

September 25, 2025

HARVARD

Vol LVII, Issue 5

INDEPENDENT

The student weekly since 1969

FALLING IN



CONTENTS

About the *Independent*

3. **A Look Into the IOP's Fall 2025 Application Cycle**
by Sara Kumar '27
4. **The Harvard College Class of 2026 Elects its Class Marshals**
by Caroline Stohrer '28
5. **Harvard University Affiliates Mourn the Closure of the QuOffice**
by Addy Anyaosah '28 and Lucy Duncan '28
6. **Laundry, Dining, Printing: Campus Reactions to Service Changes**
by Seyi Amosun '29
7. **Thoughts from New Quincy: Residue of Rooms**
by Luke Wagner '26
8. **Learning the Words**
by Rania Jones '27
9. **Point/Counterpoint: What to Wear to Class**
by Frances Connors '26 and Heidi Heffelfinger '26
10. **Drop In!**
by Clara Lake '27

12. **Who We Go to War For and Why It Matters**
by Noah Basden '29
13. **Back to the Book**
by Paige Cornelius '28
14. **Crimson Threads**
by Taylor Thorne '28
15. **A Senior's Guide to Harvard**
by Chopped Unc
16. **Come to the Golden Arm**
by Adedoyin Adebayo '26
17. **Playoff Potentials**
by David Daniel '28
18. **Fantasy Roundup: Week 3**
by Tyler Dang '28
19. **Sports Spotlight: Robby Meek**
by Tilly Butterworth '28
- Mr. Bartley's Burger Cottage
20. **Wish Upon a Falling Crossword**
by Fred Klein '28 and Annabella Burton Boone '29

As Harvard College's weekly undergraduate newspaper, the *Harvard Independent* provides in-depth, critical coverage of issues and events of interest to the Harvard College community. The *Independent* has no political affiliation, instead offering diverse commentary on news, arts, sports, and student life.

For general or business inquiries, contact president@harvardindependent.com. Address Letters to the Editor, op-eds, or comments regarding content to editorinchief@harvardindependent.com. To subscribe to bi-weekly mailed print issues, email subscriptions@harvardindependent.com.

We belong to no one but ourselves.

MASTHEAD

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Katie Merriam '26, *President*
Layla Charaoui '26, *Editor-In-Chief*
Luke Wagner '26, *Managing Director*
Jonah Karafiol '26, *Managing Editor*

EDITORIAL BOARD

Sara Kumar '27, *News Editor*
Rania Jones '27, *Forum Editor*
Meena Behringer '27, *Arts Editor*
Kate Oliver '26, *Sports Editor*
Kalvin Frank '28, *Editorial Comp Director*
Caroline Stohrer '28, *Associate News Editor*
Pippa Lee '28, *Associate Forum Editor*
Raina Wang '28, *Associate Arts Editor*
Alejandro Sanchez '26, *Associate Sports Editor*
Jules Sanders '28, *Editor-at-Large*
Mia Wilcox '28, *Columns Editor*
Tyler Dang '28, *Associate Editorial Comp Director*
Fred Klein '28, *Game Designer*
Courtney Hines '28, *Copy Editor*
Megan Legault '28, *Copy Editor*
Nashla Turcios '28, *Copy Editor*

BUSINESS BOARD

Mia Tavares '27, *Business Director*
Keith Hannon '27, *Operations Director*
Tomas Arroyo '27, *Advertising Director*
Ella Bikoff '27, *Marketing Director*
Frances Connors '26, *Programs Director*
Sophia Gonzalez '28, *Business Comp Director*
Anusha Kadiyala '27, *Associate Business Director*
Anya Govil '28, *Associate Operations Director*
Whitney Ford '28, *Associate Advertising Director*
Clara Thiele '28, *Associate Marketing Director*
Breagh Bridge '27, *Associate Programs Director*
Caroline Bae '28, *Community Chair*
Santiago Kelly '26, *Community Chair*

MULTIMEDIA BOARD

Patrick Sliz '27, *Multimedia Director*
Daniel Rosario '27, *Website Director*
Ryan Irving '27, *Video Director*
Natalie Blanchfield '28, *Social Media Director*
Jordan Wasserberger '27, *Photo & Podcast Director*
Josie Whelan '28, *Multimedia Comp Director*
Bautista Martinez '27, *Associate Multimedia Director*
Janelle Souro '28, *Associate Website Director*
Janelle Wang '28, *Associate Video Director*
Wessal Bakry '28, *Associate Social Media Director*
John Sogutlu '28, *Associate Photo & Podcast Director*
Hudson Byrd '28, *Archivist*

DESIGN BOARD

Kayla Le '28, *Design Editor*
Angie Li '28, *Design Editor*
Clara Lake '27, *Covers Editor*
Amelie Lima '27, *Art Director*
Emma Crago '28, *Associate Art Director*
Neshama Ryman '28, *Design Comp Director*
Kerrie Zhu '28, *Design Comp Director*

INDEPENDENT STAFF

Adedoyin Adebayo '26, Abril Rodriguez-Diaz '26, Ilana Feder '26, Annelise Fisher '26, Anthony Goenaga '26, Heidi Heffelfinger '26, Sachi Laumas '26, Andrew Morrissey '26, Kayla Reifel '26, El Richards '26, Alma Russell '26, Gauri Sood '26, Reeve Sykes '26, Gary Zhan '26, Isabella Andrade '27, Christie Beckley '27, Riley Cullinan '27, Sophie Dauer '27, Sophie Depaul '27, Madison Krug '27, Frida Lopez '27, Nicholas McQuilling '27, Matthew Moore '27, Han Nguyen '27, Emily Pallan '27,

Sophia Rascoff '27, Brooklyn Sandridge '27, Lucie Stefanoni '27, Kelly Tung '27, Britney Ampadu '28, Maddie Bailey '28, Sofia Branco '28, Tilly Butterworth '28, Amanda Campos '28, Marcel Ramos Castaneda '28, Miranda Chao Hwang '28, Natalie Cooper '28, Paige Cornelius '28, Cara Cronin '28, David Daniel '28, Jocelyne Delgado '28, James Dyalchand-Ericson '28, Ahmed Eldeeb '28, Ocean Feng '28, Ajax Fu '28, Eliza Glaeser '28, Tyler Hogan '28, Helen Hou '28, Ben Kaufman '28, Megan Legault '28, Olivia Lunseth '28, Alicia Moy '28, Blake O'Donnell '28, Alexandra Otto '28, Sidney Regelbrugge '28, Joshua Rodriguez Ortiz '28, Kyler Rno '28, Antonia Melina Salame '28, Anna Shao '28, Jackie Stjernfeldt '28, Filip Vujanic '28, Ishaan Tewari '28, Joye Wingard '28, Allyson Xu '28, Jeffrey Yeo '28, Keenan Zeidan '28

THE SUSTAINERS

The Sustainers are a group of Independent alumni committed to supporting our mission by funding one month of office rent each year for at least five years.

MARK SHIELDS '70
JIM VASEFF '71
DAVID SMITH '75
RANDY BUCKLIN '82
MARK PELOFSKY '84
JULIE DAM '93
WILL RECKLER '99

A Look Into the IOP's Fall 2025 Application Cycle

A breakdown of recent student engagement at the Harvard Kennedy School's Institute of Politics.

BY SARA KUMAR '27

The Harvard Kennedy School's Institute of Politics closed its fall 2025 Common Application on Sept. 12. Since then, its 18 student programs and four coalitions have welcomed a new cohort of undergraduates committed to civic engagement. Following a politically turbulent summer, the IOP reported one of its most engaged application periods in a non-election year on organization record.

"We are so grateful to our fellow students for their passion and interest in pursuing public service," IOP Vice President Summer Tan '26 wrote in a statement to the *Independent*.

"The scale of enthusiasm and excitement—from all corners of our campus, but especially freshmen—is like nothing we've ever seen," Communications Director Lorenzo Ruiz '27 wrote.

Since its founding in 1966, the IOP has stood as one of Harvard's core centers for public service and leadership. Its outreach to University-affiliated undergraduates and graduate students alongside global political leaders drives strong engagement every semester. This fall was no different, with the organization receiving 1,506 applications—an approximate 191% increase from their spring semester numbers.

"This semester's cohort is big, but more importantly, it is rich and reflective of the diverse backgrounds, interests, and aspirations of Harvard students," Ruiz continued.

Across the 1,258 unique applicants, a few IOP programs saw especially significant growth in interest.

The Fellows and Study Groups program forges a network between students and leaders in politics, government, journalism, and activism. The IOP announced the FSG's fall 2025 resident and visiting cohort on Aug. 25: Ambassador Mari Carmen Aponte; New York Times chief White House correspondent Peter Baker; former-U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona; New Yorker staff writer Susan Glasser '90; Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb; former senior advisor at the National Republican Senatorial Committee Brock Lowrance; former senior State Department and Central Intelligence Agency official Ned Price; Ambassador Katherine Tai, and former Senator Pat Toomey '84 (R-PA).

Over their fellowship terms, the eight residents will host seven weekly off-the-record study groups and special events in formats ranging from Q&A sessions to open dialogue between each expert and attendees, while visiting fellow Toomey will host programming during the window he visits campus.

On Aug. 25, Harvard undergraduates were invited to apply to serve as liaisons for any one of the fellows, a member of the Fellows Search Committee, or a member of the larger FSG Leadership Team. Six liaisons are chosen per fellow to assist in study group planning through weekly meetings. The FSG program aims to foster both a personal and professional



relationship between liaisons and their designated fellow over the next few months.

This semester, the FSG received 321 applicants, marking the highest program turnout in its history. For comparison, spring 2025 saw 284 distinct applications.

"We were able to more than double the number of students accepted into our program, a direct result of our efforts to broaden access and open our doors to more students than ever before," FSG co-chairs William Smialek '27 and Zoe Yu '27 said in a statement to the *Independent*. "We're incredibly excited to welcome this outstanding class of students, our remarkable cohort of fellows, and the meaningful conversations that lie ahead."

Alongside FSG, the IOP's John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum brings in speakers for non-partisan speeches, panel discussions, and debates over politically relevant topics. Past guests have included heads of state, as well as leaders in business, arts, and media. On Sept. 25, journalist Maggie Haberman will take the Forum stage. On Sept. 30, former Vice President Mike Pence will speak on the future of American conservatism. The full Forum schedule is available on the IOP's website.

The forums conclude with a Q&A session between audience members and panelists.

Undergraduates can apply to serve on the JFK Jr. Forum Committee, where they will be responsible for assisting Forum staff with event production, working on strategy, outreach, campus engagement, receptions, and social media. These students will also have the chance



to help moderate the Forums themselves. Similar to the FSG, the JFK Forum received the most program applicants in its history, coming in at 267.

Founded in 1969, three years after the FSG and Forum, the Harvard Political Review

welcomed over 200 members following an application process that featured skill-building in policy, politics, and culture reporting. The HPR encourages students of all specialities to apply and join, regardless of prior journalism experience.

Beyond its long-standing programs, the IOP has launched a few new initiatives over the past few years to account for expanding curiosities and international reach.

"One and a half years after we first discussed building a space exclusively for global affairs at the IOP, we are proud to have reached official program status," Global Affairs Program co-chairs Erik Dalaker '27 and Sarp Nalbantoglu '27 wrote to the *Independent*.

GAP is the first and only group within the IOP dedicated to international diplomacy and relations. Members organize speaker events and Socratic-style seminars centered around international governance. Launched as a pilot program in the spring of 2025, the program attracted a record-breaking 200 applications, leaving Dalaker and Nalbantoglu optimistic about the program's future.

"We have now selected a talented group of 45 students from 25 different countries and are very excited about the semester ahead!" Dalaker and Nalbantoglu said.

Following in the GAP's footsteps, the Program for Environmental Politics is the IOP's newest addition. Originally the Coalition for Environmental Action, the revamped PER will serve as a forum for its 21 members interested in the intersections of environmental science, activism, and governance.

Alongside these policy-oriented offerings, the IOP also saw an increase in direct service opportunity engagement. For instance, the Citizenship Tutoring program—which pairs student tutors with Harvard affiliates in guiding them through the American citizenship test and application process—accepted over 100 members.

With recent University engagement with the Trump administration leaving Harvard's politics in flux, the IOP's nonpartisan future and civic engagement goals remain unknown. However, the executive board emphasizes their commitment to the space for both current and prospective members.

