



Volume XCV Number 13

October 16, 1989

BARNARD BULLETIN



Bulletin Focuses on Issues of Race and Racism

Many Works About Women of Color Featured At Media Services Film Festival

◆
Students of Color Absent
from Multiracial Groups
Addressing Racism

◆
Women of Color Organize
To Combat Dual Prejudice

◆
Mapantsula: Finally a Film
About South Africa by
South Africans

BEAR ESSENTIALS

PROGRAM PLANNING FOR THE SPRING TERM is only three weeks away. As an initial step you may want to scan the Catalogue (spring courses numbers end in "Y") and consult the Course Resource File in the Office of the Dean of Studies, 105 Milbank, center table by the receptionist's desk. The file supplements catalogue information with details supplied by the instructors themselves. If a spring course in which you are interested should not be on file, do notify Dean Bornemann so that the information you are seeking may be secured before the end of the current semester. Do bear in mind your fulfillment of degree requirements (pp. 29-32 Catalogue). Remember, too, that the second semester of elementary-level foreign language (or a more advanced course if you qualify) must be satisfactorily completed to receive degree credit for the first-semester course. Consider having a leisurely conference with your adviser now when her appointment schedule is likely to be more open than it will be next month.

FIRST-YEAR AND TRANSFER STUDENTS who have not filed the required medical report and questionnaire with the Office for Health Services are urged to do so immediately. The information these forms supply is needed in your interest, for it enables the College physicians to be fully responsive to your health needs. Moreover, a complete medical history is sometimes crucial to appropriate treatment in an emergency.

SOPHOMORES: Deadline for Harry S. Truman Foundation scholarships is MONDAY, OCTOBER 16. Please see Dean Dorothy Denburg, 105 Milbank, x42024 if you have a GPA over 3.4 and are considering a career in government service.

STUDY SKILLS: Dean Denburg offers three-week mini-course covering note-taking, time management, effective study techniques TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 23, 30, at 12 noon, Centennial. Sign up in Centennial Hall Office by OCTOBER 16.

PROTECT YOURSELF! Six-week workshop on sexual coercion meets Tuesdays, 4-5 pm, Brooks Living Room. It is intended to empower women through knowledge, skill, and mutual support. OCTOBER 17: Akiba Taimaya will speak as a representative from New York Women Against Rape. OCTOBER 24: Presentation will be made by Denise Santiago, Roosevelt Rape Intervention Center.

BEREAVEMENT GROUP MEETS at hours to be announced. Call Dean Silverman, Office of the Dean of Studies, x42024, or Dr. Harrington, Office of Health Services, x42091.

REACHING YOUR ACADEMIC POTENTIAL GROUP meets at hours to be announced. Call Dean Silverman, x42024.

RUSSIAN HOUSE holds conversation hours and cultural activities. Call Anna Meytina, x36759(58) for further information about services to students.

NOTES FROM SGA

SGA proudly boasts a suggestion board across from our office, which students regularly use to vent their frustrations and complaints. Usually we are able to respond to the issues raised and as a result of our correspondence with administrators, many successful changes have taken place in health services, food services, college activities and other facilities at Barnard.

Sometimes the complaints are out of our scope, so when a student complained that the toilets on the 4th floor of Centennial Hall were broken, and another student complained that there should be Raisinets in the vending machines, we casually let it pass.

However, horrifyingly, one student used the suggestion space to unleash his or her unacceptable prejudice. On Tues-

day October 10, SGA noticed that someone had written "There are too many fags at this school." This type of attitude expressed by any member of the Columbia University community is completely disgusting.

We realize the need for immediate action and are currently planning a new system of reporting any harassment. This unfortunately does not solve the larger problem, it merely serves as a way of coping with the symptoms, not the disease.

We are therefore asking the larger Barnard community to help us eradicate prejudice and intolerance on campus. We are looking for suggestions from all students. Please to come to us with programming ideas and suggestions. This is something for which our suggestion board can and should be used. ♦

Attention Mac Gods and Goddesses:

The Barnard Bulletin is looking for students who are proficient in Pagemaker™ to help with layout.

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BARNARD BULLETIN

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The Barnard Bulletin is published on Mondays throughout the academic year. Letters to the editor are due in our office by 5pm the Wednesday preceding publication. Opinions expressed in the Barnard Bulletin are those of the authors and not necessarily of Barnard College.

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FROM THE EDITOR

In this issue terms such as women of color, black, African-American, Hispanic, white and Latina are not used in a consistent fashion. This is not a mistake.

Each of the authors has deliberately used these terms in accord with their own thinking on issues of race and ethnicity.

Many of this week's writers want the reader not to think only about the ideas on

the page but also about the more subtle ways in which the words chosen affect the message being given.

Recognizing that the power of language goes beyond the definition one finds in a standard dictionary, *Bulletin* has chosen to leave the terms as the authors have used them.

IN THIS ISSUE

Exploring Race Issues In Multiracial Groups 6

— by Jessica Malberg

Women of Color Organize On Their Own 8

— Bulletin Staff

Letters	4	Women's Issues	10	Faerie Tales	21
Bulletins	5	Arts	14		
Features	6	Point of View	18		

Deconstructing the Canon: A Criminal Offense

To the editor:

I normally do not feel compelled to write letters such as this one concerning your publication. However, after reading the October 9 issue, I felt that it was necessary.

Although I found it quite humorous, in a bratty sort of way, I was deeply disturbed by the "Deconstructing the Canon" polemic that was published in your "Women's Issues" section. My problem is not with the actual points that the writers tried to make — they were every bit as stale, obvious, bitter, and trite as I would have expected them to be. My problem is, however, with the factual inaccuracies and misanthropic reinterpretations of the issues at hand.

For starters, if Brown, Henry, and Monroe would like to define words and/or terms, I suggest that, for the future, they invest in a dictionary. With good ol' Noah Webster's best at their side, they wouldn't define "canon" as "a list of good taste," when it actually is a "body of principles, rules, standards, or norms" (certainly nothing like what was mentioned in the article).

Furthermore, while the argument might be made that these women belong, carved in stone, somewhere on the Butler facade, the proper location is certainly not alongside Plato, Virgil, et al. The suitable location for these names is along the second tier of the Butler facade, next to names such as Melville, Clay, Webster, and other great writers, politicians, and philosophers of the modern era. I would be amazed if even the most narrow-minded feminist would consider, with the issue of gender excluded, Emily Dickinson or Ines De La Cruz to be on the same level as Plato, Aristotle, Homer, and the others.

