



INSIDE



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CU bluegrass band plants roots on campus

Lion in the Grass, Columbia's student bluegrass band, has been jamming since 2004 and once beat Vampire Weekend in a Battle of the Bands, a testament to their talent.

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Master of the Senate

With two considerable challenges before the University Senate, Rajat Roy wonders whether it will meet defeat.



Sports, page 8

Women's soccer finishes fifth in conference

Although the Lions entered the 2009 season with high expectations after a strong 2008 campaign, the women's soccer team finished the year tied for fifth in the Ivy.

EVENTS

The Changing Media Landscape

Seven leaders in the changing world of journalism lead a panel discussion about technology, social networking, and the direction of the industry. Toast the death of print, or the future of online media.

Journalism Lecture Hall, Third Floor, 6:30-9 p.m.

Sabor Clasico

The Latino dance troupe Sabor presents its annual showcase, which will feature other clubs, dance groups, and solo performances interpreting classic styles to raise money for its high school workshops.

Roone Arledge Auditorium, 8-9:30 p.m.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Some of them encourage us. Some of them think we are crazy."

—Azadeh Faramarziha of the Iranian Women's One Million Signatures Campaign

ONLINE

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HOUSE OF LAUGHS



Jawad A. Bhatti / Staff photographer

BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE | Mixing sexually explicit stand-up with irreverent original musical numbers, comedian Bob Saget kept Columbia students laughing Wednesday night at Miller Theatre. See story, page 3.

Campus health experts debate House bill

BY JEREMY BLEEKE
Columbia Daily Spectator

They may not have floor votes, but they sure have opinions.

Columbia health experts are chiming in on health care reform, and their perspectives illuminate the complexity of a debate that reform supporters hope will culminate in an overhaul of the American health care system.

Last Saturday, after months of

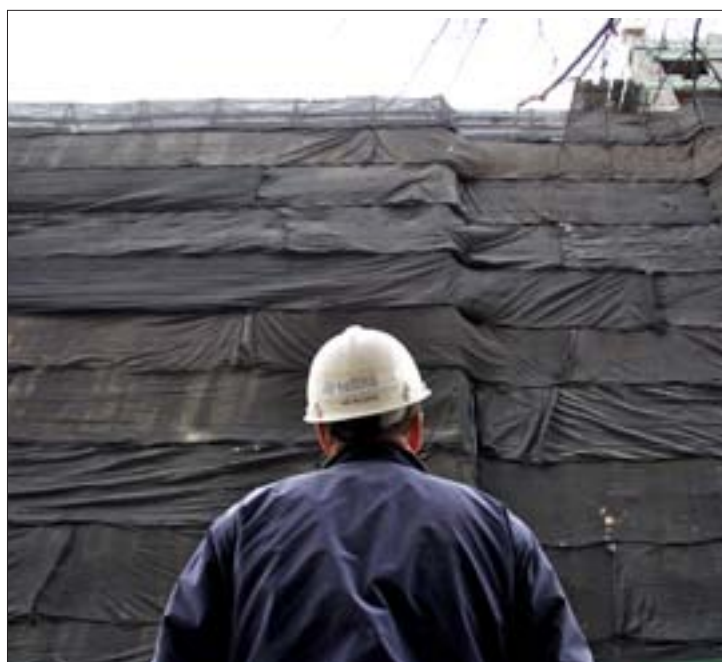
debate both on and off Capitol Hill, the House passed legislation promising sweeping health care reforms in an action President Barack Obama called "courageous" and Republicans derided a fiscally irresponsible "government

Taking the Local Pulse

takeover" of the private health insurance system.

Closer to home—among faculty at the Columbia University Medical Center and the Mailman School of Public Health—reaction toward the Affordable Health Care for America Act has been correspondingly mixed, and suggestions abound.

SEE HEALTH CARE, page 2



Kenny Jackson / Staff photographer

GROWING GREEN | A construction worker gazes up at the Fortune Society's green development on 140th Street and Riverside Drive.

Green housing targets parolees, homeless

BY LEAH GREENBAUM
Columbia Daily Spectator

Men and women formerly behind bars will soon find affordable housing behind aluminum solar shades.

The \$42 million green housing development in West Harlem, run by the Fortune Society—a Chelsea-based non-profit that helps parolees assimilate into life outside prison—will be shared by homeless, formerly incarcerated individuals, and low-income families.

The development at 140th Street near Riverside Drive is midway through construction and will begin accepting applications for residency next month.

For the developers, this project is a message that going green is not reserved for affluent New Yorkers.

"Our idea behind this building is that everyone, not just people with high incomes, should

be able to live in a green building," said Whitney Foutz, a project manager at Jonathan Rose Companies—a co-developer green firm that has partnered with the Fortune Society to build the 114-unit housing complex.

Foutz said the eco-friendly building would include a rooftop garden that controls temperature and harvests rainwater, solar panels for energy efficiency, free Wi-Fi, on-site counseling and job-training services, and unobstructed views of the Hudson River.

And according to JoAnne Page, president of the Fortune Society, for many formerly incarcerated individuals, ivy-covered trellises and breathtaking panoramas are a far cry from life after prison.

"There's actually a screening process that keeps them out of public housing," Page said.

According to research from the

SEE HOUSING, page 2

Ethnicity survey criticized

Turath: System needs nuance

BY ALIX PIANIN
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

If you are of North African or Middle Eastern descent, you are now, for all intents and purposes, white—at least according to the new federal ethnicity data survey.

Now, members of some campus groups are dismayed to see their complex ethnic identities boiled down to a simple box, one they say is both demeaning and inaccurate.

Under new federal regulations, diversity data at educational institutions are to be gathered using new categories, according to a University-wide e-mail sent last week.

The campus Arab students' organization, Turath, expressed dismay with this new set of guidelines, Yasmina Raiani CC '12, the group's secretary, sent a personal message replying to University survey requests, saying she would not participate in a classification system that she found both insulting and inaccurate.

"It clumps individuals of North African and Middle Eastern descent into 'white,' which is not only superficially inaccurate—in that the actual skin tone range of North African and Middle Eastern peoples is more akin to that of Hispanics/Latinos than it is to Caucasians—but also historically insensitive," Raiani wrote to the University. "To identify Arabs as 'white' is to disregard our history as

members of the colonized world and to dismiss all acts of racial discrimination against our community."

The U.S. Department of Education now requires annual reports from institutions of higher education on the racial and ethnic composition of their student bodies, and categorical options for race and ethnicity identification have changed.

Under new requirements, race and ethnicity data must be collected with a two-part question. Students are asked whether they are Hispanic, and then to identify their race from one or more of five categories: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and white, according to a press release from the University.

Columbia admissions applications already include questions and categories to reflect this change. Columbia does have race data for most current students, as collected through the optional self-identification area of admissions applications, but it was collected under the old categories. The University began to re-survey students under these new standards on Nov. 6, 2009. Faculty and staff will be re-surveyed in 2010.

The University plans to send each student three e-mails inviting them to take

SEE SURVEY, page 2

'Glamour' honors Iranian women activists

BY CARLY SILVER
Spectator Staff Writer

Barnard got a little more glamorous on Wednesday evening.

"Glamour" magazine teamed up with Barnard's Athena Center for Leadership Studies Wednesday night to present the publication's 2009 "Women of the Year" awards. The honors went to the Iranian Women's One Million Signatures Campaign, represented by members Hoda Aminian and Azadeh Faramarziha.

The campaign's goal is "to gather a million signatures on a petition asking Iran's parliament to grant equal rights to women," according to a Barnard press release.

While at the event, Barnard President Debora Spar observed that the campaign's goals coincide with those of the college.

"Barnard is a place that dedicates itself to women who aspire to greatness," she said. "We have two women with us this evening who capture all of this and, in their lives, have already done so much to further the causes of women."

As part of her new role as Athena Center director, Kathryn Kolbert said the event fell within her goals for the center's future ventures. "We hope to bring to Barnard a host of women activists, leaders in all of their fields, to reflect on what it means to undertake change," she told the audience.

