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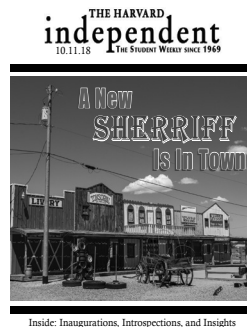


**A New
SHERIFF
Is In Town**

Inside: Inaugurations, Introspections, and Insights

The Harvard Independent

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The Indy is discovering!

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Cornero '19

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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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Bacow Takes Command

A Deeper Look into the Inauguration of the 29th President of Harvard University

By ANA LUIZA NICOLAE

Through sparkling rays of sun and falling leaves, a procession of various alumni and affiliates made its way through the crowd in Tercentenary Theater, this past Friday, October 5, as Lawrence S. Bacow was officially installed as the 29th President of Harvard University in the Tercentenary Theatre in Harvard Yard.

The ceremony began with the Academic Procession, where members of the Harvard faculty, governing board, leadership, and other dignified delegates from other universities marched in academic regalia to honor Bacow. Following the procession was the installation ceremony, during which various members of the Harvard community and neighboring institutions made speeches in celebration of Bacow's past accomplishments and future aspirations for the university.

Speeches kicked off with an address from L. Rafael Reif, who, since 2012, has served as the President of MIT—the university at which Bacow completed his undergraduate career and served as chancellor for three years. With humorous anecdotes and rather sly insinuations that MIT made the man who now presides Harvard, Reif mentioned feeling like a very proud father, dropping his son off for his first day of College. His gift to Larry Bacow was also significant—a block of limestone from the original MIT dome, with the inscription “*A chip off the block,*” to symbolize Larry's long-lasting attachment to MIT.

Following Reif's address came speeches

from; Robin E. Kelsey, who spoke on behalf of Harvard's “workaholic” faculty, Catherine L. Zhang, who spoke on behalf of the Undergraduate Council, Margaret M. Wang on behalf of the Alumni Association, Calixto Sáenz on behalf of the staff, and the charismatic Charles D. Baker on behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In the midst of the “Good afternoon's” and the congratulations to Bacow, Youth Poet Laureate Amanda S.C. Gorman '20 delivered a poem dedicated to celebrating Bacow's leadership.

“I only needed to speak with him for two minutes before I knew why he is in it. Tikkun olam. To repair the world,” Gorman said.

With the longest of the parts over and done with, Susan L. Carney, President of the Board of Overseers—or “Guardians,” as Carney describes—presented the insignia of office to the President. After each emblem of Harvard's long lasting tradition had been passed on to Bacow by one of the four previous and living Presidents of the University, William F. Lee spoke on behalf of the Harvard Corporation, of which Bacow himself was a Manager only a few years ago.

Finally, after a long period of build-up to the jewel of the ceremony, Bacow delivered his inaugural address. Using this platform, Bacow turned the audience's gaze outward towards the influence of Harvard in the world—especially in the world of higher education in the current context of both an administration that questions the necessity

of institutions like Harvard and an ongoing lawsuit over University affirmative action policies.

“Unfortunately, more people than we would like to admit believe that universities are not nearly as open to ideas from across the political spectrum as we should be; that we are becoming unaffordable and inaccessible, out of touch with the rest of America; and that we care more about making our institutions great, than about making the world better,” Bacow said. “We need, together, to reaffirm that higher education is a public good worthy of support—and beyond that, a pillar of our democracy that, if dislodged, will change the United States into something fundamentally bleaker and smaller.”

Bacow also addressed his hopes for maintaining “equality of opportunity” within higher education, working to counter the elitism that institutions like Harvard have historically been known for, and striving to maintain the opportunity for economic mobility through education. Through research, emerging efforts to mitigate climate change, pursuing equality through diversification and a general dedication to excellence, Bacow proclaimed belief that Harvard will influence the world in a better way than ever before.

“I am deeply honored to assume the leadership of this wonderful institution, and proud that as the nation's oldest university, Harvard has helped to shape the American

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Bacow Takes Command, continued.

system of higher education, which is magnificent in its independence, sweep, and diversity,” Bacow said.

