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TOUCHING GRASS

# MASTHEAD

April 11, 2024

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# NEWS

## OUR HOUSE, OUR HOME

*PBHA's Community Cabinet event marks another year of collaborative community engagement in its 120-year history.*

BY LUCAS COHEN-D'ARBELOFF '27

Phillips Brooks House Association's (PBHA) Parlor Room buzzed with lively discussion as students gathered for this year's Community Cabinet. Held on March 27, this event is the only time of the year when PBHA's program directors, officers, volunteers, and staff all meet in the same room with leaders from several partner organizations. PBHA invites partners from outside the Harvard community to discuss civic engagement and community organizing with students in group sessions and activities.

PBHA is a student organization focused on social justice, student leadership, and volunteer work in the Boston and Cambridge communities. The organization mobilizes about 1,500 student volunteers each year to run more than 80 service and social action programs. These programs range from the Summer Urban Program (SUP), a youth summer camp intended to address educational inequality in the Boston area, to Y2Y, a student-run youth homeless shelter in Harvard Square.

This year's Community Cabinet featured four community partners: Emy Takinami, who serves on the Steering Committee of Boston's Mental Health Crisis Response (MHCR) campaign, Katharine Sloss-Hartman, harm reduction specialist and Site Coordinator at Youth On Fire, George Huynh, Executive Director of the Vietnamese American Initiative for Development (VIETAID), and Sabrina Barroso, Executive Director of Stories Inspiring Movements (SIM).

PBHA Community Organizing Chair Kashish Bastola '26, who organized the event with staff, said that this is the first year PBHA has embedded the role of Harvard affinity group leaders in the event to foster broad community collaboration.

"I was really hoping that this Community Cabinet would not only benefit PBHA directors and volunteers and officers but also really help other students in organizations like affinity groups to think about how their work can involve and be in relationship with Boston and Cambridge communities," Bastola said.

The event began with introductions from PBHA student leaders and a short panel discussion. Community partners were asked to

introduce themselves and describe the world they envision for the future. Takinami described her work at Boston Liberation Health (BLH), a radical social work collective that focuses on the sociopolitical factors, such as race and social status, affecting individuals' lives.

"We're ensuring we're not just in the therapy room talking to clients about their individual problems and issues, but contextualizing [how] systems and structures like racial capitalism are impacting the actual presenting problem that folks are bringing in," said Takinami. "So we actually see community organizing as a therapeutic intervention that genuinely makes people feel better and is healing in and of itself."

Barroso, who is involved in political organizing around immigration and is a student at Bunker Hill Community College, spoke about the importance of access to food and quality healthcare, as well as the variety of forms that activism can take. "I really believe in art and creative expression as a tool in our organizing work. Our organizing doesn't need to be just pure advocacy or hardcore trainings all the time," she said.

Artistic expression also played a significant role in the Community Cabinet event. Following a range of breakout sessions that facilitated engaging dialogues between students and community partners, the event culminated in a creative mapping activity. Students outlined their connections and future plans to engage with specific communities on a map. This map is currently on display in Phillips Brooks House's Sperry Room.

Bastola noticed students connect to Huynh, who is a community organizer in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston, during his breakout session regarding community engagement and leadership. "Students were curious about how he maintained such close ties to his Vietnamese community in Dorchester, which he grew up in, while also being at an elite college that was several steps removed from his community," Bastola said. "Just taking away lessons from young organizers, people who we can really see ourselves in, was really inspiring."

PBHA Treasurer Audrey Yang '27

described the breakout session with Sloss-Hartman, a human services professional who works with unhoused youth, which exposed her to local issues she previously did not fully understand. "I learned so much about the youth homeless situation, which I really didn't know about going in," said Yang. "And [about] what we're doing right now to help out with the situation but also so much that we could be doing."

Going forward, as PBHA celebrates its 120th anniversary this year, it has embraced the theme "our house, our home" to emphasize the importance of Phillips Brooks House as a hub of social justice work on Harvard's campus. At the same time, the organization strives to extend its influence further outside the Harvard bubble, forming more partnerships with groups across Greater Boston.

"It's really exciting and really energizing around this time of year when we have Community Cabinet because we find ourselves grounded around these priorities," Bastola said. "And for some of us, it's a wake-up call for what we need to be willing to do in our organizing commitments."

LUCAS COHEN-D'ARBELOFF '27

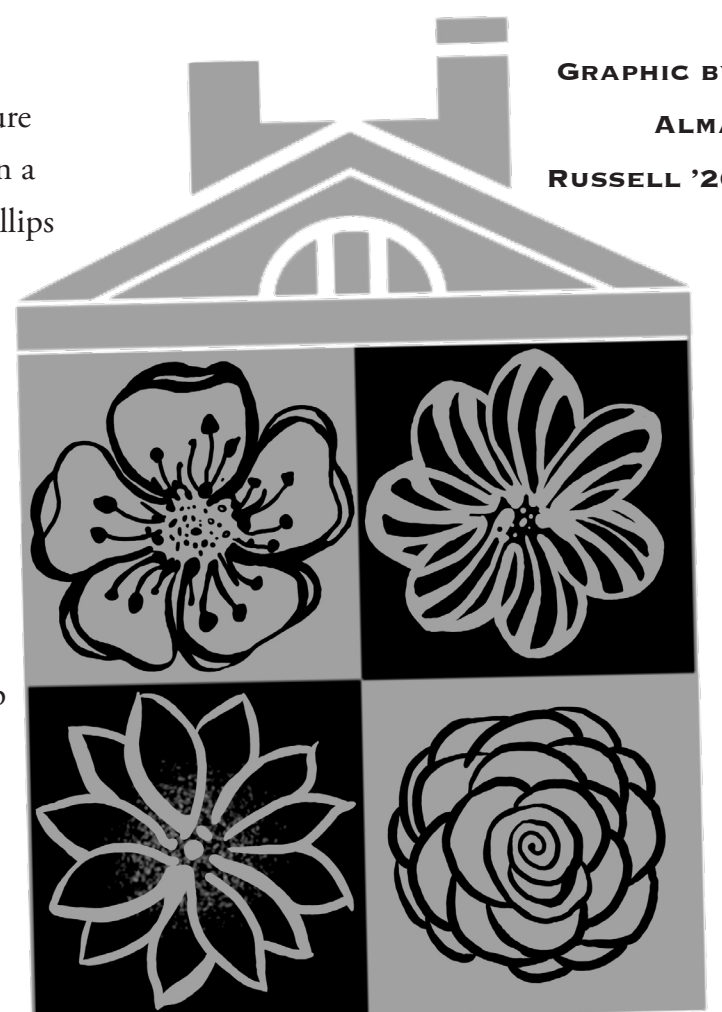
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*INDEPENDENT.*

GRAPHIC BY

ALMA

RUSSELL '26



# FIGHTING 4 PROGRESS WITH FOOD 4 THOUGHT

*A Harvard-led initiative uniting students and experts to transform our food systems.*

BY **MISHELLE WIEWIORA '27**

Food is the cornerstone of our existence, shaping not only our health and well-being but also the very fabric of society—it affects our health, culture, and our planet. Yet, the profound impact of our food choices often goes unnoticed, from the staggering heaps of discarded food clogging up our landfills to how our dietary choices can influence climate change and the health of ecosystems. However, students are raising awareness around this critical issue to sow the seeds of change for a more sustainable future.