Iranian Women's One Million Signatures Campaign formed in 2006 after Iranian police attacked a feminist rally. Representatives say that the campaign has been active since its start in almost 20 cities in several countries, and counts nearly a thousand activists among its ranks. The group is calling for legal reforms, including an end to polygamy and temporary marriage, the right for women to pass on nationality to their children, and equal gender inheritance rights.

With the aid of a Farsi translator, Faramarziha and Aminian described their involvement in the campaign as intensely personal. They said they became

SEE 'GLAMOUR,' page 2

VETERANS DAY



Jawad A. Bhatti / Staff photographer

HONOR | Columbia's School of General Studies was a sponsor of Wednesday's New York Veterans Day parade. "On Veterans Day, we honor the remarkable service the men and women of the United States Military have provided for our nation," GS Dean Peter Awn said. "As educators, we are reminded of the responsibility we have to provide veterans with access to educational institutions through participation in programs that support their educations like the Yellow Ribbon Program."

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New categories for ethnicity data survey attract critics

SURVEY from front page

part in the survey, though participation is voluntary.

While Raiani said that she was speaking for herself and not her group, her statement was circulated among Turath, and members were encouraged to respond to survey requests with a formal refusal.

“We’re not intending to represent the views of all Arabs on campus,” Raiani said in an interview.

Still, she says, the group objects “to any identification system that requires people to fit themselves in a category that they cannot be defined according to their individual experiences.”

The fact that this new survey does not include a category for Middle Easterners, she said, further underlines the fact that Arabs have not been granted minority status in the United States, which is much debated among Arab and non-Arab groups. While this means that Arabs do not receive some of the rights government-recognized minorities do, some fear that identifying themselves as Arab will make them government targets.

The Turath executive board has not yet decided how to move forward on the issue. The race and ethnicity tallies at Columbia are a University-implemented governmental requirement, and not a policy created by the school. Raiani said she believed it would be important for Turath to formally object.

“Most of my Arab friends have had problems with this for a very long time,” she said. “The main problem is, beyond superficial inaccuracies, it implicates Northern Africans and Arabs as agents of white history when, in fact, our communities and our countries have often been the victims of white power and not its agents.”

“Ideally, we would like to see the University circulate an ethnicity survey that allows each individual to define their own race and ethnicity according to their own experiences,” Dueaa Elzin, BC ’11 and president of Turath, said.

And Raiani stressed the need for nuance.

“The issue is not so much that classifying Arabs as ‘white’ is factually inaccurate, because race does not exist as a biological fact, only as a social construct,” she said. “As a construct, it is packed with historical and experiential nuances any strict category cannot adequately encompass.

“Since some form of identification seems to be necessary given the reality of racialized power, we would prefer a category that more aptly represents the Middle Eastern/North African experience than does that of ‘white,’” she added.

Columbia spokesperson Robert Hornsby said that the University did not plan to issue a comment.

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Bennett Hong / Staff photographer

GLAMOUR | On Wednesday evening, Barnard’s Athena Center for Leadership Studies hosted Glamour’s women of the year.

‘Glamour’ names Iranian activists ‘women of the year’ at Barnard

‘GLAMOUR’ from front page

involved to help themselves and their other Iranian women improve their lives. “Campaigning is the most important chance ... in Iran for women [to] do something to change their situation,” said Faramarziha.

“When you see the things that happen to you and other people in your country, you have to do something. There is no other way. And the campaign is, for me, the only [way to] change,” she added.

Because of a restriction on public space, activists took to the streets where they personally sought out individuals to help promote their cause. Faramarziha used her education in theater to write street plays that reenacted discriminatory practices against women and identified what legal rights women have and lack. The public performances so captivated public imagination that, in one instance, the police tried to break up a play they mistook for a real argument.

By asking for signatures through cities, suburbs, and villages, the activists have included both men and women in their efforts. “We speak to the people, women, men, and say that we want this. ‘If you think that these rules must be changed, please sign the petition and read our book,’” recalled

Aminian. She said that public reactions toward the idea of changing the law have largely been positive, though somewhat mixed. “Some of them encourage us. Some of them think we are crazy,” Faramarziha said.

Their activism is not without its danger. To date, around 50 members of the group have been arrested, including in Tehran. “It’s our city, but we can’t actually go through it and talk to the people easily,” Faramarziha remarked.

The women made clear that their end goal was a legal, not religious, reformation in the Iranian Parliament under any regime. That aim was made more difficult by riots after the contentious Iranian elections this past June.

“We are talking about law and law is something based on modern science ... not religion. We are working on laws, not on Sharia [a type of Muslim law],” Faramarziha reminded the audience.

Aminian added that the planned presentation of signatures to the Iranian law-making body is just the beginning of the struggle. “It’s not finished with government ... or Parliament,” she said. “[The] goal of [the] campaign must be continued [for] years and years.”

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New affordable housing plans for healthy environment, families

HOUSING from front page

Fortune Society, around 50 percent of New York City parolees are homeless after they get out of prison.

“We take people in who have no track record—of paying bills, of being responsible, of being drug-free, of staying out of trouble—and we let them build that track record with us,” Page added.

She said that the society decided to split the complex between formerly incarcerated people and families, because an advisory committee that they meet with regularly had said that there was a desperate need for affordable housing in the area.

According to Page, 63 of the units will be for formerly incarcerated people, 13 of which will be designed for ex-prisoners with families, and the other 50 will be studios with monthly rents that will range from \$624 to \$976. Fifty other units will be developed for low-income families. Family units will range from \$930 to \$1,127 a month. And eligibility for the moderate-income units will be set at 60 percent of the median average income of the surrounding community or less.

Historically, the Fortune Society has seen firsthand how parolees must contend with a strong social stigma in their fight for affordable housing.

Page said she remembered how hostile the neighborhood was when they first bought property on that street, to build the

Fortune Academy—commonly known as “The Castle”—as a transitional house for homeless parolees in 1998.

“When we first moved in people were scared of us,” Page said. “But we’ve put a lot of effort into building trust with the community.”

This year “The Castle” hosted a neighborhood haunted house for Halloween that drew over 1,000 people. Page said one of her managers remarked, “Look, they trust us enough now to let us scare their kids.”

But for some local residents, fears and concerns still linger. Evelin Baldera—who did not send her children to the haunted house—said that neighbors are sometimes afraid of standing up to a powerful city-backed organization and often feel left in the dark about the development.

Pointing to the new site, she said, “The people around here don’t know exactly what’s going on over there.”

But Page emphasized that the new development would directly support the local community. “What’s really important is that people are getting priced out of the neighborhood they grew up in, the neighborhood where their families live,” she said, adding that the application process will favor West Harlem residents.

She said, “I think what we’re going to have is a very beautiful building that reflects how all people should be housed.”

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Columbia’s health care experts share opinions on recent legislation

HEALTH CARE from front page

“On balance we are making progress nationally, and that is a good thing,” said Irwin Redlener, a clinical professor at the Mailman School. “On the other hand, we’re all caught in this reality, this realpolitik, of how much can actually be achieved.”

Redlener praised the provisions of the House bill that would prevent insurance companies from denying coverage to individuals with pre-existing conditions, as well as the provision of insurance security for people when changing jobs. He also lauded the requirement that everyone purchase insurance or face a financial penalty.

But Redlener noted that, for better or for worse, a lot of time and congressional conflict remain between the bill and Obama’s signature.

“There are a lot of things that have not happened and won’t happen under the current House bill,” he said. “But it’s certainly not going to be the final thing that arrives on the President’s desk.”

Other experts were hesitant to commend even parts of the bill.

Prantik Saha, an assistant clinical professor of pediatrics at Columbia Medical School, questioned the efficacy of the government-run “public

option,” which has been one of the most contentious issues in the nearly year-long debate.

“The bill requires people to get insurance, and at the same time the government-sponsored plan in the exchange, I’ve heard, has premiums that are actually more expensive than private insurance premiums now,” Saha said.

