



FEATURES

HOW TO SURVIVE GRADUATION

Learn everything you need to know about the ceremony at Rose Hill.

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ARTS & CULTURE

ON THE ROOF AT THE MET

Check out Jeff Koons modern art exhibition, while overlooking Central Park..

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THE OBSERVER

www.fordhamobserver.com

MAY 1, 2008 VOLUME XXVIII, ISSUE 6

Spring Cleaning Empties Closets, Fills Pockets

By BRIANNA STEINHILBER Staff Writer

Spring is finally here, which means it's time for your clutter to go. And lucky for you, there's no better place to get rid of it than New York City.

CLOTHES

The most obvious place to start is your clothing. With sweaters and scarves being packed away and tank tops and shorts coming out of storage, there's bound to be some things that you no longer want to keep.

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CRAIG CALEFATE/THE OBSERVER

Replace dust bunnies with dollars.

Graduating Seniors Not Necessarily Graduating in May

Dean Emphasizes Requirements for Graduation

By MEAGHAN DILLON AND LAURA SHIN News Co-Editors

With less than a month to go before graduation, John Rice, FCLC '08, said he received an email with the header "May Graduation PROBLEM," after which he learned he could not be cleared for a May degree and must meet with the Dean immediately.

"I stop by the Dean's office the next day, and she informs me that I cannot receive the May '08 degree because I am short one three or four-credit class despite the fact that I have enough credits to graduate, fulfilled all the requirements for my major, fulfilled all the core, and was cleared for graduation by the Dean at the beginning of the school year," Rice said.

Cecilia Petit-Hall, assistant dean for seniors, explained that in order to graduate, all seniors must have completed a minimum of 124 credits and 36 three or four-credit courses. Rice said that though he had completed 36 courses, he just learned that one did not count because it was a two-credit Ailey course for non-majors.

"[The Dean] tells me that I can walk with my class and participate in the 'theatre' of graduation in May, but that I will not be mailed my diploma until August after I take a summer class," Rice said.

Rice is not alone. Petit-Hall said that approximately 45 students were recently notified about possible complications with their degree audit, with about 20 to 25 students able to work through the situation and graduate in May, usually by getting clearance from department chairs for their major or minor. Approximately 20 students, however, will be walking in May but enrolling in a summer course in order to obtain their degree.

"For most of the small group



CRAIG CALEFATE/THE OBSERVER

Some seniors were told last minute that they would not be getting their degrees in May and will have to finish their degrees in August. Deans say students should be aware of the graduation requirements.

who got bad news, it shouldn't have come as a surprise, because things are missing," Petit-Hall explained. "They haven't taken organic chemistry, or they are short two courses for the history major—there are things that are not done."

Petit-Hall also noted that letters and e-mails were sent out in August to graduating seniors, alerting them to make an appointment with her to be cleared for graduation in May and to fill out a candidacy for degree card.

"In the meeting, I ultimately tell them what the process [for graduating] is and look at credit count and say you need X number of credits, X number of three or four-credit courses and your missing these classes," she said. "I will not be able to clear you in April or May unless

you do these things, however I have no authority over these departments."

Kiran Hefa, FCLC '08, said that she got the 'bad news' a month before graduation that she was four credits (I thought it was two?) short of a degree. She was one of the 20 or so students that Petit-Hall said was able to fix the situation, and she will be getting her May degree.

After having changed her minor from Business Administration to English at the beginning of this semester, Hefa had enough courses to graduate but ended up being short two credits. "Dean Petit-Hall emailed me about it this past Tuesday, so as you can imagine, I was freaking out," Hefa said.

Hefa was able to be added to the roster of a two-credit course, Jour-

nalism Workshop, which she had been doing work for all semester anyway, and has now made up those two credits.

Donald Gillespie, associate vice president for Institutional Research at Fordham, said that seniors who will be staying for the summer will not affect Fordham's graduation rates.

"The Student Right to Know Act, passed by Congress in the early 1990s, requires that universities that receive federal student aid must calculate and publicize graduation rates according to definitions written into the law and implementing regulations.