Natalia De Los Rios '27, the project chairperson for the Climate Coalition, reflected on her journey into the realm of sustainable food systems. She shared that she observed the staggering amount of food waste and the prevalent issue of food insecurity in her community during high school. Her experience drove her to address the inherent inefficiencies and inequities of the food system. “It just opens your eyes to the whole issue of how unsustainable our current food [is] and how inequitable our current food systems are,” she remarked.

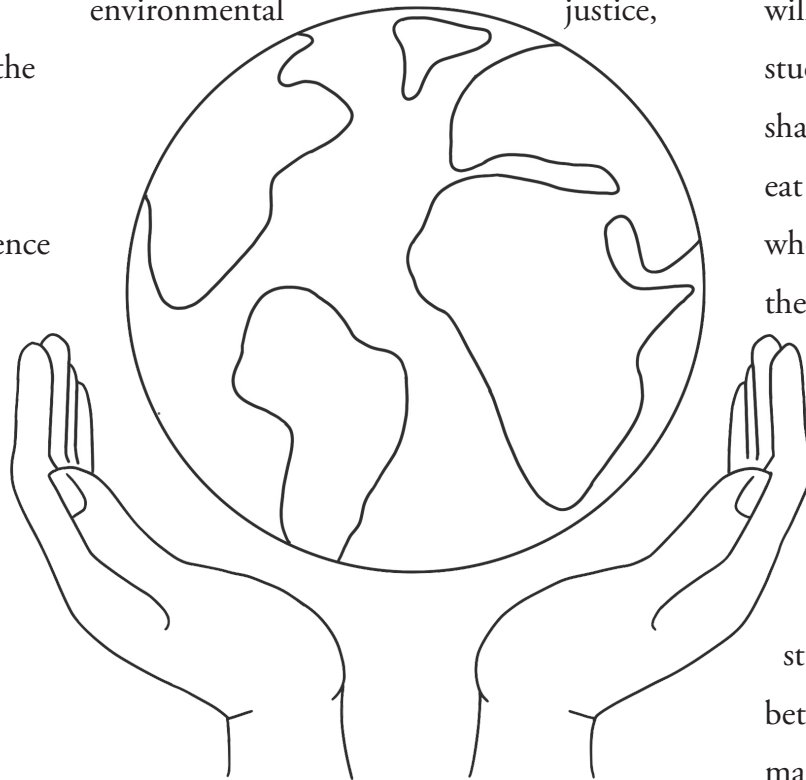
Recognizing this pressing need for change, De Los Rios and other Harvard students have come together to address this issue. Harvard University has diverse clubs and initiatives dedicated to addressing pressing environmental issues and promoting sustainability. From the Climate Coalition to the Harvard University Sustainable Energy Group (HUSEG), these organizations offer platforms for students to engage with and tackle challenges related to climate change, energy conservation, and environmental justice.

The Green Medicine Initiative draws attention to the effects of climate change on human health and promotes greener practices. The Clean Energy Group also focuses on accelerating the clean energy transition through interdisciplinary education and climate action. These various initiatives empower Harvard students to take action, raise awareness, and drive positive change toward a

more sustainable and equitable future.

To reach an even larger audience, students launched the Food 4 Thought Festival. This initiative is “a student-led initiative that invites the Harvard community to consider the impact of its food choices on the 4 Pillars of Concern: Personal Health, Public Health, Animal Rights, and Environmental Justice.”

With over 700 students from 50 universities across six continents expected to attend, the festival represents a global convergence of minds passionate about reimagining the future of food systems. Navin Durbhakula '25, the initiative's co-founder, said “Our ultimate goal is to center around... environmental justice,



animal welfare, public health, and food security.” Jack Towers '25, the design and publicity member for Food 4 Thought, added the emphasis of “breaking down some of the barriers or stigmas around plant-based diets.”

Durbhakula further explained the event's role of fostering dialogue among diverse individuals. “The goal is to really bring together a community of people and to build it out and continue to establish connections with students...and the various universities working in this area.”

The festival offers various engaging events and activities focused on reimagining the future of food systems spread across three days. The first day kicks off with a keynote address by Dr. David Kaplan and Dr. Sparsha Saha.

Attendees will find themselves delving into discussions on agricultural justice, food law, and career pathways in fixing the food system. Delectable treats await at the World Cultural Food Festival, complemented by live cooking demonstrations from prolific experts. Workshops throughout the festival will empower participants with tools for professional growth and coalition building. The event's final day culminates in an awards ceremony and exclusive field visits to Tufts University and Harvard, offering insights into cutting-edge food research.

For those considering attending the Food 4 Thought Festival, Durbhakula said, “It will be an incredible opportunity to meet students from all over the world.” Towers shared, “If you're someone who eats or likes to eat food, you should come; if you're someone who cares about the climate and your role in the world, you should come.”

With the promise of an empowering experience, the Food 4 Thought Festival allows students to go on a journey of meaningful action through discovery and collaboration. It is a testament to student-led movements' power in shaping a better world. Towers reflected, “It's been remarkable to see how much of this project has been able to take off just as a result of student initiative.”

With many like-minded people together, no challenge is too large. Durbhakula said, “We do have the power to make a difference.” Joining Food 4 Thought helps create a more sustainable future by educating others about making conscious food choices and advocating for change in our food systems. By joining forces and raising awareness through initiatives like Food 4 Thought, individuals can contribute significantly to shaping a healthier and more sustainable world.

**MISHELLE WIEWIORA '27 (MWIEWIORA@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) LOVES TO PARTICIPATE IN MAKING A GREEN IMPACT WHILE ENJOYING A SIDE OF GREENS.**

**GRAPHIC BY REEVE SYKES '26**



# "IF WE SUCCEEDED"

Former HUA Co-President candidates Lucas Chu '23-25 and Trinity Dysis '27 discuss their motivation to run for office and the ultimate conflict that led to their ticket's dissolution.

BY KAYLA REIFEL '26 AND LAYLA CHAARAOU I '26

“We feel that we have been slighted... We want to make sure that our message is present: that the HUA needs to be replaced.”

Though Trinity Dysis '27 is “well aware” that she is a freshman, since arriving at Harvard, Dysis has understood the problems that have faced Harvard's student government for quite some time. “It really disturbed me how our Student Government has been so consistently the center of efficacy and scandal... Lucas came to me with the offer to try to make a change to reform it to get rid of it, and I was 100% on board.”

Lucas Chu '23-25, her mutual friend, also holds long-standing concerns with the system, having observed and helped with the dissolution of the Undergraduate Council (UC), which was the official student government system until students abolished it in 2022 and created the Harvard Undergraduate Association (HUA) in its place. But, the HUA has been plagued by scandals even in its infancy, from being accused of rejecting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plans to a decrease in student organization funding. Chu's concerns resurfaced when current HUA Co-President John Cooke '25 was expelled from the Fox Club due to misconduct allegations.

“I felt particularly convinced that maybe I should do something, so then I decided to run for Student Government on the platform of disbanding the Student Government,” Chu explained. “[I believe] there's a problem with the culture of the whole institution, and the institution itself should also be held accountable,” he continued.

Chu and Dysis decided to run together on a platform of formally disbanding the HUA. Their platform was sent to students on April 1 by the HUA Election Commission, alongside the eight other tickets on the next HUA Co-Presidency ballot. “Like most Harvard students, I voted to abolish the UC, but I now realize that its replacement is not working well. In a time where university issues are shafting our quality of life, it seems like the main thing coming out of our representatives is scandalous headlines... [A] lack of accountability is a systemic issue,” the statement explains.

