

‘PASSPORT’ STAMP



CHRISTINA PHAN FOR SPECTATOR

WORLD MUSIC | Above, a band performs in Roone Arledge Auditorium this weekend as part of Passport to Columbia, an annual event featuring a variety of international dance styles and foods courtesy of University student groups. See page 6.

Drylands Initiative brainstorms solutions for arid countries

BY SAVANNAH FLETCHER
AND AMANDA STIBEL
Columbia Daily Spectator

Leaders from East Africa had a rare opportunity to meet in the same room Monday, where they collaborated to discuss the challenges of the East African drylands.

World
Leaders
Forum

The event was part of this year’s World Leaders Forum, and helped spotlight the Earth Institute’s new Drylands Initiative. Launched in July, the program aims to help develop arid regions of Djibouti, Uganda, Somalia, Kenya, Southern Sudan, and Ethiopia, and they hope to one day expand into Eritrea. These areas all have an average annual rainfall of less than 650 mm, and are plagued by water scarcity.



SERENA PIOL FOR SPECTATOR

ARID | East African leaders gathered at the World Leaders Forum on Monday night to talk about the water crisis in their countries. Columbia recently launched a Drylands Initiative to help.

“In 20 years the country will run out of fresh water,” Moussa Mohamed Omar, Ambassador of Djibouti, told the audience. The evening was also about challenging widely held ideas

about drylands. “People need to set aside the common misconception that drylands are wastelands,” said Belay Begashaw, from the Earth Institute.

Now the countries involved in the Drylands Initiative are turning their focus to water sustainability and creating

SEE DRYLANDS, page 2

M’side Heights may finally have its own historic district

Locals, preservation committee argue district boundaries

BY SARAH DARVILLE,
JAKE DAVIDSON,
AND PATRICK WOOLSEY
Columbia Daily Spectator

Morningside Heights may be on its way to having its own historic district, and local residents want it stretching as far as possible.

The fight to officially landmark a large chunk of Morningside Heights has been a series of fits and starts since 1996, and the plans have never yet made it past the initial stage. Now, the plans are finally making some progress. The historic status would protect the area from modern changes to existing buildings, something that many say is necessary to preserve the architectural spirit of the neighborhood.

At a public meeting on Monday night, officials from the city’s Landmarks Preservation Commission said that they agreed and wanted to move forward—though audience members questioned many of the plan’s details.

The district’s proposed boundaries run from 110th Street to 119th Street along Riverside Drive. It would have an uneven eastern boundary that only reaches Broadway at two points, 116th Street and 110th Street. The majority of the district would end mid-block between Riverside and Broadway—something local Judy Thomas described as “gerrymandering.”

To the surprise of many expecting a “not in my backyard” fight, the controversy seemed to concentrate on expanding the proposed district, not limiting it.

But residents disagreed on which parts of the neighborhood should be included. The district didn’t include any buildings on Broadway or the blocks between Broadway and Morningside Drive, and at least a dozen locals consider this to be a glaring omission.

“Some of the hallmarks of the neighborhood are east of this district, the defining buildings,”

SEE HISTORIC, page 2



ANDRA MIHALI / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

BOUNDARIES | Locals debated turning parts of Morningside Heights into a historic district Monday evening.

Local newsstand owners face competition, recession woes

BY HIEN TRUONG
Spectator Staff Writer

To some, Sher Singh, a 79-year-old newsstand owner on 116th Street between Claremont and Broadway, is a rogue in the neighborhood.

Rose Parmar, a longtime newsstand owner across the street on the southwest corner of 116th and Broadway, says she’s lost business due to Singh’s new operation.

But despite continued neighborhood opposition against “the rogue kiosk” who opened in the spring, Singh said in a recent interview that he loves the neighborhood and is not going anywhere.

Last April, both the NYC Department of Transportation and the Department of Consumer Affairs approved Singh’s request for a license despite previous resolutions by Community Board 9 opposing the newsstand—which some local residents felt unfairly threatened Parmar.

Despite her customers remaining loyal, Parmar said recently that her sales have decreased in the past few months

SEE NEWSSTAND, page 2



EMBRY OWEN / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

COMING UP ROSES | Longtime newsstand owner Rose Parmar is still competing with Sher Singh’s “rogue kiosk” just around the corner. Parmar says she has lost business to the other stand.

A&E, PAGE 3

Professor gives gallery a fresh coat of creativity

School of the Arts professor Sarah Sze’s installation at the Tanya Bonkard Gallery turns the space into a fantastical, intricate web of everyday objects and materials.



OPINION, PAGE 4

Going viral

Aarti Iyer wants us to seize the keys to instant fame.

SPORTS, PAGE 8

Experienced defense leads young Lions team

The Light Blue defense held strong for most of the game in a 16-9 loss to Fordham. The defense, with seven senior starters, is one of the most experienced groups in the Ivy League.

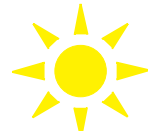
EVENTS

Dog Days

A scientific look at man’s best friend. What’s really going on in Fido’s mind? *Event Oval, The Diana, 6 p.m.*

WEATHER

Today



73 °/ 60 °

Tomorrow



88 °/ 66 °



ANDRA MIHALI / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

LANDMARK | At a meeting Monday night, locals debated with preservationists about what parts of Morningside Heights should be ruled historic. The proposal has not advanced past its first phase.

Locals debate boundaries for possible Morningside Heights landmark status

HISTORIC from front page

said Michael Gotkin, who lives on 104th Street.

Officials disagreed, and maintained that many of the buildings on Broadway are either new or damaged. The street doesn't have the "sense of place" that the rest of the neighborhood does, they argued.

Community members pushing for the inclusion of buildings along Morningside Drive said that the proposal overlooks the "heights" that give the neighborhood its name—the cliffs of Morningside Park.

"Morningside Drive, that promenade along the park, has just as much of a sense of place as Riverside Drive," said Brad Taylor, a Community Board 9 member who lives along Morningside.

Columbia demolished three brownstones on 114th Street between Amsterdam and Morningside Drive over the summer, which residents said underscored the importance of including those blocks in the historic district. But while many seemed eager to use the district to curtail Columbia's

development, LPC officials made it clear that this was not their agenda.

"We wouldn't just include vacant lots [in the district boundaries] just to stop development," said Kate Daly, executive director of the LPC. She was quick to say that the research staff was

"I'm concerned about the process. I think what's lacking is sitting down with the players and deciding on boundaries."

—Walter South, CB9 member

solely responsible for the boundaries, not any negotiations with Columbia. Though the LPC never considered including Columbia's campus in its historic boundaries, Daly said that 43 of the 63 buildings included in

the potential district are owned by the University, a reflection of Columbia's huge real estate presence in the area.

Still, historic districts aren't universally popular because they dramatically increase the bureaucracy for owners of protected buildings. Any change that a property owner wants to make beyond basic maintenance needs a separate approval from the LPC, including acts as simple as changing the paint color on a front door.

