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Supernatural Storytelling

A conversation with Dr. Lowell Brower

BY CADE WILLIAMS '23

Imagine you're strolling down JFK Street and you hear a strange sound. You turn to your right, peeking into the window of the Hicks House, an unassuming little abode on the corner of JFK and South Street. What you see inside astonishes you.

In one room, a small group of undergraduates sit in a circle, silent and contemplative. In another room, an amateur photographer aims her phone at the bookshelves, the walls, the portraits, and the halls, attempting to capture an image of an apparition or an orb. This sort of experience might seem ridiculous, but for Professor Lowell Brower and his cohort of supernatural storytellers, this is just another Tuesday night.

In the Folklore in Mythology course, "Supernatural Storytelling: Ghost-lore, Occult Legends, and the Politics of the Paranormal," Brower and his students

discuss the impact of supernatural discourses on people's everyday lives, politics, spiritual beliefs, and ritual practices. He aims to explore ways in which otherworldly discourses and ideologies in this world.

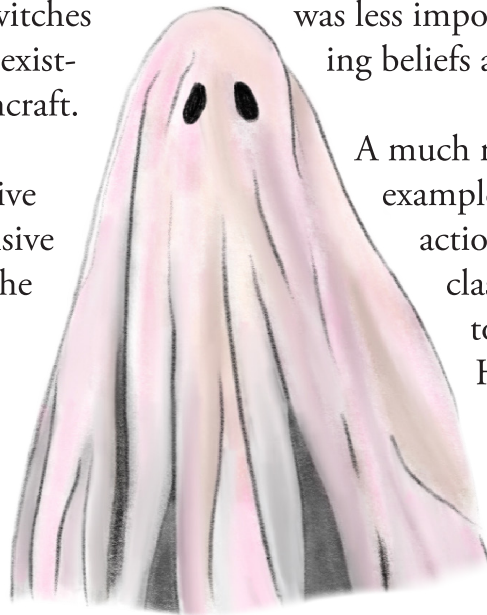
Brower urges his students to begin "looking at the very familiar landscape of Harvard through the unfamiliar lens of its ghosts and the ghostly versions of itself that are hovering below its surface." This study provides "a good opportunity to re-enliven, repopulate, and re-story the campus after a year and a half of silence,"

As a part of this re-enlivening process, Brower takes the class on various supernatural excursions on and around Harvard's campus. These trips give students the chance to practice what folklorists call the art of ostension—the enacting of folk scripts in real life. Brower defines ostension as "thinking of legends not as folk literature but as folk action, and the ways in which folktale or a folk narrative can allow you to engage with the world in a new way."

The Salem Witch Trials are an infamous example of ostension. Accusation of witchcraft led to the trial of 200 individ-

uals and execution of 19 on the grounds of witchcraft. In this case, the citizens of Salem were performing an act of ostension by bringing folklore to life regardless of its scientific veritability—whether or not the people condemned at these trials were actually witches than existing beliefs about witchcraft.

positive ostensive was the trip the

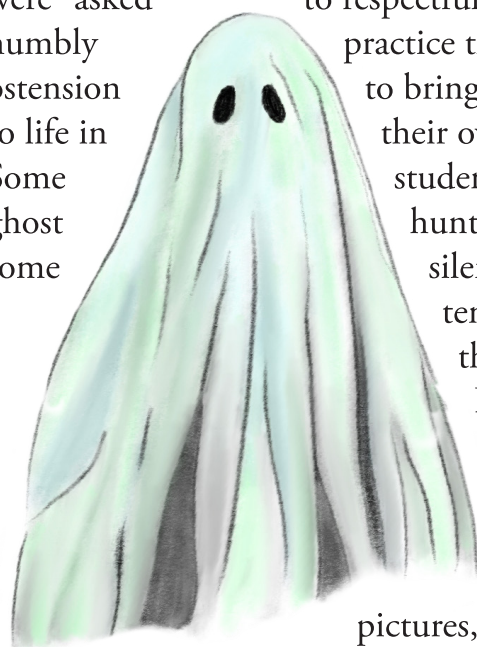


was less important than existing beliefs about witchcraft. A much more example of action class's to Hicks

House, the former home of John Hicks, a Cambridge city tax collector who is the subject of many legends. A member of the Boston Tea Party, Hicks was shot and killed on Massachusetts Avenue as he and a compatriot attempted to ambush the British soldiers who were retreating from the Battle at Lexington and Concord. Hicks was laid to rest in the Old Burying Ground on the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Garden Street, but his spirit is said to haunt the Hicks House to this day.

When the students entered the Hicks House, they broke off into small groups and were "asked to respectfully and humbly practice the arts of ostension to bring legends to life in their own way." Some students used ghost hunting apps, some silently contemplated the story of Hicks's life and death, others snapped pictures, and still others tried to interact with Hicks's ghost by flipping a coin.

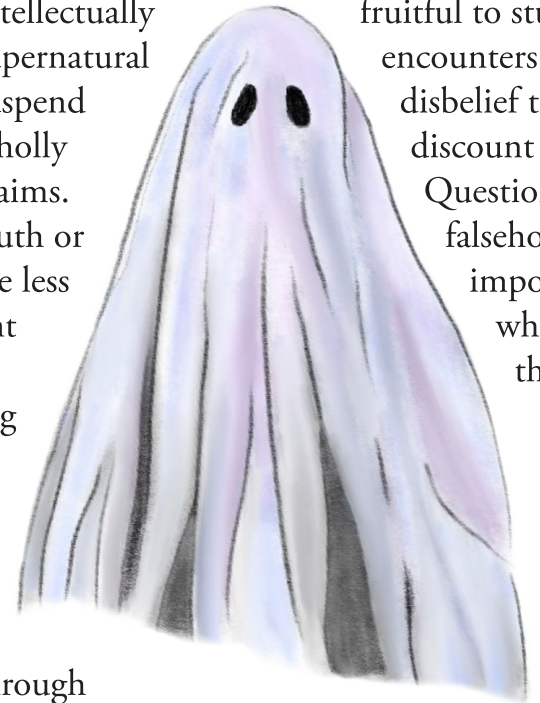
Some students had supernatural experiences of their own. Multiple students reported having a flesh-creeping sensation, one of the course Teaching Fellows saw a ghost and took a photo, and others captured electronic voice phenomena on voice recorders. The students were "engaging in



supernatural storytelling as storytellers, as characters in the stories they were telling," Brower says.

These claims might seem outlandish to some, but such experiences are deemed abnormal for many of Brower's students. In fact, many of the students were originally prompted to take the class because they had past experiences with the supernatural. On the first day of class, "everyone came and enraptured each other with these incredibly compelling narratives," Brower says. "That provided us with this amazing corpus of supernatural storytelling that we come back to again and again."

In Brower's eyes, it's much more intellectually fruitful to study supernatural encounters and suspend disbelief than wholly discount such claims. Questions of truth or falsehood are less important when thinking



through these movements and their adherents. "If your response is, 'prove it,' that doesn't shed any light on the person's experience or what it might mean to them or their lives," Brower shares. "If your baseline is belief, that allows you to see the amazingly powerful effects of supernatural storytelling in people's lives, regardless of its truth value."

Seriously engaging with supernatural claims can have profound implications on our understanding of politics and society at large. "Supernatural storytelling is deeply consequential but often ridiculed. The more it's ridiculed, the more powerful it becomes, I'm afraid," says Brower.

Dr. Lowell Brower will teach the course "Internet Folklore, Online Communities, and Digital Storytelling" in Spring 2022.

Cade Williams '23 (cadewilliams@college.harvard.edu) encourages all readers to really lean into supernatural experiences. They're good for the spirit!

Graphics by Piper Tingleaf '24

A Modest Proposal

The Undergraduate Council faces backlash for proposing to review Harvard's freedom of speech guidelines.

BY RYAN GOLEMME '23

The Undergraduate Council has long waded into difficult territory in its aim to advocate for the students, but one of its recent moves around freedom of speech has attracted some controversy. On October 4th, the UC unanimously passed a resolution to review Harvard's Free Speech Guidelines, a set of principles adopted in 1990 that outlines the University's approach to freedom of speech, the invitation and treatment of guest speakers, and other areas pertaining to free expression.

The resolution was sponsored by Lowell Representative LyLena Estabine '24 and proposed to create a Review Committee at the next faculty meeting on November 2nd to discuss the guidelines, though not with any immediate recommended changes. The resolution states it partially originated from "several incidents where the issue of free speech was called into question," and Estabine clarified two in particular: the invitation of political scientist Charles Murray '65 to Gov 50 and the presence of Eliese Stefanik '06, Republican U.S. representative for New York, on an IOP committee. Both instances caused uproar from some students during the 2020-21 school year. Gov 50 soon became entangled in another controversy over blog posts authored by David Kane, the course instructor, around fraught statistical and racist topics.

While the initial proposal passed without much note, The Harvard Crimson's Editorial Board soon weighed in with concerns. The Board stated they were "extremely wary of any attempt to reduce or alter the freedoms that these guidelines promote. We worry that a committee such as the one the UC proposes, at least without understanding the true purpose of the legislation, would threaten to do just that." They also defended the principles of the original guidelines stating that, aside from speakers promoting a "grave disrespect for the dignity of others," all other speakers should remain allowed to come, and they argued against "deplatforming" even noxious individuals.

Estabine thinks *The Crimson's* editorial misunderstands the UC's objectives and what the proposal does. She noted that Section 7 of the Guidelines allows for the creation of a Faculty Council committee to discuss the application of such principles in tough situations. "What [this proposal] seeks to do is not only re-assure the student body and faculty that free speech and inclusion can be simultaneously pursued and protected, but provide a permanent forum for when these issues arise in future years," Estabine said. The proposed committee seeks to establish a centralized forum to discuss this, and the meeting is only there to open up discussion, not to immediately propose changes, she added.

Part of the confusion may stem from the lack of availabil-



ity of the resolution. As of October 27th, the official UC website's archive page only extends to the Summer 2020 session, and it does not include any of the minutes and agendas of its Fall Session meetings, nor does it currently list the current slate of representatives. The minutes are only accessible via the UC's weekly update email, which many may not have seen. The UC did not respond to a request for information and notification about the website.

While the UC insists they are merely opening dialogue without any definitive changes in mind, initiating the committee process suggests that any current rules are subject to modification and replacement. The resolution itself mentions that the Dean of Students Office has "renewed their commitment to diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, anti-sexism, anti-homophobia, and anti-xenophobia," as its second preambulatory clause, and mentions the guidelines can help "Harvard's new, anti-racist agenda" in the subsequent clause. The resolution's last operative clause states that "if this endeavor fails, a proposal to update the Freedom of Speech Guidelines will be submitted to the FAS [Faculty of Arts and Sciences] Commission of Inquiry." Even though the UC has no changes slated for now, the resolution resolves to propose some if nothing comes out of these exploratory meetings.