"As our members settle into our 18 programs and four coalitions, we remain committed to making the IOP a home for every student interested in public service, regardless of beliefs or background," Tan concluded.

SARA KUMAR '27 (SJKUMAR@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS THE NEWS EDITOR OF THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE INSTITUTE OF POLITICS

The Harvard College Class of 2026 Elects its Class Marshals

Interviewing the Class of 2026's newly elected class marshals on their plans for a last Harvard hurrah.

BY CAROLINE STOHRER '28

On Sept. 19, the Harvard Alumni Association and the Harvard College Fund announced the first and second marshals, program marshals, and Harvard College Fund Marshals for the Class of 2026.

Charisma Chen '26 and Mohan Hathi '26 were elected first and second class marshals. The program marshals elected are Toluwanise Ademola '26, Kirthi Chigurupati '26, Emma de Jong '26, Arezoo Ghazagh '26, Kritika Nagappa '26, and Jade Stanford '26. The HCF Marshals are Said El Kadi '26, Ethan Hsiao '26, Cassie Liu '26, Isabella Mandis '26, Shukria Yassin '26, and Andrew Zonneveld '26.

For over a century, each Harvard College senior class has elected class marshals to serve their community during their final two undergraduate semesters. Unlike the Harvard Undergraduate Association, which focuses more on campus life and student organizations, the Senior Class Committee functions as the senior class's governance body. Harvard College Fund Marshals are selected separately through an HCF and HAA-run application process.

The Committee is responsible for organizing class-wide events such as Senior Week and Class Day, as well as educating seniors on how to engage with the HCF and University philanthropy after graduation. The Committee will support the transition to alumni life by recruiting volunteers for the HAA, HCF, and coordinating reunion events.

Seniors campaigned for their classmates' votes, posting comedic skits and creative posts on Instagram to spread the word. "The campaign was fun, [but] it was really intense," said Hathi in an interview with the *Harvard Independent*, pointing to a 50-person-long "dance chain" video he made.

"My campaign revolved around the slogan VOTE KRIT GET LIT, and I leaned all the way in: making silly videos around campus, dancing in costumes, whipping up matcha at Café Gato Rojo, and even dropping a house music mix," Nagappa wrote in a statement to the *Independent*.

"For weeks afterward, people would stop me to sing, 'VOTE KRIT GET LIT,' or text me that it was stuck in their heads."

Because most of the class already knew one another, candidates had to get creative. "I think [for] the campaign process, you want to show off your personality a bit more," Ademola told the *Independent*. "I wanted to just [feel] genuine... It ended up working out."

Ademola riffed on his British nationality in a video skit referencing a rap meme and held open photoshoots on the Widener steps during voting, dubbing the sessions "Photolu."

Crucial to all of the interviewees' decisions to run were a sense of gratitude and a desire to remain connected to their Harvard College peers following commencement.

"The Class of 2026 is genuinely incredible," Ghazagh told the *Independent*. "Every day, even if it's people I've already seen before, I'm continuously inspired by everyone around me. I didn't want that to stop after graduating."

"What this means to me is a lifelong relationship with our class at Harvard, a lifelong responsibility to build community within our class," Chen said in an interview with the *Independent*. "We're here to build really

unforgettable memories with each other, and then in life beyond."

The Class of 2026 has weathered four turbulent years on campus and nationwide. This class was the first graduating class to be completely free of pandemic restrictions after losing most of their high school years to COVID-19 shutdowns. They faced the press coverage that accompanied the rise and fall of Harvard President Claudine Gay, the upheaval that came with the Israel-Hamas war, and the spring 2024 Harvard encampment. Over the past year, they also felt the effects of tensions between Harvard and the Trump administration.

"Ours is a class that's carried so much of the anxiety that inevitably comes with being a Harvard student these past few months and years," Nagappa said. "More than anything, people just want a year where they can be silly, relax, and actually enjoy the experience of being college students."

Ademola, who transferred to the College as a sophomore, found community in his surroundings and inspiration from his classmates. "Our class has been very resilient despite so much change in the school." For the past three years, he has observed peers step into leadership roles across campus—much like the mentors he had when he first arrived.

"[As a transfer student], I was a bit more isolated... I met a bunch of upperclassmen, whom I saw as mentors and friends, bringing people together," he continued. "So I got involved in HoCo, got involved in a bunch of different organizations...[now] our class is setting a good example for underclassmen."

One of the responsibilities outlined in the description of the Class Committee Roles is embodying the shared values of the committee to their classmates in "word and action." When the *Independent* asked interviewees about what these values would be, a recurring theme was "inclusivity."

Chen expressed a desire to create a "third space" where students felt uninhibited by social norms, restoring the feeling of communal life in Harvard Yard during freshman year.

"School has a way of beating [out] the

childlike wonder of just saying 'yes' to everything, because things get scary when you know people and there are stakes involved in your relationships," Chen explained. "I loved freshman year because there was just a magical sort of air to anything that you did, or anybody you spoke to, and everybody was so down to meet everybody else—and that was when things were so fluid, and there's endless opportunity."

"I want to bring the whole class together and create a feeling of identity within our class year," Hathi said. "I hope that people go out of this senior year with strong, lifelong connections and feel like they're seen and understood by our class."

The Marshals were especially excited about the Committee's plans for the spring—parties, merchandise, and unique experiences.

"We know we want some of these fun, bigger parties. But what I'm also excited about is having a balance, because those things don't necessarily appeal to all parts of the class... I had some ideas on the chill side, like a 'Family Feud'-style night or a 'Battle of the Bands,'" Ghazagh said.

Ademola agreed and suggested impromptu food drops for seniors that rotated between Houses or weekend retreats organized with the Harvard Alumni Association.

"It would be super cool to execute some more ambitious ideas," Chen, who brought up the limitation of having to fundraise mostly from the class, added. "Somebody gave us the idea of laser tag in Lamont, or a sleepover at Widener... The more in advance we fundraise, the more ambitious we can get with the size and scope of our events."

Regardless of which events materialize, the marshals expressed strong mutual respect and excitement for their work together. "We have an amazing team—I really look up to the other people who are elected, and we have really great energy," Hathi said.

The Class Committee will now meet weekly with the Harvard College Fund and Alumni Association, and in the coming weeks, they will appoint the Class Secretary, Class Treasurer, Media Team Members, and House Representatives.

"It's super exciting to meet a new group of people and get to work with them...that's been one of the highlights of my time at Harvard—just really cool people," Ademola said.

**CAROLINE STOHRER '28
(CAROLINESTOHRER@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) CAN'T WAIT TO
SEE WHAT THIS YEAR'S CLASS
COMMITTEE COMES UP WITH.**

**PHOTO COURTESY OF
MOHAN HATHI '26**



Harvard University Affiliates Mourn the Closure of the QuOffice

Students and faculty held a funeral for the Office for BGLTQ Student Life.

BY ADDY ANYAOSA '28 AND LUCY DUNCAN '28

On Sept. 19, Harvard students and faculty gathered at the Cambridge Commons and held a pride flag at half-staff to hold a funeral for the University's Office of BGLTQ Student Life, often endearingly called the "QuOffice." The ceremony was organized by the Harvard Undergraduate Queer Advocates and the Queer Students Association.

The QuOffice, alongside the Women's Center and the Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations, was suddenly closed over the summer. Its staff were reassigned to the Harvard Foundation, a group operating under the newly formed Office of Culture and Community.

"The Dean of Students Office has undertaken incredible work figuring out how we can support our entire community during these fraught times," Harvard College Dean David Deming '10 wrote in an email to students and faculty on Sept. 2. "Earlier this summer, we opened the Office of Culture and Community. I know that this is a big change for many people, and I ask for your forbearance as we chart the path forward."

This change followed a series of attacks by the Trump administration, including a letter sent to Harvard President Alan Garber '76 on April 11.

"The University must immediately shutter all diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs, offices, committees, positions, and initiatives, under whatever name, and stop all DEI-based policies, including DEI-based disciplinary or speech control policies, under whatever name," Josh Gruenbaum, Commissioner of the Federal Acquisition Service, Sean R. Keveney, Acting General Counsel for the Department of Health and Human Services, and Thomas E. Wheeler, Acting General Counsel for the Department of Education, wrote in the letter.

The QuOffice, which was most recently located in Thayer's basement, offered a physical safe space for queer students on campus.

"The Harvard College Office of BGLTQ Student Life provides support, resources, and leadership development for bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgender, queer, and questioning students," the Harvard Kenneth C. Griffin Graduate School of Arts and Sciences website states. "Through collaboration with students, staff, and faculty across the College, the Office creates opportunities for fellowship, community building, and thoughtful dialogue."

The website also addresses the purpose of the QuOffice before its closure, adding, "We seek to foster a safer, more inclusive campus by educating and engaging the Harvard community about the multiplicity of sexual and gender identities."

At the funeral, students, tutors, and other faculty members delivered speeches to the dozens

of affiliates in attendance, sharing their sentiments about the closure of QuOffice. Among the student speakers were lead organizers Hannah Niederriter '26 and Amber Simons '26, as well as former QuOffice intern Aaryan Rawal '26.

The event also included a community art project, which invited attendees to write messages on pieces of paper and fold them into paper cranes, which were placed in a symbolic coffin.

Students at the funeral described the ways that the QuOffice had supported their Harvard journey. "It was the first time that I was able to be in a physical space that was dedicated to people like me," Niederriter said in an interview with the *Independent*. "Coming from rural Pennsylvania, that wasn't something I ever had back home."

Similar to Niederriter, Simons found a community in the QuOffice after coming to Harvard from Texas. "The shutdown of the QuOffice represents the erasure of queer voices, and that's really what we're mourning: what it represented and what it means now that it's shut down," Simons told the *Independent*.

The QuOffice first opened its doors in March 2012, following a year of effort by Dean Evelyn M. Hammonds '93 and the BGLTQ Working Group. This working group, established in October 2010, also introduced a full-time Director of BGLTQ Student Life and a BGLTQ Advisory Committee. The QuOffice's establishment responded to student protests advocating for a physical space for BGLTQ students to gather, find community, and access resources.

For those it served, the QuOffice was a valuable center for students to connect with each other, celebrate queer joy, and share important information.

"In the QuOffice, I was able to meet people who were equally passionate about creating spaces that were comfortable for queer students, making sure resources got out there—especially ones related to the social transition fund or health insurance that is queer-affirming—and all of those resources that needed to be shared out that Harvard wasn't necessarily so vocal about," Niederriter said.

The QuOffice faced its share of criticism, including from its own students. "The QuOffice did have its problems, and it was not a perfect space," Simons explained.

Rawal found that it often fell short when it came to fulfilling the needs of queer students and addressing certain issues within the Harvard community.

"If you were to ask queer people when they visited the QuOffice, the answer is that we came here during our first semester when we lived on the Yard, we occasionally stopped by if we needed snacks and free printing, and that's about it," Rawal said in an interview with the *Independent*. "And yet, we have so many issues in

our community that we're all aware of but have never been articulated and we've never actually done any work to make real progress on them."

Despite this, they wished that Harvard had instead decided to "figure out a way to do better" and to "come together as a community" rather than close the QuOffice.

"Part of making Harvard the place that it is by making sure that students are comfortable here," Niederriter said. "If Harvard cannot embrace the queer student identity, then it is not a place that should be admired the way that it is."

For many of those who benefitted from the resources the QuOffice offered, their biggest concern was the lack of support future BGLTQ Harvard students may feel. "I feel so sad on behalf of incoming students who don't have that space that I had and won't be able to use that as a transition," Simons said.

Organizers wanted the Harvard community to know, above all, that the closing of the QuOffice does not mean the end of Harvard's BGLTQ+ community. "We're not going anywhere," Simons said. "It is now more important than ever to continue this kind of work and advocacy." Queer organizations, they added, are still present on campus.

The Harvard Foundation, located in Grays Basement, is meant to "serve the entire Harvard College community by ensuring that each student is treated with equal dignity and respect."

According to its website, "the Foundation will support programming that showcases the wide spectrum of life experiences within the Harvard College community and fosters student engagement with different perspectives, values, and identities." LGBTQ students are not mentioned explicitly on the Office of Culture and Community page or the Harvard Foundation page on the Dean of Students' office website.

To Rawal, this is an opportunity nonetheless for students, especially freshmen, to get more involved with the BGLTQ+ community and advocacy on campus.