In conclusion, the solution to the problem is not to "cover all the names on Butler Library." Destruction of our greatest minds to accommodate some lesser lights is not only simple-minded, it's criminal! Instead, the rational and proper solution is to recognize the validity of the "white men carved in stone" and to add the names of worthy women and minorities on the lower tier — if they rightfully belong. I sincerely hope that Brown, Henry, and Monroe get their facts straight and know better next time.

Adam J. Levitt (CC '90)

Fed Up? Join the Auxiliary Police

To the editor:

I would like to comment on an article written by a few Barnard seniors who were recently pushed and verbally abused by some black teenagers (Sept. 18, *Barnard Bulletin*). As a male graduate student and a long time member of the Columbia University community, I have some provoking thoughts to share with those young women who unfortunately experienced a negative aspect of our great city.

The New York City judicial system simply does not have the capacity to deal with violation complaints (a violation carries at most up to fifteen days in prison for an adult). The crime situation in the city is in a state of "controlled chaos." Someone who had been very close to me was raped a few years ago and I have observed the effects such an atrocious crime can have on the victim. I have seen muggings and pickpocketings. Simply stated: New York City is a zoo.

Yet, at best the New York City police can only keep us from experiencing absolute bedlam.

So what do we do? Focus our energies on minor occurrences? No! Instead of trying to make a useless example of a few teenagers who are incensed with the system and feel that their unenviable socioeconomic position earns them the right to go "wilding," I suggest that members of the Columbia community join the New York City Auxiliary Police Force (APF) as I have.

The auxiliary program is an excellent low profile approach that allows members of the local community to help control the chaos by participating in uniformed patrols. I assure you that after these seniors completed the sixteen week APF course they would view walking down Broadway in completely different manner. In my APF graduating class over 40% of the new auxiliary police officers were female. The women and men of the Auxiliary Police Force are people dedicated to making their communities safer and improving everybody's quality of life. They do not waste their time by burdening the already overtaxed enforcement system.

Inquiries concerning the auxiliary program can be made by calling the local precinct and asking for the auxiliary police coordinator.

Tavor White

"Works by Women" Festival Features *Salaam Bombay*

Salaam Bombay, which won the Camera D'Or Award at the 1988 Cannes Film Festival and the 1988 New York Film Festival, highlighted the thirteenth annual "Works by Women" festival held last Thursday and Friday at Barnard. The festival is sponsored by the Barnard Library Media Services.

Salaam Bombay was directed by Mira Nair, whose earlier, shorter works were shown at the 1982 and 1983 Works by Woman festivals.

"This festival has seemed to have charted her work, and we thought that this was the culmination of [Nair's] work," said Director of Media Services Christine Bickford.

The festival also featured documentary works on Isadora Duncan, Alice Walker, and Olympia Dukakis. Elena Featherston, who produced the Walker piece, and Dayna Goldfine, who produced the Duncan pieces, each held an open forum after the showing of their

documentaries. In addition, a discussion with Tula Goenka, the assistant Editor of "Salaam Bombay," was held after the movie.

The films are picked from about 250 to 500 entries submitted yearly for the festival.

"When the program was first set up, it was done jointly with the Women's Center, and because it was in the seventies, there was more emphasis on consciousness-raising works," Bickford said. "As the program developed and the media center took over, there was more of an emphasis on production, and now we look at the technical aspect of the piece as well, such as an innovative use of media or directing."

Traveling Light, by Jane Aaron, for example, traces the light movement through an interior over the course of a day.

"This is a really great way to show women directors and producers experi-

menting with different media," said Leah Kopperman (BC '89), who worked on last year's festival.

Works by Women is sponsored in part by the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. According to Bickford, there have been fewer grants for festivals like these in the past years, so programs like "Works by Women" have become increasingly rare and increasingly popular.

"We are expecting to sell out at least one night, since we are getting coverage from not only our publicity office, but the *Sunday New York Times* and the *Village Voice*," Bickford said.

Other programs included, *Of Snakes, Moons, and Frogs* by C.L. Monroe, and *Cadillac Dreams* by Matia Karrel, which was nominated for Best Live Action Short Film at the 1988 Academy Awards.

—Jessica Malberg

85 Attend "Housing for All" March

Somewhere between 150,000 and 250,000 people participated in the "Housing for All" march and rally in Washington DC on October 7 — 85 of whom were Barnard College and Columbia University students mobilized by BC Help for the Homeless.

The protestors, who came from all over the country and included homeless people from San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles and other smaller cities, walked from the Washington Monument to the Capitol Building, where they then held a rally.

Jesse Jackson, Loretta Scott King, local politicians and national housing advocates, such as Mike Schneider, spoke at the rally. Supporters at the march also included performer Tracy Chapman and members of the rock group Jefferson Airplane.

According to Co-Coordinator of BC Help for the Homeless Adam Lindgrin (CC '90), the most significant participants were the homeless marching for themselves. By demanding their own political legislation, the homeless make themselves visible to the federal government and the general public, he

continued on page 16

Alcoholic Awareness Week

Among college women who drink alcohol, about 15% drink heavily. Studies also show a correlation between how much a woman drinks and how well she performs in school. It's also been shown that alcohol damages a woman's body much faster than a man's.

These alarming facts are one of the reasons Barnard College has joined 3,000 other schools across the country in dedicating this week to raising awareness about the dangers of alcohol.

Alcoholic Awareness Week runs from October 16 to October 20, and Barnard staff and other professionals are hosting a wide range of programs that provide information on alcohol, alcoholism and the potential problems facing women who drink. This is the first year Barnard has participated in the national program.

According to statistics cited at last year's Penn State Alcoholic Awareness Week, 50% of women college students who had GPAs above 3.5 don't drink and 60% of women with GPAs below 2.0 do. More than half of women with low GPAs are considered heavy drinkers, these statistics say. (Someone

continued on page 16

Addressing Issues of Race and Racism Through Multiracial Groups

— by Jessica Malberg

In recent years, Barnard College and Columbia University, as well as many other campuses across the nation, have seen an increase in the number of reported incidents of racial and sexual harassment within their confines.

In the last four years at Barnard and Columbia a racially motivated attack against a black Columbia College student took place outside of Ferris Booth Hall, racially harassing graffiti disgraced the walls of Barnard dormitories, and most recently four white female students were racially and sexually harassed by a group of black teenagers.

These incidents among many others have forced students, faculty and administrators to address the issues of race and racism within the University.

And in the past year, both Barnard's Student Government Association (SGA) and the Columbia University Senate established groups designed to examine issues of racism and harassment; two of which are Barnard's Committee on Ethnicity and Columbia's Coalition for Racial Awareness (CARA), both of which have had difficulties attracting students of color.