The UC's most recent actions pertaining to speech point in the same direction. In November of 2019, *The Crimson* reported on an "Abolish ICE" rally by pro-immigration group Act on A Dream and asked an ICE spokesperson for comment. In response, Act on a Dream circulated a

petition rebuking *The Crimson*, claiming that "request for comment is virtually the same as tipping them off, regardless of how they are contacted" and organizing a boycott of the paper. Despite defenses of *The Crimson* from newspapers such as the Washington Post, the UC passed a resolution endorsing the Act on a Dream's critiques against them. The *Crimson* initially stood by their reporting but eventually agreed to some restrictions on their reporters in the future. The UC also endorsed the removal of David Kane after the blog posts were brought up by students. Though the specifics of each case vary, the UC has thus far reflected the progressive outlook stated in their proposal.

The UC's ultimate position remains unconfirmed, but the process of changing the Guidelines suggests it is unlikely they suddenly change their position. The resolution proposes that the Review Committee will be split between students with faculty and administrators. After an application process, the group will then deliberate amongst themselves and consult other offices and students on campus before they draft a report. The report will be sent to the FAS, who will vote on any proposed changes, and the committee will exist afterwards to discuss future considerations as needed.

In short, the committee is structured to allow for multiple discussions, administrative meetings, and votes before any report even comes out. Though the structure is not wholly fixed, the process aims for requiring multiple consultory steps before any concrete action, if any recommendations arise at all. The actual committee may work out differently in practice, as both the FAS guidelines and the proposal are at some points vague, but the structure aims to give enough time for considerations and feedback throughout the process. The next steps will come after the November 2nd faculty meeting, depending on whether the proposal is approved. Freedom of expression at universities has attracted much debate and consternation over the years, with multiple activist and academic projects devoted to tracking incidents. Tensions already flared this semester when administrators took down a flag of a bikini-clad Niki Minaj from a Mather dorm window, which resulted in students ordering and displaying more flags in solidarity. The UC hopes to avoid any similar public flare-ups with their proposal, but even this early backlash points to a campus uncertain about the best ways to balance freedom of expression.

Ryan Golemme '23 (ryangolemme@college.harvard.edu), an occasional motormouth when he gets excited is a Staff Writer for the Independent.

Graphic by Arsh Dhillon '23

Harvard's 450 extracurriculars define student life. Although some of these clubs have existed for decades and even centuries, many of them are newly formed, including some of the largest and most prominent clubs like Harvard Undergraduate Capital Partners, which began in 2018. Although Harvard College Consulting Group (HCCG) seems very different from the spikeball club, for example, many clubs have one thing in common: they are Recognized Student Organizations, or official Harvard organizations. Some say the process to achieve club status is too rigorous, as many organizations try but fail to be recognized. After all, why should there be regulation governing how students form groups and organize themselves?

On the other hand, Harvard does have a legitimate interest in ensuring that its name and brand are used responsibly. But, where should this line be drawn, and is Harvard's approval criteria fair to those students trying to form a community on campus?

Both Roman Ugarte '24 and Ben Elwy '23 have founded clubs at Harvard this fall after feeling something was missing from the community. Ugarte observed that other schools like MIT, Berkeley, Stanford, and Columbia had founded Crypto organizations, yet Harvard had none to offer. "Harvard actually had a blockchain club a few years ago, but it went defunct. So, with a handful of others who are also interested in the space, we formed the Harvard Blockchain Club (HBC) this semester," he said.

Meanwhile, Elwy wanted to revive a club that had since gone defunct. He was a member of the Harvard E-Sports Association (HESPA) during his first two years at Harvard, but it became inactive when seniors graduated and forgot to renew the club's recognition. "This year I was talking with some friends about creating an organization to fill that gap, and it went from there," Elwy said of re-founding HESPA as the Harvard Undergraduate Gaming Group (HUGG).

These two clubs represent the most common types of organizations being formed, said Jon Robert Bagley, the Associate Director of Student Organizations: "The two categories with the most applications each year are Academic Pre-professional & Hobbies and Special Interest." In a typical year, 30-40 clubs applications are

filed; this year, 61 have so far been filed.

This filing process consists of three basic steps. First, one must have a faculty advisor and a cohesive idea of the club. You must "have an organization that is unique and different from existing organizations," Ugarte said. "If not, they'll just say 'why didn't you start this as a division of another club?'" Students must also find a faculty advisor before continuing with the process.

Then the actual paperwork begins. Aspiring club founders must fill out a form asking for their club's name, constitution, leadership style, basic budgeting information, and faculty sponsor. The final process is the interview stage, where the club meets first with a Harvard administrative representative, and if it advances, it meets with

at the SOCH about it to help fill out the form, but there's no structure or help in the process besides asking questions at interviews, but by then, you're already done with the process."

However, the bureaucracy can be seen as a necessary filter for student organizations using the Harvard name. Gaining recognition allows student organizations "use of space, access to grants (funding), access to trademark and Alumni network," among other benefits, said Bagdely.

Ugarte noted that the process makes more sense for clubs focused on charity or pre-professional organizations—"things that have a larger impact on the campus community and also the Harvard name broadly, those should go through a vetting process and it's extremely reasonable for Harvard to have high standards for that," he said.

Similarly, Bagley stressed that this process is not meant for every student formation: "if you want to talk about the new Matrix movie with others who are excited about it, I think there are easier ways to go about that," he said. "I also think that as a community we need to find more

ways to connect students on basic levels, like geographic location. We don't need 50 organizations, 1 for each state, just so students can meet people from their home state. They should be able to find their way to each other effortlessly."

The club approval process determines the ecosystem of clubs on campus and by extension the type of community at Harvard. Whether it strikes the right balance between stringency and leniency can greatly influence students' willingness to start a club, which appears to be on the rise with the return to in-person activity this semester.

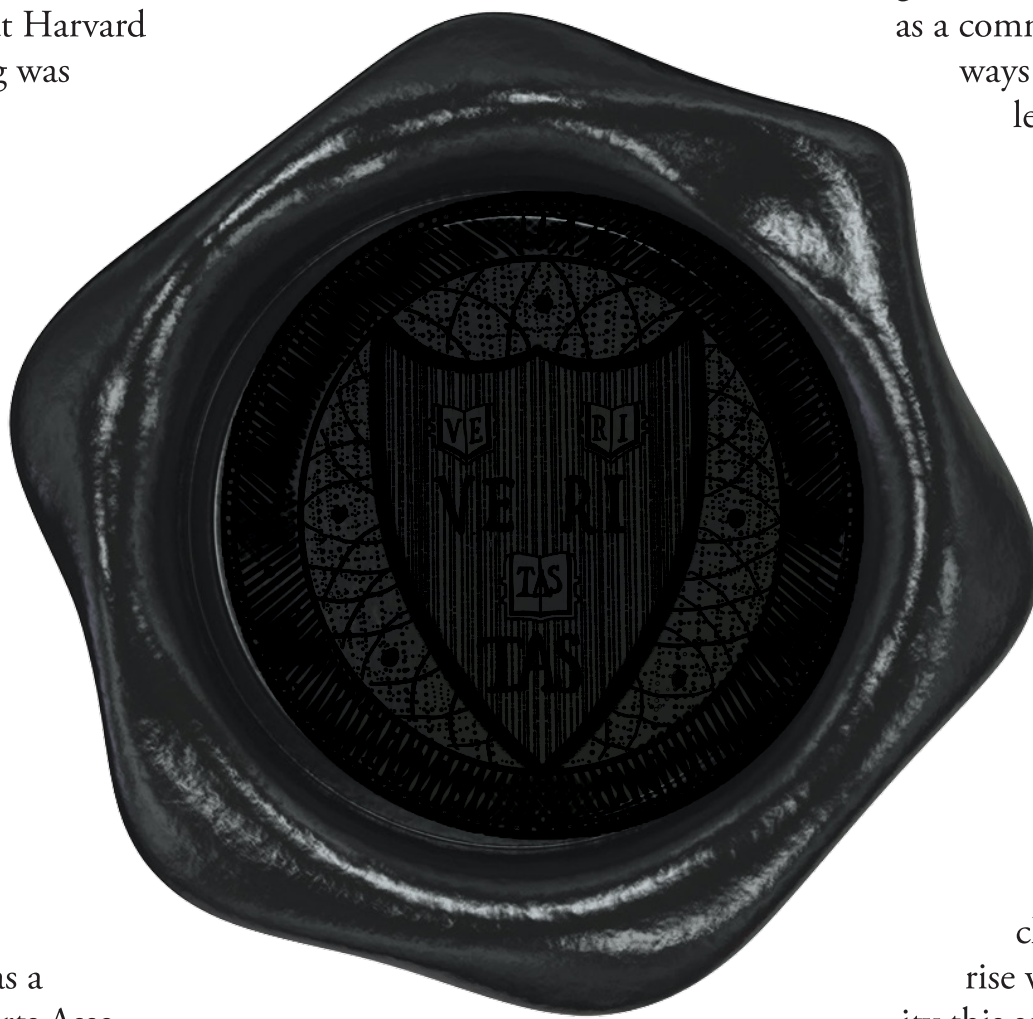
Aden Barton '24 (adenbarton@college.harvard.edu) is a Staff Writer for the Independent.

Graphic by Piper Jingleaf '24

Approved?

Exploring the club approval process

BY ADEN BARTON '24



the Undergraduate Council (UC). Elwy met with a member of the Student Organization Center at Hilles (SOCH) for the first interview, whereas Ugarte met with a pre-professional advisor from the Office of Career Services. Assuming they both advance, they will present their club proposals to the UC, which will conduct a final vote to approve their clubs.

Elwy saw the process as overly stringent without necessary support from the administration: "If you want to start a student organization, you have a giant form to fill out. I could definitely see someone looking at that and stopping," he said. "You assume you can contact someone

Are Harvard Students All The Same?

Dying concentrations, sheep, and the shift to career-oriented courses of study

BY CARLI COOPERSTEIN '24 & MADDIE PROCTOR '25

Though much of the first semester has already gone by, students are still guaranteed to ask the most typical beginning-of-the-year question—what classes are you taking? This attempt to get to know each other through our course load has become the new how are you? To forge connection, we naturally look for overlap. Bonding over shared classes is a simple way of connecting with someone new. So it is no surprise that frequent responses to this question include Econ 10a, a Stats variant, CS 50, and the Sleep GENED (“for balance”). But this uniformity should shock us. For a student body alleged to be the most intellectually diverse in the country, why are students all studying the same things?

