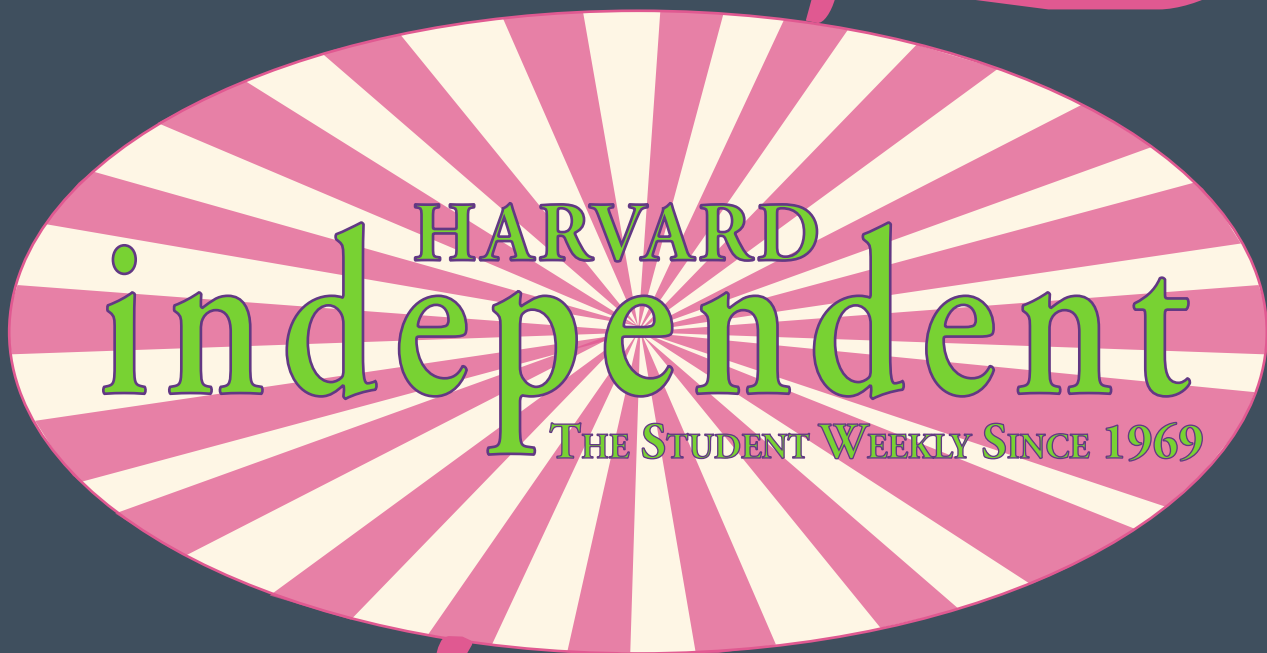
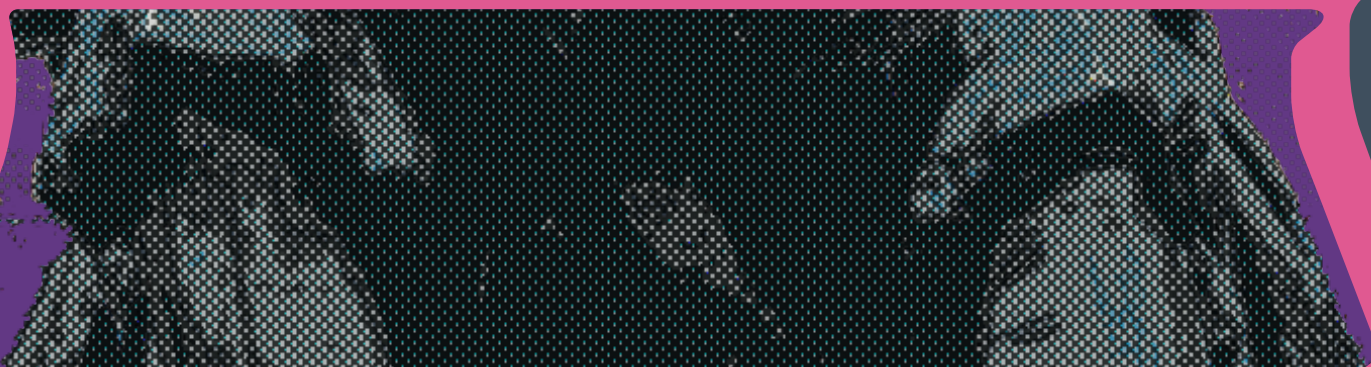


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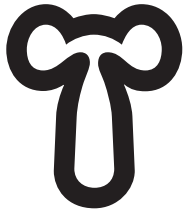
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THE STATE OF PSYCHEDELICS AT HARVARD

How the reemergence of these substances is unfolding in Cambridge

BY CHRISTIAN BROWDER '23



The relationship Harvard holds with psychedelics is long, convoluted, and until recently, static in its progression. Many are familiar with psychedelics' fall to social damnation during the '60s, less

are familiar with how institutions like Harvard were involved, and less still are familiar with academia's attitude towards these compounds before the research ceased.

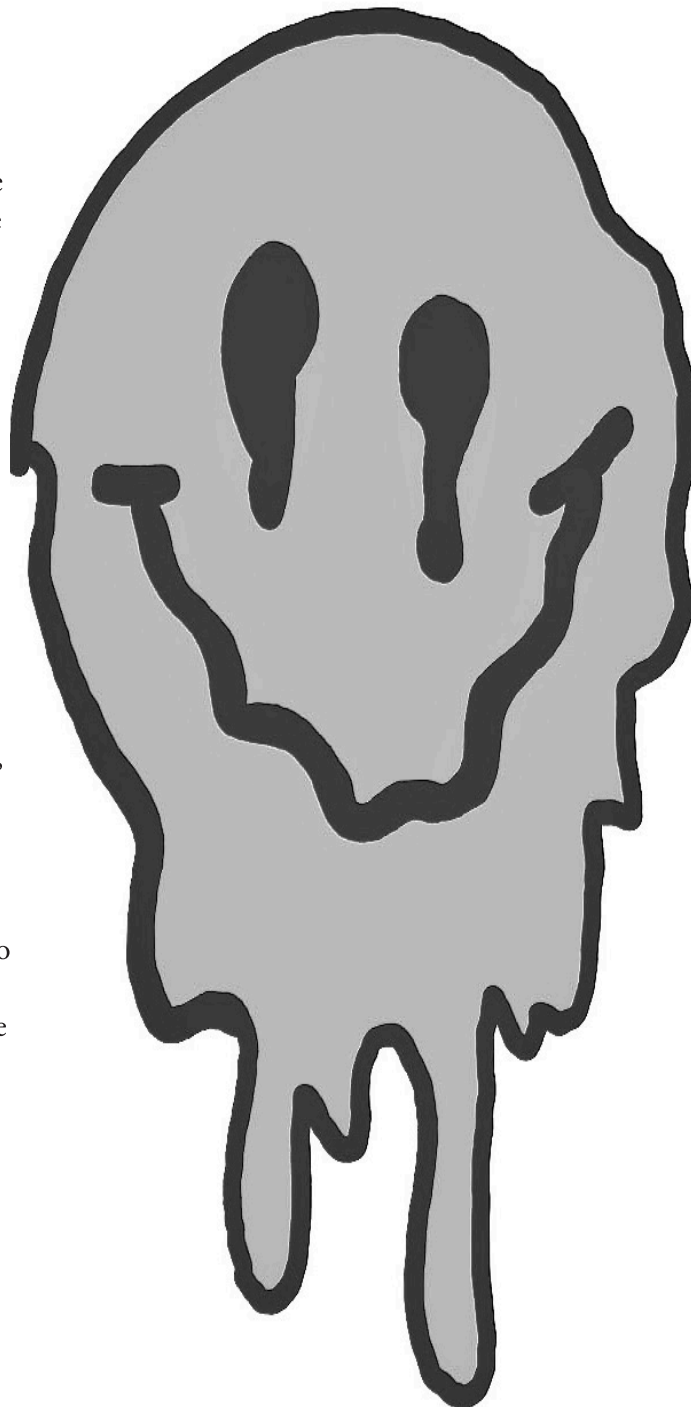
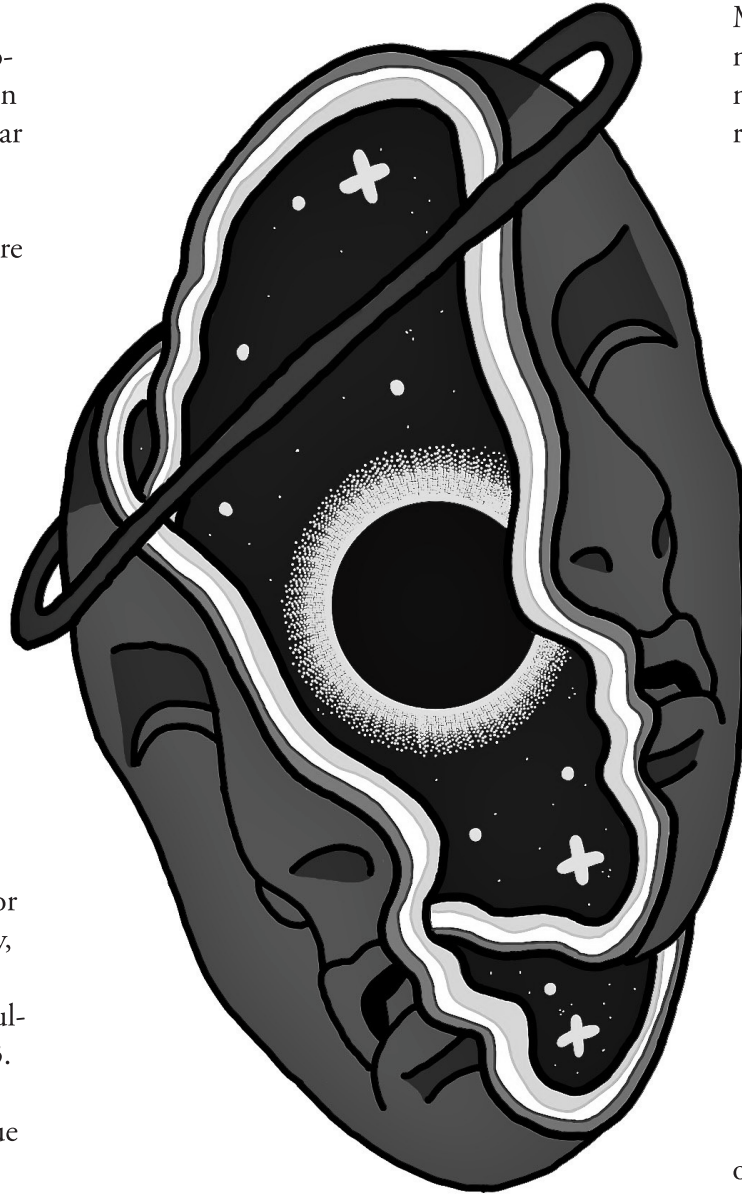
When the history of psychedelics at Harvard is recited, it is often oversaturated with retellings of Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert's infamous Psilocybin Project. During its time, the Harvard Psilocybin Project was likely the most high-profile, public-facing psychedelic research project that had ever been undertaken. But just two years later, the project was terminated - permanently tainting not just the public, but also academia's perception of the substances. However, in the years before controversy halted psychedelic research, it was a different story.