Some were left unconvinced that the commission was being completely transparent. "I'm concerned about the process. I think what's lacking is sitting down with the players and deciding on the boundaries, rather than the Landmarks Preservation Committee coming in with a presentation," said CB9 member Walter South. Daly promised that researchers will be sent out to the properties residents asked to be included, and that more meetings will be convened.

"We have a lot ahead of us," Daly said.

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Speakers describe water crisis in drylands

DRYLANDS from front page

infrastructure to further develop the region.

The African representatives stressed that water is the critical element in making the initiative successful. While the event stressed the troubles of these arid areas, speakers also offered possible solutions. In the region of Karamoja, Uganda, damming

rivers and underground tapping could help ease their water scarcity.

Through the creation of water sustainability, sound infrastructure, and better communication among neighboring countries, the Drylands Initiative could help to create functioning economies in currently failing ecosystems.

As Abukar Addow Arman,

Somalia's Special Envoy to the U.S. said, "Failure is not permanent."

For some audience members, the evening highlighted a problem that is sometimes ignored.

"It was really interesting, it brought a huge issue I didn't know much about to light," Hannah McLaine, GS, said.

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Residents square off over competing newsstands

NEWSSTAND from front page

as a result of competition from Singh's newsstand just across the street, as well as the slow economy and the rising cost of goods like cigarettes.

"Now it's 10 to 20 percent less business, but later on, I don't know," she said.

Just across 116th Street, Singh's newsstand is similarly not pulling in the revenues he hoped it would. "The community is not buying," he said. "But we have to wait, we just have to wait."

Singh said his business was struggling during the summer months due to low traffic, but he said hopes that sales will pick up now that students have returned to campus.

Singh admitted that setting up his stand on a residential street was not a smart business move, but he stressed that it allows him to remain in the neighborhood. Of Parmar's newsstand across the street, he said he is not in competition with anyone and is simply trying to do his job.

"Everyone has to earn a living somehow," Singh said. "We are ready to do the jobs, but what jobs can we do? [Selling] something is better than nothing."

Opposition against Singh surfaced in the spring with many residents and long-time patrons insisting that they would remain loyal to Parmar's 22-year-old stand in front of Ollie's Noodle Shop.

"I think we have been well-served by the newsstands that were already there," said Theodore Kovaleff, secretary of Community Board 9. "We could have a newsstand at all four corners of the intersection and none of them would be profitable."

According to Abigail Lootens, spokesperson for the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs, "The application is reviewed by DOT [Department of Transportation] and the Design Commission, which includes a public hearing. If the newsstand gets DOT and Design Commission approvals, DCA must, by law, issue a license." The community boards are involved in the review process, she added, but only have advisory power.

According to a spokesman from the office of Assembly member Daniel O'Donnell—who wrote a letter to DCA last spring inquiring about the approval process—once the newsstand meets DOT requirements, DCA cannot take the presence of nearby newsstands into consideration. O'Donnell spoke with DCA Commissioner Jonathan Mintz by telephone about a need to change the current procedure to incorporate community input.

Officials from DOT could not be reached for comment.

Morningside Heights resident and former state Assembly

member Edward Sullivan said that system just doesn't make sense. "The community board only has advisory power because you don't want a community board to be able to block the services to a city at large. But this is so clearly within the jurisdiction of the community," Sullivan said. "A change in the law would say, if the community board disagrees [with DOT or DCA], there should be a second review process."

The community opposition remains a mystery to Singh. "Everything is legal here. Are we hurting anyone? We are not doing any harm to the community here. We are serving papers and sodas and snacks," he said.

Madeleine Tramm, a Morningside resident of more than 50 years and activist behind last spring's "Stop the Rogue Kiosk" petition, said she is surprised Singh is still in business today.

"People [in the community] are discouraged. What can we do? We've written to the officials and they haven't responded," Tramm said.

She said there were talks of a boycott, but that residents ultimately deemed it unnecessary. "It would only draw attention to the stand," she said. "Whatever we have done is just in limbo at this point."

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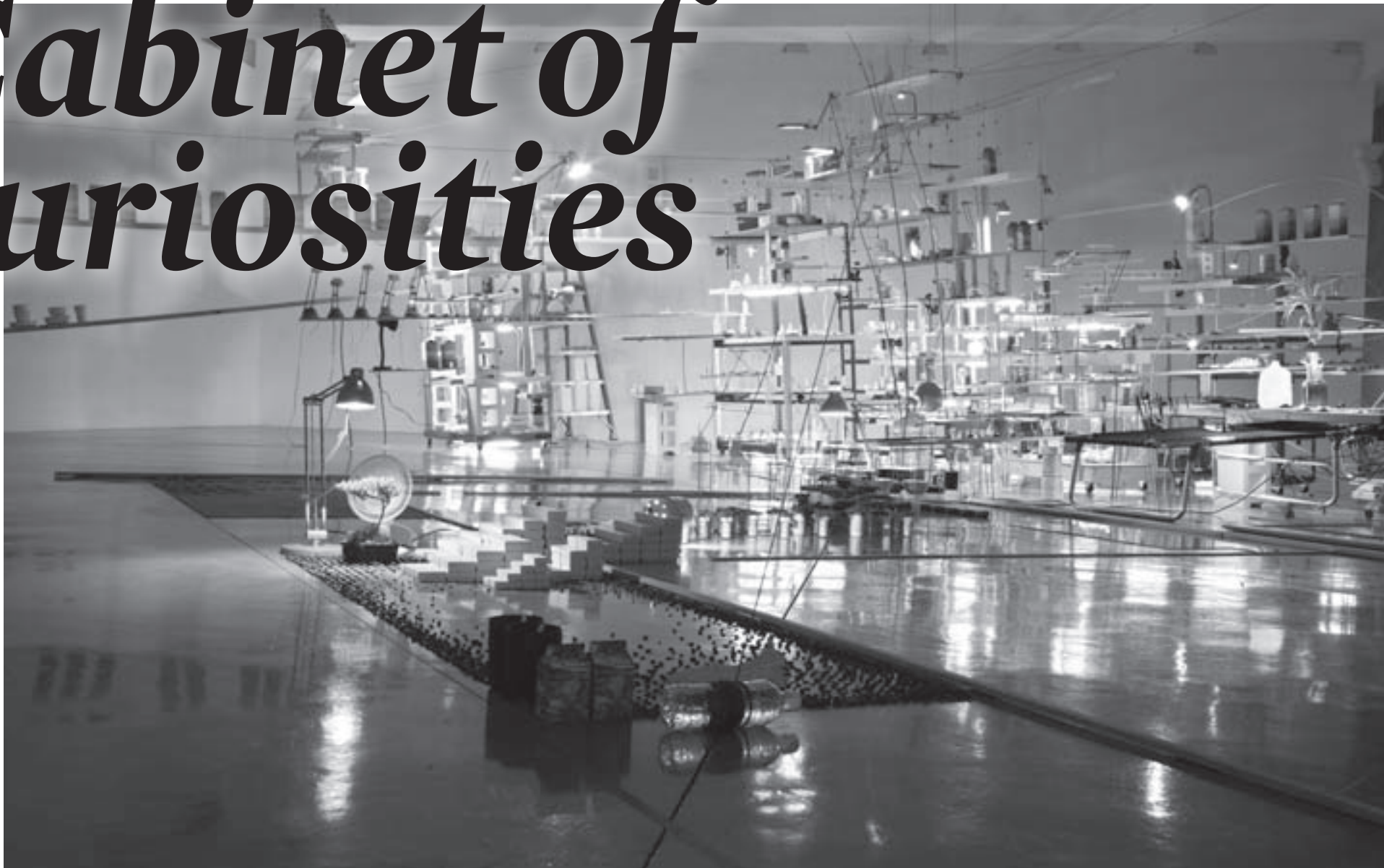
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EMBRY OWEN / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

