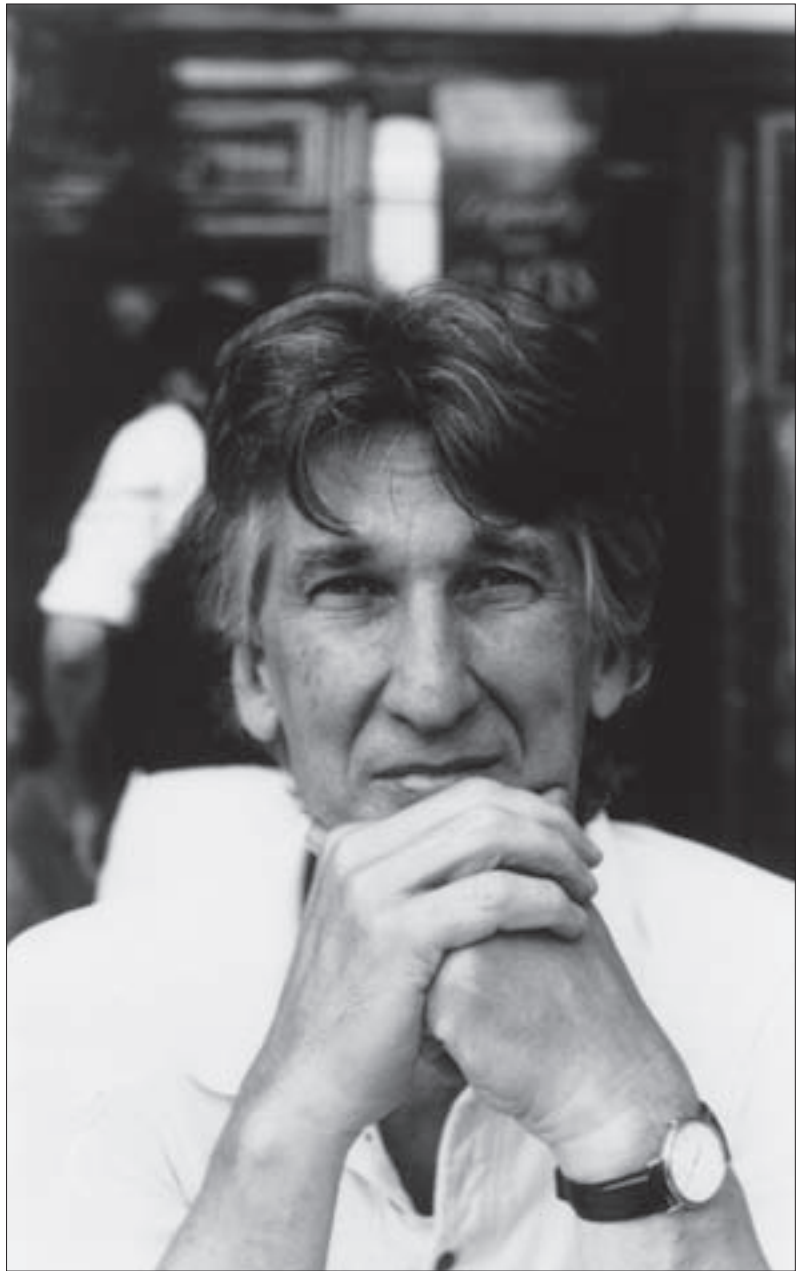
Patrick Yuan for Spectator

CITIES | In Low Memorial Library, Johnson and Bloomberg discuss the economy and the importance of collaboration between their cities. “We gave you ‘Billy Elliot,’ you gave us ‘Hairspray.’ We gave you mad cow disease, you gave us swine flu,” Johnson says (left). Julia Vitullo-Martin of the Manhattan Institute joins the mayors (right).



**THEATER**

## Mee's program to stage students' writing



Courtesy of Chuck Mee

**PAGE TO STAGE** | Director of playwriting, Chuck Mee, translates second year student playwright's work to full stage productions with his new initiative.

BY LOUISA LEVY

*Spectator Senior Staff Writer*

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict doesn't show up too often in theater.

It's a sensitive topic, and playwrights without firsthand knowledge and full-production resources tend to steer clear of it. But thanks to the vision of Chuck Mee, the director of the playwriting program at the Columbia University School of the Arts and his student Samara Weiss' work, you can see the two collide—for free.

Mee, appointed chair of the School of the Arts playwriting department in 2007, has instigated several changes in the program that allow playwright graduate students the opportunity to put on full productions of their work. The most recent modification is the initiative that grants second-year students like Weiss the opportunity to stage full productions.

When Mee took over for Eduardo Machado as chair two years ago, he immediately made his mark on the department. He established an annual festival of full productions for third-year playwriting students called New Voices New Play Festival. Until last year, graduate students in the playwriting department were encouraged to perfect their writing from behind a desk rather than in rehearsal.

"You really need to work in the flesh and see how it works out. Eduardo had a different notion," Mee said. "I've always thought that playwrights are not novelists. Playwrights don't write for the page, they write for the stage."

Although the new second-year productions won't be staged in Riverside Church, like the New Voices festival was last year, graduate playwrights will still have the opportunity to attend rehearsals and make edits and rewrites throughout the process.

According to Mee, full productions grant the playwright a deeper understanding of the three-dimensional construct of his or her play that staged readings do not. "I think that readings can often be very misleading. You hear

a reading and it's not so exciting somehow, so you start rewriting. But that wasn't the problem," Mee said.