Richard Evans Schultes, a name familiar for those who know their share of psychedelics history, is an unsung hero of the early psychedelics game. Coming from humble means in East Boston, Schultes attended Harvard on a full scholarship in 1933. He went on to become a wildly important ethnobotanist - one who studies the properties of unique plant species by learning from the indigenous peoples who cultivate them. He wrote his thesis on the spiritual use of the peyote cactus among the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma and kept up this inquiry on psychoactive plants throughout his career. Schultes' contributions to Harvard, ethnobotany, and the greater medical field are vast and not yet fully appreciated. But his story is distinctly valuable for informing contemporary dialogues as the future of psychedelics remains unclear.

Second Wave

The second wave of psychedelic research, which the current moment falls into, poses an important question for institutions like Harvard, "How do we want to proceed?" It's a question that has been shrouded with irrelevancy and disagreement since the late '60s. While public dismay and academic rejection posed a hiatus on psychedelic research, it did not terminate the possibility of carrying out studies with government approval. Over time discoveries were made, tireless disciples toiled on spreading awareness, and research methodology improved. Eventually, as more studies accumulated, all flaunting solid standards and positive results, an undercurrent of excitement started to flow. As the academic world caught on, it became clear science was lagging behind the experience and knowledge of the millions of people all throughout history who have used psychedelics. It is this recounting of the personal explorations and potentials which has time and again sparked the passion of the researchers.

In the last decade, the country has seen the slow resurgence play out as hospitals and universities open up psychedelic research centers. Recently, Harvard and Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) opened the new Center for the Neuroscience of Psychedelics to study the substances' effect on the brain. The *Independent* spoke with the center's scientific director of chemical neurobiology, Dr. Stephen J. Haggarty on the importance of the center's opening. About which he says, "as short as a few years ago, I would've never imagined



MGH and Harvard, in general, would have as much interest as there is." Dr. Haggarty cites that many of those taking up an interest in psychedelic research are doing so because they are being "driven in this direction because there is a need for new medicines in psychopharmacology."

This is one of the promises of psychedelics that researchers are working to understand and enact - the ability to heal patients who are left untreated with current tools. And so far, the results of drug-assisted psychotherapy studies have more than surpassed the effectiveness of any other treatment option. For those willing to listen the evidence is already here: psychedelics are the future of psychiatric treatment. Additionally, psychedelics are associated with a number of other health and lifestyle benefits - such as neuroplasticity in adulthood, and greater life satisfaction. With all these benefits in mind, it is surprising that the university doesn't invest in this research to a greater extent.

Generational Gap

To try and understand this hesitation, *The Independent* spoke with Harvard Psychology graduate student Grant Jones. Jones is studying the links between mental health outcomes and psychedelics using large-scale epidemiological surveys. It's not that Jones is opposed to clinical research, but as of now, that approach is unavailable as it is often prohibitively hard to get funding for psychedelic studies. Even at the new Harvard and MGH psychedelic center, their main source of funding is philanthropy. Psychedelic research is predominantly reliant on private funding, hence why advancement in the field is slow. In discussing the role research has in the movement, Grant believes research is fundamental to ensuring people begin taking these medicines seriously. He went on to note that "research can help to hasten [acceptance of psychedelics]. It needs to hasten because there's a lot of people suffering needlessly when these really profound and potentially powerful treatments could help."

Part of understanding the limited investment in this field is understanding the generation gap in this field. There are a couple of factors at play here, on which Harvard undergraduate Nick Ige shared his thoughts on the importance of time periods. For the Baby Boomer generation, they were kids or young adults when the demonization and criminalization of psychedelics happened. For Gen Z, they were the first generation who grew up with the internet fully integrated into their lives - referencing the fact that today's youth have greater informational access than anyone before them.

This age-related difference is illustrated clearly with polling results. A 2021 Harris poll found that a majority of Americans aged 18-29 agree that psychedelic substances have medical uses. For those over 30 years old, the majority answer was a resounding no. It seems youth are not only more accepting and knowledgeable about psychedelics, but the total amount of young adults who embrace these substances is quickly increasing. This can be seen even on Harvard's campus.

Recently, *The Independent* ran the annual counterculture survey. In it, students were polled on which drugs they've tried. Focusing specifically on psychedelics, 11% have tried LSD, 9% for MDMA, 23%

for psilocybin mushrooms, and 6% for Ketamine. Particularly surprising was not the near quarter of respondents with psilocybin experience, but how drastically that number had risen. Just five years ago, when students were polled that same question, those with psilocybin experience amounted to a comparatively small 8%.

This rift between youth and older generations' attitudes is something Dr. Haggarty mentioned while commenting on the road ahead for psychedelics. He mentioned that in the eyes of the university, the continuation of psychedelic research is a long-term game – meaning Harvard, as an institution, feels no rush to carry out research. Dr. Haggarty notes the tension one might feel when caught between understanding the gravity of the situation and being unable to make any progress. That's a feeling many students find themselves having in this era when psychedelics are no longer taboo on campus, but they are still absent.

Looking Forward

To gauge how students' feelings on the matter, The Independent spoke with Yana Lazarova-Weng and Max Ingersoll, co-presidents of the Harvard Psychedelic Club. On the topic of fostering interest, they thoughtfully remind that different people could have different preferences for what legitimizes something they learn – in this case, psychedelics. That is the reason the club hosts such

a wide array of events, from art shows to scientific panels so that everyone can find an avenue they can approach from. And it is definitely working, both Lazarova-Weng and Ingersoll shared stories of classmates joining the club after realizing the true depth of the club and thanking them for creating a judgment-free, educational space on campus.

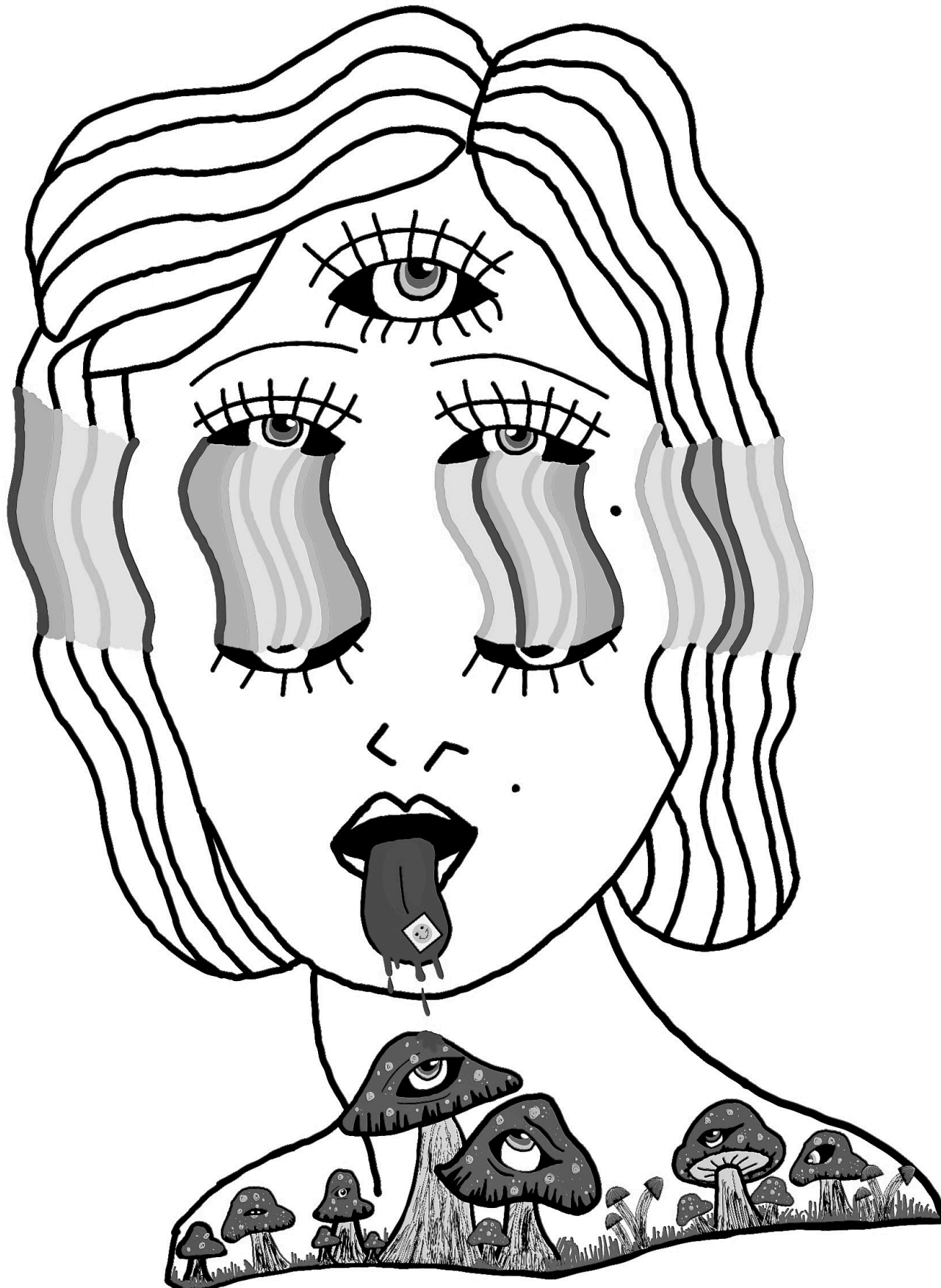
Though the Harvard Psychedelics Club was relatively unknown before Lazarova-Weng and Ingersoll took leadership, it had existed since 2019. The fact that it lay unknown for so long is symptomatic of a wider diagnosis one could give Harvard – indecisiveness. The reason Schultes was such a great scientist is that he was respectful, humble, and above all passionate. He worked alongside experts from all the varying departments, making his work as interdisciplinary as it could be. His work has stood the test of time and his determination shows, but at the end of the day Schultes wouldn't have accomplished what he did were it not for the support Harvard gave him throughout his life. Dr. Haggarty believes Schultes' story is a powerful reminder for Harvard to consider their potential and role in the second wave of research.

In conversation, Lazarova-Weng mentioned that “there will always be open- and close-minded people, but the open-minded ones are the ones who are the catalysts for growth.” Dr. Haggarty said something similar, that visionary, catalyzing

research is possible, but students and faculty alike have to be invested. When considering the state of psychedelics at Harvard, and what happens from here, these two quotes ring with confidence.