A Congressional Budget Office report confirmed that public option premiums under the House plan would be higher than the average private insurance premium.

Saha added that he considers health insurance a right, not a privilege for those who can afford it, and he supports universal health care. Toward that end, he advocates a “single-payer” system, in which the government would be the sole provider of insurance and the private company system eliminated.

“In a single-payer system, everyone would be covered,” he said. “There would be no such thing as qualifying for coverage, and there would be no relentless drive for profit.”

But a single-payer plan would be extremely controversial—perhaps, when it came to a Congressional vote, prohibitively so. Opponents cite the core free-market principle of competition, and worry that a single-payer insurance

system would force individuals satisfied with their private insurance plans to change to a plan they like less.

Michael Sparer, department chair of health policy and management at the Mailman School, outlined three approaches to covering the approximately 50 million people who are currently uninsured: The government can expand public health insurance offered by Medicaid, Medicare, or a “public option,” it can use regulatory authority to mandate that employers offer insurance or that individuals obtain a private plan, or it can work to make private insurance more affordable and accessible.

These options are not mutually exclusive, and, Sparer noted, “The House has a very expansive bill, designed to use all of those tools,” paid for “by raising taxes on the wealthy and by cutting reimbursement rates on Medicare.”

Sparer said he believes Medicaid is the most effective route to universal coverage.

“The best way to help low-wage, uninsured folks is through a Medicaid expansion, expanding the Medicaid program, and combining that with giving people the right to buy into the Medicaid program,” Sparer said.

Peter Muennig, also a professor at the Mailman School, agreed.

“My ideal would definitely be to simply offer Medicaid plans as a universal public option that anyone could buy into at the actual cost to the government,” Muennig said. “Those who could not afford to pay at the government cost would receive a subsidy. There would be one central billing source, and one central source of medical records.”

The House legislation meets Sparer’s and Muennig’s reasoning partway, as it would extend Medicaid eligibility to individuals with incomes below 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

While Redlener, Saha, Sparer, and Muennig all champion universal coverage, Columbia Business School professor Frank Lichtenberg is not convinced such a system is feasible.

“Many other advanced industrialized countries have universal coverage, and they manage to provide health care of reasonable quality at a lower cost than we do in the United States,” Lichtenberg acknowledged. “However, to some extent, I think that other countries are free-riding or obtaining the benefits of the U.S. health care system.”

Lichtenberg explained that, in his view, one of the reasons health care is so expensive in the United States is that

Americans in many ways subsidize the rest of the world.

“We pay higher prices for drugs and other medical innovations,” Lichtenberg said. “That allows those innovations to be available to other nations at significantly lower prices.”

Asked his opinion on the public option, Lichtenberg called its prospects for Senate passage “quite low.”

But while Lichtenberg remains skeptical of the public option, Mailman School professor Wendy Chavkin said she wishes it were even stronger.

“What I would have liked to see—and I guess there’s some vague hope that in the reconciliation process [between the House and Senate] we’ll get a little closer to this—is a robust public option,” Chavkin said, calling the House plan “thin” and criticizing what she sees as its narrow focus with regard to women’s health, particularly abortion.

“They [legislators] have thus far accepted an amendment that would completely prohibit the use of any public funding for abortion,” Chavkin said. “And they’ve done it in a way that will actually make it very difficult for people to get any kind of insurance coverage for abortion.”

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THEATER

Irreverent comic Bob Saget comes to Miller

BY RUTHIE FIERBERG AND STEVEN STRAUSS
Spectator Staff Writers

Comedian Bob Saget first noticed Miller Theatre by accident. He passed by the venue while on a campus tour with his daughter, Lara Saget, now a sophomore at Barnard. “I flashed, I wonder if they do stand-up in here,” said Saget.

On Wednesday night, Miller Theatre did do stand-up, Bob Saget-style, to a sold out crowd. Organized by Bacchanal, a student-run campus organization dedicated to organizing student events and promoting Columbia spirit on campus, the event featured an opening performance by sketch comedy group Chowdah and an hour-long set from Saget.

Saget said he was honored and excited to perform for Columbia students. “I also like to give back to the schools,” he said. “It’s a really really amazing school ... and to have a kid going here is a real honor.”

Saget is known for his philanthropy as well as his comedy, and all of the proceeds from his Columbia appearance will go to the university. “It’s just nice to do something,” he said. While Saget did not choose a specific destination for the money, he expressed a desire for it to contribute toward Columbia’s arts programming. “I want it to go to the things that allow people to follow things they love to do—if it’s art, if it’s literature,” Saget said.

Saget confessed that he likes playing the college scene. “College kids love ‘Dirty Work’ and ‘Half-Baked,’ but nobody saw it when they came out, and ‘Aristocrats’ is weird and ‘Full House’ they grew up on,” said Saget. “I feel like I’m better for people of college age almost than my own age.” Saget’s hopes for the evening were high: “Hopefully it’ll be a night people tweet about.”

On Wednesday night, his comedic style was a characteristic mixture of ADD-induced grade-school potty jokes, graphic sex humor, and tailor-made jabs at Columbia. Saget’s rapid-fire approach barely left the audience time to breathe between laughs. Instead, Saget carpet-bombed the crowd with jokes—sometimes using a quick pace to compensate for a lack of creative material. “I’m a work in progress,” he said.

His stream-of-consciousness style included several self-referential asides, often referring back to earlier hilariously crude comments. While the pace took some getting used to, Saget’s Columbia-specific material kept the performance personal.

Before making his first crack at Barnard, Saget ripped into audience member Daniel Weinstein, CC ’12, for everything from his stereotypically Jewish last name to more intimate—and hidden—physical attributes. Much of Saget’s humor stemmed from attacks on individual audience members and on Columbia in general.

“When a Jew hears seven dollars [the price of admission], they show up,” he joked. Though

the humor sometimes played on stereotypes, Columbians were only too willing to laugh at both themselves and the not-so-P.C. humor.

Saget lived up to his naughty reputation, inundating the audience with no-holds-barred sexual humor. As he announced on stage, “Dick jokes, that’s what I do.”

The second half of Saget’s set featured a change of pace. The comedian sang original songs including “My Dog Licked My Balls”—a crowd favorite during what was a weaker half-hour.

Following up with the tune “Danny Tanner Was Not Gay,” Saget segued into the comedic highlight of the evening—his “Full House” material. He declared John Stamos the “gayest man on Earth” and informed the audience that Uncle Joey shaved his balls. He also recounted his usual response to girls gushing that they grew up watching him on “Full House”: “Now watch while you go down on me.”

Despite his sometimes gag-inducing material, Saget contends that he takes his profession seriously. “Comedy is an art and it’s a craft and I love it,” he said. While his career includes credits in filmmaking, television, and Broadway, Saget said, “Stand-up is an immediate thing. I liken it to a hard-drive, it’s always whirring in a performer.”

“It [comedy] is like a base station that you get to go off into other galaxies for a while,” said Saget. “But I love going back to it all the time,” he said. “It’s home plate.”



Jawad A. Bhatti / Staff Photographer

X-RATED LAUGHS | Comedian Bob Saget held no punches in his biting—and sometimes Columbia-specific—stand-up set.

BOOKS



Courtesy of PublicAffairs

HOMECOMING | Journalism School professor Kelly McMasters’ book exposes the unsafe conditions in her hometown’s nuclear lab.

J-School professor retraces her steps in new memoir

BY MERCEDES PRITCHETT
Columbia Daily Spectator

Shirley, Long Island is a town with radioactive issues—literally. In her debut novel, a memoir entitled “Welcome to Shirley,” Kelly McMasters, who obtained an MFA in literary non-fiction from Columbia in 2004, tackles the difficult issue of exposing the questionable safety of Shirley’s nuclear laboratory, Brookhaven. While McMasters’ eloquent handling of scientific issues in the book is very compelling, perhaps what is most interesting is the tender, nostalgic way in which she portrays her hometown.