Mee is particularly excited about the diversity within the productions of this season. He has tried to incorporate an international aspect into the curriculum, bringing in visiting international playwrights and admitting more international students into the program.

"About half the students are from other countries and they bring with them an understanding of the kind of theater they grew up in," Mee said. "You step into a room full of lots of different ideas about a great way to make a play."

The result is a broad range of different types of plays from Weiss's "AK-47 Sing-Along" about the manipulating influence of children's television shows on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to Erin Moughon's dark comedy "Pretend That You Owe Me" about a nine-year-old girl who acquires unlimited power.

Weiss's play is strongly political and deals with the disturbing subject of the manipulation of Palestinian children's minds toward violence, but it has a message that Weiss found important and underrepresented in the theatrical world—the kind of politically charged, controversial message that resonates with the Columbia community.

"In mainstream theater, it's difficult for people to address these things, you know, there's a lot of risk associated with putting up productions which address the topic [the Israeli-Palestinian conflict], no matter which side they're coming from," Weiss said. "But because we're student theater, we can do whatever we like."

And there's something exciting about being an audience member, witnessing such a labor of love for the first time.

According to Mee, "Columbia people coming to see their [the playwrights'] work will not feel they've seen one more play just like the last 376 plays they saw ... but something that comes from somebody's heart and is shaped by their lives."

**BOOKS**

## Life lessons on the road, off the shelf



LUCY TANG

### SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION

Travel has long played a prominent role in the education process. In "Some Thoughts Concerning Education," John Locke points out, "The last part usually in education is travel, which is

commonly thought to finish the work, and complete the gentleman." Rousseau also emphasizes the necessity of travel in the education manual "Emile," in which he proclaims, "Travel pushes a man toward his natural bent and completes the job of making him good or bad. Whoever returns from roaming the world is, upon his return, what he will be for his whole life."

The reason why travel is important may seem obvious and cliché—to have new experiences and encounter new acquaintances. Consequently, this exposure to an unfamiliar environment will simultaneously (and perhaps counterintuitively) determine one's identity and broaden one's horizons.

While I had been aware of travel's immense impact on the development of the self, the idea remained abstract to me, something I had only read about in books for a course on education. My recent sojourn abroad, however, showed me that travel is still instrumental to personal growth and, perhaps more importantly, that some big life lessons cannot be learned from books.

After reaching this conclusion, I was, ironically, reminded of Petrarch and his letters. According to Petrarch, travel and reading are the best ways to gain experience. He favors reading over travel because it allows one to avoid the consequences, and often mistakes, of travel. This hierarchy is a bit misleading, considering that Petrarch admits that he has learned his lessons the hard way. In this case, I trust Petrarch the person over Petrarch the writer. In order to gain cherished moments, one must experience things firsthand. Though I had previously depended on books as my guide to the world, I realized that I had to navigate it myself.

I was sitting in the courtyard of the British Library waiting for it to open at 9:30. Around 9:10, a line began to form in front of the entrance, and by 9:29, the line had snaked across the courtyard. As someone who arrives early to most social events—I was the girl in elementary school who showed up at birthday parties when the parents were still stringing up the "Happy Birthday" banner—I had found my people. Not to mention, the British Library also serves beer and wine.

Punctuality and drinking aside, my time in London did elicit significant epiphanies. Although most people would not consider examining manuscripts at the Royal Society and the British Library exciting, I was thrilled whenever I happened upon interesting marginalia or a particularly significant line in an unpublished poem. The fact that 17th-century correspondences made me giddy suggested to me that, perhaps, I was fit for postgraduate studies.

One such margin note was from one of Margaret Cavendish's personal letters, in which she scribbled an apology for having a scribe pen the letter on account of her abysmal handwriting. Considering the popularity of scribes among well-to-do people, the note seems rather unremarkable. Yet, as a close reader of Cavendish's work "The Blazing World," I recalled that her heroine confessed to a similar handwriting issue. Given the interest surrounding the autobiographical nature of Cavendish's work, I was excited to uncover new evidence supporting the argument that the heroine is Cavendish's alter ego.

Unfortunately, life is not like the movies, and personal epiphanies are never so clear-cut (not to mention the fact that research papers are really daunting), so by the end, my uncertainties about the future also increased. Away from the ambition characteristic of Columbia students and New Yorkers, I met people who were happy just floating through life.

To nitpick a little, traveling has not dramatically changed any part of my life. Yet I started my summer plagued with uncertainties about the future, and by the end, well, the uncertainties remained, but I embraced them. After all, most of the world exists outside the library and at age 21, with more literary than lived experience under my belt, maybe a little bit of post-grad floundering would not be so terrible.

*Lucy Tang is a Columbia College senior majoring in English. Sentimental Education runs alternate Wednesdays.*

**TV**

## Booze, sex and a dash of stale melodrama on AMC

CHRISTOPHER MORRIS-LENT

*Spectator Staff Writer*

"Its main theme is change," the "Mad Men" set decorator said to an NPR interviewer.

Now that the third season is underway, I am confident that this was a flat-out lie—maybe one that the show's producers believe, too, but a lie anyway, since nothing ever happens on "Mad Men." If "Curb Your Enthusiasm" is a comedy without jokes, "Mad Men" is a drama without a plot. What happened in seasons one and two? Not a whole lot—barely enough, in fact, to be condensed into the "previously on 'Mad Men'" montage aired right before the first episode of season three.