Christian Browder '23 (cbrowder@college.harvard.edu) is a Staff Writer for the Independent.

Graphics by Alma Russell '25



MADE BY MARLO: MAX INGERSOLL AND THE MEANING OF MEDITATION

Harvard Psychedelics co-president speaks about the power of meditation practices.

BY MARBELLA MARLO '24

Sunlight floods in from the Dunster fifth floor's angled skylight as Max Ingersoll settles into his makeshift meditation space. He starts breathing in a cadence, focuses on how his body feels, and tries to imagine himself dying. As he thinks about his own life ending, he tries to make himself feel physically hotter. He imagines getting older with age and losing the things that make him happy. To most people, Ingersoll acknowledges, visualizing this sense of loss is morbid. Why, and especially in a time of so much uncertainty, would anyone want to intentionally experience despair? To Ingersoll, however, this practice provides the opposite result.

Visualizing death is one of the five Buddhist subjects for daily recollection, colloquially known as the Five Reflections: aging, illness, death, separation, and accountability. The purpose of envisioning death is to anticipate and prepare for nature's inevitable afflictions while developing an appreciation for life's impermanence.

"All these things are natural laws. They will happen. The idea is to accept these natural laws as inevitable ... It creates a ton of gratitude, and the more you do it, the more you appreciate it. You realize 'wow, I'm not sick, and wow, I have my friends and my family that I love. Let me make the most out of that.'"

This practice of intentionally embodying pain is one of Ingersoll's preferred methods of medita-

tion.

Another, he calls metta.

The idea of metta, which Ingersoll argues is grossly undervalued throughout the mediation community, is "about cultivating the intention for things to go well for yourself and for others." The practice considerably differs from that of envisioning pain, yet the outcomes are relatively similar. He compares it to the love that a grandparent would offer to their grandchild: "It's not love through attachment ... it's not trying to change someone else's life through love or positive thoughts, I just want to cultivate the way I think about someone else. May they be happy. May they be healthy."

Like the Five Reflections, metta meditation can promote self-compassion by reducing the temporary negative emotions that frequently cloud our perspective of ourselves and others. By fostering gratitude and empathy for individuals around you, this practice can transform both emotional and physical health. It promotes grace and recognition of everyday fortunes, and Ingersoll encourages everyone to try it.

"By changing your mindset, you then treat other people differently, which then makes their situation better because they can feel that you want things to go well for them," Ingersoll comments. "You become so much happier and can start breaking down the walls of the ego. The stronger the ego, the more separate you are from other people and the world, and that's when paranoia and envy come in."

Max Ingersoll grew up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, attending Graham and Parks, NuVu Studio, and Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School before coming to Harvard. He recounts loving sports as a child and developing a passion for art and philosophy as he entered high school. During his gap year, his appreciation towards meditation blossomed. After spending over three months at silent meditation retreats at the Insight Meditation Center

in Massachusetts and a temple in Mahasi Sayadaw tradition in Thailand, In-

gersoll recognized his passion for the activity and started incorporating it into his everyday life.

He continues to demonstrate this commitment to mental and emotional well-being as the co-president of the Harvard Psychedelics Club, where he promotes objective research into the mental health benefits of psychedelics. The club's website recognizes research showing the "ability of psychedelics to effectively treat seemingly intractable conditions such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) [MDMA], Treatment-Resistant Depression [Psilocybin], and Addiction [Psilocybin]." The club aims to use its credibility to garner support for education and decriminalization surrounding psychedelic medicines in the hope of promoting more responsible usage.

Ingersoll confirms the club's firm policy against drug use at any events and argues that psychedelics should be treated with sincerity and respect. Through extensive research, conversation, and collaboration, the Psychedelics Club actively recognizes the role that psychedelics have played in Indigenous cultures' practices and the potential they have in treating several medical conditions. The Psychedelics Club has hosted several events, including art shows and speakers, and is focused on "creating a space on campus built around the values of mindfulness, inclusion, respect, and individual expression."

Marbella Marlo '24 (mmarlo@college.harvard.edu) is the Sports Editor for the Independent.

DON'T LET IT BE A DRAG, QUEEN

A Perspective on Harvard's History of Drag

BY SEATTLE HICKEY '25 AND CALVIN OSBORNE '25



If you can't love yourself how in the hell are you gonna love somebody else?"

This quote is repeated at the end of most episodes of Ru Paul's Drag Race, a show responsible for making drag mainstream. The show starts with a dozen queens strutting on a runway, and they then compete against each other by designing elaborate costumes to fit the show's various themes, constructing the quippiest read for the seasonal roast, and—of course—finding out who has to “sashay away” from the competition in a lip-sync battle. The drama and showmanship has made the show a staple for queer and straight people alike.

Drag has its own unique history here at Harvard. For one, the Hasty Pudding Institute, founded in 1795 and the oldest collegiate theatrical company in the country, began giving its shows in 1884 with an all-male cast. Due to this gender discrimination, a large section of the cast performed in drag: this fit right in, however, to the show's satirical and often campexecution (each show ended with a ten-minute kickline!), leading to drag becoming a hallmark of the Hasty Pudding productions.

Women wouldn't be allowed to participate in Hasty Pudding until 1973, where they were allowed to assist with the show's tech, band, creative, and business components. It wouldn't be until 2018 that women were actually allowed to participate as cast members in the Hasty Pudding productions, even after multiple performances directed by women. This drag tradition still continues today, now including the actresses on the show.

Nikita Nair '24 was one of the women who performed in drag for this year's production, “HPT 173: Ship Happens!” The “fever dream” of a show was as raunchy as it historically has been, and for Nikita the hard work of the entire company was “unimaginable.” She was somebody who had never done drag before, beyond the standard acting for theatricals (and Dungeons & Dragons!), and she described the role as an incredible experience. Masculinizing her face through eye-shadow

and concealer, Nikitia described the role as a chance to “honor and respect the artform of drag.”

As for performing in drag as a straight woman, Nikita likened the experience to introducing her friends to her Indian cultural traditions. She described the importance of intent when tapping into an aspect of a different culture, just like how she always enjoyed “dressing [her] friends in Sari and doing Bali, it was a great way to help people to learn something new about themselves.”

The tradition of drag on Harvard's campus extends beyond Hasty Pudding to Adams House, an epicenter of culture for queer and artistic students through its Drag Night. This event has allowed students of all genders and sexualities to explore themselves in an environment welcoming to

anyone's first time in drag. The performance began as a protest in 1980, after an Adams student was assaulted by those at Kirkland for his sexuality, and Adams rallied around their own member by creating the Drag Ball, now Drag Night, which has been a trademark of the house ever since. Tiffany Gonzalez '22, the Adams Hoco Chair, says that the creation of Drag Night was “almost a protest of the social norms of the school at the time,” interrogating the Formal Dances held by Kirkland and Eliot houses. Each Adams student showed up in full drag in an act of unity for the Adams student, as their dressing in drag meant they supported their peers, even if the rest of Harvard—and the world—didn't. My own dad, Class of '94 (pictured here), participated as a cisnet male, and his fond memories of participating is a part of what inspired me to write this piece.

The beautifully unique thing about Drag Night is that to its participants, it has never felt like a progressive act, instead feeling “fun and safe,” according to another past Adams house student, David McMurry '95. Today, it still feels the same way, as Tiffany explains it “doesn't feel serious or intense.” In her words, “It's nice to have a place where you can explore your gender presentation and feel like it's welcome, and it's not calling attention to you or making anything about you because other people are doing it.” Drag has a deep history with respect to queer expression, and it is inspiring to see the original intention of Adams' Drag Night as a space of

inclusivity continue to this day.

Even though housing is now a lottery, Adams has successfully kept this tradition alive through selectively choosing tutors and deans that are knowledgeable about the history of the House and are committed to keeping the tradition of acceptance alive, no matter what form it needed to be. During the online year of 2021, Adams House held a drag night over Zoom, where students submitted videos of themselves in drag and a professional Drag Queen performed to the audience of students at home. This year, Drag Night had the biggest turnout in history, with students, tutors, deans, and professional Drag Queens performing, as well as an audience of students almost entirely in drag. Ten students performed over the course of the night; this was the debut act for eight of Harvard's own students, as Drag Night has always been a place for people to experiment. This year, Drag Night was open to members of the queer community, but in the future, Tiffany sees it growing to be open to all of Harvard.

For more than just Harvard, the drag scene extends out into the city of Cambridge: performances from drag icons including Detox take place at The Sinclair, a bar only five minutes away from campus, and Cambridge still hosts an annual The Rocky Horror Picture Show. But whatever form drag takes in the future, we can be sure that it will show up here on campus at Harvard, and whether it is through Hasty Pudding shows, inclusive Drag Nights, or our very own students' performances, we know that this is something that we cannot wait to see play out on the stage.

Seattle Hickey '25 (seattlehickey@college.harvard.edu) really hopes Housing Day wasn't a drag.

Calvin Osborne '25 (cosborne@college.harvard.edu) would love for somebody to help him do his makeup.

Graphics by Seattle Hickey '25



SIZE MIGHT MATTER

Harvard's smallest concentrations are chronically underrated.

BY MICHAEL KIELSTRA '22

High salaries after graduation, famous professors, and well-trodden paths to being a mover and shaker: the ingredients for a popular academic concentration are fairly obvious. As of December 2020, 483 students were concentrating in Economics, 400 in Computer Science (including joint concentrators), and 245 in Applied Mathematics. At the other end of the spectrum, some students pursue much more niche courses of study. At Harvard, a place that lives and breathes community and networking, perhaps the most countercultural thing to do is to join one of the smallest concentrations.

“Applied Math, Gov, CS, even Sociology, those were always off the table, not just because I wasn’t interested but because they’re so big and very impersonal,” says CJ Passarella ’23. “I think size does matter, and I think that I wanted a community.” Both of the concentrations in Passarella’s joint, Comparative Study of Religion and South Asian Studies, are quite small: including joint concentrators, Religion had fifteen students in December 2020 and South Asian Studies, the smallest concentration at Harvard, had only three. Although he does concede that “maybe [size] should have mattered less, because you can find that same community elsewhere,” he happily confirms that he did indeed find a strong community in South Asian Studies.

Community does not have to be restricted to undergraduates alone. Rosalind DeLaura ’22 praises the Germanic Languages and Literatures concentration for being “small enough that people knew who I was [so that] I didn’t feel this overwhelming anonymity that you can at other places.” She ascribes her concentration’s sense of community to those higher up the academic ladder: “I’ve been able to take classes from the same professors throughout my time at Harvard and have been able to have good relationships with them... they know what I’m studying, they know what I’m interested in, they’ll send me things.”

