

FEB. 29, 2024

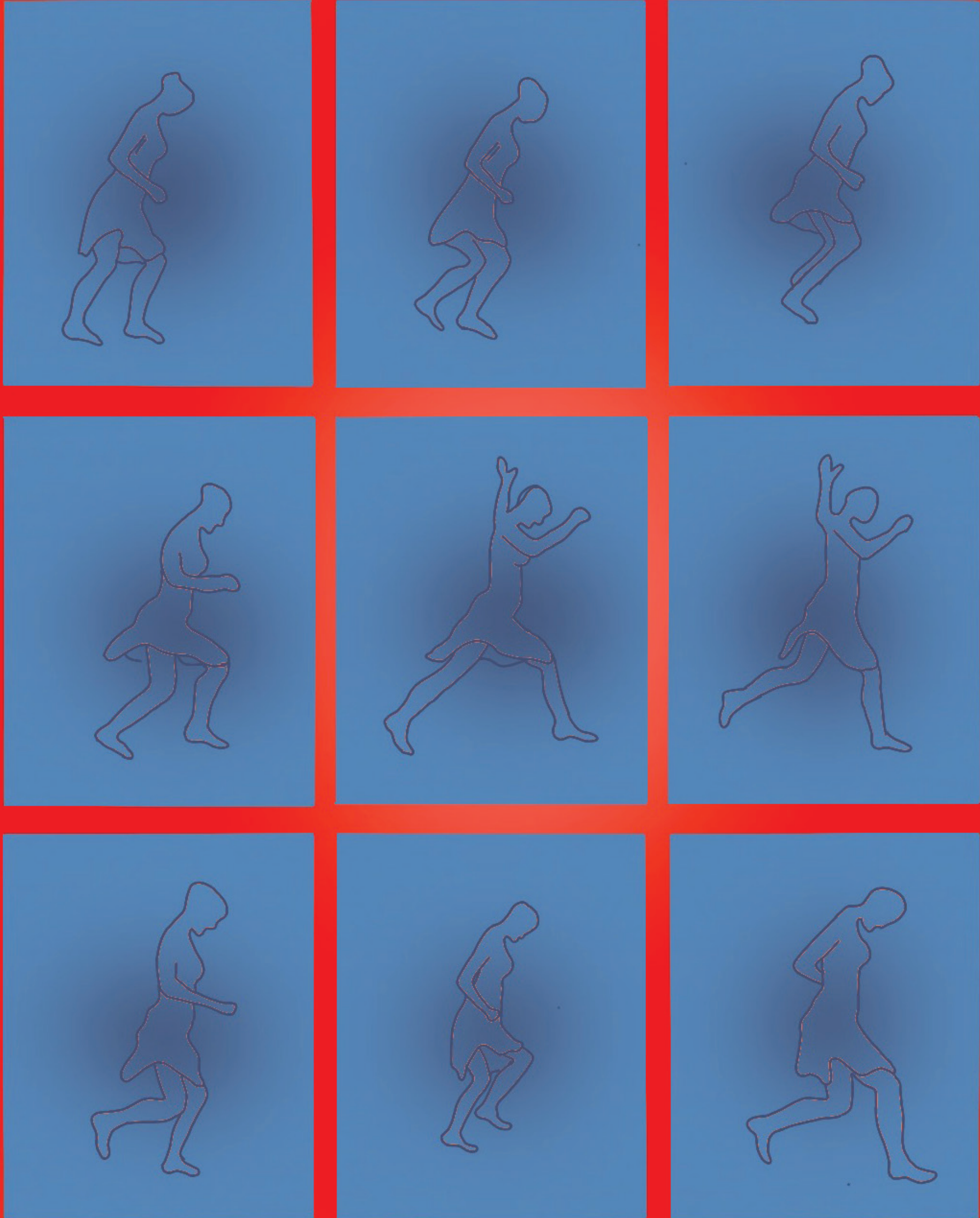
HARVARD

VOL LV ISSUE 17

# independent

THE STUDENT WEEKLY SINCE 1969

## THE LEAP DAY ISSUE



# MASTHEAD

February 29, 2024

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# NAKED DATA

Sungjoo Yoon '27 exposes anonymized Rice Purity Test scores to underscore risks of Big Data.

BY MIR ZAYID ALAM '25

Sungjoo Yoon '27 has been recently referred to as the “Datamatch hacker,” but he’d rather you call him “bernie marx,” the pseudonym under which he published his Feb. 25 website, styled “the data privacy project.” It describes security vulnerabilities in the nationwide college matchmaking app Datamatch, which caused an uproar amongst Sidechat contributors and campus alike. An advocate for data privacy and protections, Yoon published self-reported Rice Purity Test scores of the Harvard freshman class, alongside their first and last initials to preserve anonymity in what he called an “ethical awareness project.”

Replete with 16 citations and zero capital letters, Yoon’s website also includes an open letter urging other Harvard students to be wary of their data: “we live in an era of big data. this is not something to be inherently afraid of, and it can actually be really cool. for example, keeping a gcal of ur exam dates or the birthdays of ur closest friends from home—that’s amazing. but the reality is that we live in a society...where dubiously-ethical governments and less-than-ethical corporations are looking to capitalize on this useful tool.”

Amid online allegations of aspirational political theatrics, comparisons to Mark Zuckerberg (who lived in Yoon’s current dorm room), and praise for whistleblowing, Yoon sought to set the record straight in an interview with the *Independent*.

Yoon’s suspicion of data mismanagement and manipulation arose during the beginning of the school year when he was exposed to a deluge of advertisements for Claim, a Sequoia-backed

start-up that socially gamifies shopping for Gen Z with vouchers and cash back. “They’re obviously not just giving you free money. There is a catch to all of this. There is no such thing as a free lunch... Why would people sign up for this stuff?” Yoon went on: “People are really putting their data anywhere. And these are the future leaders of the world.”

His perspective was also transformed by liberal arts—specifically, taking Harvard Kennedy School and Government Department Professor Latanya Sweeney’s class “Technology and the Public Interest: From Democracy to Technocracy and Back” and reading *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* by Shoshana Zuboff last semester. He described developing a deep fear of a future where corporations know everything about you—genetics, personal information, consumption patterns, and more—and exploit that knowledge to your detriment. “It wakes you up when you read that book about the potential for that [data] being weaponized against marginalized minority identities in a way that is incredibly

pernicious.”

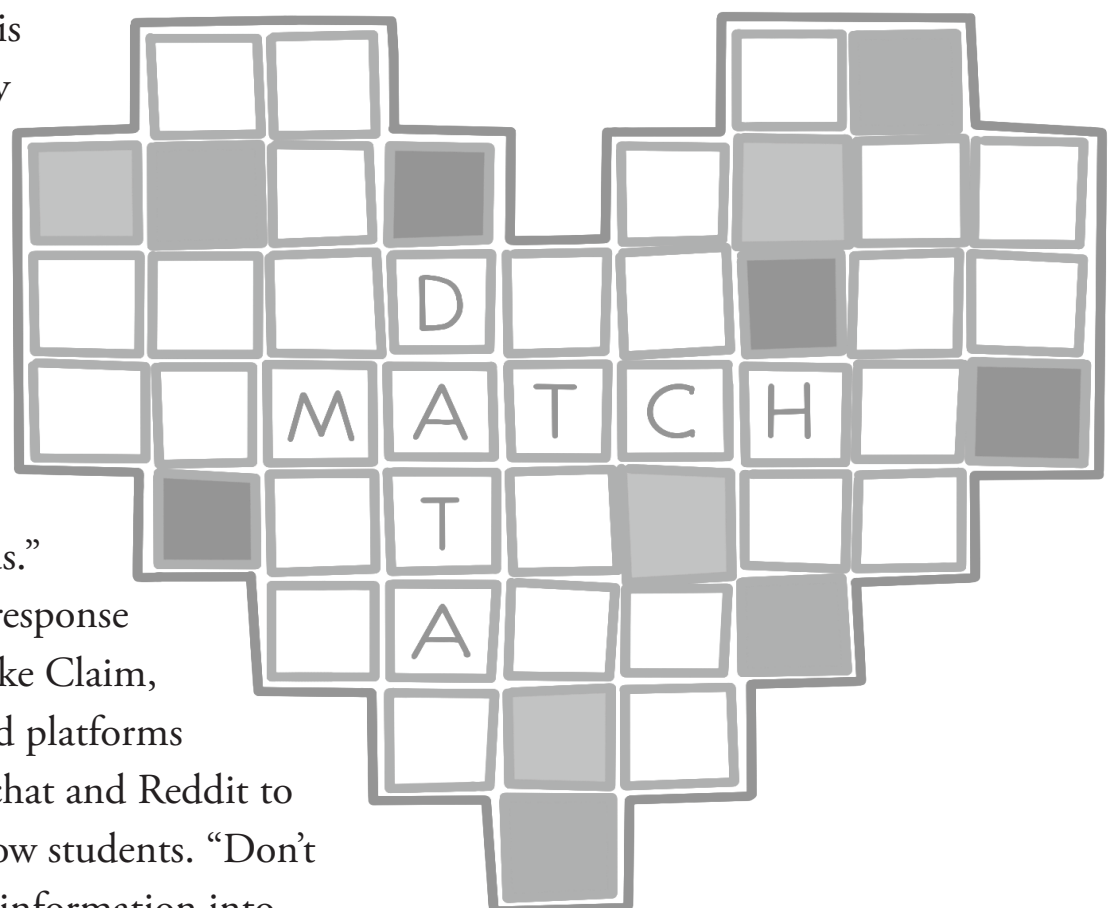
In response to apps like Claim, Yoon used platforms like Sidechat and Reddit to warn fellow students. “Don’t put your information into

random websites that reserve the right to sell your data in their privacy policies.” He elects to search the internet with DuckDuckGo and Firefox instead of Google Chrome.