"What I want first-year students to know is that they still have a lot of power," Rawal said. "And it's important that they use that power to try to imagine better for our community, even if ultimately Harvard has failed us."

ADDY ANYAOSA '28
(ADDYANYAOSA@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) AND LUCY DUNCAN '28 (LDUNCAN@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU)
WRITE NEWS FOR THE INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY AMELIE LIMA '27

Laundry, Dining, Printing: Campus Reactions to Service Changes

A breakdown of on-campus reactions to Harvard College's house practice adjustments.

BY SEYI AMOSUN '29

Campus life at Harvard College has seen a number of fiscal changes in recent months—student services, alongside residential policies, are no exception. Following the removal of Crimson Cash on July 1, the University transitioned to using One Tap Away laundry services, as well as the Touchnet payment system for Crimson Print. House dining halls and Annenberg Hall also saw changes to offerings, most notably the transition from disposable takeout boxes to reusable containers.

Crimson Cash

On July 1, 2024, the University announced they would be phasing out Crimson Cash. In a statement to the *Harvard Independent*, Harvard administration specified “significantly reduced utilization of the program due to the evolving purchasing habits of the Harvard community” as a key factor in this adjustment. Necessary hardware replacements across campus facilities likely spurred the resulting year-long transition period. Though the service was officially retired in June 2025, students with money remaining in their accounts can request a refund through June 30, 2026.

In previous years, students loaded money into their Crimson Cash accounts online, which were linked to their Harvard IDs. Students swiped their IDs at a monitor to pay the \$1.50 fee before selecting a washer or dryer.

“A lot of times, the monitors would break... It was just hard to use, so it would essentially be hard to get laundry,” Jenna Jiang '28 said in an interview with the *Independent*.

With Crimson Cash now retired, Harvard is rolling out new private-contract-provided payment options. “The Harvard Strategic Procurement team negotiated the pricing with the vendor and in line with the current market. The final agreement was reviewed and approved by all as part of the Crimson Cash Transition,” a member of the Harvard administration wrote in a statement to the *Independent*.

According to the Harvard Office of Treasury Management, third-party contractors like TouchNet provide a cost-effective and seamless solution, reducing the manual work needed to collect cash, checks, and wires. This reduces the scope of payment card industry data compliance for the University.

Moreover, the University's new implementation of the One Tap Away app automatically syncs students' accounts to dorm laundry facilities. Users scan QR codes located on each machine to add funds and start laundry cycles.

A key point of contention with this change is the University's decision to increase laundry services from \$1.50 to \$1.75. “I think Harvard should make laundry free for all students, in retrospect,” Jiang said. “I don't believe it should increase, based on the fact that Harvard itself has raised tuition this year.” The University raised tuition from \$56,550 to \$59,320 for the 2025-2026 school year. Other price hikes include housing, food, student health insurance, and general fees.

Some aspects of the new system have received positive feedback, especially features like live machine availability updates, wash and dry cycle status, and relative ease of adding funds. “It was fairly unproblematic,” Zach Dyrlund '29 said in an interview with the *Independent*. “I think overall, the system is decent, because it's as good as it's gonna get.”

Canaday Hall proctor Joe Currie reflected on his experience advising first-year students through setting up these accounts for the first time. “I almost feel like I've had less issues with having to explain to students how the laundry works this year. Last year, the system wasn't particularly intuitive,” he told the *Independent*. “You had to put money on a separate thing, and then sometimes the swipe thing wasn't working. So I actually feel like this year, even though the system has broken down, I haven't had to explain stuff as much as last year.”

One Tap Away has yet to solve all issues with laundry. On Saturday, Sept. 13, the system went down for many students on campus. “Obviously, that created a huge challenge,” Currie added.

Printing

In addition to residential living practice adjustments, Harvard University Information Technology made changes to the Crimson Print program. New security features were installed on the printing network, and Touchnet became the University's new provider for payment on Crimson Print.

With these updates, a number of students faced difficulties trying to set up their new accounts. “I have tried to set up office hours to help people figure out Crimson Print. I've done that with a number of students at this point, because it is not intuitive at all,” Currie said. “At least in my experience, the rollout of the new Crimson Print system was not working very well for many students.”

The process of printing varies depending on a device's operating system, device software updates, WiFi network, printer location on campus, and printer affiliation with

University departments.

“I kind of avoid printing at all costs—last year with Crimson Cash, it was actually terrible. It was so hard to set up. The printing system is still very hard to set up,” Jiang said.

Dyrlund had difficulties attempting to set up Crimson Print for the first time. “I have tried. I tried twice, and I literally messed with it for half an hour or an hour both times. Both times, I did not manage to print,” he said. “It's overly complex, which I don't really understand why.”

Dining

Beyond adjusted software, in an effort to encourage students to spend more time in the dining halls and reduce waste, Harvard University Dining Services switched from compostable to-go boxes to reusable, microwaveable containers. Utilizing the HOLLIS library technology, undergraduate students can check out these to-go boxes at dining halls around campus.

The process is seemingly straightforward: students will scan their HUID on the tablet at the check out station, then scan the barcode on the container. The boxes must be returned within one week. Failure to do so will result in a \$10 fine to a student account.

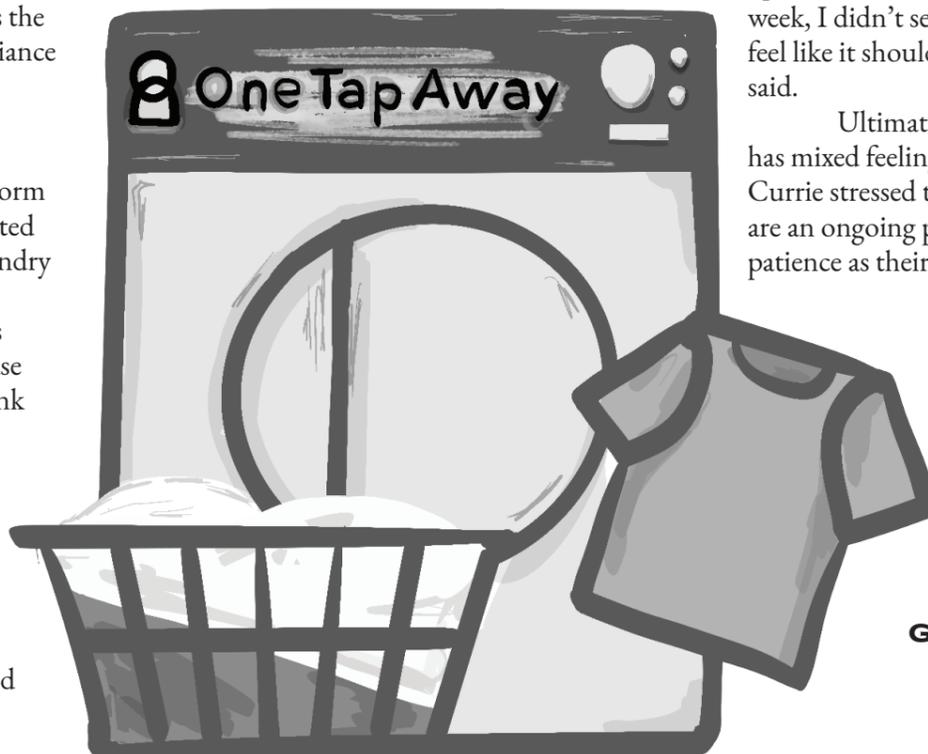
“I'm actually a fan, I think. I still get to use takeout boxes. The gripe that I had with the to-go boxes was that if you had a lot of food and sauce, the paper box would absorb the sauce,” Thamini Vijeyasingam '28 told the *Independent*. “Now there's a plastic box, which I think is an improvement.”

Students are allowed to check out two to-go containers at a time. After use, HUDS will wash and sanitize the loaned out box for up to 40 times of reuse.

Other members of the Harvard community expressed concerns over the need to return a box compared to simply throwing away a disposable container. “I do think at times it might be a little inconvenient since you have to wash and then turn it back in,” Jiang said.

For first-years unfamiliar with the new system, some feel that it's not a widely-known option. “It was underground at least for the first week, I didn't see a bunch of people using it. So I feel like it should be pushed a little more,” Dyrlund said.

Ultimately, though the College community has mixed feelings about these various transitions, Currie stressed that improvements to student life are an ongoing process: “We appreciate everyone's patience as their systems transition.”



SEYI AMOSUN '29
(SAMOSUN@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) THINKS
PEOPLE SHOULD
CLEAN THEIR LINT
OUT OF THE LAUNDRY
ROOM DRYERS.

GRAPHIC BY ANNELISE
FISHER '26

Thoughts from New Quincy: Residue of Rooms

My four years of moving around.

BY LUKE WAGNER '26

This summer in London, I visited the Tate to see Do Ho Suh's installation. Entire apartments were remade in translucent fabric: doorframes, corridors, kitchens, even the seams and edges of walls rendered in color so thin it felt like memory given form. They are monuments to impermanence, preserving the memory of rooms that no longer exist. Walking through them was like inhabiting someone else's past. What struck me most was the scale: an intimate life made monumental inside one of the world's largest museums.

Each September, as I unpack another Harvard dorm room, I feel a quieter version of the same logic. My gestures are smaller—stacking books, plugging in lamps, tugging at tangled cords—but the impulse is similar: to inscribe myself into a space that will never fully be mine. Suh presses paper against walls to capture their residue; I arrange the same belongings year after year, as if they could hold continuity. The objects hardly matter. What matters are the traces the rooms leave behind—the ways both spaces and objects continue to live in me long after I've packed everything back into cardboard.

Freshman year began in Matthews, a corner of the Yard alive with slamming doors and music spilling into hallways. College was new, and the room hummed with proximity—steps from my classes, the libraries, and everything that made Harvard feel immediate. Friends didn't need to be invited—they appeared, collapsing distance by opening doors. The single was small but pulsed with noise. I don't remember the walls so much as how they absorbed us, teaching me that community can be architecture as much as choice. Suh calls his rubbings "a way to carry the memory of space," but for me, Matthews is carried as a constant presence.

The next fall, when I landed in Cabot, I moved into a five-man suite with my blockmates. The space felt cramped, but the common room made up for it: shoes scattered in corners, couches never empty, tables layered with cards, takeout containers, and half-finished homework. We spent hours there without realizing it, drifting in and out of conversations that never seemed to end. That room left me with something different: intimacy, immersion—the sense of dissolving into others until it was hard to tell where one life ended and another began.

Looking back, it feels like an inflection point. Rooms began to feel more solitary, more adult. That suite was the last time unpacking meant dissolving boundaries rather than simply arranging myself. Suh sometimes stitches fragments of different houses together—the Seoul home he grew up in, apartments from London or Berlin—into impossible hybrids. Cabot felt like

that kind of hybrid: five people from different countries, towns, and backgrounds, stitched into one improbable space. The residue was not Suh's furniture or outlines but more a blur of us living over and through each other.

Junior year fractured that continuity. After many of my blockmates transferred to the River, I felt stranded at the edge of campus, shuttle rides stretching every friendship into distance. My own room held little significance; the closeness I needed was in borrowed spaces—the couches and beds that mine could not provide. The Quad taught me that space can exclude as much as it holds. Suh's rubbings make walls speak, pressing out every seam, switchplate, and imperfection. In the Quad, what surfaced wasn't presence but absence, distance pressed into every wall.

When I finally made it to New Quincy in the spring, where my friends already were, it felt like a relief. Central. Efficient. Newly renovated? Not really. But there was a sterility to it, the sense of a space scrubbed of memory. I unpacked, lived, packed again, and the walls wiped themselves clean. Unlike Matthews or my Cabot suite, Quincy didn't cling. Suh has said some rubbings fail, that no matter how hard you press, the texture doesn't come through. That's how Quincy felt: a surface that erases as much as it records.

Between these years were summers at home, in a bedroom that seemed determined not to move forward with me. The walls remained lined with the same posters I had taped up in high school, and the drawers were filled with the same clothes I no longer wore. It was uncanny to step back into this room each summer—as if the room had chosen to preserve a version of me I had already outgrown.

I felt the tension between my own growth and the space's refusal to acknowledge it. The stillness was comforting at first, but over time it became a kind of estrangement. The chairs I once filled seemed ghostly in my absence. The room seemed to wait for someone I no longer was, and being inside it forced me to measure the distance between that frozen version of myself and the person I had become.