After thanking the persons of most influence in his life, Bacow, far-removed spatially from the commotion at the steps of Widener Library, concluded his speech, undisturbed by the vociferous calls to action

intonated by several Harvard Kennedy, SLAM, and Asian Student Organization students.

The inauguration ceremony was immediately followed by the Bacow Block Party, which was open to all HUID holders and hosted at the center of Harvard Yard. After the most formal part of the event, alumni of different experiences and students mixed and mingled along the tables filled

with comfort food for the cold October evening. In the backdrop, workers had started bringing down the technological apparatus and packing up the week-long deployment of infrastructure for the occasion.

Ana Luiza Nicolae '22 (analuiza_nicolae@college.harvard.edu) is still frigid about the weather and caramelized apples at the block party.

News Brief

Protests Continue In Support of Former UHS Employee Mayli Shing

By SEGAN HELLE

Last Friday, October 5, protests continued in support of former Harvard University Health Services (HUHS) employee Mayli Shing who has brought allegations of wrongful termination and sexual and racial harassment against her supervisor. This protest, which was staged at the newly opened Smith Campus Center, marked the fourth rally since Shing was terminated by the University. Shing and her supporters are calling for the University to rehire her at HUHS.

Shing, who is a member of the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW), is being supported by members of the Harvard No Layoffs Campaign, Harvard RAD Collective, Harvard TPC Coalition, Our Harvard Can Do Better, and the Student Labor Action Movement. All five organizations have signed on as sponsors of the most recent rally for Shing.

Prior to termination, Shing was an

employee at Harvard for over 10 years. During her time at Harvard, Shing filed three complaints against her supervisor for alleged sexual harassment and racial discrimination, with the first complaint being filed in December 2015. Shing was terminated on February 6 of this year. Employer records indicate that Shing was terminated for arriving to work early on multiple occasions. Shing and her supporters allege that she was terminated in retaliation for speaking out against her supervisor and issues of sexual and racial harassment.

Some members of the Harvard community view Shing's battle as part of a larger issue of University indifference to victims of harassment.

"I'm feeling very frustrated after the publicity surrounding Professor Dominguez's [a Harvard professor currently on leave after facing allegations of sexual harassment] rampant harassment of women that continued for decades, the university's response seems directed primarily toward

protecting its own reputation, and discussing the problem as an intellectual abstraction, rather than implementing any concrete solutions for specific cases, like Mayli's," Desiree Goodwin, a member of HUCTW currently employed as a Harvard Library Assistant said. "The university's dismissive response to people who have reported incidents of harassment, and have suffered retaliation in response does nothing to encourage victims of harassment to come forward. Real people are suffering, and endless academic double talk is not going to resolve it."

The first rally in support of Shing was hosted in front of the Smith Campus Center on February 15 of this year. Shing and the University still have not reached a settlement.

Segan Helle '20 (shelle@college.harvard.edu) will provide updates on Mayli's story as events unfold.

The Tree Trials

Second Treetise

By AIDAN FITZSIMONS

Oak-ay everyone, I'm back with my bi-weekly tree talk.

Two weeks ago, I started this column off with my favorite tree in Harvard Yard, the Emerson Evergreen Tree in Sever Quad. This week, we're going to kick the skill level up several notches. The Emerson Tree is a relatively easy tree to climb: the first branch is accessible at standing height, and the branches continue all the way up the tree with horizontal orientations. It's a breeze. But the two trees we'll bark up today are another story.

If there's one thing Harvard students love, it's a challenge... or at least, a challenge within a field in which they are already adept. My love of tree climbing, along with slight masochism, has led to many attempts to climb trees around Harvard which seemed unclimbable. When I see a tree whose first branch is around the edge or just out of my range— maybe 10-13 feet off the ground— then I feel this crazy need to get up into it. These larger trees often have plenty of branches above that first branch which are great for climbing around in. *Any* seemingly inaccessible tree can be climbed as long as you can grab that first branch (this is a life lesson as well as a tree lesson, for all you upwardly-mobile types.) The hard part is that first grab. There are two challenge trees around Harvard that I climbed last spring which I am especially proud of conquering.