“If you had asked me the year before [I wrote ‘Shirley’] if I was obsessed with my hometown, I would have said, ‘absolutely not,’” McMasters said with a laugh during an interview. “But apparently I was.”

How, then, did she start writing about Shirley? “It was when I was in the MFA program at the Columbia School of the Arts that I first realized that I wanted to write about my hometown,” McMasters recalls. “It actually started as a series of essays. For the first year and a half, every time I would sit down to write, I would write about my hometown. When I was coming close to thesis, a professor told me that I had about six or seven of these essays and they were all sort of going in the same direction. It was really scary, thinking about writing about my hometown, but it made it easier because I had left it.”

After reading “Welcome to Shirley,” it is easy to see why McMasters was reluctant to return to her past. On the surface, Shirley seems like the typical American small town—neighbors know everything about one another, children run around in the streets until their mothers call them home, and there is a certain intimacy that is the product of a close-knit community. But the shadow of the Brookhaven National Laboratory looms over the town in the form of death and disease caused by the careless treatment of the employees, who were frequently exposed to small amounts of chemical radiation.

McMasters’ descriptions of the laboratory and its history are thoroughly researched and well-written. “I had worked in the library in Shirley, and I knew they had local history archives there,” she said when asked about her research process, much of which took place in her hometown. “When I went in, it [the archive] was so rarely used that they were using it as a storage facility for books that needed to be reshelved.”

Though McMasters’ roots are in Shirley, she now teaches at the Columbia Journalism School. “It’s wonderful,” she said. “It’s funny because when I first got to Columbia, I spent most of my time walking the halls waiting for someone to tap me on the shoulder and say, ‘Oh sorry, we made a mistake. Your application actually was denied. You’re not supposed to be here.’”

The best piece of advice she had to offer as someone who has been on both sides of the lecture podium? “I sort of wish I could somehow have been a professor before I was a student because I would understand so much more about what professors go through. As a student I looked at professors as people who have their lives completely together and know absolutely everything. Later I realized that professors... they’re just human.”

“Welcome to Shirley,” which is currently on its way to becoming a documentary film, should captivate bibliophiles of all types. Though the book’s overt purpose is to address the importance of nuclear safety, especially in such close proximity to a populated area, McMasters integrates historical and scientific fact into prose so beautifully written that the book reads more like fiction than non-fiction.

TV

BY NOEMI SCHOR
Columbia Daily Spectator

Many students take comfort in the line-up of TV shows they follow. But, every once in a while, one needs to add a new show to the repertoire. So, how do students get hooked on new shows for the first time?

As a growing number of college students consistently watch TV online, one might think that TV viewing is becoming an increasingly solitary activity. But according to interviews with Columbia students, TV watchers are still striving to introduce their friends to their favorite series. “I usually start watching a new show because a friend recommends it,” said Sara Lederman, BC ’12.

Lederman claims the recommendation of a friend is powerful enough to keep her watching a show even if she finds it initially dissatisfying. “For instance,” Lederman said, “I started to watch ‘How I Met Your Mother’ because my cousin insisted that it was the best show. The first few episodes were mediocre, and I usually would have stopped watching, but I continued because my cousin was so enthusiastic. Now it’s one of my favorite shows.”

John Haney, CC ’11, agreed with Lederman. He also relayed another motivation for trying out friends’ recommendations—taking part in weekly rehashing and conversations about particular shows. “For ‘Dexter,’ ‘The Office,’ ‘Weeds,’ and ‘South Park,’ I got into it because all of my friends were always talking about them and how funny and awesome they were, so it made me want to try it out.”

With full seasons available both on DVD and online, it is now easier than ever to become



Graphic by Jin Chen

hooked on a new TV show. Sara Liben, GS/JTS ’13, said, “Over a six-day span, I watched the first two seasons of ‘How I Met Your Mother’ on DVD, and then I found the first few episodes of season three online, which I watched just in time for the newest episode to air on TV, which I continued to watch religiously every week.”

TV executives will be glad to know, however, that word of mouth alone does not determine college students’ viewing habits. If a show is well advertised, students take notice. “For ‘House,’ I just got into it through commercials and advertising,” Haney said.

But once a student has made the decision to add a new title to his or her “Favorite TV Shows” on Facebook, how does weekly viewing

become an addictive ritual? The most common way, it seems, is through a mob mentality. “My friends and I are in love with the show ‘Glee,’” said Lederman. “It is one of those shows that you need to experience with friends while belting out the songs with Lea Michele and company... I associate ‘Glee’ with spending time with my friends.” Making weekly episode viewings a group activity seems to strengthen both the bond among the viewers and the viewers’ bond with the show.

Lederman also acknowledged a secondary appeal of immersing oneself in a new cast of characters, which has nothing to do with her friendships: escapism. “It reminds me that there is a world that exists outside of Morningside Heights.”

MUSIC

Bluegrass grows on campus thanks to Lion in the Grass

BY CAROLINE CASEY
Columbia Daily Spectator

“World music” connotes exotic sounds from far off places. But Lion in the Grass, Columbia’s bluegrass band, is one of three campus world music ensembles associated with the Department of Music, along with the klezmer and Japanese gagaku bands. According to music graduate student and founder Toby King, a bluegrass band contributes something “distinctly American” to the mix.

“Whenever I hear that kind of [bluegrass] music I have this feeling of driving out to the middle of nowhere and being with my family and being on a lake or in the forest,” King said. He recounted listening to the radio in the car on the way to Maine for family vacations, and credited NPR’s A Prairie Home Companion partially for his familiarity with acoustic, folk, and bluegrass music.

“For me, bluegrass is more a texture than anything else... As soon as you hear that texture, that’s when you say ‘Oh, that’s bluegrass,’” King said, referring to the sonic layers created by the six official instruments—fiddle, five-string banjo, acoustic guitar, mandolin, upright base, and resonator guitar. “But that’s gotta be heresy to somebody,” he added. Indeed, some would argue that the genre is defined by its timing and rhythm rather than its “texture.”

Still, as King pointed out, nearly anything can be played in bluegrass style, as evidenced by the countless albums that reinterpret classics in other genres with titles such as, “Pickin’ On The Rolling Stones” and “Pickin’ On U2: A Bluegrass Tribute.”

Lion in the Grass is currently comprised mostly of undergraduates—including Spectator art editor Hannah Yudkin, BC ’11—with the exception of Nick Vogt, a graduate student of Chinese history. Having

never previously played an instrument, Vogt bravely took up the dobro—a type of resonator guitar—upon joining the band three years ago. “I try to make up for in enthusiasm what I lack in skill,” Vogt said.

Like Vogt’s journey to the band, King’s journey to Columbia was nontraditional. Working for an oil company in Denver, Colorado, before coming to Columbia, King experienced what he described as “an attack of idealism.”

“I was drilling holes in the ground, destroying the earth, and I was so miserable,” he said. So he took a year off to study music history and theory, and applied to the Columbia graduate program. He founded Lion in the Grass to bring a type of music to Columbia he felt held both nostalgic and international appeal.

“Bluegrass is also a way of interacting socially,” King said. In the case of Lion in the Grass, the educational and social components of membership go hand in hand. Budding talents like Vogt intermingle with more experienced players like Neil Pearlman, CC ’11, and Hannah Kligman, CC ’11.

Pearlman, who hails from a musically-inclined family, grew up playing piano and picked up the mandolin at age 10. Kligman, who is trained in classical violin and has also played in the klezmer band, said he finds that bluegrass “more fun than classical music.”

King requires members to learn the cues and lingo native to the bluegrass genre (such as the kickoff, the nod, and the tack). Members must play an instrument and sing, perform at least one solo—and cannot turn a solo down once it is handed to them.

Though the rules may sound daunting, King said that they all contribute to his central goal: for each band member to be able to partake adeptly in a bluegrass jam. “I’m happy to say I’ve never failed,” King said.



Courtesy of Jonathan T. King

JAM SESSION | CU’s bluegrass band Lion in the Grass features the six official instruments of the bluegrass genre.

