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HARVARD

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INDEPENDENT

The student weekly since 1969

THE

GAME



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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.

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Student Organization Profile: Harvard Undergraduate Sports Lab

Founded in 2022, HUSL's mission is to provide a space for Harvard students interested in athletics both on and off the field.

BY LAYLA CHAARAOU I '26

"The first of its kind at Harvard." The Harvard Undergraduate Sports Lab proudly displays this slogan on its homepage. Co-founded in 2022 by Tai Tatum '24 and Ayah Al-Zubi '23, HUSL provides students passionate about sports business a space to connect with industry leaders and one another. At an institution with limited offerings for students interested in athletics beyond "going pro," HUSL aims to connect undergraduates with the vast career options available in the sports industry.

"I hadn't seriously considered working in sports before HUSL, but now it's a career path I'm actively exploring, particularly on the brand, media, product, and marketing side," HUSL Vice President of Marketing Tolu Ademola '26 said in an interview with the *Harvard Independent*.

While Harvard fields pre-professional groups within medicine, finance, and tech, HUSL's founders noticed a gap in resources for sports business. "We are proud to have created a resource where people can have access to the necessary resources, tools, networks, and connections to pursue a professional career in the sports business industry," Tatum states on HUSL's website.

Harvard College does offer a handful of relevant courses, such as "SOCIO 111: Sociology of Sport," "ECON 1042: Sports Economics," and "STAT 143: Sports Analytics." Yet opportunities to engage directly with the industry beyond lecture halls remain limited. These constraints are heightened for student-athletes due to Harvard's restrictions on name, image, and likeness deals, which prevent them from leveraging Harvard branding or external financial opportunities that could support a sports-related future post-graduation.

HUSL, then, fills this gap by offering a bridge between campus interest and real-world access. "I joined HUSL when I was a freshman because I thought it was the perfect place for me to exercise my passion for sports and learn more about the sports business," HUSL co-president Hank Yang '26 told the *Independent*. "I instantly resonated with the vision of the club—to provide unprecedented opportunities and pathways into the sports industry for aspiring students—as I had always dreamed of working in this space."

HUSL hosts events, screenings, socials, and conferences that allow members to network with one another and with guest speakers. Its 24 student leaders are organized into teams, including the Executive Team, Partnerships, Marketing, and Events, each responsible for advancing the organization's mission. Together, these teams drive HUSL's semesterly projects: securing speakers

and planning conferences, cultivating relationships with external organizations and industry experts, producing social media and visual materials, supporting member development, and coordinating events and programming. Past events have included football watch parties, "Beyond the Game," a collaboration with Harvard Undergraduate Women in Business, and student basketball and pickleball tournaments.

"For me, it's been the way that I've been able to leverage going to Harvard the most," Professional Development and Community Team lead Alex Stone '26 explained to the *Independent*. "Being a sports fan and someone interested in pursuing a career in the sports industry, I've been able to reach out to speakers and organizations I'm interested in and invite them to be a part of HUSL events—it is a way for me to offer something to them while pursuing my own interests," he said.

Among HUSL's other opportunities, their annual conference remains the main draw for new organization membership and general campus engagement—a fact co-president John Thomas Borowitz '27 knows firsthand. "I first learned about HUSL in November of my freshman year when I walked out of Berg and saw a table of students promoting a 'Harvard Sports Business Conference' with Carmelo Anthony as the keynote speaker," he said to the *Independent*. "Being a huge sports fan, I loved Carmelo and attended the conference. I spoke with the HUSL Board at the conference and later applied and joined them for sophomore year as Head of Special Events."

In that role, Borowitz took on a central responsibility in planning and executing semesterly programming. "It was a massive amount of behind-the-scenes work, but when the rooms were full, the conversations were sharp, and students genuinely learned something meaningful," he added.

Now serving as co-presidents, Borowitz and Yang stepped into their roles with a shared goal of elevating HUSL's professionalism and expanding member opportunities. Focusing their efforts on the conference, the organization's flagship annual event, as a way to attract greater membership, they moved the event to the Harvard Club of Boston, its first time off campus, rather than the usual on-campus Science Center venue.

"We took a risk hosting a conference off campus, but it was a huge success," Borowitz said. "We still had an attendance of over 200 students."

Held on Nov. 8, this year's speakers included two-time National Basketball Association Champion Quinn Cook, NBA Deputy Commissioner and Chief Operating Officer Mark Tatum, former NBA shooting guard Josh

Childress, WHOOP Chief Marketing Officer John Sullivan, and Amazon Prime Video Sports Partnerships Principal Andy Oh. Attendees heard from these leaders and others throughout the day via keynote sessions, networking opportunities, and a range of additional programming.

This year's lineup echoed the successes of past conferences. "Being in HUSL has given me experiences I never thought I'd have. From visiting and hearing from Will Ahmed at WHOOP's headquarters to talking with Ryan Fitzpatrick at last year's conference to meeting Carmelo Anthony the year before that, it's really been incredible," Stone said.

In addition to panels, the conference opened with a morning keynote session from Kyle Cunningham, co-founder and managing partner at Limited Ventures, and Childress. The day also saw keynote sessions from Cook and Mark Tatum and an "Advocacy & Athletes" fireside chat. Catered breakfast and lunch rounded out the event for all attendees.

With the conference now behind them, Yang aims to continue raising the bar for what HUSL can achieve. "I hope to build a system within HUSL that facilitates [networking] connections more actively, creating direct channels between Harvard students and these organizations," he said. "Whether that's through regular professional development events or engaging in more targeted outreach, we hope to provide our membership with more structure in this regard."

Yang also envisions expanding HUSL's academic footprint. "I see HUSL leveraging Harvard's unparalleled academic platform to kick-start meaningful scholarly dialogue about the sports business industry. I see a future where HUSL produces industry-leading academic literature addressing major shifts in sports, media, and entertainment that many teams and organizations can utilize to drive performance and success," Yang added. "HUSL members can also lead academic conversations internally, enriching our student body about all facets of the sports industry and giving back to our HUSL brothers and sisters."

HUSL offers a space where student-athletes and sports fans alike can fully engage with their interests. Beyond semesterly programming, the organization's focus also expands to academic exploration, philanthropy, mentorship, and community building. "We want Harvard students to have the ability and opportunity to pursue sports business jobs if they are passionate about the industry," Borowitz said. "Athletes always dream of saying they got to speak at Harvard, and we are trying to match that desire with students that love sports."

"There are truly endless possibilities, but I hope that as we continue to advance the mission and vision of HUSL, the club can grow into every corner of this country and beyond and shed proper light on how wonderful and vast the sports industry is," Yang concluded.

LAYLA CHAARAOU I '26 (LAYLACHAARAOU I@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AIDEN CHOI '29



Harvard Students React to Larry Summers's Campus Presence and New Epstein Records

Students were reminded of Summers's relationship with Epstein following recent developments, sparking renewed discussion about Harvard's current affiliations.

BY COURTNEY HINES '28

The United States House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform released more than 33,000 pages of Epstein-related records obtained from the Department of Justice from Sept. 1 to Nov. 12. Although much of the material reiterated information already made public in Jan. 2024, the timing and volume of the release reignited campus debate over how institutions should handle faculty affiliated with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

"If evidence emerges that he was involved with any sexual misconduct, he should be charged and fired. I don't think people who commit crimes to that degree should be anywhere near an institution like Harvard," Nataly Delcid '28 said in an interview with the *Independent*.

In January 2024, the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York unsealed nearly 1,000 pages of civil-case filings from *Giuffre v. Maxwell*. The contents mainly pertained to Ghislaine Maxwell, Epstein's wife, detailing her involvement in recruiting young women and personal knowledge of Epstein's sexual activities. However, the disclosure also named dozens of people related to Maxwell and Epstein in various contexts, including former Harvard President and U.S. Treasury Secretary Lawrence H. "Larry" Summers '82. Reporters and courts stressed that inclusion in civil discovery or deposition exhibits does not imply any wrongdoing.

Still, commentators on both the right and the left circulated selective excerpts to fit preexisting narratives. On social media platforms, some accounts mislabeled the trove as a "client list," blurring the line between sworn allegations, witness mentions, and hearsay.

Meanwhile, official reviews have reiterated two key points: federal investigators concluded Epstein died by suicide, and a July 2025 Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation memo stated there is no "client list." Those findings sit alongside sharp criticism of the Bureau of Prisons for failures that enabled his death.

Harvard's 2020 internal review—a year after Epstein's second imprisonment—

found the University accepted \$9.1 million from Epstein between 1998 and 2007, with no gifts after his 2008 conviction; it also documented more than 40 visits to Martin Nowak at the Program for Evolutionary Dynamics from 2010 to 2018. The University announced it would be closing the Program and suspended Nowak from advising undergraduate research for two years. The remaining \$200,937 in funds were directed to anti-trafficking nonprofits My Life My Choice and GEMS. The report recommended tighter donor and visiting-fellow policies.

Summers and the November Document Release

Immediately following the release of the files, Summers still held his Harvard professorship and taught five courses across the Economics Department at the College and Harvard Kennedy School. He attended lectures following press coverage of emails released via Congress on Nov. 12, which showed that he corresponded with Jeffrey Epstein between 2013 and 2019 on a mix of personal topics and Harvard-related projects.

Summers appeared in class the day following his announcement, which Delcid sat in on. "Some of you will have seen my statement of regret,

expressing my shame with respect to what I did in communication with Mr. Epstein," he said before starting the lesson. "I've said that I'm gonna step back from public activities for a while for a time. But I think it is very important I fulfill my teaching obligations. And so, with your permission, we're going to go forward and talk about the material in the class."

Epstein and Summers' email and text correspondence went on from Nov. 2018 to Jul. 2019, 10 years after Epstein pleaded guilty in a Florida state court to solicitation of prostitution from an underage girl. Summers, married both then and now, detailed a romantic pursuit of a woman he referred to as his "mentee." At one point, Epstein referred to himself as Summers' "wing man" for the PhD student he pursued.

"I believe that the most important aspect of a person in their work, especially in a university, is what they actually enact and what they say and do in regard to the university," Brandy Figueroa '28 said. "But I also do believe that a person's personal life and their morality in general, and

the morality of their actions and speech, privately, also is something that we should care about."

"There's people that are controversial because we don't believe with their political system, right? But there's also people who are controversial just because they're bad. There are limits to what is useful and what actually contributes to intellectual vitality," she continued.

"Why the fuck are you still here? Why are you still here?" said Aaron Samuels '27. "I think it's a general consensus that he represents the worst of Harvard."



Summers Steps Back from All Public Commitments and Teaching Responsibilities

On Nov. 19, Summers alongside spokesman Steven Goldberg announced that he would step down from his teaching responsibilities, directorship of the Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government at the Harvard Kennedy School, and all other public commitments. “I am deeply ashamed of my actions and recognize the pain they have caused. I take full responsibility for my misguided decision to continue communicating with Mr. Epstein,” he said in a statement to CNBC. Also on Nov. 19 it was announced he had resigned from his board position at OpenAI.

Delcid questioned the motivations behind Summers’ stepping back. “I could see a world where he genuinely stepped down because he was forced to at least take a pause until he can make a statement, or prove that he’s innocent in some way. So I don’t know if stepping down is an admission of guilt,” she said.

Still, Delcid criticized Summers’ pursuit of a student whom he discussed in the correspondence. “The fact that he was getting advice from Epstein on this front a day before Epstein was arrested, is just like... I think there actually is probably enough evidence for Harvard to justifiably remove him just based on that email.”

“What role does the institution play in this, and now that we know this, or now that new things are coming to light, what does the school do after this?” Samuels asked. “What are they willing to do?”

On Nov. 18, Trump was questioned on references to him in Epstein’s emails. Trump claimed not to know anything about them, but asked, “What did it mean when he spent all that time with Bill Clinton, with the President of Harvard, you know who that is, Summers—Larry Summers?”

The records were released in the midst of an ongoing legal battle between Harvard and the Trump administration. “Unfortunately, the University has become really entrenched with politics and power plays,” Figueroa said. “I think that there should be repercussions for being affiliated in any negative way with Epstein, but I also don’t think that should be used to harm the University itself.”

“This is an institution separate from who Epstein was and what he did,” she continued. “The University should try to [protect] itself by, first of all, figuring out who would be affected, and doing damage control in any way possible.”

