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Inside: Finding Magic, Gold, and A Voice

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As Harvard College's weekly undergraduate newsmagazine, the *Harvard Independent* provides in-depth, critical coverage of issues and events of interest to the Harvard College community. The *Independent* has no political affiliation, instead offering diverse commentary on news, arts, sports, and student life.

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## Honor Thy Music

Country that stays.

By KELSEY O'CONNOR

Four years ago, just about the time I got my driver's license, a country radio station reappeared in the New York tri-state area. While NASH 104.7 immediately became the number one preset on my Jeep's old radio, this addition was largely unnoticed by my friends. Since then I have successfully converted a few people to Country fandom, but it was not very difficult. Often when I ask people about music preferences the response is "I like pretty much anything, except I'm not crazy about country." I've become so used to this response that when I am the DJ I warn that there may be more twang than they are accustomed to.

In middle school I listened to lots of Top 40. It was what the kids were listening to; hip and cool just like 7th grade me. For example, Bowling for Soup's *1985* was in the top 10 of my most played songs, I attended a Lady Gaga concert, and I think I have some iTunes receipts for more than one Katy Perry song. Don't get me wrong, these songs are fun: so catchy, so danceable, so nostalgic. I still listen to some of them, but ironically. Usually it happens like this: I'm about to go on a long car ride, so I make a playlist and include a bunch of 'classics' (aka middle school dance songs) to entertain me along the way. And inevitably when they come on I blast the volume and scream the lyrics and proceed to forget about the song until my next road trip.

My emergence from this high-energy pop period of my listening history was largely initiated by a rediscovery of Garth Brooks. My parents both like country music, especially my dad, so growing up there were always CDs playing in the car or in the house. George Strait and Garth Brooks were staples. The album that I had loaded into my iTunes (via CD, what is that?),

was the Garth Brooks *Double Live* album. I think I can still recite the dialogue that runs throughout this album. When Garth's comeback tour made it to Boston last January, it was amusingly almost verbatim from the 20-year old album. Also amusing was that I could recite the whole thing with him because the album was so ingrained in my memory.

As I listened to this CD in 7th grade, the narrative of the songs, the diversity of energy, and the comfort I found in its familiarity prompted me to revisit Toby Keith, Martina McBride, and Montgomery Gentry. While each of these artists, and in fact most country artists, have a different approach to the genre, what they all have in common is a sense of history and community in Country. Johnny Cash and his wife June Carter, Gene Autry, Hank Williams, Patsy Cline – the list goes on – are legends of Country music to whom every artist afterward pays tribute and whose legacy they carry on. The Country Music Hall of Fame's motto is "Honor Thy Music" and I have no doubt that the passing of Merle Haggard on April 6 will inspire shout outs and tributes from all corners of the Country community.

In the past couple of years Country has gotten a reputation for "Bro Country," which is now essentially being disowned by the Country community and considered a sub-genre. These songs, which honestly are fun summer anthems, prominently feature trucks, fields, and parties. And they are very popular. However, artists like Carrie Underwood, Eric Church, and 2016 Grammy Award Winner Chris Stapleton are making more traditional country that is still gaining radio traction. These artists are taking it a step further from a meaningful

narrative; Stapleton's latest music video for a song called "Fire Away" draws attention to the importance of mental health and highlights an organization called Change Direction. This is not the first time a Country music artist has used their music for a cause. Martina McBride has had many songs that draw attention to domestic violence. While these may seem like heavy topics for the radio, it signifies that popular music can also be meaningful.

The narrative in Country songs keeps me coming back – it's the most memorable part of the music. Whether it's the story of those we miss ("The Dance," Garth Brooks), a love story ("Ring of Fire," Johnny Cash; "Happy Man," Thomas Rhett + many others), a story of love gone terribly wrong ("The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia," Reba McEntire + many, many others) or an meaningful ballad about home ("The House that Built Me," Miranda Lambert), there's something for everyone and every scenario.