"The definitions provide that the date that divides years from first

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Self-Injury Increases on College Campuses

By CASEY FELDMAN Asst. News Editor

"I was a cutter from my senior [year in high school] until the middle of last year. I know a few people here who also cut, but will not seek help... People feel like, to relieve pressure, they [have to] cut themselves," said a Fordham College at Lincoln Center (FCLC) sophomore who declined to be identified.

Cutting has become increasingly prevalent among college students, said Amelio D'Onofrio, director of the FCLC Psychological Services Institute

and the author of a book about adolescent self-injury. D'Onofrio said that greater public awareness in regard to self-injury may play a role in the number of college students who report self-injuring.

Opinions vary on the reason for the increase in the number of students who self-injure, with experts citing everything from increased media attention to greater pressure for students to succeed as contributing factors. Compounding the issue of cutting on college campuses is the fact that cutting, according to D'Onofrio, is "absolutely contagious" and has been known to

spread through groups of friends or through students in campus residence halls like a trend.

A researcher in a 2006 Cornell University study cited by Science Daily stated that "there is virtually universal consensus among college and secondary school mental health providers that many psychological disorders, including [self-injury], have increased significantly in the past five years." The study estimates that 25 percent of college students have cut themselves.

According to D'Onofrio and other

see CUTTING pg. 3

Inside

SPORTS

BOYCOTTING THE OLYMPICS

The Beijing Olympics are causing a stir among spectators—What about the athletes?

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OPINIONS

POPE BENEDICT'S PEACE WORK

Pope Benedict is making strides to create a more unified world.

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# Pope Benedict XVI Calls for Basic Human Rights During His Visit to New York

By LEILA NOONE  
Contributing Writer

Pope Benedict XVI, leader of the Roman Catholic Church, of which three million New Yorkers belong, visited New York City and Wash., D.C. this past week in the second-ever visit of a pope to America. His visit garnered as much public and media attention as a celebrity might. The New York Times devoted its front page and numerous subsequent pages to the visit; pope blogs emerged; radio, television and magazine content was packed with papal commentary; and the streets of New York City were a gridlocked mess as onlookers flooded Fifth Avenue to catch a glimpse as the "popemobile" sailed by.

The pope's belief in "the right to life of every human being from conception to natural death" was the theme of his American venture.

The pope stated in his message to the United Nations that "there are universal values that transcend the diversity—cultural, ethnic or ideological—embodied in an institution like the United Nations, founded to help prevent the ruin of another world war. Those values are at the base of human rights," he said, "as they are for religion."

Kunick Kapadia, Fordham College at Lincoln Center (FCLC) '09, agreed that religious concepts must be translated into secular terms when speaking to a nation that is comprised of a myriad of different religious beliefs. "Every religion talks about not killing other humans, not stealing, not physi-

cally harming others... but that's only on a very basic level. I think people who don't even believe in religion believe in these things."

In his speech, the pope said, "Recognition of the transcendent value of every man and woman favors conversion of heart, which then leads to a commitment to resist violence, terrorism, war and to promote justice and peace."

This commitment to basic human rights seemed to be the theme of the pope's visit to America, a country that some feel is becoming increasingly secular and pluralistic. The pope's emphasis on basic human rights was hence applicable even to those who do not embrace religion.

The pope's itinerary included a trip to the White House, a visit to the United Nations, a visit to a Synagogue on Passover, talks with youth and two masses at professional baseball stadiums. The pope gave his last mass of the week in front of a packed crowd of 57,000 people at Yankee Stadium, where he summoned Americans to "move forward with firm resolve to use wisely the blessings of freedom in order to build a future of hope for coming generations." He also addressed terrorism, at-risk youth and sex abuse scandals in the Catholic Church at various points during his stay. He derided priests involved in such scandals, stating that such acts caused the Church to suffer both financially and morally.

In March, the Vatican added seven new deadly sins to the original list. The new sins targeted drug dealers, those who pollute the environment, the rich and powerful and genetic engineers.



LAURENCE KESTERSON/MCT

The Pope Conducted a Mass at Yankee Stadium on April 20.

