

MAR. 28, 2024

HARVARD

VOL LV ISSUE 20

# independent

THE STUDENT WEEKLY SINCE 1969

# Marching



# Along



# MASTHEAD

March 28, 2024

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# Mouse-Capades

Horror stories behind Harvard's mice infestation.

BY ELLIE TUNNELL '27

The Harvard mice are more like you than you may want to admit; you both are in search of good food, comfy nesting quarters, and nighttime action.

My roommate was the first to arrive on campus in early August, brimming with excitement to move into our dorm. As she climbed the stairs of Canaday's concrete towers, her anticipation swelled. That inaugural evening, she snuggled into her bed, the day's excitement gently giving way to the first whispers of sleep. But, amidst the quiet, she heard a faint rustling from beneath her belongings. It was easy to dismiss the noise as the trees swaying in the night's breeze.

However, the truth was far more animate. Moments later, she locked eyes with the beady little eyes of the perpetrator.

The blood rushed from her head, paralyzing her body from her limbs to her toes. Before she could even shriek, the furry beast scurried across the carpet, leaped onto her sheets, and escaped under her bed, its flaccid tail disappearing in its wake. As soon as the creature was out of sight, she leaped from her bed and fled Canaday, clad only in her pajamas, to seek shelter in the pest-free Thayer Hall.

This was just the beginning of the Canaday F mice infestation. Canaday, built in 1974, was the last building constructed in the Yard and was intentionally designed to be riot-proof. One would think the door sweeps, lengthy flight of stairs, and two sets of locked doors to enter each suite would prevent pesky rodents from penetrating through. But the riot-proofing is not enough to protect against the smallest of inventions.

Impressively, mice can squeeze through holes the size of a pencil, climb up radiator pipes, and jump like acrobats. And Canaday consistently seems to have a certain propensity to attract mice. Many residents blame Harvard for the rodent problems, claiming the University has done little to rid their dorms of rodents.

So, what is Harvard doing to prevent this rodent issue from persisting? With one quick Google search of "mice at Harvard," you can find all the answers to your pesky problem on the Campus Services "Mice FAQs" page. There are no tangible solutions or numbers to call in a mouse emergency, but rather philosophical musings about their history at Harvard.

Mice are residents of Cambridge, so

Harvard technically invaded their native grounds. As naturally curious and adept creatures, they enter buildings because they can, and they detect yummy foods or other mice.

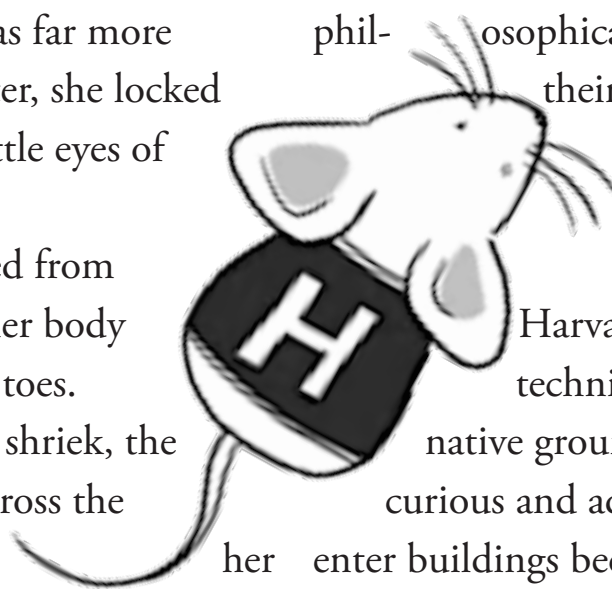
Just like "The Chisler" in *Cheaper by the Dozen 2*, mice are drawn to food, valuables, and crinkly packaging, caching these items away in cracks in the walls, holes in furniture, and any other nook or cranny they can squeeze their way into. Similar to people, mice shelter in groups and then repopulate. Their large litters and short lifespans mean that a group of just two mice can grow to 1,250 in a year. Once they find a stash of Cheetos, chocolate, and a place to nest, why would they ever leave?

Another roommate of mine hears our rats in the radiators at night, haunting her dreams and disrupting

her sleep. The noises and mouse droppings are the dismal reality of living in a Canaday suite. She has a litany of tales involving her encounters with these small, unwelcome companions within Canaday's walls. One incident stands out vividly as she explains, "the most recent dramatic one was at 2 a.m. when I had to call Yard Ops because the mouse was chewing the wires to the back of my fridge."

Not only were the mice preventing her sound sleep, but their gnawing through the plastic on electrical wires was a severe safety hazard. The Fire and Electrical Safety Ltd. warns that sparks from exposed wires can start devastating fires, especially when surrounded by insulation and wood like in the Harvard dorms. Furthermore, a not-so-fun fact is that mice's teeth never stop growing, forcing them to gnaw through wires, wood, and radiators so their lower teeth don't grow through the roof of their mouth and into their brains.

After frantically calling Yard Operations, they came an hour later. She sarcastically added, "What did they do? They just put more traps. That's the magical solution to everything." Jonathan Palumbo, the Director of Communications and Engagement for Harvard Residential Facilities reported in an email to the *Independent* that "they have a process in place to report any sightings immediately which launches a group of professionals who come in and address the issue as quickly as possible." From peanut butter and jam sticky traps to old-fashioned snappers, peppermint spray, and anti-mouse patches, they have tried everything, yet the mice prevail.

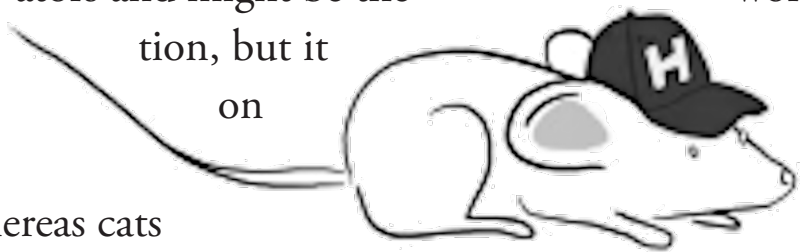


GRAPHIC BY CLARA LAKE '27

A common question Yard Ops gets is, “Why can’t I just poison the mice?” Although this may be an effective method, the carcass will decompose in your walls and emit an odor permeating the dorm. As the carcass decomposes, the “clean-up crew” of flies, beetles, and moths feast on the meal. If that doesn’t work, others ask, “Can’t I just get a cat?” The Mice FAQs provide that cats are vital mouse predators and might be the solution, but it depends on who you ask. “Whereas cats would undoubtedly support the idea, the decision is up to the residents and building manager.” Apparently there are also “mouse-detection dogs,” but the Harvard-qualified pest control vendors and EH&S self-proclaim themselves as more adept at searching for mice and should be relied upon for expertise.

Nina Berkman ’27, an *Independent* staff member, returned from winter break to her room to find not one but a dozen new roommates. Tiny brown pellets were scattered across her couch, bookshelves, and desk—the little buggers had made her suite their new home.

Unfortunately, the mice did not just leave their tracks. “That’s when it started to happen; when I started hearing one in my bedroom,” Berkman said. “In two weeks, I had about six dead mice or more, two or three on my shelf, two under the heater, and another under my bed.” She faced both a



psychological and physical toll from the visitors. Yard Ops reported to her mother in an email that Berkman had the worst case of mice they’ve seen in years.

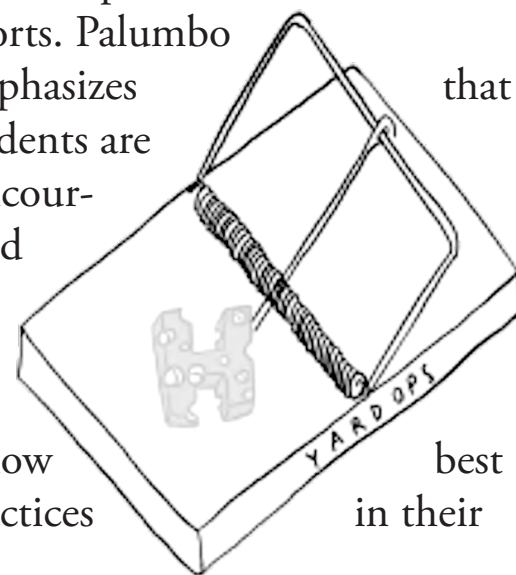
Arriving home from a long day of classes or a late night at Lamont, the last thing a Harvard student needs is to lie awake at night in fear of an unwanted visitor. Harvard Campus Services acknowledges this issue: “Sharing your home or workplace with unwanted guests can contribute to an already stressful life,” but they provide little support for Harvard students dealing with persistent pests. The Harvard Environmental Health and Safety team treats mice like a symptom of stress akin to a paper or an annoying friend, advising that students “reach out for help to their residential and faculty advisors and building managers, as well as to the HUHS Center for Wellness and Health Promotion.”

Besides damaging physical infrastructure, house mice are more dangerous to your health than they look. The poop on your bed, urine on your carpet, saliva on your food, and deceased mice rotting in your walls calls into question the disease and health risk mice bring to Harvard students’ dorms. According to the CDC, mice are carriers of several dangerous diseases such as Hantavirus, Salmonellosis, the plague, and Lassa Fever. These diseases can be transmitted to humans either through direct contact such as touching or being scratched by mice, or indirectly through breathing in their air or by touching materials that they have contaminated. Even cleaning mouse droppings can put people at risk of contracting the host of

diseases that they carry.

Mice at Harvard are no new phenomenon. Fortunately, the Mice FAQs reassure us that many notable Harvard alumni have endured encounters with mice. Palumbo writes, “Although such events may not have been desired, the experiences may quite possibly have positively influenced the graduate’s career and perspectives in appreciating nature and responding to life’s little challenges.” In his same email, Palumbo recognizes the “disruption that finding rodents in the Houses can cause and regret every instance when they occur.” However, it is evident that Harvard is generally unconcerned if the main reassurance they provide students is that they will graduate with a greater connection to “nature” and resilience to “little challenges” from their battles with mice.

With Harvard’s \$49.495 billion endowment, one would hope our dormitories would be clean and devoid of pests, but the mice are persistent in their efforts. Palumbo emphasizes that students are “encouraged to follow practices best in their



environments to help our efforts collectively.” So, it is safe to say that Harvard’s resident rodents are here to stay. In the meantime, to distract from the unwanted creatures climbing through your walls, take a look at Harvard Professors Steven Pinker and Tom C. Conley and Dean D. E. Lorraine Sterritt read “If You Give a Mouse a Cookie” by Laura Numeroff for a bit of entertainment.

**ELLIE TUNNELL ’27 (ELLIE\_TUNNELL@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) HAS TRAPPED THREE MICE IN HER CANADAY SUITE.**

**GRAPHICS BY CLARA LAKE ’27**



# A Professor's Break

Harvard University educators discuss their opinions on the current structure of Spring Break.

BY VINCENT HONRUBIA '27

Spring Break has come to an end. As we resume our final stretch of classes, we often disregard how much changes within the one-week

University-wide break. As the campus quiets down and lecture halls empty, students attempt to immediately disconnect from the academic stresses of college and “forget about” their professors and classes. But Harvard's Spring Break impacts them, too. Oftentimes, break heavily affects educators across disciplines in regard to their curriculum, academic, and personal development.

Professors had mixed reactions when asked about how student performance and engagement leading up to and after Spring Break changes. Professor Elliot Turley, who teaches the Expository Writing 20 class, *Laughing Matters*, explained that “the last class before Spring Break I anticipate being a less productive class, and I'm aware that that is going to be the case. But, I don't think I do too much differently pre or post-Spring Break.”

Sina Saleh, a Ph.D. student and Math 1A Head Teaching Fellow, found that following the Spring Break period, “[he] noticed maybe a couple of students were not as active as they used to be. Maybe they just forgot how it worked because they were away for one week. But then they get it (the structure of the class) again, [and] they catch up after a few classes. So maybe in that respect, it could be a little disruptive.”

Despite these potential learning disruptions or issues with limited focus, the break does prove beneficial for students and faculty alike, who rely on it as an opportunity to catch up on their own research.

help me, too, because I was a little behind on my own research, because teaching is also a lot. It takes a lot of time to prepare for classes and answer questions, and you're getting involved in a lot of different things. So it's also a good time off for me to spend some time on my own research and have meetings with my advisor and get back on track with my own research,” stated Saleh. Turley echoed this notion, conveying that “it was definitely useful for me to get research done or to go to a conference.”