Committee on Ethnicity

The Committee on Ethnicity was formed in response to the racist graffiti in both Centennial Hall and other parts of the Quad and its most visible product so far has been the Barnard College Harassment Policy. This policy outlines Barnard's commitment against all forms of racial, ethnic, sexual and sexually-oriented harassment.

The group's sub-committees are continuing with a number of projects that focus on increasing the diversity at Barnard, educating students about all cultures and backgrounds and promoting multicultural sensitivity. The programming sub-committee, for example, is presently working with this past year's orientation multi-cultural committee, to find ways to improve multi-cultural pro-

gramming during First-Year Orientation. The recruitment sub-committee is continuing people of color recruitment weekends, as well as encouraging students to recruit students from their hometowns.

However, some students feel that there is an inherent flaw in the Committee on Ethnicity because even though the committee has invited students of color to join, few such students have chosen to participate.

According to SGA President Leora Joseph (BC '90) who sits on the Committee on Ethnicity, "The different sub-committees are open to all students, especially women of color."

Yet, the President of the Barnard Organization of Black Women (BOBW) Nekesa Moody (BC '91), who is also a member of the committee, said there aren't many students of color because, "A lot of students don't know about the [Committee on Ethnicity]."

Moody added that the committee recruited her due to her involvement in BOBW.

Both Moody and Joseph said the committee plans to get more students of color involved in the committee. "We are going to try to recruit even more people, especially minority women," said Moody.

According to Joseph, "The committee also intends to speak with many of the minority women's groups and women of color groups, something that was not done last year."

CARA

The Committee on Ethnicity is not

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Many students of color say they do not want to participate in groups in which most of the members are white, such as the Committee on Ethnicity and CARA, for fear of assuming the responsibilities of a "token minority student."
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the only group designed to include students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds that has had trouble attracting students of color. CARA, a student group that focuses on sensitivity training, has admitted facing similar difficulties — difficulties that may have resulted in the group's demise.

Many students of color say they do not want to participate in groups in which most of the members are white, such as the Committee on Ethnicity and CARA, for fear of assuming the responsibilities of a "token minority student."

They also said that the small percentage of students of color on the campus makes it even more difficult for the African-American, Latino, Chicano, and Asian communities that exist here. Many groups would like and encourage more women of color to participate in their committees. Yet the limited number of students of color can join only so many groups.

Alianza Latina Americana (ALA) President Lilliam Alfaro (BC '90), who was a member of CARA, said she left CARA, "because it didn't seem that much was being done. I think a little more is being done by the Committee on Ethnicity, but not much. I also feel that it was a gross oversight by [the Committee on Ethnicity] not to ask for suggestions from any of the minority groups."

Representative-At-Large Lisa Gersten (BC '90), who was a member CARA, and a number of other organizations that have sought the participation of women of color, offered yet another explanation for the problem.

"I have found that [students of color] need their own groups to strengthen themselves first. You need to see more

people like yourself, with the same kind of background and experience before you can be expected to join groups where you might be the only woman of color," said Gersten.

She said more activities should be co-sponsored by women of color groups and other organizations so that, "the students of color aren't necessarily teachers. In CARA last year, lots of times they were teaching us about racism, and that wasn't the point of them participating in the program."

Gersten also blamed some of CARA's problems on a lack of organization. "The group really emphasized coalition building, and was a great experience. It really made us look at ourselves and how we really feel. . . But this year, problems occurred with the original facilitator that were out of our control. . ."

However, despite both groups' concerns about low levels of participation by students of color and despite the possibility that CARA will become inactive this year, students expressed some optimism about Barnard College's and Barnard students' commitment to combating racism.

"I'm not going to say that there is a better racial climate or less harassment because of the committee, but I think that this administration here [at Barnard] is a little more approachable and willing to change," Moody said.

Yet, others feel that the role that the administration has pursued is negligible. Alfaro said that she does not, "see the administration doing much more [to combat racism and harassment] than before — a little, if any. In my dealings with the Alianza Latino, I haven't seen them as any more approachable. In fact, the Alianza has usually been given a po-

lite brush-off."

"We as students have to be able to make change for ourselves - the administration isn't going to do it. Now that we know that the administration is willing to listen to us and change, we have to take advantage of their changed attitudes, otherwise nothing will get done," said Moody. ♦

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Women of Color Organize On Their Own

— Bulletin Staff

Amidst the national surge in racist attacks, the number of incidents of harassment directed particularly against women of color has increased dramatically. The prejudice these women face is two-fold, for they are being harassed both as women and as people of color.

"China doll," "Niggress," and "Spic," are just a few of the names women of color hear regularly, and in response to this climate and in order to directly address the needs and concerns of women of color, Barnard College and Columbia University women of color have begun forming support groups, such as the newly-founded Women of Color Group.

"I'm so sick and tired of this harassment, it does a lot of damage to your mental and emotional health," said a member of the Asian Women's Coalition and a founding member of the Women of Color Group Hannah Choi (CC '91) "I'd like to get more awareness of what women of color go through, just to sensitize people."

According to some of the women present at last week's first meeting of the Women of Color Group, besides reacting to an increase in harassment, they decided to form a group only for women of color because concerns of women of color are often subordinated to general issues of race in coed student groups.

Member of Alianza Latino Americana (ALA) and Chair of the Chicano Council Margie Ramos (BC '90) said, there is sexism within the Chicano movement at Columbia University, which makes it difficult for Chicano women to identify themselves as feminists within the community.

According to Choi, Asian men tend to be unreceptive to issues of feminism

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Women of color have begun to organize on their own not only because they feel that their concerns are being subordinated in the various racially organized groups on campus but because they feel their concerns are not being addressed in campus women's groups.

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and because of that attitude women of color need to form their own groups.

As an example of the attitude that issues of feminism should be put below issues of race she spoke of an Asian male friend who once suggested to her that she should identify herself first as an Asian and then as a woman. Choi feels that making such a division is impossible because the two aspects are inseparable within herself.

Women of color have begun to organize on their own not only because they feel that their concerns are being subordinated in the various racially organized groups on campus but because they feel their concerns are not being addressed in campus women's groups. The feminist tradition itself has a history of being racist, classist and ethnically biased, said Ramos.

Another women present at the first Women of Color Group meeting Jennifer Tsai (CC '91) also said that the feminist movement has largely excluded issues concerning women of color.