What I carried from that room was not noise or intimacy but quiet—a recognition that spaces can resist change, holding us in ways that feel both protective and suffocating at once. Suh's rubbings pull outlines of hinges and corners into visibility, but my childhood bedroom offered me another kind of outline: the ghost of a self still hanging in the air, even as I moved past it.

Its residue was stillness, time circling me while space remained intact.

Sublets were the opposite: layered, messy, worn by strangers. I inherited kitchens with other people's pans, floors already scuffed, and furniture carrying their own ghosts. Those rooms taught me what Suh already knew: no room is ever just yours. They are accumulations, palimpsests of everyone who passed through. He calls it "collective witnessing," the idea that spaces hold more than individual memory. Sublets made me part of that chain.

Now, in my senior year, I'm unpacking slowly. Maybe reluctantly. The objects are mostly the same, but heavier now—heavy with the places they've inhabited, the people they've touched, the semesters they've already endured. To settle in feels less like starting fresh than agreeing to be marked again, knowing I'll have to leave. Unpacking has become less beginning than repetition, like unfolding fabric already worn thin with use.

Do Ho Suh once said he wanted to fit his childhood home into a suitcase. Without realizing it, I've been trying to do something similar. Each September, I've folded and unfolded fragments of past rooms into new ones, stitching their years together. I haven't just lived in rooms; they've lived in me. Their marks are subtle, but they accumulate; they shape how I think about distance and closeness, belonging and loss, and what it means to grow older while carrying the residue of spaces that no longer exist.

As I drag boxes into New Quincy for the last time, I think of Suh pressing paper to walls, tracing hinges and seams until absence is made visible. My own archive is cruder: mattresses lugged across stairwells, posters taped and retaped, stiff couches that weren't mine.

This is the paradox Suh captures: we don't see how rooms mark us until we've already left them. What I've come to understand is that the marks don't stay behind. They travel with us, stitched into how we move through the next space, how we learn to carry belonging and absence at once. Four years of packing and unpacking have taught me that memory accumulates less in the walls than in the body, and that weight doesn't vanish when we graduate—it shapes the rooms we have yet to enter.

LUKE WAGNER '26
(LUKEWAGNER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS THE
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE
HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY ALMA RUSSELL '26



Learning the Words

Pop culture speaks across generations and time.

BY RANIA JONES '27

Striped, terry-cloth towels hang flimsily from the ceiling beams as my cabin of 16 12-year-old campers scream about Taylor Swift, Sharks and Minnows, and what we'll have for lunch. I make attempts to stay clued into their pop-culture discourse—teaching them the “Pitch Perfect” cup song at Camp dinner and the lyrics to Natasha Bedingfield’s “Unwritten” before bed. It feels, though, most of the time, like they’re speaking a different language.

For one week this summer in rural Massachusetts, I was a camp counselor for Harvard College’s chapter of Kesem, a national organization supporting children who are affected by a parent’s cancer. The work was hard and emotionally taxing, but it was worthwhile. To see my campers and others alike find their voice, unravel their emotional walls, and experience wild joy while learning from them myself was a beautiful experience.

I learned that Taylor Swift makes “glitter pen” albums and “quill” albums, attempted to understand what “The Amazing Digital Circus” was, practiced the movements of Katseye’s “Gnarly” dance, learned that they weren’t counting when they said “6 7,” followed along as they transformed knots into friendship bracelets, and rapped Lafayette’s verse in “Guns and Ships.” It was messy, confusing, and wondrous.

Most of all, though, I was fascinated by the ways that pop culture, and the references I actually did understand, bridged the gap between me and them. More often than not, I could keep up with their fights over Conrad and Jeremiah, or what Easter eggs we might expect before “The Life of a Show Girl.” For the most part, I held my own, and when I couldn’t, they took my hand and happily walked me through all that I was missing.

Pop culture is often heralded as frivolous or even superficial. Yet, more than ever, I think music, movies, television, literature, video games, and even Internet memes are forming a universal cultural meaning. And this meaning, one that transcends generational divisions, creates a fluency and a language.

We’re driving down I-95 from Miami to Orlando. As Fleetwood Mac bellows through the rental car’s speakers, I stare out the window, watching the balmy Miami sky

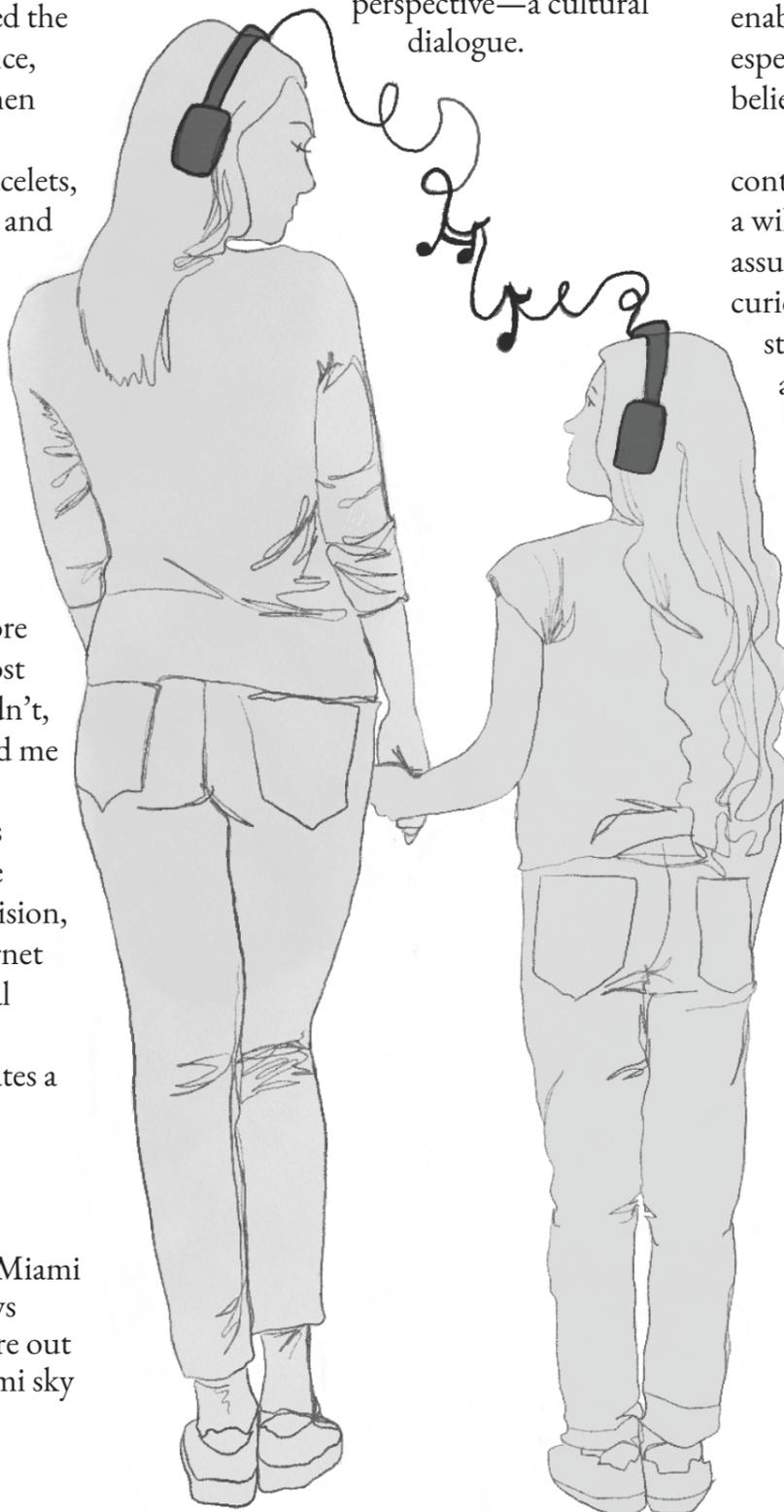
fade into the swollen depths of Orlando. My Dad hums “Everywhere” as we share a melted chocolate-chip cookie.

We’ve all sat in the front seat with our dads as they turn *Yacht Rock* Radio towards max volume when their favorite song plays. I hear “Come on Eileen” as we pull up to school and sink into my seat, embarrassed. But I love that song. I also love the Beatles, Stevie Nicks, and Simon & Garfunkel too.

Music is how we speak to each other.

Yet this simple act—that of a parent introducing a child to their favorite music from decades past—is another example of how media is used as a way to communicate context and memory. These songs in the car once accompanied first loves and late-night drives. It’s a culture he wants my brother and I to grow up with. And after the song is over, I catch a glimpse of his 16-year-old self in the back of his eyes.

Pop culture references build concrete walls around ideas like nostalgia. They become tangible. I gain insight into the experiences that shaped who my father is, and the generation he belongs to. Pop culture, in every sense, becomes a convergence of age, experience, and perspective—a cultural dialogue.



Few things, other than our shared passion for children and public policy, led to small talk between me and my co-workers this summer. Yet, reality television meaningfully wedged its way in our morning elevator rides. *Did you see last night’s episode of “Love Island?” Wasn’t the “Stand on Business” challenge insane?*

My co-workers, who watch it while they pay their bills and apply to grad school, relate to my opinions in a way that feels so different and yet so similar. We share playful arguments about who should’ve gone home on last night’s episode or what couple deserved the date to create space for dialogue and connection.

Most importantly, though, pop culture teaches us empathy. Wrapping our heads around who the Bee Gees were and what a Labubu is allows us to understand what challenges, anxieties, and aspirations were and are fueling the lives of our parents or little cousins. Engaging with contemporary works and pieces of media enables us to confront modern perspectives, especially those that radically differ from our beliefs.

Engaging with the platforms and content of another generation requires a willingness to step outside of our assumptions. It teaches us about patience, curiosity, and the enduring nature of storytelling. By engaging with stories across mediums and decades, we learn that while details like style or slang may change, the emotions and challenges we all face remain similar. Pop culture is never static; it remains alive and evolving.

**RANIA JONES '27
(RJONES@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) IS NOW
WELL-VERSED IN THE
VERNACULAR OF TODAY'S
12-YEAR-OLDS.**

**GRAPHIC BY MADISON
KRUG '27**

Point/Counterpoint: What to Wear to Class

With no dress codes in college, should students stick to sweats or dress up for class?

BY FRANCES CONNORS '26 AND HEIDI HEFFELFINGER '26

COn a warm September morning, the steps of Widener were crowded with students smiling for photos with friends. Their signs read “FDOC,” commemorating the First Day of Classes. Beyond the unusual pre-10:30 a.m. cheer, one thing stood out: their outfits. Every year, students don their finest polos and sundresses for the first week to impress new classmates and start the semester off on the right foot. But by October, sweatpants outnumber skirts, and loafers give way to sneakers. Should students keep dressing up, or embrace the comfort of casual wear?

Franny: Coming from the Midwest, I was pleasantly surprised to see classmates in preppy New England ensembles—sweaters tied over shoulders, button-downs on repeat. The athletic skirts and leggings I wore back in Cleveland suddenly felt out of place, better suited for tennis courts or yoga studios than for the classroom. Thankfully, instead of scrolling on Pinterest, I need only to glance around a lecture hall for outfit inspiration. Since moving here, my style has shifted: I wear loafers and flats more than sneakers, swapped my backpack for a tote, and rarely leave home without a sweater. Dressing up for class feels natural now in a way it never did at 16.

Heidi: Don’t get me wrong, I love a good cashmere sweater. But coming from California, where flip-flops reign and sweaters only come out on the rare cold day, the preppy aesthetic can feel like overkill. There’s freedom in rolling out of bed, throwing on jean shorts and a tank top or hoodie and sweats, and heading to class without anyone blinking an eye. Sure, people dress casually at Harvard too, but “Harvard casual” still skews polished. Jeans and a sweater here might pass for “dressy” back home, where true casual more closely resembles pajamas.

Franny: Fair. But if “casual” here means jeans and a sweater, why not lean into it? We chose to go to school in New England, where students notoriously dress in preppier styles, so instead of complaining, why not adapt? That being said, dressing up for class doesn’t have to mean wearing expensive brands. The distinction is more about choosing a sweater over a sweatsuit, not Gucci slides over Crocs.

Heidi: Changing your zip code doesn’t mean changing your entire wardrobe. Why not embrace personal style instead of blending into a J.Crew catalog? A classroom should feel welcoming no matter what you wear. Harvard has no school uniform, so our classrooms should not look uniform either. Having a mix of styles helps cultivate classroom environments where ideas, not outfits, take center stage.