“It’s rad to just show up and play some tunes,” said fiddle player Colin Cotter, CC ’11, after several members of Lion in the Grass played for the International Day of Climate Action on Saturday, Oct. 24. As Yoav Guttman, CC ’10, noted, “It’s good to see some organic non-electric music on a day like today under a tent. It seems natural.”

Not one to play second fiddle even to a campus legend, Lion in the Grass beat Vampire Weekend in a battle of the bands three and a half years ago. “It’s official, we’re better,” Vogt said. The band’s self-conscious and unprompted comparison to Vampire Weekend perhaps indicates another reality of being a band on Columbia’s campus—competition with new and old campus performers.

The competition, however, is friendly. King, a self-professed Vampire Weekend fan, mentioned that drummer Chris Tomson played the mandolin with Lion in the Grass in its inaugural year.

Lion in the Grass will be performing as part of an end-of-semester concert on Sunday, Dec 6 at 7 p.m. in 301 Philosophy Hall.

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR

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Staff Editorial

RetroSpec:
Today's norm was
yesterday's wish

In this week's RetroSpec, we show just how far Columbia's administration has brought this campus in terms of attracting global speakers. In this editorial, originally published on Feb. 16, 1999, the editorial board lamented the sad state of political discussion on campus. We feel confident that events such as the World Leaders Forum, last year's ServiceNation summit, and today's event with Bill Gates and Warren Buffett would please our predecessors from a decade ago.

The recent panel discussion on President Clinton's impeachment was the type of event which is all too rare at Columbia—a lively discussion of domestic politics involving academics, journalists, politicians, and interested undergraduates. For a school of its stature, Columbia does a poor job of attracting major American political figures to its campus. Marquee events are almost always organized by graduate students or faculty, and opinion expressed at them are often one-sided. For Columbia undergraduates, this campus feels far too apathetic.

Fortunately, there is a solution on the horizon. For the past three years, a small group of College Democrats and College Republican have worked to form the Columbia Political Union. This non-partisan, student-run organization would pool together the resources of different political clubs in an effort to attract prominent national speakers. The Political Union could also host election-year debates for city and state races, sponsor discussion panels, and organize voter registration drives.

Yale's Political Union provides a model of what Columbia students

could build—an organization which allows undergraduates to promote political awareness by inviting major figures to deliver their major policy address on campus.

The would-be founders of the Columbia Political Union need help from the University if they are to succeed. The Office of Public Affairs is often wary of allowing politicians to speak in Low Rotunda, citing a fear of losing the University's tax-exempt status if it hosts a partisan affair. The Political Union would be an umbrella organization that both Democrats and Republicans, and its non-partisan sponsorship would hopefully convince administrators to loosen its policies. Columbia can be non-partisan without being apathetic.

The highly successful club at Yale and Harvard's equivalent organization, the Institute of Politics, are both strongly supported by faculty and administrators, who realize that bringing prominent speakers to campus is an important part of a prestigious university.

If political science and history professors can get behind efforts to create the Political Union, and the University agrees to provide funding, Columbia can make major events like the impeachment the rule, not the exception.

Not only has the administration come a long way, but so have student organizations. The University's political groups have done a good job of bringing exciting speakers such as Rebiya Kadeer, Ann Coulter, and the leaders of the Minutemen Project to Morningside Heights. Today, Columbia prides itself as an open forum for lively discussion and debate. It appears that we have come quite a long way.

POLITICS ON STILTS



SHAINA RUBIN

Karl Kroeber, or
living and dying
in the present

BY PHILIP PETROV

Karl Kroeber—who received his Ph.D. from Columbia in 1956, and who returned to the University in 1970 after 14 years at the University of Wisconsin—passed away earlier this week. His death came just six months after his retirement.

Much has been written about the extraordinary diversity of Kroeber's interests, which centered, at various points, on Native American literature, the history of science, narrative theory, and British Romanticism. A leading proponent of the need for humanists to take stock of developments in the natural sciences, Kroeber practiced a mode of literary criticism that saw the study of literature as a means to deal with social, psychological, and environmental problems. Sidestepping the obscurantism that has become commonplace in literary studies, he taught that an understanding of the imaginative processes behind world literature might allow humanists to “contribute to the practical resolution of social and political conflicts that rend our society.”

For Kroeber, literary criticism was an opportunity to survey the ways in which storytellers of both written and oral cultures have envisioned their responsibilities to the natural environment—and to the people around them. In his “Ecological Literary Criticism,” published in 1994, Kroeber illustrated the ways in which the political engagements of various Romantic poets were founded

on their desire to live in accordance with natural processes. One of Kroeber's central aims, in fact, was to suggest that the study of literature can help everyday readers to bring their political aspirations into harmony with their obligations to the natural and social worlds in which they live.

It is almost unnecessary to point out that Kroeber devoted himself to his students, and those who knew him will agree that he had a longstanding interest in learning from those whom he taught. There were, on that note, several convictions that distinguished Kroeber's teaching and thus lent it a unique significance. Foremost among these was Kroeber's belief in the importance of imagination, which he sometimes defined as the ability to realize that things need not forever remain as they are. Kroeber saw change and evolution as universal, and he taught his students to accept the mutability of both the external universe and the human mind. He was a literary critic at home in disciplines like neuroscience and biology, for he recognized the value for social and political life of what these sciences ultimately imply—namely, that organisms and life processes cannot be understood except in terms of their interaction with other living things. He saw fundamental parallels between the human mind and the natural world, and a significant part of his work was devoted to showing that artists as dissimilar as Native American storytellers and Romantic poets had based their craft on an imaginative understanding of these parallels.

Kroeber's teaching was shaped in equal measure by his belief in the necessity for spontaneous action. The best choices, he believed, are often made by those who act impulsively, those who do not allow their fears, insecurities, or inhibitions to taint their decision-making. To some degree, at least, Kroeber's fondness for impulsiveness reflected his conviction that modern

education systems have dampened the ability of people to behave capriciously. Indeed, one of Kroeber's accomplishments was to show his students the possibility of a particular mode of living, one that emphasizes impulsiveness over brooding, exuberance over anxiety, and compassion over suspicion.

One of the most astonishing things about Kroeber, perhaps, was the fact that he seemed to be free of fear, regret, and distrust. If this observation seems bizarre or foolish, it is only because so many of us have come to accept self-doubt and unhappiness as standard components of modern life. It is, after all, difficult not to feel restless, hesitant, and unhappy once one has lost the means to imagine what human life could be. Unhappiness as the result of a simple but pervasive lack of imagination—this, one might say, was the axiom that undergirded much of Kroeber's work.

Kroeber once portrayed William Blake, whom he admired for decades, as a kind of shamanistic figure, a poet whose allegiance was not to any standard of aesthetics but to the men and women who lived, suffered, and died around him. Blake—and this is a fact that Kroeber saw more clearly than others—was committed to showing that many of the psychological sources of man's unhappiness could be cast aside, transmuted, overcome. His poetry stemmed from a desire to show that there was nothing unavoidable, nothing inexorable, about human suffering. Kroeber bore a much more striking resemblance to Blake than he would ever have admitted. In a world replete with self-promotion and self-pity, he worked—quietly and unpretentiously—to remind us of how things could be.

The author is an alumnus of the Columbia College class of 2009.

Letters to the Editor

American Studies extends learning off campus

To the editor:
We read with interest your Nov. 5 editorial, “Studying in the City of New York,” calling for more courses that “move beyond our campus and engage the city.”

We agree, and would like to call your readers' attention to several initiatives in the American studies program that encourage students to combine classroom learning with public service in the larger community.

This spring, in partnership with the Double Discovery Center, we will again offer a seminar called “Equity and Access in Higher Education” (open to students from all majors), led by former dean of students, Roger Lehecka, in which students study U.S. higher education while committing several hours per week to working with high school students from disadvantaged backgrounds who hope to become the first member of their family to attend college. Also in partnership with DDC, we are offering a year-long course on “Freedom and Citizenship” led by Roosevelt Montas, director of the Core Curriculum, for rising seniors from under-resourced public high schools. This course involves Columbia students—both undergraduates and graduates—as teachers and mentors.