Yoon was tipped off about insecurities in Datamatch by anonymous members of Harvard’s “computing community” around a week ago. He workshopped his data privacy crusade with the counsel of his technologically “prodigious” 14-year-old brother. “He was my sounding board for the idea. He also played a really large part in processing the data in a way that was not visible to anyone else, was ethical, de-identified, and anonymized.”

Yoon, who describes himself as a “hobby coder,” and his brother were able to retrieve JSON files with people’s names, gender identities, Zodiac signs, Myers-Briggs Personality types, and of course, Rice Purity Test scores. Moreover, he mentioned that the Datamatch database was “completely vulnerable to SQL injections, which means that passwords and other very, very private data were available.”

GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26



Yoon shared that this was not the first time Datamatch left user data bare. “What people don’t realize is that this is not Datamatch’s first insecurity. Datamatch, a couple of years ago, had every user’s personal data inside their publicly available GitHub. It really never received any attention. I don’t even think *The Crimson* covered it. Because once you alert the people at the top, they go on hiding campaigns, right?” He is referencing an incident mentioned in Datamatch’s privacy policy, in which the platform was informed that in 2019 and 2020 their website had a potential security vulnerability. Yoon commented, “They admit to having had this exact flaw for years, but still didn’t fully change their architecture and built irresponsibly on top of it. There’s a reason the security community doesn’t tell companies directly and instead whistleblows through anonymized data demonstrations—so that it can’t just be glossed over like they clearly did for years.”

But Yoon stated he did not interrogate every data type accessible, such as passwords, places of residence, or preferences for the Crush Roulette feature, where users had the option to improve their odds of matching with a crush by submitting their name. Yoon expressed that he did not even know what the Crush Roulette data meant when he found the data vulnerability—he did not fill out a profile on the principle of minimizing personal data dissemination. “That was something we didn’t investigate. I didn’t know what that was. I’m not a user. I had no idea what that was until very recently.”

Once he had assembled his

findings, Yoon tried to flag the vulnerabilities to two younger members of Datamatch. “I did attempt to reach out to a couple of people that I know at Datamatch. None of them responded.” He quickly clarified: “They were dismissive.” Thereafter, Yoon assumed the name “bernie marx,” referring to Bernard Marx from Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, and published his website.

Datamatch responded to the data privacy project with an email to its users on Feb. 27, which stated: “We were informed about the vulnerability at 8:48 p.m. EST on February 25, 2024 and locked access to the APIs corresponding to these attributes by 9:30 p.m. EST. An hour later, we deleted all Rice Purity, MBTI, and

Zodiac sign information to guarantee that others could not exploit it using the same method the report detailed. As of 3:15 a.m. EST on February 26, 2024, the website closed and all remaining APIs were disabled.”

But, the Datamatch team also made a request: “Moving forward, we ask that if you identify a security flaw, please contact us through the above channels so that we may fix the issue first.”

The ripples got back to Yoon quickly. “[I felt] overwhelmed. My intention was not to go public about who I was, that was the result of *The Harvard Crimson* pressure.” The Sidechat discourse surrounding Yoon exploded after *The Crimson* surfaced his identity, with many students calling his act a political stunt. His response? “It’s no secret that I am interested in politics. At

the same time, I don’t understand how this would be connected to my political future. Once again, I was trying to keep this anonymous.”

Near the end of the interview, Yoon expressed disappointment. “I just thought I’d have a little more time for the point to sink in, and then for my identity to be the afterthought, but instead the order got flipped by *The Crimson*.”

“Yeah, I think the saddest part of this all is that the message got lost within the zeitgeist. My persona kind of became a cultural phenomenon. A lot of the message got diluted through that.” He lamented

Sidechat “talking about the discourse and talking about the person, but not talking about the reason that the person or the discourse started in the first place.” Despite these emotions, Yoon says he has no regrets.

“If I could figure out a way to drive the point home without having myself involved whatsoever, I would do it again,” Yoon said. “Once the attention economy runs dry in 48 hours, no one on Sidechat’s gonna be talking about this. What does need to last hopefully is that these brilliant people who go to Harvard who ultimately will become very successful product managers or United States senators remember that this is an issue that people need to care about.”

**MIR ZAYID ALAM '25  
(MIRZAYIDALAM@COLLEGE.  
HARVARD.EDU) HAD A GREAT  
VALENTINE'S DAY.**

**GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26**





# IN THE NEWS: ANTISEMITIC CARTOON, DEGREE DEVALUATION

Latest campus controversies lead to legal backlash.

BY JONAH KARAFIOL '26

On the evening of Feb. 20, Harvard University Interim President Alan M. Garber '76 released a statement “unequivocally condemning the posting and sharing” of an anti-semitic cartoon by the Palestine Solidarity Committee and African American Resistance Organization.

The cartoon, which was part of a newsletter circulated during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, depicts nooses wrapped around the necks of two men who are held by a hand imprinted with the Star of David with a dollar sign in the center. The cartoon is captioned “Third World Liberation Movement.” The student groups released a joint statement on Feb. 20 apologizing for sharing the cartoon.

“The inclusion of the offensive caricature was an unprompted, painful error—a combination of ignorance and inadequate oversight,” the statement read. “It never should have been published to begin with. We wholeheartedly apologize for the immense harm we caused.”

The incident occurred just over a month after six Harvard students sued the University, calling it “a bastion of rampant anti-Jewish hatred and harassment.” The lawsuit was filed by two law firms, one of which, Kasowitz Benson Torres, filed similar lawsuits against New York University in November and the University of Pennsylvania in December.

Now, 10 Harvard graduates have filed a federal lawsuit against the University for degree devaluation. The lawsuit alleges that the value of a Harvard degree is determined by the present reputation of the University, rather than the graduation year of the job

applicant.

“The value of a Harvard degree has been significantly diminished, rendering it functionally damaged in the professional and academic spheres,” the lawsuit states.

Employers have already expressed hesitancy to hire out of Harvard. This past December, in the wake of Former President Claudine Gay’s heavily scrutinized congressional testimony, plaintiff law firm Edelson PC informed Harvard Law School that they would no longer participate in campus recruiting at Harvard. In their letter to HLS, Edelson said they had previously considered HLS, as well as Yale and Stanford, as primary institutions for recruiting.

“It must be unequivocally clear that calls for the genocide of any group—be it on the basis of religion, race, gender, disability, or sexual orientation—are indefensible and contrary to the values we uphold,” Edelson said in a letter to Jesse Ohrenberger, Director of Recruitment and Operations at HLS.

“As lawyers, we know that words can be powerful. Dr. Gay was in a position to help lead the country. She did the very opposite.”

The group of graduates suing for degree devaluation alleges that Harvard has refused to enforce its policies intended to protect students from hate speech on campus.

“While the campus devolved over the years from one of tolerance to its present state, Harvard has done nothing to address and halt this egregiousness and stop the rampant antisemitism on campus and in classrooms,” the lawsuit reads. “Harvard, instead, has permitted, even sanctioned,

pro-Hamas rallies at which antisemitic slogans were shouted and refused to enforce its policies to protect Jewish students.”

The lawsuit demands that Harvard “rehabilitate the value of a Harvard degree by taking remedial measures” including the termination of deans, administrators, professors, and other employees who have been complicit in antisemitism on Harvard’s campus, as well as the suspension or expulsion of students involved in hate speech and other acts of antisemitism.