Franny: I disagree. Wardrobes naturally reflect your environment. Someone living on a ski mountain dresses differently from someone living on a beach. They also reflect your fashion and cultural environment, and what the people around you wear. New Yorkers tend towards suits for work while San Franciscans opt for jeans.

Turning back to campus, preppy style grew out of preparatory schools, so it was literally designed for academics. And while the style may have started as elitist fashion only accessible to the 1%, it became more democratized as brands like Lacoste and Tommy Hilfiger started making preppy clothing for the masses. Harvard certainly has its fair share of designer clothes on campus, but one can emulate the same academic style on any budget.

While collared shirts and loafers may not be everyone’s style, the idea of dressing up for class is accessible to everyone; a thrifted cardigan can have the same effect as a designer one. Even if your closet is not 75% J. Crew, putting effort into your outfit signals readiness. Roll into lecture in pajamas, and you are far more likely to fall asleep than take good notes.

Heidi: My ability to focus has more to do with sleep than shoes. I’d rather get eight hours than trade them for time spent picking out ballet flats. Mark Zuckerberg wore the same gray t-shirt every day, not because he could not afford cashmere, but to save mental energy for bigger decisions. I’m not saying we should all adopt Mr. Zuck’s Silicon Valley minimalism, but does stressing over ruffles and frills really help you understand Ec10a any better?

Franny: To me, it’s “look good, feel good.” A put-together outfit boosts confidence and sets the tone for the day. Swapping sweatpants for jeans is a small price to pay for the mental benefits.

Showing up for yourself and being in a better mood certainly makes it easier to pay attention in class.

Heidi: Sure, but not every day needs to be a “look good, feel good” day.

Sometimes it’s more “look alive, feel alright.” Dressing up should be an option, not an expectation. Harvard already brings enough pressure: grades, extracurriculars, and figuring out the new laundry system. Do we really need a daily outfit competition, too? Some days you just want to sit through lectures in sweats, coffee in hand, hungover in peace.

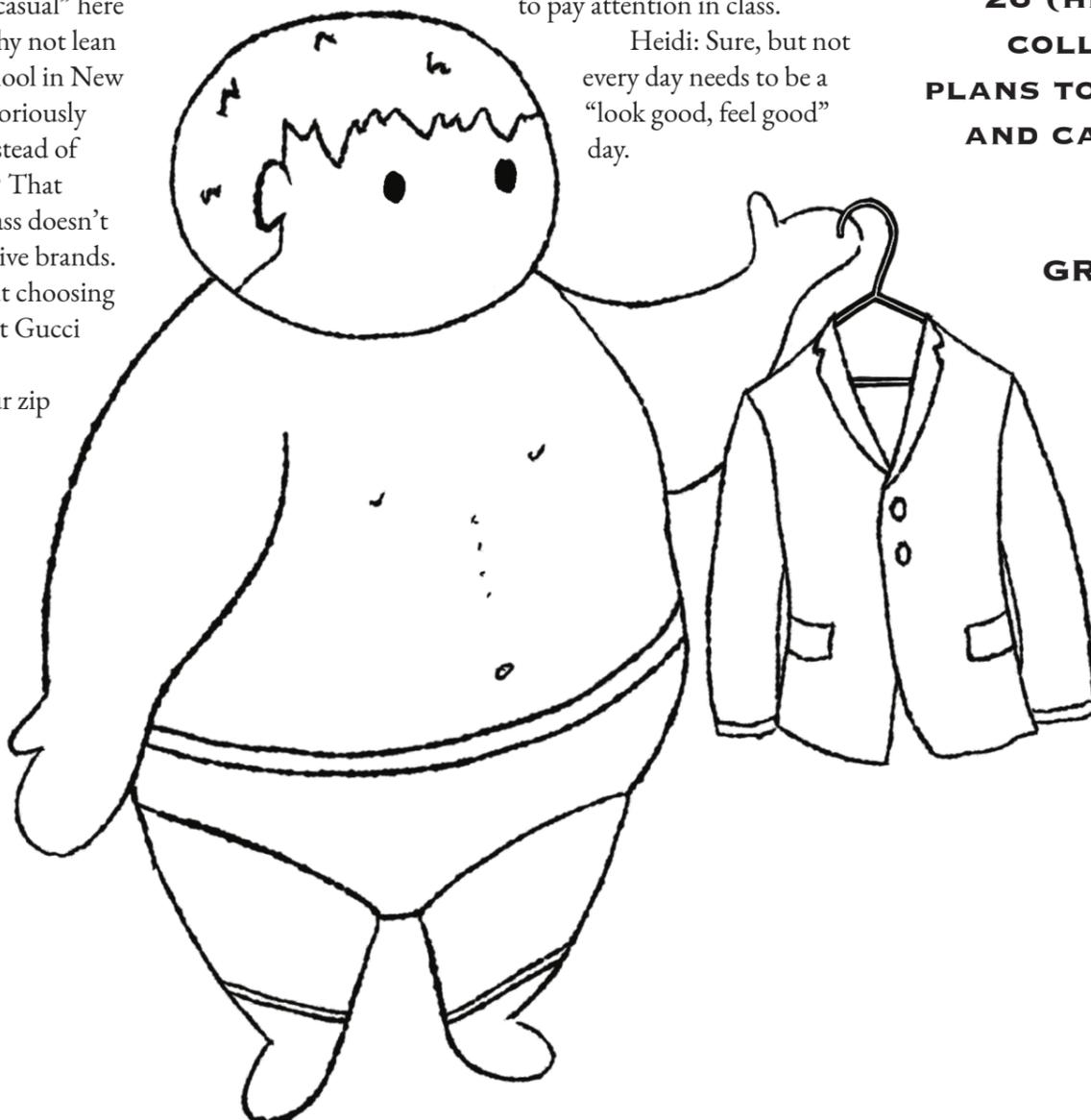
Franny: It’s not a competition, it’s a way to connect with people. I appreciate seeing my classmates dressed up for class and exchanging compliments. From a professor’s point of view, too, I’m sure it feels nice to see students care about school, and are not just showing up for class 10 minutes after they woke up.

Heidi: If our professors are really here for our brains rather than our beauty, then what we wear to class should not matter. For some, comfort may enable authenticity and creativity. I’d rather be an active participant in section in sweats than sit silently in a blouse.

Franny and Heidi: At the end of the day, what you wear to class says less about your GPA and more about your personality. Whether you’re in cashmere or Crocs, Harvard classrooms are big enough to fit all fashion styles. If anything, a bigger mix of styles is what helps our campus feel alive. So make sure to show up as your authentic self, and most importantly, wear what makes you want to show up.

**FRANNY CONNORS '26
(MARYFRANCESCONNORS@
COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU)
OWNS FAR MORE J.CREW NOW
THAN SHE DID FOUR YEARS
AGO. HEIDI HEFFELFINGER
'26 (HEIDIHEFFELFINGER@
COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU)
PLANS TO LIVE IN FLIP-FLOPS
AND CASHMERE SWEATERS
THIS YEAR.**

**GRAPHIC BY KERRIE
ZHU '28**





DROP
IN!



Who We Go to War For and Why It Matters

The politics of tragedy in America.

BY NOAH BASDEN '29

In response to the tragic assassination of Charlie Kirk, many prominent conservative voices have proclaimed that a state of “war” has befallen the nation. A war of ideology, left versus right, “our truth” versus “their truth.” Amidst the trigger words and headlines, we must take stock of where we are as a nation and ask how we got here and where we go next. Who do we go to war for, and who do we let fade into the annals of history, remembered only as tragedy and nothing more?

All tragedy is tragedy. There is no Democratic tragedy, nor Republican tragedy. The murder of Kirk is just as tragic as that of Minnesota state representative Melissa Hortman, South Carolina state senator Clementa Pinckney, or school shooting victims Charlotte Bacon and Sabika Sheikh—the list unfortunately goes on. From slavery and Native American genocides to political assassinations and lynchings, we are a nation built on tragedy; it governs our headlines and creeps into our daily discourse. Each step forward leaves behind broken communities marked by loss. Political violence in all its forms is a stain on the United States, and Kirk’s death is a painful reminder of how far we are from our lofty ideals as a nation.

What we *can* compare is how we respond to tragedy. Condolences or thoughts and prayers do not bring back the 267 individuals killed in school shootings in 2024. Why is it that the political right only goes to “war” when one of their own suffers the fate that so many others have endured? Do we only go to war for “Great American Patriot[s],” as President Trump described Kirk? Was Melissa Hortman not a “Great American Patriot?” Were the 14 high school students killed at Parkland High School not worthy of that title? Was there not a patriot among them? The drums of war did not beat for them, yet for Kirk, they do.

Only in the U.S. are school shootings described as a “fact of life,” as JD Vance did in September 2024 or gun deaths dismissed as “worth it” to protect the Second Amendment, as Kirk declared in April 2023. Yet the assassination of Kirk is treated as cause for war. If you thought partisanship was not an issue in this country, this contrast alone highlights the gravity of the problem. Even tragedy is not free from politics. The administration has already made it clear that, in

response to Kirk’s assassination, it will crack down on “leftist NGOs,” using every available arm of the federal government.

This strikes a different tone from Trump’s comments after a 2024 school shooting in Iowa: “It’s just horrible, so surprising to see it here. But [we] have to get over it, we have to move forward.” Why must we “move forward” when it happens to children, but remain at a standstill when it happens to a political ally? Kirk was murdered, but does his blood run any brighter than that of the children in Iowa? I think not.

In a recent, now viral sermon on Charlie Kirk, Rev. Howard-John Wesley said: “How you die does not redeem how you lived.” Those words struck me. Kirk was undeniably controversial; you could fill volumes with hateful statements he had made, but it was his right to say them. He was a prominent advocate of the First Amendment and wielded it to its fullest. That he was murdered for exercising this fundamental right is both un-American and morally wrong. But so too is the subsequent crackdown on others’ speech in his name. Kirk himself once said, “There’s ugly speech. There’s gross speech. There’s evil speech. And all of it’s protected by the First Amendment.” It is ironic and troubling that, in defence of his legacy, the right has betrayed Kirk’s own intentions. One cannot defend the First Amendment by potentially violating it.

Pam Bondi, the U.S. Attorney General, said: “We will absolutely target you, go after you, if you are targeting anyone with hate speech—and that’s across the aisle.” Bondi ought to know that there is no distinction between the two; hate speech is

free speech. She has since clarified that the Justice Department will target only speech that incites violence, yet this remains a troubling response from the government. This, coupled with potential First Amendment violations in the case of Jimmy Kimmel’s suspension from air, highlights the dangerous reality we are now facing.

What is clear in all this political theater is that we need, in the words of Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, to “turn down the temperature.” Kirk’s death, like the tragedies before it, reveals a raw and unpolished version of this country that divides us rather than brings us together. Americans are not born right or left; we are born American. It is that belief in the American dream that should unite us. As Alexis de Tocqueville, a prominent 19th-century French thinker, put it: “The greatness of America lies...in her ability to repair her faults.”

History proves that we do repair our faults. In the 1960s, a Black president was unimaginable; by 2008, it was reality. The idea of women’s suffrage was laughed at by the Founding Fathers, yet by 1920, women were at the polls. Though long overdue, these changes demonstrate that we are capable of correction. How we will heal today’s polarization and divisive society, I am not sure yet. But I have hope—and sometimes, that is all we can hold onto.

Who do we go to war for? The overarching question that has lingered in my brain as the fallout from Kirk’s death pans out across the nation. Kirk’s death is emblematic of a deeper issue that for too long has been pulling this nation apart. Division and violence in all their forms serve only to pull us further from each other. In their totality they should be opposed—not only when their victim bears the face of an ally.

NOAH BASDEN '29
(NHBASDEN@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS
COMPING THE *HARVARD*
INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY RILEY
CULLINAN '27



ARTS

Back to the Book

It's time to re-fall in love with reading.

BY PAIGE CORNELIUS '28

 It's 2014. I am eight years old. My parents say goodnight, flick off the light, and pull the door shut just before leaving my room. I count their footsteps like some kids count sheep—one, two, three—until I know they've settled back on the couch, immersed in "Grey's Anatomy." Like clockwork, I begin my nightly rebellion, reaching over for the lamp and opening up "The Magic Treehouse."