Soon after their initial announcement of candidacy, Chu and Dysis' ticket disappeared. They were not present at the April 3 debate hosted by the Harvard Political Review, nor were they posted by the HUA Election Commission Instagram as an eligible ticket. The HUA Election Commission then announced on Instagram on April 3 that the Chu/Dysis ticket was dissolved following “multiple rule violations:” one regarding campaign emails, one on early campaigning, and one discussing campaign focus.

Chu and Dysis' conflict with the HUA Election Commission began before their ticket was formally announced, as Chu explained, when he emailed the HUA Election Commission to initiate recall petitions

for both Cooke and the other HUA Co-President, Shikoh Hirabayashi '24. Chu's petition to recall Cooke was denied, as the Harvard Feminist Coalition (HFC) had already initiated a recall petition for him. Chu's petition to recall Hirabayashi was approved.

On the evening of March 31, Chu sent out a mass email to student email addresses acquired from the Harvard College Facebook. The email contained links to recall petitions for both Cooke and Hirabayashi. In addition, the email contained a petition for a constitutional referendum to disband the HUA. “No more scandals. No more presidents. No more HUA. Let existing orgs do what they do best. Sign on to disband the HUA at <https://bit.ly/disbandHUA>,” read the final two sentences of the email. Because the email contained similar language to Chu and Dysis' campaign platform but was sent before the campaign period began, the HUA Election Commission considered it early campaigning—the first election rule violation. Yet, Chu felt this was unwarranted: “I wanted to get something out before campaigning started so it wouldn't be construed as campaigning,” he explained.

In addition, this email contained the phrase: “Allegedly, all HUA members, except one officer, have been complicit in silencing victims, and so have parts of the administration.” The HUA Election Commission considered this to violate the campaign rule that “Campaigns should focus on policy and keep campaign communications centered on the candidate's own platform, not on the character or policies of other candidates.”

In an email chain obtained by the *Independent*, Chu planned to meet with the Election Commission and Assistant Dean Andy Donahue to discuss the emails he had sent out; he then changed his email wording to reflect their recommendations. Chu, Dysis, and other affiliates subsequently sent out the updated emails advocating for students to sign their petition, writing “The Harvard Undergraduate Association should not tolerate or be involved in the harassment or the suppression of victims.” This was considered to be the third violation, under the premise that “Campaign emails to group lists (including House and club lists) and cold emails to individuals as well as campaign texts to organized group chats will be banned.” The Chu/Dysis ticket was then dissolved.

Chu expressed that the rules of the HUA Election Commission felt very unclear. “The way I interpreted that is that campaign emails, including cold emails, are banned. Both emails in and of themselves are not banned... I sent out a poll to the Linguistics Society, and everyone has voted that all campaign emails, including cold campaign emails, is the linguistic interpretation. So that it's not *all* emails.”

“I don't feel it's clear, and we did not understand the basis on which we were being pulled off of,” Dysis recalled. “While yes, [the emailed petitions]

were related to at large, they completely unrelated to our campaign... I feel like that if somebody else had

put out an email that was not related to these specific allegations, [similar consequences] would not have been brought up, and Lucas and I both feel like these actions were retaliatory.” The HUA Election Commission did not comment further on the situation or their election policies, only reiterating their initial statement in an email to the *Independent*.

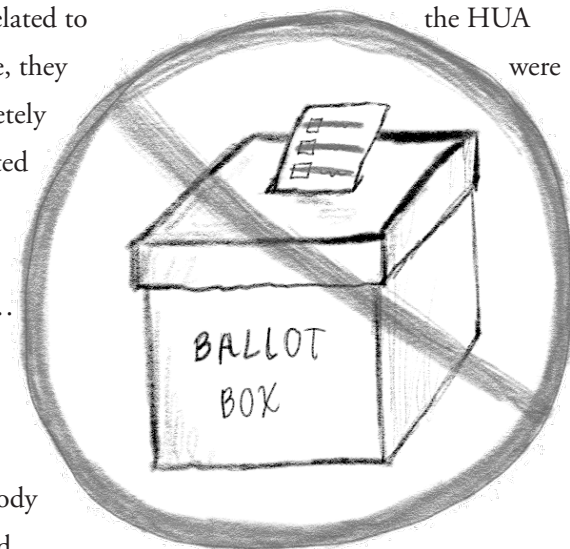
Even though Dysis disagrees “with the principle of the rule” they had violated, the two former candidates, knowing what they know now, both acknowledge that they would not have sent the emails and enlisted more friends to circulate their petition instead. Yet despite being disbanded for their actions, they still stand strong behind the message they hope to send. “It proves our point that this is a broken system that works to serve itself and limits the people who try to criticize it,” Dysis expressed.

Chu echoed Dysis' sentiments. “Someone said to me, and I agree with it, that this is a continuation of the silencing of voices advocating for justice... It proves my point in the sense that it's censoring petitions out. Maybe fittingly, this means I can send more emails now and can provide more information that... aren't censored, because I'm no longer running [on a] ticket.”

Since their ticket was dissolved, Chu informed the *Independent* that he was reported to the Harvard College Administrative Board due to what he believes was potentially violating “a rule against cold emailing.” However, the two expressed that they have not given up their mission just yet. “This only fuels Lucas and I's resolve to accomplish a task that we set forth to do,” Dysis said. They plan to release a petition within the first three weeks of next semester, following policy rules, to formally dissolve the HUA. “We want to see the system replaced with something more effective and less corrupt.”

“I honestly thought it was the right thing to do,” Chu said, reflecting back on the situation. “I saw an injustice, and I couldn't do nothing. If I didn't do anything, then I think I would have failed.”

**KAYLA REIFEL '26 (KAYLAREIFEL@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) AND LAYLA CHAARAOU I '26 (LAYLACHAARAOU I@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITE NEWS FOR THE INDEPENDENT. GRAPHIC BY NATALIE MENDEZ '26**



# FORUM

## IN DEFENSE OF BED ROTTING

*Harvard students often feel pressure to always be at work. What if we took a break?*

BY ROBERTO QUESADA '27

At Harvard, it often seems like every second must be accounted for. The Google Calendar squares often touch from morning to night, encompassing everything from social events to classes to networking. If you are not filling out a spreadsheet, attending a networking event, or going out, you may feel like you are doing something wrong. That guilt can motivate you to manage your time better, but it can also lead you to neglect your own well-being and off time. Thankfully, there is a way to find some relaxation in the hectic world of Harvard: bed rotting.

Bed rotting is a term that originated among Gen Z to describe sitting in bed all day. This usually includes watching movies or scrolling through social media. While it may sound lazy or unproductive, it can actually have many benefits. When done correctly, the act not only provides a much-needed break but can also help you rethink your connection with external validation and work.

As a whole, the value of taking a step back from life cannot be understated. It serves as an antidote to the relentless stress and anxiety that are all too common in high-pressure environments like Harvard.

Despite what is often fed to us by TikTok self-help gurus or politicians wanting to cut welfare, overworking yourself and failing to find balance can have very serious effects. The build-up of stress, if left unchecked, can significantly impair cognitive functions, leading to decreased productivity and a diminished sense of well-being.

The practice of bed rotting—setting aside intentional time for inactivity—allows for a mental decompression that is increasingly rare. It provides a sanctuary from the constant stream of notifications, obligations, and comparisons that feed into the cycle of stress and anxiety. When we step away from the external stimuli that incessantly demand our attention, we give our brains the opportunity to shift into a more reflective mode.