Country recently came back to New York on NASH 104.7, but there are stations everywhere. In Boston 101.7 and 102.5 broadcast a mix of the old and new. Listening to Spotify in my room or the radio in my car, there is always a familiar tune, even those I've never heard before. Country music is more than entertainment, it is stories and concerts with friends and the excitement of sharing a new album with someone even if he is not a fan – chances are he soon will be.

*Kelsey O'Connor '18 (kelseyconnor@college.harvard.edu) dedicates this piece in memory of Merle Haggard (1937-2016), a country music legend.*

# INDY FORUM

## Life Out Loud

Speak Out Loud's inclusive environment draws many artistic talents.

By MEGAN SIMS

Curled up in a chair in Ticknor Lounge, I put the finishing touches on a poem meant to capture the ethos of a heartbreak just 24 hours old. With a black moleskin notebook on the table in front of me next to my camera, I smile and begin to type. "I am poet, photographer, ethnographer, journalist."

On Saturday night I played many roles, taking pictures, notes, quotes, and of course writing and performing my own poetry. Under other circumstances, this might have been a cause of stress, but I felt strangely calm. It wasn't just the

Moses Kim '18, the MC for the event, was truly the star of the night. Interjecting short poems between the performers, he owned the stage, moving energetically and often removing the mic from its stand (the only one to do so during the night). Each introduction of a poet was met with effusive praise from Kim, and each poet received validation for the work. Never once did one get the sense that these sentiments were anything but genuine. I was surprised to learn at the end of the night that this was his first time MC-ing.

What makes Speak Out Loud great

As an art form, spoken word encourages engagement. Audience members are told to react to work they appreciate with snaps, stomps, and "mmms" as the poet reads. The audience thus becomes a part of the piece not just as consumer but also as enhancer. Speak Out Loud, in keeping with this tradition, seeks to elevate voices, often voices that aren't heard.

Throughout the night we heard poems about interpersonal and institutional racism, hookups, breakups, and more. The overarching sentiment was one of comfort and ease—there's no pressure



low, warm light of Ticknor. Something about being in the space with Speak Out Loud made me feel inherently more relaxed.

Speak Out Loud, Harvard's only spoken word poetry group, has been inviting the Harvard community into the art form for the past several years. From hosting slams to open mics to workshops, SOL strives for an inclusive community. Anwar Omeish '19 said "I think the Speak Out Loud space is always a really comfortable space to share what you have, whether it's actually a completed work or something that's on your mind."

is the people. Humphrey Obuobi '18 said, "I definitely think that Speak Out Loud is a very important organization on campus, both for creative expression and for getting a lot of important issues and human experiences out there." This emphasis on each individual person's story gives Speak Out Loud a unique perspective on campus. The focus is on promoting art rather than curating it. Attendees are encouraged to share anything from published work to stories about their day. And the people involved, from those who run events to those who share, give life to this mission.

to share, but anyone is welcome. SOL creates a space that validates the work of artists, regardless of subject and polish.

The night ended as it began – with music playing. As board members took down the mics, someone's iPod blasted the *Hamilton* soundtrack, and everyone sang along. People lingered, conversations flowed, and I, and everyone, felt at ease.

*Megan Sims '18 (megansims@college.harvard.edu) is multi-talented.*

## Finding Gold

The Indy converses with a past and present leader.

By CAROLINE CRONIN

This paper, The Harvard Independent, has a storied mission. Since the founding in 1969, the Indy has attracted students of all variety to join in our ranks. The common thread that weaves them all together is that of passion – passion for the art of critical thinking in an independent nature. At Harvard and beyond, that passion becomes a driving force to excel.

Therefore it is not surprising to learn that Indy alumni become role models to whom we look for guidance and inspiration. Dr. David Finegold is one such man. Graduate of the 1984 class, Finegold served

as President of the Independent in the '83-'84 term. Call it fate or destiny but Finegold's presidential capabilities are once again being called upon; this time, by Chatham University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

An academic with a collection of appointments at institutions such as University of Southern California and Rutgers, Finegold has continued writing since his Indy days and boasts a number of published books. From this perspective, Finegold holds interesting views on the nature of college journalism and the path the Indy has taken. According to Finegold, "There was a very obviously distinct point in time when the Indy was founded during the

Vietnam War." The tumultuous campus climate and the perception that "the Crimson seemed to be representing only one perspective on the issues" created a desperate need for an independent college press.