Here is some dialogue from those scenes:

"I want you to be my wife."

"Just don't come home."

"I had your baby... and I gave it away."

"I'm pregnant."

Are you sensing a pattern here? This is the same kind of crap that sustains telenovelas and soap operas. "Mad Men" traffics exclusively in well-worn tropes and banalities. It is even less about advertising than "The Big Lebowski" is about bowling. Its subjects are love, adultery, working, and children. Its themes are trite. Its pacing is lethargic.

And nobody seems to mind.

Why? I think it has everything to do with the target demographic. The average "Mad Men" viewer considers himself above typical prime-time

fare. He is at work when the re-runs of "General Hospital" are on. He objects to the notion of TV in general. He also abhors lowbrow conventionality, with its bad dialogue, outlandish scenarios, and demand of total passivity.

So he loves "Mad Men." He loves its fine writing, its meticulous historicity, and its sumptuous sets. And because plot is all that matters for a typical TV drama, he likes that there isn't one. He is the same mensch in your Literature Humanities class who, during "To The Lighthouse," exclaimed, "Plot is the least important aspect of a book."

None of this would matter if "Mad Men" didn't have the potential to be a great show. But it does. With such a relevant subject, you'd think the writers would use it to their advantage. After all, advertising is compelling stuff—it permeates our present consciousness and dictates our future media. I had a professor who viewed history as a series of information revolutions, and what better topic to put at the center of this than advertising?

The forces were revolutionary, and the possible subjects were inexhaustible. And yet the writers, who pen flawless sentences about nothing, are content to make Harry Crane (Rich Sommer) the head of the television department and leave it at that. And the critics rave. But defining yourself in opposition to an ethos is not the same as having an ethos. "Mad Men" has little character beyond the wood-paneled offices, bottles of whiskey, and silhouettes smoking cigarettes. Without a plot, it turns into the kind of period piece that's contained within its era instead of vice versa, and it falls prey to the same superficiality it wants to float above.

**ART**



Alyssa Rapp / Staff photographer

**DRAWN TO ART** | After graduating from Columbia's MFA program, Greer merged her desire for a stable career with artistic passion by teaching at her alma mater.

## Art professor encourages individuality through art

BY ALYSSA RAPP

*Spectator Staff Writer*

Tara Geer, CC '93, MFA '97, and adjunct assistant professor of visual arts at Columbia, provides sanctuary for the unexplainable image.

Perched on the third floor of Riverside Beer Distributors on 133rd Street across from Fairway her studio looks like a three-dimensional notebook margin, where the texture and line-quality of Geer's thoughts are voiced in charcoal, pencil, and chalk. Four of her works are currently on view at the gallery at The LeRoy Neiman Center for Print Studies.

Having graduated from Columbia for both her bachelor's and then her master's, she noted that her MFA work at Columbia only gave her enough time to understand the problem she had been seeking to solve in her work. A highly skilled drawer, she felt that much of what she wanted to represent was getting edited out and that her concrete drawings did not tackle what interested her more: the things that did not make sense.

When asked whether a formal education in art history benefited her, she acknowledged the comfort that an intellectual degree provided her, yet she denounced art history's tendency to dissect artist's ideas.

Geer's large-scale forms obliquely represent the titles with which they are paired, such as "Horseman, Frayed Sock, and Whale." This ambiguity acknowledges the artist's struggle with representing unexplainable visual information. In fact, Geer stated that in drawing she searches for something that she doesn't "know how to put into words."

While studying both art and art history as an undergraduate, she intended to stray from artistic practice towards a

stable career. Yet ultimately, she did not conform at the expense of her inner artistic voice. Even when working at other occupations, she would find herself following right-brained impulses like gluing buttons on a coffee mug at two o'clock in the morning.

Since those days, Geer has enjoyed success as an artist by spending the last 10 years working in her studio. As one who both practices and teaches art, Geer advocates individuality at all levels. She has taught kindergarteners, advanced students, and even the celebrity director André Gregory.

Currently, she teaches basic drawing at Columbia. According to Geer, the challenge for the beginner drawer is to have confidence and to train the mind to translate visual information into a drawing. In order to quiet anxieties of ability, she will ask her students to create left-handed "blind contour" drawings in which the student draws an object without being allowed to look at the page. When aiding more experienced students, she strives to encourage the success of their individual goals. According to Geer, for the many different types of people in the world, there are equally as many kinds of art. Just as bad public accountants can exist, so, too, can bad artists. Yet, she advocates any artistic practice that brings pleasure to the creator.

Remarking that even the greatest artists fail as they experiment and learn, she said, "The definition of anyone's particularity is that it is not necessarily going to be visible to the outside world." Therefore, she encourages young artists not to back off from their creative drives, and "to honor what they are drawn to."

Practicing her teaching, Geer acts on her visceral reaction to return to drawing, a medium that some might consider the drafting tools for the greater art of painting. For her, however, paper provides that boundless stage upon which she explores her truest artistic representations.



Courtesy of AMC

**MAD BOREDOM** | Despite its mass and critical appeal, AMC's hit show "Mad Men" can't please everyone—it dangles by a thread as a primetime show without a plot.



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My Tale of two cities

BY AMANDA GUTTERMAN

"You can't leave now!" admonished my desk-mate Jan, a secretary at the D.C. law firm where I interned, wagging her bangled wrist at me. She wore a belly-dancing costume, complete with a gold-sequined brassiere, beneath an oversized blazer that made the outfit loosely work-appropriate. College began in less than a week, and everything worth keeping was boxed and ready back at my apartment.