Intentional bed rotting can look like setting aside one day on a weekend to just sit in bed all day. No work, no social gatherings, and no guilt—because you already set aside this time to have to yourself.

Bed rotting and other work-free times in our schedule serve as a recognition that we are not machines, and our value is not solely tied to our output—an important lesson at a school where we often crave external validation and achievement as our source of fulfillment. Bed rotting also allows the mind and body to recover, which can spark creative ideas and even build resilience once we return to our busy schedules. Indeed, scientific studies show that being alone helps creative people come up with ideas for music, visual artworks, and theater.

This is not to say that bed rotting doesn't have its risks. Some might argue that bed rotting is a bad form of self-care since it



inherently involves separating yourself from the campus community and the outside world. These concerns are backed by science. Too much time in bed can disrupt sleep cycles and worsen the effects of depression and loneliness. This is why it is important to set limits and ensure you are holding yourself accountable to a healthy balance of relaxation and work. Occasional bed rotting can be good, but too much can be harmful, especially if your schedule leads you to spend much time inside already.

For those who feel bed rotting would not be great for them, a parallel self-care

strategy might also work: leaving the Harvard bubble by yourself. While it can seem daunting at first, since the more socially acceptable form of going out is to do so with others, being outside alone has many of the benefits of bed rotting and can be especially helpful for someone who has been inside for too long. Boston has many walkable and beautiful neighborhoods, like Beacon Hill or Back Bay, where one can get lost in narrow, European-style streets lined with stones and bricks.

Taking a social break gives you immense freedom, allowing you to process your own thoughts and do what makes you happy without compromising on someone else's schedule. Cycle around Boston and sightsee, go to the art museum you've been wanting to see, or dine alone at a place that intrigues you. Doing so alone forces you to be in the moment, rather than doing them for the cool Instagram photos. It also helps you stay in touch with the communities that surround Harvard.

In general, there's something liberating about engaging in activities devoid of external validation or the need to keep up with the societal rush. Bed rotting and its extensions into solitary activities are not about advocating for a life of isolation or inactivity. Instead, they serve as a reminder of the importance of balance.

In our Harvardian quest for achievement and belonging, we must not forget to nurture our relationship with ourselves. Spending a day disconnected from the world's demands allows us to connect more deeply with our own needs and desires. Intentional bed rotting can lead to a more balanced, fulfilled, and, ultimately, productive life. It's a defense of the self in a world that constantly asks for more, a reminder that sometimes the best move is to stay still, reflect, and simply be.

**ROBERTO QUESADA '27**  
**(ROBERTOQUESADA@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) CAN BE FOUND BED ROTTING SOMETIMES.**

**GRAPHIC BY RILEY CULLINAN '27**



# A LOVE LETTER TO THE THAW

*The unexpected awe of winter's metamorphosis to spring.*

BY HANNAH DAVIS '25

**A**s a Chicago native and temporary Bostonian, I am well acquainted with cold, windy winters where my hands turn white, my cheeks turn red, and my nighttime tea becomes ritual. I often remark that you never get fully used to the cold, but you learn to accept it. Still, I love living in cold weather climates. Not because I love the cold (my friends will tell you I hate it), but because I love the defrost that comes afterward.

Easter Sunday was one of those random 50-degree Boston days when the sun was out, but the air was still brisk—the kind of weather warranting a switch from puffer jackets to shorts and a sweatshirt. Unlike the numbing winter cold, the slight chill on my bare legs woke me up. This kind of unexpected spring day always yanks me from the monotony of gray winter days and never-ending homework assignments. As the city thaws, people remember what it's like to be outside, active, and happy.

Maybe that's why Harvard students are so eager to capitalize on uncharacteristic warmth. On these days, students fill courtyards with di games, spike ball, volleyball, and outdoor work sessions. Acquaintances stop to chat, and friends greet each other from across the grass. The world lights up, and people go outside regardless of their work, knowing the warmth won't last.

Spring reminds me of the cold that has persisted and of the warmth to come. This weather makes me calmer and more optimistic than any perfect summer day. When sunshine and heat are the norm, even slight breezes chill my whole body, and I curse the "cold." Meanwhile, I relish the ability to wear only a light jacket on Boston's few proper spring days.

The forecast changes daily, so each bright day is sacred. I am more grateful for the sun-induced serotonin when it's not guaranteed. Spring is uncertain. The only given is

its cyclicity. Warm days, cold days, and all the hope of summer around the corner.

A few days after Easter, rain pellets and wind gusts pierced me on my walk back to Eliot from the SEC. As I finally arrived in the empty courtyard, I thanked my thick jeans for protecting my legs.

On days like that, my friends and I claim that we wish we went to school in California, Tennessee, or Arizona, with endless warm winters and no seasonal depression. We picture playing pickleball after school, hitting the beach, and getting the perfect tan. Yet, when I really stop and think about it, I'm not sure we mean it.

It's comforting to think something as simple as the weather could be a blanket bandaid for all of college's woes. But, warm weather would not rewire my type-A brain or create the idealized college experience that I imagine it would. Most Harvard students prioritize their schoolwork, extracurriculars, or varsity sports schedules over everything else. Even if Boston had California's weather, assignments would still stress me out, and competing commitments would

run me ragged.

I pause my priorities when the perfect spring day hits because I don't know when the next one will come. I want to bask in the warm weather and seize spontaneity while I can. After college, I won't be able to pause my work on a sunny

weekday to play tennis with friends. Even now, the weather gods and homework gods only align so often. These idyllic days are so comforting because they stray so far from winter's baseline. As the seasons change, the novelty of spring strikes me anew each year.

