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HARVARD

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INDEPENDENT

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As Harvard College's weekly undergraduate newsmagazine, 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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We belong to no one but ourselves.

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Letter From the Editors: Roots and Changes

Who and what we are as a publication.

By **RANIA JONES '27 & MIA TAVARES '27**

Dear Readers,

Whether this is your first or fiftieth read, we're so glad you have decided to join us. To our newcomers: welcome. If you are curious, let us satiate you.

The Indy's story begins much earlier than our first issue. The first newspapers emerged in 1605, over a hundred years after the invention of the printing press. Eighty-five years later, in Colonial America, Benjamin Harris published America's first multi-page newspaper, "Publick Occurrences Both Forreign and Domestick," in Boston. Newspapers quickly became divisive political tools in the late 18th century. In 1833, steam-driven printing presses enabled publishers like Benjamin Day of "The Sun" to sell papers for just one penny, bringing journalism and print news to a broader American population.

"THE INDY'S STORY BEGINS MUCH EARLIER THAN OUR FIRST ISSUE."

Then comes us. Over a century later, in 1969, amid campus protests during the Vietnam War, Harvard undergraduates founded the "Harvard Independent," believing the institution's publication landscape demanded a fresh alternative to the "Harvard Crimson." The Indy was conceived with a fierce, genuine promise: to publish bipartisan, independent coverage to counter an openly biased press.

Each fall, campus predictably changes, but the Indy's core has remained unchanged for 57 years. We have existed as a reliable, objective, and extraordinary counterpoint to prevailing opinions. The stories we tell belong to everyone.

Still, we are not entirely without iteration and improvement each cycle.

We didn't always have our iconic, recognizably colorful hand-designed covers—and we definitely used to have more ads. The Sex Issue hasn't always

come in the fall, and the Weed Issue used to set the administration more ablaze.

During the dot-com surge, like most other print publications, the Indy moved from print to a website and a weekly email newsletter.

But we didn't stop there.

At times, our issues have had dozens of photos. In other semesters, they've contained only illustrations. Alongside our breaking news and opinionated forum pieces, we've published full photo spreads, poetic short stories, satire, sports gambling tips, comics, and even music playlists.

In just the past five years, we've added video journalism, podcasts, posters, and clothing to our portfolio. Still, amidst all these changes, we stick to our roots when it counts.

Throughout our constant evolution, the "Harvard Independent" has always had something for everyone, because we welcome everyone. We were founded as a student-focused alternative to biased press, and we remain that countercultural beacon. The Indy beats with the pulse of the Harvard student body. We Belong to No One but Ourselves, and so we are for ourselves. The Indy is for journalists, artists, deal-makers, engineers, loud people, quiet people, virgins, smokers, people who get scared of the dark, knife-throwers, creatives of all types, and anyone who looks good in purple.

We don't subscribe to the status quo (although we do hope you'll subscribe to us!), even as we report on it.

When you open an Indy issue, we hope you feel as though you've been invited into our home: momentarily privy to our private conversations (and disagreements), the news we project onto our televisions, the topics we find relevant, the people we care to hear from, the jokes we find funny, and the sketches we choose to bold and color in.

This semester, we'll write to you about everything. We'll talk about new technology, international relations, Halloween (and every other fall or winter holiday), and Harvard athletics. We will sell you posters of Harvard Houses to hang up in your bedroom, advertise Harvard-Yale hoodies to wear once and then gift to your younger siblings, and give

you little candy pouches in our door drops. You'll see our interviews on Instagram, and our covers virtually everywhere, on campus and off.

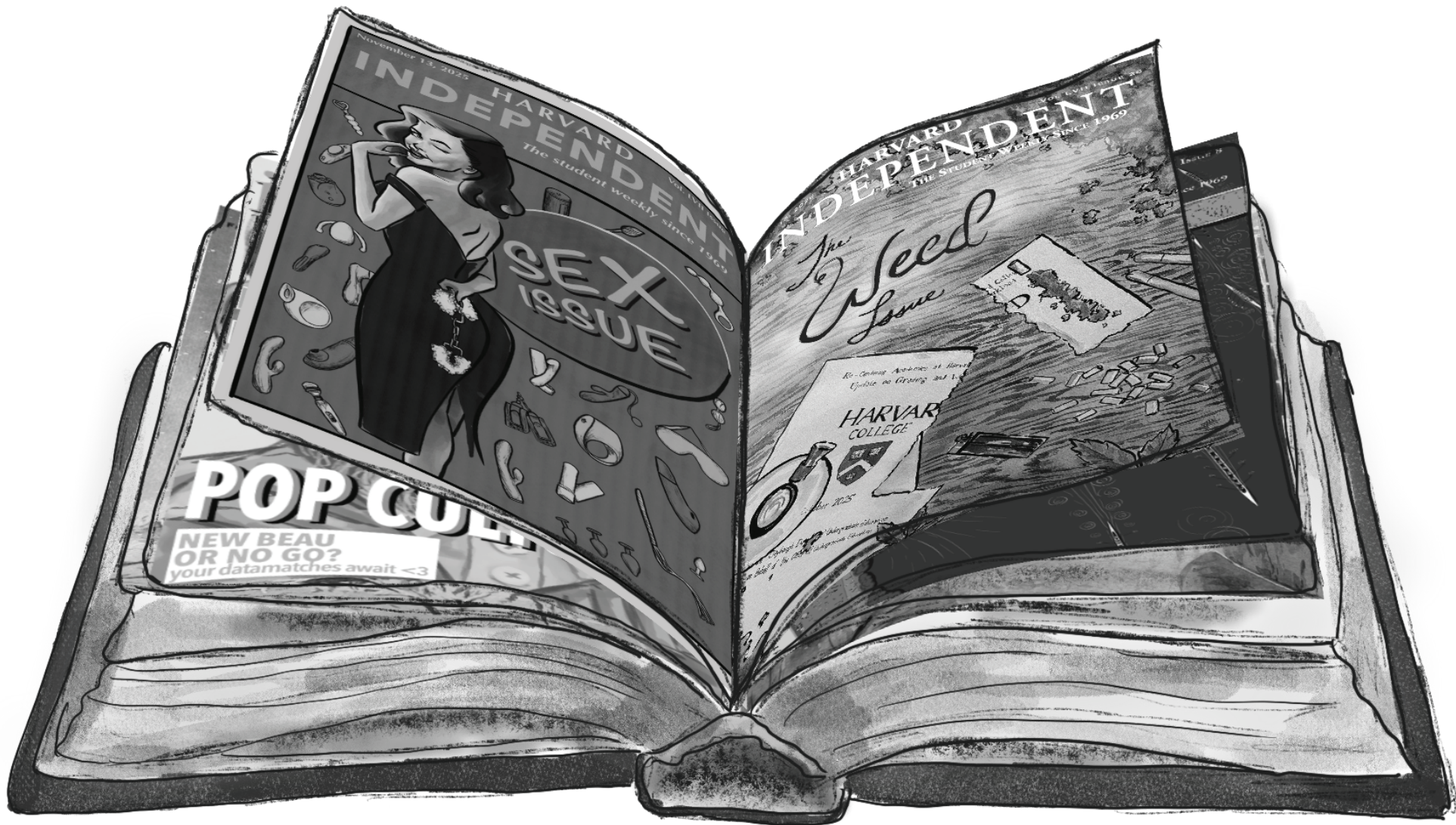
"THE INDY BEATS WITH THE PULSE OF THE HARVARD STUDENT BODY. WE BELONG TO NO ONE BUT OURSELVES, AND SO WE ARE FOR OURSELVES."

As President and Editor-in-Chief, we eat, sleep, and breathe the "Harvard Independent" not just because we love it, but because we believe in it. We hope you'll find us lovable enough to stick around for a little taste. If you are a student, consider comping. If you are a parent, sign up for our newsletter. If you are an alum, subscribe. If you are a reader with no affiliation at all, share your favorite article or cover with your group chat. And if you are a writer, submit a story for us to publish.

As we say, "If we belong to no one, how can we tell anyone that they don't belong with us?"

RANIA JONES '27 (RJONES@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) AND MIA TAVARES '27 (MIATAVARES@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) CAN'T WAIT TO SHEPHERD ANOTHER SEMESTER OF INDY LEGACY, LOVE, AND IMPACT.

GRAPHIC BY TRISCHELLE AFIHENE '27



NEWS

Updates on Antisemitism Litigation Against Harvard

Harvard University continues its ongoing legal battle with the U.S. Department of Justice.

By SEYI AMOSUN '29

Harvard is no stranger to pushback from the federal government; in the most recent installment of its legal disputes, the university made significant headway. In a memorandum issued Aug. 13, U.S. District Court Judge Richard G. Stearns granted Harvard's motion to dismiss the antisemitism case brought by the U.S. Justice Department in March. The DOJ has appealed the dismissal.

First filed on March 20, 2026, the case cited several complaints regarding acts of antisemitism on Harvard's campus following the Oct. 7, 2023 attacks. Specifically, the DOJ alleged in its initial court filing that Jewish and Israeli students were denied access to educational facilities by demonstrators. "[They] violated content-neutral time, place, and manner restrictions, and coupled their chants, signage, and other means of disruption with intimidating actions and slurs," DOJ attorneys wrote.

Though the filing conceded that peaceful protest is not inherently a violation of Title VI, it argued that Harvard's "deliberate indifference to this harassment," demonstrated by a lack of campus policy enforcement, provided sufficient grounds for the suit. This case followed a March 10 letter from the Department of Education that cited six out of eight Ivy League institutions for antisemitic discrimination and harassment—excluding Dartmouth and the University of Pennsylvania.

"Harvard has taken substantive, proactive steps to address the root causes of antisemitism and actively enforces anti-harassment and anti-discrimination rules and policies on campus," Harvard wrote in a March 20 statement on the lawsuit. The statement said that training for members of the campus community, as well as civil-dialogue programming, demonstrates "the very opposite of deliberate indifference."

The U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts's dismissal cited several instances that identified deficiencies in the government's arguments. "The Amended Complaint focuses almost entirely on incidents that took place during the 2023-2024 school year. Only three incidents are alleged to have occurred after this period, all of which took place nearly a full year later ... in March of 2025," Stearns wrote in his four-page ruling. According to the district court judge, the characterization of the incidents as "isolated and episodic" did not align with the government's argument of institutionalized Title VI violations at Harvard, and thus supported the dismissal of the case.

Judge Stearns also found that the government misconstrued the controlling statute, which allows the government to revoke funding for Title VI violations. This ruling further supports Harvard's separate lawsuit challenging the Trump Administration's revocation of nearly \$2.2 billion in federal funds.

Whistleblower Report

The ruling is also accompanied by a second development associated with the Justice Department. Haley Van Erem, a former DOJ attorney who served from 2015 to 2025 and received several honors during that time, including three Distinguished Service Awards, two Special Commendations, and one Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General Cooperative Achievement award.

On Aug. 17, she accused DOJ leadership of egregious misconduct relating to antisemitism litigation against three Ivy League schools, Harvard included. The report, made public on Aug. 18 by Democratic Rep. Jamie Raskin, noted the detailed history of deviations from DOJ policy. Significantly, officials at the DOJ and the Department of Health and Human Services "departed from longstanding investigative practices designed to ensure due process, accuracy and legal compliance," Van Erem's lawyers said. More than one case had little or no factual basis to support opening an investigation.

For Harvard's case specifically, Van Erem's lawyers said that the freezes on research funding, as well as settlement proposals that would change the curriculum, endowment management and governance "were being pursued before any completed investigation had established Title VI violations and without a demonstrated connection between the proposed remedies and substantiated findings of unlawful discrimination."

The letter also mentioned Brown University and Columbia University, though the alleged DOJ violations took different forms in each case.

Other Litigation

In January 2025, Harvard reached a separate but important settlement in a case brought by the Brandeis Center and Jewish Americans for Fairness in Education over alleged Title VI violations. As part of the settlement, the university agreed to several terms, including explicit protections for Jewish and Israeli identities under its Non-Discrimination and Anti-Bullying Policies.

Harvard also agreed to establish an official partnership with a university in Israel, adopt the IHRA working definition of antisemitism, and hire a designated individual to consult on antisemitism complaints.

Importantly, the press release stated: "As part of this settlement with Brandeis Center and JAFE, which includes monetary terms, Harvard has not admitted to any wrongdoing or liability."

The university faces other challenges from federal litigation, including the government's actions affecting international students with F-1 visa status and its lawsuit seeking race-related admissions documents, both of which remain pending in court.

Beyond Harvard, other peer institutions have also faced legal challenges from the government. Several schools, including Brown, the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia, and Yale, have reached agreements or are pursuing them with the Justice Department.

Harvard also has received support in its legal battles. Yale backed Harvard amid funding freezes, and the president of the Association of American Universities published the "Statement of Barbara R. Snyder, AAU President, on Harvard's Refusal to Surrender Its Independence or Relinquish its Constitutional Rights." She expressly supported Harvard's choice to safeguard intellectual inquiry from political influence.

"Today I find myself deeply grateful to Harvard University, one of our founding members, for having the courage to live up to its values," she said. "[President Garber] is absolutely right that all of us have a stake in safeguarding the freedom of thought and inquiry," Snyder stated.

Harvard's Actions Against Antisemitism

The university has responded to claims of antisemitism in several sweeping actions in recent years. On Nov. 9, 2023, nearly one month after the escalation of regional tensions following the Oct. 7, 2023 attacks, former Harvard University President Claudine Gay issued a statement titled "Combating Antisemitism."

"Antisemitism has no place at Harvard," she said. "While confronting any form of hatred is daunting, the challenges we face tackling antisemitism are made all the more so by its pernicious nature and deep historical roots. But we are committed to doing the hard work to address this scourge."

In January 2024, President Alan M. Garber announced two presidential task forces focused primarily on combating antisemitism and Islamophobia on campus. Garber echoed sentiments from President Gay, stating, "Harvard University is resolved in our commitment to combating antisemitism and anti-Israeli bias."

"The University has taken and continues to take substantive actions to advance this commitment through both University-wide and school-specific initiatives aligned with preliminary and final recommendations put forward by the Presidential Task Force guided by Harvard's commitment to open inquiry and academic freedom."

Preliminary recommendations from the task force urged the university to take several steps, including clarifying Harvard's values; acting against discrimination, bullying, harassment, and hate; improving disciplinary processes; implementing education and training; fostering constructive dialogue; and supporting Jewish life on campus.