"Why not now?" I asked. My capital hometown wasn't going anywhere, and I was off to bigger and greener (greenish) pastures on the Upper West Side of New York. The answer was simple.

"Because the man's in town!" The man, of course, is Barack Obama. Washingtonians had predicted how he and his cabinet would take the city by storm, invigorating its cultural life and illuminating landmarks like Ben's Chili Bowl, a fast-food spot that played a role in the region's African-American history. These days, we are likely to follow Rahm Emmanuel to his lunch haunt or, like columnist for The Washington Post David Ignatious, peer through barbershop windows in Georgetown to spot FBI chief Robert Mueller getting a trim.

We are newly star-struck by our own brand of celebrity, and are prone to lurking and guerilla photography, kept current with Internet tip-offs. Consider Barack's shirtless shot on the cover of The



Washingtonian, the byline "Our new neighbor is hot!" bolded to the left of his muscular chest. With city pride bolstered by a surge in national attention, we have become tourists in our own town in the best possible ways, with new eyes, ears, and things to do with them.

New York is well accustomed to its celebrities. The city's official recreation of choice has been people-watching almost since its founding, and tourists always hope to glimpse a famous face among the crowds. Media forays like "Gossip Girl" and "NYC Prep" on Bravo market wealthy young citizens—not movie stars or singers—as celebrities, rendering New York fame paradoxically common. In D.C. where the latest craze for faces is fresher, we are just coming into our city's celebrity, rather than overindulging the next generation's appetite for media coverage.

New Yorkers are pickier about tourists, scoffing at fanny-pack-and-all-the-same-T-shirt-wearing flocks that yielded the city \$53 billion in 2008. Sometimes grumpy and often impersonal, the Big Apple has layers of toxic pesticides to wash away before the meat can be enjoyed, hazing periods for newcomers rushing this immense fraternity house. D.C. manners, on the other hand, are small-town, even Southern. A recent "New Yorker" cover poked fun at bus-tour companies promising the quickest yet most encompassing New York experience. Back in D.C., we have red-painted trolleys frequented by middle school kids visiting for the weekend, and old guys who mistake them for the Metro bus. Hop on, hop off!

Our public transportation systems are microcosms of the two cities' patterns of motion. New York's subway system reaches its long fingers deep into the five boroughs, but its joints are rheumatic. The trains can be fickle: late, early, steaming, icy—you may find yourself stuck for a half hour in a metal box that smells like pee. Washington's metro (we call it that), though so small it covers only half of town, is as punctual and neat as a new intern on the Hill. The volatile nature of New York's mass transportation and infrastructure, something like the weather, corners some citizens into fetishized pockets of personal fastidiousness. A native friend of mine, a self-described "neat

freak," frets about the mess in Carman Hall, but finds himself at home in the throng of people swarming across the street. In D.C., we drive gas-guzzling cars and scatter our belongings across wide spaces over grassy lawns, confident that our destiny belongs to ourselves, heartened by the illusion of control. Here, we are at the mercy of the city's random fates and act accordingly, obsessing over our few personal spaces of solace.

There is evidence apart from the statistics and numbers to argue that between the two cities, D.C. is the child and New York the adult. Consider the popular "I Heart NY" T-shirts and the budding market for "I Heart D.C." (which sells best with Obama's face stamped on it, the blue-and-red mural version in the style of Che Guevara). Growing up in D.C., we played in public parks. Here, we study them through the lenses of architecture, city planning, and sociology. Of course, New York was also the original capital of the U.S. until it moved in 1790 to its offspring D.C. to placate the South.

Kids grow up. The MTV series "The Real World" has finally landed upon D.C. after several rounds through New York. The Washingtonian published a series called "Why We Love Living Here." D.C. is the setting of many of the newest bestselling novels and movies like "State of Play"—it's growing, attracting attention, and has a more open and undefined future than self-satisfied New York. But I'm growing up, and I can grow into this city of adults even when "the man" stays back home, as long as I keep the spirit of a newer construction with my eyes open and my future up in the air.

The author is a Columbia College first-year.

West Side Stories is a feature that uses the personal essay to showcase the diverse backgrounds of members of the Columbia and Morningside Heights community. It takes an intimate look at the journeys that have led individuals to this school and city. By drawing upon stories of family, culture, childhood, past travels and adventures, the essays seek to illuminate how people's experiences both influence their relationships to the community and shape the opinions they hold.

ILLUSTRATION BY WENDAN LI

Staff Editorial

Any suggestions, Columbia?

Another semester is well under way, and the tuition payment due date is rapidly approaching. While most of us are putting the finishing touches on our schedules and adjusting to the workload, many of our fellow students are scrambling to find private loans to cover their tuition bills before the Sept. 17 deadline. Those who cannot meet the deadline will have late fees charged to their accounts, exacerbating the problem. While Columbia boasts a generous financial aid program, it should help students who still need loans by keeping an up-to-date list of suggested lenders.

On its Web site, the Student Financial Planning office currently provides all Columbia students with a list of suggested lenders, which includes banks such as Chase, Citibank, and Sallie Mae. But it doesn't take long to realize that obtaining a loan through one of these companies is no easy task. Last year, the suggested lenders list featured the names and Web addresses of approximately 20 companies that offered private loans to college students. This year, however, that list has been shortened significantly—only five companies remain—as many of the smaller lenders are no longer offering private loans. In the midst of a severe economic downturn, and without impeccable credit or a credit-worthy cosigner, those in financial need may find these banks unwilling to finance their tuition.