We are also expanding our curriculum to include new seminars that emphasize service learning in the city. A seminar on “Immigrant New York,” to be taught by Rebecca Kobrin of the history department, is scheduled for fall 2010. In this course, students will read in the historical literature while participating in a community organization that assists new immigrants to the city.

Other such seminars are in the works for the future, and we welcome student interest.

Casey Blake, professor of history and chair of the American studies Committee on Civic Engagement

Andrew Delbanco, Julian Clarence Levi
Professor in the Humanities and director of the American studies program
Nov. 9, 2009

Sciences deserve A+ to compensate for their curve

To the editor:
Last week's Editorial Board piece, “An F for the A-plus” (Nov. 5, 2009) highlighted an important concern for many top humanities students, albeit a poorly founded one. Although the article is correct in its assertion that economics and science students are more easily able to attain above-4.0 GPAs, the Editorial Board failed to understand the risk-return relationship that justifies the current system.

Grade distributions in economics and science classes feature far more variability than those in the humanities. In other words, it is difficult to get an A or an A+ in a humanities class, but it is equally difficult to get a C or a D, provided that the student puts in a basic amount of effort. Conversely, science and economics classes are curved, meaning that a set proportion of the class will necessarily receive a C or lower, regardless of how much effort they put into studying the material. Moreover, whereas humanities students are usually graded on papers, which they have weeks to write and edit, science and economics students generally have 80 percent of their grade determined by two in-class exams.

As a result of these factors, it stands to reason that students who take science and economics classes face a larger risk of getting a bad grade. Thus, they should be compensated for this risk by the possibility of getting an A+ that is worth 4.33 points, something the current system allows.

Jon Hollander, CC '10
Nov. 7, 2009

Columnist must become more pro-active to gain from college experience

To the editor:
In response to Chris Morris-Lent's column entitled “The Columbia conundrum,” (Nov. 5, 2009)—I think “The college conundrum” would be a more fitting headline. As a parent of a college student, I can tell you that what Morris-Lent discusses is familiar to many students across the country. “It's a great school, but I hate it here—it's not for me,” is often the sentiment heard by many parents. Is it a syndrome or merely a bullet under the heading of “College Experience” or “Growing Pains”?

Whether it's a big or small school, in a city or rural, claustrophobia, loneliness, solitude, isolation, and boredom are found in heaping doses among students in ALL colleges and universities. But the problem lies not in the place per se, but in how students perceive it and their motivation to seek happiness. Surely, the pressures of surviving academically while trying to navigate through a network of social relationships can be daunting and overwhelming, and sometimes lead to alienation. However, I have yet to find a school so lacking in clubs, organizations, activities, employment, and Greek life that boredom is justified.

Instead of engaging in a perennial misery which some have succumbed to as a favorite pastime, students need to be more productive to better benefit themselves. They need to learn how to think in order to “fix” a problem. There are so many opportunities for self-enrichment at Columbia and elsewhere, and you don't have to be in a city, drive a car, or have money in your pocket to take advantage—you just need to have the right attitude and desire.

Anna M. Ruela-Browne, School of Continuing Education
Nov. 11, 2009

Senate confidentiality



RAJAT ROY

CUTTING THE BLUE TAPE

IEOR departments in SEAS, setting sexual harassment policy, and pushing for transparency from the administration, to say nothing of the infamous NROTC debates. The senate handles issues affecting faculty and staff as well. Anything of any importance spanning more than one school is addressed through the senate.

But now, two items are threatening the organization. The first is President Bollinger's statement two months ago at a senate plenary (the main meeting) that the senate is an “advisory body.” The second is a new set of “senate confidentiality guidelines” which will reduce transparency and efficacy.

The de jure powers of the senate granted by the University Statutes make it the most powerful organization on this campus, with the exception of the Board of Trustees. It can censure members of the administration and has the ability to fundamentally change policy. The administration must administrate based on those decisions. But the administration has not ceded some of the powers given to the senate and in several instances refuses to turn over information.

What is more troubling is that if the senate enacts a resolution, the administration may disregard it. Last year Billy Freeland (CC '09, SIPA '10) went committee-to-committee writing a

resolution requiring professors to post syllabi before classes started. It was vetted and approved, but at the plenary senate leaders changed wording in an effort to make it “better.”

The resolution effectively went from saying “All professors should post syllabi because it helps students plan and budget for how much textbooks will cost” to saying “The senate highly suggests that professors consider that maybe they should post syllabi if they would like to be considerate of the pocketbooks of some of their students. Maybe.”

Following this resolution, the administration took no substantial steps to send the new “requirement” to faculty.

Billy Freeland's resolution was penicillin for a problem students face. It became generic-brand cough syrup. The same thing happens to many resolutions proposed by Research Officers, faculty, and other groups.

The senate wanted to find “consensus” because it is supposedly “better” than results achieved by majority vote where someone loses. But as a result we have words without backing and an administration that views the Senate as an advisory body rather than a policy-making force.

If the senate wants to really be an effective body, it has to accept that not all real change will occur with “consensus.”

The second action in the senate right now is part of an effort to get more information from trustees. Some senators want to make all Senate committee minutes sealed for FIFTY YEARS. This move, headed by CC Senator Monica Quaintance, is the most reckless proposal I have ever seen.

The senate was created to provide representation. The definition of representation has evolved over the last 40 years since the inception of the Senate to include transparency. This proposal runs counter to that. Plain and simple.

What is even more astonishing is that the senate wants MORE transparency from the

administration and from the Trustees, but they are willing to sacrifice that same transparency for their constituents. Where is the representation in that?

The rationale for 50-year secrecy is that people should be free to express themselves in meetings. Senator Quaintance worries she may say something in a meeting that could be used against her when she runs for political office in 25 years.

With all due respect to Monica, who I consider a friend, I disagree. My individual opinion does not matter in any meeting I enter. What matters is the opinion and best interests of SEAS students. I represent them. At no point should I ever say anything that is against the interest of my constituency. That is my responsibility as an elected official.

This move toward secrecy is something dangerous which needs to be settled at the next meeting of the senate. They should be told that the policy goes against everything that the senate stands for.

The members of the University Senate are there to help their constituencies and they know that the University is here to educate students. However, the view of the senate as an “advisory body” rather than a “policy-making body” and a move towards secrecy will inhibit that mission and will make the Senate defunct and cause it to fall into a hole of irrelevance.

The danger is clear and present. What steps the senate takes now will shape its future and, in turn, the future of the university itself.

Rajat Roy is a School of Engineering and Applied Science senior majoring in industrial engineering and operations research with a minor in environmental engineering. He is a University senator from SEAS. Cutting the Blue Tape runs alternate Thursdays. opinion@columbiaspectator.com

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Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Nichols Lewis

ACROSS

1 FBI sting that began during Carter's presidency

7 In this way

11 Trapped-out message

14 Sheep herder

15 Old World Style sauce maker

16 Hawaiian Punch rival

17 All-big-gun battleship

19 It might be pale or brown

20 Blackguards

21 Powerful health care lobbying gp.

22 Budget noodle dish

24 Deeply ingrained habit

26 TV sched.

31 Most piquant

32 Extremely cold

34 Birthplace of "Wayne's World," briefly

35 Cheese in a ball

39 Shanghai

42 Gap subsidiary

44 "The Time Machine" leisure class

45 Org. with the blog Greenversations

47 Further off the beaten path

48 Convenience store

52 Hard-rock filler

53 Cuba or Puerto Rico, e.g.

57 Parisian's "Presto"

58 Family nickname

59 "... the hint!"