When asked about how the break alleviated student burnout, Saleh mentioned, “[it's great that] you can go back to your own city you come from, you can visit family and visit your friends. I think that's a great thing to do during the break... It could be a good change for you just to have that opportunity to do that during the week, so I think it could be really good for your mental health.” Similarly, Turley noted, “My kind of guess would be that it is really helpful that students can come back refreshed from it.” He added that students themselves can truly discern the personal and professional benefits of the Spring Break period.

While some could assume that a concern amongst faculty members is that Spring Break disrupts the flow of the course curriculum, Turley noted that the mid-semester break falls ideally within the academic calendar. “My impulse is [that] halfway through the semester is kind of the right time. I find Thanksgiving Break incredibly disruptive. In that, there's kind of this week that we almost lose the whole week, and then we come back, and it's just one or two more lessons. That to me is definitely worse than the middle of the semester.”

As Turley teaches mainly first-years, he explained that “scheduling classes the day of Housing Day just seems like a recipe to create impossible situations. I don't begrudge students wanting to have fun and celebrate... I don't begrudge teachers [for] wanting to teach. It

feels like right now, [administration] is kind of trying to have it both ways.”

As far as assignments throughout the break, each educator viewed the period differently in hopes of taking advantage of the time. Turley expressed that “[he] personally [tries] to set it up so that there's no more work happening than there would be between any other classes,” keeping the amount of work manageable and not assigning any more than usual due to the extended time away. Saleh conversely stated, “I personally think it's good not to have assignments during the break; I think it's a great time to catch up on the things you're behind on.”

Saleh also discussed the potential benefits of veering away from traditional assignments, explaining how “giving students more resources to ask questions during the break would be much better than giving them new assignments because...it's better to make sure that they understand the things that were already taught in the course, not to learn new things.”

During this Spring Break, Turley spent his time acing “the third round” at bar trivia, as he enjoys “travel[ing] back to Texas” when he can. Saleh spent his time collaborating with a group of friends from Harvard. “We had a jam session at the Memorial Hall. They have a proper jamming room, which is really nice. So we went there. We spent some time coming up with music, which was really nice.”

These insights on Spring Break provide students with a humanizing and unique understanding of how campus life functions even while we are gone. A monumental effort is employed by the academic community as they attempt to carefully balance maintaining course momentum and allowing students to enjoy the time off during Spring Break.

VINCENT HONRUBIA '27  
(VINCENTHONRUBIA@COLLEGE.  
HARVARD.EDU) WRITES NEWS FOR  
THE INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY SEATTLE HICKEY '25



# Quest for Knowledge: The Senior Thesis

Narratives of intellectual exploration and discovery.

BY MISHELLE WIEWIORA '27

In the heart of many undergraduate academic journeys lies a pinnacle moment, representing years of learning, exploration, and dedication: the senior thesis. Crafting a senior thesis allows students to get involved in a rewarding process of exploring new challenges that leave a lasting impact on their lives.

The senior thesis is a research project, typically between 30-130 pages in length, that students undertake in their final year of study. Yasmine Bazos '24, a History and Literature concentrator, said this experience allows students to “come away from your four years of studying with one product of your own that requires intense research.” Indeed, the senior thesis holds prominence in the Harvard experience as it allows students to explore intellectual interests, engage in scholarly works, and showcase their cumulative years of education.

For Bazos, her journey began with a spark of interest ignited by distinguished Harvard professor Maya Jasanoff's course on the British Empire. This curiosity transformed into a thesis exploring the history and contemporary implications of the opium wars. She delved into the historical, cultural, and geopolitical ramifications of the opium trade. As Bazos shared the transformative impact of her thesis, she said, “It's an incredible opportunity to think about your work ethic, your work patterns, and how you personally think and operate.”

Each thesis allows students to immerse themselves in topics they are passionate about and contribute their unique perspectives to the academic discourse. Chuby Uche '24, a Government concentrator, shared the role of the thesis as “a culmination of trying to explore something that you were passionate about...or expand upon something already pre-existing.” Through

his thesis on health policy during COVID-19, Uche shed light on crucial societal issues while adding his own impactful additions that enriched the academic conversation.

Crafting a senior thesis is undeniably a challenging, long journey. Uche mentioned it is filled with many late nights, meetings, workshops, and more. However, Grace Coolidge '24 articulated that “overcoming these hurdles ultimately instills a profound sense of confidence and accomplishment, paving the way for future success.” As a concentrator in History with a secondary in Art, Film, and Visual Studies, Coolidge, motivated by a passion for understanding the intricacies of war and activism, focused her thesis on Harvard student protests in the late 1960s surrounding the Vietnam War.

Uche shared that the thesis demands “spend[ing] as much time [as] you can in terms of planning.” Coolidge's experience likewise reinforced his statement as she recalled her proactive approach to researching, planning, and meeting with department members to discuss her plan. “I started over the summer and started my research pretty early. Thank God I did because the process would have been way more hectic if I hadn't,” she said. For most seniors, early preparation and consistent dedication are vital in managing a thesis.

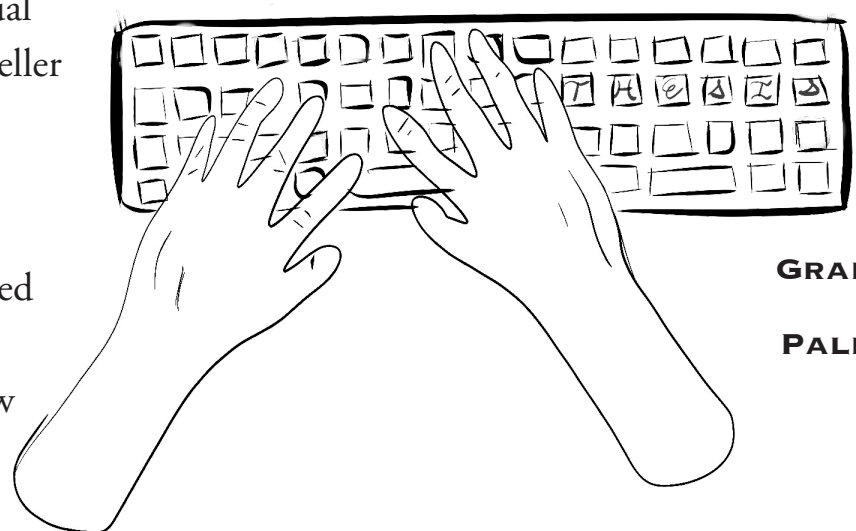
Ultimately, although the senior thesis is an arduous process, it leaves a permanent mark on students' lives and shapes their intellectual trajectories. Jacob Bueller '24, an Astrophysics concentrator, shared insights in his thesis journey which involved designing and testing components for a new X-ray telescope currently under

proposal. He shared, “It's one of the experiences that I'm definitely most glad I had. I definitely learned a lot.” Coolidge seconds this, explaining, “It's the biggest time commitment you can have in your hands, but it's also the most rewarding process.” Essentially, these seniors all agree that all their dedication will feel rewarding when crossing the finish line. As Bazos articulates, “It's a really worthwhile experience that you don't get in many other aspects [of your college career].”

At the end of the senior thesis, students have the opportunity to write an acknowledgments section. This section highlights all the professors, mentors, and others who guided students in their thesis writing process. Uche highlighted that the “most rewarding thing” was his ability to form closer relationships with his mentors. He also shared his acknowledgments section, comparing it to “a whole novel” because of the number of individuals he wishes to thank for their support, guidance, and encouragement throughout the process.

This transformative experience equips them with the skills and tools to navigate the many challenges they will experience both personally and professionally. Overall, the senior thesis establishes a lasting impact on intellectual and personal development. For those considering pursuing a senior thesis, Uche said, “I highly recommend doing it... It's a feeling that you'll never forget.”

MISHELLE WIEWIORA '27 (MWIEWIORA@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS INSPIRED TO ONE DAY LEAVE HER SCHOLARLY MARK.



GRAPHIC BY  
EMILY  
PALLAN '27



# Point: Major Decisions Take Time

Waiting until sophomore fall to choose your concentration will change your life for the better.

BY SOPHIA GHAFOURI '27

“What’s your concentration?” is a question all of us have heard one too many times. Even freshmen are faced with the infamous question, despite having months before they need to make their decision. The expectation is clear—we all need to have a defined path from the moment we step on campus. With course registration opening in early April, the pressure felt from day one is only building. As a result, Harvard students who were taking their time to choose a concentration may expedite an important, life-altering process. Instead, it is important to free ourselves from these expectations and understand the time we have at our disposal to choose a concentration that speaks to our interests and goals.

It is true that concentrations are often flexible and are certainly not the end-all-be-all in the career you pursue. An English concentrator can just as well decide to pursue a career in medicine, and a biology concentrator can go on to become a teacher. However, if you take all the time at your disposal to better understand what it is you truly want to do, the time you spend in college studying that subject will give you an advantage when entering the workforce.

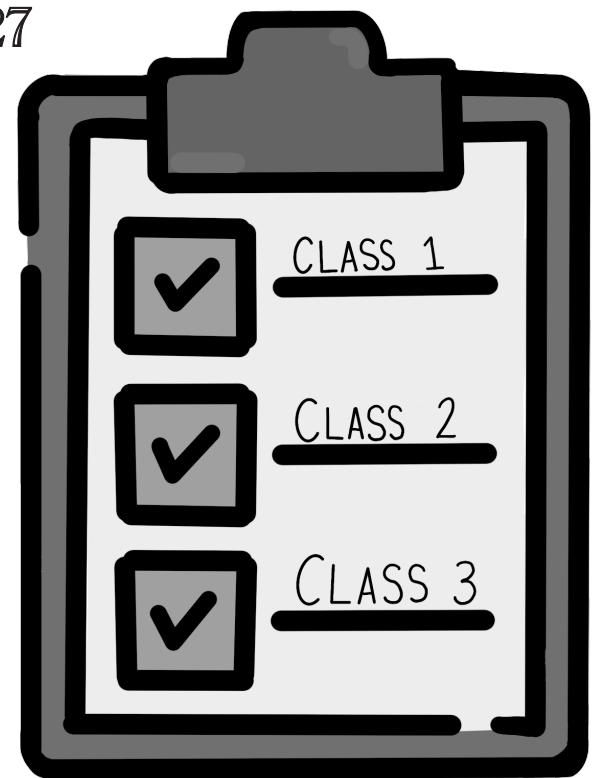
Additionally, for students who are hoping to attend medical school or other graduate school programs, what you major in while in college can be crucial to your acceptance. Studies have additionally shown that a student’s choice of major in college stands to greatly impact their future earning, listing Operations Research as the highest paying major post-graduation at a yearly salary of \$112,097, and Cosmetology as the lowest, at \$16,072. When so many things are at stake, hastily choosing a concentration can stand to have great financial and lifestyle consequences.

For those who are set on financial success, grades are likely of extreme importance to you. Yet, hard work and dedication might not be enough to get you

that 4.0. Doing something that you love can be just as crucial to your success, so it is important to take the time to find what that might be. Research has shown that students who choose a major that aligns with their true interests are more likely to graduate with higher GPAs, while students who do the opposite can experience issues with engagement and retention. Think back on some of the most boring classes you have had to suffer through. It was likely infinitely harder to focus in those classes than in ones where you found genuine interest in the subject matter. So, while you may have been kicking yourself for daydreaming in class when tests came around, your inability to engage was not entirely your fault. When we are genuinely interested in a subject matter, we pay closer attention in class, process information with more efficiency, and can more readily employ our self-regulatory skills. So, make it easy for yourself, and take the time to choose something you love.

Your concentration additionally has the power to affect your overall well-being. Declaring a concentration means dedicating significant time and energy to working with the subject matter, so it is important that you are passionate about what you choose. With 57 concentrations to choose from and a myriad of career paths that stem from each, finding what speaks to you requires time and consideration.

Taking classes in different fields, involving yourself in related material outside of the classroom, and using the summer after your first year to continue exploring your passions allows you to enter sophomore year ready to choose something that excites you, instead of making a premature decision. While students often worry that this wastes valuable time which could be used towards developing skills within a concentration, this process allows you to develop a more diverse skill set that applies to a range of academic fields, including the



concentration you may decide to pursue.

Furthermore, when students are greatly concerned about wasting time, switching concentrations is something to be avoided at all costs. The process can be difficult, time-consuming, and can cost semesters worth of time that could have been used to fill requirements. If you choose your concentration without giving yourself enough time to make a decision you are confident in, you may later have to face the consequences of such a hasty choice.

There are more than 3,700 courses at Harvard, each offering instruction on anything from Taylor Swift to Cancer Biology. Your first year, while you have the freedom to explore various courses without the pressure of fulfilling concentration requirements, is the perfect moment to try out something new and exciting. This time can also be used to meet with advisors or get to know professors and students within different concentrations.