“Plaintiffs also seek restitution for the financial costs associated with having attended Harvard and compensatory damages for the reputational damage to and thus reduced value of their Harvard degrees,” the lawsuit states. During the 2024-2025 academic year, the total cost of attending Harvard while living in its dorms was \$79,450. The University has not publicly responded to the lawsuit.

In the midst of an ever-tense campus climate, Harvard students have found themselves in uncharted territory. Harvard students have long been notorious for flaunting their alma mater at any opportunity, even prompting Dean of Harvard College Rakesh Khurana to offer the advice in an interview with *The Crimson*: “Don’t gratuitously drop the H-Bomb.” Now, they are more hesitant, say the 10 graduates.

“Plaintiffs are in a situation they never imagined: they are ashamed to say they went to Harvard.”

**JONAH KARAFIOL '26  
(JONAHKARAFIOL@COLLEGE.  
HARVARD.EDU) IS THE NEWS  
EDITOR OF THE *INDEPENDENT*.**

# MY CLASSROOM, MY RULES?

Harvard University leadership and professors have been forced to update their protesting and dissent policies after campus controversy.

BY LAYLA CHAARAOU '26 AND VINCENT HONRUBIA '27

*Note: Students interviewed for this article were offered anonymity for privacy protection.*

*They are referred to by the pseudonyms of Ryan, Alex, Charlie, and Avery.*

Harvard has a history of using campus protesting as a means of public expression. Ranging from demonstrations to die-ins, student activists have used protesting to express grievances or demand action for decades. While Harvard College's student handbook maintains that the "University must affirm, assure and protect the rights of its members to organize and join political associations, convene and conduct public meetings, publicly demonstrate and picket in orderly fashion, advocate, and publicize opinion by print, sign, and voice," unforeseen circumstances have left the University to adjust its policies in regards to protesting and dissent on the fly.

The substantial increase in in-class protests over the past year has spurred recent condemnation from Harvard leadership. More than 100 students walked out of Professor John Comaroff's first class last spring due to the professor's continued tenure despite his violation of the University's sexual harassment policies. On Oct. 19, a general strike was organized by the Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC), where students were asked to walk out of class and "stand in solidarity with Palestinians facing genocide." A pro-Palestinian "Week of Action" led by the African and African American Resistance Organization (AFRO) this past December led to four students being sent to the Administrative Board for their involvement in organizing in-class chants and walk-outs.

In response, the University hardened its stance on campus protesting. A University-wide statement, issued by Interim President Alan M. Garber '76 and University leadership, on University Rights and Responsibilities on Jan. 19 clarified that "unless a particular School makes an explicit exception, demonstrations and protests are ordinarily not permitted in classrooms and other spaces of instruction; libraries or other spaces designated for study, quiet reflection, and small group discussion." This is in line with an additional section of the handbook which explains that "interference with members of the University in performance of their normal duties and activities must be regarded as unacceptable obstruction of the essential processes of the University." Ultimately, in-class disruptions at Harvard are prohibited.

Current guidelines regarding who has the power to punish students participating in classroom disruptions and if professors themselves can relay their own consequences are unclear. Jonathan Palumbo, a Harvard College communications team spokesperson, declined to comment on behalf of the Administrative Board on their internal process. Though he referenced the student handbook and the Administrative Board's website for publicly available policies, there is no apparent verdict on professor involvement and official consequences.

Though some professors have opted to remain silent on their thoughts on in-class protesting, others have been more vocal with their sentiments. In one example, on the first day of Psychology 1: Introduction to Psychological Science, the introductory course requirement for the Psychology department, Professor Jason Mitchell expressed his opinions on classroom disruption to his students. While he encouraged them "to express their political opinions," he asked that they not "disrupt lecture to do so," he explained in an email interview with the *Independent*. "The most important quality of any relationship—including that between instructor and student—is mutual respect, so I anticipate that students will honor that request."

Students in the class had mixed reactions to their professor's sentiments. "I just remember thinking it was a bit off-putting, especially since this was a new professor [and this was] his first impression on his whole class," expressed Ryan. "There was no initiative of any controversy, [and] the idea of a protest happening wasn't really in the picture. I guess I understand why he would just mention that if it was that important to him, but I remember feeling a bit put off-guard because he was inserting some political thing that I feel like teachers don't really get into unless it's relevant to the class discussion, especially on the first day."

Alex was similarly taken aback and felt that the environment of the class changed in response to Professor Mitchell's comments. "It's just something weird to hear professors [say]. I feel like normally [they] don't really involve themselves in that." Yet, Alex expressed that they were not surprised by Mitchell's comments, noting how Harvard's campus has become increasingly tense and divided this past year. "[The policy] is definitely something unfamiliar for professors to talk about. But I think it's also been a really weird year here, and it's not unnecessary to talk about."

Though Professor Mitchell clarified to the *Independent* that he has no official disruption policy and that his time spent on the subject was short, it still stood out to those who were paying attention. "[I felt it was] interesting, especially given the political climate at this school right now. I think there's a lot of contention going on between a lot of different people on a lot of different issues. He didn't endorse any particular side on any issue or talk about any specific issue at all, but I

think it was kind of all-encompassing."

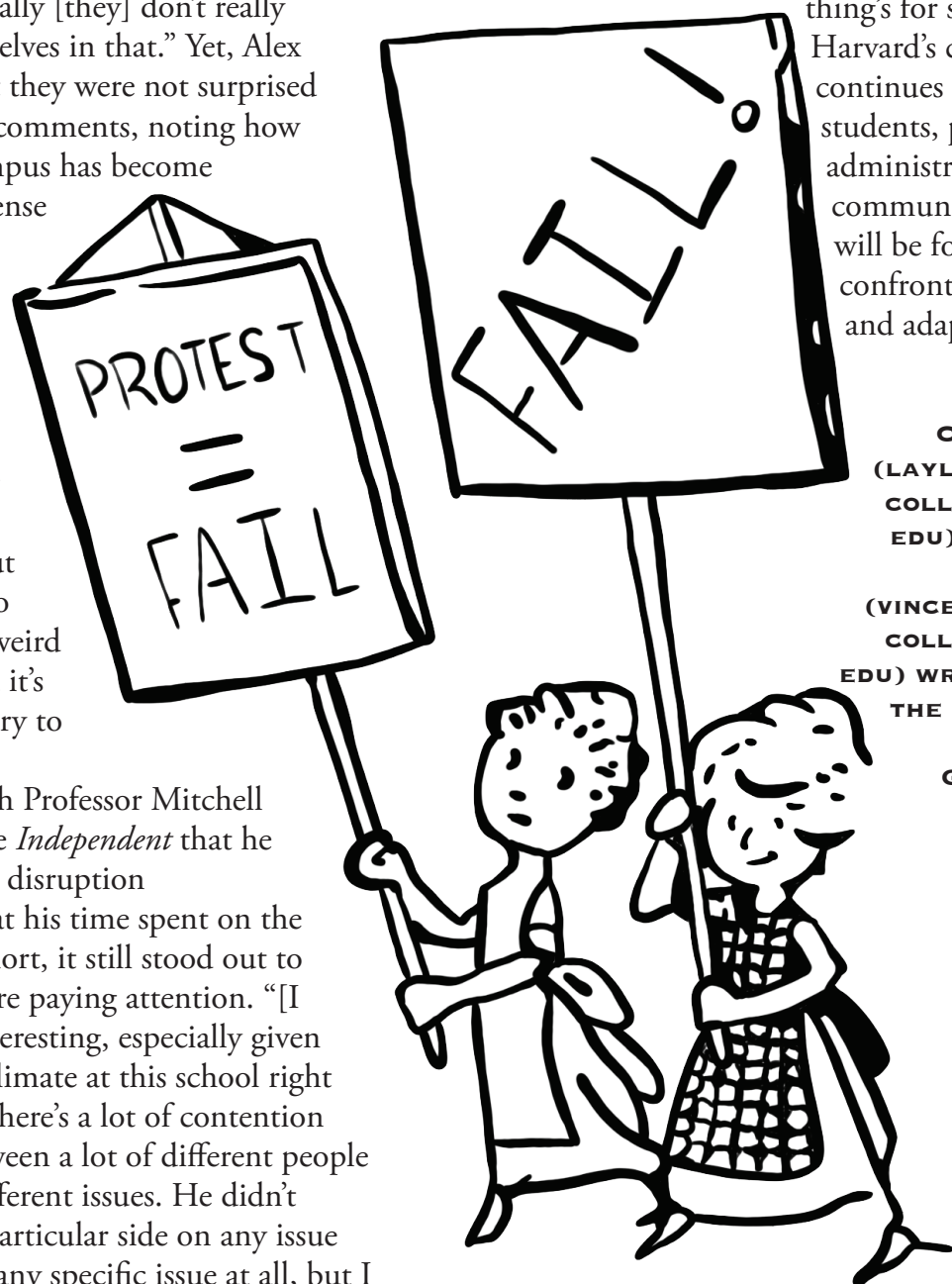
In general, students are calling for a clear policy on the involvement of professors versus administrators giving consequences for in-class protesting. "We should standardize [a policy regarding protesting] because if it comes up to the discretion of the teacher, there could be more punishments as opposed to an administration rights policy. I think also, if there is a broader policy, it could be up to the teacher's interpretation in the case that some classes or teachers may not enforce the policy as strongly, which leads to some confusion," said Avery.