Epstein Emails Reference Trump

New references to Donald Trump in the Nov. 12 tranche added fuel to the discourse. The committee’s release included three emails from 2011, 2015, and 2019 in which Jeffrey Epstein mentioned Trump. Among them was a 2011 note to Ghislaine Maxwell, saying a victim had “spent hours at [Epstein’s] house” with Trump and calling him a “dog that hasn’t barked,” and a 2015 exchange with author Michael Wolff about an upcoming Trump interview; several outlets published the emails in full or summarized them. The White House downplayed the messages, stressing that being mentioned in correspondence is not itself an allegation.

“I would genuinely say I’m unfazed. I think that so many batshit crazy things come up in the news regarding Trump,” Delcid explained. “I think I’ve just been desensitized... I was pretty confident he had some sexual misconduct in his past, so I’m not overly surprised by some of the stuff that’s coming out.”

Figueroa shared a similar sentiment towards the President. “I never really had trust in Trump—I’m not totally shocked by this. It’s kind of to be expected. You don’t need these emails to realize what’s been going on,” she said.

“I already expected Trump to be on there,” Samuels said. “The majority of people have already associated Trump with predatory offenses—sexual predatory offenses.” He noted how this knowledge is often disregarded. “A good portion of people don’t necessarily care about it.”

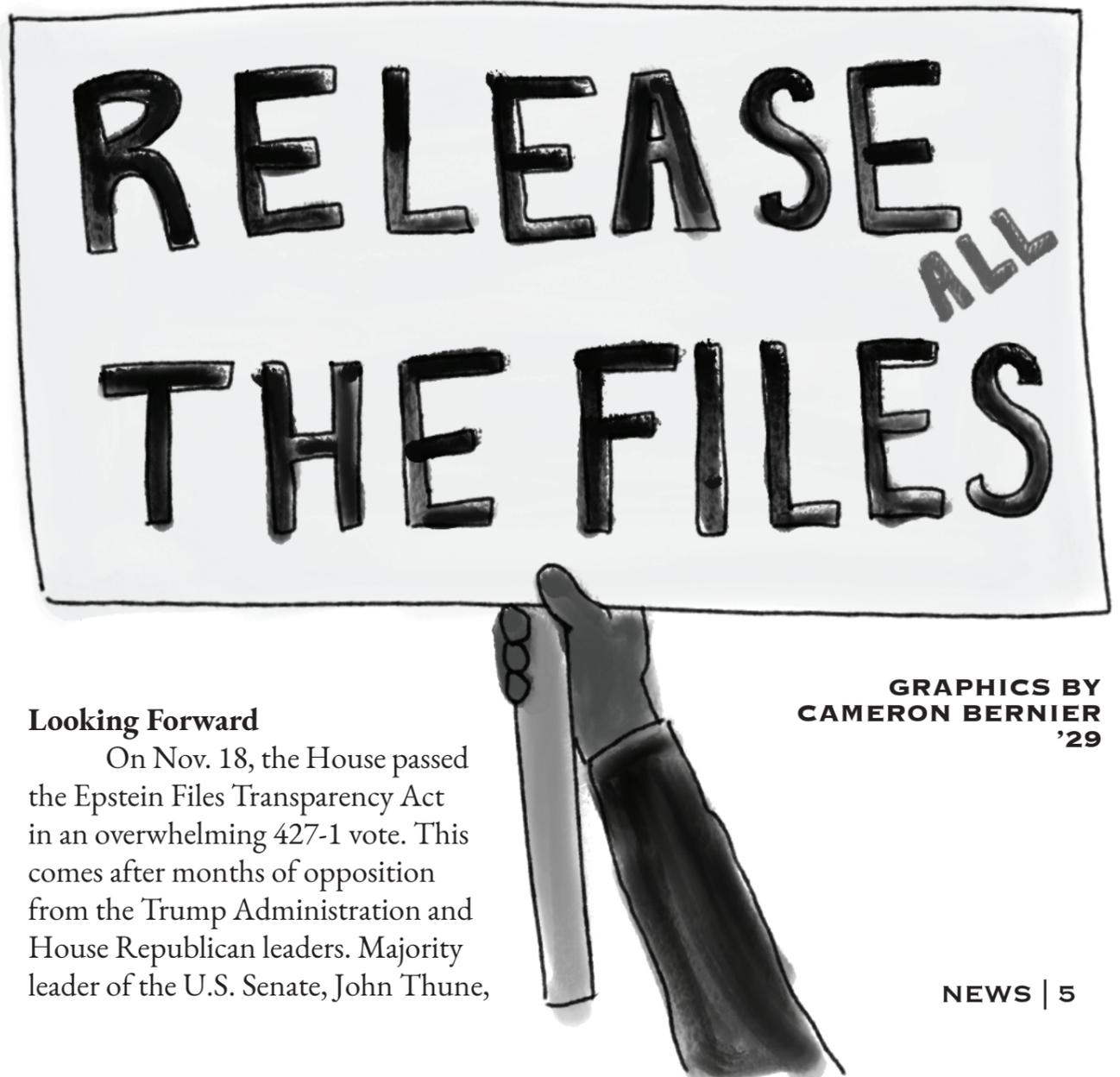
claimed that the bill would pass quickly through the Senate, and that Trump “sounds like he’s prepared to sign” and release the files.

While it is difficult to know how many of the files will not be redacted or if they will reveal any incriminating information about third parties, the public anticipates corroborating evidence of misconduct. “I think that there probably aren’t obvious grounds to impeach [Trump] on this front quite yet, but I think that it’s possible that with more evidence. He could be impeached or he could be forced to resign somehow,” Delcid said. “I do think that this would be one of the only things that would break his base and make him lose full support.”

“I’m very discouraged by how things are looking right now with Republicans and the Senate and in the House, and also just the people that are around and in the government right now as a whole,” Figueroa expressed. “I think that we can’t hope that representatives do what they need to do to, rightfully carry out whatever repercussions Trump should face if new evidence comes to light. So I think the only hope we have is the next election.”

“I was honestly just impressed that Democrats and Republicans released things. It has taken a very long time, so I was just a little bit proud,” Delcid said.

COURTNEY HINES ’28
(COURTNEYHINES@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITES NEWS FOR **THE INDEPENDENT.**



Looking Forward

On Nov. 18, the House passed the Epstein Files Transparency Act in an overwhelming 427-1 vote. This comes after months of opposition from the Trump Administration and House Republican leaders. Majority leader of the U.S. Senate, John Thune,

GRAPHICS BY
CAMERON BERNIER
'29

Harvard Custodians Call Out the University Amid Ongoing Wage Negotiations

From Nov. 17 to Nov. 18, hundreds of Harvard University's custodians went on strike, demanding fair wage increases and a new union contract.

BY SONIA SINGH '29

"Harvard, escucha, estamos en la lucha!" "Harvard, escucha, estamos en la lucha!" By mid-morning on Nov. 17, loud chants, translating to "*Harvard, listen, we're in this fight!*" filled Harvard Yard. Hundreds of custodians represented by the Service Employees International Union 32BJ began a two-day strike in demand of fair wages, a new union contract, and an end to what they describe as Harvard's "unfair labor practices."

The strike came after the custodians' previous contract with Harvard expired on Nov. 15. Just two days earlier, negotiations for new agreements "broke down" when the entire custodial bargaining committee walked out of negotiations with the University, stressing that current wage proposals were insufficient. With the cost of living and inflation rising, Harvard's custodians want to be heard: "We aren't asking for something crazy, we just need the minimum to survive," a striker shared in an interview with the *Harvard Independent*.

Elena Lavarreda, the New England Janitorial Division Director of 32BJ SEIU, expressed the urgency of the situation. "We're out here supporting the workers," she said. "They want to maintain their benefits, which include [wage] increases over the life of the contract... People want recognition of all of their hard and important work. But more importantly, people want to be able to afford the cost of living in this very expensive area."

In the Fiscal Year 2025, around \$3.5 billion of Harvard's \$6.8 billion total operating expenses were allocated to salaries, wages, and employee benefits for Harvard faculty, staff, and other employees. Harvard notes that full-time support staff, including custodians, are eligible for various benefits, including medical, dental, and vision coverage, life and disability insurance, and transportation subsidies, among other offerings. Still, custodian workers on strike express that financial struggles remain an issue and demand increased pay.

According to the 32BJ SEIU Contract, from Jul. 1 to Nov. 15, 2025 when the contract expired, custodial staff with less than three years of service received \$28 per hour, while staff with more than three years of service received \$28.68 per hour.

"Folks are not asking for much, and it's not even a drop in the bucket of what Harvard could afford," Lavarreda stated.

For Roberio B. Da Silva, an athletic custodian at Harvard, financial struggles have hit hard. After getting COVID in 2021, he spent 30 days in the hospital, 19 of them intubated, followed by a long recovery that kept him out of work. "When I got COVID, I didn't work that much. Now to support my family, I need two jobs because the money I get from Harvard is not enough," he said at the strike.

Normally, full-time custodians work eight hours a day, totaling 40 hours per week. "We do the hard work over here. We wake up at 4 o'clock in the morning to get over here by 6 o'clock," Da Silva said. However, he added how overtime work has become essential for his finances. "Right now, if I

don't work overtime, I'm not gonna make enough to survive because I have to pay the rent, I have to pay for food, I have to pay for medicine," he said. "It is very difficult right now, because the money we get is not enough."

Sandra Vega, another custodian on strike who works in Adams House, added that many custodians have second jobs just to cover basic expenses. "They are offering pennies, pennies for our work," she said. "We got very little money in the previous contracts, and given all the inflation right now, we cannot live with just one job," she said.

"Typically, I wake up, I come to work at Harvard, and then after Harvard, I have to go to my part-time job because what I get as a full-time worker here is not enough to pay my bills and provide for my daughter," Vega continued.

From July 2024 to July 2025, the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers in the Boston area increased by 3.2%. More specifically, from July 2024 to July 2025, food prices in the Boston area have increased by 3.3% and housing prices have increased by 4.8%. However, in wage negotiations, the University offered custodians an annual salary increase of 2.2%, which custodians feel does not account for the increases in cost of living.

To contextualize the recent 32BJ SEIU Contract history, custodial wages at Harvard have steadily risen each year since 2020. For custodians with over three years of service, the hourly rate increased from \$24.67 in July 2020 to \$28.68 by July 2025. The University has maintained efforts to increase custodian pay throughout the past years, though workers remain feeling stretched thin, tired, and still struggling to cover basic expenses.

"I'm here because in the negotiation Harvard didn't show any willingness to accommodate or any respect for us, so we had no other choice than to come today and strike," Vega said.

Lavarreda added how the work of custodians is crucial and too often overlooked. "Keeping this campus clean and safe and healthy and hygienic is just as important a part of student body life as is making sure that the academics are strong. It's one piece of a puzzle that makes up a whole," she stated.

Today, around 6,000 unionized Harvard employees belong to labor unions, with approximately 800 of those being represented by 32BJ SEIU. As the fastest-growing labor union in North America, SEIU takes pride in protecting the workers whose daily

efforts keep communities safe and running.

As the strike continued, Da Silva shared the pride he takes in the impact of his work. "When one student got out of quarantine... They hugged me and told me I make their life better because I am always smiling."

"When I work for students, I treat them like my own sons and daughters," he added.

Da Silva said that he has spent 10 years doing this work without complaint. "We left our families and homes to take care of you guys, and we are happy to do it," he said. "The only thing we ask is for Harvard to stand up for us."