The first one is in Tercentenary Theatre, located diagonally between Sever and

Emerson. It's got its own little island of grass. It is a different species from the other climbable trees around it, with a rougher bark (I really wish I knew tree names). Anyway, the trees in this area are all pruned by Harvard specifically to prevent you and I from climbing them, because Harvard wants to keep us all grounded and stale. Harvard probably thought that this tree was bred sufficiently well so that it, too, was unclimbable. They underestimated our power, my mammalian friends. The lowest branch on this tree faces Pusey Library, and its crest hovers about 10-11 feet off the ground.

It actually took me a long time to notice this tree, because upon first glance you would never think it climbable. But one day, I was walking past Sever and looked at this tree as if for the first time. I stopped, considered it for a moment, and realized that I was being challenged. I backed up a considerable amount across the path that leads between Emerson and Sever; I took a running start at the tree, jumped, and then wall-jumped (like in a video game, or like a ninja) with one foot against the trunk. At my flight's apex I grabbed at the large branch with my right hand... and fell to the ground. I got back up and tried again. And again. And again. A few times, I almost got purchase, but slipped off due to the transitory and unstable nature of such a leap. My hands got red and raw; my arms got scraped up considerably, and I even bled a little bit. After 24 leaps, I rested a moment, breathing heavily.

I decided to stretch out, and I took my time limbering up my muscles. The extra few millimeters of muscle elasticity I gained from stretching ended up making the crucial difference. On my 25th try, I ran at the tree, leaped, pushed off the trunk, and grabbed at the branch with my right hand and then, surprising myself, with my left— both found solid purchase, and I had it! I dangled from the branch a moment before pulling myself up and grabbing the now-accessible other branches of the tree.

Pulling oneself up is the easier part, but it still takes considerable coordination between upper and lower body weight. Once fully in the tree, I cackled like a maniac. I loitered up there a while and watched the tourists passing through the yard. Some people stopped to ask me how I got up there. I relished telling them how. Nowadays, I can usually get into that tree the first try, and I actually just did 40 minutes ago.

(Sidenote: there is a tree at the Business School which engaged me similarly, with many failed leaps followed by eventual success. I will not discuss this tree further for safety reasons.)

The second challenge tree is by the Charles River, between the Weeks Bridge and the first bench to its right. It's one of those smooth-barked, late-career-Michael-Jackson-looking trees. The first branch on this tree is at least 12 feet high, and I will

Francesca Cornero '19

The Tree Trials, continued.

never be able to jump into it (although maybe someone on the basketball team could).

This tree was my personal rival last year, and it took me literally hours on separate occasions to master. To get into this tree, I had to engage in some real monkey business. I removed my shoes and socks and worked my way up the slightly knotty but still relatively smooth trunk by the tips of my toes and fingers. At a certain point, I had to straight-up shimmy, which is the craziest thigh exercise you'll ever do. This, too, entailed many failures and scrapes; some days the tree would win due to my exhaustion. But eventually, through Herculean efforts of clinging and shimmying, I was finally able to grab onto that high first branch and pull myself into that damn tree.

That was probably the highlight of my sophomore year. Barefoot, I was able to hang out in the tree for an hour and watch the beautiful tangerine sunset over the Charles. Next time you're strolling by Sever or the river, check out these trees, and feel free to entertain that tantalizing thought: maybe...

Aidan Fitzsimons '20 (aidan_fitzsimons@college.harvard.edu) is Tired but Wired.



Bi the Way, I'm Still Coming Out

Angsty Thoughts on Too Many Expectations

By ALAYA AYALA

For me, coming to Harvard was as freeing as it was binding.

I was free from the fetters of my high school responsibilities, free from the city where I was born and raised, and even as I hated to admit it, I was free from the expectations of my old friends and family. There was a two hour barrier on I-90 separating me from my old life, and I felt light enough to officially Come Out as bisexual last fall, to everyone. I had lived with so much fear of it for so long, I remember I used to have nightmares about my family rejecting me in disgust. It turned out I was lucky, my Coming Out was more of a dream than a nightmare. What I didn't expect was for the dream to become recurring and to morph into the nightmare sometimes.