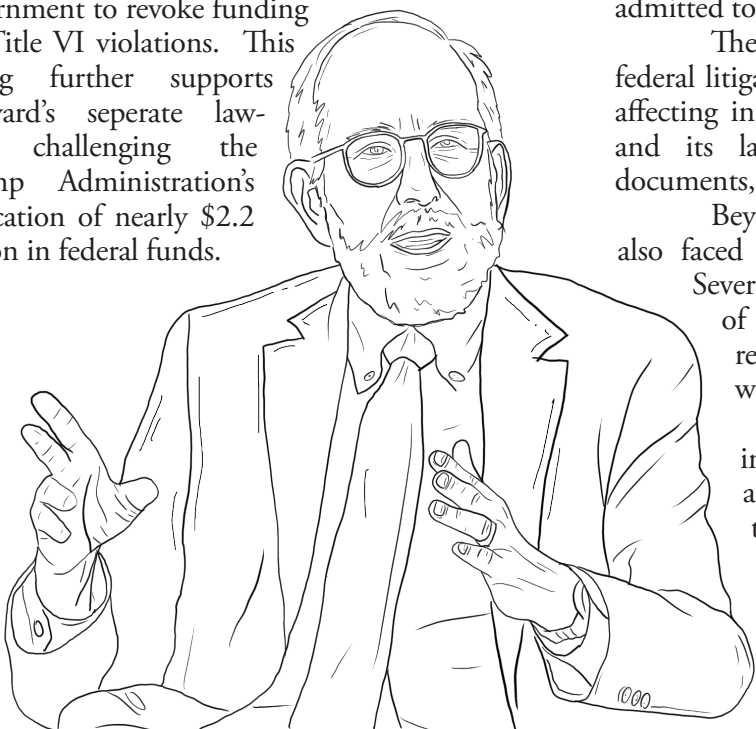
The Presidential Task Force on Combating Anti-Muslim, Anti-Arab, and Anti-Palestinian Bias has also investigated aspects of campus life that uniquely affect students of these identities. Anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian rhetoric have deeply affected students on campus. The task force reached several similar conclusions, recommending improvements in campus safety and university-wide recognition, support for a climate of freedom of expression and pluralism among affinity groups, and audits of academic resources related to Islam, the Middle East, and Palestine studies.

As tensions surrounding Israel and the Middle East remain on Harvard's campus, the university has called for respect, civil dialogue, and transparency in promoting "an academic culture where diverse perspectives can be respectfully explored, challenged, and developed."

Though the case was dismissed, the DOJ's appeal may still affect Harvard research funding and other legal cases.

SEYI AMOSUN '29 (SAMOSUN@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITES NEWS FOR THE "HARVARD INDEPENDENT."

GRAPHIC BY MIRANDA CHAO HWANG '28



Harvard Morgue Scandal: From Stolen Remains to a \$53 Million Settlement

Cedric Lodge, who worked as the manager of the Harvard Medical School morgue, stole donors’ human remains to sell for profit.

By **ELLA RICKETTS '28**

From 2018 through Aug. 16, 2023, morgue manager Cedric Lodge participated in the sale and interstate transfer of cadavers stolen from the Harvard Medical School (HMS). During that period, Lodge removed human remains, including organs, brains, skin, hands, faces, dissected heads, and other body parts, after they had been used for research purposes but before they were cremated according to their donors’ wishes under the anatomical gift donation agreement. HMS provides donors with four different options for how they wish their bodies to be disposed of.

“MACLEAN
ALLEGEDLY STORED
AND SOLD SOME OF
THESE REMAINS AT
HER STORE, KAT’S
CREEPY CREATIONS,
IN SALEM,
MASSACHUSETTS.”

According to court documents, Lodge transported the cadavers to his home in Goffstown, New Hampshire, where he and his wife sold the remains to co-conspirators Katrina Maclean, Joshua Taylor, and others. They communicated by cell phone and social media. On other occasions, Taylor and Maclean would use Lodge’s building access to directly enter the morgue to evaluate the body parts prior to transporting them to Pennsylvania.

In October 2020, Maclean agreed to purchase two dissected faces from Lodge for \$600, and they coordinated to meet at the morgue around 1 p.m. Maclean allegedly stored and sold some of these remains at her store, Kat’s Creepy Creations, in Salem, Massachusetts. The store’s official Instagram account describes the business as specializing in “creepy dolls, oddities and bone art.”

The Lodges also used the United States Postal Service to sell the cadavers in other parts of the country, occasionally shipping human remains to Taylor and others within their trafficking network out of state for a sizable profit. Over three years, Taylor sent 39 electronic payments to the Lodges totaling nearly \$37,500 for stolen body parts. One payment, sent on May 19, 2019, included the memo “head number 7” and another, sent on Nov. 20, 2020, contained the message “braiiiiiiins.”

Remains sometimes traveled back and forth between the states to be “modified” for sale. In one such instance, Maclean sent human skin to Jeremy Pauley in Pennsylvania to be tanned into leather.

He would then ship the tanned skin back to Maclean to be resold.

The FBI, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the East Pennsboro Township Police Department, and the Cumberland County District Attorney’s Office investigated the case before filing charges in June 2023 against the Lodges, Maclean, and Taylor. All four defendants were charged with counts of conspiracy and interstate transportation of stolen property exceeding \$5,000. Pauley was indicted for his role in the HMS case as well as for a separate case involving the

tracking of cadavers in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Following his indictment, the dean of HMS released an official statement condemning Lodge. “We are appalled to learn that something so disturbing could happen on our campus — a community dedicated to healing and serving others,” the letter read. “An important and meaningful part of how all first-year medical and dental students learn human anatomy is through the dissection and examination of

“CEDRIC LODGE
AND HIS WIFE, DENISE
LODGE, PLEADED GUILTY
AND WERE SENTENCED ON
DEC. 16, 2025, BY CHIEF
U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE
MATTHEW W. BRANN.”

donor cadavers.” Cedric Lodge and his wife, Denise Lodge, pleaded guilty and were sentenced on Dec. 16, 2025, by Chief U.S. District Judge Matthew W. Brann.

Denise was sentenced to 12 months and one day in prison for her role in the case, while Cedric received eight years.

During the criminal proceedings, donors’ families filed lawsuits against Harvard for negligence and failure to protect human remains. The Massachusetts Superior Court dismissed the claims, finding that Harvard was protected by the “good faith” immunity provision of the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act.

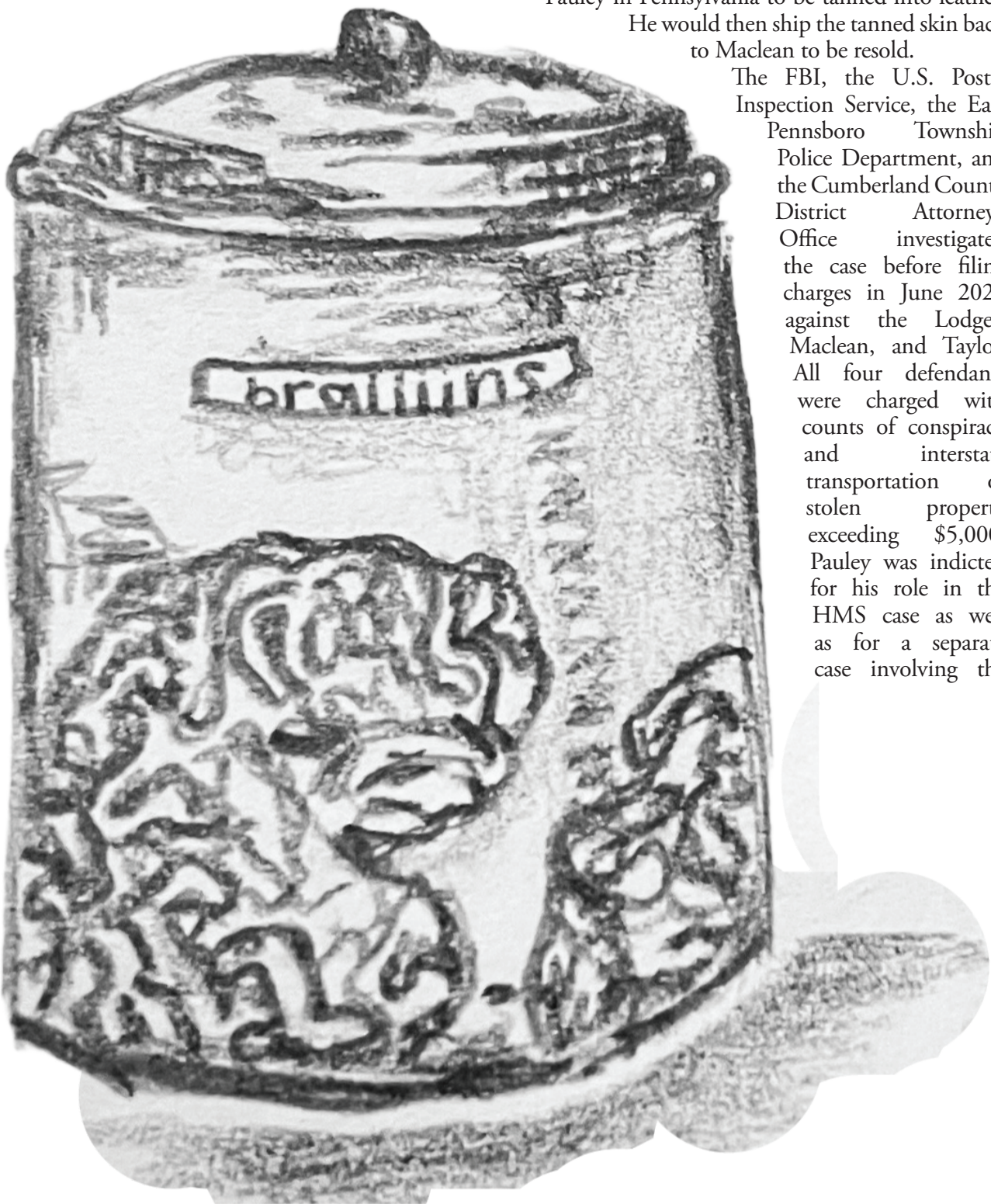
However, the state’s highest court later overturned that decision on appeal, allowing the case to move forward. The ruling ultimately led the university to agree to a \$53 million settlement related to Lodge’s actions. The school will appoint a third-party administrator to distribute funds to the families.

HMS also reiterated its condemnation of Lodge’s actions and provided families with a summary of improvements to their Anatomical Gift Program. The university reaffirmed its commitments under the settlement, creating an annual financial aid scholarship for medical students beginning in the 2027-28 academic year to honor the anatomical donors.

In a formal letter co-signed by deans George Daley and Bernard Chang on Aug. 17, 2026, the University affirmed its plans regarding the settlement. “These events do not reflect the reverence we hold for the altruistic individuals who selflessly donate their bodies to our Anatomical Gift Program (AGP) to provide essential educational opportunities to medical and dental students, practicing surgeons, and allied health professionals,” the statement read. “While we cannot rewrite the past events that brought us here, our students give us profound hope in the future.”

ELLA RICKETTS '28 (ERICKETTS@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) USED TO THINK THE RUMORS ABOUT SALEM WERE JUST A MYTH.

GRAPHIC BY SARALUNA SASSINE '29



FORUM

Hold My Hand, I'm Afraid of the Dark

We're all just kids at the end of the day.

By NOAH BASDEN '29

I often think about last words and what I would say when my time comes. Would mine be poignant, like William James's: "These, then, are my last words to you. Be not afraid of life.

Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact"—or ironic, like John Adams's in 1826: "Thomas Jefferson survives?"

Death has a funny way of not waiting for a person to come up with last words before knocking at the door. However, if given the choice and the fortune of living to old age, I'd choose simply this: "Hold my hand, I'm afraid of the dark.

There is a scene in Florian Zeller's "The Father," in which Anthony, a man riddled with dementia, breaks down, repeating the same line over and over between tears and gasps for air. "I want my mommy. I want my mommy," he cries. The scene is

**"HOWEVER, IF GIVEN
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OLD AGE, I'D CHOOSE
SIMPLY THIS: 'HOLD MY
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DARK.'"**

impactful not only in its visuals—an old man afraid of the world around him—but also in its language. Like a child, abandoned by his friends in the playground, he cries out for a mother he knows will not come. This moment reminds us that the older person you may see confused in a grocery store, or staring listlessly out a bus window, was once someone's child. As they age, they become childlike again, only this time without a parent.

I believe life has two distinct periods when we are implicitly vulnerable. The first is infancy; the second is the end of our lives. There is an image in my mind, at least, of older people as somewhat infinite buckets of wisdom from which we can learn and build our own lives. While I find this true, it is also an

essential truth that as we age, we regress in many ways back to the conditions of infancy. As many people age, they progressively lose the ability to live and thrive completely independently. Nurses and doctors often adopt the role of the parent, providing a sense of safety, security, and a shoulder to lean on—or, in many cases, to cry on — as they move on to the next and final stages of their lives.

I have no shame in saying that, as a child, I was afraid of the dark. Maybe it was more a fear of the unknown, but in my young mind, it manifested as a fear of the dark. I swore up and down to my parents that there were creepy-crawlies hiding beneath my bed that would nip at my toes and keep me up at night. Eventually, my parents stopped coming every night because they knew my gimmick, but the fear was real.

The unknown has always caused trepidation because it is unknown—a tautological statement, perhaps, but one that reflects an essential aspect of the human condition. Our fear of what we don't know does not stem from the knowledge that it is inherently dangerous, but from its conflict with our innate desire for control. Various pillars of society, religion among them, can be understood as attempts to impose meaning on what was once, and in some cases remains, unknowable. The fear of the unknown, I think, is not merely a personal anxiety of mine but an intrinsic feature of the human experience.

Death is the ultimate unknown, a frontier that man has yet to conquer. "Death comes for us all; even at our birth—even at our birth, death does but stand aside a little. And every day he looks towards us and muses somewhat to himself whether that day or the next he will draw nigh. It is the law of nature, and the will of God." This line from Robert Bolt's 1960 play "A Man for All Seasons" speaks beautifully to the finality of life and the inevitability of death. Though death may be the "law of nature, and the will of God," it remains a frightening concept at any age—especially in older age, when it is no longer an afterthought but a constant reminder. We have constructed heavens above our heads and hells beneath our feet, which serve as the best examples of humanity's refusal to accept oblivion as an option.

Whether in philosophy or religion, we have long sought reassurance that death is not final but a brief intermission on the way to better things.