When time is given to you, take advantage of it. There is no rush to decide on a concentration before sophomore fall, so dive into all the opportunities at your fingertips while you can and discover what calls to you before committing to something with the potential to have a significant impact on your life.

**SOPHIA GHAFOURI '27 (SGHAFOURI@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS RETHINKING HER DECISION TO CONCENTRATE IN ECONOMICS.**

**GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26**

# Counterpoint: Ready for Registration?

Do yourself a favor by deciding on a concentration before sophomore fall.

BY EMMIE PALFREY '27

I vividly remember my first time enrolling in college courses.

It was the week before classes started—the week before my first semester of college—and I had no idea what I wanted to concentrate in. Dreams of Psychology, English, History, and Government all danced around in my head as I excitedly clicked through course reports and added various classes to my Crimson Cart.

It's perfectly normal to come into college, especially a liberal arts institution like Harvard, having little knowledge of what you're looking to study. I would even argue that keeping an open mind as you enter your first year is healthy; it's good to try new subjects and get out of your comfort zone. I never would have piqued an interest in Biology if I hadn't impulsively taken Life and Physical Sciences last semester. But just because we are not required to declare our concentrations until sophomore fall, doesn't mean we should wait until then to have a good sense of our intended major, nor that we should put immense career pressure on our decisions. Moreover, there are still opportunities to branch out and explore while maintaining an academic focus area, and carefully choosing a concentration early can help you efficiently move through your four years.

There are logistical advantages to deciding on a concentration early. A lot of the stressful course decision-making dissolves once you decide on a major. Instead of rifling through various departments' intro courses or blazing through Gen Eds, you'll have a solid sense of which classes need to be taken and when.

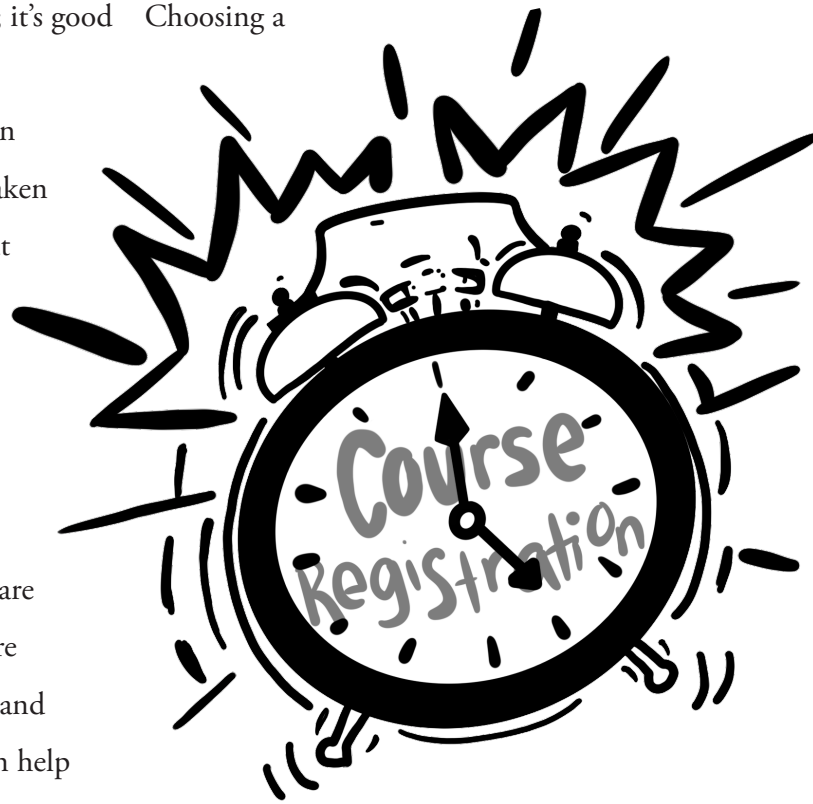
With a clear sense of your concentration, you can create a comprehensive three or three-and-a-half-year plan allowing for flexibility in junior and senior year, when you may be studying for post-graduate exams or applying for jobs and schools. Take independent studies, a personalized project tailored to your area of interest, typically done during junior or senior year, for example. Students who complete independent studies can benefit from one-on-one instruction, the opportunity to get involved in research, and the chance to show future employers the ability to organize and execute an advanced project. Projects like these may be trickier

to fit into your schedule if you're racing to complete concentration requirements close to graduation.

But beyond the practical benefits of choosing a concentration early is the mental benefit. Knowing which courses you have to complete and having a clear four-year plan may ease overall academic stress. Furthermore, having little direction in terms of coursework is likely only to exacerbate stress levels. A study published by the National Library of Medicine demonstrated a clear correlation between “worse academic stress and poor mental well-being.”

All of this is easier said than done.

Choosing a



concentration seems like a big life decision that can determine the course of your career. But the truth is, college majors actually aren't particularly determinate of career outcomes. Statistically, only 27% of college graduates work in fields related to their concentration. While it's true that some industries are higher paying than others, a student's ability to enter those fields is more determined by soft skills as opposed to having a “relevant” major, according to an article published by *Forbes*. In other words, choosing a concentration may not be as much of a major decision (pun intended) as you might think.

Take some of Harvard's famous alumni. Actress and filmmaker Rashida Jones '97 studied Comparative Religion but went on to join the entertainment industry. Yo-Yo Ma '76, a world-renowned cellist, concentrated in Anthropology. Though both achieved immeasurable success, neither Jones' nor Ma's undergraduate concentrations were necessarily

predictive of their respective careers.

Besides, a student's choice of college is likely more important than their choice of major. Research done in several states has revealed that across the board, regardless of major, graduates from more selective universities tend to make more money, on average, than those from second-tier schools. So picking Harvard over a less selective college may already have been a more determinate career choice than deciding on a concentration.

In a few weeks, we'll return to Q-Guide Reports and Crimson Carts to choose courses for next fall. This time, I won't be spending hours pouring over course descriptions and impulsively enrolling in subjects I know nothing about. Instead, I'll spend some time selecting classes of interest from a specific concentration, maybe finding a Gen Ed or two. It won't be any less exciting—we only take on average thirty-two courses during our time here, so choosing classes will *always* be a big deal. Rather, I will go into course selection with a bit more peace of mind, having a better sense of where I am headed academically.

There's something thrilling about coming into college and taking classes outside of your comfort zone. Going into freshman year with an open, unattached mind is meant to be exhilarating; many of us *chose* a liberal arts institution for the chance to explore many fields of study before settling down.

Despite this, choosing a concentration doesn't have to take the full year and a half Harvard allows, nor is it an end to the adrenaline rush of your first course selection. Instead, you are able to explore in depth a singular field, gain a meaningful understanding of it, and pursue the aspects you're passionate about—which I would argue is just as exhilarating and intellectually stimulating. So I encourage my fellow freshmen to think critically about the subjects that pique their interest and run with it. It might blossom into a career, or it may just be a worthwhile exploration of academic interest. Either way, you'll undoubtedly benefit from having a clearer picture of your academic path for the next three years.

**EMMIE PALFREY '27 (EPALFREY@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WROTE THIS ARTICLE WHILE PLANNING OUT HER COURSES FOR NEXT FALL.**

**GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26**



# Point: The Case for Institutional Neutrality

Nurturing critical thinking and open dialogue in higher education.

BY JONAH KARAFIOL '26

The role of universities in shaping public discourse has been widely contested, especially in recent months. In the wake of rampant debate on issues such as the Israel– Hamas war and President Claudine Gay’s resignation from her post, universities have been criticized for both partisan and neutral responses. Some institutions have released formal statements on these issues, while others have stayed silent.

The question of the proper course of action for universities—to stay neutral or take a stance—begins with their role. Many students see college as a means to an end, a stepping stone to a lucrative career. However, at its core, higher education is intended to teach students to think both critically and for themselves. Indeed, universities serve as a crucial bridge between adolescence and adulthood, providing students with a unique opportunity to explore diverse perspectives away from the influence of their parents. They meet peers from a variety of backgrounds, take classes in a wide range of disciplines, and are exposed to new viewpoints of the world around them. Universities have a responsibility to foster free and open dialogue between students—by imposing their views on their students, they stifle this discourse before it can even begin. Therefore, institutions must practice institutional neutrality and refrain from taking stances on political issues.

In *Harvard’s Quest for Fulfillment*, *Independent Sports* Editor Luke Wagner ’26 described how Harvard students lose sight of the purpose of college—to learn—as they seek prestigious internships and high-paying jobs immediately after college. He warned that “Harvard University and its students need to shift from a myopic emphasis on career-centric goals to a more holistic and growth-oriented approach, reclaiming the true essence of education.” This true essence

is only possible when students can think for themselves. During the first 18 years of their lives, students’ parents exert a major influence on their personal beliefs. When students leave home to go to college, many face an opportunity to reason independently of their parents and other hometown influences for the first time.

When institutions set University-wide precedents on political issues, they deprive their students of this opportunity. They assert their stance as the correct one and delegitimize all others. Education should foster critical thinking skills, encourage students to question prevailing beliefs, and empower them to form informed opinions based on evidence and analysis. If institutions genuinely believe in the validity of their own opinions, students’ own analysis would lead them to the same conclusion. But, they disrupt this process by imposing their own views on students.

To make matters worse, these issues are not as clear-cut as universities make them out to be. Their populations undoubtedly include students who disagree with their statements; in issuing statements, universities ostracize these students and disincentivize them from participating in free discourse on campus. Students still have access to protests and public dialogue, but universities enact additional barriers to freely exchanging ideas by setting school-wide precedents through formal statements. Disagreeing with peers on controversial issues can be difficult enough, and by failing to maintain institutional neutrality, universities further hinder the open discussion of controversial issues.

Universities’ polarizing statements divide student bodies into two groups: conformers and dissenters. Conformers often find community and validation in their agreement with the university’s position, while dissenters may retreat into smaller, like-minded groups where their

differing views are accepted, resulting in echo chambers that amplify the division. This can lead to a campus where challenging discussions are avoided and ideological diversity is diminished, as students may refrain from voicing dissenting opinions that clash with the university-endorsed narrative. In these polarized environments, meaningful dialogue and exchange of ideas become increasingly rare.

According to the Pew Research Center, the divide between Republicans and Democrats in the United States is the deepest it has been in the last two decades. About two-thirds of conservatives and half of liberals say most of their friends share their political views, and approximately 30 percent of both parties’ members believe their rivals threaten the nation’s well-being. Cross-aisle compromise is growing increasingly difficult, with 78 percent of voters saying that the parties cannot agree on basic facts. By failing to uphold institutional neutrality and contributing to a larger trend of political polarization in the United States, universities risk making open debate between their students impossible.

Instead of issuing partisan statements, universities should focus on creating an environment where open discussion occurs organically and students are encouraged to form their own opinions on major political issues. By refraining from imposing their own views, universities will allow their students to engage in the critical thinking process that is at the heart of higher education. This approach not only fosters the development of well-rounded individuals capable of navigating complex issues with nuance and understanding, but it also upholds the core values of academic excellence, intellectual freedom, and the pursuit of truth.

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# Counterpoint: Silence is a Stance

Universities should not remain neutral on endemic social issues.

BY RANIA JONES '27

In the hallowed halls of academia, there exists an impossible dichotomy. On the one hand, universities are being told not to speak out against pressing political issues, and if they do, their comments are heavily critiqued. On the other hand, if they do nothing, then their ability to retain a diverse student body and maintain their reputation as centers of innovation becomes jeopardized. Given Harvard's heavy political turmoil over the past few months, the concept of institutional neutrality in universities has come under scrutiny.

Interim Harvard President Alan Garber '76 is set to announce a working group to consider whether Harvard should adopt a policy of institutional neutrality or not. If Harvard were to adopt a policy on institutional neutrality, the University's leaders, presidents, provosts, deans, department chairs, and others, would not be able to offer statements on social and political issues, despite any strong opinions of their own.

Some argue that universities should remain politically impartial, abstaining from taking sides on contentious issues to cultivate an environment of open debate and intellectual freedom. However, the idea of institutional neutrality is deeply flawed and maintains undeniable limitations. Universities should abandon the notion of neutrality and instead embrace a more engaged and principled stance on social and political issues.

Arguing for institutional neutrality is in itself taking an institutional position. Historically, higher education has often been at the forefront of movements that challenge the status quo. Universities do not exist in a vacuum, especially in institutions like Harvard with prestige and fame, where our

stances are taken to broadly influence other higher education institutions. In place of retreating into a stance of neutrality, universities need to embrace their role as engines of knowledge production and actively contribute to public debates.