Each class accepted to Harvard is curated to bring new perspectives on a variety of different subjects, acting as a beacon of diverse thought. According to entrance statistics conducted by the Admissions Office for the Class of 2025, intended fields of concentration varied greatly, with 28.1% intending to study social sciences, 25.9% studying biological and physical sciences, 18.4% choosing computer science and engineering, and 15.3% pursuing a course of study in the humanities.

Yet exit data tells an entirely different story. 63% of the Class of 2020 entered the workforce in finance, consulting, or technology. Despite starting with a diverse pool of interest, Harvard has converged the myriad passions and student aspirations into one homogenous outcome. These so-called “sheep” of our generation succumb to herd mentality and enter the same few fields.

Concentrating in a lucrative field is a practical decision but runs contrary to the entire premise of Harvard College. We are a liberal arts institution, not a pre-professional training program. The beauty of a liberal arts education, as Harvard claims to hold as the central tenet of its mission, is that learners do not have to be confined to any one discipline.

First-year Robbie Owen '25 began his education in the United Kingdom, where he had to specialize at 16 years old in mathematics, chemistry, and biology. His career aspirations, however, lie outside the lab. Owen wants to pursue a career as a director. When it comes to concentrations, he “has no fucking

clue.” When people ask, he tells them, “something in Biology”—but he admits, “maybe I’ll find something else that I love.” Owen says, “Part of the reason I wanted to do liberal arts in the U.S. is to figure out what I want to do without having to commit to one degree.” The flexibility of a liberal arts education allows students to pursue or explore career paths independent of our everyday classes, a luxury many college students across the world do not get to enjoy. The point of our time here is to discover what we’re passionate about, even if these passions don’t correlate with an assuredly lucrative career.

One possible explanation for the convergence of concentrations at Harvard is careerism—diverting away from genuine academic motivations to secure a high-paying job. Particularly for students from low-income backgrounds, career earnings can play a large role in discerning concentration choices. “In the United States, people who concentrate in the humanities have lower lifetime earnings than people who do other things,” concedes Professor Jay Harris, the course head of Humanities 10. However, the same does not necessarily hold true for students graduating from Harvard and other top universities, he says. Harris notes the importance of differentiating between different kinds of institutions when talking about the value of a concentration in strictly careerist terms.

Focusing entirely on the future can often lead students to forego their academic interests of the present. This shift towards outcome-based learning has yielded a phenomenon known as “dying concentrations” in the humanities. With so much emphasis on technical skill acquisition during our undergraduate years, concentrations like Folklore and Mythology have dwindled in numbers. Students seem to be embracing the teleological imperative, a phenomenon often studied in humanities classes that describes the tendency for students to sacrifice the means (choosing a concentration you actually like) to achieve the ends (securing a high paying job).

But careerism is short-sighted. “It doesn’t work because the job market changes every five minutes,” says Doris Sommer, Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures and African and African American Studies. “If you think you’re training to be a mechanical engineer, and then everything turns into quantum mechanics, you’re out of a job.”

The assumption that concentrating outside of STEM fields bars students from entering high-paying industries has measurable effects on department demographics. Harris attributes the theory “that you have to be an economics concentrator to get to Wall Street” to a slew of problems within the humanities—including the disproportionate representation of white, affluent, and female-identifying students. The notion that certain concentrations are a prerequisite for high earnings is dangerous, as it constrains the learning of students who place a premium on job prospects. Overwhelmingly, students who choose to study the humanities are able to focus on the experience of their education at Harvard, rather than a potential salary.

Not only does the profitability assumption limit diversity, but it is fundamentally untrue. While serving as the Dean of Undergraduate Studies at Harvard College for ten years, Harris met with many industry leaders and recruiters.



When recruiters described their preferred qualities in new Harvard graduates, “almost invariably, they started with a range of qualities that humanities concentrators will certainly excel at, like communication, writing, and collaboration,” Harris says.

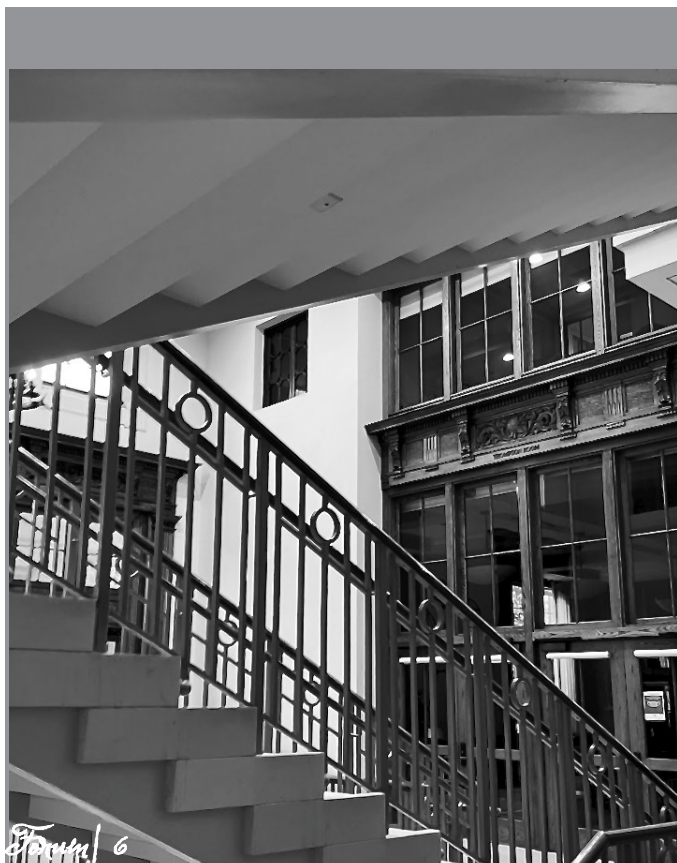
In fact, Big Tech companies need humanities concentrators. A recent visit from Brad Smith, Vice Chairman and President of Microsoft, to Harvard’s CS105 course sparked a discussion around the importance of highlighting perspectives of people with expertise outside computer science. His discussion emphasized communication between technology and government, highlighting a need for cross-disciplinary conversations and broadened understanding as we tackle seemingly intractable problems going forward.

Perhaps the most authentic and rewarding course of study involves a combination of passion and practicality. Sommer emphasizes that “the only thing to do in education is to learn skills and to learn curiosity.” Engaging in cross-disciplinary studies gives students the chance to grow practical skills for the industry of their choice without foregoing genuine interest. These initiatives also allow us to look at innovation from multiple angles. One example of Harvard’s efforts to cross academic borders is Embedded EthiCS, a recent program initiated to “teach students how to think through the ethical and social implications of their work.” Headed by Professors Barbara Grosz and Alison Simmons, the program combines the expertise of faculty in the philosophy and computer science departments to create curricula for various classes. Another such program is Renaissance Now, spearheaded by Professor Sommer as well as Professors Tarun Khanna and Francesco Erspamer, which champions the intersection between science and sociability, calling for a collaborative approach across humanities and STEM fields.

“The university is at a crossroads—it really does need to rethink what the future of good education is,” Professor Sommer states. Let’s hope that this future includes equal representation of diverse fields of study, with each student following a path they are genuinely passionate about.

Carli Cooperstein '24 (carlicoopstein@college.harvard.edu) is the token Humanities person amongst her friends. Maddie Proctor '25 (maddieproctor@college.harvard.edu) can't do math.

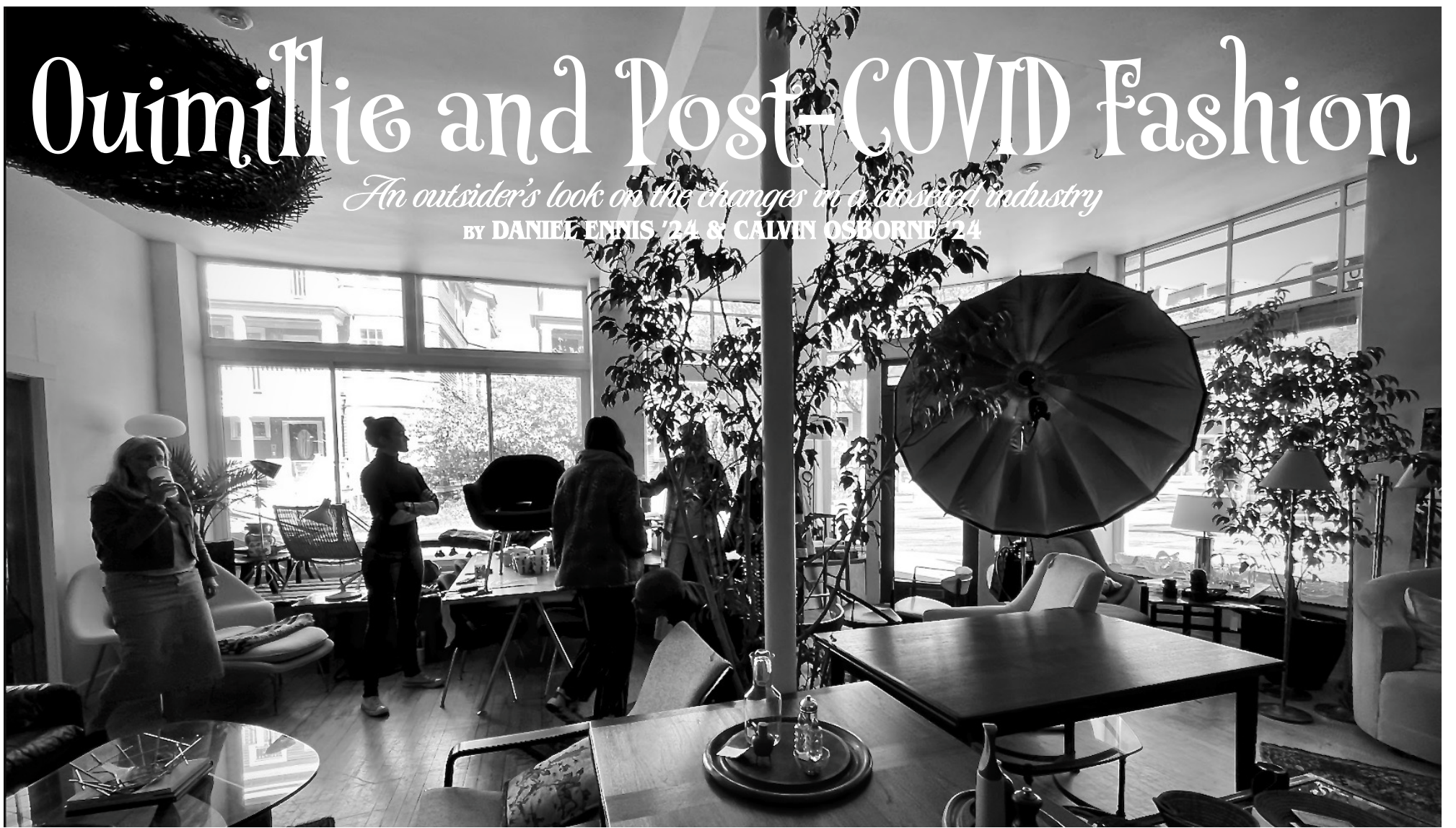
Photos by Carli Cooperstein '24



Ouimillie and Post-COVID Fashion

An outsider's look on the changes in a closed industry

BY DANIEL ENNIS '24 & CALVIN OSBORNE '24



Less than a ten minute walk from the quad was a photoshoot for the fall marketing campaign of Ouimillie (pronounced we-mill-ee). Ouimillie is a fully women-owned and operated interior design and fashion boutique based in Cambridge, and the boutique was started by Millicent Culter, pushing the focus of fashion towards curating small, local designers across the country. Upon entering the boutique, Millicent couldn't be friendlier or more excited to discuss her passions—for fashion, for architecture and interior design, for inclusivity and representation in her boutique, and for her mission overall.