It is no secret that most lenders consider college students to be

high-risk customers. We accrue overwhelming amounts of debt, and there is no guarantee that a hefty paycheck will be waiting for us after graduation. It is also common knowledge that the economy in general is ailing, and many of the large institutional lenders who once granted education loans are now backing out of the business. We cannot blame Columbia for the problems that exist in the economy at large, but in difficult times like these the school must react to the situation at hand. We cannot expect Student Financial Planning to acquire our loans for us, but they could greatly facilitate this by providing students with a suggested lenders list that is both current and comprehensive. Updating the list will provide a crucial service to students, particularly those who are trying to manage schoolwork while simultaneously attempting to fill out loan applications. After all, if Columbia expects its students to meet the ever-increasing cost of tuition, the school must provide them with the resources to do so. With the 2007 scandal—in which a Columbia financial aid officer was found to be a shareholder in a suggested loan institution—behind us, it is time to look ahead to helping students find loans from willing banks, especially in this time of economic hardship. Columbia currently offers generous grants to a large portion of students on campus, and we hope that it can expand its services to those students who need to borrow.

Core consistency

BY CAITLIN BROWN

On Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2009, 20 fresh faces turned sour in the dusty twilight of Butler Library. Hunched over laptop computers, soaring through bits and bytes and cookies, these first-year students on a mission to impress a certain Literature Humanities professor inevitably found themselves cursing out the stony wrinkles of Alma Mater. I sat among them, an Iliad-literate prep school graduate utterly unprepared for the baffling question professor Zeus had posed for the deliberation of the mere mortals: "Why, then, is Trojan the number-one selling condom brand in the United States? Consider that"—to a smattering of titters—"for class Thursday." As I read the Iliad that night, I sincerely hoped she did not expect a serious response, for the answer, I knew, was not in the stacks.

Across campus, my roommate toiled, engaged in the same sort of preliminary over-preparation for the dreaded first Lit Hum assignment. I assumed, as Lit Hum is the foundation class of the Core Curriculum as well as the uniting literary fodder for discussions in the classroom and the dining hall and the laundry room, that she, too, would be grappling with a similar bizarre task.

I returned, however, to find her hunched over a mangled red saucer sled, crafting a "virtual representation of the shield of Achilles." It was then that I realized the following: although we all read the same texts, the discrepancy among the focal points of sections of Core classes makes for a wholly different learning experience for each class, and, indeed, each individual.

This incongruity among sections of Core classes seems to contradict the reputation of the Core Curriculum as an educational foundation and a common bond. The Core classes, we are told, will be the bank of intellectualism from which we will draw ideas and skills for future classes and life in general. The lectures about Homer and Sophocles are a sort of hazing process, an admittance ritual into "an intellectual community that includes Columbia graduates in different places, different careers, and different generations." This stuff, they tell us, this jumbled syntax, these obscure passages—this is the stuff of Pulitzer-winning novels and drunken cocktail conversations with other alumni down the road. Covering 24 books of Homer's epic in three to four class periods, a professor can only touch on so many things while still engaging each to a reasonable degree of depth. How will I comfortably bond with another Columbia grad over a martini and the Iliad when my Lit Hum professor lectured about Thersites the ugly and hers lectured about the role of hubris?

The myth of the free market



JON HOLLANDER  
REASONABLY RIGHT

the world's largest insurance company—AIG—imploded, and Wall Street's surviving financial institutions were forced to accept massive infusions of government capital in order to forestall a similar fate. In the year that followed, pundits have constantly opined about "America's shaken faith in the capitalist system." At Columbia, Spectator opinion columnists Kate Redburn and Sarah Leonard boldly announced, "Never have conservatives' odes to market forces seemed more delusional than now, as the market's unregulated force sweeps the country into a historic recession." These kinds of statements serve as damning assessments of free market ideology and its consequences. If only they were true.

In reality, the factors that contributed to the financial crisis were far more complex and varied than a simple overzealous adherence to free market principles. If we take a serious look at how the American economy functions—especially the housing market—true economic freedom becomes difficult to find.

In order to understand why the collapse of the housing market had such devastating effects on the American economy, we first need to understand real estate's important place in the economic system. Houses are the largest

assets and account for most of the net worth of the vast majority of American families. As a result, price increases in the housing market can lead to substantial economic growth. In the aftermath of Sept. 11, the Federal Reserve was desperate to kick-start the economy and understood the potential impact that a strong housing market could have on America's short-term economic performance. In order to achieve this goal, the Fed had to stimulate demand, and the best way to do so was to keep interest rates low, which would, in turn, make mortgages cheaper. So, for almost three years, the Fed kept its benchmark rate below 2 percent, which was extremely low by historical standards—this ignited the housing market.

At this point, we need to take a step back and ask ourselves if the massive bubble in housing prices was caused by an unchecked free market or by a government policy blunder. If we think of the housing market under noninterventionist circumstances as a simple campfire, rising and falling moderately in accordance with natural changes in the environment, the Fed's decision to cut interest rates so dramatically was the equivalent of pouring in gasoline, causing the fire to explode and burn down the entire forest. The move to cut interest rates was taken by a government body under political pressure to get the economy out of a recession quickly before the 2004 election. Moreover, anyone who is knowledgeable about the crisis will tell you that the housing bubble was the cause of our problems today. Thus, having just illustrated that the massive appreciation in prices was directly caused by the Fed's interest rate policy, it becomes increasingly difficult to blame a nonexistent free market for our current troubles.