However, while some students are advocating for a more general policy, others are taking stances on whether or not they think consequences for in-class disruptions should be left to a professor's discretion. "If someone has something to say, fine, it could disrupt other people, but if they think it's relevant, they shouldn't be put down," Ryan said. Charlie disagreed with this notion, explaining that both students and professors have a right to respond to in-class protesting accordingly. "You have the right to go into a classroom and disrupt it, but in the same way that a teacher is allowed to evaluate your participation in that class in the way that he or she or they want to... More broadly speaking, I would agree with the ability of a professor to dole out punishment in a class that they run."

The ultimate decisions of the Ad-Boarded students who disrupted class could provide further context to what, as of right now, remains unanswered. However, if one thing's for sure, as Harvard's campus continues to adjust, students, professors, administrators, and community members will be forced to confront new norms and adapt to change.

LAYLA CHAARAOU '26 (LAYLACHAARAOU@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) AND VINCENT HONRUBIA '27 (VINCENTHONRUBIA@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITE NEWS FOR THE *INDEPENDENT*.

GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26





# TIME AND PLACE

## The First-Year Formal falls flat after awkward scheduling.

BY EMILY PALLAN '27

Picture this: You are a Harvard student sitting in your dorm, post-everything shower, in formal attire and dress shoes. This time, to your surprise, you actually do have plans, albeit arranged by the First-Year Social Committee (FYSC)—the First-Year Formal. *A Great Gatsby* themed endeavor, the Committee transported students back a century as they draped Annenberg Hall in gold and black. Assisted by a DJ and platters stacked with fan-favorite grilled cheese, first-years danced the night away to their favorite hits and lived out their Daisy Buchanan dreams. By most accounts, it was a successful attempt—first-years seemed to enjoy this unique opportunity for class bonding. However, one theme permeated the night: attendance was *lacking*.

In the week leading up to the event, a prominent question loomed over the Class of 2027—and no, it was not “where are we pregaming?” Curious first-years, especially those with older siblings or friends with intel, wondered why the FYSC would choose to hold such an event in what seems to be a first-year frequenter, their dining hall.

Wyatt Croog '27, a member of the FYSC, recalled that “the First-Year Social Committee, in conjunction with the College, chose to hold the Gatsby First-Year Formal in Annenberg because it was something we had never attempted to do before—it was uncharted territory. Usually the event is held in off-campus venues, yet we thought Annenberg, a bougie venue, would be a great fit for a theme that highlights extravagance and lavishness.”

Croog continued: “We originally had set the date for early December, before exams, but due to logistical reasons and the increasing pre-exam stress across the first-year class, we decided to move the formal to after winter recess. We only had a few dates to choose from, and hosting it on the night of the 23rd, a Friday, felt right and like something Gatsby himself would do.”

However, while the decision might have seemed seamless to the Committee, the first-years were not too persuaded by the time and place. “I was honestly confused when I learned that the formal would be held in Berg,” Saanvi Malkani '27 reflected. “Especially since it was held outside and later in the semester in previous years—the location made it seem like less of a ‘formal.’”

While Annenberg Hall is certainly a memorable Harvard landmark, with its stained-glass windows and Hogwarts-esque aura, it is also arguably the only space that every first-year visits daily. Being such a frequented place, it might have benefited the formal's attendance to consider locations that are less visited to give students an excuse to take a break from the Harvard bubble.

Olivia Zhang '27, who opted not to attend, said, “I think I would've been more keen on going if it was off-campus. It would've felt like more of an event.”

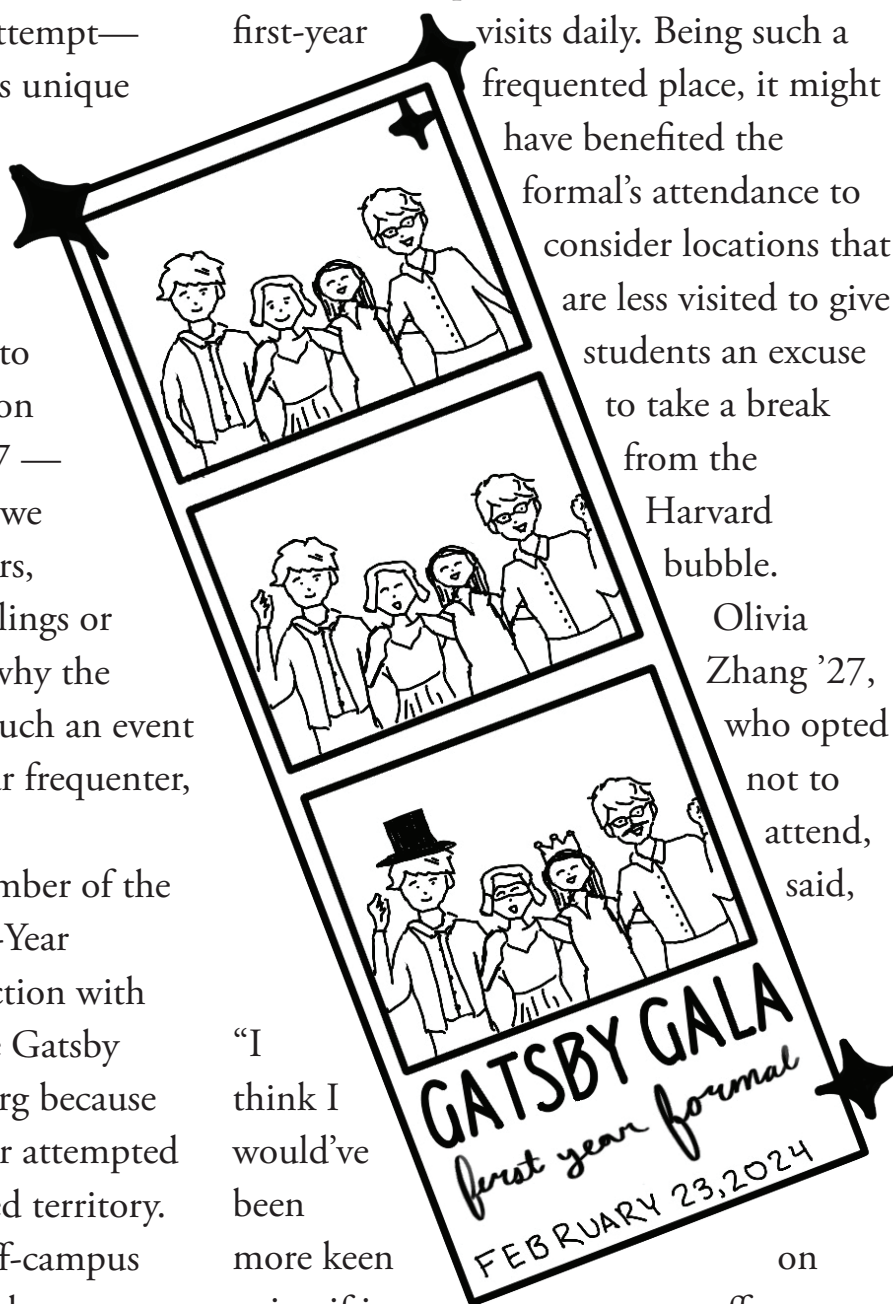
Interestingly enough, the decision to hold it at Annenberg in February is not a traditional one. Two years ago, the First-Year Formal was held at the Science Center Plaza in May. Holding it later in the semester, like during the beginning of finals season, and outside might have been more appealing for students looking for one last hurrah during their first year.

This mid-semester event held at the dining hall, on the other hand, was far less enticing. With midterms and spring break approaching and the absence of a reading period, first-years are more stressed than ever. “It was just awkwardly placed. Maybe I would've considered going if I didn't have homework and midterms looming on the horizon, but I also would've been more compelled to go if they had a formal dress code and people did their own version of ‘promposals’ to ask dates to the event,” Zhang explained. “That would've brought a level of humor and anticipation to it and made it more appealing to the entirety of the freshman class.”