"The interior world informs the fashion world more than people think," Millicent said. Her career as a curator of designers has led her to draw parallels across many different forms of media. She explained that both the fashion and the interior design world tend to have "the same fabrics, the same trends, and the same hardware" – in the end, they are fundamentally similar.

Millicent began her career in interior design, importing furniture from designers in France and Denmark to her small boutique. After deciding to add some clothing items to her shipments, she found that they sold much faster than her furniture, which gave way to a natural transition: her clothing pieces could be styled on the sales floor in a way that not only worked with the furniture, but complemented it. Expanding on her fashion business, she looked for designers closer to home.

"Post-COVID, the world has really started to gravitate towards the U.S., which is really exciting," said Millicent. "For the first time in, I don't know how long, we are considered the leaders of the fashion industry." The models in the shoot wore belts from New York City, dresses from LA, and handbags from Boston.

The world of fashion cannot be run alone, and along with Millicent were many oth-

er players assisting in the shoot: models, hair-dressers, makeup designers, and photographers. Toan Trinh, a freelance photographer who specializes in fashion and used to work for the Boston Magazine, spoke with us at great length throughout the shoot. "I feel like you really need to be respectful of others' work while creating your own," he explained. In this photoshoot, he aimed to capture what Millicent curated—not to overshadow it. "So many people get hung up on the setting or the models; they forget that the true story is about the clothes."

This is an understandable issue, however, as it is difficult to pretend like this story isn't all about the models. The group of four women gathered for this shoot were quite possibly some of the nicest and most welcoming people that one could meet, and each had their own unique perspectives on the world of fashion.

While talking with Millicent on her use of natural accessories and autumnal colors, the models completed their work. Bebe Wood (who you may recognize as Lake Meriwether on *Love, Victor*) was the youngest of the group; kind, bubbly, and open to talk with us about her transition between modeling and acting. Samantha Guidry and Biz Morris, two other models on the scene, were busy changing between shoots, running back and forth between Millicent's selection of fall themes. The final model on site was the incredible Pam Willis, who had the following to say about her role in the fashion industry:

"I'm a little older, and when I was growing up, I always thought you had to be stick-thin, twenty, not have breasts...and I have to say something that's really inspiring in the fashion industry is that now we're seeing people of every size, shape, age, and color." Pam may call herself 'a little older,' but you'd never guess it; this also happens to be the proud owner of Pammy's, and she insistently stressed her gratitude towards Millicent for curating such a space, not just for pretty girls wearing pretty clothes, but one where everyone can feel repre-

sented. "I'm just happy that my young girls—that are twelve and nine—are growing up in a much more inclusive world."

This shoot was an incredible chance to catch a glimpse into the fashion industry at Ouimillie. What occurred was a well oiled machine—quick outfit changes, hair adjustments, cosmetic touch-ups, and pose flashes. However, the intimacy of this shoot challenged many expectations on the superficiality of the fashion industry: the models were constantly laughing, the photographer was forthcoming and vulnerable, the curator was passionately explaining her selections, and it was clear that there was nothing artificial about the friendships that emerged at the end of the event.

For these models, some of whom this was not their primary source of work, there must be something enchanting about being involved in the fashion industry: to have one's finger on the pulse of current trends, to work with designers highlighting local industries, and to participate in the breaking of long-rooted stereotypes on the insincerity of the fashion industry. In contributing towards these endeavors, the women at this shoot were all doing something truly remarkable.

Daniel Ennis '25 (dennis@college.harvard.edu) still doesn't quite know how to dress.

Calvin Osborne '25 (cosborne@college.harvard.edu) please don't listen to my fashion advice.

Photo by Daniel Ennis '25 & Calvin Osborne '25

1-800-PSYCHIC

Two Different Accounts of Psychic Readings in Boston

BY ELIZA KIMBALL '25, HANNAH FRAZER '25, BROOKE STANFORD '25

Pain is universal. This past year, pandemic and all, has brought on a new set of loss, discomfort, and growing pains that many of us are still trying to navigate. As busy Harvard students, it can be really difficult to take time out of our hectic schedules to reflect on the changes in our everyday lives, including our constantly shifting relationships with others and ourselves. So, we decided to get read by psychics.

The *Independent* visited Hanna and Dena, located in Cambridge and Roxbury respectively. There was a lot of bullshit to navigate through, but both psychic sessions taught us the power in recognizing our pain and fixing our relationship with loss. While it was painful to exchange money for readings, both psychics offered a valuable chance to shift one's perspective. After having had our palms scrutinized, here's our takeaway during this spooky midterm season: take the time to take care of yourself.

Dena the Psychic

One stop on the T and a seven minute Uber ride from Harvard, we arrived at the front desk of Dena the Psychic's apartment building in Roxbury. We had exactly fifty dollars cash, enough for one palm reading. After five minutes' time, a raspy voice rang through the dark gray halls. "Come on over, darlings." Blindly following her lead, we proceeded upstairs and into her apartment. Dena was stout with a receding hairline and at least four missing front teeth.

Surrounded by stacks of pots and pans abandoned in the sink, we sat down in a small living area. Dozens of Virgin Mary figurines stood quietly in the corner. Their presence was deafening, starkly standing out against the tarot cards, incense, a glass ball, and other psychic paraphernalia strewn on the coffee table in front of us. Looking around, we got a glimpse into Dena's everyday life; a plethora of magazine clippings, artwork, cosmetics, and miscellaneous items littered every inch of the surface area.

We expected the stereotypical four domains of psychic work to be covered: romantic relationships, familial connections, death, and major life transitions. We were spot on. Assuming the role of the readee, Eliza sat directly next to Dena, and opened her palms. Like most people receiving a palm reading for the first time, Eliza had some reservations about Dena's higher powers. The woman started off by asking Eliza to come up with two goals, to which she responded, "win equestrian nationals and maintain a long and successful romance." Dena had Eliza hold out fifty dollars of cash in her palms, ironically emphasizing the importance of money to not be the focus of her life goals; "Money comes and goes."

The beginning of the session included a few inaccuracies. Dena shared conflicting

statements regarding the past nine months and whether they were full of ups and downs or held at a steady "standstill." It was also obvious that Dena used our university student context for her vision that the "next three years" will be filled with trials and tribulations. Eliza was informed that her lucky months are May and August, although the only potential connections we could conclude were the beginning and ending months of school. Dena told her that her luckiest days of the week are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and her lucky numbers 9, 19, and 24. We weren't exactly sure how these days were selected either—we only noticed that, in naming every other day of the week, there was a forty percent chance of her striking a perceptibly "lucky" day.

As the reading progressed, it became more detailed. Dena believed one of my grandmother's had passed. But instead of a grandparent, the grumpy old lady who passed in my household was a 60 lb butterball of fat and muscle. My bulldog Mary Lou passed away in her sleep earlier this week.

After that miss, Dena informed Eliza that she was a strong candidate for twins, and with no such history in her family, it appears that her future spouse will have to supply the twin gene. Dena bounced back with a convenient prediction. She contended that Eliza would be "traveling" within the next six to nine months—conveniently right around the holidays. But finally the most predictable of them all: the proposition that Eliza will soon be invited to a big celebration. But, Dena made one pure error on that front: most colleges have big celebrations, not Harvard.

Hanna

Like with Dena we cringed as we charged Brooke's credit card 35 dollars for a palm reading. After wandering around with Google Maps for half an hour, we finally stumbled across Hanna's building—tucked away on a road off of Brattle Street.

From the outside, her place was unassuming. Inside, it looked like a fairy had thrown up. We were surrounded on all four sides by sparkly, lavender walls; crystals covered every inch of the room. Luckily, we were spared the rest of the psychic paraphernalia—no tarot cards or crystal balls in sight.

Brooke held out her palms, and Hanna placed a crystal in her right hand. She asked if Brooke was prepared to hear everything—the good and the bad. After a very hesitant "yes," she began prophesying. For the first few minutes, everything that came out of her mouth was disappointingly predictable. I sat there as she fed me what I'm sure is her usual psychic analysis:

"You will live a long and healthy life.

You will meet the love of your life very very soon.

You will be incredibly successful."

The list goes on. Hanna made Brooke's future life sound downright perfect, and yet, somehow, it didn't really sound like hers. She did tell Brooke it looked like she was struggling with anxiety, which—though an accurate statement—does not require a third eye to ascertain (the alarming state of Brooke's bitten nails can be seen from a mile away).

Right when we were about to lose hope, Hanna said something that actually resonated with Brooke.

"There's a pain that demands to be felt."

Although Brooke is not at all convinced that this psychic actually saw the magnitude of the loss she recently experienced; nevertheless, it finally felt as though she was speaking to someone who maybe, in her own supernatural ways, understood.

Brooke told Hanna that she was right, and for the first time in a while, she let herself feel the full weight of the pain. Hanna was right—it demanded to be felt.

Hanna squeezed Brooke's hands a little tighter, and reminded her of something she too often forget:

"It doesn't make you a hero to suffer alone."

And with that, the reading was concluded.

Brooke walked out of the psychic office still somewhat skeptical. And yet, Brooke felt a little bit lighter.