63 Lill neighbors

64 Human fingerprint, and what's hidden in five puzzle answers

68 ... Peroli: Pacific Northwest tribe

69 Irish Rose's beau

70 Prepare to slip off

71 Museum filler

72 Barbecue site

73 Singer Shereen

DOWN

1 Type of elec. adapter

2 Afghanistan's Tora ... region

3 Huskies' burden

4 School group

5 Help

6 Serious threat

7 Unauthorized attendees

8 Broom rider

9 Exclamation with a shudder

10 Buddha's teachings

11 SeaWorld celebrity

12 Carrier of crude

13 Dramatic segment

18 Songwriter Toni

23 Show up

25 University founder Cornell

26 Pebbles' pet notation

27 "Little" Dickens girl

28 Play-as-you-go

29 Cook, in a way

30 Gucci of fashion

33 Mink or baby

36 Pop, to sally

37 Parade rite, maybe

38 Vidal's Breckinridge

40 Remain undecided

41 Picouette

43 Inflict on

46 Gathered up

49 When Rome wasn't built?

50 Play to ... draw

51 Off-color

53 Trump with a cameo in "The First Wives Club"

54 Not even Ispay

55 "Faust Symphony" composer

56 Physician Bohr

60 Swarm insect

61 Nestlé cereal beverage

62 High schooler

65 Jazz org.?

66 Balloon filler

67 Italian "si"

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

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MITCH	TORTILLAS	
ALWAYS	ONTIME	
KEILLOR	UNAIDED	
ESTA	ROBO	GLAZE
TER	OSTE	LEA
FOREVER	YOURGIRL	
ROO	ELAL	NYE
ONAIR	DEAN	TERR
NANDELA	LEGATEE	
ETERNAL	FLAME	
STRATAGEM	LILAS	
AWOL	SUMO	AFIRE
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xwordeditor@aol.com 11/12/09

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By Kathy Blakely
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New blood key for Light Blue in 2009-2010

WOMEN'S SWIMMING from back page

to compete as strongly as it did last year.

Kristin Hehir joins Columbia divers Casey Bresee and Stephanie Foster on the boards. Hehir earned seven varsity letters in high school, was the captain of

her swimming and diving team as a senior, and is a two-time Massachusetts Division 2 state champion. Renee Brown and Alex Hammerberg join the Lions in the breaststroke, while Molly Dengler and Lacey Harris-Coble swim the backstroke in addition to the individual medley and butterfly,

respectively. Dengler is a 16-time All-Ohio honoree and state champion in the 200 IM and 200 free.

In addition, Columbia welcomes a handful of free and fly swimmers. Among their many combined accomplishments, Bunge Okeyo earned first place in the 500 free in the Junior Olympics and Kristina Parsons is a two-time Marin County Athletic League champion in the 100 fly. Lastly, Katie Meili joins the Light Blue in the pool for the IM and free events. Meili is a seven-time TAPPS (Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools) state champion and a USA Swimming National Team member.

The 10 freshmen join an already strong and skillful swim

squad anchored by returning seniors Hobbs, Hughes, Delghi Urubshurow, Caitlin Bertelsen, and Katie Omstead who are all hungry for titles in their final collegiate season. Urubshurow had an impressive season last year as part of the school-record-holding 200 free relay squad and as a finalist in three individual events at the Ivies while Bertelsen was awarded the team's Most Improved award in 2009 for her breakthrough as an Ivy point-scorer in three events including the 400 IM, 100 breast, and 200 fly.

The Lions start their season and look to pick up their first victory against Yale on Friday, Nov. 13, at home in Uris Pool.

Men's swimming to rely on seasoned veterans

MEN'S SWIMMING from back page

Lions' top swimmers were lost to graduation. This year, Columbia will be without the leadership of Glassman, Lee, Ko, and Cedric Cheung-Lau, just to name a few. In addition, this year's diving squad will be without graduated senior Jeff Hull.

In order for the Lions to be competitive this year, they will have to rely on young freshman talent. The 2009-2010 roster features 16 freshmen, who should fill the void left by the graduated seniors, especially in the diving squad, which has been in need of new athletes. The three freshmen looking to give the diving team a much-needed boost are Michaelangelo Borghi from New Jersey, and Jason Collazo and Joshua Holowinski from New York. They will be led by junior David Levkoff.

"I think our junior diver Dave Levkoff has the potential to be a significant force on the boards," head coach Jim Bolster said.

The success of the season, however, does not rest on the shoulders of the newcomers, but instead on

those of returning swimmers. The Lions will rely on the consistency and leadership of seniors Nick Barron, Ross Ramone, and Pagan.

"Senior captains Nick Barron, Darren Pagan, and Ross Ramone have a wealth of dual and championship meet experience and success, and should be the guys who lead us in a record-breaking season," Bolster said.

In addition, the Light Blue will succeed if its sophomores live up to the expectations that they set last year. Two swimmers to note are sophomore Bruno Esquen and sophomore Alex Smith. Esquen took third place in the 100-yard butterfly in last year's ECAC championships, while Smith posted the top dual-meet times in both the 1000-yard freestyle and the 1650-yard freestyle.

Whether or not the returning swimmers can improve on last season's results will become clearer over the course of this season. The team's first test will come this Friday, when Columbia travels to Penn for a 5 p.m. meet. On Saturday at 4 p.m. Columbia will host Yale in the season's first home meet.

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Following last week's loss to Harvard, the Columbia football team will travel to Ithaca this weekend to face Cornell in its final road game of 2009.

TOMORROW



SPORTS

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2009 • PAGE 8



Looking to snap a four-game losing streak, the men's soccer team will face the Big Red this weekend in its final competition of the season.

TOMORROW

Tennis deserves equal opportunity to attract fans



KUNAL GUPTA

MOVING THE CHAINS

The Lions Den Student Rewards program has been met with a mixed response from the student body. The program was launched by the athletics department in an effort to boost student attendance at home sporting events. At pre-designated home games, students swipe their IDs, and at the end of the year, all swipes will be added up. Based on the number of games a student has attended, prizes are awarded that range from t-shirts to a laptop computer. Regardless of whether you think that the program will bring more fans to the stadium or that it's inherently flawed, there is one team whose exclusion from the list of games is more than surprising.

The men's tennis team is, in my opinion, the best team at Columbia today. Not only have the Lions won two of the past three Ivy League titles—in 2007 and 2009—but they have dominated individual competition as well. In the ITA Regional Championships, the biggest singles and doubles tournament of the fall, the Lions have sent a representative to the National Indoor Championships every year since 2006. In 2006, then-junior Jared Drucker advanced in singles. In 2007 senior Justin Chow and junior Bogdan Borta won the doubles title. In 2008 Borta advanced to nationals again, this time in singles. The Lions finished last season as the No. 1 team in the Northeast, ahead of traditional sports powerhouses including Penn State and Boston College. Just this season, senior Mihai Nichifor beat the No. 17 player in the country in three sets at the ITA All-American Championships, one of the nation's most prestigious collegiate tennis tournaments.

Despite its success on the court, the men's tennis team has not garnered the fan support that it deserve. I've been to virtually every home match since 2008, and I've never seen more than 30 or 40 students show up to support the team. In fact, at the pivotal Ivy League match against Brown in the spring of 2009, I'm pretty sure that the Brown parents and alumni outnumbered the Columbia fans at the game. The one time recently that the Lions got a huge outpouring of support was in 2007, when they played Penn in a playoff for the Ivy title. The Lions won that match to advance to the NCAA tournament, and any player who was there will tell you that the home crowd made a difference in a tight, 4-1 win. Everyone who I have talked to about that match has spoken excitedly about what the atmosphere was like in the Dick Savitt Tennis Center bubble that afternoon, descriptions ranging from a European soccer game to playoff football in January.

Consider that for just a second. When was the last time anyone compared a sporting event at Columbia to a playoff football game?

In some ways, the tennis center is ideally built for a small but vocal cheering section. There are six courts, with bleachers separating the third and fourth courts, along with more bleachers near the first court and the sixth court. When individual matches finish before the overall outcome is decided, spectators and teammates are allowed to watch ongoing matches from the courts on which the matches were completed. Spectators not only have the ability to watch some of the nation's best collegiate tennis players, but to watch them so closely that anyone could reach out and grab the tennis ball in play.