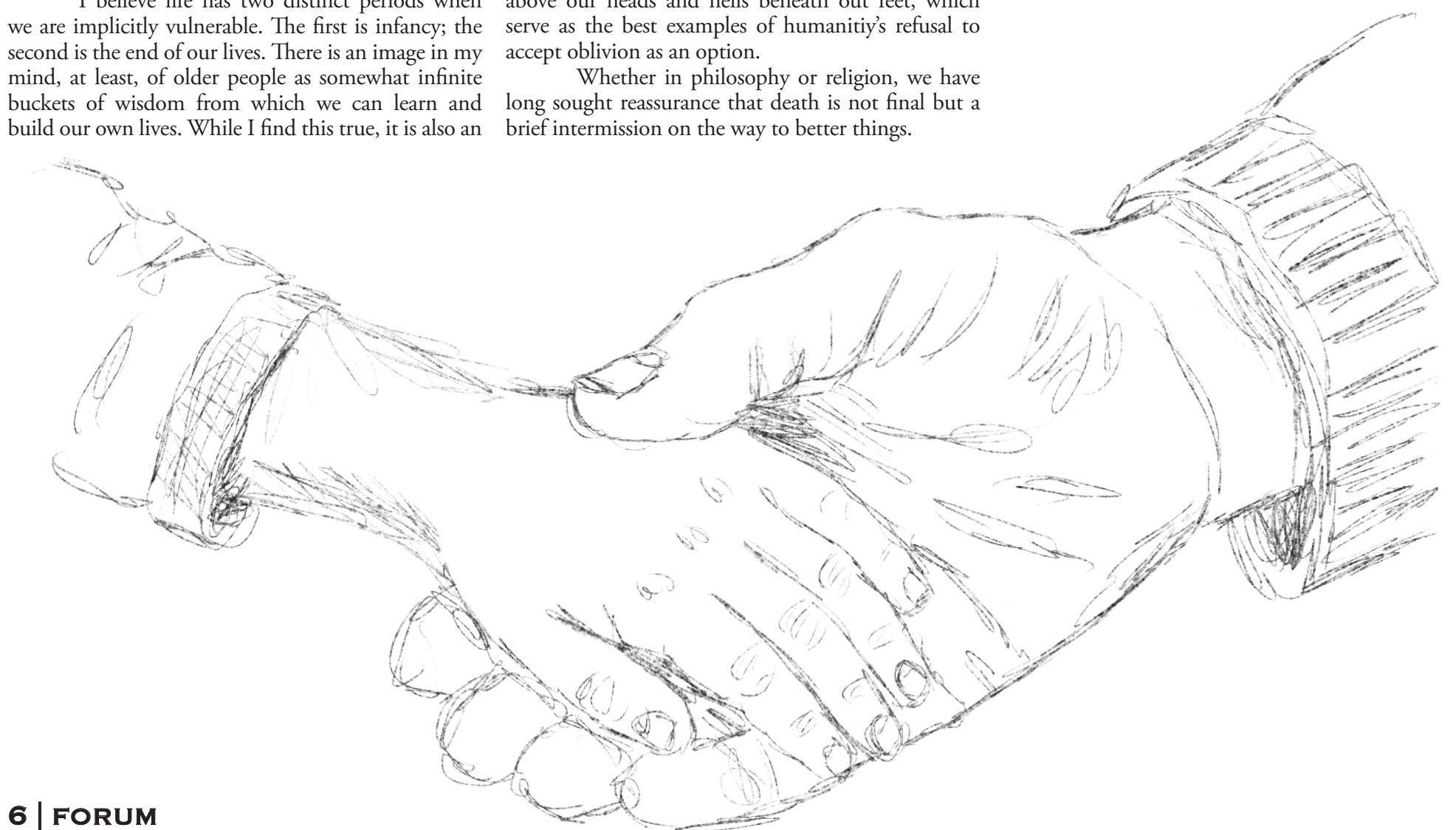
John Donne, the famed late 16th-century poet, speaks directly to death in "Holy Sonnet 10," writing: "Death, be not proud, though some have called thee / Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so." Donne's confidence, rooted in his unwavering Christian faith, is admirable, though it rests on an

**"WE HAVE
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OBLIVION AS AN OPTION."**

unprovable promise. We do not know what lies in the infinite beyond; we think, we believe, but ultimately, we cannot be certain until we meet it ourselves. I believe in God, and I believe in heaven, yet faith has never completely silenced the fear of the unknown. And so, if death grants me the opportunity to have last words in my old age, they will neither be ironic nor brave but simply human: "Hold my hand, I'm afraid of the dark."

**NOAH BASDEN '29 (NHBASDEN@
COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) DID NOT
HAVE A NIGHT LIGHT UNTIL AN
EMBARRASSINGLY OLD AGE—WHOEVER
TOLD YOU THAT IS LYING.**

GRAPHIC BY TRISCHELLE AFIHENE '27



BerryLINE

The hours stolen by queue culture.

By MIA WILCOX '28

In 1989, the year my sister was born, my dad bought our family home in rural Appalachia in upstate New York, where he now lives. Standing in an overgrown forest, the 200-year-old house is an artifact in itself, largely untouched by modern renovation.

The whole village mirrors this timelessness—my dad's favorite example is Baird's Tavern, a pit stop on George Washington's march across the Northeast where he purchased a round of grog (a Revolution-era beverage consisting of water-diluted rum, according to the "Drunkard's Almanac"). Bellvale Farms, resting atop a nearby hill, has a similarly rich history beginning with its founding in the early 19th century. In 2003, the farm opened its creamery, a family

"WHILE THE ICE CREAM, FRESH FROM THE COW, NEVER DISAPPOINTS, THE NOVELTY OF WHAT HAD FOR SO LONG FELT LIKE A MOM-AND-POP SHOP HAD DISSIPATED."

favorite and a coveted spot on Appalachian Trail maps for backpackers who have made the journey up from Georgia (my dad has picked up a number of these hitchhikers at the creamery), not to mention the cows grazing just down the hill, ensuring product quality.

This is all to say that the house, the village, and the farm have long existed outside my New York City milieu, and they have always been a haven away from the crowds and excess.

This summer, I visited my dad, and we decided, in the spirit of old times, to visit Bellvale Creamery. The site had already expanded significantly in recent years to accommodate its growing number of visitors. But what we came upon was different. A packed parking lot, a line snaking through stanchion dividers, a big sign obstructing the beautiful view of the valley. We decided to wait in line, like a TSA checkpoint at JFK International Airport on Thanksgiving.

While the ice cream, fresh from the cow, never disappoints, the novelty of what had for so long felt like a mom-and-pop shop had dissipated.

Prolific marketing and influencer culture play a central role in the proliferation of line culture. Take Harvard Square's very own BerryLine, which these days has really lived up to its name, minus the "berry." Even in the two years I have been at Harvard, it has transformed from a local gem into Cambridge's "hardest club to get into."

Meanwhile, in NYC, frozen yogurt joints have been popping up on nearly every corner. Walking through Chelsea, the West Village, SoHo, or the Upper East Side, I've found it's become a task just to avoid the lines snaking for blocks, all because of a storefront smaller than my New Quincy single. And don't get me wrong, I love a good froyo on a no-line day (a 10 out of 10 is Glace Greek froyo with whipped honey), but it only seems possible to get it during the off-hours of a rainy day in the middle of the week. Between Myka, Birdie's, Mimi's, Madison Faire, Culture, Go Greek, and others I am surely forgetting, froyo is slowly hijacking the corner real estate of NYC.

As a vehement opponent of line culture—with the exception of the occasional Bellvale Creamery—I can't imagine what would compel someone to wait an hour in the brutal humidity of a mid-summer New York day for 10 minutes of satisfaction. Paradoxically, though, I can't help but be enticed by a product so transformative that it is worth the wait. That momentary curiosity, combined with exposure from

social media influencers and health culture, makes the line culture at these destinations so effective.

Each location offers a slight variation on an essentially identical product—Myka's "mykataifi," Madison Faire's whipped honey, etc.—and has effectively marketed its line to build curiosity and demand. This combination of carefully curated variations and intense business competition—neighboring Myka and Birdie's have taken over 7th Avenue between Charles and Perry—seems to turn line-waiting into an activity, adding to our already prolific materialism and social media's takeover of the third space.

Even in a world of dwindling patience and attention spans, queue culture has an obvious psychology behind it; a 2015 behavioral study, "The Positive Role of Queues on Customer Value Perception," examines a myriad of factors, most notably perceived value and mimetic desire. When we see that other people think a product is worth waiting for, we want to experience it too. Moreover, for those with the luxury of waiting, the visual aesthetic of the entire experience (the line, the service, the product) fits perfectly into a 30-second review reel.

The efficacy of such curated experiences and their resulting cultural impact is reflected in the industry's growing market power. In the 2010s, Pinkberry, 16 Handles, and Red Mango, the OGs of the first froyo boom, were backed by private equity from the onset. The new crop is playing the same game: Myka just landed a growth equity investment to fund its "mykataifi" monopoly. The frozen yogurt market is projected to nearly double by 2035, from \$6.6 billion to \$11.53 billion, riding the same wave of nutrition-obsessed, startup-brained culture that put us all in line in the first place.

And while many things in life are worth the wait, I can't imagine I'll be grateful on my deathbed for the hours lost waiting for trending froyo. But even amidst the hundreds of influencers hopping on the review train, some still go against the grain. Take @mattpeterson, who proudly boasts a 22-day series "boycotting lines in NYC." In this series, which has amassed hundreds of thousands of views, Peterson exclusively dines at no-line, family-owned businesses, many of which have suffered the consequences of the herd mentality behind business-stealing line culture.

Again, sometimes the line is worth the wait—the "Bellvale Bog" (a chocolate fudgy brownie

flavor) will always draw a queue. What counts is the recognition of product value over herd mentality—not standing in line just because it's there, but asking yourself if a full afternoon in New York is well-spent waiting an hour and a half for four ounces of froyo

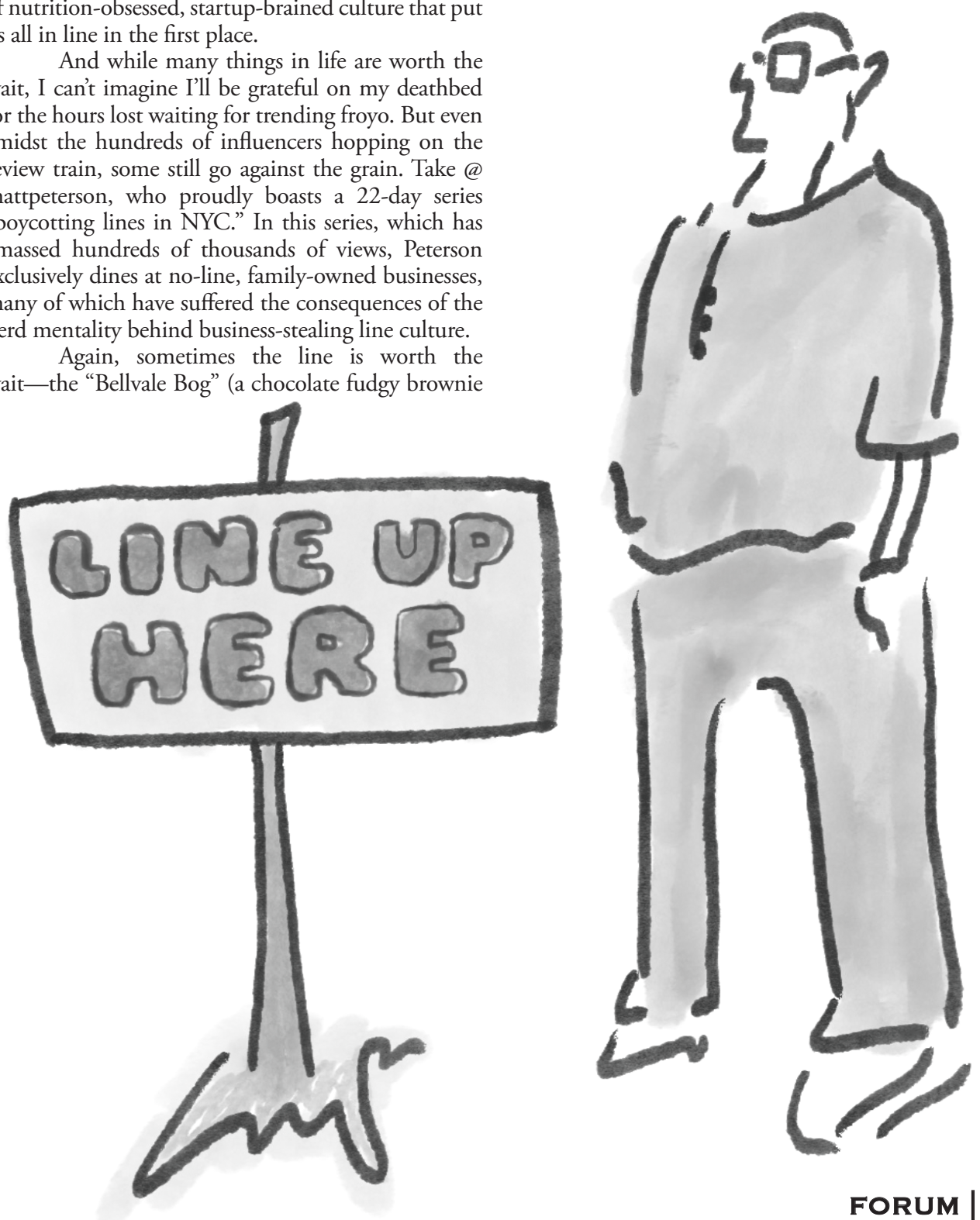
"PARADOXICALLY, THOUGH, I CAN'T HELP BUT BE ENTICED BY A PRODUCT SO

TRANSFORMATIVE THAT IT IS WORTH THE WAIT."

at \$15. Trying new businesses and products is to be expected, but it may be worth considering how to do so without validating excessive consumerism. Though I mourn the days of BerryLine and Madison Faire before they became mainstream, perhaps a greater appreciation of time will inspire me to further explore underground, less-influenced businesses instead.

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GRAPHIC BY KERRIE ZHU '28



From House to Home

Navigating the start of a new year in a new House.

By MIRIAM TSEGAY '29

After tackling the many suitcases and giant pink plastic bags filled to the brim with things I do not even remember packing, move-in is finally done. Everything feels completely different—in part because yes, the start of every school year brings its own novelty. But this year, the transition from first-year dormitories to the highly regarded sophomore-year residential housing feels especially significant. House life is a definitive part of the Harvard experience and at the center of traditions from River Run to graduation.

All I have ever known in Cambridge is the bedroom I shared with my continuing suitemate in Pennypacker Hall on Harvard Street: homey and spacious, with beautiful windows, a laughter-filled common room, a tiny, cramped bathroom, and a balcony perfect for people-watching. Despite its distance from the Yard, it was home—familiar and warm after many long days (and nights) spent running all around campus from classes to club meetings.

Now, as I sit in my Mather single, I reminisce about these memories and crave the familiarity that Pennypacker provided. Although I am still living with my first-year roommate, we now have the luxury of singles, connected by a common room instead of an arm's length apart. While it is lovely to have my own space, it is disorienting to come back to my room without my roomie's chatter to keep it from getting too quiet. And although we are right next door to each other, separated only by a thin concrete wall, I feel as though the many chance conversations we had while drifting off to sleep or cleaning our space will be lost.

I also mourn the loss of the Pennypacker entryway community that I have come to love. With my old entryway now spread out all across the River and all the way to the Quad, I rarely see its members. I know that we will never truly be as close as we were then—chatting on the fourth-floor landing and spontaneously knocking on each other's doors. No amount of “let's catch up” and grabbing meals in our respective dining halls will recreate that feeling.

I have not gotten to know my Mather entryway yet, but I feel it will not be the same. Now, as sophomores, we all have our defined friendships and spaces on campus. I feel as though my classmates no longer look to their entryway for friendships. In my hallway, I walk past doors with names I recognize and

others I do not, but I cannot bring myself to knock. It does not quite feel like Penny 4.

It is strange to be back in a school I have come to know so well and to feel like it is slightly foreign. It is both exhilarating and odd. Despite the changes that feel intimidating, there are good ones too.

There is much to learn about my new House and its culture, from Mather P-Set Nights to open houses in the airy Deans' residence. In addition to learning where the laundry and trash are, there are

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pottery and woodturning studios to explore, too. Between meeting tutors and House staff, I have found that so many people work to make Mather House a home. It is strikingly different from the small proctor and PAF team that supported my first-year entryway, but I welcome the change to a bigger community that still remains tight-knit.