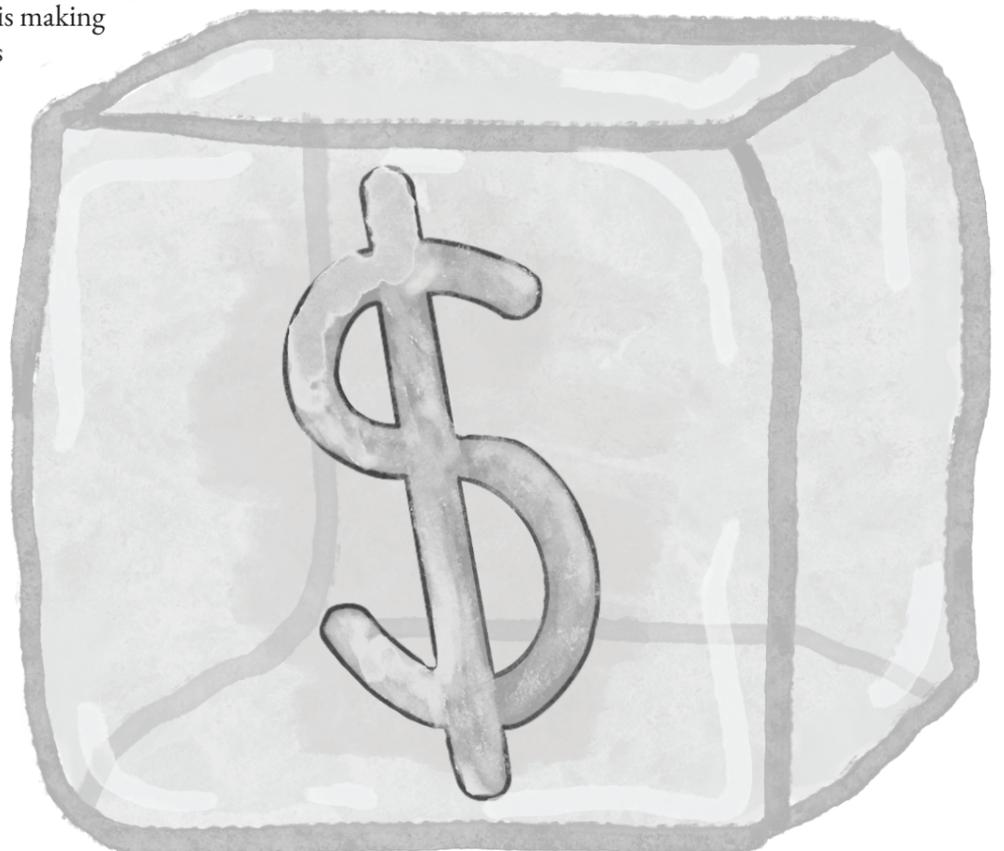
By sundown on Nov. 18, custodians were still marching and chanting through Harvard Yard. On Nov. 19, a press release from Regional Communications Director Frank Soultz announced, "All the custodians who participated in one-day strikes across Harvard University on Monday and Tuesday have now returned to work, and the workers' bargaining committee has agreed to resume negotiations."

"We look forward to returning to the table to negotiate an agreement that lets these essential workers get ahead of the terrible affordability crisis that has hurt working people across the country," stated 32BJ SEIU Executive Vice President Kevin Brown.

Vega said the message they hope the University hears is simple: "We've been here for you when you need us. Please, at least consider our jobs and try to give us a fair salary."

SONIA SINGH '29 (SONIASINGH@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITES NEWS FOR THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY SOPHIA RASCOFF '27



Student-Founded Apparel Brand Crew Dog Arrives at Harvard

An interview with the executive leads of the merchandise company Crew Dog.

BY NATALIE COOPER '28

Crew Dog, a student-founded collegiate apparel company known for its minimalist mascot designs, is beginning to make its way into Harvard's merchandise sales. As the brand prepares for its first retail appearance in the COOP starting Nov. 24, its founders say their goal is simple: to offer college students apparel that feels intentionally designed rather than mass-produced. At a moment when elite Ivy League career pipelines overwhelmingly favor finance, consulting, and tech-centric startups, Crew Dog positions itself as a counterculture, hoping to exemplify a student entrepreneurship rooted in craft, design, and community identity.

Founded two years ago, Crew Dog began with a simple idea. "The first design was to fulfill this sort of want and desire for more chic collegiate wear, especially collegiate wear that was more subtle and had a strong affiliation to some sort of club or organization," Kiernan Liberman said, one of the company's early executive members and a 2025 Yale graduate.

In three words, Liberman described the brand as "playful, timeless, and nostalgic."

Liberman and founder Constantino Polychronopoulos—another member of Yale's Class of 2025—started with pieces for their alma mater's men's rowing team.

"We started using the Bulldog mascot and repurposing [it] into this humanized form and making it really cute," Liberman said. "What began as a niche idea quickly evolved into a formal business, one that now works with dozens of organizations and campus bookstores across the country, including Boston University, Georgetown University, and Harvard University."

"If you can make every student feel seen and wanted within your collection," he said, "that is the success in itself."

Crew Dog now operates with three major revenue streams: direct-to-consumer collections on its website, custom group orders for student organizations, and partnerships with university bookstores.

Crew Dog's arrival in Cambridge has been spearheaded by their recent Harvard-Yale line, which launched just under two weeks ago and immediately took off. "The feedback has been tremendous," Liberman said. Their velour sets—according to the executive team—have been a top seller of the line. "It's a very fun game day piece!" Liberman added.

Apart from Harvard-specific apparel, their fastest-growing segment is custom group merchandise, where student clubs can request original artwork or adapt Crew Dog's existing mascot designs. "Groups and clubs will reach

out, and they'll either ask to make their own from-scratch design or utilize the OG design... and customize it," Liberman explained. "This customization has become a cornerstone of Crew Dog's campus presence."

Catering to the needs of every student type is a main priority of Crew Dog. In addition to more trendy styles like the velour track suit, there are more preppy pieces, like "long sleeve button up polos and more normal t-shirt graphics, sweatshirts," as Liberman describes.

Trying to find a consumer that wants sort of all these different pieces is the biggest priority," Liberman said. "If I can make every type of person want a piece from the collection, that's a success."

Working with students, Liberman said, is remarkably different from dealing with corporate clients.

"With students, it's pretty clear," he said. "They know what they want."

"I think because there's such a niche in the market of collegiate wear, everyone is so willing to just have anything that represents their creation... There's not too much back and forth between us and customers with design edits, but I think that just goes to show how much people really want something that represents them and their community."

The ease of working with students allows Crew Dog to deliver products to consumers quickly. This is a necessity when working with student groups that often operate on tight budgets and even tighter timelines. Many collaborations begin with a club treasurer or student leader submitting an online request, after which a designer follows up as soon as the next day.

"You submit a design request, you get in touch with our team of designers, you go back and forth with designers for a few changes and edits for what you want, and then from there, we design the pieces, get them made, [and] get them delivered. So it's a pretty easy and simple process," Liberman explained.

The brand is also gearing up for even bigger projects. "We have a huge Army-Navy collection coming right after Harvard-Yale," Liberman said. And though he declined to share specifics, he hinted that the team is already identifying their "new hero product" based on the performance of the past few weeks' sales.

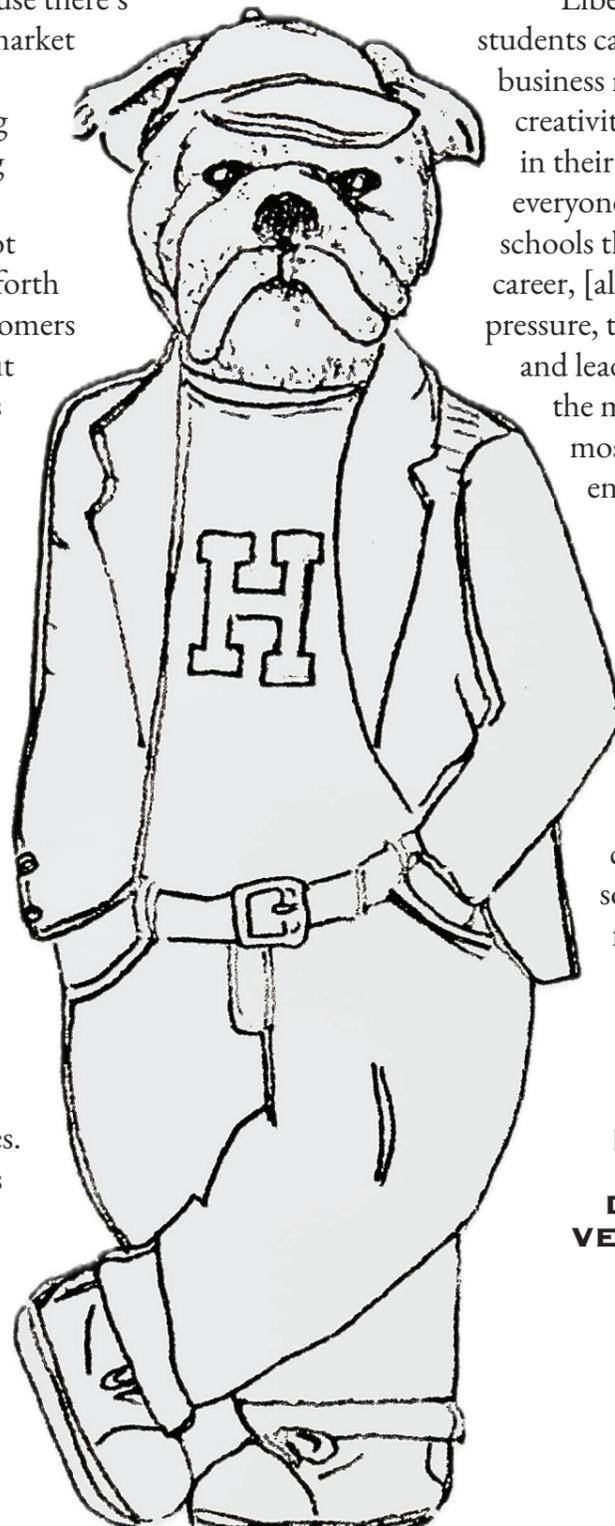
While the company has grown, Liberman believes Crew Dog's strongest appeal lies in its origins. "Crew Dog represents an idea that came from students, for other students," he said. "It wasn't really about reinventing the wheel; it was about using something as a vehicle for community, which was clothing."

Liberman hopes that Harvard students can see Crew Dog's successful business model of authenticity and creativity as one they can emulate in their own lives. "I just advise everyone I know, especially these schools that have such an intensive career, [almost] corporate-like pressure, to just follow your heart and lead to where you truly feel the most, the most fulfilled, the most enlightened, and the most energetic."

As Crew Dog launches at Harvard in person in just a week, Liberman underscored the values that drive the company through each new chapter. "I think I would say to the Harvard community, our brand, and sort of the message is just to follow with love and do what you want."

NATALIE COOPER '28 (NATALIE.COOPER@HARVARD.EDU) WILL BE WEARING CREW DOG'S NEW HARVARD VELOUR TRACKSUIT AT HARVARD-YALE.

GRAPHIC BY CALEB BOYCE '29



A Conversation with Dean Deming

Harvard College's Danoff Dean chats with undergraduates about the latest updates at the institution.

BY KALVIN FRANK '28

Harvard College Danoff Dean David Deming hosted an open forum in the Winthrop House Junior Common Room on Nov. 12, inviting undergraduates to discuss the updates on institutional policies, culture, student engagement, and more. Approximately 20 students attended, ready to ask questions ranging from increases in the student activity fund, free laundry, and an initiative that seeks to recenter academics at the College.

The Danoff Dean oversees undergraduate academic and student life. Although not all of the recent institutional changes are directly related to Deming's projects, he is nonetheless tasked with supporting those charged with executing them. Recognizing student opposition to the push against grade inflation, Deming stressed that the Office of Undergraduate Education's report was not intended to spur any immediate change to undergraduate assessments, but rather to introduce a campus conversation around the topic.

"This was a report that was intended to actually bring some transparency to a conversation that is just beginning to happen among the faculty; we want to involve the students in the learning," Deming said. "Nothing's happening. There is no change, and everything is the same... But what this does do is start a conversation."

The grading report follows an earlier document commissioned by former Harvard College Dean Rakesh Khurana and released in 2023. After concluding that grades had dramatically risen over the past decades and identifying solutions that other colleges utilize, the 2025 update dives deeper into grading, workload, and a more defined list of recommendations that may work at the undergraduate level.

Regardless of the opinions felt by students across the College's campus, the administration has made a concerted effort to get buy-in from the student body, such as hosting office hours with the Dean of Undergraduate Education and point person on the report, Amanda Claybaugh.

"Claybaugh had office hours and met with 55 students [in-person] in her office hours. I myself have met with dozens of students

talking about it in a lot of conversations. It's really important that we understand how this reads to you guys, and what you think we should do," Deming continued.

Deming believes that the ideas discussed around grading will benefit students. "Some of the things that are proposed or that people are talking about could encourage risk-taking," he shared. "Just to give you one example, one of the proposals in there is what they call 'median grade.' I would call it a delta grade, where it's basically if you record the average grade in each class on a transcript, and then you also see some of these grades, you can sort of figure out what the difference is."