Growing up, fiction was my escape. On car rides, in the spare minutes after finishing schoolwork, by the pool—anywhere I could—I was captivated by stories, lost in remarkable worlds, and aching to know what happened next.

Now, at 19, life feels different. That rush I felt still exists, but from notifications instead of page turns. What I once craved has turned into a chore. One chapter, formerly a small yet thrilling milestone, now feels like an insurmountable feat—something I delay and then reward myself for with a scroll through endless social media feeds.

Perhaps this is simply a personal experience. I've grown older, taken on more responsibilities, and prioritized other tasks over reading. Maybe my creativity has dwindled, and I have simply fallen out of love with books. But more likely, it isn't just me—it's the world we live in now. Our attention spans

shrink by the day, and American society tends to reward efficiency over depth. We neglect activities that do not offer stimulation or check off a to-do list item.

In 2004, the average attention span on a given screen was roughly two and a half minutes. Over the past six years, this has decreased to only 47 seconds, a 70% reduction. This decline is linked to higher stress and worse performance, yet we still scroll during movies or check screens at family dinners to keep ourselves even more stimulated. We demand instant gratification, satisfied through short clips instead of long-form media.

The empathy in me struggles with this on a sentimental level. Books teach us how to love and to yearn, to inhabit cultures beyond our own, to understand history, and to respect the wisdom of those who came before us. To read literature is to step into lives we will never live, but can deeply relate to. Through books, we grieve losses that are not our own, celebrate triumphs we did not achieve, and in the process, we become more human. Even more so than movies, where depictions are visually accessible, books demand that we actively construct the world in our minds. Where a screen might rush past moments, causing our thoughts to simultaneously move on, literature allows us to pause and reflect. It allows for deeper relationships with characters, as we dwell in the subtleties of human experience, noticing the unspoken.

But the act of reading itself teaches us something different: skills necessary for success. Reading demands attention in a world full of distractions. It makes us exercise patience, discipline, and critical thought, training us to sit with complexity or discomfort without backing down or shying away.

And yet, when assigned anything longer than five pages for a Gen Ed, we groan. We are given texts picked by renowned professors who have dedicated their lives to their crafts, and we go to extreme lengths not to read them. The problem

is so generational that teaching staff across higher education institutions have noticed this decline. Where a new book each week produced fruitful discussions, students now struggle to pick up on details, work through challenges, or complete the readings at all.

We are all guilty of having ChatGPT summarize readings. It is becoming second nature, and we have been convinced that the efficiency of this strategy makes it the most productive. The AI system delivers the main points well enough, but in taking that shortcut, we lose far more than just the details. We neglect the nuance of language, the explicit examples, and the engagement that trains thoughtful discernment. The act of reading itself can teach us more than the content alone. In forgoing this aesthetic experience, we risk not just losing empathy and understanding but also diminishing the intellectual curiosity that shapes brilliant minds.

So, is reading gone for good? Is this once infinite art form actually...finite?

Great literature has been collecting dust for years now, but it's time to pull it back off the shelf. With no more strict bedtimes and having to hide under the covers to sneak in a couple of extra pages, there is no excuse. It's time I found that little kid again—the one who counted footsteps, flicked on the lamp, and stepped into a different world. Maybe it's time we all did. Because in choosing to read, we are choosing to slow down, to sit with our thoughts, and to care. In a culture built on speed and distraction, intentionality might be the most rewarding choice we can make.

PAIGE CORNELIUS '28

**(PAIGECORNELIUS@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) WOULD LIKE TO
START A BOOK CLUB.**

GRAPHIC BY ALLYSON XU '28



Crimson Threads

How Harvard students are embracing fall fashion.

BY TAYLOR THORNE '28

Autumn has long been established as one of the pinnacle seasons in terms of style. The highly anticipated Vogue September Issue is considered the most important magazine issue in the fashion industry, featuring fall and winter trends that set the tone for the upcoming year. Released in mid-August, it signals a departure from the summer season and instructs individuals to transition into a new, distinct period of personal style. Likewise, September is the month when Harvard students return to campus and once again face the challenge of establishing their college identity for the next year.

As the foliage turns to shades of crimson and gold and autumn hints at its arrival, Harvard welcomes new students and celebrates the return of familiar faces. Everything about the season creates space for renewal and reinvention, supporting students in their key decisions regarding academics, personal identity, and relationships. Of these decisions, the daily act of deciding what to wear becomes a simple but important beacon of self-expression.

The style choices that students make echo their unique perspectives and personalities. For instance, muted colors and lace can evoke a feeling of femininity, while a leather jacket brings edginess to an outfit. With endless style combinations, students can tailor an outfit for each particular mood or sentiment they want to project for others to see. This form of creative expression is an outer representation of inner identity. On a campus as diverse and accomplished as Harvard, fall fashion trends provide insight into the inner workings of the student body and the similarities that exist, even in heterogeneity.

Harvard's distinct demographic create an environment lacking just one overarching aesthetic in terms of fashion. Unlike southern SEC schools that are known for their preppy athleisure style, Harvard does not boast a singular uniform. With students from across the United States and all over the world, undergraduates bring their unique heritage and fashion sense to campus.

So what exactly does fashion mean for the Harvard student?

"Fashion means everything to me," says Talia Rehill '28. "So many things are so routine and mundane, and it's just a conscious decision to have control of one part of my day." With such busy schedules, fashion can break up the monotony by getting to pick out new and exciting outfits each morning.

For Liya Naod '29, fashion is more than just articles of clothing. "It not only means identity, but it also means it facilitates a lot of connection with the people around me." She feels that her style has enabled her to make friends on campus who share

similar interests. "People who are drawn to the way I dress come towards me."

Fashion is an individual statement of identity shared with the broader community. Specific choices become impactful by facilitating discussion and creating connections, most commonly through participating in trends.

Students predicted brands like Intimissimi, Sezane, and Isabel Marant, as well as versatile color palettes, including cream and burgundy, will dominate this fall's fashion scene. Textures such as leather, lace, and fringe were mentioned alongside the classic stripes and polka dots. Some are hoping for a resurgence of vintage-inspired fashion, while others anticipate creative ingenuity to shine via repurposing clothing, such as scarves and belts. "I've been seeing so many riding boots or knee-high boots paired with a skirt and a chunky sweater with a barn jacket," Lucy Yuan '28 highlighted. "I'm really excited to wear more fringe, suede, browns, leathers, as we get into the fall," Lauren Park '29 said

Naod offered her vision for the potential autumn color palette. "I love a lot of reds and burgundy and crimson." She also wishes for nostalgic patterns to return. "I want Paisley to come back in," she added. "I want to see Vera Bradley come back really badly."

Despite different opinions on personal styles, students generally did not identify any overdone trends that should be left in the past. "There's nothing that I don't want to see," Park said. "I honestly do appreciate every single type of clothing item because it is someone's expression and they're entitled to whatever they want to wear."

"I think Harvard students should be able to dress how they want, and I think there's beauty in diversity," Rehill said. In a school often filled with competitive spirit, fashion seems to be in some sense an outlier—a thread of contiguity and community.

Responses indicate that there is not as much of a perceived socioeconomic divide on campus when it comes to sense of style. While there are elements of wealth-signalling, many students choose to focus on the representation of identity and personal taste rather than branding. Having a good sense of style is about how you utilize different articles of clothing and accessories, not how much you spend to obtain them. While only some have access to new high-end designers, many believe that second-hand shopping and thrifting have levelled the playing field in terms of accessibility to fashion.

"Harvard is a place that doesn't just reward you for the brands that you wear, where it's really more like a place that rewards your intelligence and your understanding of the world," said Jan Granacher '27. There are, of course, popular designer bags and shoes that are easily recognizable, such as Goyard totes

and Golden Goose sneakers; however, the diminished emphasis on celebrating monetary value has allowed for a greater focus on creativity and developing a strong sense of self through clothing.

This complexity is important to acknowledge. Fashion acts not as another level of division, but rather a unique way in which differences can be celebrated and community can be formed. At the end of the day, what you wear doesn't determine your success as a student at Harvard, but it does highlight who you are.

Students were finally asked to encompass this season's fall fashion into one short phrase:

Rehill: "Finishing Touches"

Granacher: "Take Ivy"

Park "Unexpected Patterns"

Yuan: "Equestrian"

Naod: "Maximalism"

Caleb Graupera '28: "Quality of Fabric"

These predictions indicate an Ivy-inspired, equestrian Ralph Lauren. Suede, boots, tailored silhouettes, expert layering, and jewel tones (but no horses) are all sights we can expect over the next few months.

Still, trends are simply an aggregate representation of likely decisions, or in other words, a baseline from which to build upon. In this transitional period, it's important to examine pieces in new ways, challenge the norm, and craft a style that is truly representative of yourself.

The first official day of fall was Monday, Sept. 22. Go forth in style.



TAYLOR THORNE '28 (TAYLORTHORNE@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS SEEKING ADDITIONAL CLOSET SPACE.

GRAPHIC BY JOYE WINGARD '28

A Senior's Guide to Harvard

An original self-help writing piece.

BY CHOPPED UNC

When you first begin your senior year of college, you are oftentimes faced with the notion of it being your last chance to do and see all of the things on campus that you haven't before. While this concept may inspire adventure, there are some clear boundaries seniors should no longer cross. So if you are in your final year at Harvard and have been asking yourself, "Am I Unc?" this guide is for you.

It's mid-September. The leaves haven't quite changed, but the air carries a certain crisp edge that makes you want to get blackout drunk. Time to finally check "MIT frat party" off the bucket list? Except there's a problem: You just finished your junior summer internship, where your co-intern, Kevin from MIT, asked you to check over his Excel sheet every day. But now Kevin's frat brothers aren't going to let you through the door because the whole summer Kevin thought your name was a few letters off from what it really is. So technically, you're not on the list.

You're 21 years old and rejected from an MIT frat, and scrambling to salvage the night. In a desperate bid for dignity, you romanticize the night by going on a midnight stroll through Boston. The sparkle in your eyes quickly vanishes as you instantly come up on students puking in the sidewalk bushes. Suddenly, all you want is your couch, a glass of wine, and the latest Netflix documentary about some psychopath. It's official: You are Unc.

As a senior, you may be realizing a sad reality: all the hot people on campus have graduated. You sit in section, hopelessly trying to find a section crush to motivate you to keep your eyes open for that long hour. But no one is calling your name. Well, maybe that one in the corner. Wait...yes. The longer you look, the hotter they become. It is Harvard intro time. You brace yourself to remember their name for the inevitable post-class Instagram search. But then the words come out fast and hard.

"I'm a first-year living in Canaday." Oh no. Oh NO. I mean, it could be fine, right? It's

not like they aren't 18. Unless they have a late birthday. What if they're 17?! Stop spiraling and disregard the idea immediately before you're in too deep. Just one quick reminder: The freshmen were in seventh grade during COVID. While you were mosh pitting to "Mo Bamba" at your high school homecoming, they were on their New York and D.C. field trips. Now, you're applying for post-grad jobs and they're pissing on the statue and laughing about



"6 or 7...something?" Time to move it along.

It's your final year of dorm life, and by now you're numb to your home friends' shocked reactions when you explain Harvard makes you live on campus all four years. Most of your time has been spent grinding p-sets and doing readings half-focused in the dining hall with friends. There was nothing more exciting than seeing a pound cake for Brain Break rather than an assortment of vegetables at 10:30 p.m. Although you may have gotten away with eating a toasted bagel with cream cheese, a bowl of Lucky Charms, and that slice of pound cake every night, your metabolism isn't what it used to be four years ago. It may be time to start considering those daunting celery sticks.

As a first-year, anything felt possible. You lived for the weekends when your roommate left to visit their long-distance lover—the same one that they talked shit about to you every other day. When the room was yours, it felt like

no better time to turn into a Tinder demon. Now that you're a senior, try to avoid maxing out your Tinder swipes within three hours. When your roommate goes away for the night, savor the joys of solitude instead. Just think about how exciting it is to use the bathroom without having to close the door, microwaving your favorite frozen Trader Joe's meal without your uncultured roommate complaining about the smell. Enjoy these precious moments rather than paying mind to the people you've matched or unmatched on Tinder with since freshman year. By now, they're just not worth it.

While many agree that senior year is the best year because you finally know the lay of the land, it's still important to take risks and try new things. With that being said, why are you considering comping Crim Biz for the sixth time when you can devote yourself to something you're actually passionate about, like the Harvard Pole Dancing Club?