That intraclass bonding is a lost phenomenon when it comes to Harvard social life, which is dominated by finding a friend group and spending weekends hanging out exclusively with them. Rarely can people find one event where their entire class is almost guaranteed to attend, so being able to meet and socialize with different kinds of people in a formal event with their class is a luxury—one that has not been accomplished since Convocation.

With the diverse social lives and interests of the Class of 2027, it would benefit us to have an event that everyone could look forward to attending—but with the placement and location of the event, many found themselves unenticed to abandon their traditional Friday night plans of DoorDashing dinner and curling up on their common room couches to watch a movie with friends. So, what should next year's social committee do to make sure they rope in all the members of the next great class? Move it off-campus and right before finals. Only then, maybe, would I have been willing to cash in my \$20.

Emily Pallan '27, who attended the formal, said, “I think I would've been more keen on going if it was off-campus. It would've felt like more of an event.”



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(EMILYPALLAN@COLLEGE.  
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THE FIRST-YEAR FORMAL TO  
WRITE THIS ARTICLE.**

**GRAPHIC BY SOPHIA RASCOFF  
'27**



# A WALK THROUGH THE FOGG

Must-see masterpieces at the oldest of the Harvard Art Museums.

BY MEENA BEHRINGER '27

In an inconspicuous building on 32 Quincy Street lies the University's hidden gem: the Harvard Art Museums. Simply walking into the building is an enchanting experience—the courtyard itself is a work of art. But walking through the museum is an enriching engagement with some of the most important artists and works of art history canon.

The Harvard Art Museums are composed of the Fogg Museum, the Busch-Reisinger Museum, and the Arthur M. Sackler Museum. The three are all contained in one building, though each individual museum retains its original focus. Established in 1895, the Fogg is the oldest of the museums and renowned for its incredible collection of Western art, stretching over three out of the five levels of the museum complex. Here are some of its highlights, from Dutch Age masterpieces to American contemporaries.

Vincent van Gogh's *Self-Portrait Dedicated to Paul Gaughin* (1888) [Level 1, Room 1220]: Located in the Maurice Wertheim room on the first level, Van Gogh's self-portrait is immediately eye-catching due to its luminescent veronese green background and thick brush strokes. The inscription, "To my friend Paul Gaughin," is only faintly visible at the top of the painting. Van Gogh initially sent the painting to him, spurring a brief portrait exchange between the two. However, shortly after sending the portrait to Gaughin, their friendship abruptly ended. Around fifty years later, the painting was seized by the Nazis.

Claude Monet's *The Gare Saint-Lazare: Arrival of a Train* (1887) [Level 1, Room 1220]: A few paintings to the right of Van Gogh's self portrait, this work is Monet's largest piece from his famous 12-part series of the Saint-Lazare station. Pieces from the series are scattered worldwide, each presenting a slightly different perspective of the station. His use of impasto, the thick application of paint so that it stands out from the canvas, for the smoke illuminates the effects of rapid industrialization in Paris. Monet is famous for painting nature but notably did so when industrialization was engulfing Europe. Just upstairs, for example, his *Charing Cross Bridge: Fog on the Thames* (1903) presents an even more whimsical and impressionistic view of a city tainted by industrial pollution. *Arrival of a Train* sits among other 19th and 20th-century artworks that depict new scenes of modern, urban life in the Wertheim room.

Nina Chanel Abney's *Four Stops* (2007) [Level 1, Room 1330]: Only recently put on display, *Four Stops* is an enormous contemporary work that depicts a surrealistic ride on the subway. The work is composed of abstracted and distorted figures, bold and contrasting colors, and incredible

amounts of expression. Abney uses surrealism to evoke alienation and a lack of human connection between commuters.

Kerry James Marshall's *Untitled* (2008) [Level 1, Room 1200]: Across the museum, Marshall's *Untitled* is a powerful work. In this work, a Black painter assertively stares at the viewer while dipping his paintbrush into black paint on a grand palette. This piece directly responds to Langston Hughes' 1926 essay encouraging Black artists to embrace Black culture.

Peter Paul Rubens' *Neptune Calming the Tempest* ("Quos Ego") (1635) [Level 2, Room 2300]: The second floor of the museum dynamically moves back in time and across the world. Rubens' small work is hidden in the corner with other Dutch and

is famous for writing the pamphlet "What is the Third Estate?" that served as a rallying cry for the National Assembly, formed by the Third Estate in 1789 to draft a new constitution. Both the artist and the subject uniquely survived decades of political turmoil from the revolution to the reign of terror and its aftermath.

Albert Bierstadt's *Rocky Mountains, "Lander's Peak"* (1863) [Level 2, Room 2100]: Nestled in the other corner room with Monet and Sargent, Bierstadt's work offers an American angle on the 19th century in contrast to the European paintings we have encountered so far. His grand landscape painting is based on sketches he made during a U.S. government survey expedition in 1859. He presents an ethereal view of nature interacting with light. However, the Eastern Shoshone people, who had inhabited the mountain range for thousands of years, are absent from the work. In portraying a heavenly landscape, this painting matched the ideal of Manifest Destiny, which encouraged westward expansion.

The museum's third floor is adorned with marble sculptures and pottery from Greek and Roman antiquity. On its other side lie the Special Exhibitions Gallery and University Galleries. It is here, I find, that you grasp the best view of the courtyard—the first and last artwork you encounter.

The courtyard is an affair of dynamic light and a flawless blend of contemporary and classical. The two-story arches model the facade of the San Biagio complex in Montepulciano, Italy, in a timeless Renaissance style. The walls then seamlessly meet glass that stretches to a truncated, pyramidal roof that ushers in natural light into all five floors. Works peek out from the row of arches that enclose the airy courtyard. Looking up, the installation *Triangle Constellation* (2015) by Amorales floats in the air, a sculpture composed of 16 musical triangles. It creates a visual, and physical once played, collective experience of sound that reverberates through the galleries. The courtyard is a dynamic and radiant space that serves as the perfect beginning and end for the visitor's experience at the Harvard Art Museums.

These pieces are a mere few of the Fogg's highlights—the rest are waiting to be explored.

The Harvard Art Museums are free to all visitors and open 10am-5pm, Tuesday through Sunday.

MEENA BEHRINGER '27  
(MEENABEHRINGER@COLLEGE.  
HARVARD.EDU) LOVES TO GET LOST  
IN THE FOGG.

GRAPHIC BY ALMA RUSSELL '26



Flemish Art. The oil sketch, based on a passage in Virgil's Aeneid, illustrates a majestic scene of Neptune protecting Aeneas's fleet to commemorate Cardinal Ferdinand's safe arrival in Antwerp in 1635.

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres' *Raphael and La Fornarina* (1814) [Level 2, Room 2200]: Ingres' depiction of the master Raphael's sensual relationship with his mistress is a painting about painting itself. While the mistress sits desirably on Raphael's lap, he stares out lovingly toward his own work of art—a portrait of her—instead. The mistress gazes at the viewer directly, as does the portrait. She resembles the depiction of the Virgin Mary hidden in the back of the painting, as well as the subject of Ingres's famous *Grande Odalisque* (1814).

Jacques-Louis David's *Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès* (1817) [Level 2, Room 2200]: Right across the room from *Raphael and La Fornarina* radiates David's neoclassical portrait of Sieyès, a French Revolutionary leader. A member of the clergy, Sieyès



# THERE ARE 366 DAYS IN A YEAR

A partially true short story that is partially about the leap year.

BY KAYLA REIFEL '26

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, businesses, events, incidents, emotions, thematic revelations, etc. are products of the author's imagination (that she will hopefully one day sell and capitalize upon). Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental. (By purely we mean truly, thoroughly, nearing 100%, downright asymptotic!)

There are 366 days in a year. There are 366 days in a year. There are 366 days in a year.

I repeated it over and over in my head while doing jumping jacks. I had a test the next day—my first test of third grade. Things were getting serious. I had seen on television somewhere that if you do jumping jacks while studying you remember information better.

The next morning I bit my nails as I stared at the final portion of my test.

There are 60 seconds in a minute. There are 60 minutes in an hour. There are 24 hours in a day. There are 366 days in a year.

Satisfied, I got up and confidently handed in my test.

When I received the test back three days later, a bright red X struck through my final answer. A harsh "365" glared at me, red as blood on the page.

I was pretty sure I read 366 days somewhere—sure enough to talk myself into asking my teacher about it. She was an old, mean woman with hair the worst shade of gray, and I was pretty convinced that she hated me because I stole more than twenty Hershey's Kisses from her desk one day and left the wrappers behind as evidence. I tentatively shuffled up to her desk right before recess and told her I was pretty sure there were 366 days in a year because I had read it somewhere.