It is strange, however, to see so many new faces when it feels as though I have met most of the people in my year. In the dining hall, I do not recognize nearly

as many people as I did in Annenberg, and I miss the constant chatter as I passed by the rows and rows of long tables—something that used to overwhelm me but now only makes me feel warm. This year, though, it will be nice to have the dining hall be so close to my dorm—far closer than the seven-minute trek I used to make from Penny to Berg.

Beyond the walls of Mather, it is also strange to see all my friends outside of their usual Yard homes, spread out across the Harvard housing system. We are excitedly planning our long-awaited reunions and much-anticipated room tours. These unplanned run-ins, as I make my way to the Square for cleaning supplies or books from the Coop, are just as joyous—a reminder of all the things that have stayed

“DESPITE ALL OF THESE CHANGES, HARVARD STILL FEELS LIKE HOME, AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO GROW INTO A NEW SPACE AND COMMUNITY IS SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO.”

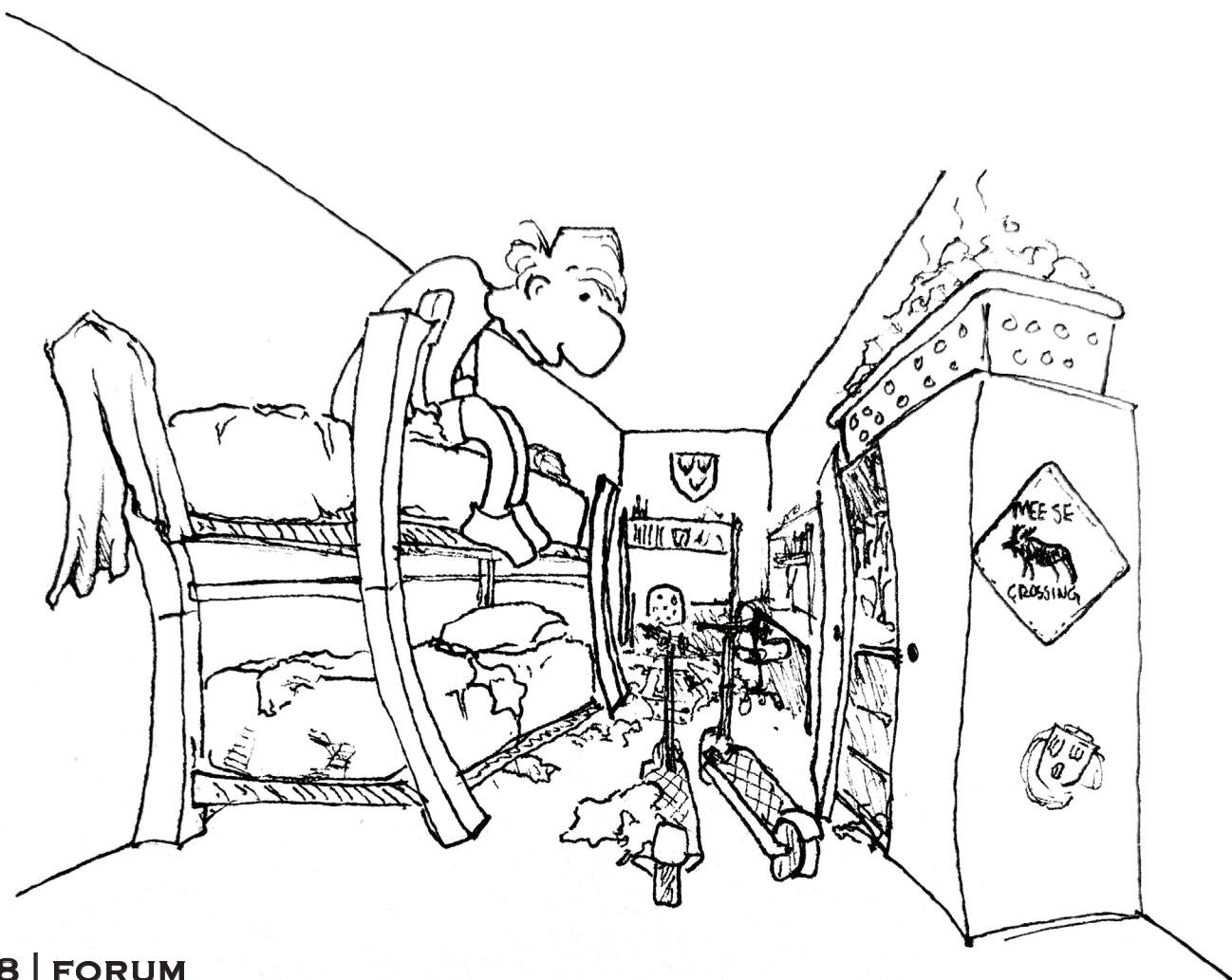
the same despite moving into our separate housing communities.

Despite all of these changes, Harvard still feels like home, and the opportunity to grow into a new space and community is something to look forward to. I remember walking into my first-year dorm on move-in day last year, and all the potential for a new year that came with it. Moving into my House this year, I can feel that same potential in the air.

The new suite I share with the same suitemates I had in Penny has its own quirks and features that I know I'll come to love. As I put together my room and add the finishing touches—the rug bought at a senior sale, pictures from home, and posters printed at Walgreens—I can see myself living happily in Mather for the year. My single looks out onto quiet Banks Street right next to Mather, farther away from the Square than all the other Houses. The tree that shades it provides beautiful foliage that I look forward to watching change through the seasons as I come to know and love the new House that I hope will soon feel like home.

MIRIAM TSEGAY '29 (MIRIAMTSEGAY@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS HAPPY TO BE BACK ON CAMPUS.

GRAPHIC BY CALEB BOYCE '29



ARTS

2026 Fall Arts Events Round Up

Harvard's extensive theater and fine arts lineup is sure to be a crowd-pleaser.

By **KALVIN FRANK '28**

The Harvard-to-finance pipeline is strong, but we shouldn't let that stereotype keep us from enjoying our expansive arts scene. As the Arts Editor of the "Harvard Independent," I have had a front-row seat to the wonderful theater productions, art collections, and special events across campus.

For incoming first-year students, the clubs,

**“DO NOT GO
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classes, and people on this campus can feel both overwhelming and exciting. However, take it from me: do not go an entire year without seeing a fine art exhibition. Here's what we can look forward to in the upcoming semester.

Theater:

The theatrical community has two main organizations offering shows on campus this semester: the Harvard-Radcliffe Dramatic Club (HRDC) and the American Repertory Theater (ART). The HRDC hosts most student-led productions, ranging from the familiar to newly minted student-written shows. Look for classics like "Into the Woods," "Dear Evan Hansen," and "Don Quixote." Also, look for the new student-written production "According to Chance" by Judith Epstein '27 or "The Greek Improv Show," an entirely ad-libbed show in partnership with the

Three Letter Acronym.

Meanwhile, the ART brings professional acting to Harvard's many theaters. The group boasts award-winning actors and producers, including Tony Award winner Diane Paulus, right on Harvard's campus. Students can look forward to "Rhinoceros," "1972," and "Mexodus." All three stories explore complex historical themes, including conformity in the context of World War II, abortion before the Roe decision, and the Southern Underground Railroad, respectively. While ART performs in spaces such as Farkas Hall and the Loeb Theater, it will soon have a permanent home at the David E. and Stacey L. Goel Center for Creativity & Performance in Allston.

For students looking for more theater, Harvard is just five minutes from a world-renowned theater scene. Boston has year-round shows advertised on the city's theater website—something I plan to take advantage of as the semester begins.

Museums:

Harvard's art, science, and history museums are world-class institutions. Students are encouraged to check out the great permanent exhibits, but beyond that, each semester the museums also team up for special temporary exhibitions.

The Harvard Art Museum has a packed semester for its temporary exhibitions. Continuing from the summer, the exhibit titled "Glück auf in Deutschland" (Good Luck in Germany), by Pinar Öğrenci, is on display. The exhibition marks the Turkish modern artist's U.S. debut. It invites viewers to question what history has erased versus preserved, while imagining an equitable future through photography and film from the 1950s and '60s. This special exhibit continues until Oct. 15.

The other two special exhibitions, which opened on Aug. 29, are currently running. "An Introduction to the History of Art" offers a great viewing experience for art critics of all experience levels. For the "newbies," the exhibit and accompanying course, History of Art and Architecture 10, try to answer the questions "What is art? Why does it matter?" Experienced art viewers will appreciate the breadth of regions, times, and styles represented in the exhibition. The other current special exhibition is "The Way We Never Were: The American Professional Photographers Collection," which draws from an archive of over 20,000 photographs of daily life between the 1930s and 1960s.

Keep an eye out for the two exhibits that open mid-semester, including "On Location: Drawing the Outdoors" on Sept. 18, a curated collection of natural landscape art, and on Oct. 23, "Alfonso Ossorio: Line and Lineage," an exhibition of the Filipino-American artist's works. For these and every exhibition, you can find special events and presentations on the art museum website.

Stroll over to the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts, where three special displays await this fall. Currently on view is "No Slop, No Second Screen: Animation—the hard-won image," an animation by Harvard students and faculty. Next, opening Oct. 1, "Knowledge Is Myth: Chimeric Continuities" asks what defines ancient and modern mythology. It uses sculptures and visual art to help answer this question. Lastly, "Constitutive Outside" opens Oct. 22 and promises that "across performance, installation, and screen space, the exhibition examines how subjectivity emerges through misrecognition, non-coincidence, and the limits of representation."

The Harvard Graduate School of Design has two exhibits this semester. The first is "Infrastructure in a Time of Flux: Methods, Conditions, and Situations," which tasks students with designing for

a spectrum of situations including refugee camps, conflict zones, and informal markets. It also asks if we have the power to design these spaces more efficiently and why these inventions are rarely implemented. The other exhibit is titled "Design Engineering for New Systems of Being" and promises to showcase future technologies and reimagine how tech is implemented into our existing systems.

Like the art museums, Harvard's science and

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cultural museums host weekly events throughout the semester. The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology's main exhibit this semester, "From Iran: A Visual Testimony," features staged photography by Azadeh Akhlaghi that captures major moments in 20th-century Iran.

Music:

Multiple bands, orchestras, and other music groups call Harvard home. For student groups, the Jazz Band has "Sounds of Brazil" in Lowell Lecture Hall on Nov. 7; the Harvard Wind Ensemble has the "Bands of the Beanpot" on Oct. 25, and another performance on Dec. 4. Other group concerts are listed on the Office of Fine Arts website.

For those interested in professional orchestras, the Boston Chamber Music Society has three fall semester concerts in Sanders Theater. The concerts are Sept. 27, Oct. 11, and Nov. 12; all are Sundays at 3 p.m. Students at the door pay only \$6, a steep discount from the starting price of \$33. The Kendall Square Orchestra also hosts its fall concert titled "Voices of Freedom" on Oct. 9 at 7:30 p.m.

Dance:

If dance is up your alley, Harvard has over 25 student-led dance groups. For those interested in dance on ice, Harvard will once again host "An Evening with Champions" on Sept. 11–12. The show is a figure skating exhibition featuring solo, pairs, and large-group performances from across the country. Harvard also boasts many special dance exhibitions on the OFA website.

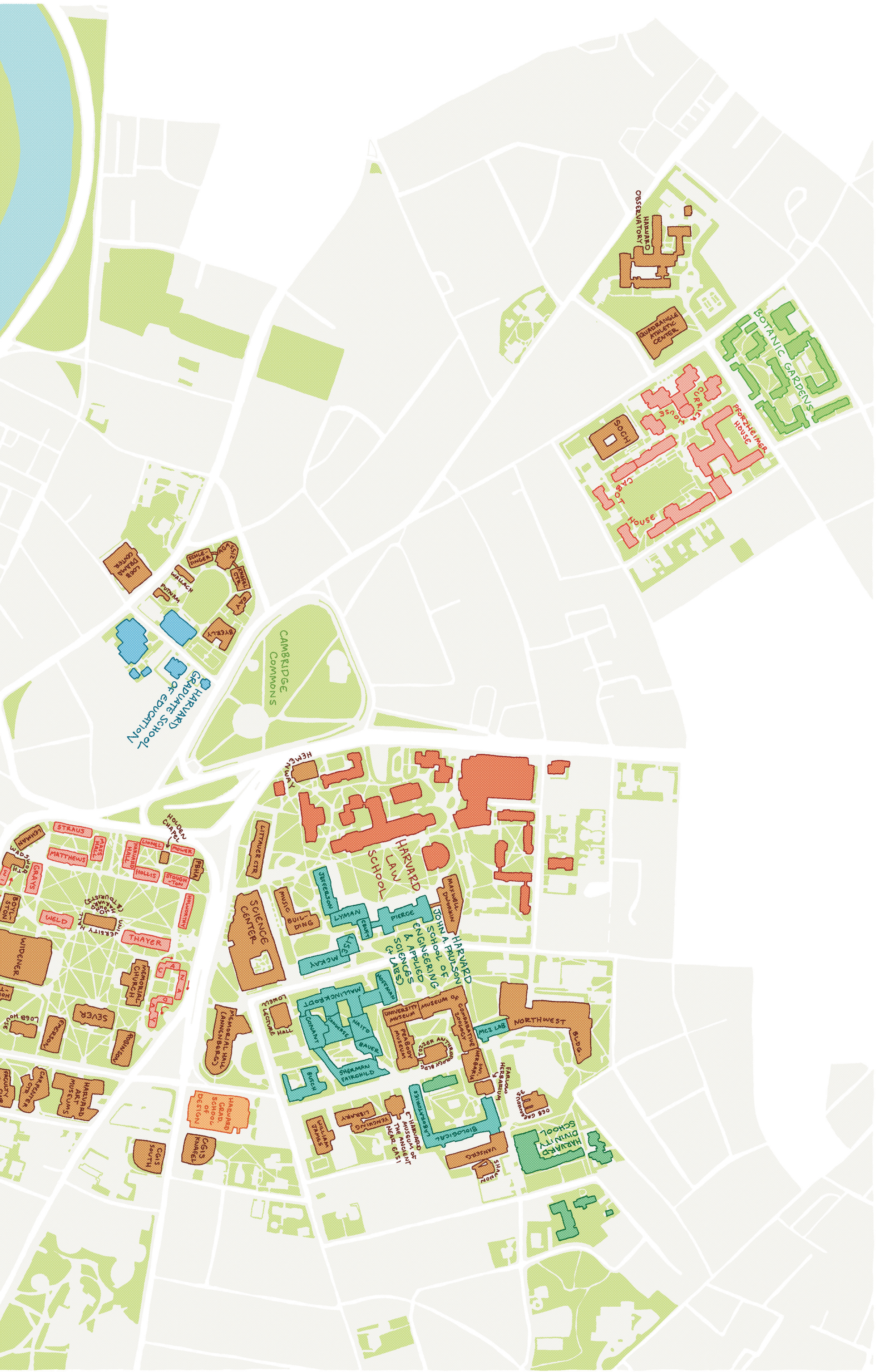
I personally provide a satisfaction guarantee—with or without your money back—if I am wrong. Seriously, though, take some time to enjoy the great art events this university has to offer. For first-years, two years will fly by, and before you know it, you will be a junior writing an article titled, "How have I never gone to an Orchestra concert on this campus?" The "Harvard Independent" is always here to share events you do not want to miss and coverage of the ones you do.