At Fordham, students were invited to participate in activities surrounding the pope's visit. Activities included masses at St. Patrick's Cathedral and Yankee Stadium and the Pontiff's meetings with Catholic youth, Orthodox Christian hierarchs and Catholic educators.

Michael Levoff, FCLC '09, helped plan some of the events that surrounded the pope's visit. "Planning started months before for the Archdiocese of New York," he said. "Each event was very carefully orchestrated and required multiple planning meetings to produce what you saw on Saturday and Sunday. Security was a very important concern and the NYPD, in conjunction with the Secret Service, did a wonderful job protecting the Holy Father."

Levoff also attended the Mass at Yankee stadium. "Everyone who was

inside was assigned their ticket by the Archdiocese, so everyone who was there wanted to be there and was devout," he reported. "The crowd cheered out his name. On one occasion, after blessing the altar... there was a moment of complete silence, [and] a man in the upper deck screamed out 'We love you Benedict' and the entire stadium laughed and cheered."

The pope's visit to America was situated in the midst of a heated electoral season. The Roman Catholic Church opposes abortion, and the pope encourages Catholics to vote against candidates in support of it. In a nation where 67 million Americans are Roman Catholics, and given the enthusiasm that surrounded the pope's visit to New York, it remains to be seen what kind of impact his message will have on this large segment of voters.

## Self-Injury In College Students Raises Concerns

CUTTING FROM PAGE 1

experts, individuals who self-injure do so to relieve stress and emotional pain. Some feel that the increase in the number of college-age individuals who cut is attributable to the amplified level of stress placed upon today's college students.

Christine Graham, FCLC '10, agreed, stating, "We're all expected to push ourselves above and beyond. Grades aren't enough anymore, and the additional achievements required of undergraduates might be stressing people out or making them feel inadequate, even when they're performing at a very high capacity," she said.

Kella Birch, FCLC '10, said about a friend who used to cut, "[She] was a perfectionist, and when things started to go awry in her life, she couldn't face it... she pressured herself to appear perfect, and because she never allowed herself to admit that something was wrong, she released her tension by cutting. She finally told my friends and me about two years after she had stopped... we had never previously noticed because she apparently had cut on her inner thighs."

"Self-injurers do it when they are feeling depressed, anxious...or overwhelmed," said D'Onofrio. "Individuals who self-injure sometimes report feeling numb...and dissociated from their emotions. The act of self-injury jolts them back to reality. It is a way to soothe themselves," D'Onofrio said, also stating that a sense of relief often accompanies the act of self-injury.

The "provocative" nature of self-injury makes it a way for "disconnected" individuals to acquire a sense of identity, said D'Onofrio. "It's a way to get attention and nurturance from friends," he stated.

Birch said about another friend who used to cut, "She desperately wanted to be paid attention to. She showed our entire group of friends the cuts on her upper arms, thinking that it would just warrant our sympathy and that she would be the center of attention. But when we actually called her parents and they confronted her about it, she freaked... Basically, she



MCT

Experts say cutting is a large problem on college campuses.

wanted the attention but not any sort of confrontation or medical help."

According to D'Onofrio, cutting is not only a way to seek attention, but it often also becomes a method for groups of friends to compete for social status. "I have seen individuals where there is...social status determined by who can cut more deeply," said D'Onofrio, who has a private psychotherapy practice. "I saw three girls who were cutters," D'Onofrio continued. "They all made a pact to stop cutting, but if one relapsed, the others would relapse also to be supportive," he recalled.

D'Onofrio compared the contagion factor of cutting to that of eating disorders, where "you have entire suites of women who develop [anorexia]." D'Onofrio stated that he classifies eating disorders as a form of self-injury and that "there is a high correlation between individuals who cut and those who have eating disorders."

Other forms of self-injury, according to D'Onofrio, include drug and/or alcohol abuse, burning oneself or ingesting toxic chemicals. "Oftentimes, the individuals who are cutting are

involved in lots of other self-destructive behaviors," said D'Onofrio. "The function of cutting is to regulate one's emotional state...and to relieve anxiety. Individuals who use a lot of drugs and alcohol also do so to regulate their emotional states."