When life feels especially shitty, people want to be told that it will pass. They want a stranger to convince them that their anxiety can be cured by magic healing crystals or the guy they like actually does like them back. People believe what they want to, and it's easy to have faith when you're being spoon-fed fantasies of some idyllic, impossibly perfect future.

Brooke's reading may have been mostly bullshit, but oddly enough, she found it to be sort of therapeutic. It can be nice to just sit back, be a little more introspective, and have someone tell you that everything is going to be alright, even if you don't fully believe it yourself. Brooke, for one, left the psychic with a little more hope, and a lot more clarity. But we'll feel differently when the credit card fraud rolls around.

In both of our readings, we found relief in the unexpected. You should try it.

Eliza Kimball (elizakimball@college.harvard.edu) anticipates her luck on Monday May 9, 2021.

Hannah Frazer (hannahfrazer@college.harvard.edu) is having her palm read on Friday.

Brooke Stanford (bstanford@college.harvard.edu) is looking to invest in a crystal ball.

Graphics by Lucy Thurlbut '25

“Reality is for those who lack imagination”

The eerie, anonymous wisdom found in the Adams House Basement

BY MATTHEW DOCTOROFF '25



In 1988, members of the Adams House Committee joined House Master Robert Kiely in formulating a plan to paint the tunnels of the House basement. Back when Harvard's Houses were largely organized by “personality,” Adams thrived with artists. One weekend in January, while the superintendent was away and without the Dean's approval, artists living in the House snuck downstairs and painted for hours. Working deep into the night, they all followed one rule: paint a representation of yourself, something that speaks directly to you. Although most of the work from that original weekend has now been painted over, the rule is still followed by contributors today.

This historic capsule of art and prose provides a window into students' self-awareness and worldviews across the years. A 1992 graphic by someone with the initials LMR memorializes a pool that had existed in Adams for generations. Before it was converted into a theatre, the pool was known as a place where LGBTQ+ residents could freely express themselves, most famously at boisterous “clothing-optional” parties. “It's all true,” LMR wrote. “They all swam naked in the pool.”

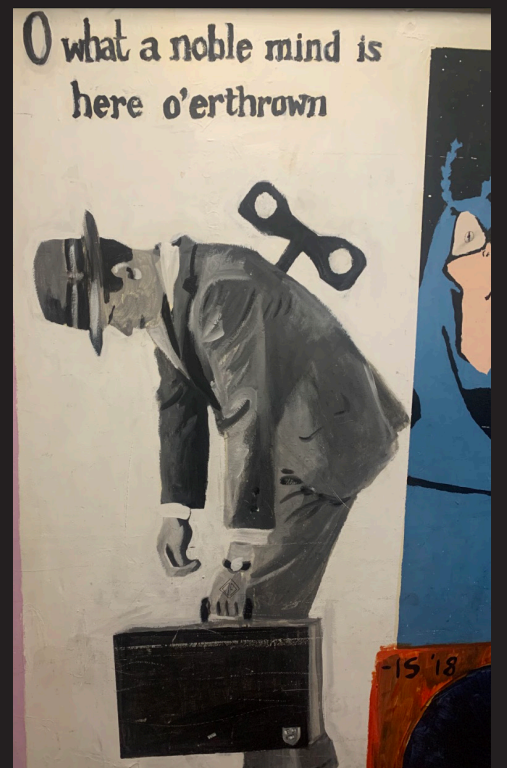
Many other illustrations in the basement reveal the spirit and activities of Adams. Written along some pipes are the words: “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to live in ADAMS.” One might interpret these lyrics as suggesting that the House is so soul-crushing, that for evil to take over the world, all good people must live in it. Elusive, this line sparks onlookers' curiosity about the distasteful or rebellious history of Adams—perhaps that is the objective of all the drawings in the basement.

Inspiration also abounds on these walls. Some creators have posted words that have real-world significance: “Let us not look back in Anger or forward in Fear, but around us Awareness,” James Thurber wrote in 2005. “In every life there comes a time when that dream you dream becomes that thing you do,” Grace Sun wrote in 2013. While these tunnels would stir the interests of historians and psychologists, they also exhibit a variety of random curiosities whose intended meaning is unknown. One feels as if they are walking through an abandoned elementary school as they pass murals of Snoopy and Charlie Brown and snapshots of Winnie the Pooh and Piglet. Excerpts from nursery rhymes like Hey Diddle Diddle, Russian scripture, and a plethora of obscure paintings cover every inch of the walls.

For over three decades, Harvard students have used the Adams House basement to demonstrate their understanding of the world and immortalize messages for future generations. The underground tunnels are continually repainted to make room for future artwork, suggesting that their purpose and popularity have not diminished over time. Crowded as they may be, the walls provide a clean slate for students' imaginations and a platform to represent themselves and their ideas, just as Kiely and the House Committee of 1988 had imagined.

Matthew Doctoroff '25 (matthewdoctoroff@college.harvard.edu) does not want to be placed in Adams House.

Photos by Matthew Doctoroff '25



Review of *JULIA* (2021)

An interview with co-directors Julie Cohen and Betsy West.

BY KATE TUNNELL '24 AND CAROLINE HAO '25

Many hit films and TV shows have sought to capture Julia Child, an American chef and television star who rose to fame in the 1960s. But none have portrayed the culinary titan quite like *JULIA*, a documentary that aims to reconcile her career and legacy. The *Independent* sat down with co-directors Julie Cohen and Betsy West at a roundtable discussion of college journalists and had the opportunity to preview the film before it hits theatres on November 15th.

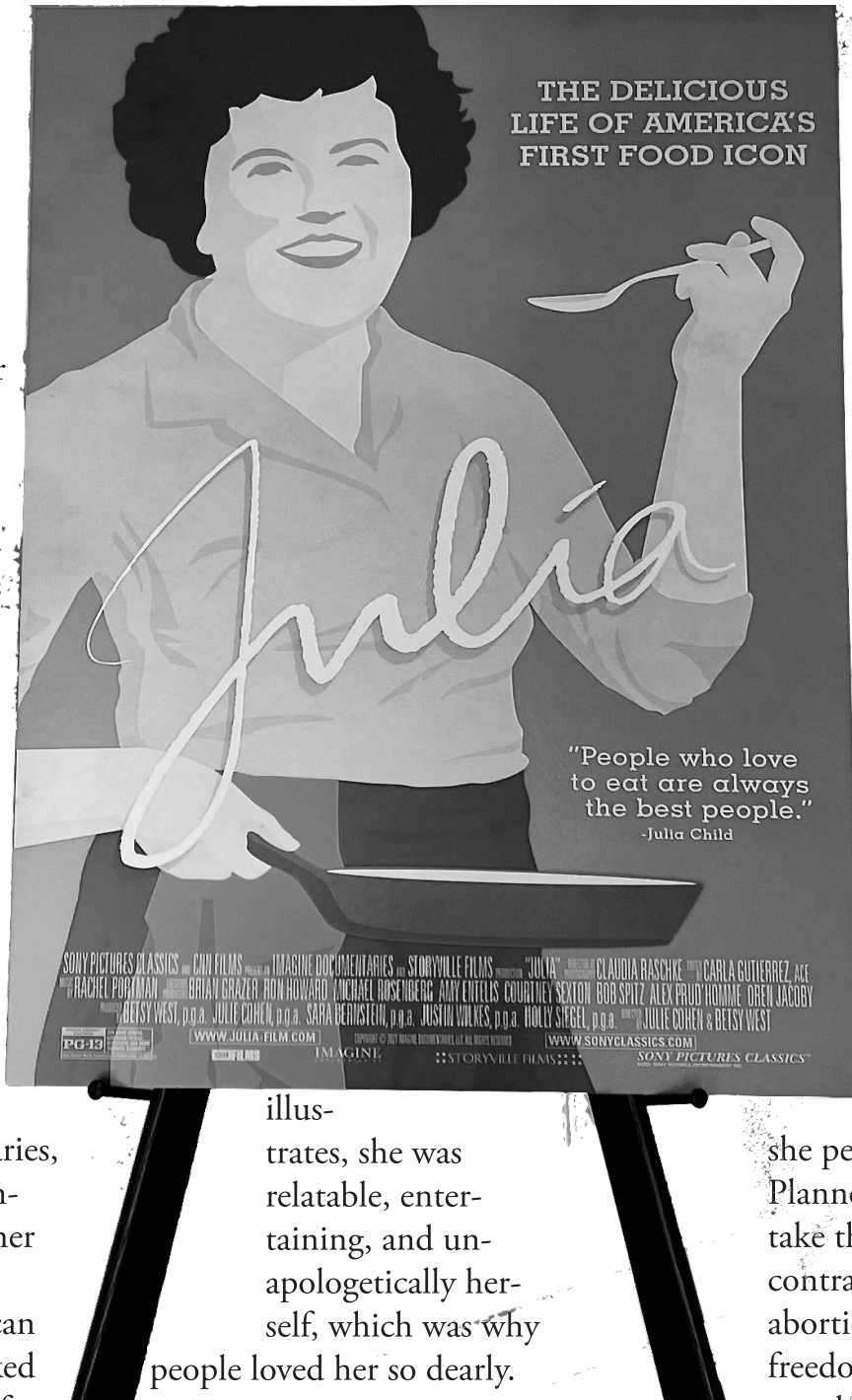
Cohen and West strolled into the conference room at the Hotel Commonwealth in Boston, smiling enthusiastically. “Was this organized?” asked Cohen, referring to the fact that all the journalists in front of them were women. We laughed nervously, wondering what brought the girls next to us here. Did we all come because we like cooking? Or because we love Julia Child?

Cohen and West had previously worked together on multiple documentaries, including one on the life and accomplishments of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, and another on Pauli Murray, an American civil rights activist and lawyer. When asked why they landed on Child as the focus of their next film, West responded: “She was somebody who changed the way Americans thought about food, the way Americans thought about television, and even the way Americans thought about women.”

JULIA explores the stereotype of the '60s housewife, who was expected to serve as a caretaker to her husband and children—cooking, cleaning, and tending to their needs. Women were seen as delicate and timid, and when they appeared on television, they dressed in frills and played accompanying roles to men.

Julia Child contradicted these gendered expectations. “Julia was a gregarious person,” said West. The film depicts her as a rowdy, loud, self-made woman whose personality was broadcasted on countless American televisions. Her cooking show, Cohen explained, “was not the result of a bunch of executives making a big plan... it was Julia herself who connected with an audience hungry for authenticity.”

Authenticity—there couldn't be a more perfect way to describe Child. As the documentary



illustrates, she was relatable, entertaining, and unapologetically herself, which was why people loved her so dearly.