The idea behind this delta grade is that it encourages people to take more rigorous, mentally stimulating courses regardless of the grading consequence. "That actually encourages risk-taking, because if you wanted to take classes where there's more variation in grades and you get an A, that's worth a lot more," he said.

Another topic on the discussion table was the announced increase in the student activity fee, which raises the annual tuition cost from \$200 to \$450 and makes it a required expense in exchange for free laundry. "It's money from you, for you. I hope that there will be a much more robust pool of resources for students to plan activities for themselves, and you guys have more fun with it," Deming said.

According to the University, the student activity fee funds student organizations, student life activities, and operations for Harvard College students. At the moment, students are permitted to write a letter to opt out of paying the student activity fee. The change came as the College claimed that an increasing number of students were electing not to pay; this adjustment is expected to begin at the start of the next academic year, with free laundry starting on Jan. 1, 2026.

Deming also added that if the University does not approve the added cost to be covered by financial aid, "we, the College, will cover from our own budget so the students who are on financial aid are not [disadvantaged]."

As Deming looked ahead regarding Harvard's place in the world, he believed that one of the biggest challenges was people's perception of the University. "I think the single biggest challenge facing Harvard is that too few people in this country, in the world, see themselves in what we do," he said. "We are at risk, not just from the Trump administration, but politically at risk in general, from both sides of the aisle, actually, because people think Harvard is for the elites, by the elites, and it doesn't serve the country."

Harvard has come under fire from Trump and Republicans for not having enough right-wing viewpoints. Trump, on multiple occasions, has called Harvard a "threat to democracy," and a "liberal mess." Critics also point to the fact that Harvard has a studied bias



toward accepting wealthy students.

Deming argued that this perception is more of a PR issue than a reflection of the school. "Very few people know that Harvard College is tuition free for families; for most families who earn \$200,000 or less, which is like close to 90% of American families, [a] very high share of our students are on financial aid," he said.

The public knows Harvard best for its academics, but Deming points out that the College is exemplary in areas outside of academics. "Very few people know that we have a moderate number of military veterans enrolled, that we have more Medal of Honor recipients than any other university other than the service academies, that we had 13 Olympic medals in the Paris Games, that we have twice as many Rhode Scholars," he shared.

As Harvard seeks to improve its public image, Deming aims to increase student buy-in for informing the public. "How can we talk about what we do?" he asked. "How can we actually be a place that provides opportunity for students, and it helps students go out and serve the public good, and talk about the great things you guys are doing in the world for [others] so that people can see?"

"My long-run goal, however long I last, is not just [making] Harvard a better place for [students] but also expanding in the eyes of the public. So we continue to do the great thing here—and that's not one initiative."

KALVIN FRANK '28 (KFRANK@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITES NEWS FOR THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JORDAN WASSERBERGER '27



The Psychology of Knowing: Professor Steven Pinker on Common Knowledge and the Power of Shared Awareness

At the IOP JFK Jr. Forum, Steven Pinker examines how shared understanding between individuals and institutions governs power, politics, and the search for truth.

BY NASHLA TURCIOS '28

On Nov. 12, Harvard Kennedy School's John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum hosted a conversation featuring Professors Steven Pinker and Jennifer Lerner. The event centered on Pinker's latest book, "When Everyone Knows That Everyone Knows: Common Knowledge and the Mysteries of Money, Power, and Everyday Life," which explores how shared awareness—mutual understanding of what others know—shapes cooperation, politics, and social behavior. Drawing from psychology, Pinker examined how this often-overlooked concept underpins everything from government legitimacy and social norms to academic freedom in an age of competing truths.

Lerner opened the discussion by questioning the meaning of "common knowledge." "In the book, common knowledge has a very specific definition. It's not something that everybody already knows. It has a more precise definition... Can you tell us what's special about common knowledge?"

For Pinker, common knowledge describes what allows people to coordinate their actions and understand one another's intentions. "Common knowledge, in its technical sense, refers to the state in which I know something, you know it, I know that you know it, you know that I know it, I know that you know that I know that you know it, and so on ad infinitum," he said.

"It can be generated when we have a sense that something is public, or conspicuous, or out there, or self-evident. When one of us sees something and another one sees it, and each sees the other one seeing it, that generates all of these levels implicitly."

In academic literature, the concept of common knowledge has long been discussed in fields such as game theory, economics, and philosophy. Philosopher David Lewis first formalized the idea in the 1960s to explain how shared awareness enables cooperation. Since Lewis, mathematician Robert Aumann expanded the concept in 1976 through his "Agreement Theorem," and later scholars applied it to fields ranging from political science to computer science models of distributed systems. Pinker's contribution lies in bringing this abstract concept into the realm of psychology and everyday human behavior.

"It is necessary for coordination—for being two people on the same page," he stated. "It can be the basis of power, from the dominance and deference relations in everyday life. One person defers to another because he knows that the other one will stand his ground, and the second one will stand his ground because he knows that the first one will defer."

He added that this logic applies to larger institutions as well. "The power of a government

hinges on common knowledge that they have power. Of course, [the] government has the guns, but not enough guns to intimidate every last member of the population."

"I quote a line from the movie 'Gandhi' in which the titular character says to a British colonial officer, 'In the end, you will leave, because there is simply no way that 150,000 Englishmen can control 350 million Indians if the Indians refuse to cooperate,'" he continued.

Pinker explained that regimes maintain authority by suppressing information. "The regime holds its power because it prevents common knowledge from being generated. [It] suppresses freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, so that people can't share the news that their disgruntlement is widely shared," he said.

Drawing from his earlier work on rationality, he noted that humans are prone to errors yet capable of great collective achievements. "Despite all of the flaws of human judgment and decision-making that Jen and I are both obsessed with... We've discovered DNA. We've gotten to the moon. We've reduced the toll from scourges like infectious diseases, war, and crime. If we're so cognitively flawed, how did we accomplish these things?"

Pinker attributes this to the power of institutions that guide human reasoning toward truth and progress. "Part of the answer is institutions," he explained. "We figure out hacks and workarounds where the flaws of some people can be used to expose the flaws of other people."

"That's why free speech, freedom of the press, [and] open debate are cardinal virtues in a democracy, as they ought to be in academia and in science. Someone proposes an idea; everyone gets to then say what's wrong with it. You expose it to potential falsification."

The connection between human imperfection and institutional design that Pinker alluded to has long preoccupied political thinkers. In the "Federalist Papers No. 51," James Madison famously wrote, "If men were angels, no government would be necessary." Like Madison, Pinker views democratic systems as protections against the limits of human reason: structures built to channel disagreement rather than suppress it. Yet as modern society confronts newfound pressures on free speech, the same mechanisms meant to correct human error can turn into tools of exclusion.

This tension between open inquiry and social policing set up the next part of the conversation.

Pinker then turned to what he calls the "canceling instinct" and described it as a deeply rooted psychological tendency to suppress ideas that threaten widely accepted norms. "I did want to take up the psychological question of why people feel the need to cancel in the first place," he said.

"Why is it contrary to what ought to be the ethos of academia—namely, only by expressing an idea can we find out whether it's any good? Why is there an urge that certain ideas not be expressed at all, leading to the various incidents of cancellations, censorship, punishment, mobbing, and shaming?"

He traced the answer back to common awareness and the role it plays in sustaining moral and social norms. "Our moral and social norms are held up by common knowledge—that something is a norm because everyone knows it's a norm," he explained. "Why don't we tell ethnic jokes the way people did



when I was a child, or jokes at the expense of gay people, or jokes about ditzy blondes, or all kinds of things that are almost unthinkable today?"

Pinker noted that because norms exist through common knowledge, they can unravel if they are publicly violated without consequence. "If we follow a norm, we also tend to be norm-policemen," he said. "We tend to be attentive to people breaching the norm, particularly in a public forum. And if they do, there is a need to prop up the norm by making it common knowledge that you can't get away with breaching it."

While this tendency helps uphold civility and respect, Pinker warned that in academia it can be destructive, as people often equate opinions with moral worth. "They're signs of tribal loyalty, of moral purity," he said. "These features are poisonous to the collective search for the truth, which is why we allow free speech even when it can be shocking or offensive."

Pinker's warning carries particular weight at Harvard, where debates over free expression and inclusion have intensified in recent years. In April 2023, more than 70 Harvard faculty members came together to form the Council on Academic Freedom, co-led by Pinker, with the stated goal of "encouraging the adoption and enforcement of policies that protect academic freedom."

Nonetheless, ideas once considered offensive can later become accepted truths. "Often empirical hypotheses or even normative beliefs that seem to be assaults on the moral sensibilities of a day can become unexceptionable in subsequent eras," Pinker said. "The idea that humans descended from apes was, in its time, considered to threaten the moral order. Fortunately, some people were willing to say it—they were denounced, they survived—and now we just don't think it's a major moral issue."

Pinker concluded on a reflective note: "We can't study everything. Should judgments of social harm enter into what we do or don't take up? This is different from repressing a particular opinion, but rather about what questions we should raise."

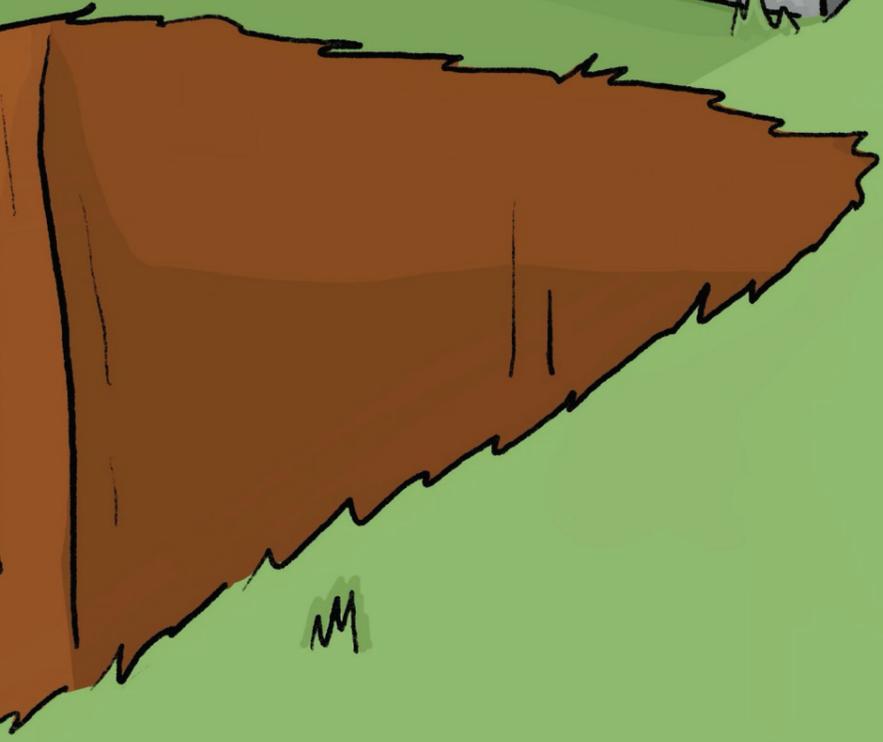
**NASHLA TURCIOS '28
(NASHLATURCIOS@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) WRITES NEWS FOR
THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.**

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WADDS



Setting the Scene for the Winning Team: Harvard Stadium or Yale Bowl?

The pros and cons of the long-awaited game day in Cambridge versus New Haven.

BY OLIVIA LUNSETH '28

Starting on Nov. 21, Harvard undergraduates will head to New Haven, CT, for the 141st annual football matchup between Harvard and Yale. As one of the oldest rivalries in American college sports, it has been dubbed “The Game.” Held this year at the Yale Bowl, the event typically draws thousands of students, alumni, and other fans. Because The Game alternates locations each athletic season, students inevitably compare the two settings, renewing discussion each year about how the experience differs when hosted at Harvard versus at Yale.

First played in 1875, The Game is one of the oldest rivalries in American college football and has remained at the center of collegiate athletics. Held in New Haven, the inaugural matchup marked the beginning of an annual tradition that long precedes the formal creation of the NCAA and the Ivy League itself.

“I’ve been to the game at both Harvard and Yale. Going to Yale feels more like an adventure—finding a place to stay, trying to pack light, getting away from campus,” Kristine Schwartz ’26 said to the *Independent*. “Leaving campus makes the whole weekend feel like an alternate reality, which just makes it super chaotic and also super fun.”