Peter Horowitz ’24, another German concentrator, agrees: “The professors are unbelievably involved in the academic development throughout the class, in the work that you’re doing; I’ve never been disappointed with feedback, or I was

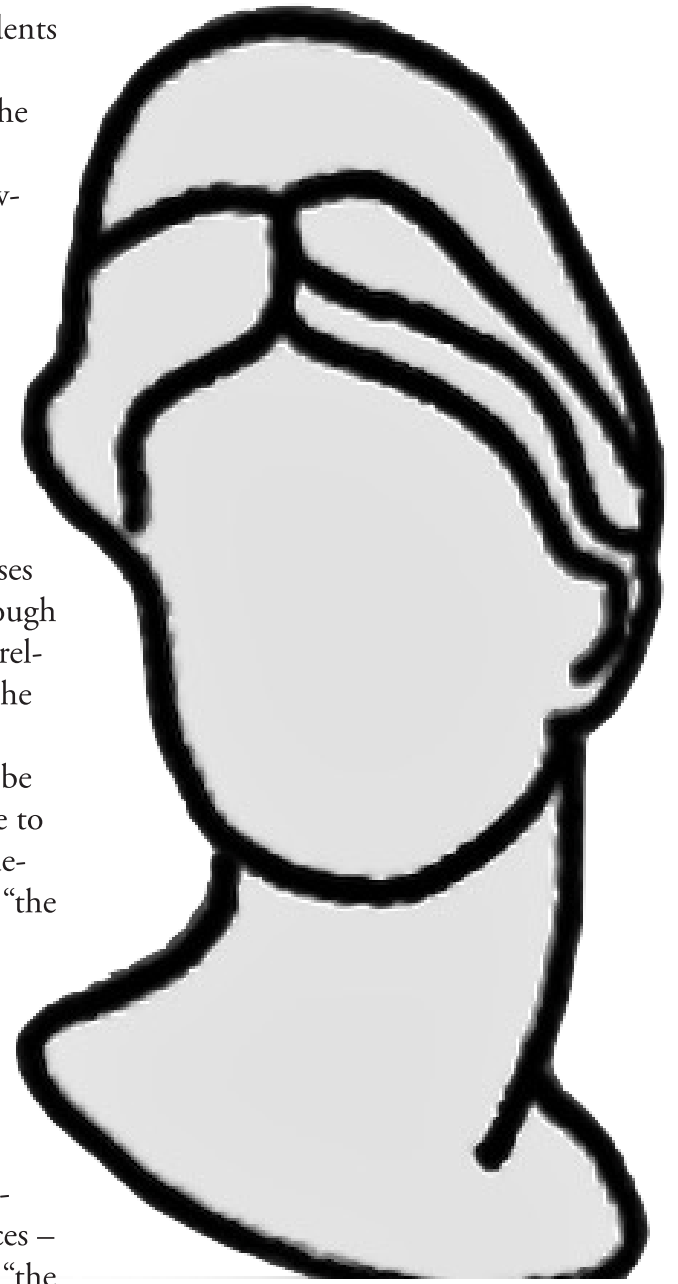
never concerned that the professor was more interested in their own research or in writing a book than in helping us perform well.” Both he and Rosalind mention having graduate students in their classes as well. For those looking to meet people, small concentrations may be the way to go.

There are obvious drawbacks. Horowitz mentions “the scale of the funding that the department can get,” and compares the German department’s portion of the third floor of the Barker Center to the Economics department’s much larger building. There can also be a lack of course diversity. Passarella describes South Asian Studies as “mostly just a language department.” The non-language courses in the department are often cross-listed through other departments, thus, according to Passarella, the only real benefit of concentrating is the tutorial system.

Getting access to those tutorials can be tough for those who are unwilling or unable to fully commit to the concentration. Larger departments have what Horowitz describes as “the power to say no” without jeopardizing their student base. Economics does not participate in joint concentrations, despite Horowitz and others’ efforts “to see if they can convince at least someone in the department to change the policy.” Smaller concentrations can demand significant commitment without providing the best resources – or assuaging Horowitz’s “existential fear” of “the inability to be hired after college only knowing German literature.”

However, Passarella points out that smaller concentrations may not be as niche as they appear. “South Asian Studies, East Asian Studies, Romance Languages, Germanic Languages... if you add up the number of people who are doing those things or are interested in area studies, it probably equals another social sciences or humanities concentration: not a ton of people, but in the 40s or 50s, maybe even 70s or 80s.” As of December 2020, the sum total of concentrators in subjects focused on subject areas outside of the United States was 62.

Horowitz notes that his passion is not for area studies specifically, but for German. He attributes this interest to a high-school junior year foreign exchange in Germany and a trip to New York with the German Club his first year at Harvard. DeLaura points out that “If you hadn’t had the opportunity to learn German or Russian before coming into Harvard, then there’s technically a way that you could still concentrate but it would be a bit difficult... you wouldn’t come in thinking that you were going to concentrate if you’d never taken the language before.” Horowitz acknowledges that his field of study is “very, very specific” and not the obvious choice for those with multiple interests: “If you’re interested in Romance Languages and Literatures and Germanic Languages and Liter-



atures, you could do a joint in both, [but] it might be better to study some sort of comparative literature course, which has many more concentrators.” Comparative Literature has, as of December 2020, 20 concentrators.

One might therefore conceptualize area studies not as a group of concentrations, but as one larger concentration that attracts the amount of interest expected for a humanities department and allows undergraduates to sort themselves into clearly-defined tracks. Viewed in this way, declaring one of these concentrations is a truly countercultural act. At a college filled with GroupMes, socials, and events designed to help students with similar academic interests coalesce into large groups, the area-studies concentrators go the other way, making their interests increasingly niche to the point of three-person departments. For those who want close relationships with faculty and the ability to focus on their exact area of enthusiasm, a small concentration size is not a bug but a feature.

Michael Kielstra '22 (pmkielstra@college.harvard.edu), being a math concentrator, has been known to study area.

Graphics by Isabel Eddy '25



BLENDING

WELLNESS

Life Alive and Down Under bring the Y

BY ELIZA K

Have you ever stepped out of Widener Library for a study break at Pinocchio's only to find the scarfed-down meal slows you down? The collaborators at Life Alive Organic Café and Down Under School of Yoga are determined to keep your energy ignited. Their first-ever collaboration, Wellness Oasis, which opened at 22 John F. Kennedy Street on March 1st, strives to turn our intellectual mecca into a spiritual hub. According to Life Alive's CEO Bryan Timko, their mission is rooted in an essential tenet: "how we eat, move, and think influences how we feel."

Having graduated from Harvard Business School in 2002, Timko knows how Harvard Square ticks and how to amplify its energy. "The people who are here create an intellectual center not just for Massachusetts but also in the world," he says.

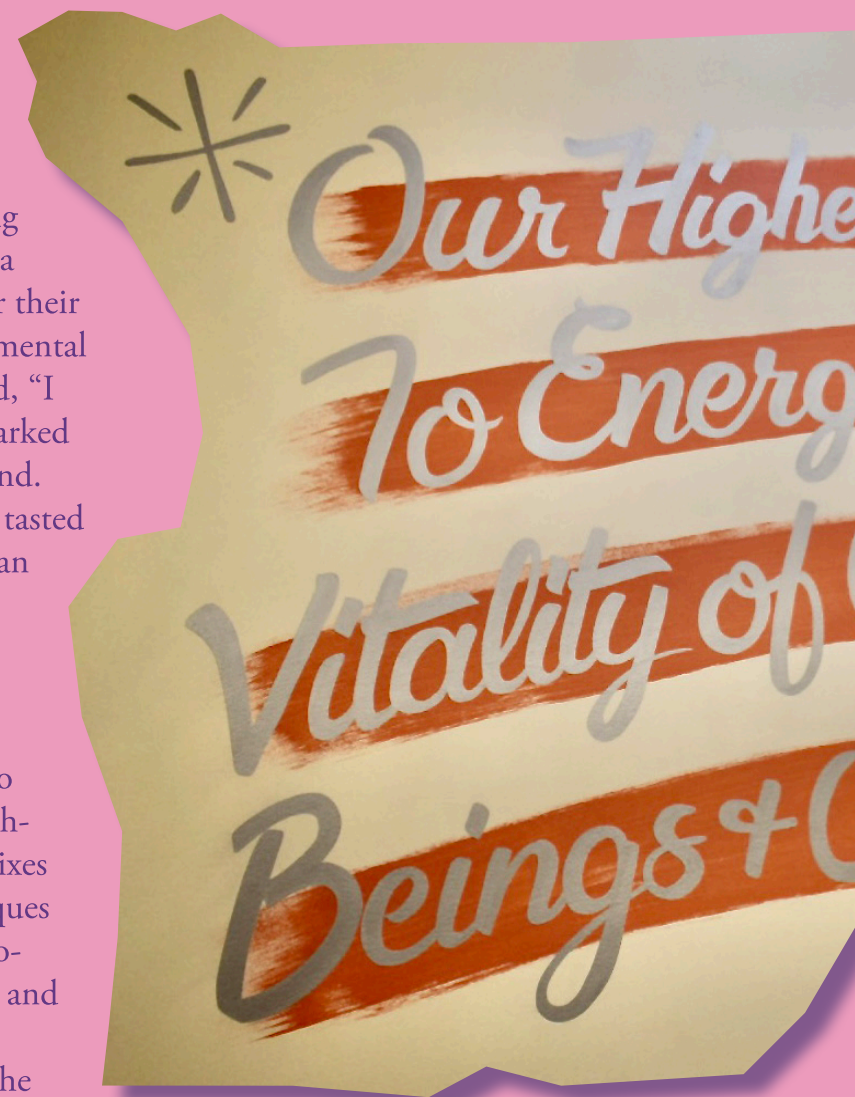
With five other locations in Massachusetts, Live Alive serves its visitors with vegan and vegetarian meals as healthy and vibrant as the space itself; their signature rainbow motif is evident even in the colorful details of each dish. Life Alive targets 40% of the American population who define themselves as flexitarians, a new term to describe those who primarily choose vegetarian options but cannot avoid the occasional temptation of the juicy Tasty Burger cheeseburger. Timko describes the café as a "spa for [his

insides."

Diners boast about feeling better after a meal at Life Alive. Alma Russell '25 appreciates Live Alive's vegan-vegetarian menu inspiring everyone—beyond flexitarians—to have a more vegetable and fruit based diet for their own health benefits as well as environmental reasons. As a vegan herself, Russell said, "I love seeing a menu where dairy is a marked option rather than the other way around. It's much more inclusive and the food tasted the same and better to all my non-vegan friends."

Timko partnered with Justine Cohen, Founder and Director of the Down Under School of Yoga, to incorporate movement and thinking into the space. Originating in Newton Highlands, Massachusetts, Down Under mixes classical and cutting edge yoga techniques in their teacher-focused movement program with an emphasis on meditation and wellness.