CONCESSIONS | Sher Singh, who runs the newsstand on 116th Street between Claremont and Broadway, is staying put at his preferred location, despite opposition from certain neighbors.

Cabinet of curiosities



COURTESY OF EMILY RUOTOLO

ORDINARY TO EXTRAORDINARY | School of the Arts Professor Sarah Sze’s installation at Tanya Bonkadar Gallery is a complex tangle of household items that consumes the space.

Professor spins everyday items into an intricate artistic web

BY FRANCES CORRY
Spectator Staff Writer

Sarah Sze doesn’t believe in minimalism. Or if she does, it has no place in her most recent installation, which opened last Thursday at the Tanya Bonkadar Gallery in Chelsea. Sze, a Columbia School of the Arts professor currently on sabbatical, constructs pieces that appear as intricate, gravity-defying cabinets of curiosities.

Her four pieces, each filling its respective gallery room with hundreds of strange and connected items, layer plain objects with altered ones, strings with electric cords, and wooden shelves with construction tools. Each piece emanates outward—its tentacles of wires or blue

painter’s tape precariously connected to the ceiling, floor, and walls—like Sze’s personalized version of the Big Bang.

Indeed, these pieces seem like entire worlds unto themselves. Sze deals with nature in various ways, from repeating bits of moss and bowls of water to mechanically recreating the elements, like a small fan providing a breeze or a construction-style light shining, sun-like, from above. She also references the artistic process, particularly the building style of her own work, with hammers, ladders, and other heavy-duty materials. Paint and ink bottles sit in orderly rows, some of them completely covered in either gallery-white or black paint, while others are left in their original containers.

While a litany of references and meanings can be extracted from her work about the conundrum

of art as life, institutional critique, religion, and the existence of God, it manages to maintain an air of simple pleasure. Visitors can’t help but enjoy the effortless wonder of a piece so intricate and intelligent, a piece endlessly fascinating from every perspective.

Part of the fun of looking at these pieces lies in the observation of others’ examinations and reactions. At the opening of the installation, artsy-looking “security guards” carefully extracted people who came too close to one of the delicate strings or precariously placed objects. One couldn’t help but feel a little like an admiring bull in an entirely strange china shop, waiting for some other animal on its third beer to knock into a piece and send the whole object tumbling down. (Luckily, this didn’t happen.)

Sze’s art in this context gives an intimate view of an established and lauded artist, whose works are housed in some of the most famous modern and contemporary museums in the world. Her status as one of today’s important artists is a rightful claim. Sze’s work can be looked at in the manner in which one might look at a Van Gogh, or any other master of composition and texture. There is the sheer beauty of the image as a whole, but upon a closer look, individual elements such as a brush stroke or small object give the piece a complex depth.

Yet, most of all, Sze is an expert at taking ordinary objects and recontextualizing them—that is, she takes everyday objects and creates something far more beautiful and spectacular than the world in which we usually see them.

Dining hall success is all in the timing

BY HARRY FLAGER
Columbia Daily Spectator

With the revamped dining system in full swing, the simple task of grabbing lunch presents a new challenge for Columbians accustomed to having one main dining hall. For students seeking to develop a new meal routine, there are a few strategies for beating the monster that is the Columbia Dining Plan.

Sensible students, no matter how hungry, should never under any circumstance go to JJ’s Place right when it opens. It is a throng of epic proportions. A few dozen students eagerly line up just before 8 p.m., and once the doors open and everyone rushes in, the small serving area becomes a mosh pit overflowing with soggy fries and lukewarm cheeseburgers. In fact, all three dining halls can reach this level of mayhem.

The calmer hours at JJ’s are from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m., but by then, it’s likely that the food will be cold and hardly worth the \$12.50 price tag. Students desperate enough for a late-night milkshake should just walk the few blocks to Tom’s, since it’s probably just as efficient as braving the lines at JJ’s.

John Jay is also a hazard zone. Perpetually filled with first-years eager to use one of their umpteen weekly meals, the dining hall and kitchen are packed during peak lunch and dinner hours. There are two safe options—go at an unusual time, like 11 a.m. for brunch or 5 p.m. for an early dinner, or make use of the Eco To-Go program and fill a reusable plastic container with food before heading for the door.

The food isn’t quintessential lackluster dining hall fare, but a visit to John Jay is certainly quicker than the time it would take to make something equivalent in a dorm kitchen. The



COURTESY OF REBECCA CASTILLO

WINE AND DINE | At this weekend’s “Eating Locally, Thinking Globally” event, hosted by Columbia College Women, attendees mingle at Mae Mae Café.

CCW mixes food-industry business with culinary pleasure

BY ALLISON MALECHA
Spectator Staff Writer

Columbia College Women proves that post-graduation gatherings need not be restricted to class reunions at five-year intervals. On Sunday, a hodgepodge of Columbia men and women from the classes of ’77 through ’09 attended a more organic gathering at Hudson Square’s Mae Mae Café for the CCW event “Eating Locally, Thinking Globally.”

As expected, Mae Mae had the feel of an academic’s favorite nook—cozy dark wood, shelves filled with leather-bound books and bottles of red wine, and oddities like an inflated, Alice-in-Wonderland-sized, red lamp shade. A circular wrap-around bar was covered with stemware for the sparkling cider and the three Long Island wines, paired with the tasting menu of zucchini fritters, fried cod, beet with whipped blue cheese, and—the standout—mini apple tarts. The event’s \$75 price tag may have been beyond the means of many students, but if the food was any indication, the money was put to good use. The goody bags, filled with everything from a Tarte

lipstick to the book “Food Politics,” weren’t too shabby either.

CCW, committed to keeping Columbia women involved and connected since the school went co-ed in the ’80s, sponsors at least one big event every fall. On Sunday, most of the event’s approximately 30 attendees were CCW event veterans. A few came in small groups, but there was plenty of new mingling involved. The event’s casual four-speaker agenda left plenty of time in between to chat and snack.