Though The Game is centered around football, there is much more to the tradition than just athletics. Social events at both universities define the weekend as much as touchdowns, with many being collaborations between Harvard and Yale student organizations or athletic teams. This year, students from both schools will be able to attend a combined tailgate on Saturday morning before kickoff, one of the most prominent social traditions of the weekend. The tailgate happens regardless of which school hosts, allowing students to connect before the game.

“I think it’ll be fun to have everyone come to Yale and explore campus and experience student life here... I love showing people around, and I think there are a ton of super fun traditions,” Olivia Tung, a sophomore at Yale, commented.

When the game is at Yale Bowl, Harvard students are guaranteed a ticket, with a total of 2,900 discounted student tickets offered at \$25. Once those sell out, students can purchase \$35 tickets through the Yale ticket website. This year marks the first year that Harvard students must pay for tickets to The Game. With the tickets being non-SEF eligible and 55% of Harvard students being on financial aid, the cost of these tickets plus travel expenses could be the deciding factor on whether some students attend or not.

For Yale undergraduates, securing a ticket is not as simple when Harvard hosts. “I think it was much more difficult last year, because Yale students were put on a lottery system and nowhere near everyone was able to get even one ticket,” Tung recalled. “I know a bunch of people who weren’t able to go last year due to space constraints at Harvard.”

Most students arrive at the host university

the night before, making housing another factor to consider. Although Harvard and Yale maintain “sister” house partnerships that offer visiting students free accommodations in the respective university’s dorms, the number of available spaces is limited and assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Many students ultimately end up booking hotel rooms, renting Airbnbs, or staying with friends in New Haven.

“I think it’s fun to see parts of daily life at different schools and compare, so it was cool to see where my friends take classes, live, and eat! This year, my suite is hosting a bunch of people—the five of us are hosting 9 in total,” Tung said.

“Try to plan where you’re going to stay, but don’t plan too much of the weekend beyond that—there’s so much to do and so many people to meet, so just let the weekend unfold,” Schwartz advised.

Exploring the host university and connecting with friends at each school can be a much-needed break from the rigorous schedules both Ivy League



institutions typically maintain. Students can fill their weekend with tailgates, reunions, and visits to local restaurants or campus landmarks. “For visiting students, I’d definitely recommend walking beyond Yale’s campus and exploring the area—the East Rock neighborhood is super nice, and has a bunch of great restaurants and cafes such as the Loop, or Elena’s on Orange,” Tung said.

Julia Downey ’27, a member of the Harvard sailing team, recalled spending time with the Yale sailing team in New Haven her freshman year. “We mixed with the Yale sailors, which we didn’t do at Harvard,” she shared. “We also mixed with Yale sailing the morning of, too, as a pregame to the tailgate at their house.”

Downey noted that the night before The Game in New Haven offered more activity and energy in comparison to Cambridge. “There was more stuff going on [that] Friday night. There weren’t that many solid plans people had [at Harvard] besides going into Boston.”

For students looking for off-campus activities the night before the big game this year, Toad’s Place in New Haven has become a familiar staple, in comparison to the Boston nightclubs that many undergraduates flock to when Harvard hosts.

However, Downey encouraged students to prepare in advance if they decide to go. “I didn’t have the best time at Toad’s,” she said, explaining the confusion that came from not buying a ticket early. “Either buy a ticket beforehand if you plan on going, or figure out how to use an ATM.”

After going out, safety is a factor students should keep in mind. Violent crime has fallen in both cities, but Cambridge remains significantly safer, with no murders since 2022. New Haven, despite a 46% drop in violent crime, has reported several homicides and shootings this year.

Downey recommended staying alert, especially late at night. “New Haven is way more sketchy than Cambridge,” she said. “Have a good head on your shoulders, because we had some sketchy moments walking back to our hotel freshman year on Friday night.”

When hosted in New Haven, after Friday’s social events, many Harvard undergraduates elect to take advantage of Yale’s different offerings on Saturday morning. With extra time before kickoff, some are hoping to make the most of being on a different campus. “Since the actual game takes place pretty far from Yale’s academic campus, I’m planning to try to walk around the campus a little bit before the game, since I didn’t really get to see it last time,” Schwartz said.

“I was lucky enough to get tickets in the lottery last year, and I liked being able to explore parts of Cambridge as well,” Tung added.

Downey recalled the breakfast she had at Yale on Saturday before the game her freshman year. “The food is better than Harvard by a long shot,” she admitted. While Yale’s dining hall food might be better, Harvard Square’s restaurants are hard to beat. “I was able to go to Felipe’s after for nachos. I’m kind of mourning not being able to do that,” Downey said.

At Harvard, the walk from the River Houses and the Yard to Harvard Stadium takes just a few minutes, with steady streams of students crossing the Charles. Yale’s setup is more spread out, as the Yale Bowl is located about 1.5 miles west of the main campus, near the border with West Haven. With the longer walk, it’s good to have a plan with your friends going into the game.

“Anticipate not having cell service the whole time you’re at the game—try not to lose your friends!” Schwartz advised.

With Harvard on a three-year losing streak, the College’s seniors have one last chance to witness their University take home a win, even if a victory happens on rival soil. Harvard’s team currently has six wins and zero losses, making all undergraduates and fans heading up to New Haven this year optimistic for an end-of-season 7-0 record.

**OLIVIA LUNSETH '28
(OLIVIALUNSETH@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) WRITES
NEWS FOR THE HARVARD
INDEPENDENT.**

**PHOTO COURTESY OF
JORDAN WASSERBERGER '27**

Thoughts from New Quincy: Leaving, Falling, Letting

On the slow, almost invisible ways we change.

BY LUKE WAGNER '26

By the time leaves begin to fall in the courtyard outside of New Quincy, the semester is already racing by—too fast for anyone to notice. They gather first in the tight corners of the brick path—wedged beneath bikes, pressed against the base of the lamppost, scattered along the entryway like an afterthought. In the mornings, I watch a maintenance worker blow them into soft, reluctant piles. By noon, they've scattered again, trampled flat by students rushing to class. No one looks down. The leaves pile up.

People like to talk about fall as if it's a mood—a curated palette of colors and comforts. The season gets reduced to a checklist of flannel, pumpkin spice, and tan Ugg boots. Harvard is especially good at this. The Yard turns into a postcard the moment the leaves change. Everyone stops to photograph Widener framed in orange, convinced the image reflects something about themselves. Campus tours drift down the paths, pointing out the foliage like it's a landmark, as if the trees do this for us each year out of habit.

The leaves aren't putting on a show. Early cold shuts down the veins that feed them, and the tree seals the spot where the stem connects to the branch. After that, the leaf has nothing left to run on. It dries, cracks, and breaks off. What looks graceful from far away is just a slow collapse.

A breeze drifts down Plympton, and a handful of leaves lift off the bricks, hover for a moment, and then settle again in places they weren't a second earlier. It isn't dramatic; it's the kind of small shift you notice only when you're completely still.

Sometimes, in that same courtyard, the light gets low enough that everything looks smoothed—the bricks, the windows, even the tangled piles of leaves. For a second, the whole scene flattens into a fall day turned into wallpaper: warm, earthy tones, unreal in their neatness. I always catch it a heartbeat too late, right as the wind starts to scream in my face, and I feel a small, instinctive pull toward the version of fall we're taught to want—the prettier, easier one.

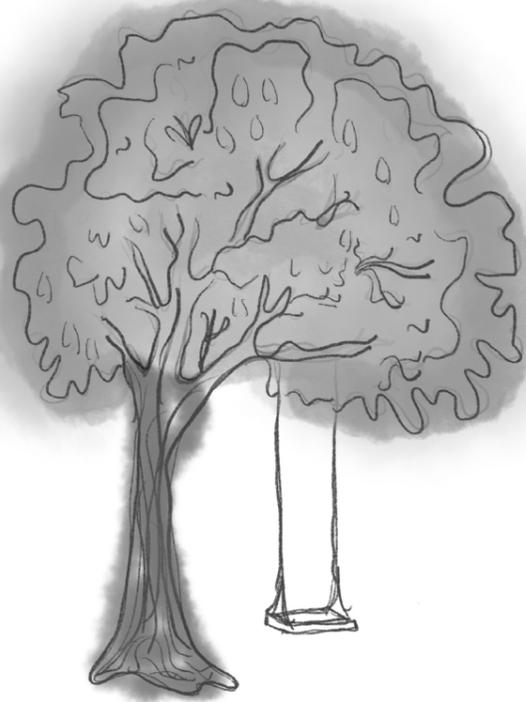
But that part never makes it into the aesthetic—because the aesthetic isn't built for honesty. It's built to reassure us. And reassurance is easier to sell than truth. It's easier to believe fall is about cozy sweaters and warm light than to acknowledge that it's a season of losing things, small deaths scattered

across the surface of the leaves.

Every October, campus leans into this performance, and every October, I fall for it a little less. The leaves seem to remember something we've forgotten: change isn't supposed to be pretty. It's meant to be bearable.

...

During the first week of October, I crossed the courtyard and stepped through a cluster of leaves that had settled into a single muted gold. They were damp from an overnight drizzle, softened to the point where the season's brightness had already left them. When I pressed down, they yielded without protest. No crisp edges, no sharp break—



only a dense, tired collapse, as if the work of holding themselves together had finally ceased. Had I lifted one, it would have come apart in my hands.

I realized then how rarely I actually look at the leaves. Mostly, I encounter them the way I encounter my own memories: accidentally, and only when I'm too distracted to confront them. There was a time when I noticed them more clearly: walking to school in October, kicking through big dry piles that gathered along the curb at my bus stop. The smell of cold dirt rose when my feet dragged across it.

When you're younger, you're closer to the ground; the world announces itself. Now, I only ever mistakenly register the leaves: a bright red one stuck to my shoe; a brown one caught in my hood; a yellow one plastered to the sidewalk after rain, its shape blurred and soft, already beginning to rot.

Sometimes I walk across Quincy's brick yard, slip slightly on a wet leaf, and catch myself at the last moment.

Fall is supposed to make us nostalgic, but nostalgia always feels like a trick to me. It makes us remember things cleaner, warmer, and simpler than they ever really felt or had the right to be. Leaves fit that version of memory—they look delicate and beautiful only from a distance, only when we are not thinking about what it took for them to get that way. But that isn't what fall is asking of us.

I think the leaves remember the things we try not to.

...

There's a particular tree by the Quincy entrance on Plympton Street that always changes early, a streak of red appearing along the top branches while everything else is still green. It catches the late-afternoon sun in a way that looks almost intentional, like a warning flare. I walked past it every day for a week before realizing the change wasn't sudden at all. It had been happening slowly, almost imperceptibly, leaf by leaf.

That's how the semester feels, too. You don't understand you're exhausted until the morning you sleep past your alarm. You don't realize the loneliness gathering around you until a weekend arrives and the silence makes itself known. You don't see how you're changing until someone says you seem different. The shift is slow, almost invisible, and then one day you look up and the whole tree has changed.

We talk about "falling behind" in college—the assignments stacking up, the opportunities slipping past—but the truth is most of us aren't falling behind; we're shedding. Letting go of the version of ourselves we tried to be in September. Letting go of the routines we swore we'd maintain. Letting go of the expectations that quietly rotted at the edges weeks ago.

We spend the semester pretending we are the people who arrive in September, even as the evidence quietly shifts around us. Our routines thin out. The intentions we swore we'd keep start to loosen. The version of ourselves we imagined at the beginning of the year becomes harder to inhabit. Most of the time, the change is small enough that we don't name it. But it's there, accumulating, the way a single branch begins to fade before the rest of the tree follows.

But because we're students here, we pretend the process is temporary. We pretend it's reversible. That we can become the earlier version of ourselves if we try hard enough. Trees don't make that mistake.

Once a leaf falls, it doesn't climb back up.

...

One afternoon, walking back from the Smith Center, I walked along Plympton Street and saw a fresh pile of leaves blown into a corner beside the curb: bright yellow, crisp red, fading green. They were arranged almost like a gradient—accidental but exact. A breeze lifted the top layer and scattered a few into the road. Cars rolled over them without slowing.

I thought about how easily things disappear when no one chooses to keep them.

