

Bullets Off Broadway

You might pat yourself on the back for writing a skit in time for Greek Week. Don't pat too hard. Jerome Hairston has written two off-Broadway plays and is drafting a third.

15 MINUTES

And the James Madison U. freshman got a pat from one of his heroes, director George Wolfe (*Angels in America*), who attended a New York performance of Hairston's *The Love of Bullets*.

According to Hairston, Wolfe told him, "That was amazing. Keep writing," removed a medallion from his collar and pressed it into Hairston's hand before disappearing into the crowd.

"I was floating on air," Hairston says. "He handed it to me as a gesture of passing on to the next generation of playwrights. I see it as a beacon of inspiration."

Hairston's ambition was first sparked at age 15 by a school play-writing assignment. After his work met with approval, Hairston forged on to write the 1993 Theater of Virginia competition winner, *Live From the Edge of Oblivion*. He describes *Live* as a collage juxtaposing television's representations of inner-city

life with people's real struggles.

Hairston didn't stop with pocketing a statewide competition. He entered the 1993 national Young Playwrights Festival held by Young Playwrights Inc., which produces plays by writers under 18. Of the approximately 1,600 plays submitted, only Hairston's and a few others emerged as full-fledged off-Broadway productions with professional crews.

It was for the 1994 Young Playwrights Festival that Hairston wrote *The Love of Bullets*, a love story about a black drug dealer and a drug addict.

Hairston admits he enjoys the glitter of New York's professional productions of his plays. "It's exciting. I'm not going to lie. But it's really all about writing the play, the joy of creation. You have to have perspective on that."

At the ripe old age of 19, Hairston can no longer work with Young Playwrights, but it isn't curtains for his career. New York's Papp Public Theater, which staged *The Love of Bullets*, has commissioned Hairston to write another play for possible production.

"There's an undeniable voice," says Young Playwrights artistic director Sheri Goldhirsch about Hairston's writing. "I think that we're going to be hearing his name quite often and quite soon. He has a future in the theater."



For Jerome Hairston, playwright, the neon lights are in sight.

■ Kara Ogletree, *The Breeze*, James Madison U.

U NEWS

IF THE WALLS HAD NOSES

Pace U., Pleasantville/Briarcliff, N.Y. — Something was rotten in the state of Marks. Marks Hall, that is —

a science building at Pace. It smelled so bad that some of the offices had to be shut down. "I had an idea that it was a dead rat in the wall, but I learned it was

much worse," the chair of the department of biological sciences says. "I imagine 10 to 100 rats. That is how bad it smelled." Turns out it was rotten fish. They were being stored in a liquid that was thought to contain formaldehyde but in fact had no formaldehyde. The problem was tidied up just before the school's name could be changed from Pace U. to Pee-yeww!

JUAN VALDEZ WOULD BE PROUD

Stanford U. — Pulling an all-nighter at Stanford U. just got easier. This semester, Stanford brewed up its own line of coffee, lovingly called Cardinal Coffees. The 11 blends sport the names of residence halls: Branner Italian Roast, Florenee Moore French Vienna and Escondido Sumatra, to name just a few.

The campus bookstore is selling the brews in individual bags that bear the official school logo or in gift baskets that include Stanford mugs and small coffee grinders. In a survey to see what java junkies wanted in a cup of joe, students said: whole beans, gourmet flavors, tough specifications on freshness and no saucy lady pouring it for them in the dining hall. (Dining hall personality added for effect.)

A DUBIOUS HONOR

Good Times U. — The folks over at *Inside Edge* magazine have been busy. They just released the results of their second annual Fun College Survey, a survey of students at 101 colleges in the categories of bar/club scene, party scene, attractiveness of students, ease of graduation, ease of classes, happiness quotient, bragging factor and others. Georgetown U. came in first overall with a whopping 88.9 points out of 100. Penn State U. holds the title of No. 1 drinking school, and the survey commented, "In fact, our friends at Penn State confess that they buy beer by the case in bars." Rounding out the top 10 after Georgetown are: Florida State U.; U. of California, Santa Barbara; Southern Methodist U.; UCLA; Penn State U.; Tulane U.; Ohio State U.; U. of Southern California; and Stanford U.

S&M: Sadly Misunderstood?

When students at Columbia U. first heard there was a university-recognized sadomasochistic

group on campus, they imagined scenes of whip-wielding dominatrices and submissive young men.

Founders of the 40-member group, however, insist that their meetings are for students and faculty interested in bondage, domination, submission and sadomasochism (BDSM) to talk about safe sex, negotiating consent and methods of safe psychological play.

The group, called *Conversio Virium* (Latin for power exchange), was ousted from the Earl Hall student center in December in an 18-15 vote by representatives from other Earl Hall student groups on the grounds that it is not a humanitarian organization.

"Any Earl Hall recognized group must have as its purpose [to] contribute to the furtherance of the spiritual, religious, political or humanitarian life in the Columbian community," says senior David Linton, a CV opponent.

Other opponents argue that CV encourages its members to

practice unsafe sexual activities that may legally jeopardize the university. And to many of the Earl Hall groups, a number of which are religious, the idea of pleasure through pain is abnormal.

Tammy Jo Eckhart, a December graduate who was CV treasurer at the time of the ousting, defends BDSM as "a good kind of hurt."

"A lot of people enjoy sensations that would be painful in other contexts, like getting a hickey, or being scratched during intercourse, or even enjoying the pain when they exercise," she explains.

CV founders Ben Delfin, a senior, and "Jane," who wishes to remain anonymous, have appealed the decision, but Earl Hall acting director Scott Matheney ruled in early March to uphold it. CV members are pursuing further appeals.

Supporters argue that since the Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay Coalition is recognized under Earl Hall, CV, as a discussion-only group, also has the right to exist.

"It's just a place to talk, people to talk to. It doesn't mean that we're all hiding out in dungeons and whipping each other," Jane says.

■ Monica Mehta, *Columbia Daily Spectator*, Columbia U.



J. Thurston, *The Auburn Plainsman*, Auburn U.