The modern mission of the university is to nurture critical thinking. Universities thus cannot shy away from controversy. Engaging with social issues encourages critical thinking and fosters a culture of debate, disagreement, and even discomfort. Students need to grapple with complex societal challenges and develop the skills to be informed and engaged citizens. Universities are hubs of knowledge cultivation, and to argue that these institutions should remain silent is to argue that knowledge is somehow neutral.

Universities can inspire campus discourse by critically speaking out on social issues. The focus should be on the merits of the issue itself, not aligning themselves with a particular political agenda. Navigating social issues requires a nuanced approach. Universities should be looking to cultivate a vibrant, intellectual environment that tackles complex issues without stifling dissent.

It is crucial to differentiate between an institution taking a stance and creating a space for diverse viewpoints. When a university takes a public stance, it normalizes discussion about the issue on campus, empowering students to feel their own voices are relevant and encouraging them to engage with the topic. Neutrality does not guarantee fair debate but rather creates a vacuum where no clear guidelines exist for student engagement. Taking a stance does not silence opposing viewpoints but instead encourages a more structured and supported environment for discussion.



It is misguided to think that a university can ever be an entirely neutral space. In an era defined by increasing polarization and global challenges, the notion of institutional neutrality appears increasingly outdated and unrealistic. The global issues facing society today require decisive action, not passive neutrality. Universities, with their wealth of knowledge and resources, have a positive historical track record of sparking political change.

In the 1980s, Harvard, along with several other peer institutions, divested its endowments from companies doing business with South Africa in protest of apartheid—a powerful statement that placed significant pressure on the South African government. In the 2010s, Harvard was the grounds for a robust student movement advocating for fossil fuel divestment. After hundreds of student activists stormed the field at the Harvard-Yale football game in 2021, Harvard announced that they would divest from fossil fuels.

Fundamentally, taking a position is not easy for a university and must be done with caution and intention. Instead of shying away from controversy, universities should embrace their role as agents of change and moral leaders in society, reclaim their role as vanguards of truth, and confront ignorance with conviction.

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**GRAPHIC BY LAUREN ZHANG '27**



# Lent Update!

Almost 40 days in review: the highlights of Lent 2024 and looking forward to Easter.

BY MIA TAVARES '27 AND EMMIE PALFREY '27

Prayer, fasting, almsgiving—the phrase Christians repeat over and over during the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter. In the Christian tradition, across denominations, Lent is a time of “solemnity and self-reflection,” as described by the United Kingdom’s Christian Enquiry Agency. Christians use this time to repent for their wrongdoings and turn towards a more holy life, which, for the six weeks of Lent, involves extra time in prayer, fasting from luxuries, and charitable giving or volunteering. Lent culminates in the joyous day of Easter, when Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus.

So what is it like being a Christian during Lent 2024?

## Pescatarian Fridays

Not all Christians are required to do so, but for many, meat is off-limits on Fridays during Lent, which forces us to reach for the questionable grilled tofu or vegan options. Thankfully, HUDS has installed fish and chips lunches every Friday, making the midday meal a no-brainer. Still, we often find ourselves grabbing under-ripe bananas and peanut butter at dinner.

## Ash Wednesday = Valentine’s Day?

We are not sure what St. Valentine had in mind for his feast day, but we are betting it did not involve clashing holidays. Still, Ash Wednesday often falls on February 14th, prompting Christian couples to reevaluate the most romantic day of the year, trading in their chocolates for church services and red roses for rosaries.

This year, it could have started with a church date. Christians often attend services on Ash Wednesday to mark the beginning of Lent. In some traditions, such as the Roman Catholic faith, priests will mark the foreheads of churchgoers with an ash cross as a symbol of repentance. Though not all Christians participate, Roman Catholics and many Protestants, such as Episcopalians, Lutherans, and Presbyterians, can be spotted with ashes at the Lent kick-off.

Ash Wednesday mostly marks a solemn day of the year—a day Christians show remorse for their wrongdoings and begin a period of self-reflection. It was not the easiest to balance with a day full of love

and luxury. But do not worry; we still put on pink and sent out our galentines.

## Mud, Lacerations, and Ashes

“Is there dirt on your face?”  
“Are you injured?”  
“Did you hit your head?”

These are some of the many questions a Christian might have gotten sporting a charcoal forehead this February 14th. Our responses? *Yes, the dirt makes me feel grounded. Yes, I’m badly lacerated—please help. Yes, I hit my forehead on some palm ashes.*

(In all seriousness, though, those situations are great opportunities to start up a conversation about Lent and invite others to support whatever you choose to fast from, whether it is foods, bad habits, or screen time!)

Saying Bye to Snooping Around Social media is often considered one of our worst vices. It is arguably one of the hardest things to give up during Lent, especially this month with countless spring break and royal-family-saga posts filling up our feeds. How are we supposed to keep up with all the drama if we are not constantly glued to X, Instagram, or TikTok? It might seem like an impossible task. But as Christians, we are called to avoid excessive judgment and gossiping, according to biblical passages such as Proverbs 20:19. So during Lent, we would recommend sticking to good ol’ newspapers and asking people in person what they have been up to. Detox a little. Try reading some exciting Bible stories (such as David and Goliath) instead of scrolling through edited photos and thirst trap videos.

## Not Dry January, but Dry Lent

We all know Jesus turned water into wine, but for many 21+ students this Lent, their wine is going right back to water. And while these lovely young authors do not imbibe, we know that giving up alcohol can be hard, especially when it seems like just about everyone is regularly toeing the line of alcoholism during college. Walking into a grimy club dead-sober might be scary, but you just might find that you really can enjoy yourself with just the right combination of fun friends and well-mixed music.

## Giving Back

It is easy to neglect the third task of lent—almsgiving—but it is one of the most important aspects of the 40-day period. Along with fasting and extra prayer, we are called to give back to our community, whether through small gestures of kindness or more deliberate volunteering. This Lent, these authors took up random acts of kindness and spent time volunteering in various homeless shelters in the area. We hope to carry these practices into the rest of the year, too!

## Looking Forward to Easter!

The last week of Lent is Holy Week, kicked off by Palm Sunday, followed by Holy Thursday and Good Friday (a day of fasting), and culminating in Easter Sunday, the celebration of Jesus’s resurrection. Easter services are some of the most extravagant of the Christian year; churches across denominations decorate with spring flowers and celebrate with pastel colors and Easter hymns.

This year, Memorial Church, the interdenominational Protestant congregation located in the Yard, is hosting Easter services at 6:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m., and

11:00 a.m. Similarly, St. Paul’s, the

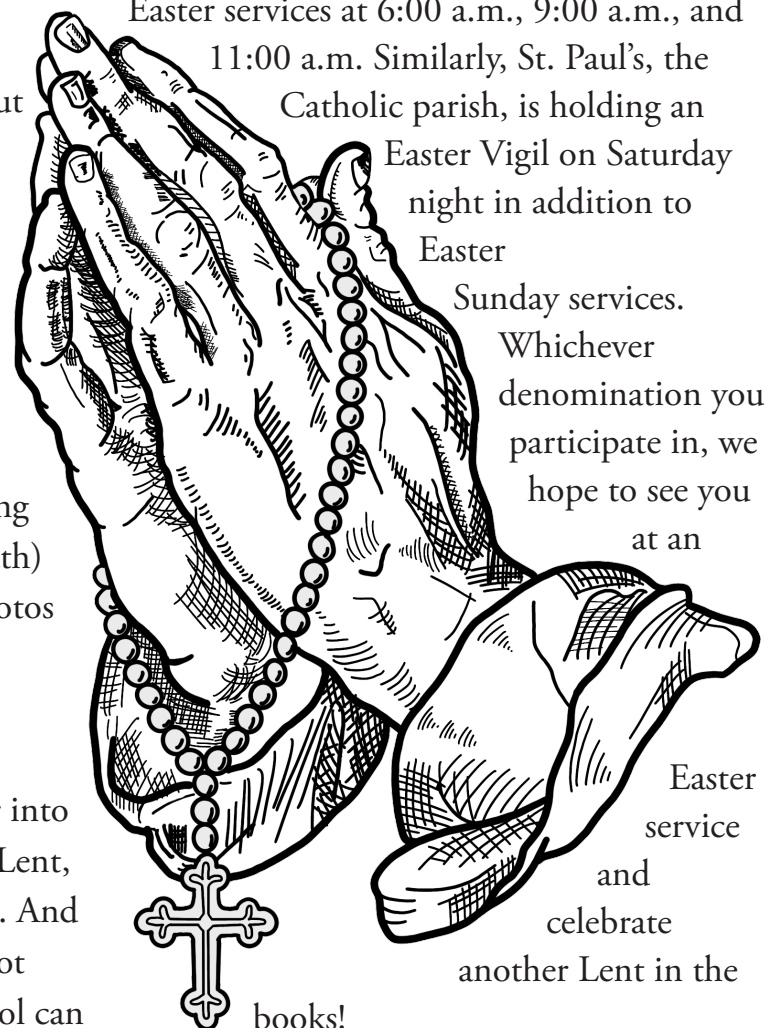
Catholic parish, is holding an Easter Vigil on Saturday night in addition to

Easter

Sunday services.

Whichever denomination you participate in, we hope to see you at an

Easter service and celebrate another Lent in the



books!

MIA TAVARES '27 (MIATAVARES@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) AND EMMIE PALFREY '27 (EPALFREY@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) CANNOT WAIT TO PUT ON THEIR EASTER BEST THIS WEEKEND!

GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26



# A Joyous Spring Break in Pakistan

My ode to Harvard Pakistan Trek and other political musings.

BY TAYBAH CRORIE '25

Pakistan's ex-Prime Minister, Shahid Abbasi, turned towards me.

"What's your 9/11 theory?" I threw out my question to him from behind my cup of tea, perched in his living room post-dinner buffet at his home in Islamabad, Pakistan. The Al Jazeera journalist had left a short while ago. Her departure lent casualness and intimacy to the room, making my question wholly appropriate. The 27 of us leaned forward, anticipating the soundbite that would cap our first day of spring break—Harvard Pakistan Trek edition.

A week prior, I had very little idea of what my spring break would entail other than a ghastly 17-hour flight, Google Image photos of Islamabad and Lahore, and the excitement of beginning to fast for Ramadan. Various changing lists of students had been floated around, with names from the College, Kennedy, Business, Divinity, and Medical Schools. Yet, I knew fewer than a handful of the people on the trip and even less regarding the itinerary. I left Boston with a sort of blind faith, which, over the course of the week, turned out to be well rewarded.

How is it that you can come to know a country in just seven days? I know Pakistan in hazy sunlight by its warm air streaming across our skin as we race to the Palace of Mirrors on the back of the painted rickshaw. Knowing comes from bargaining for jhumka earrings in the small shops that lean higgledy-piggledy against Badshahi Mosque's walls. It comes from wearing the bright new orange shalwar kameez attire I bought with a fistful of 5,000 Pakistani rupees. It is waking up bleary-eyed to the sound of the adhan cutting through the darkness at 4:45 a.m., realizing I've missed the pre-dawn sehri meal.

I know Pakistan by kneeling down, head to the ground in prayer, next to a woman and child reciting the same Arabic verses as me and knowing that should I turn to them later, there will be no shared tongue for conversation. It is by looking at the cows lined up as our bus drives past the country auction held amidst the fertile green rice paddy fields. It is observing the marshes' water levels that lie well below the edges of the riverbank, patiently waiting for the next monsoon. It is seeing the myna birds flit

through the ornamental red flowers of the blooming Gulmohar trees that line well-groomed avenue streets.

Knowing is whispering to each other in the alcoves of the restored Mughal Shahi Hammam about sidling away to play Ludo board games in the illegal shisha lounge. It is bringing the scarf across my newly washed, cut, and blow-dried hair, having emerged from the salon post-massage-and-facial, face gleaming, wallet hardly touched. It is watching sugarcane juice be squeezed for me and spooning nutty kulfa-almond ice cream into my mouth on Haveli's rooftop under a full, heaving red moon. It is sitting with my new friends, who last week were strangers, as hot coals are delivered under the table by waiters to keep the cool night's air at bay.

And the food! Oh, the food! Every morning, we woke at 4:30 a.m. to a hotel buffet with chicken karahi, keema, chickpeas, and an omelet station. Iftar dinners, hosted by organizations including the Harvard Club of Pakistan and the Fulbright Program, were another glorious buffet. Korma, biryani, nihari, paya, rosh malai—a spicy, rich, endless eating with eyes and mouths. Behind the counter, fresh kebabs and marinated meats are grilled in large batches. In front, warm, crispy, thin jalebi are served, doused in syrup. All is washed down by copious amounts of tea.