The next few days, the pile kept shrinking. Rain pressed the top layer into the pavement, and passing cars dragged the rest into the gutter. By the end of the week, only a thin smear of color was left. It was the same spot, but it didn't look like the same place.

Memory works like this, too—unreliable, uneven, reorganized by gusts we don't control. Some moments stick like wet leaves to a windshield; others vanish on contact. I don't choose what I remember from the semester any more than I choose which leaves cling to my shoes after walking through the courtyard.

Maybe that's why fall feels heavy even when the air is crisp. It confronts us with how little we hold onto by choice.

...

There is a simple honesty in the way leaves fall that I find myself needing. A tree does not bargain with the cold or ask for an easier season. When the sap pulls back and the stem weakens, the leaf lets go. It does not cling to what it was in September or hope to be green again in November. It obeys the quiet law it was given.

We are less straightforward. We hold on to habits that no longer help us, to versions of ourselves that no longer fit, to people who belonged to another time in our lives. We persuade ourselves that keeping everything as it is is a kind of virtue. We call it loyalty, resilience, and responsibility. Mostly, it is fear.

The leaves are not heroic, and they are not sentimental. They do not imagine that staying on the branch a few weeks longer will change the winter. When the cost of holding on is greater than the strength left in the stem,

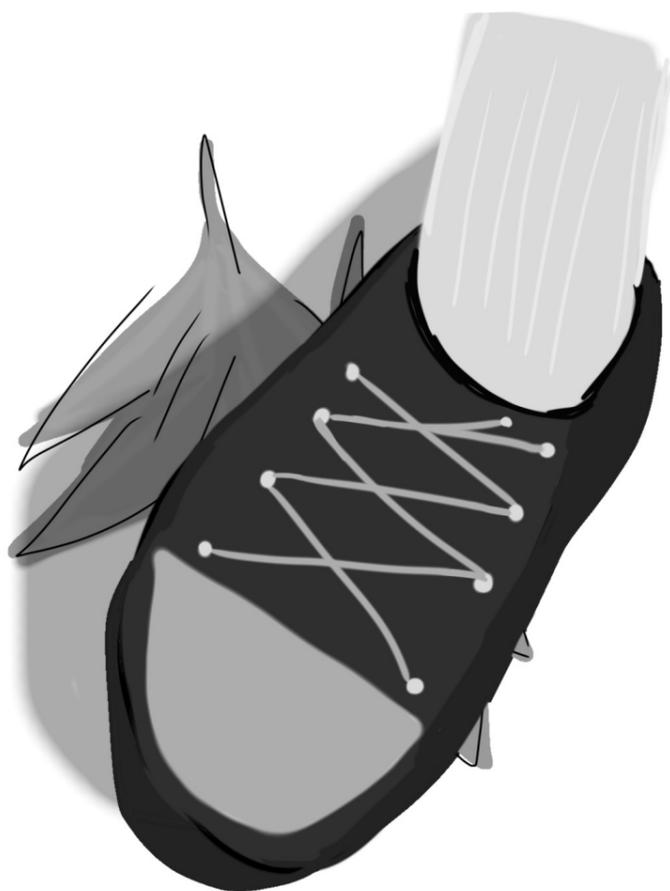
they fall. There is no drama in it, no speech, no audience. They simply stop pretending that they can stay.

Watching them, I understand how much of my own life is held together not by necessity but by reluctance to face what would happen if I let certain things go.

Earlier this week, I reached into the pocket of a hoodie I hadn't worn since last fall and pulled out a faded receipt. The ink had almost disappeared. I couldn't remember the day it came from—what I bought, who I was with, why I kept it. It was a small, harmless object, but it felt like something left over from a person I was already no longer trying to be.

Fall makes it harder to lie about this. It shows, almost too plainly, what is still alive and what is only being carried out of habit.

...



By mid-November, the leaves in the courtyard are no longer pretty. They're smashed into the brick, ground into residue by hundreds of footsteps. Rain turns them into a slick, dark paste. The aesthetic phase ends quickly, replaced by something closer to decay.

This is the part of fall people ignore, the part no one photographs. But this is where the real work happens: the breakdown, the softening, the quiet reordering. The leaves decompose into the soil they'll feed on in spring. They become the substance of next year's growth.

I try to remember that when I'm sitting at my desk late at night, staring at my calendar and feeling like everything is outpacing me. Not all breakdown is collapse. Sometimes it's preparation. Sometimes what feels like losing is really clearing space.

Maybe the reason we romanticize fall is because it lets us practice losing things safely.

The trees release what they can no longer keep. We watch from below and pretend we're participating when really we're just observing. But the truth is, the leaves aren't teaching us how to let go. They're showing us how not to pretend.

...

On the walk to class this morning, I passed the same tree that started turning early. Most of the branches were bare. Only a few leaves hung on—thin, curled at the edges, impossibly stubborn. I paused and looked at one of them, trembling in the wind, caught between staying and falling.

I understood the feeling.

We're all somewhere in that in-between space, trying to decide what still serves us and what we're only holding onto because it feels wrong to drop it. College doesn't teach you that part—how to recognize the weight you don't need anymore. How to shed gracefully, or at least honestly.

By winter, the trees will stand completely stripped. No performance, no pretension, no distraction. Just the bare shape of what they are.

The leaves will remember the version of the tree that existed before the letting go. The tree will remember what it takes to survive after.

Somewhere between the two, I'm trying to learn the difference. Sometimes letting go is just the quiet realization that what you're clinging to has already slipped away.

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

**GRAPHICS BY AMELIE LIMA
'27 AND MIA STEWART '29**

The Game: A Storied Legacy of Pranking

A fun history of the second-oldest rivalry in college football.

BY KALVIN FRANK '28

Last year, I got my first chance to see “The Game.” There are really only two football rivalries that share this name. Growing up in Michigan, I had often watched Ohio State face Michigan, but this was my first time experiencing the storied Harvard-Yale matchup. The atmosphere was unlike any other Harvard athletics game I had attended; the stands were packed, alumni came back for the occasion, and it felt as though the entire student body was present. I knew this rivalry had a long and storied history, spanning generations of students, but I did not realize how legendary the pranks and antics between the two schools have been over its 150 years.

Pranking is often a way that rivals build up hype for their matches. Stealing something treasured from the other student body, making the rivals look dumb, and getting under the opponent’s skin are all ways rivals often build up hype and excitement for the upcoming match-ups. A perfect example of this is Ohio State’s tradition of crossing out all M’s on OSU’s campus and social media in the weeks leading up to their clash.

Earlier this year, I was scrolling through Instagram reels when a video appeared on my feed about the most infamous prank in the history of “The Game.” In 2004, a group of Yale students disguised as Harvard students and handed out crimson-and-white paper meant to form a stadium-wide “Go Harvard” when held up. In reality, the clever Yalies arranged the Harvard section to spell out “WE SUCK.” (What’s less often mentioned is that Harvard blew out Yale, 35-3.) While this is the most well-known prank, a rivalry that has played out for over 150 years unsurprisingly has a long history of pranking on both sides. Here are some of the greatest hits.

Handsome Dan II Prank:

On March 15, 1934, the New York Times reported that Yale’s bulldog mascot, Handsome Dan II, had been kidnapped in the early hours of the morning. It was later revealed that two Radcliffe students, aided by the *Harvard Lampoon*, were responsible. The Times noted that the disappearance coincided with the night the swimmers were in New Haven for a meet. One Harvard swimmer, also a *Lampoon* board member, had been seen eyeing Dan shortly before he went missing. Not long after, the *Lampoon* circulated the “Bulldog Issue” with a photo of Handsome Dan licking the foot of the John Harvard Statue on the cover.

By March 24, 1934, the Times reported that the *Lampoon* had turned Handsome Dan over to the Yard police, and he was returned to his (probably less safe) home in New Haven. It was said that a first-year had stolen Dan, and of course, out of the kindness of their hearts, “The *Lampoon* had gained possession of him and was returning him in an effort to better the relations between Harvard and Yale.” I’ll leave it to the reader to decide how the dog ended up in the hands of the *Lampoon*.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Pranks:

Keeping with the Institute’s

technological reputation, MIT has found itself involved in quite a few pranks on “The Game.” Although MIT isn’t part of the Ivy League or directly involved in the Harvard-Yale rivalry, MIT still finds ways to join in on the excitement and fun. With MIT located just 2 miles from Harvard—and the two schools constantly vying for the top spot in national rankings—it’s safe to say they’ve become academic rivals. MIT, which doesn’t really have football rivalries, finds itself pulling pranks, or as they call them, “Hacks,” on its academic opponent by utilizing the grand stage that is the Harvard-Yale game.

Their first notable attempt, in 1948, was ambitious but ultimately a failure. MIT students planted wires and a detonating fuse under the field designed to detonate and spell “M I T” during “The Game.” Stadium workers



discovered the device before the match, and police apprehended the student responsible for triggering it after finding batteries in his pocket. Eight students were suspended (and a ninth later joined them on probation).

It was almost forty years later when MIT students experienced success in 1982 after carefully studying stadium security patterns. They rigged a weather balloon, marked with “MIT,” to a vacuum-cleaner motor hidden beneath the field. During “The Game,” the mechanism launched the balloon upward, where it expanded to about six feet in diameter before loudly exploding.

While not as notorious as the weather balloon, MIT students fired a rocket-propelled banner over a Harvard goalpost in 1990. Boston Globe writer Joe Concannon quipped, “Perhaps the best way to explain Harvard’s frustration in yesterday’s 107th game against Yale in Harvard Stadium is to say that the students of MIT made it into the end zone before the Crimson offense.” In 2006, MIT pranksters struck again, altering the Veritas shield on the scoreboard to read HU-GE-EGO.

Despite having no stake in the rivalry itself, MIT has certainly left a mark on the history of “The Game.”

The JFK Situation:

For the 1961 game, the *Harvard Crimson* distributed parody issues of the Yale Daily News announcing that President John F. Kennedy ’40 would attend. Despite no official announcement, many on campus believed the rumor, given his Harvard roots. Before kickoff, the president of the *Harvard Crimson*, Robert

Ellis Smith ’62, marched onto the field in a Kennedy mask, accompanied by students dressed as Secret Service agents and another in a ROTC uniform posing as a military adviser. The *Crimson* even coordinated with the Harvard Band to play “Hail to the Chief.” Many fans were truly convinced.

After a few minutes on the field, Smith took off his JFK mask and ran up to the press box, where he was the alumni magazine correspondent. Even after the spectacle, many correspondents in the press box still believed that JFK had been present and were upset that they hadn’t been informed in advance of “The Game.” The following day, the *Crimson* ran an article explaining the prank and revealing that JFK had actually not been present.

Band Pranks:

For the 1962 game, the Harvard University Marching Band decided to honor the rivalry by offering New Haven residents an early-morning parade. The only problem: it was 3 a.m. After a wave of noise complaints, the band spent the night in jail before the football game.

In 1992, the Yale Precision Marching Band began performing its customary block Y formation when the Harvard Band countered by forming an X, meant to “X out” the Y. But the Yalies caught on quickly, reconfiguring into an H instead, leaving Harvard’s band inadvertently crossing out its very own logo.

These are only a handful of the most famous pranks in the history of “The Game.” Undoubtedly, hundreds more have gone unreported. While pranking isn’t as common as it was in the past century, “The Game” still brings together Harvard and Yale students with humor, rivalry, and tradition.

In today’s world of heightened security and constant connectivity—where nearly everyone carries a camera and a phone—the chances of pulling off elaborate, deceiving pranks have greatly diminished. Research also shows that Gen Z exhibits less risk-taking behavior and tends to operate with a greater safety mentality than in years past. Stories from past generations suggest that our student body appears to be more controlled and less adventurous than those who came before.

Oscar Wilde once wrote, “Life is much too serious to be taken seriously,” a sentiment that perfectly captures the spirit of prank culture woven throughout the history of “The Game”—and, hopefully, one that continues to inspire many more in the future.

KALVIN FRANK '28 (KFRANK@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WANTS TO BRING BACK PRANKING.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JORDAN WASSERBERGER '27

ARTS

Harvard-Yale Bingo Card

The *Independent's* bingo card for a successful Harvard-Yale.