"No, there are 365 days in a year. Well, actually, I guess you have one year every four years with 366. Maybe you're thinking of leap years. But generally, there are 365 days. The leap year is an exception. There are 365 days in a year." Her response was clipped and annoyed. I walked back to my desk with my head held down in shame.

I remember thinking that once every four years seemed a little frequent to be an exception and that I deserved partial credit. I was right 25% of the time, and 365 was right only 75% of the time. I'd been snubbed. Except, I probably didn't actually think all that. I didn't care about leap years at all. I just cared about getting the right answer.

Many years later, I found myself in an intense brawl with the Reading and Writing section of the SAT. Practice exam after practice exam, I picked the wrong answer. "You have to pick the answer that is MOST right!" my SAT tutor kept saying. I was a miserable pile of teenage angst, and I wanted to burn the creators of the SAT alive.

At the time, I had a guitar-playing, bleached-hair, skinny, skateboarding sort-of

boyfriend. One fateful evening, about two weeks before my SAT, he convinced me to do shrooms with him.

Some fifteen minutes after the third time I said "nothing's happening" out loud, I ran into some gnomes. "What are you looking for?" I asked them, although I don't think I spoke the words out loud. "We are looking for the best answer!" The gnomes looked odd, like they weren't supposed to be gnomes, but I thought that gnomes were what you were supposed to see when you did shrooms so that is what I saw. Anyway, I do know one thing for sure about being on shrooms—the ground is wobbly.

A year or so later, I was sitting on some slimy beach rocks with the first boy I ever really loved. He asked me if I read magical realism.

"Of course, who do you think I am?" I responded. (I had no idea what magical realism was).

When he scrambled away to investigate some fish that had just jumped out of the water, I looked the term up on my shattered phone. Book titles came up before I could find a definition, and I was forced to hastily put my phone away as he came back.

"Have you read *Kafka on the Shore*?" I asked him when he got back.

"I love *Kafka on the Shore*," he said.

"This moment reminds me of it," I said. "How so?"

"Oh, uh, you know, like, because we're at the beach. Like Kafka."

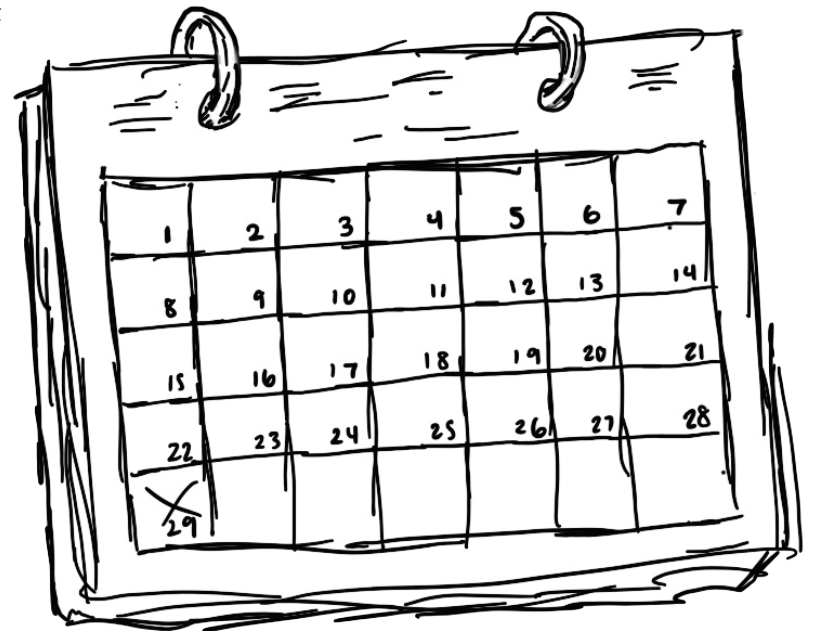
"Oh, yeah, I guess. No, yeah. Like, the metaphor is now," he nodded seriously.

"Yeah. Exactly!" I was quite pleased with myself.

Kafka is never on the beach once in that book. But it didn't matter, because the boy cared a lot more about impressing people with his robust literary knowledge than he cared about me. We continued to talk about his music taste and his childhood and his mommy issues and his passion for fighting for menstrual rights in developing nations. The whole time I fought back drool.

Many, many years later, I am old and dying. My family is packing up to depart to a different planet. On the new planet, every year is exactly 365 days, not 365 and a quarter. No one's quite sure why, but everyone is thrilled about it. I think it has something to do with the settler's accents. The air is just a little thicker over there, and they pronounce one-Mississippi more like one-Misssssissippi.

The spaceships depart on March 1st. Everyone is wildly hungover from celebrating the final leap day they will ever have to endure the



previous night. I lay on my deathbed which is in a room with very big windows: the last, great, physical manifestation of my hard-earned money. For most of my life, I was a lawyer. All my money was made from half-truths. I became less haunted by this every day as my assets increased.

In my free time before I die, I read books about law and fiction maybe once or twice a month to impress my Goodreads followers who are still alive. My favorite thing about fiction books is how short and simple and false the disclaimer is at the beginning. It is a constant comfort. At some point I found myself staring out my big windows trying to justify them. Every truth is partial. If partial truths are lies, every truth is a lie.

"PUT THAT SHIT IN PREMISE CONCLUSION FORM!!!!" My philosophy professor suddenly yelled in my dream. Okay!

Premise 1: Every truth is partial. Premise 2: All partial truths are lies. Conclusion: Every truth is a lie.

"Great. Better. But are the premises true?" my professor asked.

As I frantically racked my brain for an answer, I woke up in a cold sweat.

"What were you dreaming about?" the girl lying next to me whispered.

"Oh, uh, you know, the philosophical implications of leap years."

"Enough with the pretentious pseudo-intellectual bullshit," she laughed softly next to me. I turned over and smiled at her.

"What do you suggest I dream about instead?"

"Veritas," she whispered, giggling. Truth, in a language I didn't understand.

I laughed too.

**KAYLA REIFEL '26 (KAYLAREIFEL@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS THE ARTS EDITOR OF THE INDEPENDENT.**

**GRAPHIC BY NATALIE MENDEZ '26**



# SPORTS SPOTLIGHT: RÉMI DROLET

A profile on NCAA Champion and Canadian Olympic Nordic Skier.

BY BREAGH BRIDGE '27

**R**émi “Rem-Dog” Drolet '24 is the captain of the Harvard Nordic Ski Team, sporting his iconic man bun as a crown.

In his first season of racing for the Crimson on the Eastern Intercollegiate Ski Association Circuit (EISA) in 2020, Drolet had several outstanding performances within the conference, qualifying him for the NCAA Championships (which were canceled due to the pandemic in 2020 and 2021). Drolet then returned to the NCAA stage in 2023, as a junior, to be crowned the NCAA Individual Champion in the Men's 20k classic mass start. A mass start race is when the entire field of competition (at NCAA Championships, there are around 40 athletes in the men's category) starts together for a head-to-head race.

In the 2024 competition season, Drolet secured back-to-back wins in the EISA Harvard Carnival as team captain and the top points scorer for the Crimson every weekend of racing. He has

qualified to defend his title at the 2024 NCAA Championships in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Beyond the NCAA, Drolet took a semester off as a rising junior to compete for his home country of Canada at the Beijing Olympics in 2022. There, Drolet achieved 33rd place in the 15km classic followed by a 35th-place finish in the 50-kilometer skate mass start. Before this, Drolet made his debut on the international stage at the FIS World Junior Championships in 2017; he would return to this event three more times, and his best individual result there was a fourth-place finish in 2020. At the 2020 event, he was also a member of the Canadian men's relay team which achieved a silver medal, the first international relay medal at any level for the country. Additionally, Remi raced at the senior World Championships during his sophomore year. “That was definitely a bit of a challenge because it was really hard to balance that with keeping up with classes and trying to keep up with some of the fastest

skiers in the world [who train full-time as professional athletes],” Drolet said.

Each year, Drolet logs around 750 hours of training, an incredible undertaking as a full-time college student. Nordic skiing is an impressive test of aerobic and muscular endurance in which athletes compete in the sprint as well as distance events of both the classic and skate techniques. Sprints are about three-quarters of a mile in length, and skiers compete in a qualifying round followed by a quarter-final, semi-final, and final for the top 30, 12, and 6 skiers respectively. Distance races—Drolet's specialty—range from 5 to 50



kilometers in length (the longest race at the NCAA level is 20 kilometers). Nordic skiing is also subdivided into skate and classic techniques: with skate skiing your legs have a more lateral movement (similar to ice skating), whereas in classic skiing, your skis remain parallel to each other in a set of tracks in the snow and have a section of grippy wax on the bottom of the ski.