Mary Cipperman exemplified the success of the collaboration's emphasis on eating, thinking, and moving. "[My friends and I] found that [the Wellness Oasis] was a trendy and comfortable place to get work done, exercise, or grab food. The bottom floor is particularly comfortable with lofi music and soft lighting...we also loved their açai bowls, latte options, and healthy



lunch- es. Overall, we had a great experience and plan to return!" she said.

Cohen was pleasantly surprised about how naturally the two health centers meshed. During opening weekend, Down Under offered free yoga classes to all visi-

tors, and Cohen received compliments about the natural flow between her studio and the café. "I was teaching during the opening weekend and there was this lovely buzz," she shares. "It was like going to sleep with the sound of a party in the living room... All of the students came out to smell the aromas. Three people coincidentally ended up in the same yoga class and stayed to share a meal together afterwards."

This Harvard



WITH BLENDERS

Wellness Collaboration to Harvard Square KIMBALL '25

Our Purpose:
to energize the
vitality of
all living
beings on
our planet ✨

Harvard Square location holds a large section of the café and one of the two movement studios on the ground level. A colorful mantra is emblazoned on the stairwell to the bottom floor: “To energize the vitality of all living beings on the planet.” In the downstairs Blue Lounge, eager Harvard students monopolize the new study space, Life Alive bowls in one hand and laptops in the other. The rainbow arsenal of the spices exemplified in every dish compliments the lavender aromas and staple beautiful blue atmosphere of Down Under.

Down Under seeks to tackle issues of equality and race within the yogi community by increasing black teacher participation in fitness areas and treating teachers better than the minimal basic level for health and fitness instructors. Diminishing the racial gap in the fitness industry, Ashley Mitchell, one of the studio’s most popular instructors, spent her career working as

a racial activist leader. Down Under treats all of their 80 teachers scattered over five locations as employees, offering sick days, maternity leave, and access to healthcare—unusual benefits for fitness instructors. Cohen aims to set a standard of treatment for its teachers and be on the frontline of increasing diversity in this field.

Likewise, Culinary Director Leah Debois rewards her team with the benefits of the Wellness Oasis; all Life Alive employees are offered great discounts on yoga as well as an initial two weeks of free classes. “They love to have the access to be able to slip out of work and slip straight into a class,”

Debois explains.

To celebrate the opening, the Wellness Oasis offered the

Happiness Sabbatical: two months of free food from Life Alive and free yoga and meditation for Down Under

granted to the four selected of 300 applicants. Seeking to improve community wellness, the program also offers one-on-one meetings with nutritionists as well as counseling on stress and anxiety. Throughout the eight weeks, each winner will wear an Oura Ring, a wearable sleep and activity tracker. The rest of the applicants have been gifted a wellness immersion for a month of unlimited yoga, meditation, fitness and more.

This wellness collaboration extends

from shared ideals to dishes. Debois celebrates the connection between sleep, vibrancy, and energy through diet. During her seven years at Life Alive, Debois has applied her classic culinary background to vegan-vegetarian cuisine to compose dishes like the highly popular Buddha Bowl. A joint product of Down Under and Life Alive, the bowl is “reflective of the Life Alive pantry that celebrates the spices that get that digestive fire going,” says Debois. “A combination of raw and cooked vegetables, and some jalapenos on top, ... gives some good energy in there with some good proteins like almonds and avocados,” she adds. “It was supposed to be a seasonal dish but people seem to love it, so it is staying on the menu.”

The wholesome energy propagates through the location down to even the finest details like the names of the dishes. Charlotte Baker '24 suggests, “Spice up your ordering experience by choosing a smoothie or salad based on the names—for instance, I love requesting a Love Child or Forbidden Kale. Kale tastes so much better when it’s not allowed.”

Eliza Kimball '25 (elizakimball@college.harvard.edu) wrote this article sitting in Live Alive's Blue Lounge with their Blue Magic smoothie in hand.

Photos by Eliza Kimball '25



HARVARD QUIDDITCH

TAKES THE PITCH

Everyone knows that Harvard looks like Hogwarts, but it also has a sport to match.

BY HARRY COTTER '25

Quidditch, the high-stakes, fast-paced imaginary sport famously coined in J.K. Rowling's wizarding world, was adapted into a formal game in the early 2000s. As Rowling's fan base entered their college years and looked for a way to bring the fantasy sport to life, they transformed the activity just like the real thing, just without the flying. The Independent spoke to the Harvard Quidditch Team to learn more about a rapidly growing non-traditional sport familiar to so many fans of the Harry Potter world.

A six-person game with one keeper, Quidditch incorporates elements of lacrosse, dodgeball, waterpolo, wrestling, and rugby. Three chasers and two beaters work to put the quaffle, a slightly deflated volleyball, through one of the other team's three goals, holding long PVC-pipe "brooms" between their legs all the while.

The keeper guards the goals, which players can shoot at from any side of the field. The chasers and keeper pass the quaffle back and forth and work together to score. The beaters aim to hit the other team's players with bludgers, which are small dodgeballs. Any player hit with a bludger must retreat from play and touch their net before "remounting" their broom and getting back into the game.

Harry Potter fans may be wondering how the snitch is incorporated. In the movies, the snitch is a winged, frustratingly small gold ball that can be caught to score massive points and immediately end a quidditch game. How exactly does real-life quidditch incorporate the snitch? A neutral third-party individual brightly dressed and without a broom, often a member of the refereeing squad, is released into the game after twenty minutes of play to be chased by a single designated seeker from each team.

The snitch may employ any strategies within the field of play to avoid being "caught," or having the yellow sock tucked into their waistband violently pulled out. Felix Bulwa '23, one of Harvard's quidditch team captains, described how snitches used to enjoy completely free reign. "They used to be able to run to another field, climb up a light pole, or something obnoxious like that," he said. This level of chaos and unpredictability had to be removed from the sport as it grew to a larger scale and began to seek more legitimacy.

Quidditch is a full-contact sport: anyone with the ball can be tackled. But it is also totally co-ed. The official rules emphasize acceptance of gender identities, and no more than four people of the same gender may take the field for a team at once. "Inclusivity is a big selling point of the sport," Bulwa said. This inclusivity makes quidditch a model for achieving both competitiveness and accessibility.

Bulwa explained that those organizing official quidditch leagues and

tournaments have been making an effort to separate the sport from the specific world of Harry Potter, even considering a name change. Anyone aware of J.K. Rowling's aggressive online attacks against the transgender community will realize how starkly Rowling's transphobia contrasts with the inclusivity of the quidditch community. While Rowling has taken to Twitter to attack trans-inclusive phrases like "people who menstruate" as being absurd distinctions and generally conflated sex and gender for the purpose of excluding trans women from her feminist rhetoric, the quidditch community has given all players the freedom to identify in whatever manner is true to them. Trans quidditch players are affirmed, and quidditch rules apply based on their personal identity. Bulwa explained that the quidditch community's efforts to separate from a Harry Potter-centric identity should not be reduced to a political

statement against Rowling:

"The news really wants people to think that that's the main reason. But talking to the people actually behind this cause, it's hard to gain legitimacy on a national stage with the name," Bulwa claims. "The people who run these tournaments are trying to sell merchandise, and the longer the quidditch name is with it, the longer Warner Brothers owns those rights, the longer J.K. Rowling owns those rights. And there are other reasons besides that."

Quidditch has already gained a foothold in the sporting community, with Harry Potter-loving athletes playing leagues of varying levels for years into adulthood. For Major League Quidditch alone, there are fifteen city-based teams that compete at the highest level across the United States and Canada. "You know how ultimate frisbee kind of evolved from 'oh, that's a nerdy sport' to more of an official thing? I think that quidditch is headed in that same direction," Bulwa said. Independent legitimacy is the logical next step.

The Harvard Quidditch Team has enjoyed impressive success and a strong community for the years since its inception in 2009 (fun fact: President Joe Biden's niece Alana was one of its found-

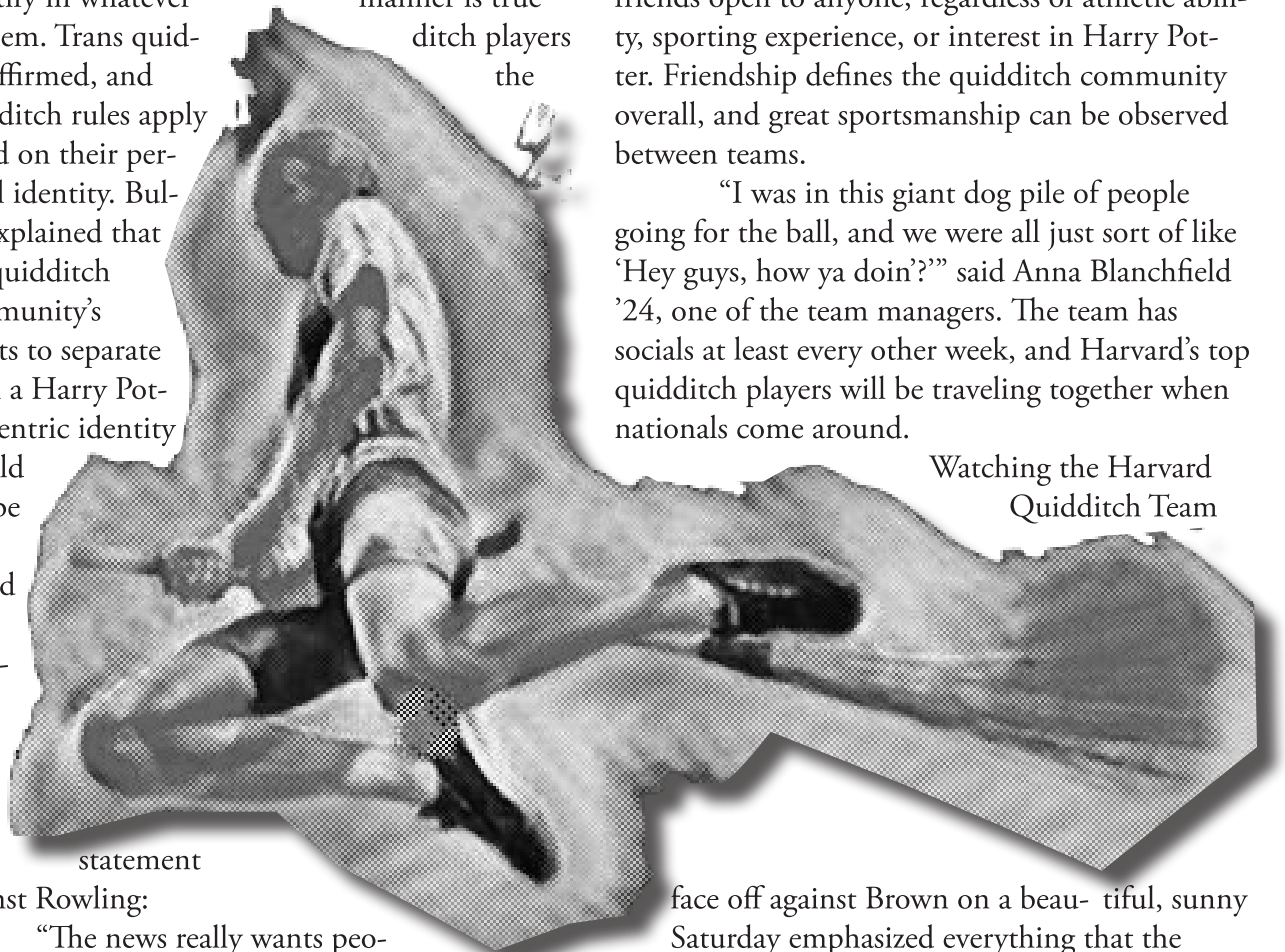
ers). Defending champions of both the Ivy League and the Massachusetts Quidditch Conferences, Harvard Quidditch will be headed to the national championship in a few months to compete at the highest collegiate level.