BY SOPHIE DAUER '27

Devoured a
game-day
hot dog

Lost your friends
and then found
them again 45
seconds later

Hung out with
an alumni who
clearly forgot
they graduated

Waited 30
minutes for a
porta-potty at
the tailgate

Tried to
pretend you
weren't
freezing

Arrived at Yale
Friday night
ready to sleep
in a bush

Wandered
around
looking for a
singular bar
of cell service

Accidentally
ended up in the
Yale student
section

Rushed
the field

Wore that one
Harvard
sweater with
the H (you
know the one)

Didn't actually
end up making
it to the
game...

Had no idea
what the final
score was

Missed the
first bus to
Yale

Found the New
Haven equivalent
of Felipe's

Tried a New
Haven slice of
pizza and still
thought Joe's
was better

Stuck it
out in the
rain

waka[®]
COFFEE & TEA

Join the instant revolution!

Try our easy to make smooth
Regular, Vanilla, and Dirty Chai



Less Waste & Mess



More Eco-friendly



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SOPHIE DAUER '27
(SOPHIEDAUER@
COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU)
WRITES ARTS FOR THE
INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY EMMA CRAGO
'28

Experiencing Live Theater With “The Pirates of the Penzance”

The Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert and Sullivan Players bring laughter and love to Harvard.

BY ELLIE GUO '29

The Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert and Sullivan Players, a theater troupe dedicated to performing comic operas solely from the Gilbert and Sullivan canon, recently took the stage to perform “The Pirates of Penzance.” Though opera may seem like an outdated form of entertainment, I quickly realized that laughter transcends time. In the lobby of the historic Agassiz Theater, I watched audience members of all ages and backgrounds gather to enjoy a musical about pirates—a character archetype now more commonly associated with children.

“The Pirates of the Penzance” originally premiered in 1879 and has since become one of Gilbert and Sullivan’s most famous shows.

Sung in an operatic style, it follows the story of Frederic (Henry Pahlow '28), who is a member of the Pirates of the Penzance, a band of all-orphan pirates, as he navigates his new life on land. “It’s a show for everyone. I think I’ve been saying that a lot, but it can be for kids. It can be for so many of our patrons, [who] have been here for 50 years, or even more, and then, obviously, we’re doing it at Harvard,” director Alicia Chu '28 told the *Harvard Independent*.

The opera opens with a celebration of Frederic’s 21st birthday, pivotally marking the end of his apprenticeship with the pirates. His 47-year-old nursemaid, Ruth (Eliza Zangerl '26), subsequently asks him to marry her, but he rejects her due to their age difference. Eventually returning to land, Frederic meets the six beautiful daughters of the Major General Stanley (Weston Fox '28) and falls in love with his youngest daughter, Mabel (Violet Paris '29).

Turmoil soon arises when the Pirate King (Benjamin Pixley '29) and Ruth reveal that Frederic was born on Feb. 29 during a leap year—Frederic must continue to serve his pirate apprenticeship, since he technically only had five birthdays. After their romance has just begun, Frederic tearfully asks Mabel to wait for him until his 21st birthday decades later in 1940, and returns to the pirates. Meanwhile, a group of policemen set out to arrest the band of pirates for the crimes they committed at sea.

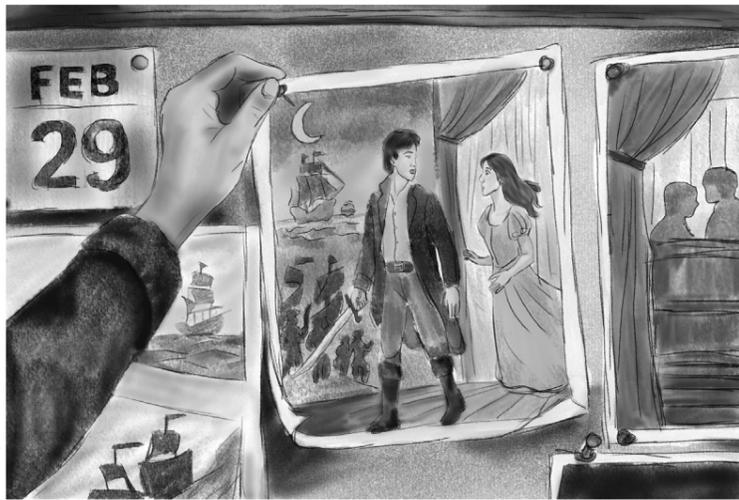
In their final confrontation, the incompetent policemen demand that the pirates surrender in Queen Victoria’s name as a last resort. The pirates reveal they are actually deeply loyal to Queen Victoria, and Ruth tells everyone they were once noblemen. The Major General agrees to marry all of his daughters to the ex-pirates, and Frederic and Mabel are reunited.

The “Pirates of Penzance” explores the tension between tradition and change, as Frederic finds himself torn between the familiar camaraderie of his pirate companions and the promise of a new beginning with Mabel. Fittingly, the show’s subtitle is “The Slave of Duty,” in reference to the conflicting obligations Frederic faces once the technicality forces him back to his pirate apprenticeship. This tension reaches its climax in the second act of the show. “Stay, Frederic, Stay” is a heart-wrenching duet in which Mabel begs Frederic not to leave her, to which he responds, “I must obey.”

These serious themes are interwoven

with comedy throughout the opera, effectively executed by the talented cast. For example, the Sergeant of Police (Ryan Zhou '29) and policeman (Jason Urgiles Vasquez '28) act as comic relief immediately after “Stay, Frederic, Stay” to maintain the light-hearted nature of the show. As Mabel paces the floor, lamenting Frederic’s departure, the two policemen shuffle awkwardly from left to right to follow her.

The production also adds unique touches to the Major General’s character. Chu highlights a scene between the Major General and the Pirate King, played by Fox and Pixley, where the Major General and Pirate King cannot understand each other due to the British



pronunciation of “orphan” and “often.”

In that scene, the Major General and Pirate King cannot understand each other due to the British pronunciation of “orphan” and “often.” They go back and forth, asking if they mean “orphan, a person with no parents,” or “often, frequently.” The Major General resorts to sitting on the edge of the stage and asking a member of the orchestra what he thinks the Pirate King is saying. At the climax of their argument, the Major General reaches out and touches the Pirate King’s nose with his pointer finger, saying “Boop!”

“It’s such a good scene, and they truly make it their own every single night,” Chu said. These details set the HRG&SP’s production apart from simply a reenactment of a 19th-century play—they make each show their own.

Frederic’s initial meeting with the six women is another example of the show’s personalized humor. Since he has never seen any woman except Ruth, Frederic is astonished by the beauty of the Major General’s young daughters, particularly Mabel. In an impressive vocal performance, Paris sings “Poor Wand’ring One” with stereotypically operatic scales and embellishments at the top of the soprano range. Awestruck, Frederic staggers erratically to each note, as if losing physical control of his body at Mabel’s beauty.

However, these characters would not be as bold and vibrant if not for the efforts of the crew. Jack Damon '28 directed music, taking the audience into the 19th century with jubilant pirate tunes. Sam Park '29 and Kimberly Baptiste, who graduated from UMass Boston in 2023, brought personality into each character with unique costumes, hair, and makeup. As well as directing, Chu choreographed every dance, filling the stage with life.

When we first meet the daughters in Act I, the costumes and choreography come together in an exciting way. In “Climbing Over Rocky Mountain,” their rosy cheeks and colorful skirts express their youth and beauty. They dance with their white lace parasols, spinning and twirling them in choreographed movements that communicate their sisterly bond. Mabel’s costume further stands out, consistent with her character as the love interest and female lead. Her dress is pink, rather than the muted tones of her sisters’ skirts, and covered in ribbons.

Moreover, the orchestra and cast collaborated in the Act II finale. The pirates swung their swords perfectly in time with the music, contributing to the show’s playfulness and theatricality. The pirates also moved their fight into the audience for part of the scene, adding to the exhilaration.

The show ends with a celebration of the marriages between the six pairs of ex-pirates and daughters. The couples pair up to dance, and the full cast is on stage. The women’s skirts fill out the space as they twirl, bringing energy and vitality to the stage. In a final comedic moment, the Sergeant of Police is left without a dance partner. The policeman abandons his partner to dance with the Sergeant, leaving one of the sisters exasperated.

“I hope [the show] just makes people laugh and have a good time and be able to escape the real world for a few hours and just immerse themselves in the communal experience of experiencing live theater,” Chu said.

This production marked the first show since the organization took a hiatus of almost three years due to COVID-19, as HRG&SP presidents Damon and Nina Jasanoff '28 mentioned in the pre-show announcement. Chu said she felt “the pressure of feeling like I am now a little bit responsible for the revival of this organization.” Despite the challenges of returning from an unexpected hiatus, the show was delightfully hilarious and charming.

“The Pirates of the Penzance” is, quite simply, pure fun. In the era of streaming services, we often miss out on the joy of laughing with other people. But in the comfort of the Agassiz Theater, I found myself sharing a delightful moment with complete strangers. Fittingly, the show heavily involves themes of found family and obligation to loved ones—“The Pirates of the Penzance” was the perfect show to come back to after a hiatus, as it illustrates the purpose of theater in bringing the community together with laughter.

The Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert and Sullivan Players performed “The Pirates of the Penzance” at the Agassiz Theater from Nov. 13-16.

ELLIE GUO '29 (EGUO@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) OFTEN, AS IN FREQUENTLY, ATTENDS LIVE THEATER PERFORMANCES.

GRAPHIC BY TRISCHELLE AFIHENE '27

SPORTS

A House Divided

A Delaware football family's experience with one son playing for Harvard and one for Yale.

BY MEGAN LEGAULT '28

By this point, it's safe to assume that football fans, athletes, and even the most non-athletic regular person (NARP) Swifties alike are at a minimum familiar with the NFL's widely recognized Kelce brothers. With their podcast, numerous brand deals, and limelight engagements, the pair has steadily become an iconic example of one of the most entertaining dynamics in sports: the sibling rivalry.

As it turns out, the Ivy League has some Kelce—although McCaffrey may be the better comparison—brothers of our own. The Tattersall family from Wilmington, Delaware, will be a house divided for the historic Harvard-Yale game, with Robby, junior tight end at Yale, and Harvard's very own freshman wide receiver Ryan '29 wearing crimson.

To say that the Tattersall brothers were exposed to the sport early would be the understatement of a century. "Robby was actually in my stomach at a game," said Shannon Tattersall, Robby and Ryan's mom in an interview with the *Harvard Independent*. "My husband used to coach college, so that was his first introduction to a play-off game."

Before their collegiate careers in the Ivy League conference, the Tattersall brothers were situated at the helm of a three-generation legacy in Delaware high school football. Grandfather, Bob Tattersall, was the head coach of the brothers' high school football team at Wilmington Friends School for an impressive 54 years, starting in 1968 until he passed on the role to his son—the brother's father, Rob Tattersall—in 2022, when Ryan was a sophomore. Bob currently holds the state record for the most football wins in state history at 283. Over time, Tattersall practically became a household name in Delaware. "It's a credit to my in-laws and to who they are. So many people, alumni, come back to watch, and they come back to be a part of my in-laws' family, like an extended family," said Mrs. Tattersall.

Overcome with pride over her sons' accomplishments, Mrs. Tattersall shared wholesome anecdotes and family photos from their football-filled childhood with the *Harvard Independent*. "The kids grew up playing on Friends fields. They grew up being managers. I mean, it has been like a playground for them," Mrs. Tattersall said. "When Ryan was a first grader, all he wanted to be for Halloween was a Wilmington Friends football player." That year, not only did his aspirations of being a Friends football player for Halloween come true, but Ryan also wore a captain jersey—the same jersey he would one day wear during his high school career.

"Football is not just a sport for us, but it's a huge family and bonding thing that ties everyone together," said Ryan. For his grandfather's last season coaching at Friends in 2022, the family accomplished what felt like a cinematic ending of an era: winning the state championship with grandfather Bob and father Rob coaching and Robby and

Ryan playing on the field.

Now graduated and playing for their collegiate teams, football remains an important part of their family tradition. Last week, having just left the field himself, Robby texted the family group chat "great catch Ryan" from the Yale locker room after Ryan made an 18-yard catch, putting Kieran Corr '28 in position to make the electric game-winning field goal in the last five seconds. Aside from Mr. and Mrs. Tattersall's weekly travels to New England instead of their local field, the brothers' father, Rob, has had to transition from the role of coach to dad on the sidelines.