You'd think after you'd done it, the thing you'd been dreading forever, that it would be over and done with. You'd think that you could put it behind you and go on living your life, enjoying the turning of the seasons, falling in love, eating great food and exploring the world around you.

You'd be as wrong as I was when I thought it.

Here's the thing, when you come out as anything other than heterosexual, you're going to find that you will have to spend a lot of your time explaining your sexuality to people who don't - or won't - understand. It'll be exhausting, and you will be annoyed. That's not to say Coming Out is a bad thing, or even something to live in fear of. But it is something that you'll have to live with, and if you're as terrified of commitment as I am, that can be rough.

This past summer was a ten week-long journey in discovering new things about

myself, meeting amazing people and learning more about other people's perspectives on life. One of the greatest things I learned from my new friends was that I don't owe anyone an explanation when it comes to my identity. While it was an amazing lesson to learn, I've unfortunately come to realize that knowing something and putting it into practice are two very different things. So, while I've learned that I don't owe anyone an explanation or defense of my bisexuality, I still find myself repeating the same phrases over and over.

Yes, I am really bisexual.

Yes, I am dating a man.

No, that doesn't make me straight now.

No, that doesn't mean I want to leave him for a woman.

It's become this really toxic cycle for me. I love being open about my sexuality and being happy with who I am. What I don't love is having to justify my love for another person to everyone who doesn't get it. It shouldn't be my burden to explain to strangers why I identify the way I do. I don't speak for all bisexual people, so why am I expected to represent what it's like to be bisexual when everyone else in the room heterosexual, or even homosexual, because sometimes biphobia goes both ways?

A lot of the time, minorities are expected to carry the weight of their community's experiences when they are the only minority present. When I'm the only Hispanic in a room, it apparently doesn't matter that I can barely speak Spanish and grew up more or less disconnected from my culture. I suddenly am representative of every Hispanic society on earth. I'm the one turned to for explanations and the butt of every joke.

The same thing happens when I'm the only person who is low income, or even the only person with purple hair. It doesn't seem to make much of a difference whether the thing that makes you different is something you chose or something you were born with, something temporary or something fused into your DNA. When you are alone, you are a target of curiosity, and you'd better hope you're not the cat in this situation.

It isn't right to expect this of anyone, to expect to have your ignorance catered to. Our struggles demand more respect than that. I didn't Come Out last year to be reduced to any random person's personal Wikipedia page on the intricacies of bisexuality. No one does that expecting to have to bow down to those without the initiative to learn these things on their own.

I guess that's where my challenge comes in, then. To those reading this, I challenge you to learn more about the identities you don't know much about. If you have a friend Come Out to you this Thursday, don't bog them down with your questions. I know for me, that was and remains the hardest part of being Out. Instead, challenge yourself, do a little research, and when you finally understand, use your knowledge to bolster your loved one who is probably already going through a tough time.

They say knowledge is power. I say understanding is love. Take the time to understand those who come out this Thursday.

Alaya Ayala '21 (alaya_ayala@college.harvard.edu) wishes everyone a Happy Coming Out Day.

INDY ARTS

HONK!

Street Musicians attempt to Blast Students out of Harvard Bubble

By TUSHAR DWIVEDI

Through the nooks and crannies of Harvard Square, the echoes of HONK! brought cheer to a subdued, lazy Sunday afternoon. From Reggae themed street music to Edward Jones booths, the fair dominating the small region offered a different delight for everyone. HONK! itself is a self-described movement, with the purpose of combining a diverse flavor of international musical styles with intrinsic themes deriving from the American South. With the stated purpose of "inciting discussion" and "using music to inspire," Harvard Square was alight with the fervor of passionate musicians and fathers trying to chase down over-excited children.