Nevertheless, students rarely come out to support the team. One way to increase fan attendance at games would be to add men's tennis to the Student Rewards program. Personally, I nominate the biggest match of the spring, when Columbia will host its biggest rival, Harvard.

The official stance of the Columbia athletics department is that they cannot include the men's and women's tennis teams in the program due to the limited seating capacity of the tennis bubble.

The tennis bubble can hold between 100 and 125 people on any given day. I say if you have to cap admission to the tennis bubble at 100, then so be it. Announce it on the Web site and in the flyers around campus that only the first 100 fans will be let into the bubble, so if students really care about the team, they will show up early for the match. Let the first 100 fans, the most dedicated ones, in and force those who show up late to wait until someone leaves.

The Student Rewards program can work, and I believe that to some extent it has. While there will always be some students who simply go to the event, swipe their IDs to get credit for attendance and then leave, many more students actually show up to support the home team. People that I have talked to have commented on how exciting a volleyball match is, or how talented the men's soccer team is, despite its overtime loss to No. 23 Brown. It's time for students to see how good the men's tennis team at Columbia really is. As for the players themselves, they would rather play in front of 100 raucous fans than the meager crowd that shows up for most matches. I can guarantee you that.

Kunal Gupta is a junior in the School of Engineering and Applied Science majoring in operations research.

sports@columbiaspectator.com



File photos

TIED FOR FIFTH | After ending last season one game shy of the conference championships, the Lions hoped that their four returning all-Ivy honorees, including Player of the Year Sophie Reiser, would lead them to an equally successful, if not better, season in 2009. The Light Blue ended the year 3-3-1 in the league.

Lions' high expectations squashed in 2009

Women's soccer fails to capitalize on strong returning roster

BY SARAH SOMMER
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

After a 2008 campaign that saw the Columbia women's soccer team fall just one win short of the Ivy League championship, the Lions entered 2009 with high expectations. Columbia had lost just two starters and returned four all-Ivy honorees, including senior midfielder and Player of the Year Sophie Reiser. Nevertheless, the Lions (7-7-3, 3-3-1 Ivy) finished the season tied with Princeton for fifth place in the league.

Columbia began the year with two consecutive losses in the Husky/Nike Invitational, allowing three goals to Washington and five to Portland. While Columbia did not score against the Huskies, senior midfielder Christina Eckhardt found the back of the net in the 83rd minute against the Pilots.

Columbia rebounded from the defeats in its home opener, a 4-0 thrashing of Manhattan College. Junior defender Kelly Hostetler scored the first goal and Reiser finished the scoring with her second career hat trick. In its next matchup, Columbia beat Iona with a 3-1 score. Reiser scored in the 25th minute, while sophomore forward Ashlin Yahr gave the Lions their final two goals of the game.

The Lions fought Hofstra to a 1-1 tie on Sept. 18 but dropped a 2-1 decision against

St. John's just two days later. Yahr recorded both of Columbia's tallies in that stretch. On Sept. 22, the Lions picked up a 3-2 victory over Central Connecticut State behind one goal from Hostetler and two from sophomore forward Marissa Schultz.

Columbia opened Ivy play with a 1-0 win at Cornell, as Yahr scored on a header in the 15th minute. The Lions struggled in their next game, however—a 1-0 defeat to nonconference foe Colgate. On Oct. 3, Columbia's offensive woes continued in a 1-0 loss to Brown.

Yahr ended the Lions' scoring drought on Oct. 5, when she led Columbia to a 1-1 tie at Lehigh. She followed that performance with a two-goal effort in the Lions' 4-2 victory over Penn. Reiser and junior forward Chrissy Butler also scored for Columbia in the Oct. 10 matchup.

Columbia continued to shine offensively in a 3-1 win at Marist. While the Lions did not score against Princeton on Oct. 17, they also held the Tigers scoreless in the stalemate. Columbia came out flat at Dartmouth the following weekend, however, and suffered a 2-0 loss.

The Lions proved that their performance against the Big Green was an anomaly with a 1-0 win over Yale on Oct. 30. The Bulldogs entered the game tied with Harvard for first place in the Ivy League standings, but Columbia caused

them to fall to second. Reiser scored in the 37th minute to lead the Lions to victory.

Columbia closed the season against Harvard on Nov. 7. Before facing the Lions, the Crimson already had clinched a share of the conference title. A Columbia win and a Yale win would have forced Harvard into a tie with Yale for the league championship, but the Lions were unable to deliver. Nevertheless, Columbia did not go down easily.

The Crimson scored early in the first half and seemed in position to win in regulation. With only 15 seconds left in the second period, however, the Lions knotted the score. Senior defender Meggie Ford set up the Columbia goal with a free kick that junior defender Lauren Cooke headed into the net. Despite entering overtime with momentum, the Lions fell to the Crimson halfway through the extra period.

This spring, Columbia will lose Eckhardt and three starters—Reiser, Ford, and midfielder Ashley Mistele—to graduation, but the Lions have enough depth to contend for the Ivy title in 2010. Yahr, Columbia's top scorer this season with eight tallies, will again be expected to lead the offense. Schultz and Butler should also be scoring threats, while Hostetler and Cooke have proven that they can bolster the Lions' back line.



File photo

MAKING A SPLASH | Caitlin Bertelsen was named Columbia's Most Improved swimmer last season after scoring points in three events.

Light Blue welcomes fresh energy to roster

BY SARA SALZBANK
Spectator Staff Writer

Last season the women's swimming and diving team saw marked improvement in depth and talent. The Lions equaled their best-ever dual meet finish with an overall record of 9-2 (5-2 Ivy) before placing fifth at the Ivy League Championship. This year, under the guidance of returning head coach Diana Caskey and with the help of some new faces, the Lions will look to improve upon last season's record and finish the year with a strong Championship performance.

At the end of the 2008-2009 season, Columbia said goodbye to some key contributors. Hannah Galey, Megan

Brown, Megan Pierce, Joanna Corby, and tri-captains Bridgette McCabe, Lauren Fraley, and Shannon Hosey all graduated, leaving the team under the leadership of the class of 2010. The 2008-2009 season was highlighted by important contributions from many of last year's graduating seniors. During the dual-meet season, Fraley and Galey combined with seniors Christina Hughes and Allison Hobbs for a new pool record in the 200-yard free relay with a time of 1:36.89, while Hosey was runner-up on both the 1- and 3-meter boards at the Ivy Championships, picking up key points for Columbia.

This year the women's swimming and diving team welcomes freshman newcomers in hopes of attaining the same balance that allowed it

SEE WOMEN'S SWIMMING, page 7



File photo

TOUCHING THE WALL | Senior Darren Pagan returns this year after breaking two varsity records last season in the 200-yard back and 200-yard IM.

Columbia looks to experienced swimmers for success

BY BART LOPEZ
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

A new season means new opportunities for the Columbia men's swimming and diving team. Last year the Lions finished with a 5-6 overall record and a 3-4 Ivy League mark. At the Ivy Championships, Columbia placed fifth with 862.5 points, finishing behind Princeton, Harvard, Cornell, and Yale, in that order. Princeton took back the title from Harvard with 1663.5 points to Harvard's 1311.5.

Despite the disappointing finish, many of Columbia's top swimmers posted impressive times throughout the season and even set a number of new school records. Then-senior Zach Glassman broke the varsity

records in the 100- and 200-yard breaststroke with times of 55.84 and 1:59.24 respectively. Current senior Darren Pagan also broke two varsity records last year in the 200-yard backstroke and the 200-yard IM. Even more impressive than the individual finishes were the times put up by the Lions' relay teams. The 200-yard medley relay team consisting of Pagan, Glassman, then-senior Steve Ko, and current junior Adam Powell broke the school record with a time of 1:30.40. Three of the previous swimmers, Powell, Ko, and Pagan, also joined up with then-senior John Dragelin to break the 200-yard freestyle record in a time of 1:20.60. However, these impressive times will be hard to repeat in the 2009-2010 season as many of the

SEE MEN'S SWIMMING, page 7

Season
Preview

Season
Preview