Regular college conversation fodder—from “what was your major?” to “ooh, I love your skirt”—was still heard all around, but was interspersed with more serious topics related to the food industry. Ellen Gustafson, CC ’02, executive director and co-founder of the FEED Foundation, talked passionately on and off the mic about hunger and obesity being connected by malnourishment. Buying one of her FEED tote bags includes a donation for a starving child’s school lunch—FEED’s current tally is 56 million meals.

On the “Eating Local” topic, program manager at Slow Food USA Jerusha Klemperer, SOA ’00, said, “I don’t care what the environmental impacts are, that’s still up for debate. Eating

local is about community, about building a local economy, about health, and taste.” It was an atypical local foods spiel, but a logical one.

She continued, “I’m not eating this because it’s lowering my carbon footprint. I’m eating it because it’s freaking delicious.”

Somewhat soggy fritters aside, the afternoon’s food spoke well to Klemperer’s statement. Most of the ingredients were raised at Katchkie Farm, a 60-acre, certified, organic operation upstate. Great Performances Catering—whose CEO is Liz Neumark, BC ’77, another speaker at the event—owns both Katchkie Farm and Mae Mae.

Although the event’s focus was food consciousness, socializing was the real key of the afternoon. Chair of CCW Claire Shanley, CC ’92, spread the word like any socially smart campus organization would—“We pelted emails out... Jerusha Tweeted about it.”

Cathleen Price, CC ’92, said of CCW events, “Some people use them for networking, other people use them to get out of the house.” Either way, seeing a room full of smartly dressed, happily chatting alums sipping chilled wine on a Sunday afternoon gives the impression that the real world post-Columbia isn’t so bad.

SEE DINING, page 6

⌚ “Beating the monster”		
PLACE	GOOD FOR	AT
FERRIS BOOTH	<i>Weekday meals at unusual times</i>	11 a.m.
JOHN JAY	<i>Late lunch or early dinner</i>	1-6 p.m.
JJ’S PLACE	<i>Late night snacks</i>	9 p.m. to 1 a.m.



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The game theory of college rankings

Columbia’s impressive performance in this year’s US News and World Report college rankings was met with a sense of relief in Morningside Heights—for many, Columbia’s surge past Stanford, University of Pennsylvania, California Institute of Technology, and MIT was seen as long overdue.

Most levelheaded readers, cognizant of the many inherent problems that arise when comparing colleges, take the rankings with a grain of salt. And, as Neil FitzPatrick argued in his column (“On a world without rank”) yesterday, the rankings can sometimes serve an important purpose for prospective applicants. But, at the end of the day, far too much credence is afforded to the system, and Columbia should use its halcyon days near the top of the rankings to draw attention to those defects.

Chief among these flaws is the ease with which the rankings can be manipulated. A case-in-point is Clemson University, which improved from #38 among public research universities in 2001 to #22 last year. Catherine Watt, a researcher at Clemson, has charged that the quest for a better ranking has led the school to inflate faculty salaries artificially and to auto-reject any student outside the top third of his or her class. But, perhaps the largest change made at Clemson was the choice to begin capping sections at 19, rather than 20 or 25. This decision was based on the mechanics of the US News methodology, wherein six percent of a school’s final score is based on the percentage of the school’s classes with fewer than 20 students.

For schools with large core curriculums—schools like Columbia—it would be easy to follow Clemson’s lead



JAMES DAWSON
Low Politics

Why we must engage in our Forum

BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE COLUMBIA POLITICAL UNION

Over the past week, Ethiopian, East African, and human rights organizations all over the world have published a flurry of open letters, condemning Columbia’s decision to host Prime Minister of Ethiopia Meles Zenawi at this week’s World Leaders Forum. The letters reopen the old, ranking, and unsettled debates raised by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s 2007 visit, questions about whether it is in line with the University’s mission and stature to invite controversial—some would say dictatorial—world leaders to speak to students and faculty members on campus. As these questions reemerge, the Columbia Political Union wishes to express its position that the invitation of Zenawi, and all events fostering political dialogue and awareness, are both in tune with our own mission and that of the University as a whole.

Yet, such events may only be beneficial to students and the world when the University serves as a neutral and critical moderator. In this light, the previous inclusion of an unedited quote from the Ethiopian government’s mission on the WLF’s online event description must be

To shy from controversy, to avoid engaging with a tricky situation, to cease even trying to support uninhibited and fruitful dialogue in the world, would be misguided and out of line.

described as an unfortunate and sullyng gaff. The unqualified statement implied University support for Zenawi and his government. The retraction of the quote and the reaffirmation in a statement by Columbia’s Director of Media Relations, Robert Hornsby, that the University remains a neutral party and that Zenawi’s speech will be followed by an open question-and-answer period, have done much to assure that the event will, in line with the goal of WLF, “advance lively, uninhibited dialogue.” Still, the mishap has raised reasonable doubts.

CPU maintains that this event can prove beneficial, especially in exploring the criticisms of Zenawi used to urge Columbia to reconsider its invitation. Detractors accuse Americans of viewing Zenawi, an American ally in Africa, without scrutiny—and this is fair. His is not a name to make the major news cycles, not a name to enter daily conversation like Ahmadinejad’s. Profiles of the man in the West are a mixed bag—questioning his two-decade tenure and his treatment of opposition parties and the press, but applauding his push for stability, economic growth, and self-sovereignty. Most Americans could not tell their East African counterparts whether they consider the man a dictator, or a democrat in the throes of difficult national transitions.

Giving such a man a podium does not mean endorsing his ideas, as has been argued. It does, however, mean drawing attention to the man. And as long as we are true to our spirit—and Hornsby holds his word that a free and robust questioning of Zenawi occurs, possibly forcing him to confront with candor the questions he may be able to avoid in his own nation—that attention will hopefully lead to reflection and investigation in the news cycle, and among individuals at Columbia and beyond, which will benefit the world.

True, if Zenawi is a dictator, he may spin the event any way he likes at home, casting this as an endorsement. But spin is spin, and a dictator seeking self-legitimation will find it somewhere. Weighing the benefit of awareness, dialogue, pressure from our corner, and the manipulation of that dialogue by outside sources is a complex calculation. But to shy from controversy, to avoid engaging with a tricky situation, to cease even trying to support uninhibited and fruitful dialogue in the world, would be misguided and out of line with our mission as a group, and Columbia’s as an institution. As long as the exchange is truly free, spirited, and critical, it is wise to err on the side of engagement.

Sara Jacobs is the general manager. Emily Tamkin is the director of operations and the Spectator editorial page editor. Alex Frouman is the treasurer. Mishaal Khan is the events coordinator. Alisa Lu is the director of communications. Samuel Roth is the publisher and a member of the Spectator editorial board. Tim Lam is the CubPub.org blog editor-in-chief. Chris Chan is the technical director. Iman Nanji is the publisher of the Columbia Political Review. Mark Hay is the editor-in-chief of the Columbia Political Review.

and begin capping sections at 19. Since 2009, Columbia has capped Literature Humanities and Contemporary Civilization classes, as well as a host of other core sections, at 22. Under this cap, the current capacity of Columbia’s 60 CC sections is 1,320 students. To distribute these students in sections of 19 rather than 22 would require nine additional sections.