More formulaically, or more "Harvard-ly" perhaps, you also know a country through its politics, legal systems, and economy. The Kennedy School students are clearly very good at what they do, and sitting beside them at meetings with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Qazi Faez Isa, the ex-Prime Minister Shahid Abbasi, and the first and only female judge on the Pakistan Supreme Court, Harvard alum Ayesha Malik LL.M. '99, we started to cobble together an image of Pakistan.

Corruption and poor governance are arguably the trademarks of developing countries. There are many pockets to line and egos to stroke. Often, grappling with and



unraveling the true wielders of power takes some time, but not so in Pakistan. It became apparent from our first day that the ultimate authority is the military. From dining in a military-owned restaurant to observing a Supreme Court case against the army, to hearing politicians openly bemoan the chokehold the military has around their necks, we came to terms with the reality of the pseudo-democracy enforced in Pakistan.

The military operates hospitals, schools, roads, agriculture, natural disaster responses, energy, and every other facet of life. They remain a constant force, even as politicians are jailed and new governments are brought in. We asked plenty of questions—the *whys and whos and so-whats*—and every actor with their own biases and agendas would present a new answer. People offered up their truths candidly but carefully. One person got up mid-conversation whilst eating with me to quickly walk around the room to gather who could possibly be eavesdropping before returning and speaking even more guardedly than before.

To set the backdrop to our visit, Pakistan held its general elections in February, just a month prior. Despite former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), winning the highest number of seats, Khan remains imprisoned, and his opposition, Shehbaz Sharif, was sworn in as PM instead. We listened as politicians besmirched each other and touted themselves as the shiny new thing. We spoke of potential military coups as an ever-present, forever-looming possibility.

We would return to the hotel, aggregating in rooms to debrief, packed in, eyes sparkling with outrage and amusement. "Is it even possible to fix Pakistan's democracy?" "Isn't a military dictatorship actually preferable?" "Can you believe the gall of that man?" my fellow trekkers would exclaim, not really in the pursuit of answers, but simply to digest much of the absurdity of the day's main "yappers."



Not that the situation is hopeless; it is quite the contrary. An entire day in Islamabad was dedicated to policy, during which the Trek group split into different policy areas. Some students went to a novel health clinic, others to a school in a slum, and a few to the Human Rights Watch headquarters. I found myself, quite fittingly as a Londoner, at the British High Commission. We all coalesced again at Tabadlab, a consulting firm and think tank working in the hopes that Pakistan can be better. That day, I wanted to have the same job as every person I met.

My focus area was energy and climate change. Pakistan struggles with energy scarcity, flooding, and heatwaves, all exacerbated by global warming. It is clear that the extent of Pakistan's problems, in fact, the entire world's problems, are too big to be solved by one individual alone. As Mosharraf Zaidi, Tabadlab's founder, expressed, we're "fucked." Yet, through diplomacy, philanthropy, business, academia, politics, and law, all the people we met in Pakistan strive for small change. This is their personal struggle or "jihad," as Chief Justice Isa put it. The Pakistani people are a resilient lot, and I left humbled and inspired.

It is also in a place like Pakistan that you understand the power of the Harvard name and network. The access we had for hours at a time to influential figures to probe and converse would never have been remotely possible for me as an average tourist. In what world would the Chief Justice spend three hours of his time simply lunching with us and avoiding questions like the great lawyer he is? Or would the first and only female judge of the Supreme Court, Malik, meet us for a morning conversation? Or would we be welcomed for a wonderful lunch and a remarkably forthright chat at the British High Commission, if not for Sam G. Sherman MPP '20, Harvard Kennedy School alum?

I left iftar dinners at the Harvard Club of Pakistan and Fulbright Pakistan Program with long contact lists and promises to stay in alumni homes the next time I visit Pakistan. Many of us made promises to come back.

Yet it had become quite clear that many Pakistan Trekkers' parents had been, and still were, opposed to the trip. Our group consisted of students from all different ethnicities, religions, and nationalities—a visual motley group with an unusual number of six-foot-plus individuals towering over the locals. Thus, we all came with different

pre-formed notions of Pakistan.

For many Americans, the country is viewed solely through a security lens. According to American perspectives, a New York Times Connections game for Pakistan's group of four might include Osama Bin Laden, Afghanistan, the Taliban, and Malala Yousafzai. Yet, when I forwarded on the email for this trip back in November, my father replied 13 minutes later to say, "I think you should really try to go on this trip if you can."

As a British-Bangladeshi Muslim who grew up in London with many Pakistani friends, I did not share many of these American apprehensions. Pre-1947 Partition, we were all one India and pre-Bangladesh's independence in 1971, we were West and East Pakistan. My family had served in the Pakistani military, attended university in Pakistan, and fought in the war against Pakistan. Our histories are



intertwined. Thus, in many ways, getting to know Pakistan felt like an opportunity to get to know myself, and every person we met would ask about our respective backgrounds.

Two other Bangladeshi Harvard students were on the trip, and our backgrounds garnered responses that differed widely from Pakistani to Pakistani. "You guys kicked us out!" said one Harvard Law School (HLS) alum. "The loss of Bangladesh is a deep source of shame which my family still feels keenly," said another HLS graduate. "My Bangladeshi sister—my compatriot," another woman said as she folded me into a hug.

Most startling of all, however, in the National Assembly of Pakistan (their Houses of Parliament equivalent), an exhibit on Pakistan's history contained a noticeably glaring omission: for the year 1971, a single depiction of a rope broken in two with the caption "Less Said the Better." Truthfully, this cut me deeply. My week in Pakistan grew a love in my heart for it. In an alternate universe, I, too, would have been a Pakistani. Walking around, I looked almost indistinguishable.

Just as I am a Harvard student and

Bangladeshi, so too am I British. My voice labels me as such. I currently lead the Harvard British Society as Prime Minister, and part of my responsibility, I feel, is to be frank about Britain's colonial legacy. England's handprints leave no stone untouched in Pakistan. Colonial influence endures in architecture, law, theater, and schooling. Lahore lies just 30 miles from Amritsar, the holiest city in Sikhism. The two cities are now forever separated by Britain's hamfisted border lines that cut through the land willy-nilly, as arbitrary as a bloodstain on the wall and resulting in the death of millions.

Along with the meddling British, the US and China did equally pop up in conversation. Pakistan has long played a role in US-China relations since the Cold War, caught in the middle of both superpowers. Pakistanis spoke of the Chinese and Americans as their "neo-colonialists." Who to court for investments? A ménage à trois perhaps? As Harvard students, we were told that for too long, Pakistan's place in the geopolitical landscape had been viewed through a unidimensional lens in the U.S. I write this account partly in the hope that I can hammer home how full-bodied and wonderfully complex Pakistan—the fifth most populous country in the world—is, just as I have come to understand it.

I find it very difficult to convey clearly the amount of gratitude I hold for the organizers of Pakistan Trek. Every day served as evidence of their labor of love. Sadiq Soofi '25, Ahmed Raza HKS MPA '24, Hamaad Mehal '23 - '24, and Abdullah Shahid Sial '27 would appear like shells of themselves at the day's end on the bus, shattered clearly by their efforts to pull together a thousand strings, people, and nightmarish logistics to ensure that we felt incredibly safe, constantly delighted, and so thoroughly well acquainted with Pakistan.

At the end of one day, at a Qawwali classical music night, as the instruments played and the singer sang, our eyes all closing, we tried desperately to remain awake just to feel that utter contentment for a second more.

**TAYBAH CRORIE '25 (TAYBAHCRORIE@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) STRONGLY RECOMMENDS YOU JOIN HARVARD PAKISTAN TREK NEXT YEAR. DON'T WORRY—YOU'LL ALWAYS BE ESCORTED BY POLICE WITH BIG GUNS.**

**PHOTOS BY QUIRIN BLOMBERG '24 AND SIMON LEVIEN '23 - '24**

# The Case for the Communal Bathroom

Why ensuite bathrooms should be phased out.

BY EMILY PALLAN '27

Picture this: It's the end of July, 5 p.m., and you just received your dorm assignment. After the typical 30-minute stalk that leads you to your new roommate's 5th-grade chorus concert video, you parcel through dorm facts to find out what kind of room and bathroom set-up you will have. A communal bathroom, though shared with your floor, does get cleaned daily by Campus Services. An ensuite bathroom, though you must clean it alongside two to eight people, means more privacy and no hallway showers! Yippee!

However, this initial sentiment of glee toward ensuite bathrooms is bound to change as, after a couple of weeks of living among your suitemates, problems arise. Different standards of cleanliness and repetitive discussions regarding cleaning schedules leave ensuite bathrooms feeling unbearable. Instead of subjecting students to all-too-awkward conversations about hygiene and cleaning sessions, all student bathrooms should be communal.

Depending on the suite, up to eight people could be cleaning one bathroom—a harder feat than imagined, especially when schedules are hard to adhere to and your suitemates may not share your cleaning preferences. Chastising people over their refusal to clean up after themselves is not ideal, so what could solve this problem? I ventured out to ask the maintenance department, one freshman sharing a hallway bathroom, and one with an ensuite bathroom to understand if all students would benefit from the communal lifestyle.

Upon questioning Jonathan Palumbo, a Harvard College communications team spokesperson, on how the department decides which bathrooms to clean, he directed me to the College's Student Handbook under "Care of Residential Property." The handbook states, "All students living in rooms containing an ensuite bathroom are responsible for the cleaning of the bathroom... Rooms will be inspected periodically during the year and at the end of each academic year. Charges will be levied for violations of rules and repair, including damages or other interventions resulting from lack of cleaning; these charges will be added to the occupants' term bill."

Since it's often difficult to hold students accountable for cleaning their own spaces, I felt compelled to ask them what their opinions on their current style of bathrooms were. Saira Rodriguez '27, a freshman in Holworthy Hall who shares an eight-person bathroom with her suitemates and the suite across the hallway, by no means enjoyed the ensuite bathroom life the first couple of months of school. "At first there definitely were some issues regarding keeping sinks clean, throwing and taking out trash, keeping the toilets clean, etc.," she said.

After setting up a cleaning schedule, Rodriguez soon realized that cleaning a bathroom is more than just delegating tasks to certain people. "I think we do a good job of cleaning each week. But I would love it if it were able to stay clean throughout the week. So if there were a service for bathrooms to be cleaned every day or even every other day I think we would definitely benefit from that," she said.

On the other hand, Nadia Borja '27, a freshman who lives in Canaday Hall and shares a hallway bathroom with just one more student than Rodriguez, has

conflicted feelings about her setup. As a person who spends much of her time in Rodriguez's dorm in Holworthy Hall, Borja offers a unique perspective in her comparison of ensuite and hallway bathrooms. "Contrary to popular opinion, I actually prefer ensuite bathrooms because, since my bathroom is outside of my suite, I get locked out [out of my suite] pretty often."

However, Borja does reflect on the sanitation aspect well. "I like the cleanliness of hallway bathrooms... I think they're cleaned once a day." Borja also positively reflects on her maintenance workers. "I really like the Campus Services worker who cleans my bathroom. Luz is the best!"