"Racism and feminism are so intertwined. It's what makes up my identity as an Asian woman. White women don't have to deal with racism to that degree. . . As a woman of color I have to deal with racist and sexist remarks simultaneously," said Tsai.

According to Choi, when women of color complain that the harassment they face is both racist and sexist, they are told that they are being paranoid and super-sensitive. Women of color groups enable women of color to discuss their concerns without having others slight the severity of the issues at hand. It is a forum where people who have endured similar experiences can get feedback, she

said.

Although, according to Tsai, the Women of Color Group will not exclude white women, only "women of color issues will be discussed and we're trying to educate ourselves as women of color. . . As far as [white women] contributing to it, I don't know if they know what it means to be a woman of color."

Another reason given for forming a group just for women of color is to get the administration to look at women of color as a distinct group when addressing harassment on campus.

Tsai said that University programs designed to deal with issues of race and racism, such as Columbia University President Michael Sovern's Civility Program, are derived from good intentions

but have produced no tangible results. She added that the University plays a particularly passive role regarding acts of sexual and racial harassment towards women of color.

According to Alicia Schmidt-Camacho (BC '91), who works at Columbia's Multicultural Center, "Columbia has not been able to create within its institution procedures for dealing with women's issues and women of color. I believe that the administration is willfully negligent in dealing effectively with the demands of students of color," said Camacho. "In addition, they look at racial attacks on a case-by-case basis. By doing that, they have found a way to diffuse the reactions of students and prevent widespread student reaction. The policy that is in effect

now is not geared toward the student. I went with a complaint and felt more harassed by the administration than I did during the original event."

To address all the issues that have led these women of color to form their own student groups, the Women of Color group plans to put together a journal of its discussions and suggestions for solutions, which it will present to the University community. The group also will be conducting awareness weeks, bringing speakers to the campus and holding one discussion sessions.

One of the group's goals is to reach the calibre of a coalition-building organization that extends its resources to other women's groups on campus, said Tsai. ♦



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Women of Color Defining and Affirming Themselves

— by Hanna Choi, Jennifer Tsai, Risha Henry and Sharon Rogers

The following article was written by four women of color who attended the first meeting of the Women of Color Group. Two of the writers are biracial women and two are Asian-American women. The ideas in this article are informed by their personal backgrounds, and represent only their own opinions, not necessarily those of the Women of Color Group or of any of the other members of the group.

The four of us along with about 30 graduate and undergraduate women congregated at the first meeting of the Women of Color Group to articulate the fragmentation we feel in the Columbia University community and in the world at large.

We met because we desire and need a supportive, constructive group that can address our unique concerns as women of color. Most campus women's organizations either largely ignore racism, even among themselves, or exist as apolitical social groups. And many of the different organizations of people of color duplicate the sexist hierarchy of the greater society by putting "our" issues above their women members' concerns. We are tired of people telling us that we are overreacting, oversensitive or selfish. The Women of Color Group is a place where no one can "overreact" and where we can retreat from the constant fatigue of explaining ourselves and not being understood.

While we are in our last years at Columbia, we can imagine how much easier our first years would have been — enduring Columbia College Core Curricu-

lum, living in University housing, and facing New York City streets, fraternities and Columbia bureaucracy — with the support of a group that welcomed and accepted us as we are.

Although this group is inherently political and the public desperately needs to hear our voices, our initial focus must be affirming our own identities and educating ourselves. Therefore, our first meeting focused on self-definition, discussing both the backgrounds that brought us to the group and our hopes for what the group could become.

In defining ourselves as a group we are aware of both the similarities and differences in our experiences as women of color. All the group's members face a class conflict because people of color in this country are linked with poverty, yet as students privileged enough to attend a university like Columbia, we are all "models," "exceptions to the rule," and in a sense, tokens. This leads to resentment and hostility. On the one hand, we are advantaged and part of an "elite," but on the other hand, we are part of a disadvantaged community of people of color. We are at an institution where we can learn to articulate ourselves and theorize about our oppression, but this is meaningless if we can't relate to our people. Thus, it is important to draw in membership in addition to students: faculty, staff, and women from outside the University community. We must hear their stories too.

However, the umbrella term "women of color," embracing Arab, African-

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Despite the many problems inherent in naming ourselves "women of color," we feel relieved to discard the old, negative, stigmatized "minority" label that isolates us into ghettos that obscure our common oppression.

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American/Black, Asian, Indian, Latina, Native American, and Pacific Islander women, should not obscure our very real differences. Our histories, our languages, our skin colors, our traditions vary, not only among our groups, but also among individuals within these groups.

Some "women of color" do not "look" like "minority" or "ethnic" people although they may identify themselves as such. For example, as biracial women, we face resentment and misunderstanding from both of our racial groups. While we are not "white enough" to escape society's discrimination, too often we are also not "Black enough" to escape prejudice within the Black community.

Many people — women of color included — still perceive "women of color" as only African-Americans/Blacks and Latinas, thereby excluding all "other" women. This is destructive because it denies the reality of racism that these "other" women experience. That there

were only two Asian women present at the meeting made it clear that many Asian women do not consider themselves to be women of color. It is crucial for us as Asian-American women to challenge the "model minority" myth which stereotypes and divides us as Asians and as people of color.

Despite the many problems inherent in naming ourselves "women of color," we feel relieved to discard the old, negative, stigmatized "minority" label that isolates us into ghettos that obscure our common oppression. Everything that we saw growing up told us to be embarrassed of our parents' native languages, and that to be white and have blond hair and "white" features is to be right and good and beautiful, while we could only be "exotic." Now, united as women of color, we need to break the white cultural hegemony by not taking for granted Anglo-Saxon appearances and values as the norm or the ideal.

We hope that the very existence of the Women of Color Group will sensitize people, but we know that no white woman or man, despite their good intentions, will ever be able to understand what it means for women of color visibly to carry with them every day their multiple labels of oppression. While we never want to pit ourselves against our other group allegiances, it is time for us now.

The Women of Color Group finally will give us a chance to address racism and sexism as the oppressive ensemble that it truly is, and will allow us to learn about each other's cultures without stereotypes and misinformation. American society holds two strikes against us, our races and our gender; we have both to affirm. ♦

Hanna Choi, Jennifer Tsai and Risha Henry are Columbia College juniors, and Sharon Rogers is a Columbia College senior.

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Reflecting on Race

— by Sharon Smith

After living in many different places in the country and encountering many different people, I've found that situations may change, but people's basic questions remain the same.