To be fair, the Fed's decision to lower interest rates is only a part of the story, albeit a large part. Subprime mortgages were what

ultimately killed Lehman and AIG and served as the immediate instigator of the crisis of 2008. Although most people use the logic that a lack of government regulation led to the development of these instruments, that view is woefully shortsighted. One of the fundamental principles of economics is that people respond to incentives, and the Fed-induced housing bubble created a massive incentive for banks and mortgage lenders to create exotic securities backed by bad loans. Wall Street saw a tremendous appreciation in housing prices and therefore crafted financial instruments to profit from the situation. Yes, the banks were myopic and failed to recognize the systemic risks posed by their actions, but those actions would have never occurred had it not been for government intervention in the housing market.

The point that I am trying to make is not that we should abolish the Fed, go back to the gold standard, and live in some anarcho-capitalist society with no government. Rather, my argument is that the seeds of the financial crisis were sown by a government-induced housing bubble, and to blame the situation on the free market is to miss the point entirely. Laissez-faire capitalism has become vilified by people who are trying to push a political agenda, and oftentimes, they simply don't understand what they're talking about. If America comes out of this crisis thinking only that the free market needs to be "regulated," then we are destined to be not just a nation of low growth and diminished opportunity, but one that is only a single policy blunder away from yet another economic catastrophe.

Jon Hollander is a Columbia College senior majoring in economics. He is the director of intergroup affairs for the Columbia University College Republicans. Reasonably Right runs alternate Wednesdays. opinion@columbiaspectator.com

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**Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle**

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Nichols Lewis

**ACROSS**

1 Colored part of the eye

5 Phonograph records

10 Become overly dry, as lips

14 John Wesley's relig.

15 Love to pieces

16 Country byway

17 Arizona city

18 Fenway Park team, briefly

19 Condo or apartment, e.g.

20 Really exhausted

23 "Nevermore" bird of poetry

24 Honey maker

25 "... and so on": Abbr.

27 11-point blackjack card, at times

28 Really exhausted

33 Copier paper size: Abbr.

34 Creole vegetable

35 Mil. school at Annapolis

36 Really exhausted

40 Blassom cousin

43 Big-screen movie format

44 Observed

47 Really exhausted

51 Mentalist Geller

52 Sandwich initials

53 Cereal grain

54 Concrete-reinforcing rod

56 Really exhausted

61 Ali who stole from thieves

62 Broom rider of the comics

63 With 66-Across, roadside stop

64 Finds in mines

65 King of rock 'n' roll

66 See 63-Across

67 Silkoon radio station

68 Gumslinger's "hands up!"

69 Afternoon TV fare

**DOWN**

1 Unethical

2 Bring to life again, as a Civil War battle

3 Romance-ending words

4 1953 Alan Ladd Western

5 Pats gently

6 Object of worship

7 Sammy in the 600 Home Run Club

8 Singing Bing

9 Moderate-sized chamber group

10 Board game with suspects

11 Closet assortment

12 Jennifer of "Friends"

13 House cat, e.g.

21 Bankrupt energy company

22 July-August sign

26 Tax-season advisor, briefly

29 ... out: barely obtain

30 Flight board datum: Abbr.

31 Camp for presidents

32 Faulty firecracker

36 Response to a mouse?

37 Latin 101 verb

38 Sigma follower

39 Additional

40 Horse player's hangout, for short

41 Defensive wall

42 Halloween month

44 Really cold, temperaturewise

45 Shrunken Asian lake

46 Furtive listening device

48 Extensive period

49 Preferably

50 Star, in France

55 Poet Pound and others

57 Hoarse sound

58 Edison's middle name

59 Banking regulatory agcy.

60 Diaper problem

61 Gift decoration

**ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:**

DEBRA	NIHIL	ISM
USUAL	OZONE	TEA
DANGER	MOUSE	OLD
SIDEROADS	WOLFE	
TRY	ECARD	
WILLY	DOUMARR	YME
RANDY	PARD	OAR
VCRS	SCENT	RUNT
EKE	KOLN	TASSE
ROBINSON	CRUSOE	
USEAS	HER	
TITLE	ELAINEMAY	
ANT	LOST	INSPACE
RCA	ENIDS	TILTS
PAL	DENSE	OCTET

[xwordeditor@aol.com](mailto:xwordeditor@aol.com) 09/16/09

By Michael Blake  
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# Yahr’s two goals lead Lions to 3-1 victory

FROM SOCCER from page 7

’89 scored 23 goals in her playing days, while Tosh Forde ’98 holds the record with 30 goals. The Lions maintained their 1-0 lead over the Gaels (1-6-1) until the 47th minute, when senior forward Stephanie Sommers found the back of the net. Senior forward Mariel Pepe was credited with the assist. Sophomore forward Ashlin Yahr gave Columbia the lead

for good with a header in the 60th minute, her first goal of the season. Hostetler notched her second assist of the night with a free kick that set up Yahr’s tally. Just four minutes later, Yahr found the back of the net for a second time. She was assisted by senior defender Meggie Ford and sophomore forward Marissa Schultz. The Lions continue non-conference play on Sept. 18 against Hofstra. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m. in Hempstead, N.Y.