Harvard's Independent student weekly thus became a publication that "could really focus on in-depth jour-

but the community of friends and colleagues that was and is the Indy became just as important. Finegold points to role models on the paper who taught him great "writing, editing, and what doing really quality research was" in order to break a story. Since the Indy in the '80s did not have the endowment it does now, another discipline was needed to run the paper: that of a successful small business. "How many ads we could sell determined how many pages we could run," Finegold states. Together, the business and the editorial disciplines that were required of Indy staff members are still in-

**"Don't defer the things you're really excited about assuming you'll get back to them after making your money." - Dr. David Finegold**

nalism...predominantly on the issues on the campus and directly relevant to the campus," Finegold recalls. Their role then, as it is now, was as a weekly newspaper specifically for the Harvard community. Of course, the publication of such a paper is a communal effort. Finegold remembers peers of his who led the paper in the '80s and who excelled in journalism after Harvard as well. Bill O'Neill '82, Charles Fishman '83, and Arthur Kroeber '84 – with Dr. Finegold at their side – took the paper to a great level.

Being a Harvard student is not always a walk in the park, and being one of Rhodes Scholar caliber takes discipline. Finegold states that he put his coursework first while at Harvard,

valuable. Finegold knows, "those are the aspects of building a really effective team." And they are qualities that have assisted him throughout his career, "right up to becoming a university president."

Chatham University is a unique institution that focuses on innovations in real world problems. Previously an all women's college, the university now boasts 2,100 graduate and undergraduate students studying in over 60 programs in health sciences, sustainability, business, and the humanities. As President, Finegold believes there is a great "chance to position it as an innovative leader in tackling some of the worlds most pressing problems,

## Finding Gold, contd.

The Indy converses with a past and present leader.

By CAROLINE CRONIN

not from doing cutting edge research, but in terms of actually creating a living learning environment.” One “where people can come together and deal with things like sustainable food and energy and clean water.”

As University President, it seems Dr. Finegold’s three passions of writing, teaching, and leading have come together. Finegold claims, “All of the aspects of the career have been very rewarding. I’ve always been drawn on research side and writing more towards things, a lot like the Indy, that I felt could have a direct impact on peoples’ lives.” Dr. Finegold also loves to teach both “traditional students and a lot of executive education.” The appeal of the leadership role is the ability to get new programs off the ground to interest people. As many of our own professors at Harvard have said, “Academia gives you a chance to do all of these things,” and to combine one’s talents. Dr. Finegold looks forward to a long and fulfilling time as University President, but intends to continue to write and teach even afterwards.

Gifted us with wise words, Finegold encourages readers and Indy staff members alike to search for careers that we are passionate about, regardless of whether they pay the best. He implores, “Don’t defer the things you’re really excited about assuming you’ll get back to them after making

your money.”

Journalism is one of the more volatile careers today. Since the Indy’s founding, it has not been alone in experiencing dramatic changes. The world of journalists is a different one today than the one our parents knew. Finegold states that one of the biggest questions facing us today is “what is the role of independent journalism in the 21st century?” He remembers working for Times Magazine over sev-

ourselves in a particular political atmosphere in which, “you could argue that we have more need for a strong independent press than ever.”

Therefore, college students and aspiring journalists are encouraged to think critically about the role of a college weekly in today’s environment. Both current Indy staff members and Dr. Finegold recognize that, “One of the best crosscutting skills you can have is to really write well and think critically about things.”

We of The Harvard Independent are continuing to explore this niche that we fill and wish to discover a purer standard of quality college

“What is the role of independent journalism in the 21st century?”