Hailing from the rural mountain town of Rossland, British Columbia, it only makes sense that Drolet would excel in a sport involving climbing and descending snow-covered hills at impressive speeds. “As is kind of a right of passage in Canada,” Drolet grew up playing hockey, Alpine skiing, and Nordic skiing. Eventually, he joined the local ski racing team. “Having such great people around me in the skiing community around me in Rossland, and going forward, has really kept me in the sport,” Drolet explained. “For those who live there, it's the greatest place on earth,” he said, commenting on the environment he grew up in.

Upon arriving at Harvard, Drolet was “a bit concerned about what it would be like” skiing in Boston. After a recruitment visit and many conversations with then Head Coach, Chris City '94, Drolet said “it just kind of clicked... [It] felt like somewhere I would really love to be that would make me really, really happy.” Drolet's initial feelings were correct as he has found success academically and athletically throughout his four years on Harvard's campus.

The Harvard Nordic Ski Team does the bulk of their winter training at the Weston Ski Track, a mere 15-minute drive from campus. This golf course covered in man-made snow is far from an idyllic mountain trail, but every Harvard Nordic Skier learns to love it after the endless hours they spend working hard with their teammates. When visiting Harvard for the first time it was “impressive how they pulled it off,” recalled Drolet, referring to how the Nordic Team manages to excel in Harvard classes and ski train in Boston. Drolet exemplifies this balancing act today as a Physics and Math concentrator and successful athlete. “It's been a bit of a journey to figure out how to balance everything really well,” said Drolet. As most student-athletes at an academically demanding school such as Harvard would agree, “there is no perfect balance because, at the end of the day, you always need to sacrifice something a little bit.”

Now with his undergraduate finish line in sight, Drolet has begun to set big goals for continuing to compete and perform on the world stage. “I'd love to be able to go back to the Olympics [in 2026] and fight for some good positions there.” As much as he has enjoyed pushing himself academically at Harvard, he added that “it's going to be really cool to commit myself as much as I need to the skiing aspect to be able to pull out the best results that I'm capable of.”

**BREAGH BRIDGE '27 (BREAGHBRIDGE@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) HOPES THIS ARTICLE BRINGS HARVARD NORDIC SKIING NEW FANS.**

**PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE FULLER AND HARVARD ATHLETICS**



# INDY SPORTSBOOK: BETTING ON THE NEXT HARVARD PRESIDENT

The earliest prop bets for Harvard's presidential search.

BY JONAH KARAFIOL '26 AND LUKE WAGNER '26

Since former Harvard President Claudine Gay stepped down from her post, the debate on whether or not she should resign has shifted to one concerning her successor. Harvard Provost Alan M. Garber '76 has stepped in to fill the interim role until the search committee decides on a long-term replacement. While no sportsbook currently allows you to bet on this event, we at the Indy Sportsbook have created fictitious lines for who we predict to be the current favorites.

First, we have current Interim President Garber at +270 odds. Garber's 13-year tenure as provost of Harvard—26 times longer than Claudine Gay's presidency—as well as his professorship at Stanford make him an obvious choice for the job. However, he will have to overcome his reputation as a union buster to win the presidency. In 2016, the Office of the Provost sent an email following Columbia's decision to give teaching and research assistants union rights. The email read "unionization will disrupt academic programs and freedoms, mentoring, and research at Harvard." Earlier this year, Brandon J. Mancilla, the first president of the Harvard Graduate Students Union, said that Garber "[led] the most vicious anti-union campaign that we've seen in grad worker unionization" in an interview with *The Crimson*. Despite this, some reports suggest he will become Harvard's permanent president for years to come, and that is why he is the favorite right now.

Next, at +550 odds is Tomiko Brown-Nagin. After being considered in the last presidential search, Brown-Nagin is once again a favorite for the presidency. Both dean of Harvard Radcliffe Institute and an HLS professor, Brown-Nagin is the author of two multi-award winning books: *Civil Rights Queen* and *Courage to Dissent*. She was also appointed the chair of the Presidential Committee on Harvard and the Legacy of Slavery, where she led the initiative to catalog the University's ties to slavery. She seems like a great candidate to replace Interim President Garber, and we at the Indy Sportsbook have her as the second-favorite candidate.

At +800 odds, we have Harvard Government Professor Danielle S. Allen, the director of the Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Ethics. She was considered during the interview process in 2018 before President Bacow was ultimately elected. In 2020, Allen won the Library

of Congress's Kluge Prize, which recognizes scholarly achievement in areas the Nobel Prize does not. Allen has political ambitions that extend the realm of Harvard; she ran for Governor of Massachusetts in 2022 and is currently running for Democratic State Committeewoman for Middlesex and Suffolk. She brings both a young perspective and impressive accolades in academia to the table, making her an attractive candidate for the job.

At +1200 odds, we have the Dean of Harvard Law School, John F. Manning '82. As a conservative, Manning brings political diversity to the table. In a 2022 faculty survey conducted by *The Crimson*, only 1.46% of respondents identified themselves as conservative or very conservative, compared to 82.46% of respondents who self-identified as liberal or very liberal. Manning would provide political diversity and a new perspective to the University. However, we do not think that the University will go with a conservative. Instead, we foresee a liberal ideology to be a prerequisite for the presidency for the foreseeable future. But you never know, maybe we could see a conservative president in the next 100 years (but we doubt it).

Coming in as the fifth favorite to become Harvard's newest president, we select Bill Ackman '88 (+2500 odds). While he is not known for his presence on campus, his contributions on X (formerly Twitter) have landed him as the fifth favorite. He is known to have the fastest fingers

on the internet, and we guarantee he would break the record for

most tweets as a Harvard president. While he may not have the most common ideals among the faculty and student body, never count someone out who can throw bands in your face. If you want to get a job at Sweetgreen, betting on Bill Ackman could help. Just make sure to tag him on X—he will see it within minutes.

Next, we have Barack Obama at +3500. This one might be a long shot, but his daughter did attend this University, and for some reason, we think he might know a thing or two about leadership.

Lastly, at +5000 odds, we have a Kanye West campaign announcement. Kanye was a write-in candidate in the 2020 U.S. presidential elections, and despite a valiant campaign, did not come close to securing the presidency. His concession tweet read "WELP KANYE 2024." Although Kanye has since confirmed that he will not run for the presidency in the 2024 election cycle, do not be surprised if he seeks office elsewhere. With his longtime friend Travis Scott intent on studying architecture at the University, Kanye West may look to join him. We place him seventh in the odds only because he has not implicitly stated he is running for Harvard President—had he done that, he might be number one.

These are just the frontrunners. As time goes on, there will surely be more potential candidates that light up the scene on X, TikTok, or Instagram. As of right now, these are our odds, but they may update and change over time as the University does extensive background checks on candidates, carefully checking for incidents of inadequate citation and whatever other euphemisms they use for plagiarism.

**LUKE WAGNER '26 (LUKEWAGNER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) BELIEVES THAT KANYE WEST WILL COME AND SAVE THIS UNIVERSITY. JONAH KARAFIOL '26 (JONAHKARAFIOL@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS LOOKING FOR A SNOWY PLUS ONE.**