Living and traveling in the South, I was often asked if I was "part black;" in Southern California, if I was Mexican; in Hawaii, if I was Hawaiian, Samoan or any number of other Asian or Polynesian backgrounds; and since I've been in New York, everything from Indian and Pakistani to Puerto Rican, Dominican or "some kind of Spanish background."

My most memorable experience is riding in the elevator of College Residence on 110 street when a man asked me what part of Iran I was from. After he apologized for his mistake and I assured him I was not insulted, he told me he was Iranian and we both found some humor in the situation.

Although I am actually from a Filipino and European background, I've always been mistaken for other ethnicities. But it wasn't until I came to New York, and it happened much more frequently, that I became more conscious of having a particular ethnicity. I guess I had never really thought about what it meant to have a parent from another country with a completely different culture. It is not that I had no concept of having two cultures in my home. In fact, with the exception of culturally diverse Hawaii, I was very aware of being one of the few — if not the only— Filipino-Americans in most of the places I lived.

I also was not unaware of racism. Just as many people often asked inquisitively about my ethnicity, many others often assumed my ethnicity in a hostile way. Racial slurs such as "chink," "spic," and "nigger" commonly have been thrown in my face. These racist people evidently don't feel any need to correctly establish my ethnicity before they denounce me for

continued on page 20

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*My experience has convinced me
of the ethnic-blind, color-oriented
base of racism.*
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— by Lilliam J. Alfaro

When I first arrived at Barnard, I was a Latina without any knowledge of what this meant.

I had attended a boarding school in which I was one of two Latinas, and blending in with my white surroundings was of the utmost importance. It was not until I arrived at Barnard that I was able to look back at my high school years and realize that much of the discomfort I often felt around my white friends was the result of their racist ideas. I thought then that I was hypersensitive, and that my Latino heritage was something that was private, not to be spoken about or emphasized.

My first year of college continued, however, very much like my academic career before it. I took no interest in anything Latino and was content to rely on white friends for my support. Then one day, quite like a slap in the face, I suddenly was confronted with racism so overt that to not address it would have been to deny my dignity as an individual. A good friend commented on "the spics" and their loud music. He was quick to point out that I was not "like that" and

and Racism in My Life

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Racism is a disease spread by ignorance, hostility and silence. I caught it when I was old enough to hear, read and see.
◆

could not understand why I had been offended. Despierta Latina!

This was only the beginning. I joined Alianza Latino Americana and all of a sudden found myself with a group of people who all had been in the same position at some point. The stories started pouring in: racial slurs, name calling, cultural unawareness. Everyone in my group had experienced some form of harassment. Columbia was not the perfect, open, aware environment that my tour guide had extolled to me. Harsh reality — Columbia's ivory towers had done nothing to wash away the racism that students bring to it.

Today I recognize racism every day in the college community. Having my best friend tell me that Spanish House parties are bound to be "wild and out of control" because of the people who attend them was a hurtful admission that ignorance continues to fuel racism even among those who claim to be sympathetic and open.

Race relations on campus are not good. Regardless

continued on page 20

— by Diana Miller

I did not realize that I was white until I got to Barnard. I was a "person." If you had asked me to describe a Black person, I would have included the color of her skin in the description. But a white person was just a person. I had never even heard the term Hispanic or Latina. Yet, I was a liberal.

If someone had said that I could have racist thoughts I would have screamed, "But I have Black friends! And I say, 'Hey girl' to all the Black girls in the hall!"

True, I did feel the hairs on my spine rise when I heard my grandfather talk about "colored people" and "island jerks." Yes, I did notice that while our school was "desegregated," almost all the Blacks sat on one side of the lunchroom and almost all the whites sat on the other. But I did not connect it to the larger picture. And I certainly did not know that I—as an ignorant white person— was part of the problem.

At Barnard, racism has been an issue that I cannot ignore. Soon after my arrival, racist incidents occurred that sparked student action by people of Color and by whites. I saw that Barnard women of various races and ethnicities formed clubs and organized around common interests and oppression. I started thinking about issues of race in my women's studies classes, which emphasized the diversity of women's experiences. After reading works by women of Color, having endless abstract conversations with one of my white woman friends about racism, and becoming more self-aware in general, I was able to see that I too was — and am — a carrier of racism.

Racism is a disease spread by ignorance, hostility and silence. I caught it when I was old enough to hear, read and see. Nobody is immune to this disease. To heal myself, I have to question all of the stereotypes and lies that I have been brought up to

continued on page 20

Do The Right Thing: Views in Black

— by Faith Burwasser

Recently, my friend Jennifer invited me to go see *Do The Right Thing* with her and several of her friends. Due to the controversy surrounding the movie, as the group of four gathered, I noticed that I was the only white person there. I didn't feel uncomfortable, though. I felt welcome and at ease.

Upon watching the film, I became increasingly aware of the sharp contrast between my comfortable situation and the tension among Spike Lee's characters. While the four of us were able to relax and have fun together that evening, the characters in the film were unable to live with people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

The tension would have been a whole lot easier to confront if I had been able to blame it entirely on one person or group involved. Yet, at no one point during the movie did I find my scapegoat. I was able to argue that the Italian owner of the pizza parlor deserved to have his restaurant burnt down when he did not respect his mostly black patrons. I was able to argue that although the customers got out of hand, they were essentially correct in standing up for their rights. On the other hand, I also was able to find fault in the customers for making ridiculous demands and having a total lack of respect for the restaurant owner.

Not only did I not find a scapegoat, but I couldn't even ignore the enormous amount of anger in each of the characters. The fact that a crowd of people could enjoy watching the destruction of a place in which they had congregated for years

is unsettling. The fact that many of them delighted in the actual trashing of the place was even more disturbing.

Throughout the movie I wanted to believe that this kind of anger and violence doesn't occur in our society, that everyone gets along as well as the four of us who attended the movie together. But a glance at any newspaper reveals the horrible truth.

In *Do the Right Thing*, Spike Lee effectively forces people to realize that if we continue to use our anger as an excuse for both disrespect and destruction and if we continue to be unwilling to compromise with others, racial violence will continue.

Yet this point often gets clouded by the movie's humor. For example, the whole audience laughed during a montage of scenes each of which contained an extreme close-up of a person addressing a person of a different culture with a long list of derogatory terms. But the movie's humor soon faded and it left me with a sad feeling about our society. It is sad that these characters knew so many pejorative words, and sadder that they possessed enough anger to use these words against a fellow human being.

Despite the movie's distressing implications, I'm glad I went to see it. And judging from

the discussion over pizza (ironically enough) afterwards, so were my friends. At the very least, I now feel much more fortunate to have had many positive experiences with people of different cultures. I only wish that in this respect I was the average and not the exception. ◆

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The tension would have been a whole lot easier to confront if I had been able to blame it entirely on one person. . .