But, considering that about 30 percent of all of Columbia classes are in the Core, those nine new sections may be well worth their cost. About 79 percent of Columbia’s classes already contain fewer than 20 students, a figure bested only by Harvard and Yale. Dropping the cap to 19 would easily vault us ahead of both schools—a change that would add a fraction of a point to our overall 1-100 rating and aid our chances of maintaining our ranking next year.

As it stands now, Columbia and its peer institutions are navigating a bizarre version of the prisoner’s dilemma. Some colleges appear to be shamelessly manipulating the rankings, while others have resisted even minor policy changes despite the enormous benefits they would bring. In an ideal world, all colleges would come together and agree not to alter any policies for the sake of rankings. But that, of course, is not the world in which we live. And when profits and prestige trump morality and fair play, the game theory model would suggest that it is in Columbia’s best interest to pursue certain marginal changes.

It’s nice to be ranked #4. I think we should be ranked first, but not at the expense of intellectual honesty and institutional integrity. As we look forward towards next year’s rankings, it is perhaps well to ask whether Columbia ought to participate in such a fallacious system at all.

In “On Liberty,” John Stuart Mill argues that the

Success, somewhere over the ‘Double Rainbow’

“The Double Rainbow Song,” a strange, so-very-21st-century phenomenon, and one of the summer’s most unpredictably popular songs, made its rounds on the Internet in July. The viral song is itself based on a viral video of a deliriously happy man, witnessing a double rainbow in Yosemite National Park. This effort was followed by “The Bed Intruder Song,” an almost more strange auto-tuned news report of an attempted rape in Huntsville, Alabama. The songs have that repeat-watch appeal and are ridiculously catchy—the perfect Internet meme, plain and simple.

These are simple Internet memes, however, with not-so-simple implications. Their success would have been an impossibility 10 years ago—their amateur production alone, an improbability. Limitations that kept other generations from pursuing their artistic interests, like time, money, and distance, don’t exist anymore. You don’t need to bus tables to pay for studio time, as long as you have a computer and garage band. The promises of Hollywood and New York can be had in your parents’ suburban basement. Forget expensive training: Antoine Dodson, the “accidental singer” of “Bed Intruder,” moved out of the projects of Alabama into a better neighborhood, because of web users’ generous donations and iTunes proceeds. The definitions of entertainment, business, autonomy, and ownership are evolving, and they all intersect in these auto-tuned masterpieces.

Music used to be a commercial endeavor like any other. Music executives scouted and signed bands they believed would sell records, and artists were at their mercy to be discovered, to become stars.

But now, it’s not music executives that artists have to impress, but their would-be audience. The big dream isn’t to get a record deal, but to reach a million viewers, get featured on Huffington Post, inspire parodies. It’s the model that helped a little guy named Justin Bieber go from recorded talent show performances to the most-watched YouTube video of all time.

Songs like “Double Rainbow” and “Bed Intruder,” however, take that control one step further, by rendering the music industry effectively obsolete. The “singers” weren’t singers at all in any traditional sense—never had to go to open mics, never had to send out demos—and the producers didn’t have much more than a computer and some software. Marketing and publicity, those elaborate, time-consuming affairs involving ad spots, television appearances, and banners on the sides of buses, were completely averted.

And nevertheless, the songs were hits. “Double Rainbow” reached #74 on the iTunes chart while “Bed



AARTI IYER
Culture Vulture

best time to speak out against an unfair system is when that system has afforded you an advantage—only at this juncture, he says, will bystanders feel confident that one’s arguments are based on the merits and not on self-interest. As it stands today, US News has afforded Columbia just such an advantage.

And so, before next year’s rankings are published, Columbia should take a stand against the US News rankings. Lee Bollinger should write to the publishers of US News to voice concern about the system. At the very

I think we should be ranked first, but not at the expense of intellectual honesty and institutional integrity.

least, he should join more than 60 other college presidents in signing the Education Conservancy’s letter to US News, calling for a radically altered system.

Several other schools, notably including Reed College, have walked away from the rankings altogether. Alas, as long as Columbia’s peer institutions continue to participate in the rankings charade, we can ill afford to take such a stand. But that does not mean we cannot be leaders—leaders in pushing for a new and fairer system, a system in which it doesn’t pay to cheat.

James Dawson is a Columbia College senior majoring in political science. He is a Columbia University tour guide. Low Politics runs alternate Tuesdays.

Intruder” is currently at #68. The former has almost 11 million views on YouTube, while the latter has more than twice as many, with 23 million views. By comparison, Katy Perry’s newest single, “Teenage Dream”—a song that did have a record label, studio, and music video behind it—released around the same time, has less than 10 million hits. Not bad for simple Internet memes.

The music industry is worried about these facts, for good reason, but we shouldn’t be. When we were growing up, we were steered into certain professions because they were “safe,” predictable, and reliable—not necessarily because we were particularly adept at them. Singing, acting, drawing, writing—these were hobbies, not career options, precisely because they were unpredictable and unreliable. Success was dependent upon the narrow opinions of record executives, directors, gallery owners, or editors.

But if there’s one lesson to be learned from “Bed Intruder” (besides hiding your kids, wife, and husband), it’s that the old dichotomy doesn’t apply anymore. What was difficult about “making it” before was a restrictive