"It's really great because you have the opportunity to play at the highest levels of the sport... I think if we put everything together and limit our mistakes, then we can make it really, really far, which is really exciting," said Leo Fried '23, another team captain.

All of the team leaders emphasized that Harvard's quidditch team is a close group of friends open to anyone, regardless of athletic ability, sporting experience, or interest in Harry Potter. Friendship defines the quidditch community overall, and great sportsmanship can be observed between teams.

"I was in this giant dog pile of people going for the ball, and we were all just sort of like 'Hey guys, how ya doin?'" said Anna Blanchfield '24, one of the team managers. The team has socials at least every other week, and Harvard's top quidditch players will be traveling together when nationals come around.

Watching the Harvard Quidditch Team



face off against Brown on a beautiful, sunny Saturday emphasized everything that the sport has to offer. Athleticism was on full display. Fried surged after the snitch, Bulwa artfully shot the quaffle through a distant ring, and the whole team could be heard communicating and developing plays on the fly. Easy camaraderie could be observed between the officials and members of both teams. A passerby ambled over and inquired about what exactly was being played. He smiled and laughed happily when told that, yes, it was quidditch from Harry Potter. "I thought you could only see this in the movies!" he said. The moment captured exactly what makes Harvard great: young people enthusiastically doing what they love and doing it well.

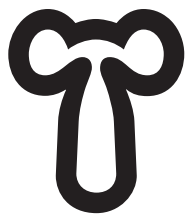
Harry Cotter '25 (harrycotter@college.harvard.edu) knows that his name does indeed sound a lot like Harry Potter.

Graphic by Arsh Dhillon '23

A FRESH St(ART)

The return of the Harvard Art Museums...

BY ARIEL BECK '25 AND ANDREW SPIELMANN '25



The Harvard Art Museums—comprising the Fogg, Busch-Reisinger and Sackler museums—are one of the prides of Harvard University, collected all under one glorious glass pyramidal roof at 32

Quincy Street. After a two year hiatus, the Harvard Art Museums are back in business. For its second exhibit since reopening, the museum featured Prints from the Brandywine Workshop and Archives:

Creative Communities, and White Shadows: Anneliese Hager and the Camera-less Photograph. The Independent was given a chance to experience the exhibit with the respective curators of the exhibits.

Prints From the Brandywine Workshop and Archives

The Brandywine Workshop and Archives is a Philadelphia-based institution that creates opportunities for underrepresented artists, who are unable to find representation in the mainstream marketplace and conventional museums. Curators Elizabeth Rudy, Carl A. Weyerhaeuser, Curator of Prints, and Sarah Kianovsky, Curator of the Collection for Division of Modern and Contemporary Art, walked us through the exhibit. The collection

provides a holistic representation of Brandywine's history, with works from the early 1970s, to today. The Brandywine exhibit adds a whole new meaning to collaborative art with student participation. Rather than providing a single framing, Harvard students contributed their own interpretations to the exhibits. Each artwork is accompanied by a written response from a participant with their individual interpretation of the work. While some focus on subject matter or technique, others concentrate on the historical perspective. "Their responses have been ever more rich and varied than we'd hoped for," says Kianovsky.

According to Rudy, with twenty six different label contributors, "it's twenty six different ways of looking at these prints, which was really our hope from the outset." "The hope is that as the visitors go through and read each of these labels, there's a different kind of engagement with the print medium through each interpretation," she adds.

The exhibition features a wide range of prints from individual prints to large multipart installations. Cut, by Odili Donald Odita presents a large colorful lithograph on white woven paper. One of their most collaborative works includes a

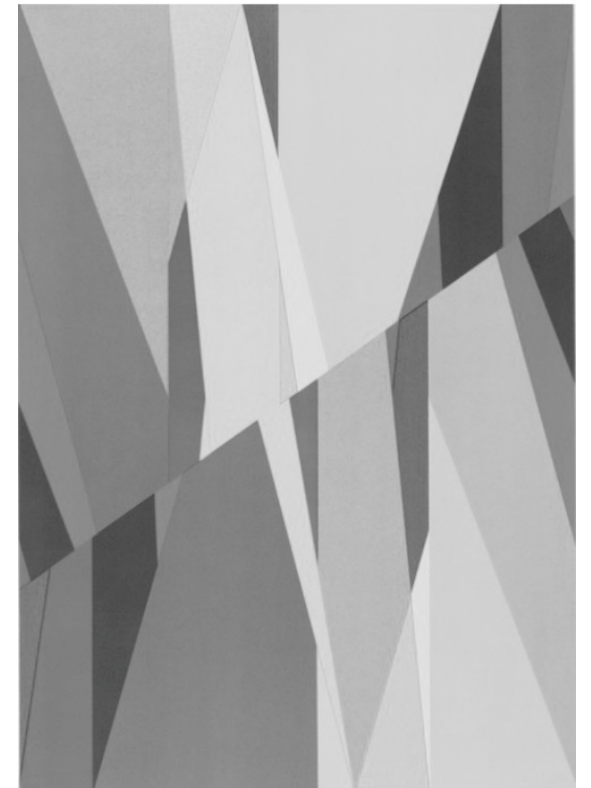
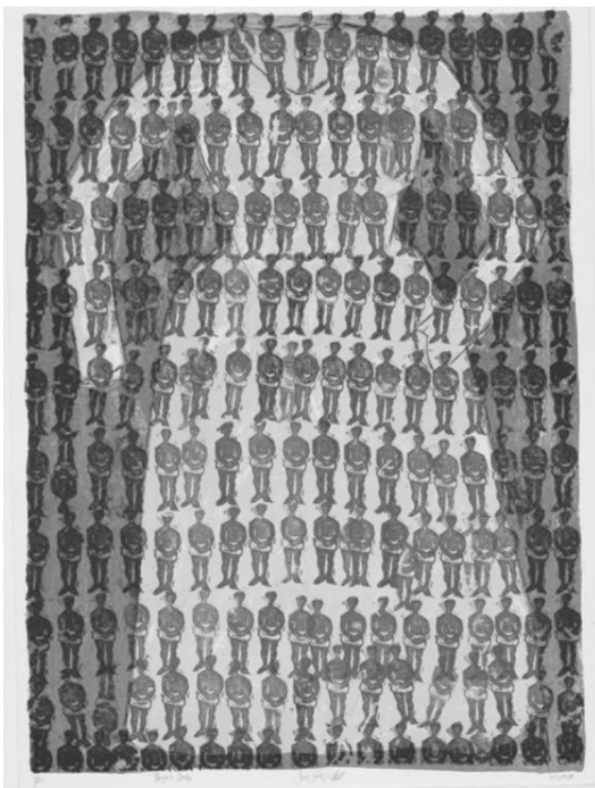
multipart installation of black and white drawings of people by Sedrick Huckaby. Each lithograph is marked with a corresponding name or number. This compilation of drawings was organized by Harvard students in a way they saw fit. Janet Taylor Prickett's Hagar's Dress, presents a dress as a visual metaphor for Black women as the bearers of people as it also represents the containers that held enslaved Africans. The title comes from the biblical story of Hagar, an enslaved woman from Egypt.

Women Bring the People by Clarissa Sligh presents a collage of a naked woman with "Women Bring the People who build. Nationals rise and fall" written repeatedly. In this piece, Sligh alludes to the unseen labor of bearing a child.

White Shadows: Anneliese Hager and the Camera-less Photograph

In the next room we were transported back to a quite different world. What at first appeared to be black-and-white photographs were far too abstract upon further investigation, yet with distinct photographic elements: photograms.

This second exhibit explores the work of Anneliese Hager, an artist who primarily made pho-



tograms from the 1930s to the 1960s in Germany. Facing both Nazi censure and the dominance of male artists and painters early in her career, she was marginalized, understudied, and essentially written out of art history. Nevertheless, she remained a remarkably active artist, producing an impressive array of works, all of which the Harvard Art Museums recently acquired, and which were presented to us by Lynette Roth, the Daimler Curator of the Busch-Reisinger Museum.

The exhibit starts with a video explaining what a photogram actually is: a photograph made by placing objects over a light-sensitive surface and then exposing it to light. The result is the exposed areas become darkest, while the covered areas remain white, hence the term "White Shadows," which was coined by Hager for her book. Roth described how she saw this as a great metaphor for "thinking about taking that which has actually been obscured and literally showing how bright it is," which in this case the museum is doing by placing "the spotlight on artists who we haven't paid atten-

tion to in the history of art."

Hager embraced this medium, despite receiving such little recognition. She could not do much exhibiting during Nazi rule, and following that, all of her early work was destroyed in the bombing of Dresden in 1945. When looking at these photograms, one primarily thinks of three men: Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Christian Schad, and Man Ray. While Hager was influenced by these artists, she was experimental in her own right; a highlight of the exhibit was an untitled portrait, which presented an innovative combination of a photogram and a photograph. When looking through her work, one also notices how she takes so much inspiration from the natural world.

Hager was included in an exhibition at Harvard in 2018, but had not been shown anywhere since 1988. This is a unique opportunity to take another look at art which has been ignored, partly, in Roth's words, due to the view that when "men made photograms they were considered to be artworks and when women made them they were considered

to be amateur works or fun pastimes." The exhibit also celebrates work by other relatively unknown female artists, thus truly flipping the script as Roth intended.

The combination of these two unique exhibits celebrates masterpieces by once-neglected artists. They are on display until July 31st.

Ariel Beck '25 (arielbeck@college.harvard.edu) and Andrew Spielmann '25 (andrewspielmann@college.harvard.edu) wish they were half as talented as these artists.

Don't Believe the News

*What's wrong with the news media,
and how can we fix it?*

BY MARY CIPPERMAN '25

D

o you trust the news?

