

Spring/Summer 2018 Issue Feedback

Letters from our readers

Fall 2018

A gift keeps giving

What a superb publication we received from you! The medical-data feature ("From Code to Cure," Spring/ Summer 2018) was brilliant, the Tracy K. Smith piece ("Poet in Motion") was also wonderful, and so were several of the short entries.

Many years ago, my wife Marcia and I gave a small sum to fund a PhD program in the art-history department. Some of its graduates still remain our friends today. That was our only connection to Columbia, and because of it we have received your excellent magazine all these many years. Our gift has been repaid many times over.

John A. Friede

Peterborough, NH

Beyond the Universe

I agree with Columbia research scientist Anna Ijjas when she suggests that our universe wasn't born in a one-time explosion but has always been expanding and contracting ("Was the Big Bang Really a Big Bounce?," Explorations, Spring/Summer 2018). I am not a scientist, but I have always questioned those trying to find the answers to existence.

For the Big Bangers: where did the tiny, intense speck of matter come from? An eternal waxing and waning of the universe makes more sense: no beginning, no end. We humans, confined to a time-space existence, cannot comprehend either infinity or eternity. The universe has no boundaries, for if it did, what would be beyond the edge?

For those seeking answers, keep trying!

Helen Cornell Koenig '43BUS

Bernardsville, NJ

The article about Anna Ijjas's research surely exemplifies that mixture of math and imagination that leads to new realms of understanding. What a wonder it will be when humankind discovers physics we have yet to even imagine. It is so exciting to live in this age of research and discovery.

G. Lynn Thorpe '77LAW

New Rochelle, NY

Poems, please

While I am an appreciative reader of your redesigned magazine, I have been lamenting that poems no longer seem to be part of the editorial content. I was therefore pleased to see the feature article on poet Tracy K. Smith in your most recent issue ("Poet in Motion," Spring/Summer 2018). I hope this may initiate a return of poetry to your pages. Columbia has a large and distinguished group of alumni who are published and teaching poets, as well as notable faculty poets, past and present. One way of honoring that tradition would be to publish a poem in each issue of *Columbia Magazine*.

Jeanne Marie Beaumont '90SOA

New York, NY

Two Ruths

The marvelous Ruth Bader Ginsburg is indeed succinct, direct, and appropriate in thoughts and language ("Supremely Quotable," College Walk, Spring/Summer 2018).

Early in their long acquaintance, my wife, Ruth Lubic, a nurse-midwife and holder of three Teachers College degrees, provided the Ginsburgs with instruction in participatory childbirth. It was reported as follows in the *Washington Post* Magazine of May 27, 2007:

“On Ruth [Lubic]’s advice, Ginsburg delivered her second child without medication. Of the 1965 birth of her son, Ginsburg says, ‘I felt so satisfied, even triumphant.’ Ginsburg, just the second woman to sit on the high court, marvels at Ruth’s accomplishments and how hard she is willing to fight for her cause. ‘I could never do what she does,’ Ginsburg says. ‘She could probably do what I do if she goes to law school.’”

So we add to the RBG persona warmth and an engaging modesty.

William Lubic '49CC

Washington, DC

Marching to a Different Drum

John Gadjo’s letter “Ba(n)d Behavior” (Feedback, Spring/Summer 2018) argues that Columbia should make an effort to improve the quality of the marching band to accompany its push to improve the football team. It certainly would be interesting to see the University provide the band with money, recruiting, and practice facilities. But that support is not going to come any time soon, and, frankly, it would detract from the band’s uniqueness.

The band is the most inclusive group on campus, taking in anyone who has the spirit to participate, including students from Barnard, General Studies, Columbia Engineering, Columbia College, and members of every race, political bent, and ethnic group. The band does not discriminate against anyone, including those who can’t actually play an instrument. The band supports all the teams — not just football and not just when they are winning. Its routines and chants are often political, biting, and crafty, and sometimes crass, sexually suggestive, and self-deprecating. The band’s signature “scramble band” format was developed precisely because the members lacked the time and resources to march in perfect formation

while playing traditional band tunes. Instead, they exercise their own style, which is precisely what Columbia is all about.

Those who wish that the band would be more traditional must remember that the admissions office strives to admit a class of nonconformists, and the band reflects this perfectly. We should be proud of that.

Kevin G. Chapman '83CC

West Windsor, NJ



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