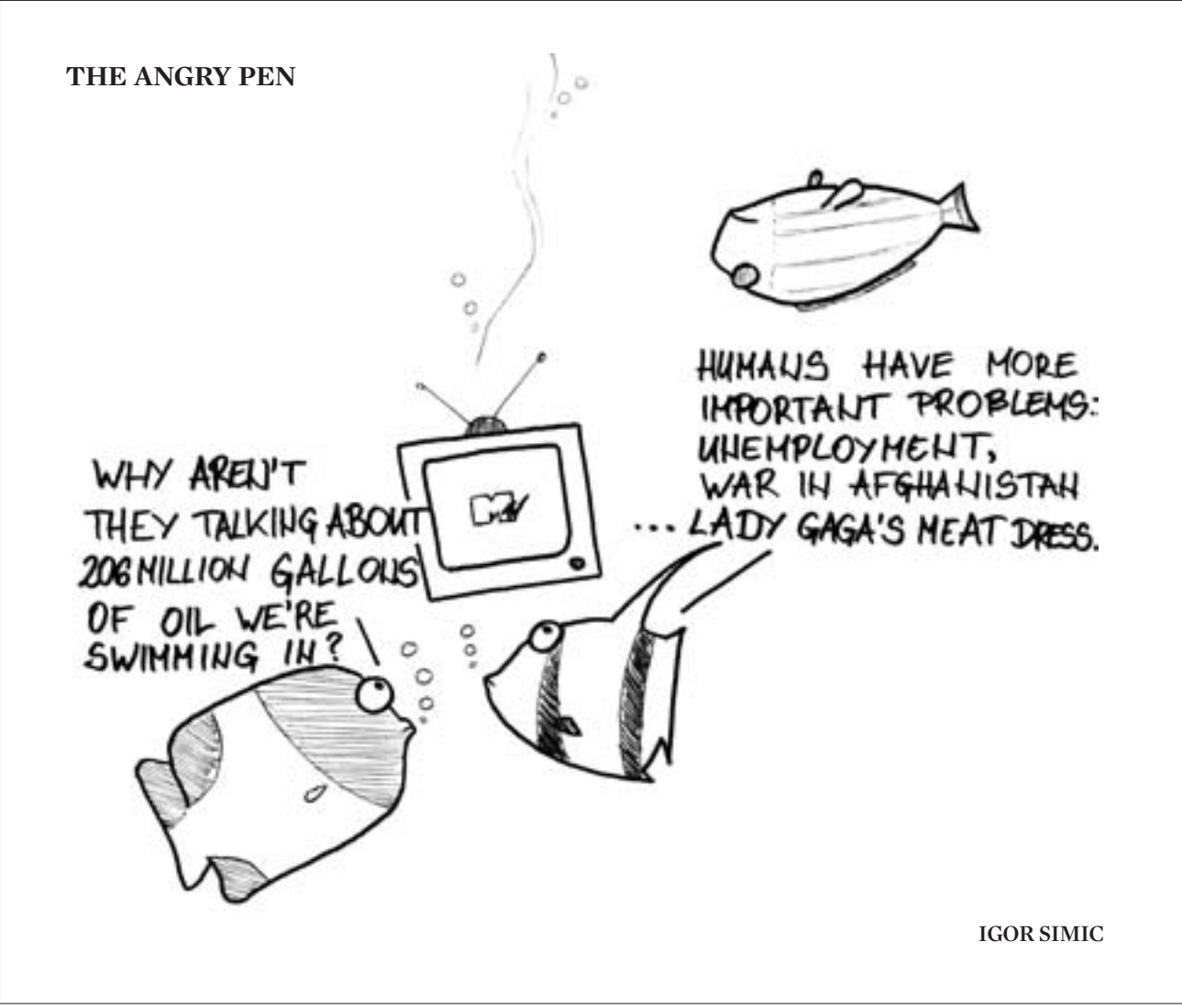
The big dream isn’t to get a record deal, but to reach a million viewers, get featured on Huffington Post, inspire parodies.

formula that conferred success almost arbitrarily. Moving to Hollywood or New York, going to audition after audition, sending out manuscripts and making cold calls—this was what it meant to pursue those dreams.

Perhaps success is still arbitrary in the Internet age—who could predict the next viral video?—but at least it is success on one’s own terms. All a potential performer needs is a video camera and a YouTube account. Writers don’t need publishing houses to get their writing to readers, thanks to blogs and online self-publishers. As we scramble for jobs post-graduation, hopefully we’ll remember that we’re armed not only with a diploma, but with access to a tool unavailable to any generation before us—the Internet.

So let’s take advantage of our position as the Internet’s caretakers, the people responsible for making ventures like YouTube, iTunes, and Facebook as lucrative as they are. Come graduation, let’s pursue our passions not because they’re easy but because they’re not—without mediation, and without sanction.

Aarti Iyer is a Columbia College senior majoring in creative writing. She is the editor-in-chief of The Fed. Culture Vulture runs alternate Tuesdays.



Performance turns trash into treasure

BY DAMIAN HARRIS-HERNANDEZ
Columbia Daily Spectator

Caught in the North Atlantic Gyre, grocery bags, bottles, toys, fishing nets, and other plastic debris break down under the sun into toxic, microscopic, non-biodegradable fish food. This floating trash patch presents a real problem that choreographer Lynn Neuman, along with Columbia University's Urban Design Lab, hopes to solve through awareness, advocacy, research, and dance.

Wrapped in costumes crocheted from six-pack holders, seven dancers charted the journey trash takes as it leaves human hands and makes its way out to sea, in "Your Planet: The Human Mapping Project," a production by Artichoke Dance Company. Performed on Manhattan Beach in Brooklyn on Saturday, the piece melded dance, activism, and audience participation into a fun and productive day at the beach.

To fully comprehend the magnitude and implications of oceanic rubbish, Neuman met with scientists from the Urban Design Lab's Plastic TrashPatch Project, which seeks to connect environmental advocates with academic experts.

"We're looking at the connection between cities and trash patches," said Richard Gonzales, the project's manager. His program assesses the global impact of garbage patches on people and the environment. So far, scientists have found that toxic elements from the microscopic plastic are entering our food chain.

As the performance began, the dancers spread across the beach in three groups. Neuman invited children and other audience members to play percussion instruments made from recycled and found objects. Two professional drummers kept the beat while amateurs experimented with buckets, cans, and glass bottles arranged in a large circle in the sand.

By starting at opposite ends of the beach, the dancers called attention to the terrain and challenged the audience to look at the big picture—the environment. Slowly, the disparate groups made their ways toward the drum circle. Dressed in garbage crocheted together by visual artist Olek, the dancers twisted and spun in the sand, leaving a trace of their existence on the beach.

Like plastic meshing together in the ocean, the dancers linked up as the groups converged in the circle. The performance referenced movement rituals historically practiced by tribal cultures, specifically Native American ones, reminding the audience that modern society has all but lost this tradition.

The performance drew to a close when the dancers took audience members by the hands and led them to the ocean. The beating of the drums gave way to the pounding of the waves, as the crowd was left to ponder its own impact on the ocean.

"It's about creating a community of people around a common concern or action," Neuman said. "The performance offers avenues of participation, so people can engage the piece in a way they feel comfortable."

Artichoke Dance Company will perform "The Human Mapping Project" again this Saturday, Sept. 25, at 1 p.m., preceded by a three-hour beach cleanup in front of the New York Aquarium in Coney Island.



CHRISTINA PHAN FOR SPECTATOR

WORLD TRAVELERS | A dance group took the stage in Boone Arledge Auditorium on Saturday night as part of the annual Passport to Columbia event. The performances ranged from hip-hop to bellydance, giving the audience tastes of different dance styles from across the globe.

Event hands students a 'Passport' to see the world through food and dance

BY LIANA GERGELY
Columbia Daily Spectator

Flying around the world and experiencing a variety of cultural practices in two hours on a Saturday night is not a likely option for most overstressed Columbians. Yet, this year's installment of the annual Passport to Columbia event made that fantasy affordable, accessible, and even delicious.

On Saturday night, various cultural groups at Columbia put together an energetic evening of food and dance, to celebrate the diversity of the University's student body, in Boone Arledge Auditorium. Columbia College Student Council financed and hosted the event. "Because CCSC sponsors the event, it is easy for people from all student groups to have an equal chance to get involved. The event doesn't just bring all the cultural groups together on this one special night,

but also exposes the entire student body to different food and cultures," Samirah Majumdar, BC '11, from Club Bangla, said.