Child's celebrity status also sprung from her impact on American cooking. She transformed complex French dishes into written recipes for the everyday American. Her wildly successful debut cookbook, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (1961), articulated the steps of making robust beef bourguignon and decadent tarte tatin. Child showed people what they could accomplish in their kitchen—a place for more than jello platters and spam, but for art, excitement, and even a profession.

One of Cohen and West's favorite discoveries about Child was her unconventional relationship with her husband, Paul. Subverting the stereotypical gender dynamic, Paul played a supporting role in Child's life. He encouraged her career, praised her ambition, photographed her, and helped with her film sets, evident through the stunning photos he captured of Child over the years.

Despite these elements that distinguished Child as an anomaly to the typical woman, the directors noted that if cooking weren't the subject of her show, she likely wouldn't have accumulated the fame she

did. “It's not too radical to have a woman expert at least be wearing an apron and whisking in the front of the stove,” said Cohen. “Had she been an auto mechanic, she probably couldn't have even gotten a TV show on a local PBS station.” Nevertheless, “we see Julia's story as very much a feminist story.”

Child, however, did not call herself a feminist. “Women's empowerment was always ridiculed and dismissed by society at the time,” said Cohen. “Feminist' was the F-word,” added West. Child was afraid to assume the label due to its possible impacts on her professional career, and she initially kept her television persona exceptionally apolitical.

As years passed and Child grew more comfortable with her fame, she began to use her significant following to advocate for progressive ideas and policies. In 1982, she penned a letter expressing her support for Planned Parenthood. “Few politicians will take the risk of publicly supporting either contraception or abortion—and who is 'for abortion' anyway? We are concerned with freedom of choice,” she wrote. Child also traveled the country, leading a series of cooking classes to fundraise for the cause.

Julia Child rose to fame behind a kitchen counter wearing a cooking apron. If she were to exist today, she likely would not be considered nearly as revolutionary as she was decades ago. But during her time, she broke barriers where they could be broken. In *JULIA*, Cohen and West contextualize and memorialize Child's groundbreaking achievements in the culinary arts and women's empowerment. She inspired female chefs and those they fed to cook, to eat, to live, and to love. As she wrote in *My Life in France*: “try new recipes, learn from your mistakes, be fearless, and above all, have fun.”

Ryan Golemme '23 (ryangolemme@college.harvard.edu), an occasional motormouth when he gets excited is a Staff Writer for the Independent.

Graphic by Arsh Dhillon '23



Ready to Rock

After a pandemic without performance, Evan Giia performs a headlining show at the Sinclair

BY GRACE VON OISTE '24

Two years ago, in the midst of a looming pandemic, Evan Giia's headline tour came to an abrupt end.

But on October 22nd, the singer-songwriter performed at the Sinclair music venue a mere walk from Harvard Yard. Just as the beat of her hit song "Westworld" makes you feel, Evan Giia is "ready to rock," she says.

Giia, whose birth name is Evan Giarrusso, says her music can be recognized by a "catchy pop vocal over a very classic electronic track." She characterizes her fan base, for the most part, as "people that love electronic music at the base, but can also get down to a Justin Bieber song." Giia creates inclusive music with the intention of it being for anyone. She describes the audience of her shows as heterogeneous, spanning from dads to little kids.

The Brooklyn-based musician has always been around music. She grew up in Hingham, Massachusetts, singing opera and studying classical music. She studied music business at Berklee College, but rarely sang. This education has equipped her with the proper skillset to run her business today. "I got really into the business side of things, I learned the

ins and outs of being a manager, putting on shows and promoting," she said.

As soon as Evan Giia graduated, she moved to New York City and worked as a receptionist for two years, further prolonging her musical career. "I felt like there was this huge missing piece in my life," she said, referring to her life without performance. Her husband, Ishaan Chaudhary, one of the members of the producing duo MEMBA, convinced her to quit her job and start writing music.

Her song "Westworld" can be heard across many college campuses. "It's my biggest hit, but it was made on a very drunk night with me, my husband and my best friend," she said, revealing that she wrote the entire song while playing a drinking game called power hour. "We just never thought anything of it and I think that's why it has become as big as it has," she reflects. Giia currently feels pressure to write another hit song, but knows it would be difficult to emulate that same relaxed environment.

The release of "Westworld" brought newfound fame for Giia. She recalls her recent experience of not being able to attend a concert in Brooklyn without being recognized. While she doesn't consider herself famous by any

means, she feels more recognized when she returns back home to Massachusetts. While the prospect of fame excites her, Giia is also incredibly daunted by the idea of it. "I am petrified of fame, but it is also everything I have ever wanted," she said.

Performing at the Sinclair is a special experience for Evan Giia. A graduate of Berklee, just across the river, she saw some of her favorite artists perform at the Sinclair growing up, and now returns for her own performance as an established singer.

Evan Giia feels incredibly lucky to have a hometown show, which her uncles, aunts, friends, and highschool teachers attended. "I am able to bring everyone from my past into one building and show them just how far I've come," she said.

Evan Giia will be continuing her tour with a performance in Portland, Oregon, on November 5th.

Grace von Oiste '24 (gvonoiste@college.harvard.edu) is the News Editor of the Independent.

Photos from Luna Collective Magazine

A Hustler's Worst Nightmare

A Harvard chess champion versus a Cambridge chess hustler

BY HARRY COTTER '24



Part I: The Game

Respected by all but only truly understood by few, chess has seen a remarkable rise in popularity over the past year thanks in part to the global success of the Netflix original series *The Queen's Gambit* and the rapid expansion of the online chess community. A chess game is played using a combination of calculation and pattern-recognition. Masters wield both a deep knowledge of common sequences and a practiced skill for calculating in positions they don't entirely recognize, and every master has their own unique style and story.

Part II: The Champion

Jennifer Yu '25 was still in high school when she won the U.S. Women's Chess Championship. She waves away the idea that she's a genius and instead suggests that a strong work ethic and long-term commitment helped her be great. Starting at a chess club at the age of seven, she's been playing ever since. "The more you play, the more your trajectory just goes upward," she said.

But, Yu has been slightly disappointed by The Harvard Chess Club's lack of prominence on campus—it didn't hold meetings until over a month after the semester's start and doesn't currently have a set weekly meeting schedule. Harvard itself has made Yu's chess career more difficult to manage: she had to skip this year's U.S. Women's Championship because of midterms. Although Harvard has limited her professional career somewhat, Yu has plans for expanding her chess celebrity beyond simply winning competitions. "I'm trying to get more involved on the personality side of things," she said. Yu has already written a number of chess-related articles, and she was able to spend some time commentating the championships she had to miss because of midterms. Her commentary was featured on the YouTube Channel of World Chess number 4, Hikaru Nakamura.

This foray into media is not new, Yu appreciates the role that media like *The Queen's Gambit* and chess streams have played in bringing new players into the chess community. "A lot of people did get into [chess] over the past year, and I think that's really cool," she said. *The Queen's Gambit* also touches on a long-standing issue: sexism in chess. FIDE, the international chess federation, kept men and women's tournaments entirely separate until the late 1980s. Similar to many professional sports, the prize pool for women's tournaments is still just a small fraction of the offerings at male-dominated tournaments. Top players like Grandmasters Nigel Short and Garry Kasparov have made claims that women are simply less capable than men at chess. A few years ago, Short stated that it should be "graciously accepted as a fact" that men are better equipped to be professional chess players. Kasparov long claimed that women could not compete with men over the chessboard until he was beaten by Grandmaster Judit Polgar.

Yu has personally experienced sexism in her chess career. "You can't avoid it, but I try not to focus on it," she said. The vast majority of the tournaments she competes in are co-ed, and she is often one of the only women. Yu reflected on how the media has played a role in perpetuating negative stereotypes about women in chess. "I did really badly in a tournament where I was the only woman, and of course they had to write an article about my performance. And a woman wrote the article!" As a woman

in chess, Yu feels an unfair pressure to single-handedly rebuke sexist attitudes. "I'm not representing all women here," she said.

Despite the difficulties that come with being a woman in chess, Yu is excited to keep playing and is ready to take her career to even greater heights. "I still have ambitions to improve. I want to win more championships," she said. But first she had to see what competition Cambridge had to offer.

Part III: The Hustler

Billy is one of the most notorious chess players in Cambridge. He's been playing chess for about 55 years, and he is currently homeless. He often plays at the chess boards outside of Harvard's Smith Campus Center against random passersby and fellow chess enthusiasts that flock to Harvard Square. Billy perfectly encapsulates the unique nature of street chess. Other regulars affectionately refer to him as the "Grandmaster of the Cheapo," referring to the tricks he uses to quickly beat unprepared opponents. Yu explained this style of play as being characteristic of "blitz" games played on the street where both players have only a few minutes to make all of their moves.



With regards to his favorite part of a chess game, Billy said, "I'm best at the middle-game because I'm creative. It's like a symphony orchestra where every instrument is playing. And I'm an excellent conductor." He tries to emulate World Chess Champion Bobby Fischer's aggressive style of play. Fischer was the first American player to dominate against the Soviets, and widely considered to be one of the best players that ever lived. "I've studied every single game Bobby Fischer ever played," Billy said.

Chess masters are generally used to quiet, patient games that require intense calculation and careful consideration. They may struggle against Billy in blitz games, where he plays for the clock as much as he plays for pieces and will use tricks from the very first moves to make his opponents burn their time. He's not unfamiliar to facing professional players, and he's always looking for a challenge.

Part IV: The Match

One night last week, Yu went to the Cambridge chess boards to play a three-game match against Billy—trying to "hustle the hustler." Billy entered the three-game match under the impression that Yu was a relatively new player learning the game for a school project. (In fairness, Yu hasn't been able to practice her chess very much recently, so Billy didn't have to face her at her best.)

The difference between Yu and Billy's style was evident from the first few moves of the first game. Yu moved the pieces smoothly and quietly, lightly tapping

the clock to pass the turn. Billy moved pieces quickly, holding a cigarette in one hand and smacking the clock with the other. It didn't take long for a small crowd to form and Yu's cover to be blown. "She's a real chess player, I can tell by the way she moves," Billy said. One of the regulars even recognized her. "Is your last name Yu?" they asked.

But Yu did her best to stay anonymous. "I just went to chess club," she responded. Unfortunately, it's hard for a master to hide their skill once they're deep into a game.

Billy soon started speaking in cartoonish voices and pleasantly trash-talking. "She doesn't have nearly as much on my king as I have on hers," he said.

As both players had less and less time remaining, the moves and clock hits became more frantic. The result was an upset: Billy wore Yu down on the clock, holding a worse position until her time ran out.