- Dr. David Finegold

eral summers during college and leaning towards that path before accepting the Rhodes. But, “very few of the people on the paper now are doing it with an eye towards that as a career path.” It is true, the Indy staff today is comprised of brilliant and competent people pursuing a number of varied dreams, but journalism after college is not very common among them.

Perhaps this is because, as Finegold puts it, “anyone who has a thought has plenty of outlets to get it out there. So you don’t need a newspaper in the same way. And yet, I still think there is an important role for a weekly to play in the process.” The current dynamic in technology and business models is an influential factor. However, we find

journalism. While giving voice to a diverse range of concerns pressing Harvard students today, we look to our role models for enlightenment in our self-discovery.

*Caroline Cronin '18 (ccronin01@college.harvard.edu) longs for chances to proclaim 'Eureka!'*

# Magic is Real

BlackCAST's daring success.  
By HUNTER RICHARDS

## BLACK CAST

THE AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER, LOEB MAINSTAGE



From the minds of five Harvard students comes *Black Magic*, a bold new original play premiering on the Loeb Mainstage at the American Repertory Theater. The idea for *Black Magic* took seed following a year of campus protests across the nation concerning the inequalities students of color face at their respective universities. The Harvard Black Community and Student Theater group (BlackCAST) has long provided students of color with a greater opportunity to be involved in theater and seeks to showcase experiences to which black students can relate. Just as Harvard faculty came together with peer institutions to take a stand against these injustices, Harvard students came together to write, produce, direct, and create an original play. Brilliant art is often born out of struggle, and *Black Magic* is brilliant art. With audience members including the likes of President Drew Faust and Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist, Junot Diaz, it marks the beginning of a new era of activism and social justice on Harvard's campus.

*Black Magic* chronicles the lives of black college students during the Black Lives Matter movement, in which Harvard students

played an active role this past year. The play discusses intersectionality – exploring concepts of race, sexuality, and gender on a campus where students face racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia. *Black Magic* focuses on the narratives of five Harvard students, but the number of students behind the creation and development of the show is much larger. *Black Magic* was written over winter break, as Ian Askew '19, Jenny Gathright '16, Madison Johnson '18, Darius Johnson '18, and Matsuda-Lawrence communicated regularly to coalesce their ideas. Kimiko Matsuda-Lawrence '16 directed. *Black Magic* began with a vague concept proposed by Matsuda-Lawrence to showcase the many different experiences of black students on Harvard's campus. The show, however, has pulled in staff members, actors, and writers who previously were not involved with BlackCAST but who were considered to be individuals with strong experiences in activism that would strengthen the narrative. While a couple of the writers may have originally been heavily involved with *Renegade*, a Harvard publication that advocates for students of color, the production is primarily by BlackCAST

and not formally in collaboration with any other student group.

BlackCAST is not always guaranteed a space to perform. In the past semester, the group collaborated with the Harvard-Radcliffe Dramatic Club (HRDC) to present *A Raisin in the Sun* and *Clybourne Park* in the Loeb Experimental Theater. However, last spring, the group was unable to secure a space. Since the group is small, not having a space to perform means that BlackCAST will not have a performance for the semester. However, from April 1 to 9, the 540-seat Loeb Mainstage presents a play entirely by BlackCAST for the first time in years. Loeb Mainstage productions have not always portrayed the stories and issues that resonate with minority groups, let alone focus on them. “It’s time for black students to take over the biggest stage on Harvard’s campus to tell a multidimensional story about being black on campus in the context of a nationwide struggle for justice,” proclaims its creators. Securing one of the biggest and most sought-after theater spaces on Harvard’s campus has allowed *Black Magic* and its message to reach even beyond the Harvard community.

Our illustrious leader, President Drew Faust made sure to be among the audience on opening night. Her presence is notable amidst the current calls for increased administrative recognition of students of color experiences and organizations. It is the hope of many students that President Faust’s attendance will lead to more administrative presence in support of such events and projects. “It’s appreciated and we hope she enjoys it and takes something important away from it, but we hope that this isn’t the only time that a high-level Harvard administrator will come to an event. We hope that something comes of it and her peers do something to support minority groups on campus and regularly come out to physically

support the things that minority groups on campus are doing,” says writer, Darius Johnson ‘18. Administrators have much power to support activism on campus. *Black Magic* may enrich the ways in which administrators will interpret racial events, protests, and issues on campus.

Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Junot Diaz will also be amongst the thousands of audience members who will view *Black Magic* during its run on Loeb Mainstage. Diaz, who has made a career in writing about the same issues that on which BlackCAST focuses, shared information about the performance over his Facebook page. In his Facebook post, Diaz

Brilliant art is often born out of struggle, and **Black Magic** is brilliant art.

notes that he looks forward to seeing the play, and he has also been in contact with the producers to further express his support. To have such a prominent figure of the queer, minority community endorse the play has further emphasized the power that *Black Magic* has in reaching out to more of the Harvard community, as well as students on campuses nationwide.

Although *Black Magic* is very much an exception in the Harvard theater community, it is the hope of BlackCAST and its supporters that this production will catalyze change. “With *Black Magic*, we’ve brought a lot of black people into the theater that wouldn’t typically have considered themselves theater people. We hope more people of color on campus do similar projects and break the stereotype that black people don’t care about art, and that right now the lack of participation is because the stories being portrayed

## Magic is Real, contd.

aren’t all that relevant or pertinent to us,” says Darius Johnson ‘18. BlackCAST has begun to alleviate the pressure of such stereotypes in order to inspire students to spearhead bolder creative projects. As a recipient of the Open Harvard grant, *Black Magic* is an excellent example of not only a successful initiative aiming to increase awareness and inclusivity, but also of bringing together students and leaders whose passion drives innovation and progress.

Opening night boasted a packed house. Though the five individual writers struggled to merge many different ideas together in one script while balancing the length, the performance was able to showcase the varied intersectional experiences of black students on Harvard’s campus because of the communal effort in writing. The audience’s reception of the play was both positive and thoughtful. The viewing sparked many discussions in the hours afterward that affirms BlackCAST’s value of the project and the concerns it meant to address.

*Black Magic* presents the narratives that students of color have not been able to find in other popular productions that dominate the theater community. Elevating the relatable and relevant discussions of students of color is an invitation to create more of such projects. Not only does the performance unite together minority students, but also exposes the entire student body to the issues that minority students are facing on our campus and others nationwide. The support of Harvard administrators and key figures who have been recognized for their work in representing the culture and communities of minority groups makes *Black Magic* a powerful and bold performance that inspires us all.

*Hunter Richards ’18 (hrichards@college.harvard.edu) is both inspired by and proud of this work of her classmates.*





**Art Brut: “The Female Figure...” at the Mather Three Columns Gallery**

The student visual artist at Harvard is amply represented in the hallowed halls of Harvard’s various houses. Public art spaces for students abound within the campus, both in the form of selected works hung permanently within the houses as well as dedicated House galleries. Among the largest of these in-house galleries is Mather’s very own Sandra Naddaff and Leigh Haffrey Three Columns Gallery, a triumph of brutalist public art in the tradition of Boston City Hall and other grand modernist public spaces. The gallery itself, however, is an altogether successful space: sun filters through floor-to-ceiling windows to bathe the spiral staircase and the eponymous three columns in warm, airy light. Within that promising space this week is a powerful Matherite-created exhibit on notions of feminist identity.

An exhibition of a unique series of oil on canvas works, “The Female Figure: Idols and Shame” presents an at once finely balanced and stridently powerful look at notions of female representation with reference to the female figure. The draughtsmanship (in reference to the classical drawing skill, not errant checkers-players) in each is skillfully deployed, stretching the limits of traditional representative art. Per the artist Serena Eggers ’17 in the accompanying commentary to the exhibit, her employment of oils on canvas attempts to “explore the relationships of the paint and the surface to the

subject matter – texture, translucency, violence and smoothness of mark, and the emergence of distortion of images through layering.” And her works live up to the promise: oils are skillfully deployed to create stark and searing images of the female form. Whether in the dusky, sinister aura of her almost skeletally splayed *Noir* or the creeping domestic terror of the half-children in her *Family Portrait*, Eggers combines carefully measured and rigorously executed draughtsmanship with a flair for the dramatic in her exploration of the female form’s portrayal.