In an era of post-truth politics and partisan polarization, only 7% of American adults say they have “a great deal” of confidence in news-

papers, television, and radio news reporting. Trust in the media reached record lows in 2016. Americans consume more news than ever before, just in different forums and from different sources. Why is there distrust in the news and news institutions? And, most importantly, what can we do about it?

Harvard's 300th Anniversary University Professor and former Dean of Harvard Law School Martha Minow, MEd '76, thinks the problem can be amended within constitutional parameters. Her new book, *Saving the News*, offers remedies for the news crisis in America, and Minow shared her insights with the Harvard Kennedy School's Institute of Politics on March 2, 2022. “Informed and active citizens

the news industry,” said Minow. Not only has the Supreme Court controlled first amendment rights, but legislative and bureaucratic administrations have actively promoted news. The American government financed the first telegraph lines and gave media sharing discounted rates of exchange in the 1840s. It's far from unprecedented for the government to protect and promote fair media.

But how can this government mediation adapt to the modern era? Minow proposed legislation that protects consumers. She noted that terms of service agreements are rarely enforced, and suggested that the government requires news outlets to disclose their information sources. This legislation would “require the removal of fake accounts [and] actually require disclosure of where messages are coming from and transparency about choice architecture,” Minow said. In other words, users should better understand how algorithms use their choices to present and deliver new information.

gested. Under the proposed Journalism Competition and Preservation Act, news publishers could negotiate against tech giants for compensation for the use of their content. This change would allow Americans to “balance the media marketplace without government censorship,” Minow said.

Reworking the news media system has broad implications for society. Not only will it allow Americans to build trust in the news, but it will reform the political polarization in American society, Minow envisioned. Proper news reporting reduces echo chambers and political polarization. It allows individuals to develop a shared understanding of reality itself, and then to collectively protest, reconstruct, or preserve the institutions at play. “None of these proposals alone and even all of these together is going to reverse the situation in which we find ourselves,” Minow explained. Yet, in her view, implementing all of them together could make a difference: Each approach is constitutional,



are a crucial ingredient for political order that is controlled by the people,” Minow said during her lecture. “The press is in serious jeopardy.”

The very nature of news is transforming, and our institutional infrastructure has failed to keep up, Minow argued, citing her research on the news media. “The traditional media has shrunk,” she said. While three national networks once dominated the news media and promoted a unified understanding of the world, internet platforms are now insulated from liability compared to traditional cable news. Little regulation exists for journalistic misconduct, such as defamation and false information. Further, the revenue stream from most news sources has changed: online platforms rely on ad sales (read, page views) to garner funds, as opposed to public funds, as they did in the past. These changes should be viewed as violations of democratic values, Minow said: “the first amendment ensures access to information, not just freedom of speech.” She asked the audience, “How can we have democracy when news and information is not shared and not reliable?”

The government has always dictated the dissemination and creation of news, for better or for worse. “Government action and support of civic organizations is necessary to overcome the demise of

She also recommended that the government support publicly funded news, which has been historically identified as particularly trustworthy and accurate. Support for media education, an “important tool for cultivating critical reading and understanding of news,” can help. As Steven Waldman, chair of the Rebuild Local News Coalition and co-founder and president of Report For America, noted during a panel after Minow's lecture, “the house is on fire.” According to his research, local news infrastructure is collapsing. Not only has the number of reporters declined drastically, but the coverage density of local issues has decreased over the past ten years. Federal investment in these local news branches could reduce local government corruption and bolster public belief in the media as a reliable source of information.

Finally, Minow suggested that the U.S. should follow the lead of Australia and the European Union to rework news revenue frameworks. Mandating that companies like Google and Facebook pay for news written by others would redistribute the revenue stream that has shaped the media landscape over the past two decades. “We can draw lessons from the music industry, and how the digital disruption that seemed to devastate the music industry righted itself by charging a reasonable fee,” Minow sug-

“none of them intrude on freedom of speech,” and “all build on steps that have been taken in the past.”

Minow closed her talk with a reminder that the American constitution is an experiment. “Frankly, the success of this experiment depends on people ... engaging in these issues and breathing new life and energy into the constitution and its aspirations for liberty, equality, and self-governance.”

Mary Cipperman '25 (mcipperman@college.harvard.edu) is comping the Independent.

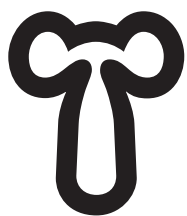
Graphic by Arsh Dhillon '23

A ONE-WOMAN SHOW WITH

A CAST OF FOURTEEN

52! A Statistics Cabaret succeeds in being a highly enjoyable evening of music, even as it fails to be anything more

BY MICHAEL KIELSTRA '22



The closing number of 52! A Statistics Cabaret concludes an hour of music charting the life story of statistics-lover Lotus.

The musical follows Lotus from conception to the age of 52, including a job in quantitative trading, a PhD, and one insane night in Vegas along the way. A different actor portrays Lotus at every stage of their life, and all five gather to end the show with Maroon 5's song "Memories":

*Here's to the ones that we got
Cheers to the wish you were here,
but you're not*

*Cause the drinks bring back
all the memories
Of everything
we've been through*

This moment exemplifies everything that one might take away from the show. First, there is the soundtrack: a series of 21st Century pop songs, each more of a banger than the last, and each expertly sung to the accompaniment of keyboard, bass, and drums. Taylor Swift is there; Olivia Rodrigo is there; Avril Lavigne is there.

Each song is performed with accuracy to the original that makes them instantly recognizable, but the performers sing with a flair and passion that reveals they truly enjoy their work. The result feels, more than anything, genuine. "Expectations" by Lauren Jauregui lives up to its potential as a heart-wrenching lament, while "Waking Up in Vegas" leaves behind the cutesy tendencies of its original singer Katy Perry to become an authentic yet lighthearted argument. The show is a pleasure to listen to, leaving one wishing that copyright laws were relaxed enough that one could purchase a cast album.

The visual experience is understated but effective. 52! takes place in the Loeb Ex, a black-box theater in the Loeb Drama Center, re-imagined as a cabaret venue. The audience is randomly put into small groups and seated at

one of several small tables, each with a classic red tablecloth and an intricate origami lotus centerpiece. There is next to no dancing, and most of the performers sing directly to the audience.

What's most interesting is the decision to convey Lotus's aging by having different singers take over from each other in the middle of the relevant songs. Furthermore, none of these actors look anything like each other. In a more technically intricate medium, this might have been a problem, but here it serves only to give each audience member a greater opportunity to identify with Lotus.

If that was 52!'s only goal, then the "Memories" scene, the only time all five Lotuses are on stage at once, would be the perfect finale. Unfortunately,

though, that same scene also exemplifies the worst of the show. The focus on Lotus means that their friends Alice, Bob, and Carl, their parents Martin and Gale, and even geometric rapper Triggy Triggs do not have a place in the final number. "The ones that we got" turn out to be Lotus and Lotus alone. In fact, this is not the first time we are left wondering what everyone besides Lotus is doing. Much of the story of 52! centers around Lotus facing and overcoming various forms of discrimination, from the "Alge-bros" in high school to their colleagues in finance who refuse to respect their pronouns. However, we never see any of these people in action, only hearing about them in the vaguest terms from two emcees responsible for narrating the story

that connects each number to the next. I don't doubt that any audience member can imagine what Lotus must have been feeling. However, since we are only told, not shown, what they experience, their eventual discovery of inner strength seems trite and unearned while the condemnation of the bad guys falls flat.

52! is clearly attempting to tackle big questions head-on. The emcees lay into the finance bros with an energy unequaled in any other part of the show. Co-director and co-writer Cas Li writes program notes that ask "Is capitalism truly the solution for sexism? Yet, is there really any other way to elevate oneself in a capitalistic society?" Lotus supposedly suffered in an underperforming K-12 education system, which the emcees blame on "(cough) Common Core (cough)."

Yet, none of these issues are discussed for more than a few seconds. The show offers no solutions beyond #girlbossing (a narrative which Li felt, according to the program, "obligated to reproduce") and the complex and devastating effects of exclusionary culture are reduced to Lotus singing a sad song instead of a happy one. Digging into the toxic relationships at the core of Lotus's sufferings would require making space for characters other than Lotus, something the show is unwilling to do.

In the end, we are left with exactly what we were promised: a statistics cabaret. 52! is a fantastic evening of listening to good music performed by great musicians. If that were all it was trying to be, it would have been enough. Instead, 52! tries, admirably in theory, to tell a more meaningful story of overcoming hatred and loving oneself. That this story ultimately failed to land should not detract from the impressive performance of the cast and crew.

Michael Kielstra '22 (pmkielstra@college.harvard.edu) is more of a pure math person anyway.

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Love in Its Fullest

A year on from "Loving Yourself When No One Else is Around"

BY ACHELE AGADA '23

Last Valentine's Day, I started to read *All About Love* by Gloria Jean Watkins better known as 'bell hooks'. My first response was to write the Indy article "Loving Yourself When No One Else is Around" and advocate for "remembering love in a time of social isolation, self-care, and wellness days." I didn't realise that this book would become my manifesto, spurring a year-long (and continual) process of radically rethinking what love means to me. In this year, I have consumed as much material as I can in the field of love, reading books such as *Attached* by Amir Levine and Rachel S. F. Heller, *Love in Color* by Bolu Babalola, and Patricia Collins' *Black Feminist Thought*. By intentionally immersing myself in love discourse, I have gained a lot of clarity on love as it relates to me, a Black woman at Harvard.

As a child, I internalised the norms of dominant society, and as a result, I didn't love myself or believe I was capable of being loved. Instead, I chose to lie to myself and contort my reality to fit the antagonistic ideologies of whatever environment I found myself in. To gain approval from others, I attempted to mould myself into an object of desire, constantly warping my identity to fit the role of what I believed to be a loveable friend, a loveable sister, a loveable daughter, and a loveable partner. My efforts were destined to fail as these competing identities often conflicted with each other, and I could never perfectly conform to the mythical figure that was guaranteed to access love from all. I didn't realise it at the time, but in order to foster the intimacy and genuine connection I craved, I needed to build relationships on foundations of reality and trust, in the words of hooks "to know love we have to tell the truth to ourselves and to others". As a young Black immigrant woman growing up in Northern England, and now living and studying at the predominately white elite institution that is Harvard College, this meant engaging in radical self-acceptance and embracing my insecurities and fears of not being desirable. I had to trust that people would love me even if I did not participate in the politics of respectability which I had tolerated in the hopes of asserting my belonging amongst those who could be loved. I had to trust I would be loved despite the preconstructed ideologies of my Black femininity which unfairly deemed me masculine, ugly, and undesirable. I needed to live consciously and, to use hooks again, "engage in critical reflection about the world we live in" as a form of resistance in order to affirm my being.

On this journey of self-acceptance, the truth about love has slowly been disseminated to me. I no longer conflate appeasement or conformity with love. Instead I strongly assert myself and my desire for love just as hooks defines it:

"The will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth. Love is as love does. Love is an act of will—namely, both an intention and an action. Will also implies choice. We do not have to love. We choose to love."

