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MYSTERIOUS SENIORS

There exist at Cornell many persons of interest. Some of them occupy the pages of our fair newspaper on the regular, but they are hardly the only ones who merit widespread discussion. You've seen these Mysterious Seniors around campus. Perhaps you've awkwardly locked eyes with them on Ho Plaza, unaware of their subtle importance to campus culture. Below, you will find 25 Mysterious Seniors worthy of your attention. Maybe you've only seen them cramming in the library, killing it on the elliptical at the gym or making unfortunate mistakes at Collegetown's finest drinking establishments, but these Seniors have carved themselves a place in Cornell lore and demand your utmost respect.

—Joey Anderson and James Rainis, Sun arts & entertainment editors



Back row, from left: Wade Simmons, Dennis Shirae, Dan Marino, Elias Kraushaar, Emily Parkinson, Christina Chaplain, Adam Belfer, Olivia Moore; Middle row, from left: Reed Steberger, Sam Ferenc, John Eckhaus, John Yoshida, Malinka Walaliyadde, Kristen McClellan, John Crowers; Bottom row, from left: Rhea Fernandes, Meghan Brown, Jennifer Jung, Varya Larionova, Sara Rahman, Jeremy Blum, Rachel Kermis, Mouleena Khan, Josh Mbanusi
Not pictured: Juliana Kleist Mendez

OLIVER KLEWIE / SUN SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

ADAM BELFER — *Great Neck, N.Y. / American Studies and Sociology* — Many will know Adam as the self-described, often bare-ass “Cornell Gangster” from his viral YouTube video of the same name. He has employed his seductive ways through other venues like Cayuga’s Waiters with his “Barry White bass” and the stacks, where he checked off #1 in the 161 Things. With a home in Great Neck, Adam plans on attending law school but wants to take a gap year to pursue government in D.C. and, yes, continue his saucy antics.

JEREMY BLUM — *Armonk, N.Y. / Electrical and Computer Engineering* — Jeremy Blum hit the ground running his freshman year when he helped to re-found Cornell University Sustainable Design (CUSD). Thanks to his technical skill, creativity and personal initiative, he has since earned many prestigious positions on campus including Kessler Fellow, Engineering and Entrepreneurship; Technical Director, CUSD’s Sustainability Research Facility Project; Presidential Research Scholar (published researcher: “Machine Metabolism”). Independent of Cornell, he has already broken into the fields of electronics and robotics. He designs electronics for MarkerBot 3D Printers, consults for Newark Electronics, produces instructional YouTube videos and is an open source hardware inventor (SudoGlove, Audiovisual Theremin and more).

MEGHAN BROWN — *Port Chester, N.Y. / Applied Economics and Management* — Bucking her family’s three-generational trend of attending Notre Dame University, Meghan Brown chose instead to come to Cornell to run 00cross-country. Now a senior and the team’s sole captain, Brown helped lead Cornell’s women’s cross country team to first place in the Ivy League Championships this October. Brown is an Applied Economics and Management major from Port Chester, N.Y. whose non-running interests include the fantasy genre and video games.

CHRISTINA CHAPLIN — *Vernon Hills, Ill. / Fine Arts* — When Charlie Chaplin lived in Ithaca, he did artsy shit and lived at 411 Thurston. CU senior Christina Chaplin does artsy shit and is a sister in Alpha Phi: 411 Thurston. Coincidence? Yes, most definitely. However — it remains to be seen which Chaplin future art historians will regard as the greatest cultural catalyst. Christina, a fine arts student in AAP with a dual concentration in Photography and Painting, plans to one day teach Art (capital-A, she has interned in Rome), has taught music at after-school programs in Ithaca, works as a freelance photographer (she might have photographed for YOUR a capella group or DJ act) and has worked as director of photography for Ithaca’s Melodramatics Film Company.

JOHAN CROWER — *Atlanta, G.A. / Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering* — John Crower shows no signs of weakness, except perhaps in his dependence on a daily bowl of blueberry yogurt with granola. When not performing at the top of Cornell’s ROTC program as Battalion Commander, he is rowing for the varsity men’s heavyweight crew team. Walking on as a sophomore, John earned a spot in the top novice boat, winning top honors at Eastern Sprints and IRA’s. John plans on pursuing a military career in special operations.

JON ECKHAUS — *Westchester, N.Y. / Audio Production and Perception Design* — Some succumb to a Netflix addiction in their spare time; Jon Eckhaus rewires electronic mixers and builds mics and conjures music before your very eyes in Contrapunkt!, Cornell’s undergraduate composition club. His band, Time/Being, who produces IDM (Intelligent Dance Music) foster more than an addiction to post-rock ambient electronic music: they bring a deeper intellectual challenge to the listener, music with integrity that promotes thought. Oh, and he casually scores films for friends, too.

SAM FERENC — *Moretown, Vt. / Government and Linguistics* — A political junkie with a penchant for sarcasm, Sam thrives on solving problems and helping people. He’s happy to work hard, whether it’s fixing computers or ensuring that people have a great time (he’s “immersed” in the Slope Day Programming Board and Cornell Concert Commission). This former Editor-in-Chief of the Cornell Progressive is also gearing up for a political career. His stint as an intern on Capitol Hill has left him eager for more: “Altruistic idealism doesn’t always get you far, although that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try.”