**New at the Harvard Libraries**

In addition to their vital role as study spaces, the libraries at Harvard have always served as repositories of art for the Harvard community. Whether in the form of the grandeur of Widener’s fantastic rotunda or the Palladian splendor of the Houghton Library’s considerable repository of *objets d’art*, Harvard’s libraries offer a rich set of historically significant artworks – artworks that are free to view for the Harvard community. Although the decidedly modernist and un-opulent Pusey Library may not be able to offer the same splendor of its adjacent competitors, its internal collections and exhibits still offer much to the prospective visitor. The Indy has waxed poetic before about the merits of the Pusey Library’s permanent displays, including its grand Mercator globe. Two new exhibits, however, offer interesting perspectives on themes of exploration – albeit of very different spheres.

The Pusey Library’s Map Gallery Hall offers exhibits fittingly dedicated to the exploration of maps as historical objects, artistic curiosities, and cultural representations of the times in which they were originally crafted. And this time, the Map Gallery is exploring nothing – or more precisely, exploring just how cartographers grapple with the notion of uncharted nothingness in their

maps. “Embellishing the Map: Empty Spaces and Treacherous Waters” offers a fascinating and at-times quite risible exploration (see what I did there?) of just how the mapmaker has grappled with the issue of unexplored land and sea. Whether through dragons and sea monsters or depictions of then-exotic animals such as jaguars and tapirs, the cartographer through the ages has certainly exhibited a great deal of creativity in dealing with the emptiness inherent to exploration – and it’s well worth a quick exploratory trip to the Pusey library.

“The Bull Moose and the China Cabinet: Theodore Roosevelt, the Progressive Party, and the Women’s Suffrage Movement” is an AP US History throwback made altogether interesting. Theodore Roosevelt ’80, of course, was a Harvard grad and an editor of the Harvard Advocate who graduated Phi Beta Kappa before going on to live perhaps the single richest (in terms of diversity of activity) life of any Harvard alum before or since. This collection, hosted incidentally in the aptly-named Theodore Roosevelt Gallery, presents a slice of his life from his late-game political insurrection as a third-party progressive candidate rebelling against his former vice president William Howard Taft. It presents a small but pleasantly intimate collection of artifacts from Roosevelt’s life detailing his burgeoning exploration of the cause of female enfranchisement, including some first-class draughtsmanship in the form of contemporary political cartoons on the subject as well as his Harvard senior paper on women’s rights -- and proof that that thesis you just finished may indeed come back to help you.

*Andrew Lin ’17 (andrewlin@college.harvard.edu) would be extremely grateful if someone would pay for his exploration of the world of television by subsidizing his Netflix subscription.*

## Aiming High

Harvard's Shooting Team went to nationals.

By JESS CLAY

The Harvard shooting team arrived at the National Shooting Complex several days late. In the days before we arrived, shotgunners from across the country had descended upon the city of San Antonio and every La Quinta within fifteen miles of the complex. They came from all over – from Cambridge and New Haven, from West Point and Annapolis, to Jonesboro, Arkansas and Hastings, Nebraska. They came in black sedans and dull golden pickup trucks, in minivans and RV's, and in great white buses with "College of the Ozarks" plastered on the side in letters two feet tall.

On the morning of the American Skeet Championships, the three other Harvard shooters and I walked to the ammunition shed to pick up the five hundred shells we would fire that day. The guy handing out the shells was thickset, bespectacled, and mustachioed; he exerted a general sense of wanting a return to the deregulation of cigarette advertisements. Our hats and vests denoted our attending a school in Boston, and this amused him. He informed us of our tardiness, and of the myriad goings—on we had missed earlier in the week.

"Yeah," I told him, "Harvard wouldn't give us the week off for a shooting competition."