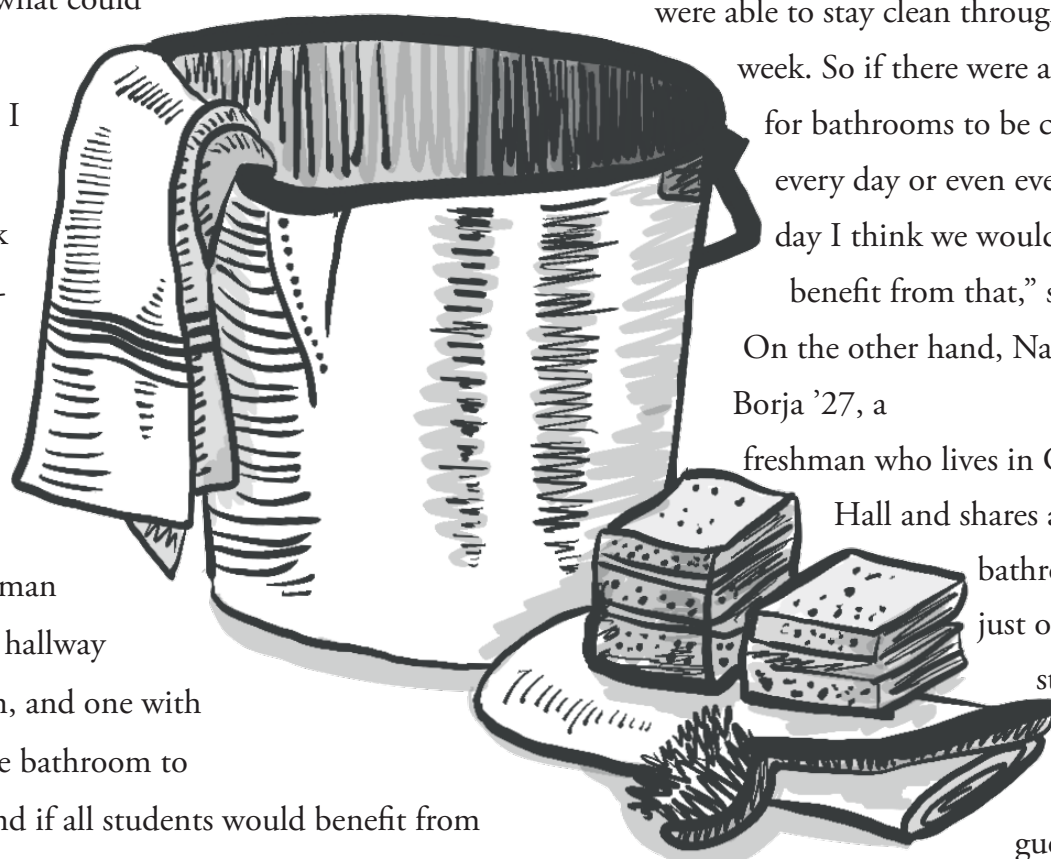
Borja has just one more person on her floor than the maximum number for ensuite bathrooms, yet her bathroom is cleaned daily, due to it being in the hallway. To rectify this problem and keep the blame off of Campus Services for not cleaning ensuite bathrooms, all bathrooms should be communal.

In the ensuite bathrooms that I've witnessed, students are quick to dispose of food in shared bathroom garbage and refuse to clean up after themselves when they shower. As college students, having to coordinate and enforce a cleaning schedule with multiple different people can be stress-inducing and shift the responsibility to specific suitemates who clean. This situation is especially heightened during freshman year when students can't choose suitemates that they feel share their cleaning and living styles.

Overall, keeping a shared space tidy is a difficult feat, but important to well-being. Although reconstructing these bathrooms and financing these developments lends itself to problems in relocating freshmen away from the Yard during renovations, Harvard students in ensuite bathrooms would be ensured fairness and cleanliness if they were all communal. After all, you can't put a price on hygiene.

**EMILY PALLAN '27  
(EMILYPALLAN@COLLEGE.  
HARVARD.EDU) IS A GERMAPHOBE  
WITH AN ENSUITE BATHROOM.**

**GRAPHIC BY ANNELISE FISHER  
'26**





# Return of the Mr. Asian Sensation Pageant

Seven dashing contestants valiantly compete for the prestigious title of Mr. Asian Sensation.

BY SOPHIE DAUER '27 AND NICHOLAS MCQUILLING '27

On March 23, for the first time in over a decade, the Harvard Radcliffe Chinese Student Association (HRCSA) hosted “Mr. Asian Sensation,” a pageant in which participants answer trivia questions, perform talents, and flaunt their best outfits in a fashion show. Seven contestants, Alan Wang '24, Aaron Kang '25, Justin Ji '26, Jōsh Mysoré '26, Reade Park '27, Peter Chen '27, and Matthew Vu '27, competed to be crowned as the most skilled and extraordinary participant of the night—*Mr. Asian Sensation*.

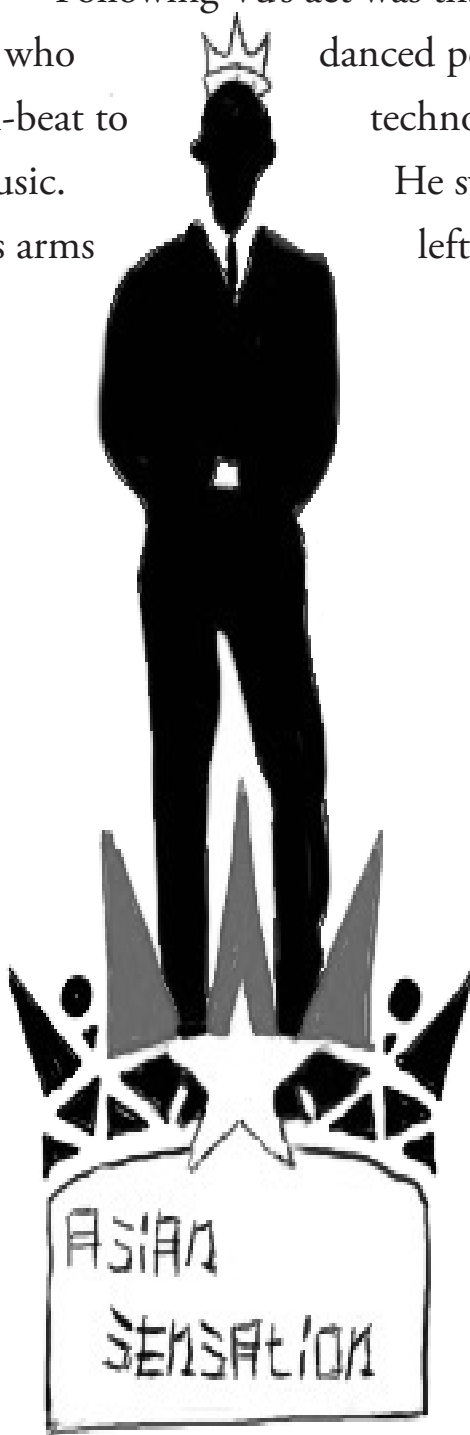
Audience members waited eagerly for the event to begin, shifting in their seats and murmuring to one another about their speculations. When asked for her thoughts, audience member Tessa Campolattaro '27 said she was excited to see “all of the sensational talents they’re about to show us.”

The evening commenced with an essential activity: as the contestants first introduced themselves, they stated their favorite pickup lines. Among those pickup lines, the most enticing was that of Wang, who said, “Are you a Cauchy sequence? Because I want to be closer and closer to you.” Chen had a much simpler approach, stating “I am 6'1”.

Afterward, the contestants demonstrated their talents. Vu performed stand-up comedy, describing an occurrence in which he accidentally cracked the screen of a computer that someone left on a bean bag chair. Insisting that it was not his fault, Vu placed the blame on the

person who left the computer there, lamenting that he “could have gotten seriously injured.” Vu assured the crowd he would pay back the price of the computer, informing us that he would be peddling in Harvard Yard the next day to raise the money and encouraging us to be there.

Following Vu’s act was that of Ji, who danced perfectly on-beat to techno music. He swayed his arms left and



right as if mimicking a robot, eliciting raucous applause from the audience.

Afterward, Ji showed the audience his mathematical skills by solving a puzzle that involved quickly taking a string of four numbers and producing a final product of twenty-four using only elementary

operations. He invited several math olympiads he knew from the crowd to participate in the game as well, but after a few rounds of adding, subtracting, dividing, and multiplying, it was clear they were no match for him.

Up next was Park, who performed an upbeat classical song with an acoustic guitar. The presentation involved hand tapping on the base of the guitar and vigorous string plucking. It left the audience speechless and us wishing we had more musical talent.

Mysoré, after demonstrating his multilingualism by speaking a few words in German, Spanish, and Russian, sang the classic crowd-pleaser “Take Me Home, Country Roads” (in English). In a display of great sportsmanship, the contestants joined arms and sang the final verse of the song together.

Chen followed Mysoré, walking on stage with a large plate of hot dogs. Even though Chen lamented that they were cold and unappetizing, this did not stop him from demonstrating his speed eating abilities. Chen began by devouring the first hot dog. He met some resistance with the next hot dog bun, though. As the timer dwindled down, the audience wanted to see Chen stuff his stomach further, so the judge granted him an extra minute. By the time the timer struck zero, Chen had eaten several hot dogs.

GRAPHIC BY EMILY PALLAN '27

Succeeding that Joey Chestnut-esque performance, Kang, who runs a hair-cutting business out of his dorm called “Kang’s Cuts,” set up an old-fashioned barber shop on center stage. He then invited a member of the audience up to have their hair cut. Kang supplied his guest with a copy of the *Harvard Independent* newspaper and a pipe, completing the barber shop’s early 20th-century aesthetic. The guest was quite pleased with the final result, commenting that he felt “ten pounds lighter.”

To conclude the event’s talent portion, Wang performed a spoken word piece about the authentic Asian identity. He spoke of the sacrifices that Asian people have made for the United States and the discrimination and lack of appreciation they have experienced throughout history. He concluded that caricatures of Asian Americans exist only in one’s imagination and are “made, not born.”

For the next segment, the contestants competed in trivia. They flaunted their Harvard brains, correctly answering questions like, “What is the speed of light?” and, “Which Asian film won Best Animated

Picture at the Oscars in 2003?” with ease. Team 1, composed of Chen, Vu, Park, and Wang, won the event by just one point.

After trivia, the contestants completed the ultimate test of athleticism: musical chairs. Chen put his rugby physicality on display, ultimately winning the final chair. The participants then competed in a fashion show, modeling outfits ranging from a full tuxedo to boxers and t-shirts. Several contestants animatedly gestured to their jawline as they strutted across the stage to emphasize their good looks and suave demeanor.

Finally, the crowd got the chance to get to know the

simple, “How tall are you again?” and another audience member asking Ji which HRCSA member he would cannibalize during a hypothetical starvation episode on a remote island.

The evening concluded with the long-awaited crowning of Mr. Asian Sensation. Each contestant received a pink rose as they waited eagerly to hear their fate. The audience members scanned a QR code and voted on who they believed to be worthy of the illustrious title. After several long minutes of voting, the results were in: the HRCSA bestowed the title of Mr. Asian Sensation to the talented stand-up comedian and spokesperson for the Team 1 trivia team Vu. Elated, Vu posed with a check for 650 dollars that he said he would donate to Children of Vietnam, a charity reducing child poverty in Vietnam.

When asked how he felt about his victory, Vu said, “I feel so relieved. I thought everyone was cringing at me,” adding that he was “super grateful” for the people who voted for him. All involved enjoyed the camaraderie of the night and look forward to seeing who will be crowned Mr. Asian Sensation next year. For now, Vu can rest easy knowing that he has won the day and the title of Mr. Asian Sensation for the time being.

**SOPHIE DAUER ’27 (SOPHIEDAUER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) LOOKS FORWARD TO NEXT YEAR’S EVENT.**

**NICHOLAS MCQUILLING ’27 (NAMCQUILLING@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU), A DOMINICAN AMERICAN, IS UPSET HE DOESN’T QUALIFY TO BE A CONTESTANT FOR MR. ASIAN SENSATION.**

**PHOTO BY CATE BUCHAN ’27**



contestants more intimately, with randomly selected audience members asking each participant two questions. Questions ranged in difficulty level, with one audience member asking Chen a



# Artists After Hours

Harvard's first of four staff art shows reveals hidden talents and passionate stories.

BY GAURI SOOD '26

Tucked away on the 2nd floor of the Smith Campus Center is the first exhibit of four in-person, diverse collections of multimedia artwork: the Harvard Staff Art Show. Close to 400 pieces from 242 artists, all Harvard University staff members, were submitted to be displayed in person for this year's four shows. The first show took place from March 11 to March 26 and offered Harvard staff an avenue to display their artistic talents, from oil paintings to knitted hats to woodwork clocks.

At the artists' reception on Wednesday, March 20th, dozens of contributing artists came to grab snacks, converse with others, and admire art. Talking to three of the artists, learning their life goals, and understanding the connections between their day jobs and creative passions was an eye-opening reminder to take the time to learn about others in their entirety—their passions, dreams, and creative outlets.

You might find Edwin Hinspeter in the back of the Leverett kitchen sautéing vegetables or grilling chicken. He has mastered the art of simultaneously managing four boiling pots with ease. After I was blown away by *The Case for Clocks*, Hinspeter's three-clock artwork at the Smith Center show, I sat down and conversed with him. His three clocks included three different kinds of wood: cherry, quarter-sawn white oak, and lastly, his personal favorite, maple, which makes up the tall, narrow coffin clock.

Hinspeter's same hands that cook for Leverett students each day also work hard at home, crafting wood and stitching leather when given the chance. Before culinary school, Hinspeter attended North Bennet Street School in Boston to learn woodworking. Despite currently working in the art of cooking, he still returns to the art of woodworking whenever possible. Hinspeter spends his summers and many late evenings in his workshop, a place he describes as a respite after a stressful or busy day. "I get lost in my work," said Hinspeter, referring to his woodworking. Spending the academic year working at Harvard provides a great amount of flexibility for Hinspeter to immerse himself in his craft during his summers.