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and White and Among Friends

— by Jennifer Bullock

Last Friday for the first time in my life, I did something I never thought I'd do, something that I will never do again — I paid \$7.50 to see a movie. Fortunately, I saw one of the few movies in New York that I consider worth the money.

Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing* is, as everyone already knows, (or should know) a movie about racial tension between inner-city Blacks and Italians from Bensonhurst. Although written by an African-American the movie shows how hate hurts everyone regardless of skin color.

I had planned to see the movie with a couple of friends I'd met at a Barnard Organization of Black Women (BOBW) meeting. When my friend Faith (who is Jewish) said she'd like to come along I welcomed her. I couldn't help but wonder, however, whether she would understand, let alone enjoy the movie. I hoped that she would enjoy it because I've taken an almost possessive pride in movies made and produced by Blacks.

When we entered the cinema that Friday night, I sat down a somewhat apprehensively. I was afraid that Faith would regret spending the \$7.50. The opening credits (shown while a young Hispanic woman performed the latest club dances), did nothing to dispel my apprehension.

In the beginning, every time the movie took a humorous turn I would glance over to see if Faith had caught the joke. She didn't look amused. But finally I heard her laugh and I relaxed realizing that a good movie is a good movie and can be enjoyed by all, regardless of race or background.

Discussing the movie afterwards, we decided that the theme of the movie was universal and the movie itself could be universally enjoyed.

But something bothered me. By having one of the black characters cast the first stone (so to speak) by throwing a garbage can through the window of his employer's pizza store, Spike Lee confuses the neat and universal message that we had agreed upon as the moral of the movie. Reflecting on several other incidents in the film since has made me wonder if this confusion of message was not accidental, but intentional.

The theme song of the movie is "Fight the Power." Ending the movie are two quotes. The first is by Dr. Martin Luther King denouncing violence. The last quote, however, is one by Malcolm X — stating that violence in self-defense is completely acceptable and should not even be considered violence. The movie seemed to make a subtle but deliberate appeal to Blacks of this country to rise and do the right thing — "Fight the Power."

First, I thought that maybe only I picked up this strong under-current, calling me to action. But after the movie, I discussed the idea with one friend (a black woman). She said she agreed with Spike Lee. "Malcolm X is the man! You see, white people love Martin Luther King because he's passive. Malcolm X says we should fight back — against them. And that's why white people don't like to talk about him."

◆

*"Malcolm X is the man!
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Martin Luther King because
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continued on page 22

Mapantsula: Of the People, By the People and For the People

— by Tamara Cohen

Mapantsula is a movie about apartheid. It's not a movie about the journalists who cover South Africa's conflicts, about the Americans that sympathize with the oppressed and march to rid the world of prejudice, or about the whites in power who control and perpetuate the system's injustices.

This is a movie about the people, black South Africans, their families, their fears, their pride and their prejudices -- in short, their lives. It is a movie that was written for the people of the townships of South Africa and not for the megabuck producers of Hollywood.

Last Tuesday night, at the film's second showing in New York, the Earl Hall auditorium overflowed with people. Perhaps it was because the movie aroused so much controversy at home —banned by the South African authorities and endorsed by the African National Congress. (Joint screenwriters Thomas Mogotlane and Oliver Schmitz had to trick the South African government into believing they were filming an apolitical gangster movie while creating this uncompromisingly honest drama). What ever drew people in the doorway, the curiosity and the excitement continued to hold them silent and still for the three reels and two hours that followed. Perhaps it was the desire to have the people and slogans we march for take on individual characters and personalities.

The movie's plot centers around Panic, a cynical streetwise hoodlum who lives the life of a careless rich man within the reality of his poverty-stricken existence. He steals suits and drinks too much liquor, preferring to live this way rather than earn money working for whites. He is a "totsi," a rebel of the

underworld, a figure commonly found in fiction written by South African Blacks.

Everyone around Panic is slowly brought into the movement, including the audience. We are drawn into the sunny village, where Panic resides, and compelled to enter its narrow and decrepit houses. The characters aren't typical heroes. They are gangsters who live

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with a different set of values, stemming from a culture entirely foreign to our own. Watching the children dance and listening to the spiritual chantings of

prisoners echoing through the long prison corridors, I felt that I was finally being given a raw taste of the real South Africa. When Panic's girlfriend loses her job as a domestic for a white family and must return to beg for her pay, we are uncomfortable with the wealth and abundance of her employer's residence (reminded perhaps of our own neighborhoods). Along with the township, we are stirred to rise up in protest over a proposed rent increase. When the son of Panic's landlady disappears after a demonstration, we too are afraid of the worst. And proud.

Panic is introduced to the audience when he is thrown into a jail cell after a demonstration. The activists who share the cell with him frown upon his lifestyle and make us question a less talked about conflict in South Africa -- the conflict within the oppressed of Apartheid over how to live under the strain of the situation.

As the movie progresses, the character of Panic evolves from an irresponsible and contemptible gangster into someone compelled to sacrifice everything for the cause. This serves to demystify the process through which everyday people become involved in social action. Through this poignant and honest film, we are shown how the ordinary and "unheroic" can indeed become heroes, forced to act against the government that restrains them.

Much of the movie is in English but without subtitles the dialect is at times extremely difficult to understand. Missing important lines will make viewers want to see the film again but it hardly detracts from the film's power to move.

continued on page 22

Casual Comments, Catastrophic Consequences

— by Lainie Blum

Included in her opening remarks at the October 4 Rep Council meeting, SGA President Leora Joseph (BC '90) said that due to recurring misquotations and inaccuracies in recent articles in the campus press, SGA officers had been forced to consider closing the Rep Council meetings to reporters. Fortunately, they decided that such a prohibition would be inconsistent with the values of SGA and Barnard. Though it apparently has the right to close the meetings, SGA will indeed keep them open.

While the decision to maintain open ties with reporters was undeniably wise, the public announcement of their misguided considerations was not. Not only did SGA's "casual" comment come off as a threat, but SGA also scored for itself some negative points on the ever-important PR scale.

Experience shows that nothing good can come out of a threat to the press. If anything, such attitudes make publications more critical and less cooperative. Furthermore, the students of this University do not like knowing that one of its governing bodies could even seriously consider such utter disregard for countless freedoms guaranteed and valued in this country.