Traditionally, cutting was more common in females than in males. Experts disagree on whether this is attributable to females' greater willingness to seek help or to a larger number of females who cut in general. "Traditionally, [self-injury] has been linked to women and girls because of socio-cultural factors...and because women tend to internalize their distress more," D'Onofrio said.

Recent studies indicate, however, that the rates of males versus females who self-injure are now almost equal. "A positive trend in our culture is that we are now giving men messages that it is okay to talk about their feelings and to come forward," D'Onofrio said.

Some blame the increase in students who self-injure on the augmented exposure given to self-injury in the media: movies such as "Thirteen"

"[Self-injurers] don't have rearing environments where they can have healthy attachments, and they don't develop the resources to self-soothe or to [confide in others]."

D'Onofrio cited the children of absentee parents and the children of drug or alcohol abusers as an example. "Individuals whose early-life relationships were conflictual learn that they can't go to another person for soothing," he said. Cutting is also more common among those who were abused sexually, emotionally or physically, D'Onofrio stated.

Obviously, not everyone who is diagnosed with depression or an anxiety disorder, or who was abused, cuts him- or herself. So what determines who cuts and who doesn't? D'Onofrio said that some experts believe that there is a biological difference: a "heightened tolerance for pain and a heightened indogenous response in certain individuals"—meaning, the brain chemistry of some cutters is different than in other people in that feel-good chemicals are released upon the act of self-injury, creating a "high" for cutters.

*"I knew three girls who were cutters. They all made a pact to stop cutting, but if one relapsed, the others would relapse also to be supportive."*

— AMELIO D'ONOFRIO, director of FCLC Psychological Services Institute

feature characters who cut, and celebrities such as Angelina Jolie, Johnny Depp and Christina Ricci have spoken openly about cutting themselves. Researchers from Columbia University cited a study indicating that media attention has been proven to increase rates of cutting in young people. D'Onofrio, however, said he feels that celebrities speaking out about self-injury could help lessen the shame of cutting and encourage self-injurers to seek help.

Individuals who cut have almost always experienced some sort of childhood trauma, D'Onofrio said.

D'Onofrio feels that many students have already begun cutting by the time they enter college and that "the stress of the college transition can contribute to a relapse." D'Onofrio also stated that individuals who cut do so because they don't have the skills to cope with change and stress, and that the tumult of going to college can be a trigger.

Sarah Landew, staff psychologist in the FCLC counseling center, said, "I would encourage students to seek help if they are self-injuring in any way, as therapy can help them to begin to understand it and to find alternative ways of coping with their emotions."

### Calendar

Tuesday, May 6

#### Midnight Breakfast

10:30 p.m. to midnight  
Lowenstein Cafe  
Sponsored by the  
Office of the President

Wednesday, May 14

#### Senior Week Brunch

Noon to 2:00 p.m.  
Cafeteria Atrium  
Sponsored by OSL&CD and the  
Senior Week Committee

#### In the Heights

8:00 p.m.  
Richard Rodgers Theater  
Sponsored by OSL&CD and the  
Senior Week Committee

Thursday, May 15

#### Graduate Grill

1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Lowenstein Plaza  
Sponsored by OSL&CD and the  
Senior Week Committee

#### Senior Cruise

7:30 p.m.  
Sponsored by OSL&CD and the  
Senior Week Committee

Friday, May 16

#### Baccalaureate Mass

5:00 p.m.  
Church of St. Paul the Apostle  
Sponsored by OSL&CD and the  
Senior Week Committee

#### Family Reception

6:15 p.m.  
Robert Moses Plaza  
Sponsored by OSL&CD and the  
Senior Week Committee

Saturday, May 17

#### 163rd Commencement and Graduation Ceremony

10:00 a.m.  
Rose Hill campus

#### Corrections

In the Observer issue dated April 16, 2008, line four of Jem Pelly's article, "Talkin' Music with Father Grimes," stated that Father Grimes studied the trumpet with Pee Wee Herman. It should have read "[Father Grimes] since learned tons of other instruments: he studied trumpet with Pee Wee Erwin and taught himself guitar when he was in his 20s."