After watching the second game, the first could only be explained as a warm-up. Yu dominated the position, whittling Billy down until he didn't even have the time advantage. "She's destroying me this game," he said.

By the time Billy resigned, he was down by one minute on the clock and multiple pawns on the board.

Billy was looking a little unsteady in the third game. He gave away a piece in the middle-game and loudly expressed his frustration. "I can't believe I made that move," he said.

Yu seized her advantage and pressed into Billy's position. "The bones can be heard cracking, Billy," one of the regulars said as he watched. "This isn't just a victory, this is an annihilation," another remarked.

All of a sudden, something bizarre happened. Yu looked at the board, reacted with confusion and moved two pieces in one turn. Billy was suddenly indignant and

claimed that she had cheated. Yu confidently rebuked him. "Don't try to play me like that," she said. After setting up the board from memory, Yu proved the truth: it was Billy who had cheated and moved two pieces on the previous move. His sleight of hand is even easy to miss when watching a recording of the match.

Realizing that it's hard to fool a master, Billy relented. "That's what happened? Ok, then you win," he said.

Onlookers commended the level of skill demonstrated in the three games. "This is beautiful chess. I've studied with some grandmasters, so I know when someone is a master," someone said.

Billy accepted the hustle graciously and was financially compensated for his time. Two impressive chess players from different sides of the community produced an intense match, and the Independent thanks Billy and Jennifer Yu for being so accommodating and open to both conversation and competition.

Harry Cotter '25 (harrycotter@college.harvard.edu) really wishes that he wasn't terrible at chess.

Photo by Harry Cotter '25

Hold the (Racing) Line

A coxswain's role at Head of the Charles.

BY DECLAN BUCKLEY '24

*W*ever is the prominence of crew at Harvard so clear than during the Head of the Charles Regatta, the largest rowing event in the world. 2,231 boats competed this past weekend from 619 rowing clubs, attracting . 200,000 spectators and the business of hundreds of vendors. Yet some of the race's most important members may also be its most unrecognized. Small in size to minimize added weight and without an oar, the coxswain is often overlooked in comparison to their much larger teammates. However, their role—particularly when racing the Charles—is anything but miniscule.

“Head of the Charles is one of, if not the most, significant race for coxswains because it's a real test of steering skill and ability to maneuver around others in an unpredictable situation,” said Hailey Kwoun '24, a coxswain for the Harvard men's heavyweight rowing team.

Sprint regattas are typically 2,000 meter events where competing boats race side by side in a straight line, while head regattas are time trials raced across 5,000 meters of winding river. Boats start ten seconds apart from each other, with the winner judged on their course time rather than finishing position. This makes picking the right racing line all the more crucial. “The longer the race is, the more opportunity there is to add meters on,” said Radcliffe heavyweight coxswain Holly Conlon '23. “Especially when Head of the Charles is not a straight course.”

Justin Han '24 had never competed in a regatta Saturday, but he cherished the opportunity to make his debut on such a hard course. “It was awesome to have one of the biggest races in the world be my first one,” he said. Han appreciated the home court advantage

Harvard students enjoy on the Charles. “The advantage we have in practicing every day on this river definitely was clear,” he said. “For example, on the Weeks [Bridge] turn, we're told to aim for the Lowell Bell tower. That means that during the race, you don't need to think too hard about which angle you're gonna take because you just know to aim for the tower.”

Han's strategy for Weeks Bridge is more than just a convenience. The turn is a sharp 90 degrees and is located in the middle of the race. It is perhaps the most notorious part of the course and is enough to stoke fear

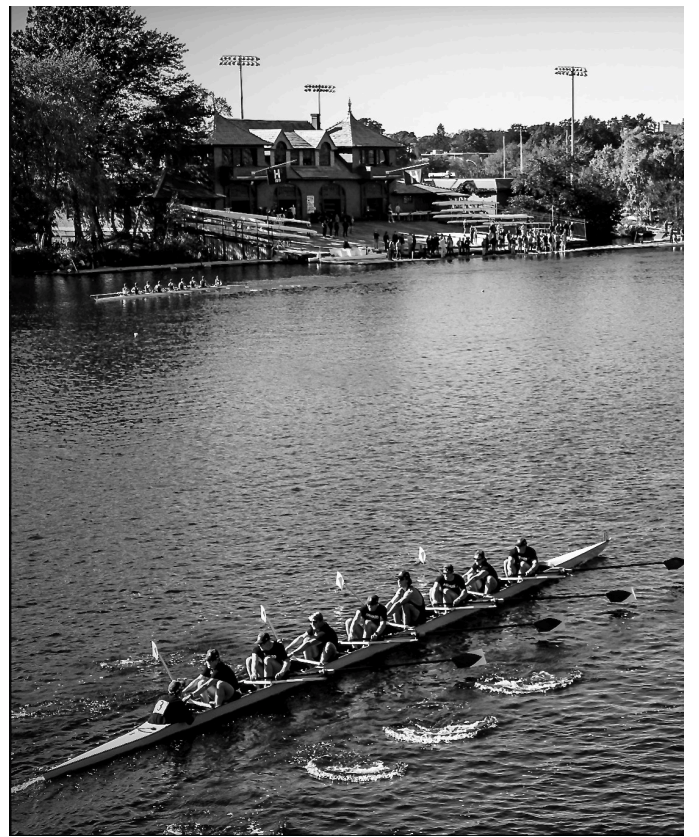


in even the most experienced navigator. “The Weeks turn is probably the bane of most coxswains' existences,” said Kwoun. “Most coxswains will screw it up. And even if they have perfectly clear traffic, they probably still won't get the line that they want.”

Not to be outdone, the subsequent 180 degree turn under Eliot Bridge provides a brutal one-two punch for coxswains. Their technique must be absolutely perfect to have any shot of winning their event.

“If you get stuck on the outside of a turn unnecessarily, you can add tons of time onto your race,” said Conlon.

Han learned the difficulty of maneuvering these turns during a race all too well. After successfully navigating Weeks Bridge, he unfortunately crashed his boat into the side of Eliot Bridge. While incredibly disappointed to cost his team valuable time, Han could not afford to think about anything but his next move during the race. “There's a lot of panic when [a crash] happens; everyone's just trying to do what they can,” he said. “As the coxswain, it's my job to get them back in line and get them back



rowing in time and with discipline to finish the race.” Han's boat was able to recover from their crash and placed 37th, beating eight other boats in the process.

Kwoun's experience on Saturday was not one of crisis management but that of celebration. She guided her boat to first place in the Men's Club Four's race, Harvard's first victory in that event since 1973. “Head racing is really funny because you can have a general idea of how well you did compared to yourself, but you have no idea how the rest of the field did.” A few days after the event, she reflected on her performance with enthusiasm. “I've raced Head of the Charles three times before this and I never finished anywhere near the top, so this was extremely exciting for me,” she said.

Conlon was not happy with her boat's 14th place in the Women's Championship Eight's event, but already has her eyes turned to the future. “It was disappointing, but there's a lot to look forward to,” she said. “Our training is mostly focused on building towards the spring and our spring racing season.”

The week after Head of the Charles is eerily quiet. The fans have left and the stands have been taken down, not to return for an entire year. The river that hosted so much joy and also heartbreak is empty save for the training sessions of local schools and rowing clubs. For those who experienced this weekend firsthand, however, the magnitude of the event will resonate far longer. Harvard's coxswains will continue to try to guide their teams to glory the same way they always have—being inconspicuous, but indispensable.

Declan Buckley '24 (declanbuckley@college.harvard.edu) secretly wishes he rowed crew.

Photos by Tom Horneastle '23 and Andrew Haimovici '23



Hot Commodities

Exploring the proliferation of scooters on campus

BY ARIEL BECK '25



As you walk through Harvard Yard, head down and exhausted from the mental exertion

of a two-hour lecture, you're suddenly startled by a student zipping past, just barely missing you.

Taking a glance up, you find a stream of two-wheeled motor vehicles zooming by.

Why are scooters suddenly everywhere around campus? Students depend on their scooters to navigate their way through Harvard's expansive campus. After being introduced to the long walks to the athletic campus and to the new Science and Engineering Complex in Allston, many athletes and other students have bought scooters.

These hot commodities have proven to be time efficient, compact, a source of amusement, and overall, a very good investment. The increased risk of contracting COVID-19 while riding the shuttles and the taxing process of storing a bike has led scooters to become the preferred mode of transportation on campus.

Scooters are now a symbol of status. According to Kai Mackey '25, the prevalence of scooters among athletes has "created a compounding effect where more people want to have them." Sterling Scott '25, a freshman on the football team, says there is "a certain swag that comes with having a scooter."

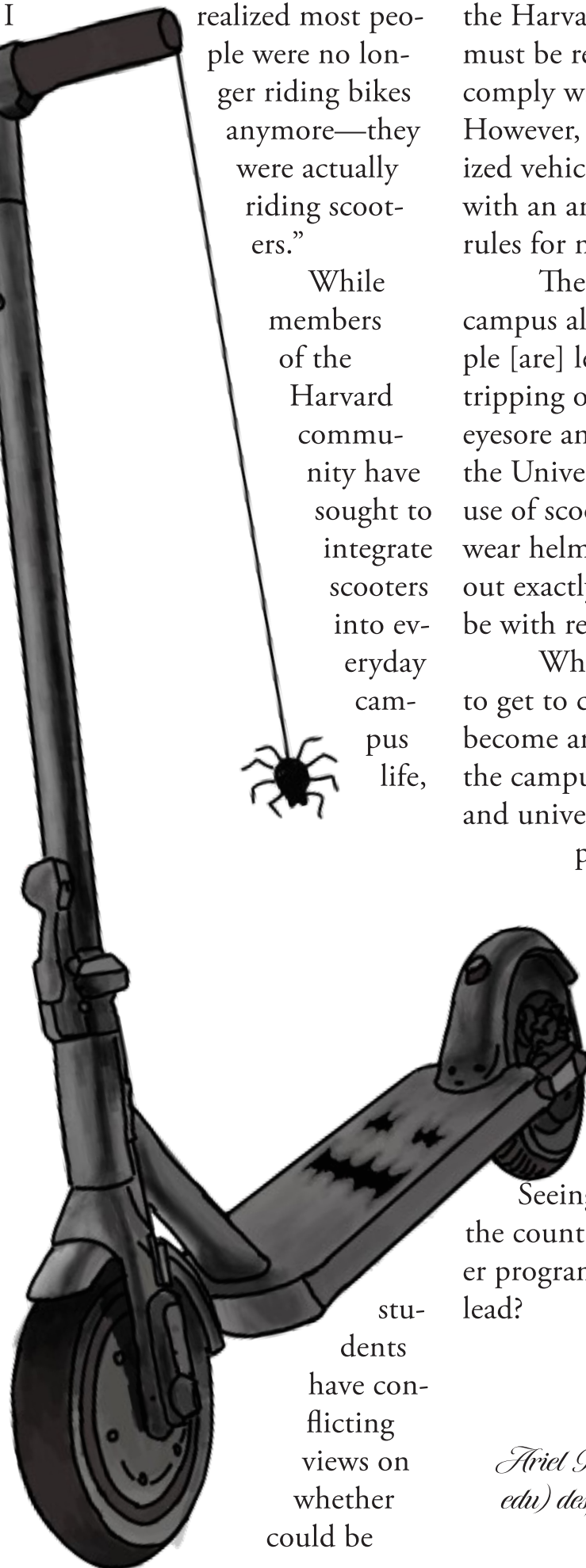
As scooters have started to dominate campus, Harvard has found ways to accommodate these scooter-loving students. Kelly Miller, a graduate student at the School of Engineering and Applied Science, developed scooter repair workshops at Lowell House's makerspace, which is equipped with 3D printers, building supplies, and hand tools. "The scooter workshops are designed to introduce students to the makerspace and teach students how to do minor

repairs on their own," says Miller. "I chose to expand

the workshop from bikes to scooters when I

realized most people were no longer riding bikes anymore—they were actually riding scooters."