On a personal and individual level, SGA officers are absolutely entitled to feel disgusted when they are misrepresented. And officers can have as many emotional, knee-jerk reactions as they want. But when in public, it is their responsibility to use some discretion and act more responsibly. In public SGA officers are not private individuals; they are public leadership figures constantly under scrutiny. That's part of their job.

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Journalistic criticism is part of politicians' daily life. They should always expect to be talked about — praised on occasion and constantly scrutinized.
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Public figures sacrifice a great deal of their right to privacy — that's why they're called *public figures*. They can't make passing comments and expect no one to take them seriously. People invariably pick up on things. Consider Jesse Jackson or Ronald Reagan or even Jackie Mason. Their respective flip comments have wreaked havoc more than once.

Now about those misquotes and inaccuracies. It's fair to say that given the amount of press coverage that SGA gets (and everyone agrees that the more the better), there are bound to be mistakes. Contrary to what people may think, editors do not derive some warped pleasure from misquoting. If there is any integrity at all in journalism, we have to assume that they at least try to get it right. No one wants mistakes, but they happen. Given that the campus press is the pri-

mary vehicle through which student governments communicate with their constituencies, coverage is something that has to be worth the risk.

Misrepresentation is a more tricky issue. Public figures are always up for interpretation, and their actions may not be portrayed in the press as they wish. Basically that's just too bad. Who's to say exactly what's accurate and what's not? It really depends on your point of view. Journalistic criticism is part of politicians' daily life. They should always expect to be talked about — praised on occasion and constantly scrutinized. That's the role of the press, and it can even be beneficial. Again, it's a risk politicians take when they step into the public arena.

That is not to say, of course, that student government members (or anyone, for that matter) has to tacitly accept what is being written about them. There are proper and effective means of recourse, such as a letter to the editor. Both *Bulletin* and *Spectator* are extremely liberal and responsible in their letter-printing policies. SGA even has its own weekly column in *Bulletin* — its very own, uncensored space. You couldn't really ask for more than that.

That student governments and campus press need each other cannot be denied. SGA, CCSC and SEAS Council provide the press with a large percentage of their news. *Bulletin*, *Spectator* and the *Federalist*, in turn, serve as major communication and public relations media for those organizations. Cooperation is essential for good, accurate coverage. Antagonism and idle threats can only be destructive. ◆

Lainie Blum is a Barnard College senior.

My Name is _____ and I'm an Alcoholic

— by Amanda Brooks

As part of National Alcoholic Awareness Week I'd like to tell you a story.

Gulping the vodka down, trying to quench a thirst of sorts, I listened to the tape in the car hoping it would "calm my nerves." My nerves calmed, whether by the music or the alcohol I wasn't sure, and my friends and I preceded to the gates of the stadium.

We were all psyched to see Madonna. Going against the grain of our Grateful Dead- and granola-loving classmates was our favorite pastime, and here was another chance to dig into their otherworldly consciousness. We reveled in the thought of sporting t-shirts with Madonna plastered on the chest to Monday morning classes.

We lived for conflict (and for weekends). It was the spice of life that nearly killed us.

We passed through the security without them spotting our bottles of Stolli. We found our place on the lawn and settled into draining our bottles.

The opening band came on stage. My mind began to whirl. The lead singer had on red leather and looking at him made me sick. I turned to my friend and began telling her about my trip to Georgia. How hot it was there, and how nice it was to be back in San Francisco. My head hurt and my eyes felt swollen. I closed my eyes and began rubbing my temples.

It didn't help my headache, in fact my stomach began to hurt. I turned to my friend again and tried to ask her to get me a glass of water. My mouth moved, but no sound came out. I kept trying to form sentences in my mind. When that didn't work I tried single words, then

sounds, until finally my consciousness fell into a black hole.

I remember nothing of the two hours following, except once I heard Madonna singing, "Don't turn me on, 'cause I'm on fire, and you can't quench my desire." I had been scared, but not enough to stop. I thought it was a freak accident, everyone blacks out, right? I knew from pamphlets floating around school that blackouts were a warning sign that you might have a problem. Of course I didn't, nothing would ever rule my life, especially a substance.

But a substance almost took my life. Driving home from a party one night (the same summer as the Madonna concert), I nearly hit a concrete pylon that divided the freeway and the off ramp. I was saved by a not-so-sober friend who happened to be a little more awake than I. I hadn't even been aware of the danger until she took the steering wheel from my control and turned it with a violent force. I didn't laugh this one off, I drank until I forgot about it, or at least for a time.

Still, I didn't think there was a problem. Three years passed, and my alcoholism continued. I learned to "control" my drinking -- drinking only at specified times and occasions, but still I drank. I didn't black out anymore, my tolerance increased, my life continued as "normal." The weekends of partying turned into daily beer with meals, beer after studying, beer before bedtime. I didn't think there was anything wrong, after all didn't all college students have a beer after studying in the library? Then I started sleeping through classes, forgetting about class assignments, and neglecting my

responsibilities.

I stopped denying my alcoholism only a few months ago and not without help. A friend from high school showed me that I was not in control of my life. Yet, I still had my qualms, I viewed myself as strong, hip and balanced. Weren't alcoholics weak and disturbed? They didn't have any fun, right? I didn't and still don't fit the stereotype of the alcoholic.

Now, I find myself trying to convince my friends that yes, indeed, I'm an alcoholic.

No one can estimate the damage that alcohol did to my academic and personal life. No one can, to use an AA term, take my inventory for me. Each one of us must make these judgments for ourselves. My friend couldn't convince me that I was an alcoholic; my boyfriend can't tell me I'm not.

Realizing alcoholism is a fatal disease, just like AIDS or cancer, put some things into perspective. It is the disease that sleeps until noon, spends evenings and afternoons in bars, and neglects responsibilities. And the behavior is not a reflection of the person, but a reflection of the strength of alcohol in an alcoholic's life.

It is important to understand that alcoholism is a disease, something that (whether you drink or not) is uncontrollable. What can be controlled is the behavior that alcoholism evokes. It is true once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic, but it is also true that once an alcoholic you can recover. ♦

Amanda Brooks is the Point of View Editor at the Barnard Bulletin

Smith
continued from page 12

nounce me for it. Instead, correctly establishing what I am *not* is their only concern.

My experience has convinced me of the ethnic-blind, color-oriented base of racism.

Despite these experiences, most of my friends at Barnard tell me they don't really think of me as part of a particular ethnic category, or at least that would be one of the last ways they would describe me. This is probably because I have always recognized both my Filipino and American sides, and have not identified more strongly with either. Also, I have not had many opportunities or reasons to overemphasize the Filipino—or should I say "more ethnic"—part of my identity. My personality is a combination of the two and, because of this, my ethnicity usually will not be overwhelmingly apparent to those who know me.