While the event certainly had a feel of unity, with a diverse range of street food ranging from Indian to American, smattered with Jefe's posters on most open spaces, and an the incredible flow of Reggae Music, Harvard Square seemed to band together as one...missing just one key population: Harvard Students themselves.

Two minutes of walking around Mass Ave., circling around the Charles Hotel, and looping back around made it painfully obvious that the large majority of attendees were Cambridge residents, or those who had followed the parade from Davis Square beginning Saturday. Without a familiar face to be seen, the Independent attempted to discover why. In a brief survey sent out to a diversified sample of students, ranging from those in the Quad to Swing Housing, the questions were of the following structure:

First, students were simply asked: "Did you pass through Harvard Square on Sunday?" with the follow up question being, "Have you heard of HONK!?" Finally, students were asked: "Have you been to any

events in Harvard Square as of this year, or know of any upcoming events?"

The response set was overwhelmingly homogeneous with respect to all three questions. A simple "No" was the most popular response to the first question, with a couple students elaborating with explanations such as, "I didn't eat out that day" or "I didn't have to go across the River." The second and third questions received short and simple "No's" as well, demonstrating a general lack of awareness of Harvard Square initiatives. While the "Cambridge Bubble" or the "Harvard Bubble" may be a significant issue, it's somewhat shocking to see even within campus, how small that bubble really is. From Chocolate Tours to Artist Takeovers (both upcoming in late October and November), Harvard's campus presents a rich and diverse set of interesting opportunities, and a chance to mingle with a set of individuals who are neither Harvard students nor tourists.

The full duration of HONK!, however, makes it one of the more unique events to occur on Harvard's campus without having any affiliation to the school itself. Featuring over 500 musicians over the course of Thursday, October 4th - Sunday October 7th, the celebration accompanying the performances are not to be missed. With free admission, on Friday, October 5th the HONK! kickoff showcase at Aeronaut Brewing Company was held, directly following the lantern parade. The rest of the night was filled with a kickoff party in Bow Market; Saturday, however, was amongst the noisiest and boisterous of days, with over 20 brass bands taking over Davis Square for nearly 8 hours. Interspersed within the afternoon was the opportunity to engage directly with HONK!'s activism foundation by creating a protest poster or marching with

Tushar Dwivedi '20



peers. The concluding rest of the show was Friday, Harvard Square's big showcase, with an energy even the impending downpour could not diminish.

Harvard's campus, while extending into campus, is already one that encourages clustering, whether it be in the river, yard, or in a specific house. Given the fact that it was so easy to miss some a tremendous celebration right underneath student noses, however, a little more awareness regarding nearby events could go a long way.

Tushar Dwivedi '20 (tushar_dwivedi@college.harvard.edu) is looking forward to the next installment of HONK!

Work of the Week

INDY ARTS

Cleanna Crabill

By ABIGAIL KOERNER

On a Thursday afternoon, clad in an off the shoulder denim dress and dangly yellow earrings, Cleanna told the story of her life, artistic foundations, and vision for her future.

Cleanna is a Senior in Adams House studying VES. When she was applying to colleges, her top pick school was not Harvard, but rather the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Her plan to follow her father's footsteps and attend MBI were interrupted when she was rejected. Instead, Cleanna came to Harvard intending to study Government. When she came to Cambridge, she joined what she referred to as a Christian "cult of personality". The religious group she joined did not allow members to date outside of the church, required members to attend church events pretty much every day of the week, and referred to other Christians as "misled Christians." Cleanna eventually found it hard to relate to the group and noted that although people part of this particular church group often do genuinely kind things, those same actions are also "unintentionally very manipulative".

When she took Hebrew Bible her sophomore year of college, Cleanna became "entirely disillusioned with organized religion." In taking the course, Cleanna realized "how many discrepancies there are in authorship [of the bible], especially in the old testament." And so, Cleanna, having abandoned old dreams of going



to the Moody Bible Institute and adopting new ideas about Christianity, left the church.

Cleanna's religious upbringing impacted her early development as an artist. She says she was often hesitant to look to historical artists for inspiration and initially avoided "images/writings around drug users, drag queens, and sexual activity," or anything that might rock her conservative boat. She thinks if she had not been so religious, she would have been drawn to artists like "Mapplethorpe, his whole funky world, and dilemmas it can present."