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GRAPHIC BY JAMES FOSS '29







“Art Can’t Just Be a Luxury for the Few.”

How arts and culture tie into Zohran Mamdani’s framework of Democratic Socialism.

By NUALA MERNIN ’29

As a senior in high school, I watched the name Zohran Mamdani pop up in conversations across my classrooms until his election suddenly became the single most important topic of discussion among the students in my graduating class. The same question seemed to be on everyone’s mind: will a self-declared Democratic Socialist manage to get anything done as New York City’s mayor?

Mayor Mamdani has accepted our challenge head-on: after just seven months as mayor of America’s most populous city, he boasts an impressive list of successful projects. In his first 100 days in office, he fulfilled promises ranging from investing in universal childcare to fixing an annoying bump on the Williamsburg Bridge. These developments extend into the cultural sphere, as Mayor Mamdani has launched several initiatives in recent months.

As the birthplace of countless historic aesthetic movements, from the Harlem Renaissance to Pop Art, New York has long been home to the country’s artistic expression. But as gentrification and displacement drive rent prices up and push low-income residents out of their homes, the New York art world has

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increasingly become a realm only for the fortunate. Keeping the arts thriving and public-facing—from establishing affordable living spaces for artists to offering free museum and theater tickets—means keeping the city and its spaces diverse and equitable. Mamdani, it seems, has been committed to this goal.

In August, Mayor Mamdani announced the allocation of over \$8.4 million in grants to nonprofit and small-business initiatives across the five boroughs.

In collaboration with the Department of Small Business Services, the Mamdani administration distributed 89 grants to various projects, including public art commissions and arts programming. These grants, among his most exciting achievements, will support street murals and local film projects that make New York a vibrant city and bring untold stories into the American art canon.

His efforts to fund the arts were not a one-off: Mayor Mamdani and the City Council agreed to a fiscal year 2027 budget that allocated \$79.1 million to restore parks, libraries, and cultural institutions. The budget includes \$30 million for Cultural Community Support Restoration, addressing the inadequate funding the city’s cultural organizations have suffered. Another landmark step toward making art more affordable and accessible across the city, the 2027 budget works to make art a public good.

In February, Mayor Mamdani appointed art curator Diya Vij as Commissioner of Cultural Affairs, placing the arts at the center of his cultural agenda. “As Commissioner, I will extend the Mayor’s affordability agenda to arts and culture,” Vij said, echoing Mamdani’s emphasis on expanding equitable access to creativity and culture in the city. Vij has previously worked at Creative Time, Powerhouse Arts, the Queens Museum, and the High Line, supporting public and accessible art.

Mamdani has not only supported the production of the arts, but also their consumption. In January, Mayor Mamdani joined the Under the Radar Theater Festival in distributing some 1,500 free theater tickets to the public. Theaters have not been immune to New York’s rapid gentrification. For the middle and working classes, Broadway shows have become an annual event at best and an impossibility at worst. By distributing free tickets and enabling New Yorkers to see shows regardless of financial circumstances, Mamdani has reminded the public that the performing arts are for everyone, not just those lucky enough to afford them.

These are just a few of Mamdani’s ongoing efforts to keep art at the center of a more equal New York. Together, these projects have helped raise awareness of and support for independent artists and their crafts. Mamdani’s commitment to the arts is not only an exciting feature of his leadership strategy but

also an integral component of his political identity as a Democratic Socialist.

While Mamdani is certainly not the first New York City mayor whose governing philosophy centers labor and community infrastructure, he is the first to label himself a Democratic Socialist and make that label central to his mayoral agenda. His landslide victory and positive public opinion are revolutionary achievements for American leftists, and every decision he makes—including the funding of public arts—will help shape the framework for future socialist governance across the country.

As the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 and revolutionary political scientist Francis Fukuyama declared liberal democracy and free-market capitalism the West’s final form in his controversial book “The End of History and the Last Man,” “socialism” took on a slew of antagonistic connotations in the American mind. By declaring himself a Democratic Socialist during his campaign, Mamdani took on a considerable risk—many still believe socialist ideals

“ONE MURAL AT A TIME,
PUBLIC ART BRINGS
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to be “anti-American.” Even at my high school, an independent institution known for its progressive syllabi and leftist teachers, many students shook their heads at the idea of a “communist” taking charge of the city.

And yet, contrary to the expectations of my peers and neighbors, who imagined a New York bogged down by “backward” ideas, one of the best examples of Mamdani’s governing philosophy is his dedication to the arts. In recent decades, average theater tickets have steadily increased in price; premium tickets, introduced in recent years, have made desirable performances inaccessible; and galleries have closed their doors to both new artists and low-income art enthusiasts alike—the cultural sphere, much like the city at large, has become a realm only for the upwardly mobile. By working to keep museums and theaters open to the public, Mamdani works toward the Democratic Socialist mission of shrinking the gap between social classes in the city.

The arts are not just an interesting attraction of the city, but a foundational aspect of its diversity and national identity. Films like Spike Lee’s “Do the Right Thing” and Jennie Livingston’s “Paris Is Burning” created global recognition for marginalized groups in New York; ’70s Black hip-hop launched decades of mainstream rap music; Yoko Ono’s ‘Wish Tree’ series brought contemporary art to new audiences through its New York installations; the arts have long given voices to the oppressed, brought new faces to the city, and reminded the world of New York’s cultural and ethnic diversity. Mamdani’s efforts to fund the arts help strengthen the palimpsest of stories that make the city special.

One mural at a time, public art brings marginalized stories to the surface of the city and keeps New York the multicultural hub it always has been.

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GRAPHIC BY NUALA MERNIN ’29



The Ruins of the Old Summer Palace

History that neither repeats nor rhymes.

By ELLIE GUO '29

The Old Summer Palace in China is known by many names, most famously as “Yuanmingyuan,” meaning “Garden of Perfect Brightness.”

Located in northwest Beijing, about five miles from the political center, it was a beautiful, quiet place for emperors of the 17th and 18th centuries to enjoy nature, raise their children, and pursue their hobbies.

Today, the palace grounds are open to the public. This summer, while studying at Peking University, I was conveniently located about a ten-minute walk away from the garden gates. I took evening walks every day, exploring every corner of the approximately 860-acre garden.

One can only imagine what it might have been like to be the emperor returning to the comforts of his estate after a busy day, a prince riding horseback

primary residents of the palace. There were corners of the garden so deserted and overgrown that being there was the most alone I have ever felt—shocking when considering I was in the middle of one of the world’s most populous cities.

In 1860, during the Second Opium War, French and British troops captured the palace, burning and looting the residence. Though most of the destruction occurred during the conflict, early 20th-century photographs show some structures still standing, albeit badly damaged. The lesser-known degradation occurred in the tumultuous Republic Era of China, when the gardens were used as military training grounds and looted by ordinary Chinese citizens.

To some, the ruins of the palace symbolize shame—the once-infallible Middle Kingdom’s destruction at the hands of Western powers. Others look past its tragic end, seeing instead China’s enormous wealth and power during the Qing Dynasty through the palace’s magnificent mansions built in the exotic style of European castles.

Contemporary criticisms of ancient China highlight its wealth inequality: while the emperor lounges in his multiple estates, rural peasants experience famines. The modern image of China in the U.S. is still one of autocracy and extensive government power—whether that image truly reflects the lives of Chinese people is up for debate, but McCarthyism lingers on in Western distrust of the ever-terrifying Chinese Communist Party.

As I stare into the tranquil waters of Fuhai Lake, these thoughts run through my mind. Why doesn’t visiting the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia resonate in the same way? Though the crack in the Liberty Bell is not nearly as significant or traumatizing as the Second Opium War, it still seems strange that the irony of the damage doesn’t hold the same gravitas for me.

My thoughts are interrupted by an unseemly sight. Another tourist—a Chinese woman, likely visiting from a different city—is dressed like a Qing Dynasty princess with a photographer kneeling by her feet. The costume is indeed just a costume. The colors are light and dainty, unlike the

vibrant dyes actually used during the era. She wears Crocs beneath her robes.

At first, I was tempted to laugh at the obvious tourist trap. No one in Boston who dressed like the original colonists would be taken seriously. In China, many popular television shows are set in fictional versions of ancient Chinese dynasties. The closest thing we have is “Bridgerton,” but period pieces rarely become fan favorites.

It occurs to me that the difference is how much we romanticize our history.

Growing up steeped in the American way of life, I found history the least relatable thing between me and another American. In a country where almost everyone is technically an immigrant, no one has exactly the same background. We have no shared history to look back on.

Though we are schooled on our country’s history, it doesn’t seem solemn or serious; it even

“HISTORY IS DEEPLY EMOTIONAL AND HUMAN.”

feels a little farcical at times. We remember George Washington for his wooden teeth, Teddy Roosevelt for the stuffed bear named after him, and Abe Lincoln for his hat—despite being the first president to be assassinated.

In ancient China, though, a shared history tracing back to one’s ancestors was one of the few forces holding an empire together as power shifted between dynasties every few hundred years. Sima Qian, one of China’s most important figures, wrote a history book in 85 CE detailing 2,000 years of events, going back to the nation’s formation.

Meanwhile, what has arguably held America together through wars, tough times, and more has been an unwavering trust in the American Dream—that is, belief in profit.

The paradigm that East Asian countries are collectivist and centered on family values, while the West is individualistic, starts to unravel here. It is not about which hemisphere of the world’s societies cares more or less about their communities, but the underlying societal forces that shape a civilization.

I do not mean to suggest that emphasis on history yields a better, more empathetic, more united, or more productive society. Evidently, the tourist traps selling bad costumes suggest the opposite.

In American schools, students are often taught the phrase “history doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes,” a quote from Mark Twain that is commonly interpreted to promote studying history as a preventative measure. However, this places the emphasis on the future rather than taking the past at face value. Studying the history of the world we live in helps us connect with our own lives and understand why the world is the way it is.

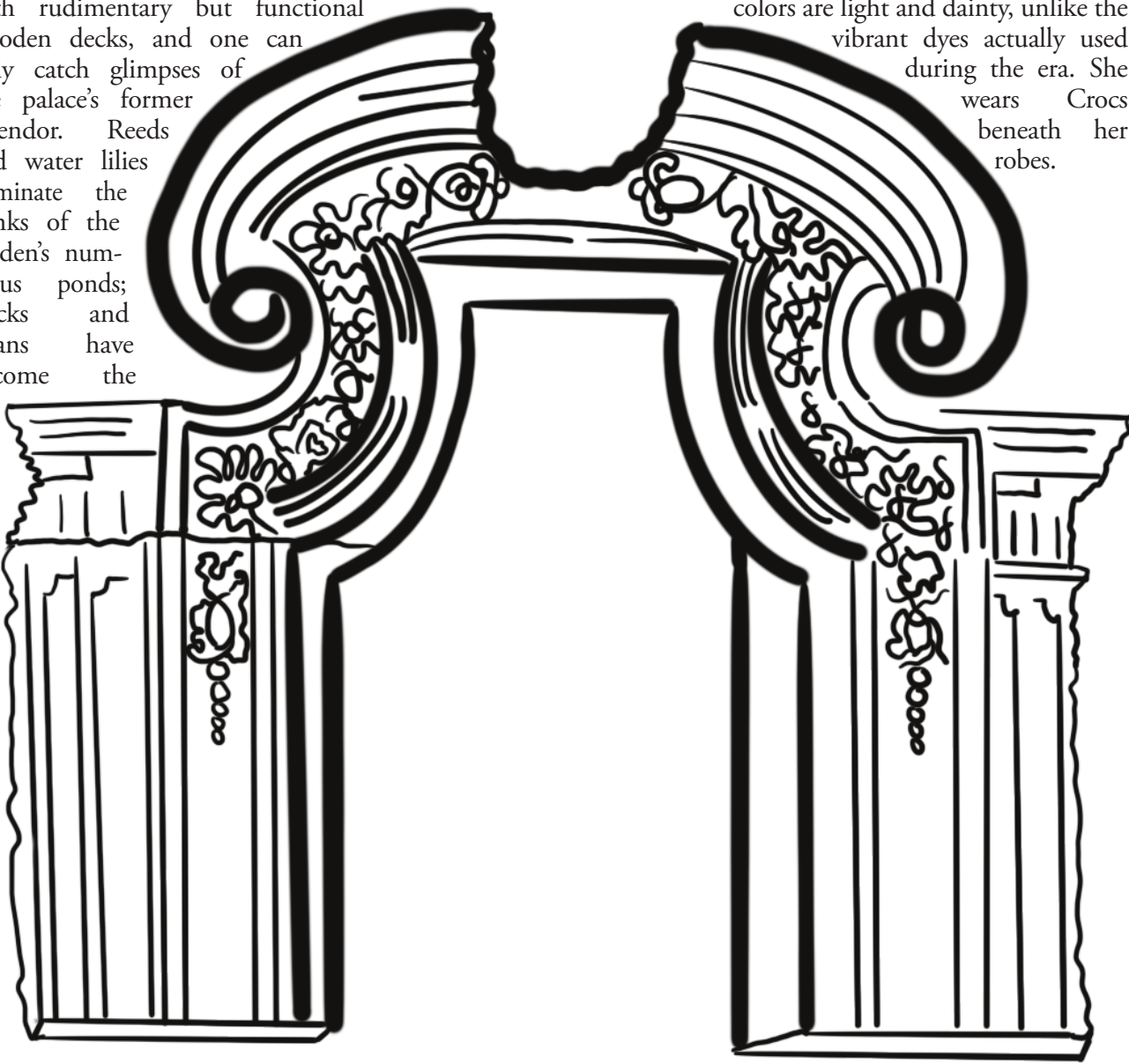
History is deeply emotional and human. While exploring the Old Summer Palace, I came across a weathered stone lion statue crouched among shoots of grass. A crack in the marble split its body in half. Failure and triumph are things that we have all experienced, whether your country has over five thousand years of history or only a few hundred.

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GRAPHIC BY AMELIE LIMA '27

in the garden, or a concubine strolling among lotus blossoms.

Most of the Old Summer Palace’s structures have been razed to the ground, with only a fraction of the original stones remaining in the buildings’ footprints. The original bridges have been replaced with rudimentary but functional wooden decks, and one can only catch glimpses of the palace’s former splendor. Reeds and water lilies dominate the banks of the garden’s numerous ponds; ducks and swans have become the



A Day in the Life of a Harvard Student

It won't make you feel bad about yourself, I promise.

By **SAM PARK '29**

It is my first year at Harvard. At 8 a.m., I get a text from my good friend—we'll call her EG for privacy reasons—saying she's left DeWolfe and is on her way to meet me at the life-threatening intersection between Santouka Ramen and Lamont Library. Because I had been dilly-dallying instead of getting ready, I am forced to pack my bag with one hand, change my clothes with the other, and type out a text with my toes—"Sorry, running late, give me two min," knowing full well that I would be more than two minutes late.

When I finally get to the intersection, EG gives me a disapproving look, and I feel ashamed. She tells me that now we only have 20 minutes to eat breakfast because she has to transfer her laundry to the dryer. Honestly, I don't know who "we" refers to,

**"KNOW YOUR
VALUES, CHOOSE YOUR
PRIORITIES WISELY, AND
DON'T SACRIFICE THE
EVERYDAY."**

because I am not going to let my life be dictated by my friend's laundry.