"I think the hardest thing for him is something that he looked forward to every day, as any parent would, is to be able to watch your child grow in a sport or something that you love," said Mrs. Tattersall. The other notable change: the boys are now competing against each other for the first time.

"When we were younger, we used to fight all the time. Every single thing would turn into an argument, altercation, something like that," said Ryan. For them, sports meant not only playing for the same team, but also for the same well-known last name and the pressures associated—something that ultimately made the pair closer as they got older. "As we got to high school and we ended up playing sports together, we ended up becoming super close," said Ryan. "He's my best friend."

As Ryan's collegiate career approached, his brother being at Yale was naturally factored into the decision-making process. "Yale, obviously, was a school that I looked at," said Ryan. But, having been labeled "Robby's younger brother" for the majority of his athletic career, Ryan's decision to attend a different college, as he puts it, allowed him to "cliché-wise blaze my own path or something like that."

Competing in a collegiate rivalry ironically parallels the brothers' childhood. Growing up they were die-hard fans of rival schools—Ryan supporting the Michigan Wolverines, Robby the Ohio State Buckeyes. "We went to the game...and we switched sides halfway through," said Mrs. Tattersall. "They totally switched colors," she said ironically. "Ryan bled blue and gold, and Robby was obviously the red and the silver."

Although they had largely outgrown the intense rivalry of their early childhood by the time Ryan faced his college decision, the chance to compete at rival schools was a tempting offer. Outside of the obvious appeal attached to a Harvard education, the Harvard-Yale rivalry and the opportunity to compete against his older brother helped cement Ryan's choice to play for the *Crimson*. "If I'm going to an Ivy League school, might as well be the best at football and academics, but also, might as well just have that rivalry, the Harvard-Yale game," said Ryan. "That's the atmosphere that everyone kind of dreams of."

As one might imagine, anticipation for the Harvard-Yale game has been brewing ever since Ryan committed to his brother's rival school. With the big game approaching this weekend, over 19 members of the Tattersall family are heading to New Haven, juggling how to best support both of their players competing on the Yale Bowl field.

Since both brothers are offensive players, the cheering part seems relatively straightforward. "My parents aren't picking a team that they want to win or anything like that," said Ryan. "It's more whoever has the ball is what they're going to be rooting for." Logistically and fashionably, however, things become a little more complicated. As of now, the family intends to flip sides like they once did at the Michigan-Ohio State game and sport mixed gear—all in the sake of fairness. "They're gonna be mix-matched with red and blue," joked Ryan. Mrs. Tattersall will even be sporting a split jersey, one similar to that worn by Donna Kelce when both her sons competed in the Super Bowl.

The Tattersall brothers' story writes itself. Between their legendary high school career and family's generational love of the sport, watching them face off this weekend is certainly something to look forward to. As you squeeze into crowded shuttles or pay for overpriced Amtrak tickets to New Haven this weekend, keep an eye out for Tattersall nameplates on No. 22 for the *Crimson* and No. 17 for the *Bulldogs*. And, of course, you can't forget Mrs. Tattersall's split jersey in the stands.

MEGAN LEGAULT '28 (MLEGAULT@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS, IN THE WISE WORDS OF NO.22 GOING TO "WEAR CRIMSON, BECAUSE HARVARD'S GOING TO WIN."

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHANNON TATTERSHALL

Harvard-Yale: A Preview of the 150th Anniversary of The Game

How the past three years and this season's men's football records set the stage for the upcoming matchup in New Haven.

BY KATHERINE CHUNG '29

When Harvard meets Yale on the football field this weekend, it is more than just a season closer. Known simply as “The Game,” the annual matchup is one of the oldest and most widely recognized rivalries in American collegiate sports.

The *Harvard Crimson* and Yale Bulldogs first faced off in 1862 when their men's crew teams raced on Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire. From there, the rivalry expanded to baseball (1868), track (1891), lacrosse (1882), hockey (1900), and more. The original football matchup occurred in 1875 and eventually became the core rivalry of the Ivy League, defined by traditions and a community of fans each year.

Past Three Seasons

Yale has taken the last three meetings, regardless where the two teams stood in the Ivy League standings. In both 2023 and 2024, Harvard finished higher in the conference, yet Yale walked away with the win. This history acknowledges what the majority already knows: The Game rarely follows the script.

2022: Yale 19, Harvard 14

Yale stepped onto the 50-yard line for The Game at Harvard in 2022 with strong momentum, holding a 7-2 overall record and sitting at the top of the Ivy League standings. Harvard, entering with a 6-3 record and fourth in the conference, kept the game close—tying it up by the beginning of the second quarter—but ultimately lost.

2023: Yale 23, Harvard 18

The 2023 matchup flipped pregame expectations. Harvard arrived in New Haven as the top team in the Ivy League with an 8-1 record, while second-ranked Yale stood at 6-3. Despite being the underdogs, Yale secured a 23-18 win—leading to Harvard, Yale, and Dartmouth sharing the Ivy League title.

2024: Yale 34, Harvard 29

In 2024, Harvard again arrived at The Game with a stronger Ivy League record. At

8-1 overall, they were the top contenders in comparison to Yale's 6-3 record. But much to the Crimson fans' dismay, the pattern from the previous season repeated. Yale found crucial scoring opportunities late in the game and emerged with a 34-29 win at Harvard Stadium.

This Season

This year, Harvard is undefeated at 9-0 overall and 6-0 in the Ivy League as of last Saturday, Nov. 15. With this record, Harvard



clinched at least a share of the Ivy League title. Yale, currently 7-2 overall and 5-1 in the Ivy League, has lost so far to Lehigh and Dartmouth. Harvard's 31-10 win over Dartmouth, compared to Yale's narrow 17-16 loss, will hopefully be a healthy predictor of The Game's outcome.

What to Expect on Game Day

Well before kickoff, parking areas and fields outside the Yale Bowl transform into early morning gathering spots, where undergraduates, families, and fans alike set up tents, speakers, and grills. Tailgates become shared spaces for both Harvard and Yale affiliates to connect, making them one of the most memorable annual traditions, central to shaping the atmosphere of The Game.

As kickoff nears, marching bands, choirs, and cheerleaders take the field. Their spirited, sometimes humorous, performances are part of the longstanding traditions that define the rivalry. For many attendees, these performances encourage team camaraderie and set the tone before the first play of The Game.

Throughout the afternoon, the competitive spirit between Harvard and Yale students and alumni continues to unfold: fight songs echoing across sections, handmade signs with the most diabolical slogans, and long-standing inside jokes that reappear from year to year. Student pranks, from cheeky banners and harmless mischief to the occasional coordinated stunt, play a big role in the day, underscoring how deeply the rivalry shapes school pride. The competitiveness of the students shows just how alive the collegiate spirit is.

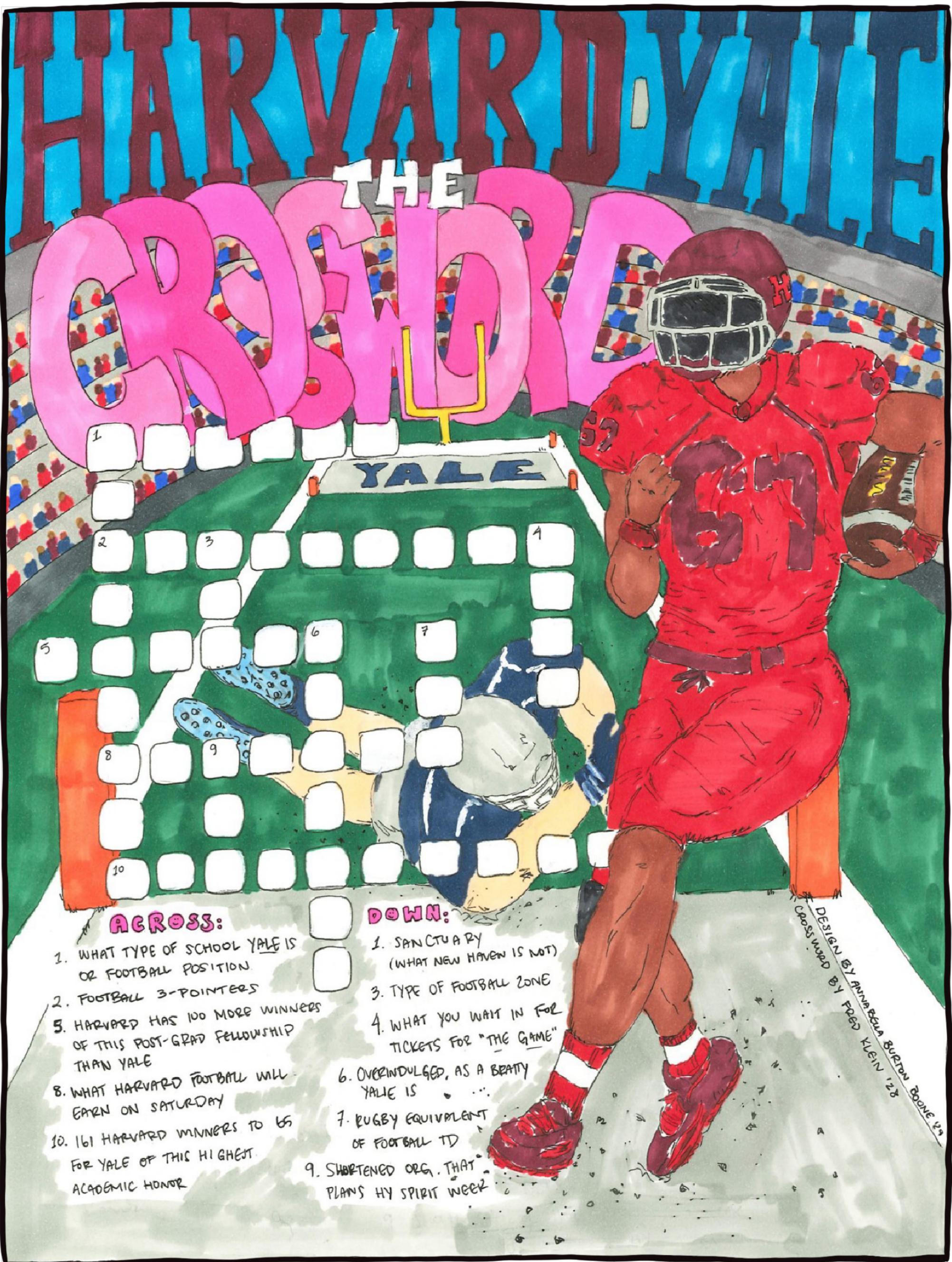
The timing of the matchup, typically just before Thanksgiving, also contributes to the mood. The Game becomes a break from routine and an unofficial marker of the semester's final stretch, one of the last big moments before students head home for the holiday. With that upcoming departure from school, school spirit feels especially strong.

After the final whistle, the end of The Game does not immediately dissolve the energy of the day. People linger, take photos, and make their way to post-game gatherings. Whether the result is celebration or disappointment, for many, attending The Game is less about the outcome and more about participating in a tradition that spans generations.

KATHERINE CHUNG '29
([KATHERINECHUNG@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU](mailto:katherinechung@college.harvard.edu))
WRITES SPORTS FOR THE
INDEPENDENT AND BELIEVES
HARVARD WILL TAKE HOME
THE W.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JORDAN
WASSERBERGER '27

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



ACROSS:

- 1. WHAT TYPE OF SCHOOL YALE IS OR FOOTBALL POSITION
- 2. FOOTBALL 3-POINTERS
- 5. HARVARD HAS 100 MORE WINNERS OF THIS POST-GRAD FELLOWSHIP THAN YALE
- 8. WHAT HARVARD FOOTBALL WILL EARN ON SATURDAY
- 10. 161 HARVARD WINNERS TO 65 FOR YALE OF THIS HIGHEST ACADEMIC HONOR

DOWN:

- 1. SANCTUARY (WHAT NEW HAVEN IS NOT)
- 3. TYPE OF FOOTBALL ZONE
- 4. WHAT YOU WAIT IN FOR TICKETS FOR "THE GAME"
- 6. OVERINDULGED, AS A BEASTY YALIE IS
- 7. RUGBY EQUIVALENT OF FOOTBALL TD
- 9. SHORTENED ORG. THAT PLANS HY SPIRIT WEEK

DESIGN BY ANNABELLA BURTON BOONE '23
 CROSSWORD BY FRED KLEIN '28

Latie Merriam *Kayla Charaoui*