As a result, her artwork was always very "questioning in nature." Even today, a lot of her work is centered around exploring the female body, modesty, and temptation—including a series of paintings paralleling the female body with fruit.

Her favorite work of late was a performance piece she did in Berlin this past May. Inspired by Yoko Ono's "Cut Piece", Cleanna sat in the center of Bard College's Berlin campus and let people cut off pieces of her hair until there

was none. Cleanna says she loved creating this performance piece because there's usually "No space for emotion or interaction with a lot of art" Instead, in this case, there was a "weird role reversal of the audience becoming makers and experiencers themselves." Cleanna, the original maker, watched the people of Berlin use scissors to create art on her head.

Cleanna creates poetry, short stories, songs, personal essays blended with research, paintings, drawings, takes photos, and wants to continue creating performance pieces in the future. After college, she perhaps wants to work as a teacher and/or live abroad. As an artist, Cleanna stands by living artistically and says an artistic lifestyle, "allows [her] to make things [she's] scared of making or do things [she's] scared of doing."

On being rejected from the Moody Bible Institute and leaving the church, Cleanna says, "I got rejected, I'm here at Harvard, and now I'm gonna birth the antichrist." But the only things Cleanna has "birthed" thus far are pieces of art that use human interaction, multimedia, and many other mediums, to interact with the world.



One of "Cut Piece"



Two of "Cut Piece"



Three of "Cut Piece"

INDY SPORTS

Sports Briefs

By JASPER FU

In an Ivy League battle, Cornell manages to defeat Harvard in Cambridge

Coming in at 3-6 (1-0 in the Ivy League), Harvard men's soccer team looked to make a statement in defeating Cornell's 24th-ranked team in the nation. Cornell set the pace early with a goal by Charles Touche at the 10th minute. However, Harvard was not to be discouraged and stepped up their game, tying the match at the 38th minute with a nice left foot shot by Nico Garcia-Morillo, his first career goal, as the keeper ran out to smother him. Having tied Cornell in the first half, it very well seemed like Harvard might be poised to take down their Ivy League foe with the momentum definitely on Harvard's side.

A very aggressive and physical second half ensued, as both teams split 54 fouls between them. Cornell scored just three minutes into the half with Charles Touche finishing inside the 6-yard box. 25 minutes later, Touche netted his hat-trick, all but crushing Harvard's hopes at defeating this nationally ranked Cornell team. However, Harvard maintained their momentum, scoring just 10 minutes later with a great play by Nico Garcia-Morillo to set up his teammate Alfred Perez. Cornell, however, scored just one minute after, bringing the score 4-2 in their favor. Harvard continually amped up the offensive pressure in an attempt to at least get one goal back, but despite their valiant effort were unable to take a third goal from Cornell. Nonetheless, Harvard played a close-run game against a nationally ranked Cornell team.

11th Ranked Harvard Field Hockey Wins 8th Straight

The Harvard field hockey team seems invincible, with 11 victories out of their 12 games, and undefeated in the last eight. On Sunday, October 7th, they played 23rd ranked Boston University, who definitely put Harvard to the test. Harvard commanded the match from the beginning, outshooting the Bulldogs 17-6 throughout the game. The Crimson team boasted a lethally offensive attack with a goal from junior Maddie Earle off of a BU turnover in the circle, followed just 3 minutes later by freshman Rachel Greenwood, helped Harvard all but guarantee a convincing win.

With this win, Harvard ties a school record set in 2016 for consecutive wins in a season. This field hockey team has not shown many weaknesses throughout this season and has proven to be a force to be reckoned with. Their next game is this Saturday, the 13th, where they will host Cornell at 12 PM. Considering how well Harvard has been playing, they seem ready to put on a show for the home fans.