And yet, we leave breakfast after 20 minutes (EG threatened me). That is, after I eat a yogurt bowl that is 30 percent yogurt, 70 percent the most scrumptious granola I've ever eaten.

I guess that yogurt put me in a good mood, because I agreed to walk EG back to DeWolfe so she could do what she gotta do. It works out anyway because, in my hurry to leave, I forgot all my books and my laptop; it is raining, and I do not have an umbrella, so I need to return to Pennypacker Hall. As we walk under the Boston rain clouds, EG and I think wistfully about what it might've been like to live in the Yard.

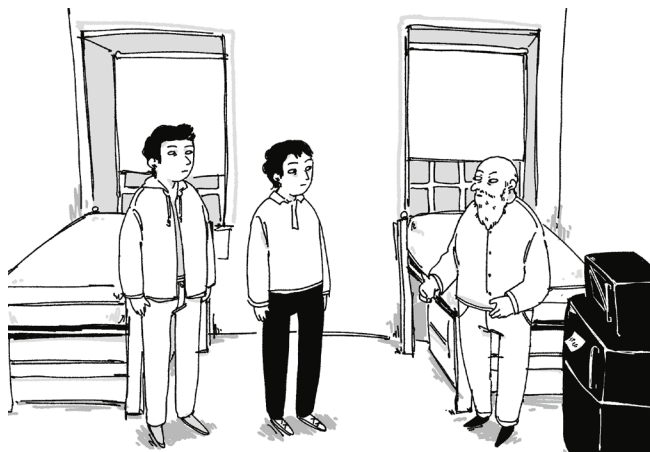
But there is also a dark, ominous cloud in my mind—the thing that I had been dreading since the moment my eyes opened that morning. That's right, you guessed it: Korean 123XB.

Seventy-five minutes of public humiliation. I genuinely do not understand how I can be so bad at reading off a screen. I'm such a slow reader that I think the professor stopped asking me to read the longer sentences because she felt sorry for me.

I am honestly grateful to return to the warmth of the Lamont basement, where EG has splayed out all of her worldly belongings on the table. I do half a reading before I fall asleep.

Fengshui Master

By **ELLIE GUO '29 & SAM PARK '29**



"Based on my expert analysis, the negative energy in your room would be balanced by the Slightly Bigger-Bed, now \$50 off when purchased through HSA."

I wake up to EG gone. I am left only with the lingering presence of her judgment and the worst pins-and-needles feeling in my legs. I am about to be late to my next class, so I hastily wobble my way to my three-hour seminar, mentally preparing for all of the active listening I am about to do.

In class, I have a vibrant discussion with my peers, contributing meaningful insights about the text. The room is brimming with anticipation and

super-aesthetic-study-sesh crap.

If you could not tell, some parts may have been slightly exaggerated for the sake of emotional truth.

Is my life really that dictated by my friend's laundry routine? No. Do I actually have that many packages to pick up? Only sometimes. Can I actually text with my toes? I wish. Do I really think the granola is that good? Yes—I don't joke about granola.



excitement, everyone eager to share the nuances they gleaned from the reading.

And then after 15 minutes, everyone gets kind of tired. The discussion, once a stunning example of intellectual vitality, turns into a desperate one-way interview; the professor fishes for answers while I avoid eye contact because I'm frantically trying to do the second half—let's be real, the second 80%—of the reading so I can be the good kid who actively participates the whole time.

After that exhausting fight for the professor's approval, I go to the mail center and pick up my 18 Amazon packages from my last retail therapy session. I can hear my mother's disappointment from here. On my trek back to Pennypacker, I balance them on my various limbs while still holding up my umbrella, feeling a little like a circus monkey that tourists point at and laugh at.

Then, I return to Lamont. Oh, dear God, get me out of this place.

For dinner, I reunite with EG and the various friends we share, except for our one friend whom we never see because she is part of a certain Harvard publication that is so much less cool than the "Harvard Independent." We all reminisce about the time we spent with her, and I think about how thankful I am to be part of this super awesome publication instead.

I ask EG if she'd like to study together, but she tells me that she must return to DeWolfe to fold her laundry. I make peace with my place in her life during my return to Pennypacker.

As I lie in bed, my legs aching from the hike, I fall asleep to the soothing sound of the mice eating something crispy in the radiators.

There you have it, an authentic Harvard day-in-the-life. Not any of that Instagram influencer

In all seriousness, I did my best to capture the essence of my first-year experience, even if it required a little exaggeration.

It's "Harvard," but it's also just daily life. The most interesting or meaningful part of your day is not always going to be a class, a club, or an event, and that's okay! Sometimes it's walking your friend back to her dorm so that she can do her laundry. For EG, I think it's doing her laundry—she definitely seemed more excited about that than I was, at least.

When you tell people about what you're doing at Harvard, for sure tell them all the cool, impressive stuff like being an InDesign Editor and writing for the "Harvard Independent." Brag all you want about that; you deserve to. However, when it comes to actually living the "Harvard experience," make sure that you pay attention to how you feel getting up in the morning, what it really is that you are excited about, and whether your choices are aligned with what you care about.

Know your values, choose your priorities wisely, and don't sacrifice the everyday—you never know if you'll get hit by the 1 Bus on Mass Ave.

SAM PARK '29 (SHPARK@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) SWEARS EG ISN'T HER ONLY FRIEND.

PHOTO BY FELIX CHEN '29

A Flashback to the History of Each Freshman Dorm

As the Class of 2030 settles into Harvard, here's a brief history behind all 17 freshman-year dorms.

By **SONIA SINGH '29**

Over the past few weeks, members of the Class of 2030 have been unpacking boxes in dorms where John Adams '1755, John F. Kennedy '1940, Matt Damon '1992, and Natalie Portman '03 once lived. I spent my entire freshman year in Straus Hall before learning that the family that financed it went down with the Titanic. With many first-years nervously anticipating what dorm life will be like for the next two semesters, here is a look back at the history of each of the 17 freshman halls, in chronological order.

Massachusetts Hall

"Mass" Hall was built between 1718 and 1720, making it Harvard's oldest standing building and the oldest dormitory in the country. Five Founding Fathers have called Mass Hall home, including John Adams '1755 and John Hancock '1754. Around 640 Continental Army soldiers sheltered here during the Revolution, which is surprising because today only 14 lucky first-years live in this building, making it the dorm with the fewest residents in the Yard.

Hollis Hall

In 1763, the Harvard Corporation built Hollis Hall because it concluded that students living with local families were less well-behaved than those living on campus. Like Massachusetts Hall, colonial soldiers lived here during the Revolution, and they left more behind than people realized: in 1959, renovation workers pulled five musket balls from beneath the floorboards. Leading figures of the American Transcendentalist movement, Ralph Waldo Emerson '1821 and Henry David Thoreau '1837 lived here, among many other famous Harvard alumni.

Stoughton Hall

The Stoughton Hall standing today dates to 1805, but the original went up in 1700. William Stoughton, who presided over the Salem witch trials, funded it. The dorm was built out of bricks salvaged from the dismantled "Indian College," a building Harvard put up in 1655 with missionary money aimed at converting Indigenous students to Christianity. Harvard demolished the first version of Stoughton in 1781 because it was so poorly constructed. In the financially difficult years after the Revolution, the College asked the Massachusetts General Court for permission to run a lottery to fund a new building. The state-run lottery raised over \$18,000. Funnily enough, the dorms today are some of the nicest in the Yard, so the replacement must have been worth it.

Holworthy Hall

Holworthy Hall was built in 1812 with the proceeds of a state lottery, similar to Stoughton. It was named in honor of an English merchant, Sir Matthew Holworthy, who gave Harvard £1,000 in 1681, the largest gift the College received in the entire 17th century.

Grays Hall

Grays Hall opened in 1863 as the first Harvard building with water taps in the basement, freeing its residents from having to get water from the pumps out in the Yard. This luxurious reputation endures today as one of the nicest dormitories in the Yard. (It's nicknamed the "Harvard Hilton!") Actress and film producer Natalie Portman '03 lived here.

Thayer Hall

Thayer Hall was built in 1870 as a gift from Boston banker Nathaniel Thayer in honor of his father and brother. Before it became a freshman dorm, Thayer Hall served as a senior dormitory in the early 1900s. This was part of a larger plan Harvard President A. Lawrence Lowell '1877 created to try to have all Harvard seniors live in the Yard. Poet e.e. Cummings '1915 lived here.

Weld Hall

Weld Hall was built in 1871; it shared the same design firm, Ware and Van Brunt, as Memorial Hall. It is one of the largest and often regarded as the most social freshman-year dormitory. John F. Kennedy '1940 famously lived in Weld.

Matthews Hall

Matthews Hall was built in 1872, on the grounds where Harvard's "Indian College" stood from 1655 to 1698. The printing press inside the Indian College produced the first Bible printed in North America. Coincidentally, Matt Damon '1992 lived in Matthews Hall during his freshman year.

Apley Court

Apley Court was built in 1897 as a private luxury dormitory for wealthy undergraduates, financed by the Claverly Trust. Notably, T.S. Eliot lived here as a graduate student in 1907. Harvard only purchased this "Gold Coast" dorm in 1920 and has owned it ever since, but the luxury still lives on today in its marble bathtubs. Adams House has famously resisted the college's use of it as a freshman dorm, even "annexing" the building in 2025.

Hurlbut Hall

In 1914, Hurlbut Hall was built as a private apartment building called Devon Court. However, just 32 years later Harvard purchased the structure, and it became an undergraduate dorm. Its suites are among the most spacious of any freshman dorm, which makes sense for a building originally designed for grown adults rather than 18-year-old college freshmen.

Greenough Hall

Greenough Hall was also an apartment building before Harvard bought it; the dorm was built in 1922 and acquired in 1956. Like Hurlbut, it has spacious rooms, likely for the same reason. It is named for Chester Noyes Greenough '1898, the dean of Harvard College in the 1920s.

Lionel Hall

Lionel Hall was built in 1925, and it is named for Lionel de Jersey '15, an Englishman descended from John Harvard who lost his life during World War I. This dorm was a gift from Harvard President Lowell and his wife, Anna Parker Lowell, as part of a larger effort to expand student housing on campus.

Mower Hall

Mower Hall was built the same year as Lionel, and the two buildings mirror each other on either side of Holden Chapel. It has room for about 35 students, yet it has housed former vice president Al Gore '1969 and Academy Award-winning actor Tommy Lee Jones '1969, among others.

Straus Hall

Straus Hall, my own freshman dorm, was built in 1925 by three brothers as a memorial to their parents, Isidor and Ida Straus, who died on the Titanic. Harvard dropout Mark Zuckerberg famously spent his freshman year in this dorm.

Pennypacker Hall

In 1927, Pennypacker Hall was built as an apartment complex called the Roosevelt Apartments, and it did not become Harvard property until 1958. It is named for Henry Pennypacker '1888, who ran Harvard admissions from 1920 to 1933. WHRB (Harvard Radio Broadcasting), the student-run radio station, broadcasts out of the basement, so if Pennypacker freshmen are loud enough, they're the only ones who can hear their dorm on the radio!

Wigglesworth Hall

Wigglesworth Hall was finished in 1931 and forms the entire south end of the Yard along Massachusetts Avenue. Residents often complain about hearing the T from the basement or loud Mass Ave. traffic. The house that stood on this site before Wigglesworth was built dates to 1631, when it was constructed for the Reverend Thomas Hooker—five years before Harvard even existed. Harvard did not buy the land until 1794. Since then, hundreds of freshmen have lived in this dorm, including famous Harvard dropout Bill Gates.

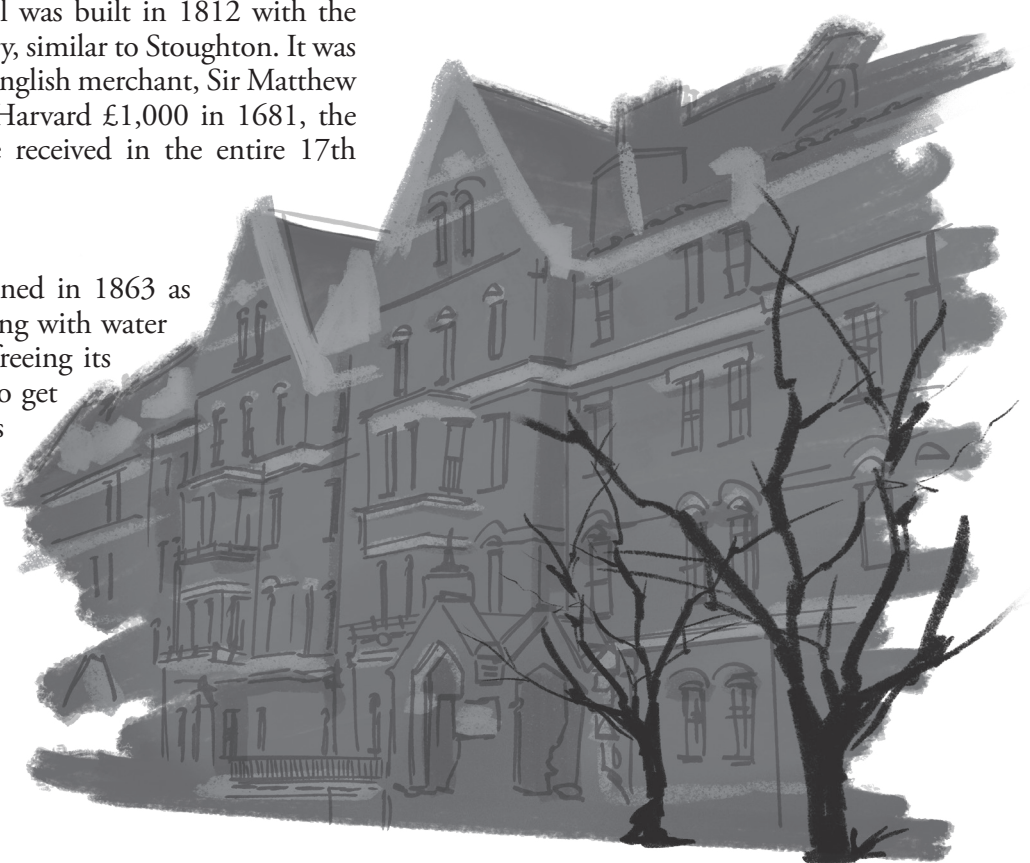
Canaday Hall

Last but certainly not least, Canaday Hall became the newest building in the Yard, built in 1974. Despite being the newest dorm in the Yard, it is known for a pervasive mice problem. It lies on the site formerly occupied by the first Fogg Art Museum. The building is named after Ward M. Canaday '1907, a Harvard alumnus and businessman. It is also the largest freshman dorm in the Yard, so more of the Class of 2030 will be able to enjoy its "modernity."

As the Class of 2030 begins to adjust to dorm life, they join generations of students stretching back more than three hundred years, most of whom were probably just as nervous. Who knows, maybe one day a current freshman will find their name listed as a famous alumnus of their freshman dormitory.

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GRAPHIC BY JUSTIN MA '28



SPORTS

Homecoming: Eudaimonia

Returning to where it all began, this time with my team.