"Well," he said, before pausing slightly, as if to choose his next words carefully. "That's 'cause they're a bunch of goddamn liberals."

I did not dispute his thesis. "I know," I said, "if it'd have been a kale convention, they'd have given us two weeks off."

This comment convinced him to give us the ammunition. We borrowed firearms from the shooting complex, trading our driver's licenses for Browning 725 12-gauges, and set out for Field #8 to start shooting. By then, it was eight o'clock in the morning. This proved disastrous for our performance, as the sun glared low and bright on the eastern horizon, and we found ourselves staring directly into it on

the first station of the skeet course. However, we persevered and began calling for targets, which instantly vanished into the brightness as we fired blindly into the sun. This strategy of spraying-and-praying did not work as well as we might have hoped. As a team, we broke only 187 of 400 targets. It was an abysmal performance by most any measure, and we avoided last place only by merit of our not having enough shooters to qualify for the team rankings.

But the glory of shotgun sports rests in the fact that, no matter how few targets we might have hit, things could have always gone worse. Nobody was killed or maimed in our ill-fated efforts to break clays in the morning light, and there was something to be said for that. The next morning, we shot American Trap, and gained some sense of what we were up against. A coach for the Lindenwood University team, from St. Charles, Missouri, described their program: one hundred shooters, forty of whom had come to nationals, all practicing four or five days a week. They had won the last twelve national championships, and they had returned this year with high hopes of taking home another title.

Hell, with a team that size, they could've taken Costa Rica. In fact, I realized proudly, any country besides ours would have probably referred to the Lindenwood team as "rebel forces" or "the army." I reflected on this unique aspect of our national identity as I purveyed the competition's sponsors, headlined by various firearm manufacturers and the National Rifle Association. We were not at Harvard anymore.

This fact was further underscored by the sight of a large Confederate flag flying against the azure sky. It was lashed to a makeshift mast, anchored to the bed up a pickup truck. I wondered if anyone would call for the flag's removal, but after reflecting carefully on the surrounding setting and demographics, I began to doubt the prospect. I was surprised, then, when upon pulling out my phone to capture the





moment in all its backward glory, the flag began sliding down the pole. Evidently, the proud owner had reconsidered the wisdom of this particular flag display – or, more likely, some no-good, mamby-pamby bureaucrat running this competition had decided a secessionist battle flag was out of place at a national event in the spring of 2016. This, I thought to myself, was the bleeding edge of progress. I Snapchatted the moment for those back in snowy Cambridge, to warm the cockles of their god-damn liberal hearts.

A few minutes later, I looked back to where the Stars and Bars had recently flown – and was shocked to realize that the banner had reoccupied its former position high above the grounds, flapping vigorously amidst the breeze. As it turned out, the flag had not been taken down to inau-

gurate some new millennium of progress. Rather, the shaft from whence it flew had been removed from the pickup truck and reattached to a large RV – slightly closer to the competition area, so as to give all of us a better view of things.

When the dust finally settled from the breaking of the clays, Lindenwood emerged as the overall champion for the thirteenth consecutive year. Their top five shooters broke 496 of 500 targets in American Skeet, and 497 of 500 in American Trap. Their individual high scorer, Hardy Musselman – what a name! – had shot a perfect hundred in American Trap. He followed this performance with a series of shootoffs in which he shot another 25 targets, followed by three consecutive sets of 15 clays, for a grand total of 170. Not a single target had escaped him.

Many targets escaped the Harvard squad. If the clay pigeons had been real birds, the Audubon Society probably would have given us a lifetime achievement award for our conservation efforts. Our trap performance had far exceeded our pitiful effort at skeet, and we had still broken only 280 of the 400 targets we attempted. But, as someone pointed out, we appeared to have beaten every other team in Massachusetts, and that was something of which we can be proud.

*Jess Clay (jclay@college.harvard.edu) can't wait to bare his other set of arms this spring.*

*Photos courtesy of Jess Clay.*

# captured and shot



Marsaxlokk, Malta  
by Shaquilla Harrigan