Although it might be too late to audition for that improv group you've always wanted to join or take that 400 student/80% athlete gem you've always heard about, you can do what you have been saying you would do for the past four years. Now is the time to finally grab that meal with the person you always run into and say, "Let's get lunch sometime," but somehow never do.

Have you ever craved a Veritaffle but were too scared to wait in the waffle-making line while the people around you fill their plates with fruit and yogurt? Fuck those yogurt bowl-makers and get your Veritaffle! You might have thought it was over when instead of accidentally calling your TF "Mom," younger students accidentally called you "Mom." But think again. Although your brain becoming further developed may be a good reason to avoid past experiences, it's never too late to make new ones...as long as they're legal.

WRITTEN ANONYMOUSLY FOR THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY AMELIE LIMA '27

Come to the Golden Arm

Eliot House's student-run movie theater builds community for Eliot residents and undergraduates at large.

BY ADEDOYIN ADEBAYO '26

One of Harvard's best-kept secrets is its private, student-run movie theater, The Golden Arm. The Golden Arm presents Harvard students with the rare opportunity to enjoy an elevated theatre experience without leaving Harvard Square. Every Thursday night, students gather on the second floor of Fairfax for the week's next showing—a new location since its founding in 2024.

Before the renovations at Eliot House that began this year, the Golden Arm operated out of its own room in the house's basement. The team behind the theater is composed of Eliot House seniors Joey Bejjani '26, Alexandre "Alex" Benoit '26, Xander Patton '26, and Renée Perpignan '26. The Golden Arm became the passion project of Art, Film, and Visual Studies concentrators Patton and Benoit. Bejjani and Perpignan worked together to create the Golden Arm's website, where guests can reserve seats, preview future shows, and purchase movie posters designed by Patton. Recent screenings have included "Good Will Hunting," "Shiva Baby," and "Lazzaro Felice."

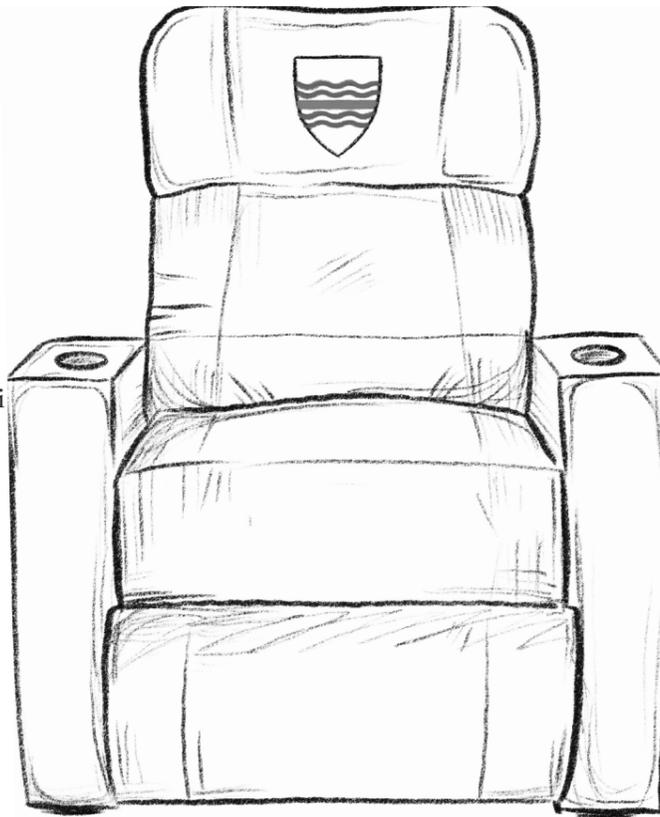
According to Perpignan, the Golden Arm's space in Eliot was originally used for "students to come freely and book the room." "Tutors would also book it if they wanted to have screenings or events," Perpignan told the *Independent*. However, the theater had become "defunct, starting with COVID," Patton explained. "We even found old posters in the old space, and [Eliot] used to do house screenings maybe once a month."

Although the origins of the theater's inherited name are uncertain, Patton explained the meaning of the term "Golden Arm." "It is a [type of] classic story meant to teach people how to tell stories. So it's supposed to be a simple fairy tale that's about storytelling. And that's really what a lot of these movies are. It's just storytelling, right?"

The Golden Arm immerses visitors with the stories it presents by providing a realistic and special movie-going experience. Since revitalizing the theater, the Golden Arm's team has made detail-oriented improvements to enhance the

experience. For example, the theater now uses real movie theater chairs, each carrying an image of Eliot's shield. Patrons are immediately greeted with a concessions stand when they enter, where they are free to choose from popcorn, candy, and select mocktails or cocktails.

Patton, who doubles as one of the theater's mixologists, explained how signature drinks include a unique weekly themed option and "the Golden Arm," a variation of "a tiki drink called the



Chief Lapu Lapu that I've slightly modified and renamed." Benoit then selects the theater's menu and drink names after he and Patton develop the recipes during winter and summer breaks. For the Sept. 18 showing of *Mickey 17*, the Golden Arm team paid homage to director Bong Joon Ho's Korean roots by introducing the soju-based cocktail, "Bong Hits for Mickey."

Receiving your own custom name tag made by Perpignan and Golden Arm volunteer and Lowellian, SoEun "Sonya" Park '26, is another special touch that comes with attending a show at the Golden Arm. On Sept. 11, when the Golden Arm presented Disney's "Ratatouille," guests received mouse traps decorated with their name and cute drawings of chef hats. That night, guests were treated to crispy potato wedges and fried, soy-glazed brussels sprouts crafted by Matthews Hall resident Alexander "Alex" Bejjani '29 and Currier House resident Whitney Jameson '26.

Some shows at the Golden Arm also involve interactive elements. For example, at the first-ever showing at the Golden Arm, a Halloween screening of "IT," guests received red balloons and pins to play the balloon game, where they could pop the balloon at any time during the film, sending other patrons into a panic.

As Perpignan noted, a night at the Golden Arm is not "just showing up and watching a movie, but you get your own custom name tag, you get popcorn, you get drinks. It's a whole experience. And so that's what I feel we have created over the past year."

The Golden Arm has become so well ingrained in Eliot House's culture that, at the suggestion of the House's recently appointed faculty deans, Benoit and Patton have earned themselves House Committee (HoCo) chair positions. According to Patton, as of Indigenous Peoples' Day in 2024, the Golden Arm chairs have "collaborated with the House to figure out how to make [the Golden Arm] accessible and included in House programming." The current Golden Arm team envisions that future Golden Arm chairs will use this position to continue to promote community building at Eliot and the Harvard community as a whole. Merchandise will also soon be offered to audience members.

For anyone who is considering whether to watch a show at the Golden Arm, including students who do not live in Eliot House, Patton says, "just come, just have a good time. It's a great space, even if you can't get a seat. We'll throw you on the pool table in the back of the room."

There's truly no better place to spend your Thursday nights than at the Golden Arm.

**ADEDOYIN ADEBAYO '26
(AADEBAYO@COLLEGE.HARVARD.
EDU) IS BUYING A TICKET TO SEE
THE PARENT TRAP ON OCT. 2.**

GRAPHIC BY NESHAMA RYMAN '28

SPORTS

Playoff Potentials

As the MLB regular season comes to a close, fans and players are in full preparation-mode for the playoffs.

BY DAVID DANIEL '28

With the 2025 Major League Baseball playoffs just days away, the regular season has already delivered its fair share of excitement. As teams jockey to secure their place as October's contenders—or fade as season failures—the season has made a few things clear: Aaron Judge remains the heartbeat of the Yankees, the Mariners' young core looks primed ready for a deep playoff run, and the Dodgers are prepared to defend their title.

But for every breakout, there's been an accompanying disappointment. Injuries derailed promising seasons, stars never found their rhythm, and teams collapsed just when expectations were highest. Now, with the postseason bracket nearly set, the only question is which of these heartbreaks will matter most in October.

MVP

In the American League, Yankees' right fielder Aaron Judge remains red hot in his pursuit of a third MVP with a .325 batting average and 49 home runs so far. Seattle Mariners catcher Cal Raleigh (aka "The Big Dumper") and the reigning Platinum Glove winner, led the MLB with 58 home runs. He has proven himself to be one of the most well-rounded players in the American League, putting up a monstrous 121 RBIs. To unseat Judge, Raleigh may need to top the 60-homer mark, as Judge recently surpassed Joe DiMaggio for the fourth most home runs in New York Yankees history.

As for the National League, Los Angeles Dodgers star Shohei Ohtani is the overwhelming MVP favorite at -25000 (99.6% chance) on ESPN BET, which will be Ohtani's fourth MVP and his third consecutive, placing him second for most MVP awards in MLB history. Though his return to pitching after Tommy John Surgery was slow, he has still been among the league's best, posting a 3.29 ERA alongside 52 home runs and a 1.013 OPS, the second-highest in

the league.

The Dodgers plan to lean on him more heavily in the postseason pitching rotation as Ohtani continues to cement himself as one of the game's true modern anomalies.

Cy Young

In the race for the Cy Young award, Tarik Skubal has been untouchable for the Detroit Tigers, practically clinching his win in the American League. The Red Sox's Garrett Crochet trails Skubal, leading the league with 249 strikeouts to accompany his 17-5 win-loss rate (including an undefeated 4-0 record against the Yankees this season). Young Pirates star Paul Skenes (better known as Livvy Dunne's boyfriend) has dominated the race in the National League, leading the MLB with a 2.03 ERA and 209 strikeouts. Despite Skene's impressive stats, the struggles of the Pirates' offense dropped his win-loss rate to 10-10 across the season.

Breakout Stars

Young talent and emerging stars have made a major impact across the league this season. The Oakland A's found a spark with one of the best rookie duos we've seen in a while. Nick Kurtz and Jacob Wilson occupy the first and second slots in the ROY betting order. Across the country, Roman Anthony's early-season surge in Boston put him just behind the Oakland duo. Yet while Wilson and Anthony have both had impressive rookie performances, with 13 and 8 home runs respectively this season, neither comes close to touching Kurtz's 33 home runs and unforgettable four-homer game against the Astros.

The emerging front-runner to win the Rookie of the Year in the National League has become Cubs rookie pitcher Cade Horton after outpitching Paul Skenes in his series against the Pirates. He is now 11-4 on the season with a 2.66 ERA and 95 strikeouts in 115 innings. Drake Baldwin for the Atlanta Braves has also been a consistent favorite. The 24-year-old catcher has proved himself as one of the most efficient young hitters in the league with a .273 batting average and .800 OPS. The other name that has everyone talking is rookie pitcher Jacob "The Miz" Misiorowski in Milwaukee. He made himself known early in the season, making the All-Star team after just five starts. At the All-Star game, he threw a scoreless inning with nine pitches over 100 mph.

The Playoff Picture

If the season ended today, the AL bracket would likely see the third-seed Tigers matched up with the sixth-seed Guardians in the Wild Card round. The fourth-seed Yankees are set to renew their old-age rivalry

against the fifth-seeded Red Sox, with Toronto and Seattle awaiting in the divisional round after earning byes. In the NL, the third-seeded Dodgers would face the sixth-seeded Reds, while the fourth-seeded Cubs face the fifth-seeded Padres. Milwaukee and Philadelphia wait at the top as the one and two seeds, respectively. A lot can still change over the final week, but the stage is set for a postseason where regular powerhouses like the Dodgers and Yankees share the field with fresher faces like the Reds and Guardians.

October Predictions

Now, we finally arrive at my personal playoff predictions. I see the Tigers beating the Guardians in two games if they ride Skubal and get production from star catcher Dillon Dingler. I feel confident that the Yankees can knock out the Red Sox; however, it may come in the final game of the best-of-three series. While pitcher Garrett Crochet has had the Yankees' number all season, outside of his one appearance, the Red Sox fail to stack up well against New York's deeper batting rotation. In the NL, I'll take the Dodgers over the Reds in three games. In addition to Elly De La Cruz dealing with a lagging injury, I believe the Dodgers should have the edge over the Reds due to their depth, experience, and history of postseason success. The Padres are my upset pick in the Wild Card over the Cubs behind Tatis Jr. and Manny Machado.