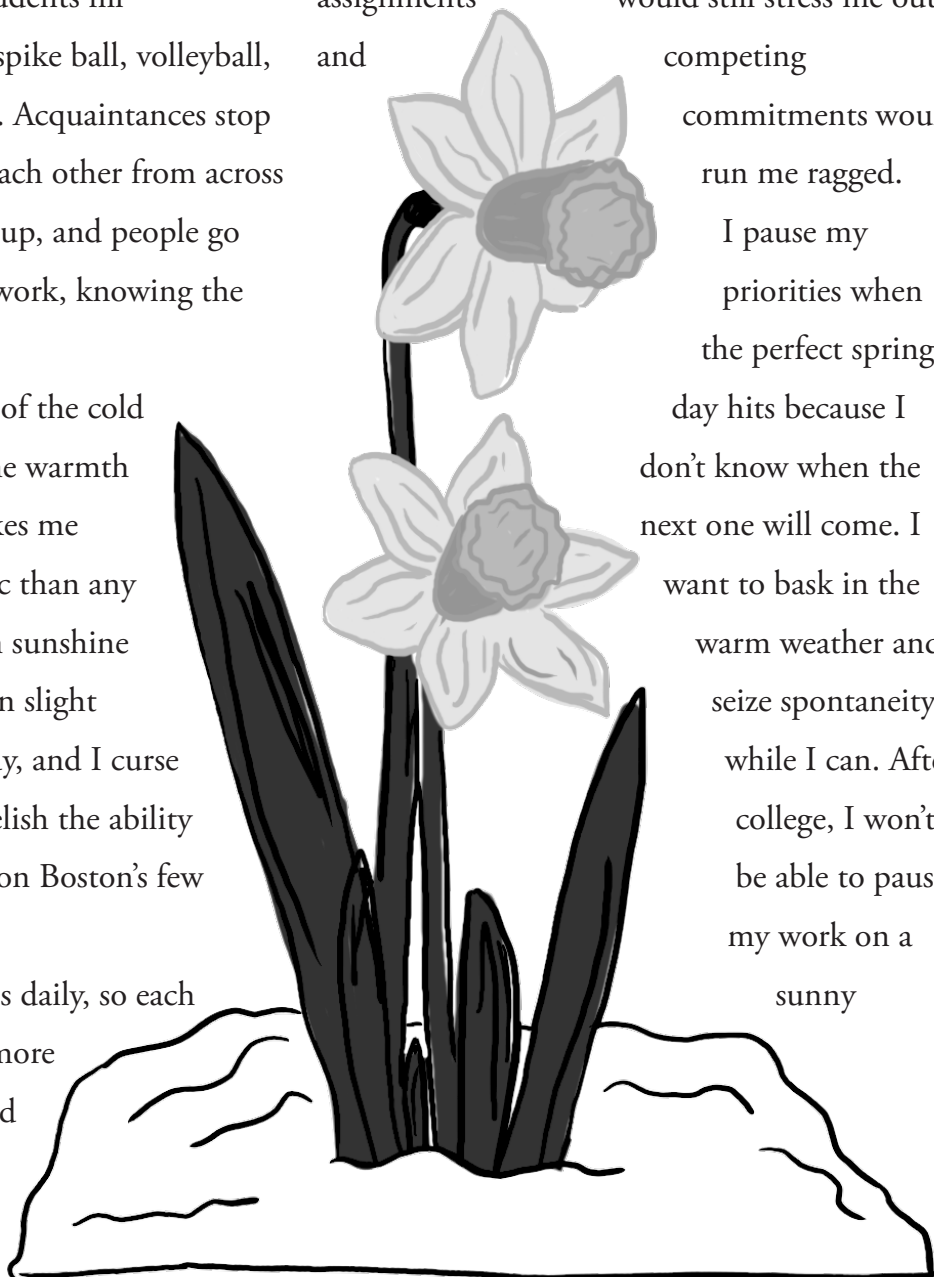
Growing up, I knew spring started when I awoke to the sound of birds chirping. I lived in the middle of urban Chicago with a bedroom window overlooking an alleyway, so I'm not certain where the birds came from. But I welcomed their morning greetings nonetheless. Back then, spring meant the school soccer season, outdoor recess, and forgoing bus rides home for long walks through the park.

On spring days at Harvard, the morning songbirds still serenade me on my walk to class. They make me nostalgic for old hobbies and simpler times. I feel fifteen again, wondering whether my coach will start me in the big game or whether my homeroom teacher will force us into a wellness activity. Spring makes me hope, reflect, and relish in the good times as they come because, much like the perfect spring day, the highs are often temporary.

Spring is a microcosm for the volatility of four season climates: winter, summer, and spring all merged into one (sorry, autumn). Last Thursday's snowfall was one of only a few in this mild winter and was likely our last of the year. I try to appreciate our April snowfall as much as I appreciate the high 50 and 60-degree days. Even when I cannot escape the demands of everyday life to soak up the warmth, I find comfort in knowing more perfect spring days will arrive soon. I am ready for the thaw, but only because I know the freeze too well.

**HANNAH DAVIS '25 (HANNAHDAVIS@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) EAGERLY AWAITS THE FIRST SLIGHTLY TOO-COLD BUT STILL PERFECT SPRING PICNIC ALONG THE CHARLES**

**GRAPHIC BY CLARA LAKE '27**



# ARTS

## HARVARD SQUARE'S TREASURE TROVE OF CINEMA

### A profile of the Brattle Theatre.

BY ARI DESAI '27

If you turn down Brattle Street, walk a few minutes past Felipe's, and look below Alden and Harlow, you'll find one of Harvard Square's hidden gems. The Brattle Theatre is the only movie theater in Harvard Square, showing a variety of classic, independent, and foreign films every day. Walking up the stairs from its unassuming lobby to the main auditorium, you'll be greeted with a variety of eclectic movie posters from decades past. The screen sits on a stage built for theater productions, overlooked by a grand balcony of seats.

In the 1920s, the space was used for productions by the Harvard Dramatic Club. Two decades later, it began being used by a theatrical group, the Brattle Theatre Company. One founding member, Bryant Halliday '47, who acted in the company while at Harvard, purchased the building a year after graduating. Along with fellow actor Cyrus Harvey Jr. '47, Halliday turned the building into the Brattle Theatre in 1952.

For Dr. Alfred Guzzetti, longtime experimental filmmaker and Osgood Hooker Professor of Visual Arts at Harvard, the Brattle is a fixture of arthouse cinema. "It was here before I arrived, and I hope it'll be here after I'm gone," Guzzetti told the *Independent*. According to Guzzetti, the Brattle stood out from other local theaters at the time for its foray into foreign films. "It was crucial in bringing the contemporary world cinema into the United States on a curated basis."

The theater's programming choices had a major impact on Guzzetti's own personal introduction to foreign films. Guzzetti recalls going to the Brattle to see *Kuhle Wampe* (1932), a militant film made in Nazi Germany before its screenwriter Bertolt Brecht was forced to flee the country. "It was assumed to be lost because the Nazis hated it...so seeing that film, even in its poor print, was a revelation of a kind of cinema that I didn't have access to." Another similarly lost film rediscovered by the Brattle is *The Rules of the Game* (1939), which, according to Guzzetti, "is probably one of the greatest films ever made... It was released to a kind of tepid reaction in France," its original film print then lost. The Brattle was able to show a duplicate print of the film, which was also monumental for Guzzetti. He shared, "I was blown away by it and went back to see it [again]."

Step into the projection room behind the screen at the Brattle, and you can feel this variety inside the cornucopia of film prints. Colorful posters of films from various decades and countries adorn the walls. Its shelves house reels upon reels of an abundant library of films, ranging from *Casablanca* to *Mulholland Drive* to *Casino Royale*.

These film prints themselves are another major feature of the Brattle. The projection of movies on actual film is a staple of many arthouse theaters, but this method is much harder to come by at major multiplexes like AMC. The Brattle gives audiences the chance to revisit classics like *It's a Wonderful Life* or even recent hits like *The Social Network* projected on film, providing a warmth and crackle to the screen that cannot be replicated by digital projection. Even the location of the projection room is a theater specialty.

It houses an incredibly rare rear projection system. Most movie theaters project the image onto the screen by shooting light from the back of the auditorium onto the front of the cinema screen. But not at the Brattle. Guzzetti explained that it "turned movies into a kind of magic—a bit like television—where the image doesn't come from anywhere... It appeared magically, which is a part of what the cinema is, you know, it's magic."

The Brattle also boasts a rich history of traditions that have developed a loyal following. Guzzetti shared that the Brattle has always had a "connection with the college rituals of final exams." The theater had a tradition of screening the Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman classic *Casablanca* during exam time at Harvard. A vibrant mural on the back wall of the auditorium floor depicts art from *Casablanca*, a clear tribute to the significance of the film at the Brattle.

Guzzetti recalled "taking [his] parents to see a screening of *Casablanca* to give them some kind of cultural education about the weird culture up here." He went on, "I remember seeing it through their eyes. For them, it was a movie they had seen, and then, in the Brattle, they went into the sort-of church of Humphrey Bogart, where people came to worship at the shrine of *Casablanca*... My parents were really struck much more by the audience than by the film."