Harvard Earns Shutout for 4th Straight Game

Harvard's women's soccer team played exceptionally well this past Saturday. Right out of the opening, Harvard mounted pressure onto the sturdy Cornell defense. The Crimson team shot eight times in the first half alone, forcing the Cornell keeper to make incredible saves. Although goalless, Harvard hoped to play the second half as it did the first, building momentum along the way and believing that their well-deserved goal would come.

As the second half started, Harvard showed themselves as strong a team as they did in the first half, and a very offensive team. This time, their efforts paid off as 4 minutes into the half freshman Trinity Thomas finished off a great cross from Leah Mohammadi. Harvard continued to pressure the Big Red backline, and was awarded a penalty after the ball struck the hand of a Cornell defender. Senior Leah Mohammadi converted the penalty in the 61st minute, and sealed Harvard's victory.

Jasper Fu '21 (jasperfu@college.harvard.edu) is cheering for the Crimson.

The Games We Play

Prime Time Fantasy Football Season

By TUSHAR DWIVEDI

I'll be frank; I do a poor job keeping in touch with my high school friends. The things that brought us together seemed to be more a function of proximity and face-to-face interaction, which sometimes, simply can't be replicated over thousands of miles.

Sports have a certain power to unite; standing amongst the crowd at Fenway or Wrigley, on your feet as a walk-off homerun departs the stadium, thriving off the energy of those around you, you feel alive. Not many have the skill to play, and few have the time to regularly watch.

But regardless of the brutality of the coming week, there's something about knowing when you wake up on a Sunday, that there's football on, and for one afternoon and evening, you can stop being an intellectual, and give in to the bright lights, big hits, shutouts and free throws of professional sports. I had dreams of playing growing up, and perhaps a little later than most, realized abruptly I wasn't good enough. Worse than that realization, however, is the harsh understanding that you've lost all channels for expressing the competitiveness and grit that defined the sport.

Fantasy Football does perhaps one of the best jobs filling the holes and neatly wrapping the above up; Matthew Berry was one of the first to describe the power of Fantasy Football as an influential role in one's life, detailing his own personal health and life struggles. By nature, fantasy

football requires a near daily interaction with the sport of football. Constant injury updates, roster changes, and trade rumors provide the perfect output for frustration, competitiveness, trash talk and appreciation. There exists no dependence on proximity, and I've found the high school friends I do stay in near daily touch with weren't my best friends, but those just as willing to obsess over a sport that brings us together.

By nature, however, Fantasy Football is an exclusive game to play - those without the time to check for bye weeks or watch the waiver wires fall far behind, and as such, I've found that leagues are hard to maintain at Harvard. Students are busy, and rarely do they have time to watch hours and hours of games on Sunday, when a daunting week approaches. Leagues that exist, exist among close friends, and joining a random league might appease the competitiveness one desires, but not the friendly bond that unites a league.

In a school where relationships are oftentimes capital and when preset deadlines come around, friendship is commoditized, it's incredibly fresh and reliving to base a relationship off of a game that in the long run, really doesn't matter. Win, lose, worst team or league championship, it's a low stakes bond that rests lightly above the daily stress of Harvard life.

I started my season 1-3 this year, having placed far too much confidence in Kenyan Drake, while waiting with perhaps most

of Atlanta for Julio Jones to reach the endzone. I traded for Gurley knowing he could single handedly carry my season, and like most of the state of Colorado, I'm a believer in rookie Running Back Phillip Lindsey's story, and someday hope that it can be mine too. Many look to athletes for inspiration, and fantasy football sometimes has us looking far too deeply into a player value, degrading real human players to points, not realizing that a broken leg matters far more to a player's family than one's team. But at the end of the day, fantasy football is just one of many potential communal activities that function to bring people together, in a common spirit, regardless of distance.

I play the game religiously, and hopefully after reading this, perhaps you'd be willing to finally follow through with the draft idea you've been tossing around for months, maybe years. Friendships based on mutual passions, with little more than personal pride and sometimes a few dollars on the line, are sometimes worth a lot more than one thinks.

Tushar Dwivedi '20 (tushar_dwivedi@college.harvard.edu) is always looking for new leagues to join!

the independent



“Untitled // Painting Collage”

By CLEANNA CRABILL