My World Series prediction is a rematch between the Yankees and Dodgers. A chance for redemption for Aaron Judge, it also provides the possibility of a fairy-tale ending for future Hall of Fame pitcher Clayton Kershaw, who just announced his plans to retire at the end of this season. Despite this prediction, it's still very early. The Phillies could beat the overrated allegations, the Mariners could shock the league with a deep run, and the Brewers could make it all the way behind rising outfielder Jackson Chourio. However, I still believe the Yankees have the kind of stars who can flip an entire series in a single at-bat. This unpredictability is exactly what makes baseball in October one of the most exciting months of sports since 1903, so don't miss out.

DAVID DANIEL '28 (DAVID_DANIEL@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS PRAYING THE RED SOX LOSE.

GRAPHIC BY KELLY TUNG '27



Fantasy Roundup: Week 3

A recap of the notable games from the NFL this past week.

BY TYLER DANG '28

Throughout Week 3, we played the game of “Who’s that quarterback?” “What team does Tyrod Taylor play for?” “What about Marcus Mariota?” “Mac Jones isn’t on the Patriots anymore.” There were 23 interceptions thrown, with four being converted for a pick-six. For full team rosters, see Week 0’s issue.

First and Lowell (2-0) vs Bring it Dome (1-1): 81.94-143.92

Top performers: De’Von Achane (16.1) | James Cook (20.8)

Underperformers: Ravens D/ST (-6.0) | Ja’Marr Chase (8.9)

Kirkland Cousins (1-1) vs Pfirst Down (1-1): 82.34-156.24

Top performers: Vikings D/ST (32.0) | Jonathan Taylor (32.8)

Underperformers: Jameson Williams (6.3) | Malik Nabers (3.3)

The Ball Carriers (0-2) vs The Inn-Zone (1-1): 83.54-119.82

Top performers: Kyren Williams (19.2) | Garrett Wilson (24.4)

Underperformers: Zay Flower (3.3) | Chris Boswell (3.0)

Standout Games:

Dolphins @ Bills: 21-31

Although the Bills were the heavy favorites, they failed to fulfill blowout expectations. With three minutes left on the clock, the Dolphins were in a position to tie the game. Then, an interception by linebacker Terrel Bernard ended all hope of a comeback. Offensively, Josh Allen utilized all of the Bills’ weapons: James Cook, Dalton Kincaid, and Khalil Shakir. Because Tua mainly threw checkdowns for minimal yards, the late-game interception was no surprise. Soon, the Dolphins may need to consider big changes to their coaching staff or even quarterback room.

Steelers @ Patriots: 21-14

While the Steelers won the game, the New England Patriots were more convincing offensively as Drake Maye picked up 268 passing yards to Rodgers’ 139. Still, the Patriots just could not hold onto the ball. Five turnovers throughout the game kept New England from racking up two more scores.

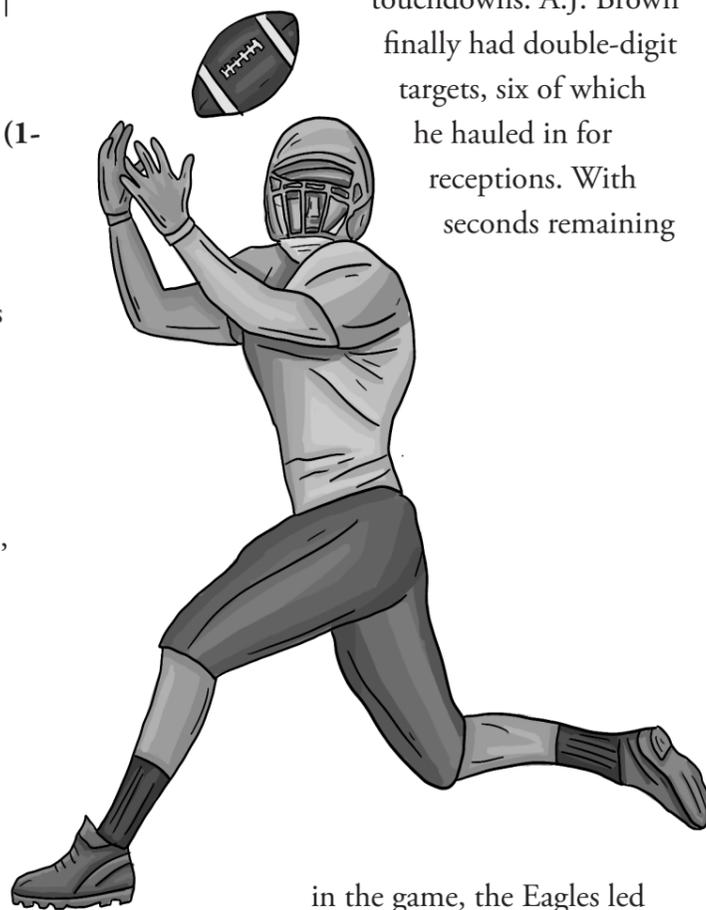
New England saw an end-of-half interception and a fumble, both of which occurred in the Pittsburgh end zone. Drake Maye seemed to outplay Aaron Rodgers; however, the inexperience of the former showed as Maye was sacked five times despite an elite O-Line. As for the Steelers: a win is a win, but offensive consistency is a problem that should be the focus for this weekend.

Rams @ Eagles: 26-33

The reigning Super Bowl champions crawl away with another win. The Rams’ defense suffocated Barkley’s rushes and forced Hurts to the ground, leading Philadelphia 19-7 at halftime. In the first quarter, Matthew Stafford connected with Devonte Adams for a touchdown, and Kyren Williams had many reps with 20 carries for 94 yards.

However, the Eagles made adjustments as Hurts racked up three

touchdowns. A.J. Brown finally had double-digit targets, six of which he hauled in for receptions. With seconds remaining



in the game, the Eagles led by one point with the Rams in field goal range. However, the Eagles blocked the kick and recovered the ball for a 61-yard touchdown to seal the game.

Texans @ Jaguars: 10-17

The stats allude to a defensive battle, but in reality, it was just two teams struggling on offense. CJ Stroud continues to look uncomfortable as he was unable to make big plays, though that may be due to a poor offensive line. Nico Collins turned on the jets and scored a wide-open 50-yard touchdown, but fumbled minutes later, securing

Jacksonville’s victory. As for the Jaguars, Trevor Lawrence is in a nebulous state where he is an above-average quarterback but nowhere near a superstar level. Lawrence attempted 40 passes but only connected on half. Still, while Lawrence’s accuracy leaves much to be desired, the Jaguars moved to a deceptive 2-1.

Lions @ Ravens: 38-30

For the final game of the week, the Lions-Ravens game saw great offensive play from both teams before the Lions ultimately ran away with the win. For most of the game, the Ravens’ offense was great as Lamar Jackson threw for three touchdowns and Derrick Henry ran for a fourth. Nevertheless, a punched-out fumble by Aidan Hutchinson allowed the Lions to increase their lead to double digits. Though Lamar was good, his five sacks and indecisive moments should be noted. Jared Goff did not play as well as Jackson but still had a solid game, racking up a touchdown and 200 yards. The Detroit defense came in clutch multiple times, preventing Baltimore from any chance for a fourth-quarter comeback. Overall, this game was a great one to finish the week.

Injuries continue to plague the league (many of the players on the fantasy teams have had to fill their injury reserve spots). Next week, two undefeated teams face off as the Eagles travel south to Tampa Bay. Two surprisingly 1-3 teams play each other in the Baltimore and Kansas City game. Finally, on Monday, we will see four of the five winless teams battle it out when the Jets play the Dolphins and the Titans match against the Texans.

TYLER DANG '28 (TYLERDANG@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) BELIEVES THE TITANS WILL BEAT THE TEXANS.

GRAPHIC BY MIRANDA CHAO HWANG '28

Sports Spotlight: Robby Meek

One of Harvard's top sailing prospects, Robby Meek '27, sets the stage for an exciting 2025-2026 season on the water.

BY TILLY BUTTERWORTH '28

Robby Meek '27, who competes in double-handed fleet racing, single-handed fleet racing, and double-handed team racing, won the NEISA Open Singlehanded Championship for the second time in a row on Sept. 13. Harvard sailing has opened the 2025-2026 season strong with a recent 7-0 round robin victory at the NEISA Match Race Championships on Sept. 20, building on last season's double-handed team national championship.

Single-handed fleet racers sail a one-person boat, with strategies shaped by weather and ocean conditions at each meet. All competitions contribute to an overall points system towards the Fowle Trophy, a major accolade given to the college with the highest score in collegiate sailing.



Over the summer, Meek also represented the United States in the North American championships in the ILCA 7s—the Olympic single-handed class—where he claimed his third consecutive title. Meek's passion for sailing began at age eight at a sailing summer camp in Annapolis, Md. "I enjoyed it so much, I got into racing the next summer," Meek said in an interview with the *Independent*. "I did a bunch of racing that following summer and started to do well, so I continued with that." Though he also played soccer and lacrosse, Meek ultimately chose to focus solely on sailing.

Team culture is often a driving force behind both enjoyment and success for teams at Harvard. "My favorite parts about this team are the people, the coaches, and the support," Meek said. "I am super close with a lot of people on the team, and I look forward to all my practices, competitions, and drives in the team van."

Sailing, in particular, is known for having more walk-ons than most Harvard teams. This means that new sailors are constantly joining the team, many of them beyond their first year. "There are some people I've known for years and some people that I have just met this year," Meek said.

Sailing is a highly technical sport, where success depends on minimizing mistakes during races—making the fine-tuning done in practice crucial to a successful competition. "I approach practices trying to experiment a lot, and in the experimentation, there are a lot of mistakes, and that's okay," Meek reflected. "In races it's all about minimizing mistakes and applying what you've learned."

That willingness to experiment in practice has been

one of Meek's keys to success. His impressive sailing career already includes finishing as the top American in the Gold Fleet at the European Championships in Sweden over the summer.

Meek is one of many Harvard student-athletes striving to make the most of the opportunities the school provides. This is challenging given demanding mandatory practice schedules, with additional lifts and cardio to optimize performance. "Sometimes sailing itself isn't very windy, so you have to work out on top of that, and with lots of other opportunities or things to do, it's hard to fit that in," Meek said.

The next challenge Meek has set for himself is the College Single-Handed National Championships at Old Dominion University. In previous years, the competition has been held at Tulane University in New Orleans, La., and St. Petersburg College in St. Petersburg, Fla., where Meek competed as a first-year and then a sophomore. After a strong start to the 2025-2026 season, Meek and his teammates hope to carry their success forward. "I'm excited for it this year, hoping for the win! So lots of working out, sailing, and eating well," Meek said.

TILLY BUTTERWORTH '28
(MBUTTERWORTH@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITES SPORTS FOR THE *INDEPENDENT*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HARVARD ATHLETICS

Mon - Thu: 11:00am to 7:30pm

Fri - Sat: 11:00am to 8:00pm

Sun: 11:00am to 4:00pm

1246 Massachusetts Ave.

Mr. Bartley's

EST.



1960

A Legend in HARVARD SQUARE

Our iconic institution combines culinary excellence with a rich history, renowned by the New York Times and celebrity clientele like Johnny Cash, Jacqueline Onassis, and Al Pacino come have an unforgettable journey!

OPINIONS OF FORUM PIECES AND ARTISTIC INTERPRETATIONS OF DESIGNERS BELONG ONLY TO THE CREATOR AND DO NOT REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE *INDEPENDENT*

Wish Upon Me Falling

DESIGN: Annabella
Curtis Boone '29
CROSSWORD: Fred Klein '28

DOWN

- PRESSURE MEASUREMENT FOR TIRES / SPORTS EQUIPMENT
- A UNC. MASCOT
- PHOENIXES ARISE FROM IT
- FRED KLEIN'S HOUSE (HARVARD'S 1ST PRESIDENT)
- REVERSE CARD
- FOOD ANALOGY FOR MONEY
- DRY, HOT LIKE THE DESERT
- CAMBRIDGE _____ & LATIN SCHOOL

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- DAVID BOWIE ALTER EGO ZIGGY
- CLASSIC ON THE ALBUM "SONGS IN THE KEY OF LIFE"
- COLLEGE, TO A BRIT
- BIG SAFARI ANIMAL, OR FAKE REPUBLICAN MISPELLED
- HELD IN YOUR WALLET NEXT TO ITS CREDIT VERSION
- DEST. IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY
- SPANISH RIVER
- WHAT WE ARE "SUPPOSED" TO DO AT SCHOOL
- BORED PERSON AT A PARTY

Latil Merriam *Kayla Le* *Angie Li*