The film was most recently



shown at the Brattle on Valentine's Day this year, and the theater continues to share the best of cinema from both the U.S. and around the world. Ned Hinkle, creative director and film programmer at the Brattle for over 20 years, took the reins of the theater in 2001 and turned it into a nonprofit called the Brattle Film Foundation. Hinkle told the *Independent* that "whether you're the most learned film scholar in the country, or whether you're somebody who's never seen an 'art movie' before, the Brattle is a welcoming place, and that's what [it's] always tried to be and tried to maintain." He sees the theater as a "place where anybody can and should feel welcome to come to experience a different kind of perspective on movies."

The Brattle is a repertory cinema, which, for Hinkle, means "looking at the full range of cinema history, from new films to the first films ever made, and putting that together into a concrete calendar, where things have set periods of time that they're playing for... That's been the way it's been programmed since really the very beginning." Repertory Series are planned two months at a time by Hinkle. "We always schedule two-month blocks, so we do six calendars a year." The programming often showcases underrepresented voices in cinema. "The original basic idea behind the theater was really one of discovery and rediscovery, so we continue to stay true to that." He described the programming process as arcane and alchemical. "We try to mix together films from different decades, films from different countries. Obviously, gender representation is an important factor for us, as is culture and population representation, so we're just looking to make as wide an array of films as possible over a two-month period of time."



When choosing specific movies to screen, Hinkle said, “We’ll look at what people might be talking about a lot online, whether that’s on Letterboxd or whether there’s a meme going around that we think might inspire a film series.” For newer films being released, the Brattle will sometimes dive into the range of influences behind it. “Are there movies that are clearly inspired by film history, and how can we create a program that references or connects the movies that a new film might be referencing?” For instance, in the first week of September 2023, the Brattle screened a different film every night that relates to or directly influenced Greta Gerwig’s *Barbie*—from Jim Carrey classic *The Truman Show*, dealing with similar themes of existential dread, to *Frances Ha*, one of Gerwig’s first major acting and co-writing roles.

The upcoming “Space Week Film Festival,” which begins on April 15, showcases Stanley Kubrick’s classic, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, as well as more recent sci-fi, like *Men in Black*, *Wall-E*, and *Gravity*. The theater also offers the chance to see new films through the Independent Film Festival of Boston. This year’s Oscar winners *American Fiction* and *The Boy and the Heron* also had early, and sometimes free screenings at

the Brattle last fall through IFFBoston. Even just last week, the upcoming Ryan Gosling blockbuster, *The Fall Guy*, was specially screened for members of the Brattle.

Ultimately, the thing keeping audiences coming back to the Brattle post-pandemic is the encouraging support from its community. “People really wanted the Brattle to be there and doing the kind of programming that we do, and they expressed that value by donating money to us to help us stay open. We really did feel dramatically energized by that immediate response after the COVID closure,” Hinkle said. He sees Brattle’s survival through COVID as a testament to audiences’ undying attraction towards the moviegoing experience. “It just comes down to the fact that people really do want to see movies together... If anything was going to actually kill movie theaters, it’s being closed for six months to two years.”

In an age of audiences gravitating towards watching movies on streaming services, local audiences continue to return to the Brattle. “When I go to the Brattle, I see familiar types and faces because there is a diehard remnant of the old cinephile culture,”

Guzzetti explained. Speaking on the technological and cultural shift towards the internet and streaming, Guzzetti feels “what [these audiences] don’t get is the sense of a theater and the communal feeling of an

audience.”

This is why despite battling a pandemic and a new streaming service every month, according to Hinkle, “there’s still a drive to go to a movie theater to experience your favorite film that you’ve seen a dozen times on screen with an audience.” He sees going to the cinema as a timeless rite that predates the invention of film itself: “Telling stories is the earliest form of entertainment and community building for humans, and I think that that still exists today, where you want to come together in a darkened room, watch a movie together, experience a sense of community.”

That same sense of community is right here in Harvard Square. “That’s why the Brattle is still here. It’s why the Brattle’s always been here,” Hinkle said. “It’s always been the goal of this theater to bring people together to challenge and entertain them. And we’re just gonna keep doing it as long as we can keep the doors open.”

**ARI DESAI ’27 (ADESAI@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) CAN OFTEN BE FOUND BETWEEN CLASSES AT THE BRATTLE THEATRE.**

**GRAPHIC BY DHATI OOMMEN ’26**

## PAELLA, TOFU, AND IMPROV

*The IGP hosts Player of the Year featuring Jason Mantzoukas.*

BY NICHOLAS MCQUILLING ’27

On April 5, the Immediate Gratification Players (IGP) presented their Player of the Year comedy improvisation event with Jason Mantzoukas. Each year, the IGP honors a famous comedian by inviting him or her to perform with the cast and receive a classic IGP striped tie. This tradition dates back to 2010 and has honored such comedians as Jeff Garlin and Keegan Michael Key. The event was highly anticipated, with posters all over campus, leading to a sold-out show of 500 people in the Science Center lecture hall venue.

The event began with the IGP members suddenly running onto the stage, waving their arms up and down and riling up the crowd. Mantzoukas, an actor and comedian known for his roles such as Nadal in *The Dictator* and Jay Bilzerian in *Big Mouth*, entered the stage after the IGP members flung open the large door closest to center stage. The crowd erupted in applause.

The IGP awarded Mantzoukas a red and yellow tie, signaling his status as an honorary member of the cast. The show followed a monologue style, in which Mantzoukas crafted a story based on a word from the audience, and the IGP cast performed improv based on it. The first word of the night was paella, a Spanish rice-based dish. Mantzoukas had never eaten it before and thought for some time before beginning his monologue.

Suddenly, Mantzoukas launched into a story

about an occurrence in a posh New York City hotel, in which he woke up locked out of his room and wearing only underwear after a night out. A pair of unfortunate tourists from Germany saw Mantzoukas on his way to get another room key from the concierge. The concierge attempted to maintain a straight face but could not help but be amused. Mantzoukas finally incorporated paella at the end of his story rather randomly, saying it was a “long night, paella.” The audience laughed throughout, especially at the final line.

This story became the basis for several subsequent IGP member improv sequences. Highlights included a lady with a Southern accent who lived in Germany through a baby exchange program and witnessed Mantzoukas on his way to the concierge, a restaurant in which customers eat paella that makes their clothes magically disappear, and a health inspector checking that restaurant and being startled to not find hamburgers in the kitchen but rather crusty, old clothes.

After the word “paella” had run its course, audience members stayed on the topic of food, deciding the next word to be tofu. Mantzoukas lamented eating tofu in Miso soup, saying, “Here comes those little globs.” He then described what it was like going to restaurants and the experience of living in Boston during the 1980s. He would run into tough guys from Boston who would constantly injure each other and say, “Oh, so you think you’re better than me?” as a way to initiate fights.

Highlights from the IGP members’ tofu improv portion included an employee at a cheesesteak shop who

got annoyed after a young customer was both allergic to dairy and a vegetarian, exhausting all of the store’s food options, and a

lemonade stand that taught sex-ed to customers through subtle innuendos. Many of these scenes were set at restaurants, reflecting the tofu theme.

After those two highly entertaining improv sequences, Mantzoukas and the rest of IGP thanked the crowd and said farewell. After receiving a standing ovation, Mantzoukas and the IGP members ran out of the venue.

When asked how the show went, IGP member Jack Burton ’26 said he “thought it was a great show” and that he was “excited to have such a great audience and to sell out the show.” He also emphasized what a joy it was to work with Mantzoukas, saying that the IGP was excited to perform with someone at the “center of the improv world.”

How would an improv group prepare for a big night like this in the first place, given that their show is based entirely on spontaneity? Jack’s answer: practices twice a week.