By **LYDIA CHATIRA '28**

As soon as I heard the familiar announcement of “boarding completed,” I found myself wondering if I had everything needed for my return home. I patted my pockets for my phone, laptop, and passport. Check, check, check. However, this time, I had one more thing to make I didn’t leave behind: my teammates and coaches. This summer, they were going to experience my home in Greece, and I had the chance to introduce them to a different version of myself that I’d never been able to show away from home.

While I was excited to showcase my heritage, I was nonetheless anxious. I kept worrying that they might not enjoy the place or understand the specific lifestyles we treasure. I felt burdened with ensuring they had the best time possible.

However, as we approached Athens, this nervousness quickly faded. Looking around at my team, I saw the same excitement on everyone’s faces. My nerves gave way to my eagerness to share a part of my life that shaped who I am today.

Without my coaches’ decision to take this summer trip abroad, none of this would have been possible. I was thrilled to learn that they intended to “bring me home,” as NCAA regulations allow collegiate athletic teams to travel wherever they choose every four years.

Though many international students feel homesick, my busy schedule as a student-athlete only makes attending university far from home even harder. The seven-hour time difference between Boston and Athens makes it nearly impossible to consistently communicate with family, especially when practice times often fall during the short windows I could call

my parents. Thus, this trip represented more than a flight across the Atlantic.

As a rising junior, I have already spent two years attending college on a different continent, and even though I have found friends and activities to keep this new life happy, my longing for home deepens. My brother and parents are like my closest friends. Watching my friends drive a few hours up the

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coast to their hometowns reminds me how difficult it is to not be able to do the same. As a result, trips such as this are especially crucial for international student-athletes. Not only do we get to spend time with our family once more, but we also get to show the team we love our home.

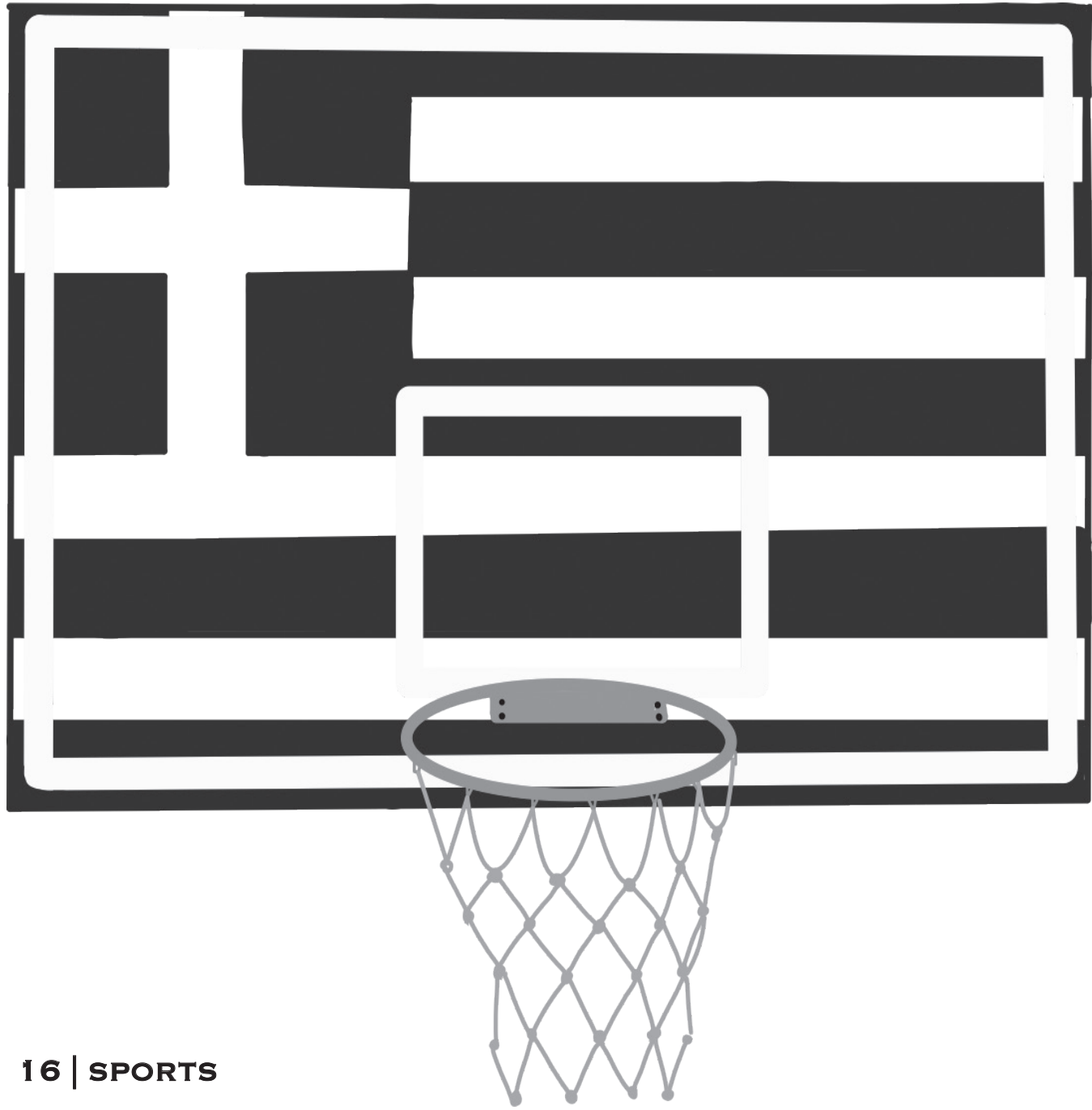
Naturally, the first thing on our itinerary was a visit to my house. As we drove up the roads that defined my childhood, my anticipation bubbled over. I started pointing out landmarks I used to judge how many minutes from home I was to my 30-plus teammates and coaches. I could smell my mother’s signature recipes even though we were a few miles away—though I was simultaneously waiting and praying for her cooking as she was now tasked with feeding a whole team of hungry collegiate athletes. I knew, of course, that she was up for the task—that is what Greeks do!

Feeling the bus come to a stop, I immediately jumped out, impatient to lead everyone through my

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front door. It was eerie how familiar yet alien the whole process felt: I was home, but instead of Greek, I was speaking English. Instead of simply dropping my bags and rushing to the living room, I found myself conducting a mini tour of the neighborhood that younger me had spent hours exploring.

While my childhood shaped who I am today, my time in college, away from home, has been just as important. Here, I could bring both sides together. My last fears were quelled as everyone enjoyed the food my mom prepared.



In Greece, sharing food and sitting at a table for hours is one of the many ways to really connect with someone. For us, a “rich” table symbolizes appreciation and hospitality. With every bite, it seemed like a different person was asking a question, whether about the food, the neighborhood, or my family. They took a particular liking to Pastichio and Mousaka, two traditional Greek dishes, and some of my favorites. If I were asked to give a couple of titles for this trip, the day we spent together eating would definitely have the word “unity.”

The most thrilling and unfamiliar part of my homecoming was experiencing my country as a tourist. One thing I know for sure is that I never would have

“WHILE MY CHILDHOOD SHAPED WHO I AM TODAY, MY TIME IN COLLEGE, AWAY FROM HOME, HAS BEEN JUST AS IMPORTANT. HERE, I COULD BRING BOTH SIDES TOGETHER. MY LAST FEARS WERE QUELLED AS EVERYONE ENJOYED THE FOOD MY MOM PREPARED.”

imagined myself at the Parthenon or on the Acropolis outside a field trip at 10 or 12 years old. I still found myself in awe of the ancient artifacts that hold so much memory, history, and value to Greek culture alongside my now-foreign-to-Greece teammates. Learning about your own culture through a tourist’s eyes is a different experience. I felt like I was traveling through time and experiencing our country’s history as an ancient Greek citizen myself. It made me realize that to value your culture, sometimes you have to act like you don’t know anything about it. Put your pride aside and acknowledge that being part of it doesn’t mean you know everything. Read, explore, and visit the places that are so-called common for you.

My favorite part of the trip was our game day in Aghia Paraskevi. We played at the same gym where I spent six years of my basketball career in Greece. Moreover, we were playing against G.S Agia Paraskevi, the same club team I once played for. Basketball continues to define my life, and while I now bleed Crimson, I can never forget my time with my hometown team—including playing for the Greek national team at just 12,

being recruited by some of the top American universities, and committing to attend the best: Harvard.

I was coming back to play, but this time I wore a large letter H, not Aghia Paraskevi. The little girl inside me with so many dreams was excited, and I found myself tapping my leg nervously. Little did I know that this night would turn out to be something even more special to me.

Before the game started, the announcer introduced me as a player and highlighted my accomplishments with the team, as well as achievements with the national team that shaped who I am as a player. Looking around the gym, I saw my family and closest friends; to the right, my team and coaches huddled around me; and to the left, important figures in Greek basketball waiting to honor me for my years at the club.

I could not help it—tears started rolling down my face. I was overwhelmed by satisfaction, gratitude, and happiness. It was almost as if I was experiencing eudaimonia at that moment. The time when “then” meets “after” in the present, offering a sense of peace

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and purpose. It was a full-circle moment that made me realize how important it is to remember and appreciate where you come from in order to move forward. All my favourite people in a place so important to who I was and who I have become, I take a moment to myself. I appreciate how far I have come and how much further I will go, carrying the memories of everything that shaped who I am today.

This trip also taught me how

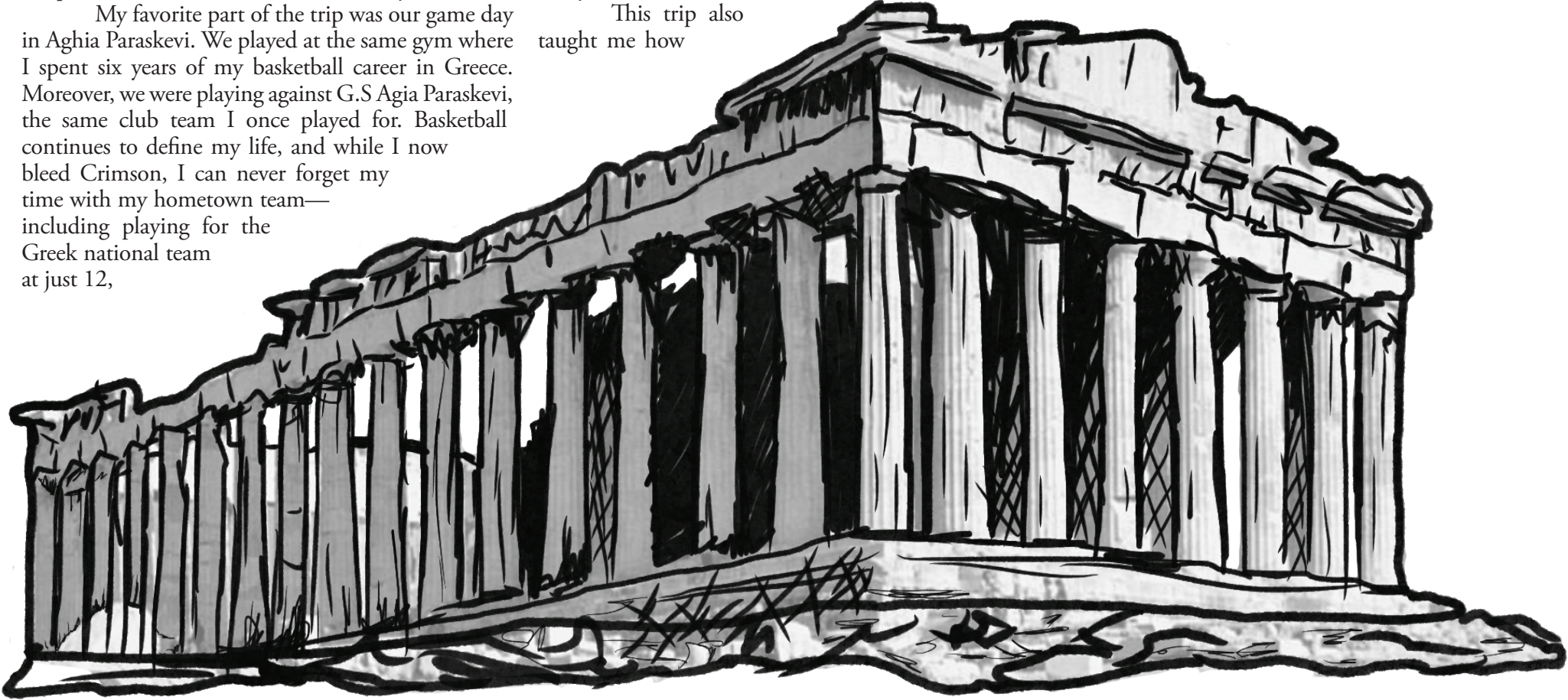
important it is to share your history and culture with your teammates and coaches. It is not just about bringing you closer to one another, but also about allowing others into your life and sharing the

“IT MADE ME REALIZE THAT TO VALUE YOUR CULTURE, SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO ACT LIKE YOU DON’T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT. PUT YOUR PRIDE ASIDE AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT BEING PART OF IT DOESN’T MEAN YOU KNOW EVERYTHING. READ, EXPLORE, AND VISIT THE PLACES THAT ARE SO-CALLED COMMON FOR YOU.”

experiences that have shaped you. Allowing your team to get to know all versions of yourself and form deeper connections. As athletes, these connections translate onto the court, leading to better collaboration, greater trust, and, ultimately, championships. But beyond being an athlete, I realized that letting people know your story and understanding where you come from matters, simply as a person. Sometimes, letting others into your life is what allows you to build the kind of connections that stay with you beyond the hours you spend on the court.

LYDIA CHATIRA ’28 (LYDIACHATIRA@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU), WHO IS PROBABLY AT PRACTICE WHILE YOU’RE READING THIS.

GRAPHICS BY MEGAN LEGAULT ’28 AND LINDEN MCCARL ’28



Opening New Doors?

A discussion about recent gender controversies in the Women’s National Basketball Association.

By **TYLER DANG ’28 & CAROLINE STOHRER ’28**

There has never been a transgender player in the Women’s National Basketball Association. So why is there an uproar around transgender players’ inclusion in the WNBA?

In July, ESPN ran a story about Indiana Fever guard Sophie Cunningham, dubbed ‘MAGA Barbie’ for her conservative political views. While the story covered many aspects of Cunningham as a player and a person, many viewers honed in on her comments that women should be able to “protect women’s sports” and “shouldn’t have to go against biological men.”

The league’s 2026 Collective Bargaining Agreement offers little clarification on gender eligibility. “Only players who are women are eligible to

Discussing identity is difficult, particularly given the complexities surrounding the term as used today. Gender identity can be defined as the “innermost concept of self.” Because we cannot determine another’s internal perception of self, we cannot definitively argue against how another person identifies. If an ex-NBA player claims to identify as a woman, there is no objective way to dispute their stated gender identity, unlike other potential sources of competitive advantage, such as performance-enhancing drugs, which can be tested for and regulated.

The issue with factoring identity into sports is the possibility of a physical advantage over the competition. Many studies suggest that athletic performance differs between biological sexes, especially after puberty. Men, on average, have a competitive advantage over women due mostly to testosterone differences and other physiological factors. Though gaps in research on women’s athletic performance may limit the ability to determine the magnitude of that advantage.