The clubs offered students free food from more than 10 countries upon entering the auditorium. The food selection gave taste buds a first-class ticket to an assortment of culinary destinations, including France, Ukraine, China, and Japan.

The highlight of the evening followed the food tasting, as students sat alongside round, cabaret-style tables and enjoyed performances by Columbia dance groups. Students cheered, clapped, and swayed to upbeat performances by CU Bhangra, Club Bangla, Raw Elementz, Sabor, Taal, Raas, Bellydance, Onyx, Orisha, and Dhoom. Each dance group proudly represented its own culture and style, exposing students to a wide range of technical dance disciplines.

"It familiarizes people to varying cultures and nationalities, and motivates students to be more creative and take pride in their art," Christina

Phan, BC '14, said.

The intersection between art and culture continues to bolster Columbia's diverse and intellectually rich community. Passport to Columbia not only allowed students from different nationalities to assimilate to the college lifestyle, but more importantly encouraged them to continue exploring their individualism and sense of self.

Amid the excitement of sparkling belly dance skirts, Top 40 songs, and big Asian-inspired props, Passport to Columbia remained true to its mission. The event also brought the spirit of social activism to the stage, making it clear that there is a purpose to art and aesthetic pleasure. The Organization of Pakistani Students collected donations for flood victims in Pakistan throughout the course of the evening as well. The event fostered a sense of community, guiding students from all different walks of life to connect through common interests—music, dance, and vegetable fried rice.

For students swamped by mealtime crowds, dining hall success is all in the timing

DINING from page 3

burgers, although dry, are a reasonable option for take-out despite the line at the grill, as is the pizza, despite its strange pie-like crimped crust. Skip the desserts entirely—it's just as fast and easy to find a better cup of frozen yogurt right outside the gates.

Ferris Booth, the only dining hall open for breakfast, is bustling by 8:45 a.m. Students try to get in and out before 9 a.m. classes, so the downstairs

eating area fills up quickly and students steadily flood the staircase. Staple items like bagels, toast, scrambled eggs, fruit, and yogurt are smart choices here, even though they may be found for lower prices at Westside Market or Morton Williams. Cereal is a good option for students seeking a fast, easy breakfast, but it's hard to justify eating a bowl of Cheerios in the dining hall when a whole box of them, plus a carton of milk, can be purchased off campus for less than the cost of a meal swipe.

Ferris Booth for lunch or dinner is the best bet. While sheer chaos does come in waves from noon to 1 p.m. and from 6 to 7 p.m., students can often get lucky and find most of the lines surprisingly short if they come at an off-peak time. However, the pasta—the clear highlight here—always comes with a seemingly infinite wait in line.

Fortunately, Ferris Booth offers other culinary options that do not guarantee time spent

standing in line, including a build-your-own salad station with a variety of toppings, sandwiches, and some decent desserts. However, steer clear of Ferris Booth on Saturdays—it is the only one of the three dining halls open for brunch that day, and things can get ugly. The chaos of all three dining halls may be overwhelming, but for students with meal swipes to burn, mastering the Dining Plan just takes a little finesse and a lot of good timing.

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JASPER L. CLYATT / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

MAKE A STAND | Junior defensive back Neil Schuster had 11 total tackles against Fordham.

Light Blue defense imposing in 16-9 season-opening defeat to Fordham

DEFENSE from back page

tackles on the day, 11 more than Fordham's defense racked up. A notable feat on its own, the tally is strengthened by the fact that the Light Blue defense spent almost six more minutes on the sideline than the Rams' crew did.

In the season's upcoming games, Columbia's defense will have plenty of work cut out for them. In Towson's second game this season, the Tigers' offense posted 47 points against Coastal Carolina. The Light Blue's first three Ivy rivals on the schedule – Princeton, Penn, and Dartmouth – scored a total of 84 points this past weekend.

The Lions will also have to focus on preventing their opponents from gaining crucial first downs. On Saturday, the Rams achieved 19 first downs—14 of which came from rushing—to Columbia's 11. They also let Fordham gain a net 202 yards rushing—something the Lions will need to shut down as they head into the rest of the season. None of this, however, comes as a surprise to the Light Blue.

"We need to get off the field on third down," Gross said. "We're going to be able to stop the pass, but when we put ourselves in [a] good position—when it's third and eight, third and nine—we have to be able to play and realize that we have an opportunity to get off the field."



JASPER L. CLYATT / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

MIDFIELD KICK | Junior co-captain midfielder Mike Mazzullo prepares to cross the ball. Mazzullo has anchored the Columbia midfield and will look to continue his superb play against Seton Hall.

Lions look to capitalize on chances, earn second win of season against Seton Hall

BY MRINAL MOHANKA
Spectator Staff Writer

The Columbia Lions fell in a disappointing 2-0 defeat over the weekend, but many felt the score-line was not an accurate reflection of the affair. The Light Blue will be hoping to set things right when the Seton Hall Pirates visit Columbia Soccer Stadium on Tuesday evening.

The Lions created plenty of chances against Saint Peter's this past weekend, but paid the price for failing to convert those chances into goals. Junior Francois Anderson came close with a first-half shot from

COLUMBIA VS. SETON HALL
Columbia Soccer Stadium, 7 p.m.



close range that was blocked off the line, and first-year Henning Sauerbier almost opened the Lions account on a number of occasions. A midfield duo of freshman David Najem and junior co-captain Mike Mazzullo did well in the center of the park, and will be hoping to build on that against the Pirates.

"I'm disappointed with our record so far, but the good spells of play we've had have led to confidence rising within the team," Mazzullo said.

"We've outplayed most of our opponents, and we're looking at translating that into results. We need to finish our chances better and we need to do what we do well for longer periods. It's been small lapses of concentration that have cost us dearly."

Mazzullo is enjoying pairing up with Najem in the heart of midfield.

"I really love playing with him, he's a sound technical player – and I know he's always ready to receive the ball when I win it," Mazzullo said. "I feel we complement each other very well."

The Pirates (1-3-1) have played some of the best teams in the country this season, including No. 3

Wake Forest, No. 4 North Carolina, and No. 5 Monmouth, which justi-

"It's been small lapses of concentration that have cost us dearly."

*—Mike Mazzullo,
junior co-captain*

fies their record. They achieved a creditable 2-2 draw against Wake with junior Hayden Morris and

senior co-captain Steven Rose getting on the score sheet. Their lone win of the season was a 3-0 defeat of Farleigh Dickinson with Rose (two) and Bryan Longo finding the net. Freshman Kevin Bonder kept a shut-out with an impressive showing in goal. Another man to watch is senior Brayan Martinez, who was ranked the 48th best player in the country according to Top Drawer Soccer's national top 100 rankings, which were announced last week.

The teams have not met in recent seasons.

The game kicks off today, Tuesday, Sept. 21 at 7 p.m.