**NICHOLAS MCQUILLING ’27 (NAMQUILLING@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) NEEDS A SCRIPT TO PERFORM ON STAGE.**

**GRAPHIC BY EMILY PALLAN ’27**



# CAN'T SEPARATE THE ART FROM THE ARTIST

*Reclaiming identity at Harvard's Black Art Collective.*

BY KATE KADYAN '26

**A**rt can take a million different forms. It can be a spoken word poem, a urinal turned sideways, or a guitar riff. Despite access to the illustrious Harvard art history professors, one would be hard-pressed to get a definitive answer on not just what constitutes “good” art, but what constitutes “art” at all.

The personal and subjective aspects of the creation process are unfortunately somewhat lost during comp, a long application process to gain admission to Harvard's myriad of art clubs. The comp process forces individuals to constantly compare their art to others in order to earn a coveted spot in a production, arts magazine, or dance troupe.

In the midst of Harvard's exclusive art culture, the Black Arts Collective (BAC) is forging a collaborative space in which Black artists, regardless of experience, can create and reflect on their personal and creative identities.

The Black Arts Collective was created in 2022 by three freshmen who were disillusioned with the Harvard art scene. Jetta Strayhorn '25, one of the co-founders and current visionary members of the BAC, reflects on the night the BAC was born: “They were all playing music and really digging deep into realizing we're all talented in different ways... The Black students here are so artistic, but so many of them don't get to explore it because of either their major or really competitive, discouraging art spaces.” The BAC then emerged as a space in which Black artists could collaborate and showcase their talents.

According to co-directors of the BAC, other Harvard art spaces prevent students from fully exploring the connections between identity and art—either through a crude reductionist attitude towards identity and art production or by ignoring the relationship altogether. Shayhorn feels that she and other students are frequently blanketly categorized as “Black artists,” when “Blackness is such a broad identity.”

On the other hand, the BAC directors feel that Harvard often falls into the opposite trap—attempting to separate the art from the artist and their identity. As Marley Dias '26, a co-director, pointed out, “We exist within those

multitudes [of race, gender, and sexuality] at all times.” Shayhorn reflected that, as a result, all Black artists at Harvard have questioned whether they are focusing too much on their identity when presenting their work—an incredibly discouraging line of thinking. In response, the BAC seeks to, not necessarily emphasize race, but to see and recognize people for how they want to be recognized. In BAC meetings, members delve into how identity shapes and is reflected in art, rather than simplifying or dismissing the connections.

The BAC has now grown into a collective of 15 leading visionary members who direct the club's events and around 20 members who participate in makerspaces and the creation of capstone projects. The BAC holds an incredibly diverse array of talent, with passions ranging from theater to filmmaking to painting. As Strayhorn puts it, it would be easier to ask what we *don't* have than what we *do* have.

*“Being Black in the world is an inherently creative act”*

*– Alyssa Gaines '26*

Not only does the BAC have an incredible range in the types of artists, but all levels of expertise are welcome. This variety is apparent even just among some of the co-directors of the program—Shayhorn, who is majoring in AFVS and hopes to go to graduate school for art, Dias, who is a published author, and Helena Hudlin '27, who began creating art for the first time at Harvard. As Strayhorn said, “We have poet laureates and also people who are putting pen to paper for the first time... The emphasis is not on skill but on passion.”

Distinctions between mediums are likewise blurred in the BAC, where students will more likely be asked not what type of artists they are, but if they have, more broadly, “any tinglings of creative energy.” Co-director Keeley Gorman '26 has seen her friends “find new passions” through the makerspaces of the Black Arts Collective—small gatherings focused on the exploration of a specific medium. In

these spaces, students can “break apart from other more suffocating areas of Harvard...and be in a space where they are allowed to explore and not be judged or discouraged.”

The co-directors emphasize, however, that the welcoming nature of the BAC does not mean that the work it produces is any less important or impressive than any other clubs. Rather, the belief that exclusion breeds valuable art is a fallacy the BAC believes plagues the Harvard art scene. As Hudlin put it, “Just because a space is accessible, doesn't mean that it isn't that it is not powerful or beneficial.”

Part of the culture of inclusion of different levels and mediums within the BAC is a result of this club being both an affinity group and an art space. “Being Black in the world is an inherently creative act, and it has historically been, so honing in on that creative power of processing and community building isn't relegated to discipline,” said Alyssa Gaines '26, visionary board member and Youth Poet Laureate.

Moreover, the co-directors feel that, for the Black community, art has been a historically reliable way in which to express themselves. Dias wants Harvard students to know, “We always have an avenue to make our voices heard, and that [art] is always going to be that place.”

At BAC, the culture of inclusion of mediums and experience is a direct result of it being a Black affinity space—this art culture is key to using art to process personal experiences and to viewing art as a civic responsibility. Thus, the BAC, as Gaines puts it, engages in “art as a production versus art as a process.” Through this approach, the BAC encourages not only Black artists, but Black artistry.

The BAC will be displaying an interactive mural on climate change at the Arts First Festival, which runs April 24th to 26th, through which all Harvard students can reflect on the connection between art and civic duty, art and process.

**KATE KADYAN '26  
(KATEKADYAN@COLLEGE.  
HARVARD.EDU) DOES NOT  
CONSIDER HERSELF AN ARTIST  
BUT FELT “TINGLINGS OF  
CREATIVE ENERGY” AFTER  
TALKING TO BAC MEMBERS.**



# SPORTS

## INDY SPORTSBOOK: HITTING DINGERS

*Some enticing bets to make about a little stick and bottle cap.*

BY LUKE WAGNER '26

**A**t this time of the year, we are gearing up to walk outside, sit on a lawn, and soak in the sun.

We have been inside for what feels like months now, and are yearning to step outside at any chance we can get.

And nothing beats baseball. We are some of the first people to hate on some aspects of baseball. This sport is enjoyable to watch, but it gets so repetitive. The sport almost outlasts three elemental seasons. When Fenway opens up, fans will flood to stadiums and bettors will flood to their sportsbooks to place their bets for the season. The excitement is palpable, as the sports betting industry becomes an increasingly mainstream part of the sports experience.

The MLB has made efforts to speed up the game and add more action to appeal to a younger audience. These changes also make the game even more unpredictable and thrilling to bet on but not really that much faster. The pitch clock has sped the sport up significantly, and the average duration is around 2 hours and 45 minutes. These stories have come at a time when baseball itself is undergoing changes.

Yet, it is the repetition, the stats, the history, the lazy afternoons in the bleachers, and the sudden bursts of unparalleled excitement that make it America's pastime. Baseball is more than a sport—it's a long-standing tradition that sews generations together with a thread of shared memories. We bet everyone can still remember watching "Field of Dreams" for the first time with their father.

As a sportsbook, we could not imagine ignoring the hottest news in the last 10 years of the sport: Shohei Ohtani.

This has been one incredible offseason for the \$700 million-dollar-man. First, he signed one of the most groundbreaking contracts in modern sports history, by deferring 680 of his 700 million dollars so that his Japanese teammate, Yoshinobu Yamamoto, could join the Dodgers as well. When he joined the team, Yamamoto had a shaky start to the season in a matchup in South Korea, a few days before the season started for the rest of Major League Baseball (MLB).