RHEA FERNANDES — *Old Bridge, N.J. / Policy Analysis and Management with a minor in Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies* — Rhea has taken her passion for public policy, government, and feminism and applied it to her on-campus activities. She is currently on the Advisory Board for the Cornell Women’s Resource Center, where she organizes weekly dinner discussions called Feminism: Food for Thought. She is also currently the joint community outreach intern for the LGBT Resource Center and the Asian and Asian American centers at Cornell. Her next on-campus venture will be directing the spring production of *The Vagina Monologues*. While she eventually hopes to attend law school, Rhea plans to travel to and work in the Middle East after graduation.

JENNIFER JUNG — *Chicago, Ill. / Applied Economics and Management, minor in Real Estate* — Jennifer speaks four languages, is ambidextrous and developed a brief allergy to the cold as a freshman year. Deciding to stay and brave the Ithaca winters, she became involved with Microfinance Club (Deputy Fund Manager), the Translator Interpreter Program, the Korean American Students Association, S.A. Communications Committee and the Social Business Consulting Group (Consulting Manager). Not busy with her organizations, Jennifer can be found eating Santa Fe subs from the Big Red Barn, admiring abstract art and singing.

RACHEL KERMIS — *Buffalo, N.Y. / Biology, Health and Society* — This “die-hard Cornellian” just can’t stop sharing her love for Cornell. In fact, she loved talking to other students so much that she became an Orientation Co-Director and student advisor in the College of Human Ecology. She later joined the Senior Class Campaign. With the Cornell Emergency Medical Services, Rachael has planned the Cornell vs. Dartmouth Blood Drive (“of course Cornell Won!”) and served as a primary clinical caregiver. By running about 50 hours of EMS a week, Rachael has learned the location of every building on campus.

MOULEENA KHAN — *Collegedale, Pa. / Operations Research with a minor in Dance* — While Mouleena is fascinated by the world of finance and hopes to have a career on Wall Street after graduating from Cornell, her interests stretch far beyond that. In addition to being the outgoing Vice President of Finance for Panhel and the AEW Facilitator for the College of Engineering, Mouleena is also the President of the Pandora Dance Troupe and danced in Bernstein’s Mass and Dance, Drama, and the Disco of Desire at the Schwarz Center. In fact, her dream job is to be a backup dancer in music videos.

JULIANA KLEIST-MENDEZ — *Iowa City, IA / Theater for Social Change* — Juli dreams of being on the stage, but not in the spotlight. Sporting a College Scholars “Theatre for Social Change” major, Juli hopes to make it directing plays that seriously consider and comment on contemporary issues. She has already proven herself as the first female student to direct this fall’s production of *No Exit* by Jean Paul Sartre, and she co-founded ParaCosm Theatrics, which explores the interaction between actors and audience. Juli can bring out an actor’s best in rehearsals and aims to bring out the best in theatre through her socially-conscious productions.

ELIAS KRAUSHAAR — *Chappaqua, N.Y. / College Scholar, Economics* — Elias has the unique ability to seem like a local anywhere. Whether dipping pita into tahini in Jerusalem, munching empanadas in Cartagena, or foaming a latte in the Green Dragon, Kraushaar’s warm disposition invites the traveler to ask for directions. His academic interests in classical sociology and comparative government have propelled him far and wide. Directly after completing an independent study of the Israeli economy last year, Kraushaar embarked on a decadent semester in Chile. A cultural chameleon, Kraushaar wakes up as an Israeli, lunches as a New Yorker and goes to bed a Chilean.

VARYA LARIONOVA — *Moscow, Russia / Architecture* — Varya simply describes herself as a girl from Moscow who wants to be an architect. She is constantly stuck in the creative process, and confesses to being “consumed by ... wanderlust.” Her dazzling array of interests (architecture, visual arts, film, literature and food), and her installation and photography work testify to her worldview. She is fascinated by her environment, and sees things as “a never-ending adventure.” She cites her “magical” semester in Rome and dancing on the slope at 2 a.m. to Abbey Road (even though she doesn’t know how to dance) as her best memories of Cornell.

DDAN MARINO — *New York, N.Y. / Architecture* — Fans often ask Hall-of-Fame quarterback Dan Marino if his parents knew about fifth-year architecture student Dan Marino when they named him. “They named me after a visionary architect,” he answers. “I am obliged.” Marino’s varied architectural interests have spurred a number of different approaches to the discipline. Marino has one foot in sculpture — he designed and constructed an aluminum installation in Hartell this fall, thanks to a grant he received from the Cornell Council for the Arts — and the other in theory — Dan serves as an editor on the Cornell Journal of Architecture.