Bad calls by officials this summer heighten intensity of instant replay debate

"Even with replays they don't get it right," asserted Jon Mariner, the chief financial officer of Major League Baseball at a speech on campus this past Thursday night. It was part of his choreographed response to a question about the seeming decline in baseball umpiring. Of course, the real question is less about the quality of officials, and more about the implementation of video replay in sports. It's a question that has become the topic of discussion at dinner tables nationwide, so I feel that it's time for me to weigh in as well.

Most people fall into one of two camps when it comes to video replay. There are the traditionalists, who believe video review removes the human element of officiating that has been part of sports for many decades. Then there are those who believe we are in a new era of sports, one in which we should utilize the best technology available to ensure accurate refereeing. But before I take a side, let's look at a couple examples.

The most egregious call that fueled this controversy over the past



MICHAEL SHAPIRO
Turn up the Mike

year was undoubtedly the one that thwarted Detroit's pitcher Armando Galarraga's perfect game. On what would have been the last out to complete the 20th perfect game in history, first base umpire Jim Joyce called the runner safe—a call that replay showed to be incorrect. Even Joyce quickly acknowledged his mistake when he saw the replay after the game. Hollywood couldn't have scripted a more devastating scenario. Major League Baseball's take on video replay in this case was apparent not by its response, but its lack thereof—as commissioner Bud Selig abstained from giving Galarraga credit for the perfect game after the fact. MLB demonstrated that man, not machine, made the call and the history books will show just that.

Then there was this past summer's World Cup, where referees were lambasted for a plethora of controversial calls. When what would have been the United States' game-winning goal against Slovenia was disallowed in the 85th minute, referee Koman Coulibaly faced a post-game 'performance review' by FIFA and was excluded from officiating the subsequent tournament rounds. The call sparked international criticism, such as this gem from New York Magazine writer Josh Dean: "An official should never factor in the outcome of any

sporting event, and yet this morning put himself front and center in a call that was every bit as awful as the one that cost Tigers pitcher Armando Galarraga his perfect game." In my research, I even came across a Koman Coulibaly hate site. Worst of all, unlike the old days, the officials have nowhere to hide when they blow a call since replay angles are extensive. Check and mate.

How can soccer entrust a referee with the final say during a game as part of a stringent no video review policy, but reprimand him afterwards using video replay?

Not surprising, the NCAA has succumbed to outside pressure for video review over the past few years as well. In 2006, the NCAA implemented a uniform video booth review in college football—baseball, basketball, and hockey soon followed suit. Even the most recent Little League World Series allowed

an instant replay system that allowed managers to challenge one play in the first six innings of play.

We find ourselves at a crossroads with controversies like the imperfect game and Koman Coulibaly. Look at baseball, a sport that has successfully added video replay when it comes to questionable home runs, foul balls, and fan interference. Then look at soccer, where mid-game video review is prohibited, but postgame replay can be used for disciplinary purposes.

This is where they lose me. Ok, so baseball needs video review for plays it has deemed as potential game-changers. But where is the line drawn? How can the MLB really say that a controversial base hit cannot have greater implications on a game's outcome? And how can soccer entrust a referee with the final say during a game as part of a stringent no-video review policy, but reprimand him afterwards through using video replay?

There needs to be more consistency and less indecisiveness when it comes to using instant replays to make calls. The current structure for sports like baseball and soccer is illogical and unsustainable, and leagues must take a more explicit stand. Taking the middle ground when it comes to this issue is the reason for such controversy, and policies are in drastic need of

re-evaluation. There is the obvious difficulty with reviewing more calls, which is that sporting events are already long enough and therefore more time cannot be wasted on reviewing every close play at first.

But what is a few more minutes tagged on an already-long contest if it means rendering a fair outcome? There are plenty of ways to shorten a game like baseball, but most conflict with the league's addiction to commercial revenue. I'm not going to advocate for full implementation of instant replay, but I will say that leagues must get their priorities in order. Either leave the margin for human error or spend two minutes reviewing close plays like the one that cost Galarraga a perfect game. Jim Joyce could have overturned his own call in the time it takes to run a 30-second TV ad for Arby's and prevented the resulting controversy.

The truth is there is no easy way to reconcile such a multifaceted issue. That's why so many sports struggle to create a coherent policy. I know one thing for sure—policies should shape the calls and not the other way around. Until this is the case, however, I'm afraid this issue will remain indefinitely contentious.

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Defense stands firm in defeat

Otherwise strong effort tarnished by Fordham's winning drive

BY VICTORIA JONES
Spectator Staff Writer

With less than five minutes left on the game clock, Fordham running back Darryl Whiting snuck into the end zone and scored what would be the winning touchdown in Saturday's match against the Lions.

It took the Rams just 11 plays in less than three minutes to make their way 69 yards down the field for the win. This drive arguably served as the Light Blue's weakest defensive performance in an otherwise solid game.

Fordham received the ball at its own 31-yard line and right away the Rams' quarterback, Blake Wayne, completed an 11-yard pass to Xavier Martin for a first down. The Rams' success continued on the ground with a series of four rushes in a row, totaling 17 yards and two first downs. Two more passes and two more rushes were all it took for the Rams to put the points on the board.

Though this swift drive was a rare occurrence on the day, it showcased a gap in the Lions' defensive play that contributed to Saturday's loss. Fordham didn't have a single incomplete pass or a single rush that resulted in lost yardage on its drive to the end zone — facts that failed to please either head coach Norries Wilson or the defensive players themselves.

"We played really good defense on every drive but one," coach Wilson said. "They [Fordham] put another drive together and our guys looked like they were a little bit gassed and we didn't get

lined up. They got a ball down to the one-yard line and they ended up punching it in on us."

Despite the last scoring play, Columbia's defense did manage to put forth a performance that more reflected the optimism it had for the squad heading into this season.

"As far as camp has gone, I'm very confident in what we [the defense] are doing," senior captain and linebacker Alex Gross said in a pre-season interview.

"A lot of the guys, especially on the defensive side of the ball, have a lot of experience since freshman year," fellow captain and linebacker Matt Moretto added. "At one time, I think six or seven guys from the freshmen class started at defense, so they have that many years of experience."

Indeed, the Lions' defense brought years of experience to the gridiron on Saturday. Of the 11 starters on defense, seven were seniors and three were juniors.

On the defensive side of the ball, the Light Blue put up some inspiring statistics to start the season. In his first game back since recovering from a knee injury, Gross led the team with 14 tackles. Junior strong safety Neil Schuster impressed as well. Schuster was an integral part of breaking up several key plays, and he notched an additional 11 tackles of his own. All in all, the Lions had seven defensive players who recorded at least five tackles in the season opener.

As a squad, Columbia totaled 83

SEE DEFENSE, page 6

STRONG RETURN | Linebacker and senior captain Alex Gross (37) had a solid game Saturday after missing most of last season with an injury.

JASPER L. CLYATT / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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