Before she recently left to work for Headspace, a company focused on improving mental health through both preventative practices and therapy, Marla Allisan served as a psychotherapist with CAMHS for almost seven years. I was taken by Allisan's kind and welcoming presence when I saw her for the first time in person at the artists' reception.

Allisan's artwork, *Figures in Flow*, displays dark figures with outstretched limbs against vibrant, patterned backgrounds. In all her pieces, each fig-

ure's position is inspired by three of the activities that guide her life—swimming, dancing, and meditating. "My figures tend to be in some form of movement, and thus, figures in flow," explained Allisan. As for still figures portraying meditation: "That's [just] a different kind of flow," she said.

Allisan initially trained as a lawyer, and soon afterward, went back to school to get a degree in social work, finding it more rewarding to help others find their way. With a rich background in litigation, adoption work, and now psychotherapy, the connection between her daily work and her art is unique.

"When I'm drawing, I'm listening for a feeling...in my own body that I want to convey," said Allisan. "As a lawyer, therapist, and sometimes writer, I'm just swirling in the world of words. The art that I do is wordless." She explained her art-making not as something she does to pay the bills or to necessarily earn a commission but rather as a "kind of mental cleansing."

Leon Welch, a soulful, kind-eyed Securitas guard at the Smith Center (with a whopping 33 years of Harvard-affiliated work experience) has a similar mentality regarding his art-making. Though he uses high-end, expensive materials such as cashmere and merino wool to make his intricate knitted hats, two of which were on display at the show, he never sells them for profit. Instead, he gives them away "[as] a way of saying thank you to people who have been kind to me," such as waiters, family friends, and even students. His hats are highly intentional gifts, and Welch often caters his design choices to the eye or skin color of the hat's recipient.

"If I'm going to be spending a lot of time with something, it needs to feel good on my hands," said Welch. "So I give people what I would want for myself, which is something of very high quality." He was introduced to knitting after his children, particularly his two sons, learned the skill in a middle school course. Soon afterward, they took a pair of needles and yarn with them everywhere. Welch was so taken with this craft that he mastered it and became a knitting instructor in the Center for Wellness and Health Promotion at Harvard for 10 years of his career.

Although Welch spends his weekend nights and a couple of late evenings at the Smith Center working for Securitas, most of his time is spent on his life coaching business, a passion he began pursuing early in his retirement, because he felt incredibly blessed. "When you hit your 60s...you say what am I going to do with this next phase of my life? Am I gonna sit back and collect a retirement check, or am I going to leave a



significant impact in the world?" For Welch, there has to be some form of coaching through which he can "[encourage] people to actually go into the uncomfortable spaces."

Welch's outlook on life is one of gratefulness and kindness, and he hopes to help others see the world similarly. "I want to facilitate learning to help people become conscious of these things that are so simple, that are accessible to everybody. Everyone can be thankful, and if we can do that, we would be actually taking a step towards improving our own health." His art fits in nicely with his life coaching work and his overall mentality. "I'm using my art to make someone happy, to give them a gift," said Welch.

Welch believes that art's role in society is greater than the piece of work itself; the regard for the artist holds a great (and in America, somewhat forgotten) importance. To Welch, art-making is about "letting [out] whatever is inside of you; that spiritual fitness inside of you has a way of being materialized into something almost tangible that people can see." "Art is so powerful," said Welch. "It goes to the core of who we are and causes things to emerge that actually make us feel good."

Taking the time to talk with just three of the hundreds of contributing artists was a heartening experience. It served as a powerful reminder that there are dimensions to each person's life beyond who they are at work. The Harvard Staff Art Show is a wonderful collection of the beauty that happens when these hidden dimensions manifest creatively.

The Harvard Staff Art Show will be open to the public at the Harvard Ed Portal Crossings Gallery from March 28 to May 16. The next shows will then be open to HUID holders only at the Countway Library from April 8 to July 8 and the Gutman Library from May 6 to June 10.

**GAURI SOOD '26 (GAURISOOD@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) URGES YOU TO GO SEE THE EXHIBITION—YOU WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.**

PHOTO BY GAURI SOOD '26

# Sports Spotlight: Nina Janmyr

## Flipping between NCAA and international success.

BY KATE OLIVER '26

**N**ina Janmyr '26's love of diving developed in improbable circumstances. After a week of diving camp in the cold and pouring rain, she discovered the sport that would become a major part of her life for the foreseeable future. Janmyr's mom could not believe that, after executing no more than 14 dives that week, she wanted to start training full-time. In her own words, "I don't really know what I was thinking at that point." Now as a member of the Harvard women's swim and dive team, Janmyr has transformed this initial love into NCAA and international success. After winning the Ivy League championship in both the 1-meter and 3-meter springboard categories, she returned to the NAAs on March 22 and finished the meet ranked 40th in the country.

Janmyr has been able to train in both the United States and Sweden as a result of her family moving back and forth while she was in middle school. Born in Sweden, Janmyr moved to California at age twelve. After staying two years longer than expected, she moved back to Sweden after her freshman year of high school. She continued diving throughout her time in both the U.S. and Sweden, training with girls who would later go on to be her teammates at Harvard. Reflecting on the difference between competing in both countries, Janmyr told the *Independent*, "Because all of the meets that I would go to, I would see... the same people. You get really close with all of the other Swedes at that level." This has shifted to now competing in the NCAA, which sponsors 202 Division I diving programs. Additionally, she remarked diving at Harvard is "so much more a part of your life because like you're training with your team, you're competing with your team, you're living basically with your team."

In Sweden, there are very limited opportunities to compete after graduating high school. As a result, Janmyr decided to come back to the US in order to compete collegiately. She was supported by her coaches in the Swedish national system, who she commented "have realized now that the best way for our team

to grow and keep going is to go to the States." There are other Swedish divers currently competing in the NCAA as well, including most of the Swedish national team.

After deciding to return to the U.S., Janmyr faced the challenge of navigating recruiting during the COVID-19 pandemic. She committed to Harvard before ever seeing the campus, having only experienced the athletic facilities through Zoom and FaceTime calls with the coaches. Furthermore, Janmyr explained that she "missed the official visit for my class because the borders were closed. I couldn't get into the country." Despite not getting to meet the team until Visitas, Janmyr was confident in her



decision because "every single one of those women on that team was [a person that I] looked up to immediately... It seemed like they all really loved each other."

Despite being on a team, diving itself is a completely individual sport. Collegiate diving meets are structured so that each diver has 6 dives total that must include at least one dive from 5 categories. As Janmyr put it, "There's no room for errors in diving. It's six dives, and each of those dives matters." Due to tight scoring margins, messing up one dive often results in missing out on placing at meets. To perform in a high-stakes environment, Janmyr utilizes visualization and modeling techniques in her

pre-dive rituals. By envisioning her dives going well and then moving through the physical movements as much as possible, Janmyr can calm her mind and focus on performing her dives as cleanly as possible. She also always makes sure to smile at the judges.

During her two seasons thus far, Janmyr has continued to succeed in competitions while developing her skills under a different coaching style than in Sweden. Janmyr had trained with her Swedish coach, Sanna Wallertoft, from the early days of her career. In comparison to her usual coach, she commented that Matt O'Neill, the head dive coach at Harvard, is good at "trying to keep it light, trying to make sure that we still love the sport. He gives us corrections, but he loves a good dad joke."

Janmyr's time as part of the Harvard Women's Swim and Dive has been one of the highlights of her diving career. In reflecting on what makes the team so special, she stated, "I think being a part of Harvard women's swim and dive is just a fantastic environment to have fun and compete together as a team, which is not really something that you get otherwise when you're doing an individual sport." Pointing to the Ivy Championship meet as the highlight of the season, Janmyr also commented on the electric energy around the pool. She feels that the environment "brings a lot of nerves, but also makes it even more exciting."

Looking to the future, Janmyr is not sure if she will continue to dive after college. In her own words, "It's a sport that you can do for a long time," pointing to Olympic divers who are still competing at age 40. If she returns to Sweden, there are very limited opportunities to continue to compete with the frequency she does now. Ultimately, Janmyr does not want to completely abandon the sport her 7-year-old self fell in love with. Right now, she is focused on getting better every meet and soaking up every precious moment with her team.

**KATE OLIVER '26 (KOLIVER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) PREFERS DOING CANNONBALLS OFF OF A DIVING BOARD.**

**PHOTO BY TERRY FLETCHER**



# Indy Sportsbook: Premier League Bets

The best bets amidst the International Break and Champions League confusion.

BY ALEJANDRO SANCHEZ '26

This upcoming Premier League gameweek has been thrown into chaos with the recent International Break and recently scheduled Champions League matches—however, the increasing chaos makes the betting twice as exciting.

The International Break is a period in which professional soccer players are called by their home nations to compete in international tournaments or friendlies. This recent break occurred from March 18 through March 26 and caused several Premier League matches to be postponed until March 30. These international matches place a lot of strain on team rosters, as players often get injured after so many consecutive games or return exhausted and unfit to play in league matches.

The UEFA Champions League, which consists of 32 qualifying teams from all European leagues, is entering its quarter-final with matchups drawn on March 15. Every season, the top teams from Europe's leagues compete to be crowned the best in Europe, with Manchester City claiming a victory over Inter Milan to become last year's winner. This recent drawing has positioned Arsenal vs. Bayern, Real Madrid vs. Manchester City, PSG vs. Barcelona, and Atletico Madrid vs. Dortmund to be played on April 9 and 10.

With group play firmly finished, every Champions League match from here on out is an important win. Managers are forced into corners to decide who to start for Champions League matches and league play.

The two biggest matchups of the Champions League include two Premier League side teams, 1st place Arsenal and 3rd place Manchester City. However, the upcoming Premier League gameweek has pitted these rivals against one another to either swap positions or secure their standings. Both Arsenal and Manchester City are stuck fighting for both their positions in the Premier League table and for a spot in the semi-finals of the Champions League.

Manchester City has been firing on all cylinders with major productions from Bernardo Silva, Phil Foden, Jeremy Doku, and Kevin De Bruyne. Yet, major players De Bruyne and Ederson both have minor injuries sustained in their draw against Liverpool, but they are expected to return by March 31, well before their Champions League quarter-final match on April 9. Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola must decide if he will rest them both for the Champions League match or play them in their match against Arsenal.

Before the Champions League draw, betting on Erling Haaland to score had been safe, with his record of 41 goals in 37 games in his Champions League campaign. However, Manchester City has been set to play against Real Madrid, a team that kept Haaland scoreless in their previous two match-ups in the Champions League. We believe Real Madrid will win this first leg at +190 odds.

Furthermore, this Champions League drawing pitted Arsenal against FC Bayern Munich, both powerhouses in their respective leagues. Arsenal Manager Mikel Arteta has been leading the team to an incredible season; the team is currently tied for 1st place with a young squad in peak form, including Bukayo Saka, Martin Ødegaard, Ben White, and Declan Rice.

Bayern has been led by Harry Kane, who is on pace for a record-breaking season with 31 goals in 26 games and is only 11 goals away from breaking Robert Lewandowski's Bundesliga record. However, we have Arsenal to win at -135 odds.

Regardless of the uncertainty that the Champions League brings, this weekend's matchups in the Premier League will be exciting to watch, with a likely shift in the top three rankings between Arsenal, Liverpool, and Manchester City. Manchester City (-120) vs. Arsenal: Both teams have been in a great run of form, with Arsenal winning their last eight matches and Manchester City unbeaten in their last 12 matches with three draws. Yet, Manchester City has been plagued by injuries and constant cup games, so the extra time before this match will allow all players to be rested and healed. We have Manchester City to win.

Liverpool (-260) vs. Brighton: Liverpool have had a strong season, as they are tied for points with Arsenal, so they need this victory to secure their spot. Moreover, Brighton has had some poor showings against lower-table teams, with their losses to Fulham and Luton Town. Mohammed Salah would be a safe pick for goal-scorer at -115 odds.

Newcastle (-115) vs. West Ham: Newcastle has big injuries returning before this match in Anthony Gordon and Kieran Trippier, and they have been in quality form. West Ham has been in turbulent form in 2024 with few wins against Everton, Brentford, and SC Freiburg in the Europa League. In this game, we would take the moneyline with Newcastle to win. Likely goalscorers for the match include Kudus at +330, Bowen at +200, Isak at -105, and Gordon at +230

odds.