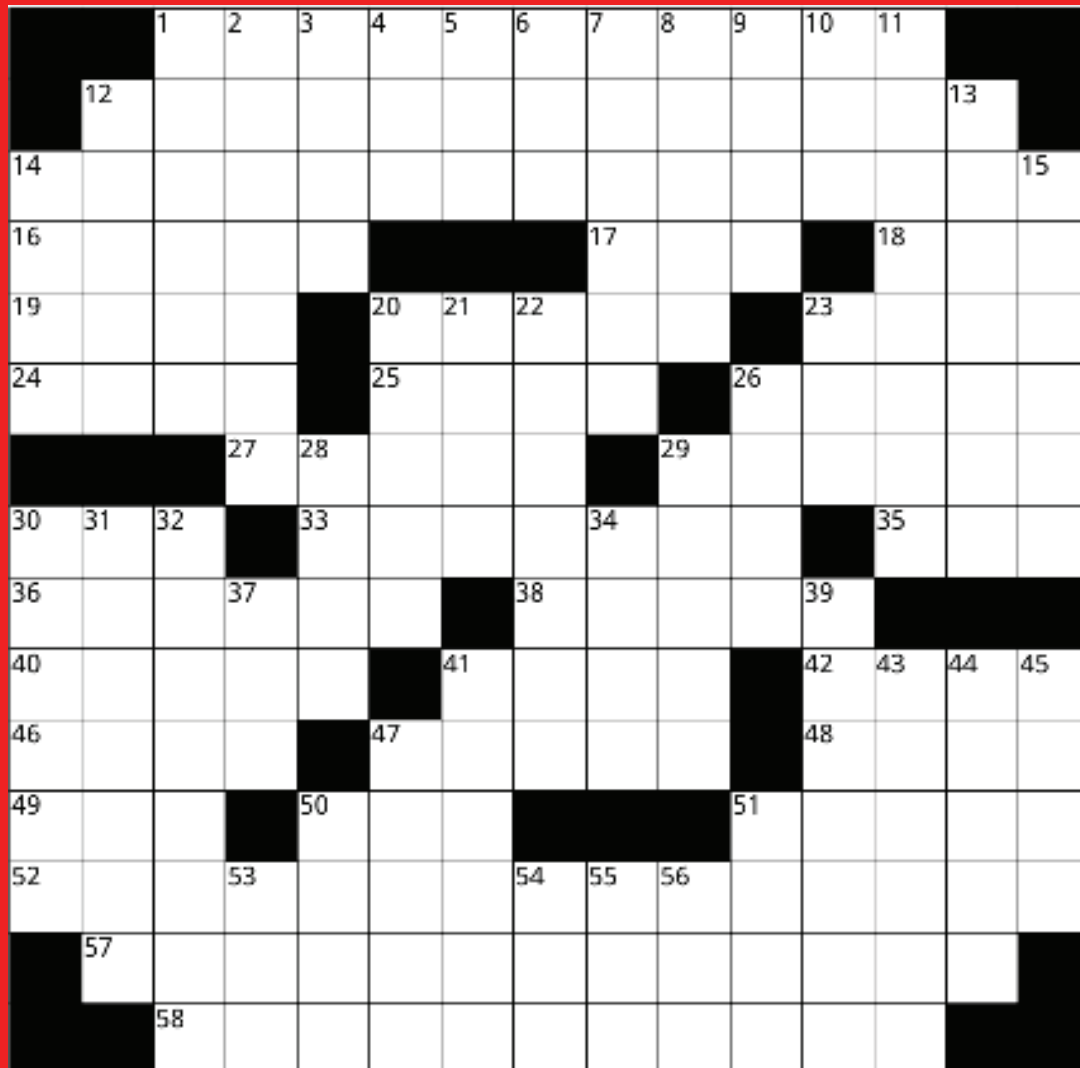
GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26



OPINIONS OF FORUM PIECES BELONG ONLY TO THE WRITER AND DO NOT  
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# SOUTHERN CHARM

BY HAN NGUYEN '27

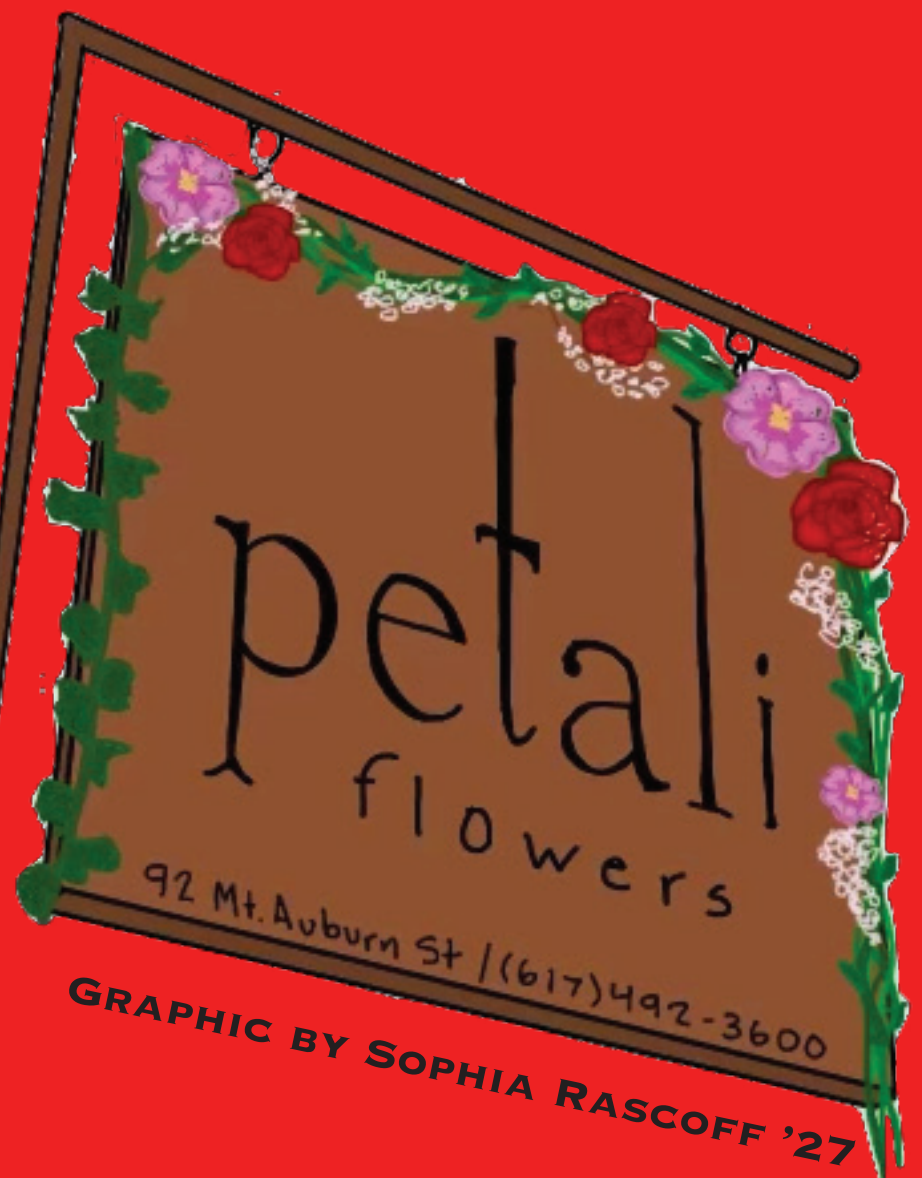


## ACROSS

- 1 Decent
- 12 Disturbances
- 14 Go mad
- 16 Colon-cleansing treatment
- 17 Under the weather
- 18 Believer's suffix
- 19 Life Alive's Best Seller
- 20 River to the Oise
- 23 "The Thin Man" dog
- 24 Attack with snowballs, say
- 25 Just \_\_\_ in the machine
- 26 Lustrous fabric
- 27 "Oklahoma!" aunt
- 29 Growing season
- 30 \_\_\_ Zion Church
- 33 Wobbly, quaintly
- 35 Lil \_\_\_ X
- 36 Was beaten by
- 38 Bing, bang, or boom
- 40 Center of power
- 41 Lawyers: Abbr.
- 42 Opposite of faux
- 46 Line above the equator: Abbr.
- 47 Flourish
- 48 Suffixes with mountain and cannon
- 49 Suffix with ether
- 50 Fan mail encl.
- 51 Refrain syllables
- 52 Rural expression used to express surprise
- 57 Highway patrolmen
- 58 Parts opposite points

## DOWN

- 1 Close again, as an envelope
- 2 Religious recluse
- 3 Greek portico
- 4 Bit of wordplay
- 5 Before, in poetry
- 6 "Survivor" network
- 7 Subduing
- 8 "\_\_\_ of Two Cities"
- 9 Engage in logrolling
- 10 High ball
- 11 Join, as the army
- 12 \_\_\_ de Leon
- 13 Verse form used by Dante
- 14 \_\_\_ Year
- 15 Ford muscle cars, familiarly
- 20 Finnish architect Alvar \_\_\_
- 21 Frozen drink brand
- 22 Kia SUV
- 23 Swiss river
- 26 Colorado \_\_\_, Colo.
- 28 Back muscles, for short
- 29 Earthquake
- 30 Never-before-seen
- 31 Bread and cabbage
- 32 Intensify
- 34 Dorothy's dog
- 37 Egyptian boy king
- 39 Turned inside out
- 41 ]
- 43 Shows over
- 44 Music's Guthrie and Parks
- 45 "This \_\_\_ outrage!"
- 47 Curses
- 50 \_\_\_spell (relax)
- 51 Spanish appetizer
- 53 Road goo
- 54 Sheet music abbr.
- 55 "Ruh-\_\_\_!"
- 56 San Francisco's \_\_\_ Valley



GRAPHIC BY SOPHIA RASCOFF '27

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