However, as a basis for excluding transgender women athletes from women’s leagues, physiological differences fall short of serving as an effective differentiator due to the need for talent alongside physical attributes.

Physical ability is not the only determinant of a good athlete. Michael Phelps may have been born with the ideal torso-limb ratio and a reduced production of lactic acid for swimming, but he still had to master the butterfly stroke. In team sports like basketball, where the task is more complex than who can run the fastest or jump the highest, skill remains the biggest determinant of how good an athlete is.

Even identical twins possess different strengths and weaknesses as competitors. The Burge twins played basketball during the 90s. Both Heather and Heide were tall, 6-foot-5 forwards/centers, but their playing styles differed. While Heather was the more traditional big, excelling in the interior, Heide relied more on outside shooting.

Because of the need for talent, these sports leagues are accessible to a wide range of physiques. Just as a 6-foot-5 forward who flourishes on the inside is important, so is a 5-foot-10 point guard who can feed that forward. A transgender male-to-female player, while perhaps possessing greater physical prowess, still needs the talent and intangibles to succeed. So allowing these athletes to compete alongside other women does not mean female athletes will be disadvantaged.

If allowing athletes who were male at birth to compete in women’s leagues does not guarantee success, why not open the door to a more inclusive league? The WNBA exists to give women a platform to showcase their talent and compete among the best. If the league is to allow for transgender athletes, there needs to be a guarantee that showcasing women’s skill

remains the focus. How can we be sure that male athletes are not claiming to identify as women for the sake of facing “easier” opponents?

Incorporating transgender athletes who identify as women is still highlighting women’s talent. Maybe they have a physical advantage, but physical advantages and differences exist among cisgender female athletes, and these transgender athletes are competing alongside those they identify with and respect. But what stops men who either were not talented enough to succeed in male leagues or are no longer good enough to compete from labeling themselves as women and using their physical advantages to renew their fame? Instead of respecting the competition and appreciating the opportunity

“DO LEAGUES DEDICATED TO CELEBRATING AND SHOWCASING WOMEN’S TALENT NEED TO INCLUDE TRANSGENDER WOMEN? IF SO, HOW DO YOU PREVENT ABUSE OF THE SYSTEM?”

play in the WNBA,” the Women’s National Basketball Association 2026 Collective Bargaining Agreement states. Cunningham’s comments come at a time when gender in sports has come under a magnifying glass. Even cisgender players, such as Brittney Griner of the WNBA, have been accused of secretly being a “man in the league.”

Cunningham argued for separating competition largely on the basis of biological advantages. However, because of her reputation for leaning right politically, many interpreted her stance as anti-transgender. Capitalizing on the attention, a few ex-NBA players declared for the WNBA draft while identifying as women. Though these players were deemed ineligible to play in the WNBA, the ambiguity raises concerns about the future of the WNBA and sports more broadly, especially around inclusion. Do leagues dedicated to celebrating and showcasing women’s talent need to include transgender women? If so, how do you prevent abuse of the system?

“HOW CAN WE BE SURE THAT MALE ATHLETES ARE NOT CLAIMING TO IDENTIFY AS WOMEN FOR THE SAKE OF FACING ‘EASIER’ OPPONENTS?”

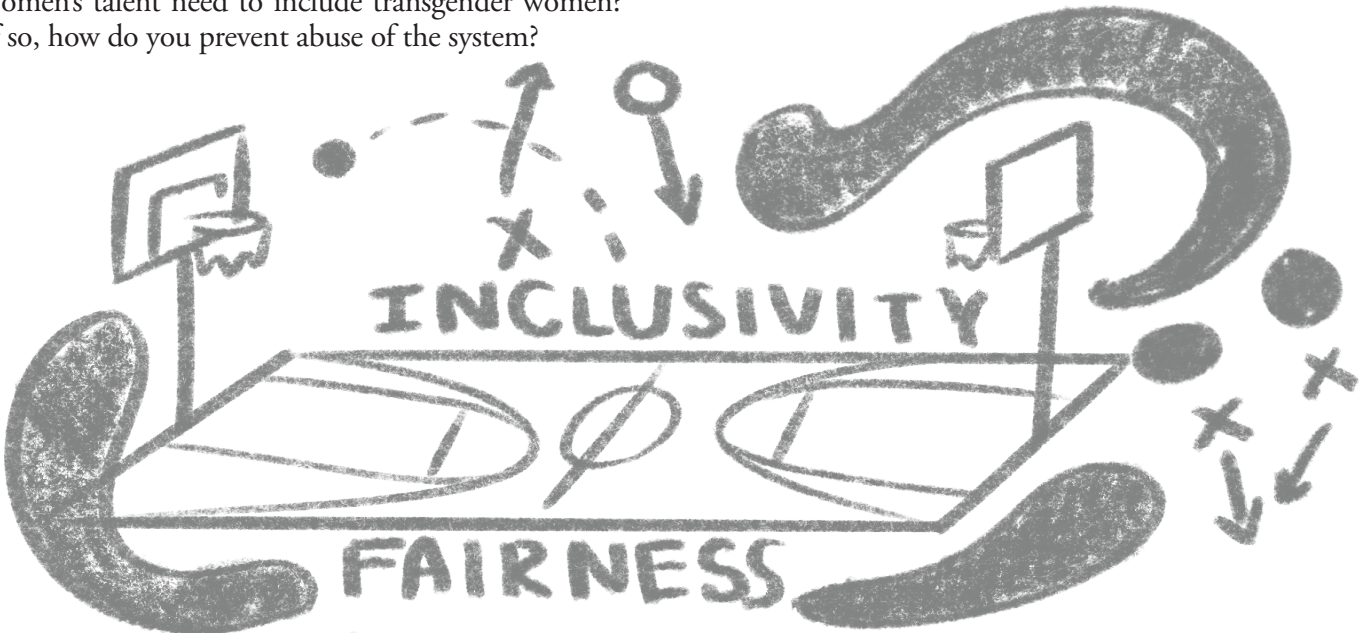
to play alongside other great female athletes, such athletes could theoretically misrepresent their gender identity to gain a competitive advantage.

Hypotheticals aside, it is important to acknowledge that there are almost no transgender athletes competing in the United States, regardless of the sport—in the NCAA, trans athletes made up less than 0.1% of U.S. college athletes last year. Nevertheless, amid the current culture war and scrutiny of gender in sports, operating without formal definitions or regulations governing transgender eligibility will contort the WNBA and other women’s leagues away from showcasing female talent.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine someone’s intentions with absolute certainty. Perhaps an ex-NBA player truly feels they identify more with women. Perhaps they are looking for the right outlet to display their talents. There is no way to know for certain. But that ambiguity is threatening. Even if allowing transgender male-to-female athletes is a good step toward inclusivity, the WNBA must protect its main goal.

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GRAPHIC BY CAMERON BERNIER ’29



From Harvard to the NFL

Patriots rookie, Jacob Rizy '23, reflects on his time at Harvard and his journey to the New England Patriots.

By MEGAN LEGAULT '28

Long before his first step on the field at Harvard Stadium, Jacob Rizy '23 already had the National Football League in mind. It has shaped his decision-making since the start of his athletic career.

During his high school recruitment process, Harvard's football program stood out as an offer that could help him ascend both academically and personally to the highest level. At the time, Harvard was led by Tim Murphy, the longest-tenured and winningest head coach in the Ivy League. Not to mention that the program had produced several NFL offensive linemen whose high school recruiting profiles were not much different from his own: a steadfast offensive lineman ready to give his all.

"I decided on Harvard due to [its] history of development, loyalty, and obviously academics,"

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- JACOB RIZY '23

Rizy explained in an interview with the "Harvard Independent."

"Harvard was the ideal place for me to grow as a student, athlete, and person," Rizy added.

Arriving in Cambridge during the COVID-19 pandemic, Rizy's freshman football season, like all other campus activities, was canceled, and because of restrictions, only freshmen lived on campus—this was by no means a typical first-year experience.

For the football team, the pandemic brought a season without quarterbacks, virtually no contact, and too few players on campus to run anything resembling a productive practice. "As an offensive lineman, there was very little for me to actually accomplish as my position revolves around contact," reflected Rizy.

Perhaps one of the only silver linings of this unconventional year was team bonding. "Our freshman class [became] a close-knit group; however, it felt more like a gap year than his first year on a Division 1 football team," Rizy shared. After navigating the trials of his ill-timed freshman season, Rizy appeared in only two games during his sophomore season, allowing him to preserve a year of eligibility through a redshirt.

Frustrating as it was, the setbacks of Rizy's earlier career ironically ended up pushing him forward. "Although not having a lot of playing time and navigating COVID was difficult those two years, I was granted a lot of time to develop and learn how to play college football," Rizy said. "Offensive line play is notoriously dependent on development, so this actually benefited me to wait so long to play regardless of how frustrated I was."

In an effort to make Harvard's travel team during his sophomore season, Rizy began practicing all five offensive line positions rather than specializing in a specific position on the O-line. "I love competing and found myself doing whatever I could to earn a role early on," Rizy said. It was not until his junior season that Rizy's long wait finally came to an end.

Going into his third season for the Crimson, the team needed a right tackle. Having practiced at the position, Rizy naturally assumed the role. After a long journey to the field, Rizy stepped into his first full season with two additional years of development under

his belt, plus versatility and field vision from practicing all five offensive line positions. Unsurprisingly, that season Rizy blocked for the Ivy League standout running back, Aidan Borguet, earning Second-Team All-Ivy League and Second-Team All-New England honors along the way.

During his senior season, Rizy's versatility once again helped him earn a starting role, this time at the newly vacant left tackle position on the Crimson's O-line. As for accolades, he had what one would call an "upward trajectory"—upgrading his Second-Team honors from the previous season to First-Team.

And while Rizy's grit certainly remained a major factor in his success, his transformation into a chameleon on the offensive line was also a testament to the support he received from Harvard Football's coaching staff. "Ultimately, my coaches were the ones who gave me all of those opportunities," he said. "All I did was say yes when they offered them and let them teach me how to do it."

Upon graduating, Rizy had developed—as most Harvard students do—many lifelong friendships and an unwavering (albeit biased) pride in the Eliot House community alongside his athletic talents. "While it was definitely hard work to earn a degree and play football at the most prestigious college in the world, I would do it all over again in a heartbeat," Rizy said.

His four years with the Crimson ultimately culminated in a stunning triple-overtime victory over Penn, earning the team a share of the 2023 Ivy League title.

Still intent on reaching the NFL, Rizy decided to enter the transfer portal at the end of his time with the Crimson. "My best path to the NFL was to



transfer up to a bigger school and play against better competition to increase my stock," Rizy said. Next, Rizy had to close the chapter on his Harvard career.

In June, the NCAA instated age-based eligibility guidelines permitting a fifth year. Despite this national change, the Ivy League contentiously maintains that only enrolled undergraduates may compete in the conference. It does so to ensure the league's focus on a traditional four-year undergraduate experience. Thus, Ivy League athletes like Rizy who want to utilize their additional eligibility must transfer to outside programs.

Rizy's offensive versatility made him an asset in both the graduate transfer portal, where he eventually committed to Florida State University, and later helped him draw attention from NFL scouts. "Playing multiple positions helped a ton in the process of moving to higher and higher levels as it displayed that I can do what the team requires in order to win games," Rizy explained. During his two years at

FSU, Rizy's adaptability remained on full display, yet again making appearances at all five positions for the Seminoles, just as he had done for Harvard.

"It was conflicting at first to put on another uniform because I loved my time at Harvard," Rizy admitted. Over time and with the support of his teammates, coaches, and communities, Rizy adjusted to life as a Seminole. Through it all, the camaraderie and dedicated fanbases he had known at Harvard remained familiar, even in his new environment.

"I love the contrast in environments between Boston and Tallahassee," shared Rizy. "Being from

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HARVARD ATHLETE TO ME."**

the Northeast, it was great to experience Southern hospitality for the first time."

After signing with the New England Patriots this spring, Rizy's football career seems to have come full circle—or shall we say, round trip? Returning to the Northeast—Foxborough, more specifically—Rizy spent the summer training as a center with the Patriots, bringing his patient tenacity with him.

After a successful summer, he quickly became one of the team's top backup centers, and recently, he was named one of 12 players signed to this year's practice squad. Most notably, on Aug. 13, Rizy, then third-string, made an unexpected appearance in a preseason matchup against the Indianapolis Colts after Ben Brown was injured in the first quarter.

In a post-practice press conference after his appearance, Rizy commented on his time on the field and adjusting to the speed of the NFL.

"The first thing that crossed my mind was, you know, I know how much Ben has been working. It was really unfortunate to see that happen," Rizy commented to the media. "You never wish that for your teammates—but I knew I had to go play."

"He's battled, he's competed, he's studied," said Patriots Head Coach Mike Vrabel about Rizy's performance to the media—sounds like a Harvard athlete to me. Not much unlike his early career, many unknowns remain in Rizy's future with the Patriots. For now, Rizy told the media he is focusing on "trying to get 1% better every day" as he continues to adjust to the pace and play of the NFL.

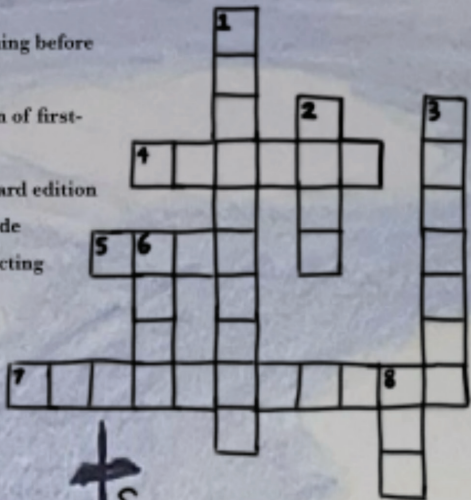
Rizy continues to demonstrate the attributes that made him successful for the Crimson, from his tenacious yet patient approach to the field to his continued adherence to "Harvard Football time." The standard Coach Tim Murphy set is simple: arrive 15 minutes early to everything.

MEGAN LEGAULT '28 (MLEGAULT@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) THINKS JACOB RIZY HAS AN AWESOME NAME.

GRAPHIC BY SARAHLUNA SASSINE '29



- Down:
- 1. What one may pull the evening before an exam?
 - 2. Collective name for location of first-year housing
 - 3. "Rate my Professor," Harvard edition
 - 6. Protagonist of Legally Blonde
 - 8. Confidential contract protecting sensitive information, abbr.



- Across
- 4. Application that hosts all your assignments
 - 5. First year dining hall and neighbor to Sanders Theatre
 - 7. The best newspaper to comp at Harvard.

crossword by Chau Nguyen

COMP
the indy



UPCOMING EVENTS!

Open House: Saturday, September 5th, 1-4pm @ 12 Arrow St.
Info Session 1 - Sunday, September 6th, 5pm @ 12 Arrow St.
Info Session 2 - Monday, September 7th, 6pm @ 12 Arrow St.

Mia Park Tavares

COVER ART BY AMELIE LIMA '27
LAYOUT BY SAM PARK '29 AND LINDEN MCCARL '28

Rania Jones

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