Chelsea (-340) vs. Burnley: Chelsea should dominate Burnley, especially after their FA Cup 3-1 win against Aston Villa, who have been in great form. We believe Cole Palmer as their penalty-taker is a great pick at -120 odds, as he has been netting big goals for Chelsea, especially in their tie with Manchester City.

Tottenham (-425) vs Luton Town: Fighting for 4th place, Tottenham have had a strong start to their 2024 campaign, with quality matches against Brighton, Aston Villa, and Everton. Luton is constantly attacking through their flying wingbacks, Doughty and Kaboré, and the team creates lots of opportunities, demonstrating beautifully aggressive performances in their 3-2 loss to Villa and 4-4 tie to Newcastle. Moreover, Tottenham's Van De Ven's recovery from his hamstring injury before the match is doubtful, which is why we think they will be unable to keep up with a additional runners. We think the game will be high-scoring, with Tottenham winning.

Aston Villa (-150) vs. Wolves: Aston Villa has been in great form with Ollie Watkins and Douglas Luiz consistently producing chances through Watkins' link-up play. Watkins is a great pick as an anytime goalscorer at +110 odds.

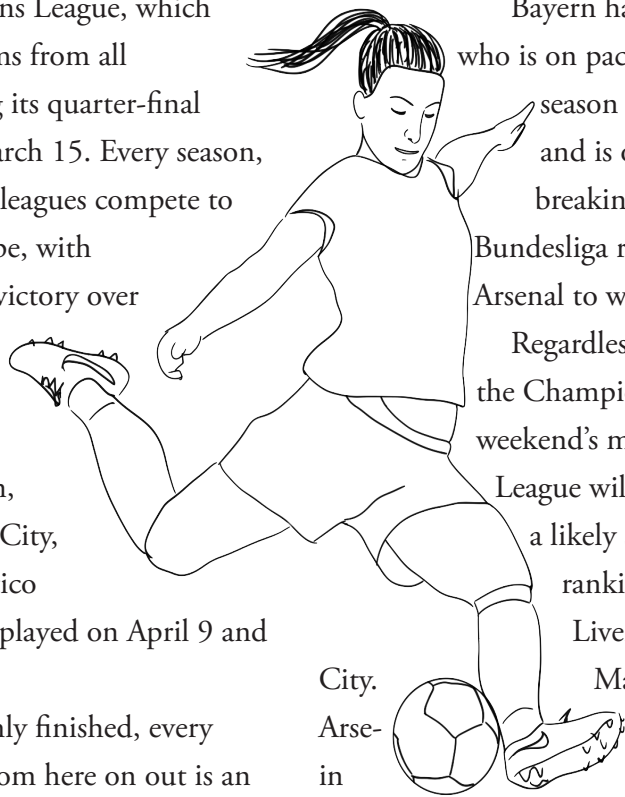
Brentford vs Manchester United (+115): Brentford has had a poor run of form, with their most recent win against Wolves in February. Yet, Ivan Toney's and Bryan Mbuemo's returns from injury are areas of concern for Manchester United. Moreover, Manchester United have had some underwhelming performances against Manchester City and Fulham. Still, with the hopeful return of Lisandro Martinez from a knee injury, their defensive line should be at full strength, particularly as Aaron Wan-Bissaka has been training with the first team since his return from injury. Manchester United should be set to win this match-up.

Sheffield United vs Fulham (-140): Fulham should dominate Sheffield United, who have been struggling to produce consistent results. Furthermore, Fulham's back line has been held together by Bernd Leno's strong presence and stand-out performances from Timothy Castagne and Antonee Robinson.

This gameweek will be full of excitement with many matches shifting the Premier League standings. With all these picks, just keep in mind: the only bad bet is the one you don't place.

**ALEJANDRO SANCHEZ '26  
(ALEJANDROSANCHEZ@COLLEGE.HARVARD.  
EDU) CAN GUARANTEE THAT MANCHESTER  
CITY WILL THRASH ARSENAL.**

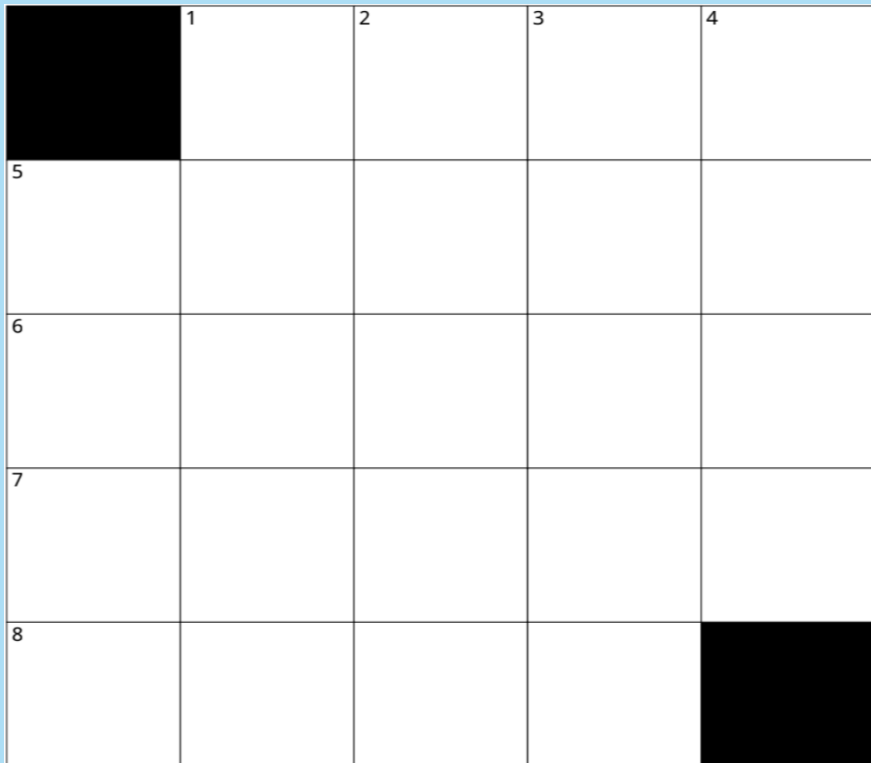
**GRAPHIC BY GABI PONIZ '26**



# Spring Mini

BY NINA BERKMAN '27

OPINIONS OF FORUM PIECES BELONG ONLY TO THE WRITER AND DO NOT REFLECT THE VALUES OF THE *INDEPENDENT*.



## ACROSS

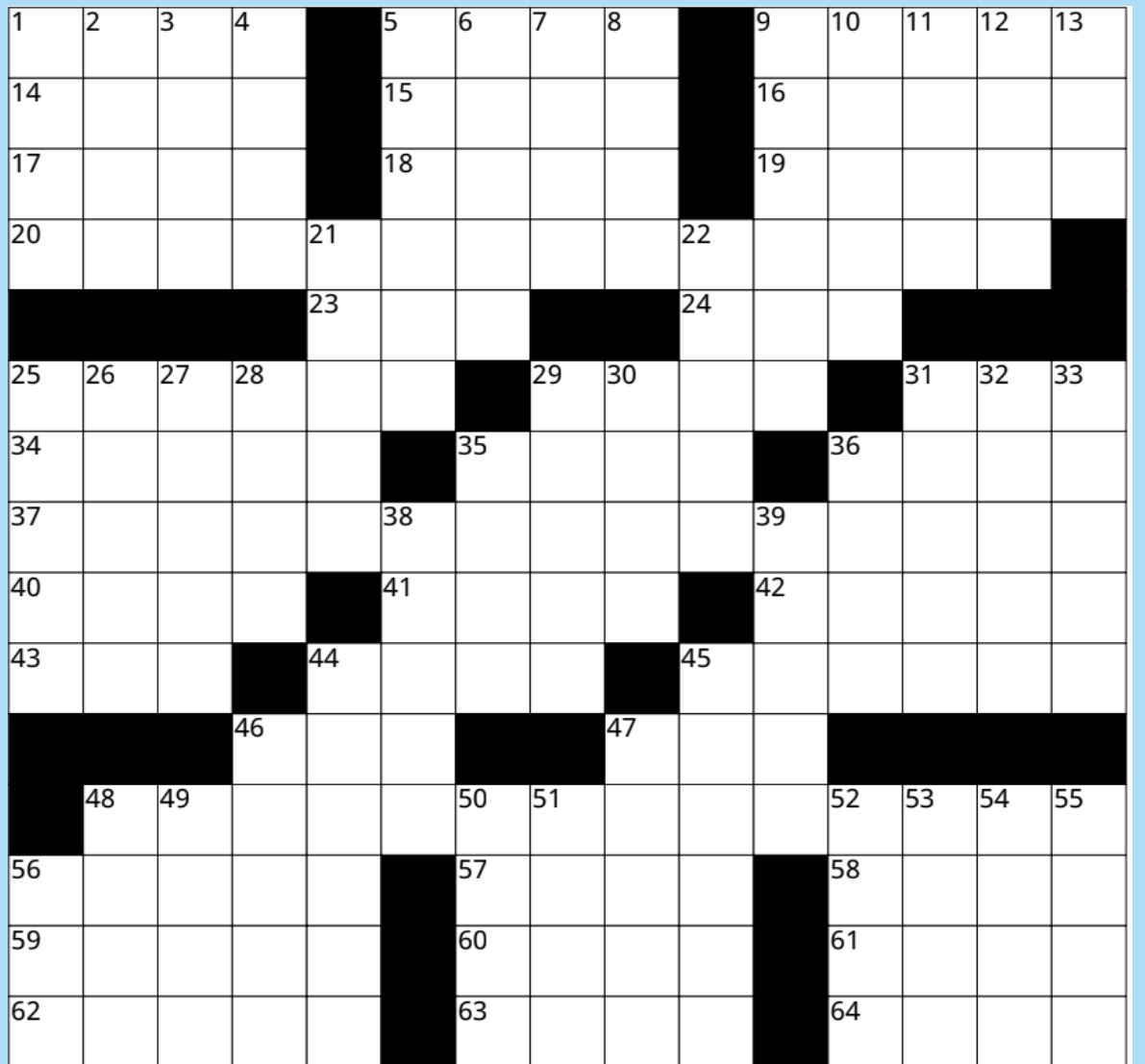
- 1 What can be seen in the night sky
- 5 Vichy verse
- 6 Month known for showers
- 7 What often occurs in summer
- 8 Zoomed

## DOWN

- 1 Absorb
- 2 Roofing alloy
- 3 "I've got half \_\_\_\_\_ to ..."
- 4 Depend (on)
- 5 Allows you to park at some beaches

# Spring

BY NINA BERKMAN '27



## ACROSS

- 1 Sweeties in slang
- 5 Not too hot
- 9 Daily Islamic prayers
- 14 Princess loved by Hercules
- 15 Helps a sunburn
- 16 Justice Samuel
- 17 Large bulrush
- 18 Well-behaved
- 19 Necessity for a copier
- 20 Zone out
- 23 Opposite of wsw
- 24 What laying in the sun does

25 Season before summer

- 29 "Shoo!"
- 31 Côte-\_\_\_\_, France
- 34 Subatomic particles
- 35 Former Hong Kong leader Tung \_\_\_\_ Hwa
- 36 Like Mamma Mia's Music Group but with one different letter
- 37 Unsigned mail
- 40 Temporary extra bed
- 41 Quaker \_\_\_\_
- 42 Extinguish
- 43 Aliens, for short
- 44 Drunkards
- 45 Seasons where people

get a break

- 46 Latin foot
- 47 One \_\_\_\_ (not min but)
- 48 Some city clean-up employees
- 56 Flower
- 57 Get older
- 58 Type of wood
- 59 Theater section
- 60 "ASAP!"
- 61 Atmospheric prefix
- 62 "I love you" in Spanish
- 63 This, in Spanish
- 64 Future flower

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- 3 Jazz great Fitzgerald
- 4 Oracle
- 5 Undertaking, as war
- 6 Solo
- 7 Plant anchor
- 8 The Beatles' "Love \_\_\_\_\_"
- 9 Took no action for the time being
- 10 Take out \_\_\_\_
- 11 Nickname for someone who shares a name with the 16th president
- 12 Suit to \_\_\_\_
- 13 Old TV knob
- 21 \_\_\_\_-weensy
- 22 "Delphine" author madame
- 25 The "S" of NASA

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- 31 It's a fact
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- 35 Paint layer
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THE *HARVARD INDEPENDENT* PUBLISHES EVERY WEEK DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR BY THE *HARVARD INDEPENDENT*, INC., 12 ARROW STREET CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

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