Still, there are others who are in disbelief when they find out my last name is Smith, usually expecting "something more exotic" based on my looks.

These experiences, along with the diversity of our university, have made me

much more concerned about what ethnicity means and how it forms an individual's concept of self.

Clearly many students on campus also are exploring issues of ethnicity and race. At Barnard, like everywhere else, pride in ethnicity abounds as the existence of many campus cultural groups prove. Channeling this pride is one of the most promising aspects of these organizations. They can be useful learning and teaching units for those who want to know more about the cultural diversity around them.

However, at Barnard, as elsewhere, I've met people, who whether because of a lack of interest in exploring beyond their own cultural backgrounds or because of fear of misunderstanding, actually make little effort to establish relationships with people from different ethnic groups. I find this unfortunate.

Until people recognize and affirm both their own and others' ethnic and racial backgrounds, racism will remain pervasive in our lives. ◆

Sharon Smith is a Barnard College senior.

Alfaro
continued from page 12

of how diverse the students are on this campus, the races rarely mix and reports of harassment come in too often for comfort. Often I have heard that separating ourselves into our own groups is detrimental to the university community as a whole. Yet, how can we be expected to function in a community that belittles our heritages and our importance without the support of a group that can educate us and the university?

I refuse to call the students of color on this campus minorities because we, people of color, are the majority in this world. Consequently, we are not about to give up the struggle for our rights as individuals on this campus and in this society, for to do so would be to admit defeat -- and defeat is unacceptable. Yes, there is racism on this campus, and yes, we will continue to fight it. No question. ◆

Lillian J. Alfaro is a Barnard College senior and Chair of Alianza Latino Americana.

Miller
continued from page 13

believe.

At the same time, I have to fill in the gaps and silences. In practical terms, that means I have to educate myself about the histories and cultures of people of Color, who make up a large part of my country and who are the majority of the world. In healing myself, I will understand the origins of my racist thoughts and take responsibility for my words and actions.

When I felt secure enough with myself, I was able to let all of my racist

thoughts flow through my head. By letting them come to the surface, I was able to challenge them, dispel myths, break stereotypes.

I do not profess to be "racist-free." However, I do make it my duty as a white woman to fight actively against my own racism and the racism that is everywhere. I do this in multiple ways: by questioning my university's eurocentrism, by trying to educate myself and other whites instead of asking people of Color to educate me, by constantly challenging my

thoughts and assumptions, etc. (For example, currently I am questioning what it means to be "white." There are so many ethnic groups that fall under that heading that it is inadequate.)

White people must confront their own racism and take responsibility for their thoughts, words and actions. A good place to start is at Barnard, where there are hundreds of ways to educate oneself, and where there is racism. And a good time to start is now. ◆

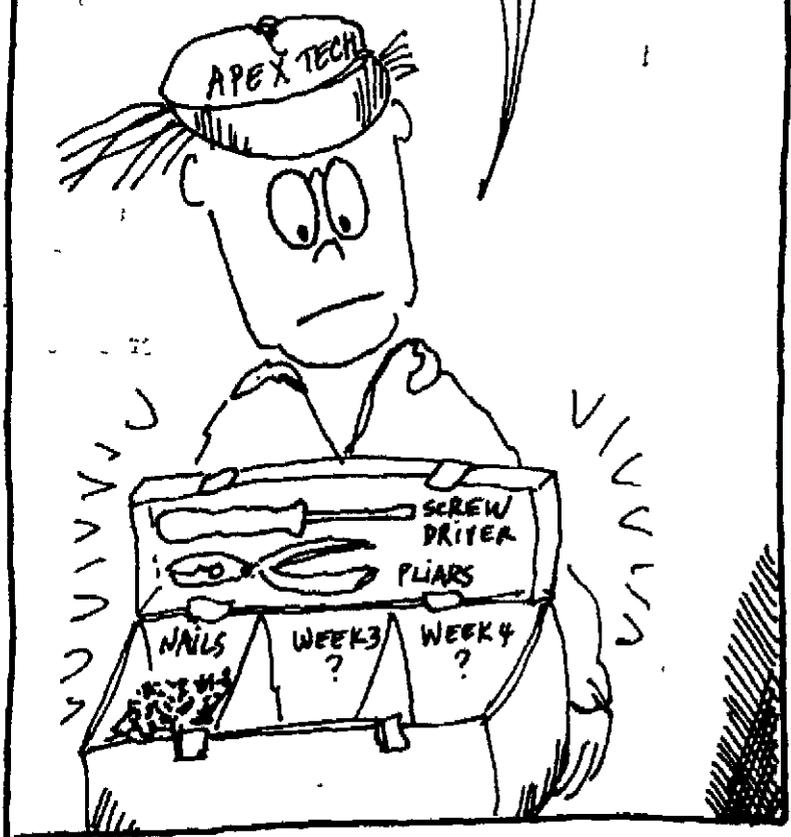
Diana Miller is a Barnard College senior.

FAERIE TALES

SO HOW IS THE APEX TECHNICAL TRAINING GOING? AIR CONDITIONING AND REFRIGERATION MAINTENANCE, IT'S THE CAREER OF THE FUTURE!!



I DON'T KNOW, ZORGO. I DID GET THIS NICE RED TOOL BOX, BUT THIS STUFF IS PRETTY COMPLICATED. I DON'T KNOW IF I'M GOING TO STICK WITH IT.



WHAT? KIDS TODAY HAVE NO PERSEVERANCE! YOU CAN'T GIVE UP SO EASILY! BESIDES, WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU DO?



I THINK I'M JUST GOING TO GO TO LAW SCHOOL LIKE EVERYONE ELSE.

NO! DON'T DO IT! SPREAD YOUR WINGS FOR GOD'S SAKE!



Mapantsula

— continued from page 17

This power derives from the people it introduces, from the music it shares and from the situations it presents.

The film's universal messages don't fade away and aren't lost in the translation:

"People always want to know about the future. The past they prefer to forget..." ; "What's wrong with the world? People live in a dream. . ." ; "The past and the future are for dreaming about. The present is for living."

The present is for change. ♦

Do Right

— continued from page 15

I'm not sure which approach I approve of. There is a conflict within me about whether or not I should discuss these issues, about how people will react to my questioning and about what I think is the best approach to take. It's a very real conflict, the same kind of conflict that makes the message of the movie less clear and more interesting than it first appears to be. ♦

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