JOSHUA MBANUSI — *Dallas, TX / Policy Analysis and Management* — As the Academic Development Chair of the Black Student Union, Joshua Mbanusi helped establish Scholars Working Ambitiously to Graduate (SWAG) to help raise the graduation rate of Cornell’s black male students. Over this past summer, Mbanusi worked with BSU and various campus organizations to set up SWAG’s student mentoring program. A PAM major, Mbanusi will be teaching secondary social studies in North Carolina next year through the Teach for America program.

KRISTEN MCCLELLAN — *Locust Valley, N.Y. / ILR* — Hailing from Locust Valley, New York and a student in the school of Industrial and Labor Relations, Kristen has a natural inclination in entrepreneurship that is already proving itself in the real world. Her product, called “SnappyScreen,” consists of a beachside kiosk that delivers a fine mist of sunscreen to the user for a thorough, safe UV shield. Trial runs are underway and manufacturing opportunities are falling into place. While she may spend the rest of her years in the sun, Kristen will never forget skating on Lynah Rink for the first time and the Cornell friends she sticks with today from that time on the ice.

OLIVIA MOORE — *Fairport, N.Y. / ILR* — Olivia Moore has been alluring prospective students and charming alumni for the past four years, not merely as an ILR Ambassador or Co-President of the Senior Class Campaign, but with her sweet songs before or After Eight and in the Chorus. She goes so far as to say: “If I could sing for the rest of my life, I would.” Her angelic voice, oddly paired with her passion for baking and secret love for US military history novels will have you singing.

EMILY PARKINSON — *Cambridge, Mass. / Fiber Science and Apparel Design* — Emily Parkinson, from Cambridge, Mass., is an active member of the School of Human Ecology’s fashion department and plays a key role in the orchestration of one of our campus’s signature events, the Cornell Fashion Collective. She spent last spring honing her fashion sense while abroad in London, last summer developing middle-school curriculums for fashion-technology. She is currently working on a wrought iron-inspired collection using primarily laser-cut leather to premier this spring. I wonder what she thinks about the finals week “10 days, one hoodie” fashion strategy.

SARA RAHMAN — *Cumberland, MD / Near Eastern Studies with a minor in Biology* — Sara’s interests in Muslim American issues post-9/11 and women’s empowerment and development in the Middle East have spurred charitable contributions and volunteer efforts on and off campus. Rahman has taken her efforts abroad to Jordan, where she volunteered for Habitat for Humanity. Rahman hopes to attend medical school and work with abuse victims in the Middle East, and maybe go into the field of teaching. Another of Sara’s passions is dancing; you may have spotted her teaching Zumba or Belly Dancing classes on campus.

DENNIS SHIRAEV — *College Scholar/Economics* — Simply put, Shiraev is sharp. The master of the witty one-line formula, Shiraev is also the mastermind behind the Cornell Insider, the successful blog affiliated with the Cornell Review. Since leaving his position as editor-in-chief of the Review, Shiraev’s interests have taken an academic turn: last year he earned a Rawlings Presidential Scholarship to study behavioral economics. When Shiraev is not conducting economic experiments or putting his pen to the page, he can be found watching hockey or terrorizing the bars in Collegetown.

WADE SIMMONS — *Forest Hill, Md. / Science of Natural and Environmental Systems* — It takes an invasive species to know one. But when dreamy Wade is not analyzing the spread of *Lumbricus* (genus) using GIS mapping he is engaged in leisure activities. Professionally engaged, Wade’s love for coffee has guided him to the Green Dragon Café, which he manages, and spawned relationships with local, coffee-producing communities in Mexico and Guatemala. When he’s not roaming on farms abroad, Wade is leading C.O.E. trips and saving small animals. If you dabble in the Ithaca jam-band scene, then you know Wade.

REED STEBERGER — *Roxbury, N.J. / Interdisciplinary Studies* — Reed Steberger understands the presence of energy in people and the importance of applying it to something positive. His passion goes beyond his love for flash mobs; he is the quintessential young activist, pouring himself into campus organizations like the Occupy Cornell Group, Kyoto Now! and the Cornell Organization for Labor Action (COLA). When he isn’t making getting arrested look cool, he contributes to the tradition of storytelling through his own folk music.

MALINKA WALALIYADDE — *Sharjah, U.A.E. / Material Science* — Malinka Walaliyadde is a senior adviser of the Cornell Genetically Engineering Machine Team, which won one of the seven first place awards given out at the International Genetically Engineered Machines competition this October. Walaliyadde has also performed research involving potential cancer treatments here at Cornell. While born in Sri Lanka, Malinka grew up in Sharjah, U.A.E. When not winning engineering competitions or helping to cure cancer, Malinka follows cricket avidly and plays guitar casually.

JOHAN YOSHIDA — *Great Neck, N.Y. / Applied & Engineering Physics and Economics* — One would think studying AEP engineering is difficult enough, but not for John “Yoshi” Yoshida, which is why he is a dual degree student, also studying Economics in Arts & Sciences. He doesn’t let his intense schoolwork break his spirits; instead, he breakdances in the Absolute Zero Crew. That’s not all: he is also heavily involved in Cornell University Sustainable Design, Delta Sigma Pi and just finished his term as president of the Mutual Investment Club.