While members of the Harvard community have sought to integrate scooters into everyday campus life,



more done to support scooter usage. "Harvard is very accommodating. The area in the back of Annenberg where you can park your scooters has been very helpful," comments Mackey.

Scott, on the other hand, believes Harvard is entirely supportive of students using scooters. "Harvard provides bike racks, but no scooter racks," he said. The University's policy toward scooters is also vague. According to the

Transportation and Parking Guide on the Harvard website, motorized scooters must be registered with a permit and comply with designated parking areas. However, this only pertains to motorized vehicles, leaving many students with an ambiguous understanding of the rules for non-motorized scooters.

The proliferation of scooters across campus also poses safety concerns. "People [are] leaving them everywhere and tripping on them," says Miller. "It's an eyesore and a fire hazard." She believes the University should regulate students' use of scooters and encourage them to wear helmets. "Harvard needs to figure out exactly what it wants the policy to be with respect to scooters," she says.

What started as an innovative way to get to class or practice on time has become an increasingly integral part of the campus experience. Many colleges and universities across the country have partnered with E-scooter companies to simplify students' experiences getting across campus, such as Scoot Safe at Emory University; Spin at Duke, Texas State, and Virginia Tech; and Lime scooters at UCLA, among other universities.

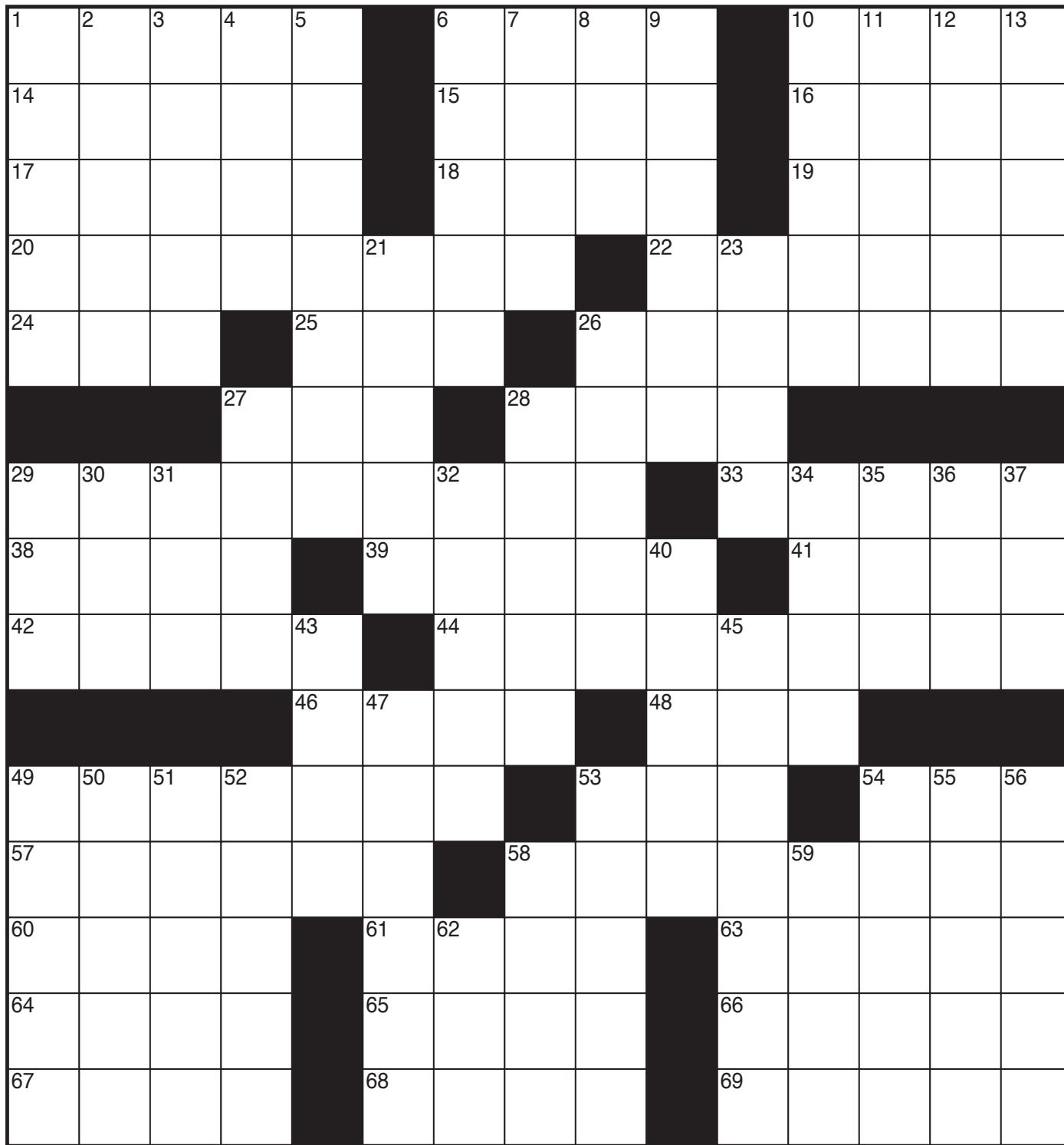
Seeing that many campuses across the country are enacting electric scooter programs, will Harvard follow their lead?

Ariel Beck '25 (arielbeck@college.harvard.edu) desperately wants a scooter of her own.

Graphic by Isa Gooijer '23

Just Passing Through

PETER LASKIN



- 13 Sheepshanks, monkeys' fists, or alpine butterflies
- 21 Really old tree sap (sometimes with bugs in it)
- 23 Discipline for Maria Agnesi and Emmy Noether
- 26 Israeli PM who rhymes with "Reagan"
- 27 Where to find 64-Across
- 28 King with a golden touch
- 29 Message when going AFK
- 30 SoCal team that's not the Chargers
- 31 Number of answers for this clue
- 32 Tools for some witches
- 34 Food truck staple
- 35 Scolding syllable
- 36 Shepherd's follower
- 37 Test where everyone gets over 100
- 40 "None of the above" option
- 43 Sword from the French for "sword"
- 45 Going from the Quad to the SEC, for one in a hurry
- 47 Study for a mystic, with "the"
- 49 Gondolier, for one
- 50 Black licorice flavoring
- 51 Accepts a gcal invite
- 52 Used up
- 53 Its green form is emerald
- 54 Top-notch
- 55 Years
- 56 Consume emotionally
- 58 Sandal from the Hebrew for "nature"
- 59 Exclamation upon being spooked
- 62 Word with "red" or "stars"

ACROSS

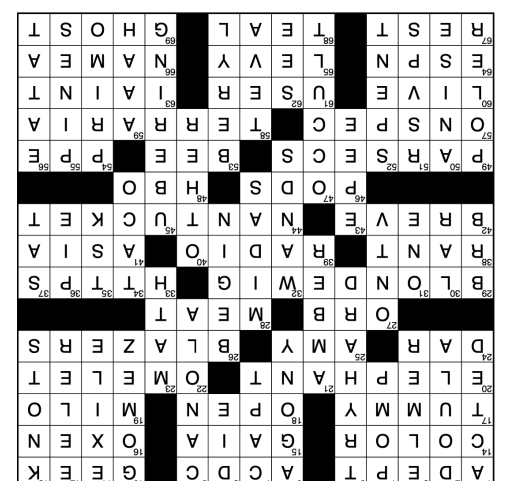
- 1 Skilled
- 6 Band known for power ballads?
- 10 Crossword fan, maybe
- 14 Group giving tests to Harvard students
- 15 Mother of the titans, in Greek mythology
- 16 Yoked team
- 17 Body part that can be tucked
- 18 Bad way to leave a refrigerator
- 19 Phantom Tollbooth hero
- 20 One in the room for a tough conversation
- 22 Dish demonstrated in the first episode of The French Chef
- 24 ___ es Salaam
- 25 Actress Adams
- 26 Outerwear for men in suits
- 27 Celestial body
- 28 It may be Impossible
- 29 Hairpiece for Sia
- 33 // preceder

- 38 Long twitter thread, perhaps
- 39 Lowest band of the electromagnetic spectrum
- 41 Where most people live
- 42 Latte made with half-and-half instead of milk
- 44 Island in a famous limerick opener
- 46 They keep the peas
- 48 Channel for Julia (the upcoming series, not the movie)
- 49 Astronomically large units of distance
- 53 Occupant of the former Café Pamplona
- 54 Face mask, e.g.
- 57 How contractors work
- 58 Tanks for tortoises, maybe
- 60 How games may be shown on 64-Across
- 61 Software downloader
- 63 "Now ___ sayin' she a gold digger..."
- 64 MNF channel

- 65 Any of three actors on Schitt's Creek
- 66 "___ more iconic duo"
- 67 Alternative to the best
- 68 Blue-green hue
- 69 Being that can walk through walls... as occurs four times in this puzzle

DOWN

- 1 Played a role
- 2 Labor organizer?
- 3 Patchwork 20-Across of children's lit
- 4 Partner of circumstance
- 5 One doing the most
- 6 Intense pain
- 7 Vessel VIP
- 8 21-spotted cube
- 9 Kind of oil you probably shouldn't put in your car
- 10 Addams house resident
- 11 Banish
- 12 One who might say "that's a moray"



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