Last semester I sat and chatted with a close friend about our various experiences attempting to act out love. We discussed our identities as Black female undergraduate students at Harvard, and how neither of us fit into the desirability politics of the spaces we have existed in our whole lives. We spoke all night about the dire state of our romantic lives and the abuse or mistreatment we had endured in our endeavours to love and be loved in return. By the end of the conversation we were in agreement: we both knew we desired, were deserving, and wanted to experience romantic love but it so far had evaded us. I am all too aware that our experience is not in any way unique. Stories of violence, neglect, and

Love is as love does.

Love is an act of will—rarely, both an intention and an action. Will also implies

choice. We do not have to love. We choose to love. We do not have to love. We choose to love."

general disregard of Black women on Harvard's campus are too prevalent and impossible to forget. The oppressive 'cult of true womanhood' as depicted by Barbara Welter excludes Black women like my friend and I. Our being is shrouded by racist, classist, and sexist stereotypes which stigmatise the act of loving a Black woman. Particularly when it comes to romantic love, at Harvard Black women are often not considered. We are good friends, good classmates, good teammates but not often weighed as potentially good partners. If you are queer, fat, dark, disabled, or your identity as a Black woman happens to be compounded with any other marginalising identity, you may find that love is especially scarce.

At times I feel particularly downhearted as I reconcile with the fact that I still have not experienced romantic connection here. I can't help but mourn the many loves that never were and grieve from the constant rejections I feel I have been bombarded with. It is extremely difficult in the face of compounding failures to not become highly self-critical, to not compare myself to my peers who cannot relate to my string of unrequited loves. I am cognisant of the "racially and sexually polarising aesthetic hierarchies" (Morgan, 2006) which

limit my opportunities. I am somewhat comforted by the loving friendships I contribute to, and the strides in self-acceptance I have made.

Still it is hard to keep believing in the purity of love when it becomes apparent one's personal attributes may be immovable boundaries in forming a loving connection. Yet like hooks, I dream of "finding a lover who would give me the gift of being loved as I am" (hooks, 2000). I know that it simply wouldn't be love if I was not consciously respected in my entirety. I know I should be patient till I find this person, but it is disheartening that I have spent my whole young adult life thus far searching for romance, hoping to be appreciated, wanting to be desired and have almost wholly been unsuccessful. This is extremely painful to admit. My heart is being broken not by someone I once loved

"The will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth.

who has ceased to love me in return. Instead I see the cracks forming in my longterm adoration of love itself. To believe in love as a Black woman is to continuously hope, and to experience love is freedom. But what happens when choosing love is a never ending quest?

What happens to the Black woman who is exhausted from believing they deserve love to its fullest but not receiving it?

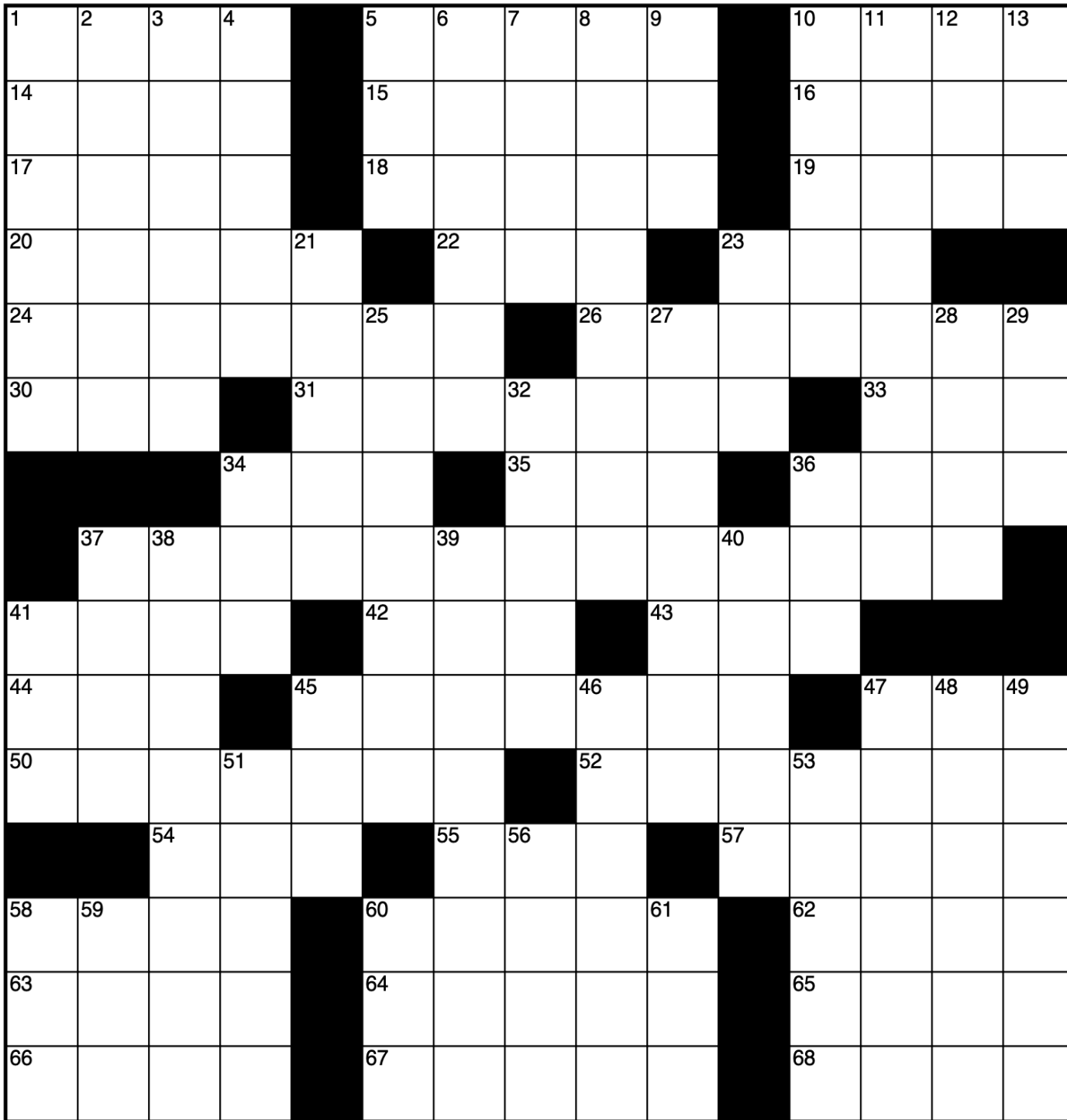
It is counterproductive to become wary of loving - by definition love will never hurt us, but loving is a dangerous endeavour. As a Black woman in a space that doesn't always value me, every outward attempt at love makes me especially vulnerable to physical and emotional subjugation. I remain a relentless lover of love, quick to open up and expose my truth in exchange for deep emotional connection. Time and time again I have put my heart on the line only to be rejected. In every dismissal I have to remind myself not to let the pain of lovelessness harden my heart. I refuse to put up arbitrary boundaries and instead commit to remaining vulnerable - vulnerable to pain but also vulnerable to love. Rather than becoming jaded by scars of love amiss I am choosing to trust the transformative power of love, in every and all of its wonderful configurations. True love exists and will occur in its own time as a witness of my existence. I anticipate it eagerly and in the meantime continue my practice of 'loving [myself] when no one is around'. I have to trust I will be empowered to leave my solitary vocation when someone sees who I am and who I can be, and chooses to love and be loved by me.

Achele Agada '23 (@agada.college.harvard.edu) is accepting confessions of love.

Read:
'All About Love: New Visions' by bell hooks
'GETTING OFF OF BLACK WOMEN'S BACKS: Love Her or Leave Her Alone' by Marcyliena Morgan and Dionne Bennett
'Witness and Repair' by Jesmyn Ward
Listen to:
'Heaux Tales, Mo' Tales: The Deluxe' by Jazmine Sullivan

Clear a Surface

PETER LASKIN '23



- 23 Title for Dalloway or Doubtfire
- 25 Pippi Longstocking feature
- 27 In a tight spot
- 28 Upcoming Jordan Peele flick
- 29 Den fixtures
- 32 Cold open?
- 34 Hairstyle for a ballerina
- 36 Pep
- 37 Nada
- 38 Fittings on the sides of shells
- 39 Double's partner
- 40 How some like their eggs
- 41 City for 44-Across
- 45 Digital memory units
- 46 Animals with a propensity for eating bones
- 47 Guns that don't require a license
- 48 Appalled
- 49 First day of class recitations
- 51 Beat unexpectedly
- 53 They're red at weddings
- 56 Put on ____
- 58 650, in Rome
- 59 French-sounding infraction

ACROSS

- 1 Neighborhood orgs.
- 5 Hagaromo substance
- 10 Column with a slant?
- 14 ____ the Red, Norse explorer
- 15 Marisa of "Spiderman: No Way Home"
- 16 "Que ____, ____..."
- 17 Coating on a cold morning
- 18 Bezos' assistant
- 19 *One cheating at blackjack
- 20 *More favorable price, for example
- 22 Brain scanning tech.
- 23 It's not PC
- 24 Atom with an unusual number of neutrons
- 26 *Opposing stream
- 30 It goes with neither
- 31 Ones next to a king and queen
- 33 Cambodian Independence Day mo.
- 34 It's grand in France
- 35 Actress de Armas
- 36 Dwarf stars?

- 37 Retaliatory move... or what's happened to the answers to the starred clues
- 41 *Number-cruncher
- 42 "Conjunction Junction" word
- 43 Pirate's quaff
- 44 Bruins great whose name rhymes with his number
- 45 *Place to prepare dinner, perhaps
- 47 Antioxidant drink brand
- 50 Like salt in water, or styrofoam in gasoline
- 52 Price tag symbol in Shibuya
- 54 Covert tail
- 55 Scot's dissent
- 57 Boat for a billionaire
- 58 Physicians, informally
- 60 Elsa's portrayer in "Frozen"
- 62 Raise, as a child, or raise up, as a horse
- 63 Gherkin, slangily
- 64 Assortment
- 65 ____ facto

- 66 "I've Got a Little ____" (song from "The Mikado")
- 67 Like a metaphorical sty
- 68 Defunct fliers

DOWN

- 1 Narc's target
- 2 "But in the case that it is..."
- 3 Draw a bead on
- 4 Sport involving drawing a bead
- 5 L operator
- 6 Moriarty's nemesis
- 7 The "A" of USA
- 8 Crossword constructors often have large ones
- 9 Soul proprietor?
- 10 Trash can-dwelling Muppet
- 11 Dove
- 12 Fumble the bag
- 13 Corny joke teller, maybe
- 21 Bird associated with springtime



WE BELONG
TO NO ONE
BUT
OURSELVES

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