# Light Blue unable to maintain momentum

FROM VOLLEYBALL from page 7

the Light Blue with a team-best 11 kills and a match-high four blocks, while senior Ellie Thomas posted an impressive 27 digs. Despite the defeat, Columbia did have a 6-2 team advantage over NJIT in team blocks. Columbia freshman Megan

Gaughn, who for the first time in Columbia volleyball program history was named both Ivy League Player and Rookie of the Week for the same week on Tuesday, had two block assists for the Lions in addition to 13 digs and eight kills. The Lions return to their home court on Friday to kick off the Columbia Classic.

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**September 25, 2009**  
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## Comebacks: The ultimate fan vacuum



KUNAL GUPTA

### MOVING THE CHAINS

For two weeks in early September, the U.S. Open takes over New York City. This is the largest annually attended sporting event in the world—drawing over 700,000 fans each year and dominating the headlines of local papers. For that fortnight, tennis is king. This year, no storyline gathered more national attention than that of 17-year old Melanie Oudin, who reached the quarterfinals of the U.S. Open and took the entire sports world by storm. Sure, there were other storylines like world No. 1 Roger Federer chasing his record 16th major as well as his sixth consecutive U.S. Open title, and Kim Clijsters winning only 18 months after giving birth to her first child. Those stories, along with many others, took a backseat to the feisty teen from Marietta, Ga. who, even in defeat, became the darling of the U.S. Open.

Oudin, who came into the tournament ranked No. 70 in the world, knocked off three seeded Russian women, including world no. 4 Elena Dementieva and no. 29 Maria Sharapova. Oudin, listed generously at 5'6" and 130 pounds, is a defensive counter puncher with world-class footwork and a deadly forehand. As an undersized player, Oudin can often be pushed around the court by bigger hitters on the women's tour. Because of this, she is forced to rely on her defense, footwork, and accuracy rather than sheer pace to hang with the world's best. However, all of her skills with a tennis racket in her hand are dwarfed by what is surely her biggest weapon on court: her undeniable desire to win.

Many athletes play afraid to win, hoping instead that their opponents will simply hand them victory if the score is close. When the stage is biggest and the lights are brightest, many shy away from the opportunity. Not Oudin.

She summed up her attitude at a press conference midway through the tournament, stating "I'm not giving up at all. So they're going to have to if they're going to beat me, they're going to beat me, because I'm not going anywhere."

But what can we mere mortals take out of Oudin's enthralling run? Simply put, Oudin played the game the way that every athlete and team should.

Almost all of the teams here at Columbia will find themselves as underdogs at some point during their season, whether it's in the Ivy League or nonconference portion of their schedule. Sometimes they will be heavy underdogs. Just this fall, both the men's and women's soccer teams have played opponents ranked firmly within the top 20 in the nation. In the past two years, the men's basketball team has played national title contenders Ohio State and Duke.

What separated Oudin from the rest of her peers, and endeared her more than anyone else to the New York City crowd, was her grit and determination that she showed in the face of adversity. It was how she steeled her nerves at the biggest moments in the match and celebrated big points with shouts of "Come on!"

The fans in the stands found someone new to cheer for during the U.S. Open and there is no reason that the Columbia community can't do the same this season. Any team on campus could find itself with a new legion of fans if it managed to upset a few higher-ranked foes and display an energy irresistible to the campus.

Take the football team for example, which opens its season on Saturday against local rival Fordham. While the Lions might not possess as much firepower or raw talent as teams such as Harvard and Penn, they should boast an improved offensive attack and a ferocious defense led by one of the league's best players in junior Alex Gross. If the Lions can notch one or two big wins during Ivy play, there is no reason that they could not garner the crowd support and campus energy that they have lacked in recent years.

Ultimately Oudin's run, like almost all other feel-good stories, came to a teary end when Oudin was beaten in the quarterfinals by eventual finalist No. 9 Caroline Wozniacki. Odds are, the Columbia football team will not be hoisting the Ivy League trophy on Nov. 21. A step in the right direction, however, would leave the Lions with the same thing that Oudin left with: a following of fans who were willing to cheer her on in good times and bad.

Melanie Oudin, more than anything, should serve as a reminder that in sports, attitude is everything.

*The author is a junior in the School of Engineering and Applied Science, majoring in operations research.*  
sports@columbiaspectator.com

## Summer-ball reveals signs of improvment

BY MICHAEL SHAPIRO  
*Spectator Staff Writer*

Last season, the Columbia baseball team's quest for back-to-back Ivy titles was cut short due to an injury-stricken lineup. So for the past few months, the Light Blue has kept busy with 13 Lions competing in various summer leagues. Among the baker's dozen were junior Nick Cox and sophomores Jon Eisen and Pat Lowery. If the summerball results are at all indicative of the upcoming season, then the Light Blue have reason to be optimistic.

Outfielder Nick Cox performed well with the Mat-Su Miners in Palmer, Alaska, batting .293 with 39 hits in 41 games. Cox, who hit an admirable .290 in 2009, totaled 20 RBI with a .392 on-base percentage and 27 runs scored during the summer. Cox ranked atop several offensive categories for the Miners and contributed to the team winning its six-team division with an overall record of 31-17.

Junior Roger Aquino took the mound but stayed a little closer to home by pitching for the Allegany County Nitros of the New York Collegiate Baseball League. Aquino was the Nitros' No. 1 pitcher, leading the squad in ERA (2.27) and innings pitched (35.2). Additionally, Aquino threw two complete games in four starts and snagged 27 strikeouts while only surrendering 24 hits. These impressive stats are a sign of improvement for Aquino, who struggled with a 6.64 ERA and 1-3 record last season.