But then the news broke. *Or did it?* A swath of stories surrounding Ohtani and his translator, Ipe Mazuhara, about gambling debt started to explode, and everyone heard different stories. At first, Ipe was making a speech to the Dodgers about thanking Ohtani for paying off his \$4.5 million gambling debt; then, we all heard that Ipe stole the money and that Ohtani had no idea what people were talking about. And the stories never stopped. We have not really heard anything about this since Ipe was fired and pushed under the rug by MLB. Now the only mention is March Madness updates and fake translations of Ohtani telling people to bet \$100k on Oakland to beat Kentucky.

While we might not be able to give you locks in the same way that Shohei Ohtani can, here are the best picks for the upcoming season:

**Most home runs, Mookie Betts (+3500):** Mookie Betts's 2018 season was one of the best hitting seasons that I have ever seen. Hitting .346 and having an OPS over 1.000, Betts led the Red Sox to the World Series in 2018 and won the MVP. I expect him to hit the peak of his slugging career and lead the MLB in home runs.

**Orioles over**

**89.5 wins (-125):** This line just feels like a steal. This team was super young last season and only continues to get better.

They won

over 100 games last season, and their guys will continue to improve as the season goes on. This one almost feels like an eternal lock.

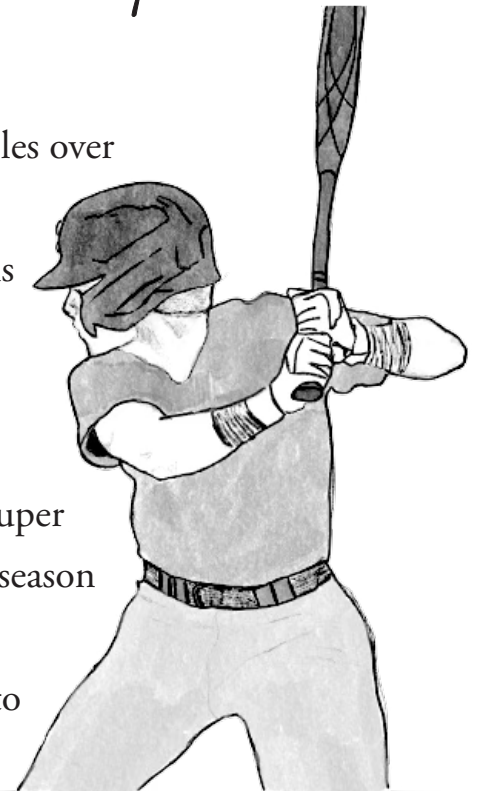
**Red Sox over 78.5 (-140):** We have already thrown over a thousand on this line. We think it's a joke to assume this team is not even .500. They have an extremely young core of players that have some spark and are exciting (as long as they all stay healthy).

**Rays over 85.5 (+110):** We know the front office has not really been as sharp as in the past, and they have lost a lot of their coaches to other teams aspiring for bigger roles, but they still have a lot of talent. We know that this means we bet over 3/5 in the AL East, but who cares—it's the best division in baseball for a reason.

We decided that we are no longer going to give "under" predictions, because some of us, who shall remain unnamed, have decided they are no longer spreading hate in the world. (But if you want to look for unders, look no further than the AL Central.)

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EDITOR OF THE INDEPENDENT.**

**GRAPHIC BY CHRISTIE BECKLEY '27  
SPORTS | 11**



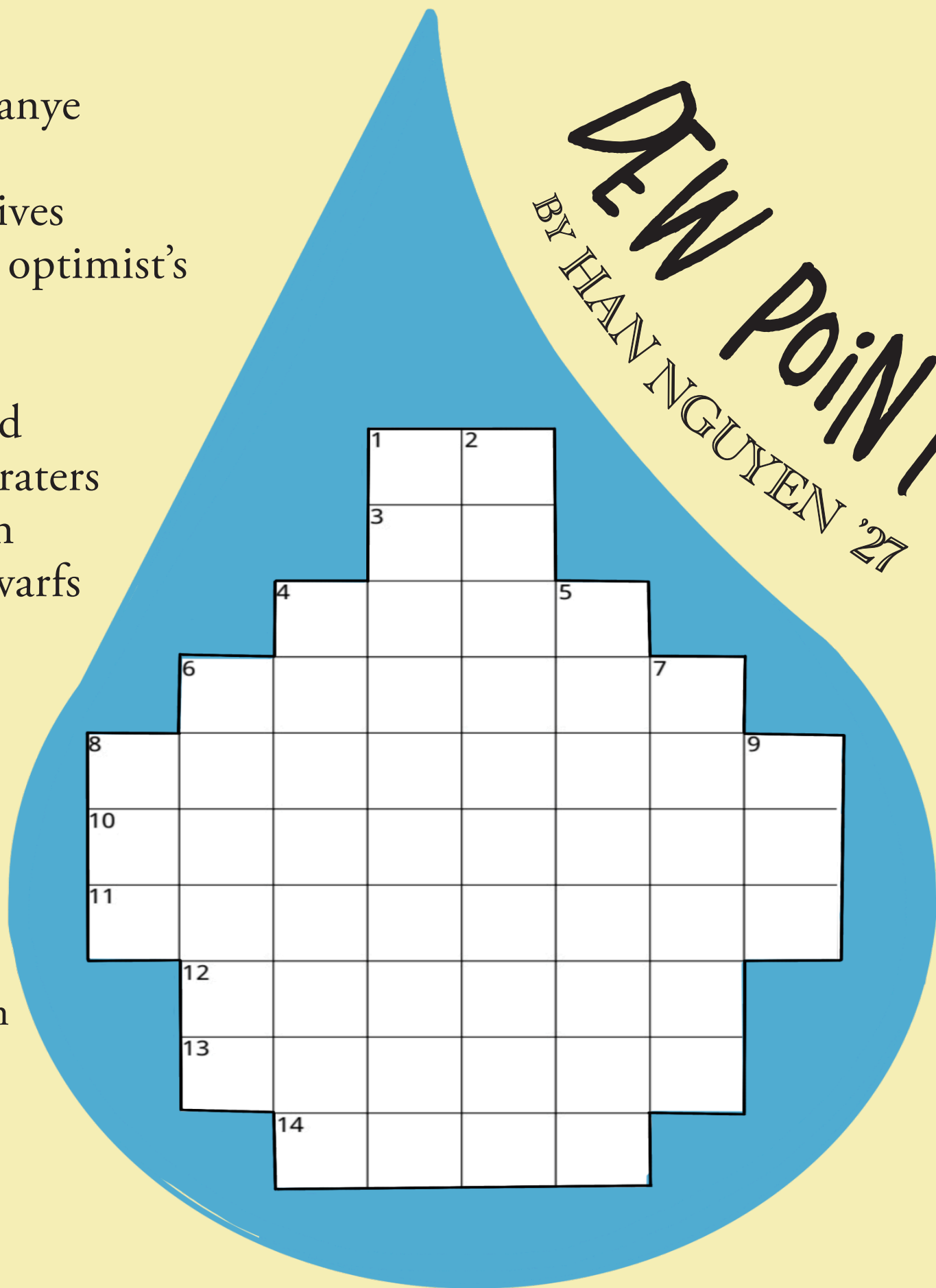
OPINIONS OF FORUM PIECES BELONG ONLY TO THE  
WRITER AND DO NOT REFLECT THE VALUES OF THE  
*INDEPENDENT.*

## ACROSS

- 1 Short for Kanye
- 3 Old lover
- 4 PC alternatives
- 6 \_\_\_ dream: optimist's philosophy
- 8 Fidgety, say
- 10 Abandoned
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- 4 Like a photon
- 5 Pilots
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- 7 Very hot celestial orbs
- 8 "Arabian Nights" bird
- 9 Paris possessive



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