"Last year wasn't my strongest and this summer was a big-time help because it basically solidified that I was going to be doing better this upcoming season," Aquino said.

Jon Eisen also experience success this summer playing alongside teammate Pat Lowery for the Monmouth Monarchs in New Jersey's Atlantic Baseball Confederation Collegiate League.

"I would say the competition level was below



Courtesy of Columbia Athletics

**SUMMER-BALL** | Nick Cox (top left), Roger Aquino (top right), Jon Eisen (bottom left), Harrison Slutsky (bottom left).

that of the Ivy League," Eisen explained. "We don't play as many games in the ABCCL, but I was one of the only guys on the team who was able to start every game so I was really able to get my reps in and get better for the season."

Eisen, who had the second-best batting average for the Lions in 2009 at .331, hit .320 for the Monarchs in 122 at-bats. Eisen's league-leading 39 hits, 28 runs scored, and 21 stolen bases earned him the opportunity to play in the ABC-CL All-Star Game. While Eisen posted outstanding offensive numbers, he focused on improving his fielding as well.

"One thing I really wanted to work on this summer was my defense," Eisen said. "The ability to play second base every game and really work on getting better in the field was probably the most important thing I got out of the summer."

And his hard work at second paid off as he recorded a much-improved .954 fielding percentage with only six errors this summer after finishing last season with a .936 fielding percentage and committing 12 errors.

Pitcher Pat Lowery joined Eisen on the Monarchs and fanned 30 batters over his 36 innings on the mound. Lowery went 4-3 in his nine appearances with a 5.25 ERA and a 1.6 WHIP.

Sophomore reliever Harrison Slutsky proved to be a valuable asset for the Staunton Braves in Virginia's Valley Baseball League. Slutsky helped carry the Braves to the league's playoffs with 20 strikeouts over 36.2 innings of work and a 2.70 ERA. Slutsky, who went 2-2 with a 6.57 ERA last season, was more consistent this summer than he was with the Lions this past season.

Zach Epstein, Brain Valero, Mark Heil, Anthony Potter, Billy Rumpke, and Kevin Roberts also participated in summer leagues to refine their games before the start of the Ivy League play.

When Lions kick off the 2010 season this March, all eyes will be looking for signs of improvement.

## Women's soccer evens record at 2-2 after win over Iona

BY SARAH SOMMER  
*Spectator Senior Staff Writer*

The Columbia women's soccer team evened its record on Tuesday night with a 3-1 win over Iona. The Lions (2-2-0) have now won two consecutive games after opening the season with losses to Washington and Portland. On Friday night, Columbia beat Manhattan by a score of 4-0.

The Lions' success this season has largely depended on their offense. Columbia has found the back of the net seven times since being shut out by Washington and scoring only once against Portland. Senior forward Sophie Reiser struck in the



IONA	1
COLUMBIA	3

25th minute to give the Lions their first goal on Tuesday night. After a shot by junior defender Kelly Hostetler bounced off the crossbar, Reiser got the rebound and found the back of the net.

Reiser leads Columbia with four goals this year, three of which came against Manhattan. She has found the back of the net a total of 23 times for the Lions. Reiser's most recent tally moves her into a tie for third place all-time in career goals at Columbia. Kristin Friedholm



Jasper Clyatt for Spectator

**SEE SOCCER, page 6**

**PAVING THE PATH** | Senior forward Sophie Reiser scored her team-best fourth goal of the season to put the Lions ahead 1-0. The game was tied entering the second half, but sophomore forward Ashlin Yahr broke the game open with two goals.

## CU Volleyball vanquished by NJIT in three-set match

BY SARA SALZBANK  
*Spectator Staff Writer*

The Columbia women's volleyball team (4-4) fell to New Jersey Institute of Technology (9-2) on Tuesday night, 3-0. The Highlanders took the three-set match easily, defeating the Lions 25-18, 25-18, and 25-20.

NJIT came out strong at the start of game one. Up 3-2, the Highlanders went on a five point run and never looked back. NJIT's Renata Pandolfo, who posted a double-double in the win with a match-best 12 kills and 12 digs, had six kills in the game.

In game two it was the Light Blue that took the lead, 5-1. But NJIT recovered quickly and, with the score at 9-7, held on to the lead for good.

The third set was the closest contest of the night. Down 14-9, it seemed that



COLUMBIA	0
NJIT	3

the Lions would lose the match, but they rallied and tied it up at 17. Columbia couldn't maintain the momentum, however, when an attack error and an ace by NJIT junior Baaba Hughes sparked a match-clinching 8-3 Highlander run.

Pandolfo and Erica Schultz, who also posted a double-double in the match with 34 assists and 11 digs, led the Highlanders to victory. Sophomore Monique Roberts led



Haley Vechiarelli / Senior staff photographer

**TOUGH LOSS IN JERSEY** | After finishing 3-1 at the Columbia Invitation, the Light Blue were swept in a three-set match against NJIT on Tuesday. As a result of the painful loss, the Lions' record drops to an even 4-4 on the season.

**SEE VOLLEYBALL, page 6**



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Please note that the schedule is subject to change and more events may be added. Further details and updates may be found on the World Leaders Forum Web site [www.worldleaders.columbia.edu](http://www.worldleaders.columbia.edu).

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