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Letters

to the editor

Cliché-ridden Commencement talk

To the Editor:
 It is difficult to be restrained in commenting about the trite, cliché-ridden content of the "English Address" at June's Commencement. This was the consensus of the graduates and parents with whom I talked that afternoon. Most used stronger expressions than these.

To permit the time of some 10,000 people to be wasted in this manner seems without justification.

If this was truly judged to be best by the selection committee, then surely a more energetic effort should be made next year to find qualified, intelligent applicants or such speeches should be eliminated from the program. If, on the other hand, the selection committee exercised poor judgment, it would appear that the membership of the committee should be improved.

What a poor demonstration it was! What a sad loss of over 3,000 listening hours to the audience! What a blight on an otherwise beautiful day!

ROBERT W. SHOEMAKER JR. '43
 Anderson, Ind.

A degree will not be forthcoming

To the Editor:
 Cheers for Adam Yarmolinsky's "Where are you likely to spend eternity?" (June, page 50).

He failed, however, to ask a key question — though coming close with the one on the nature of thought at 3 a.m. My key question: What are your recurring dreams?"

The reason for this is that I think I am on the trail of something big. One of my r.d.'s goes like this:

I am back at Harvard. It is exam time. I realize there is one course whose lectures I have not attended and whose books I have not read. I don't even know where the damn class meets. A sense of panic enfolds me—relieved only by awakening.

(I hasten to assure you that no such backsliding occurred when I was a student.)

Now I have already surveyed Nat Benchley '39, who claims he has had sim-

ilar nocturnal fantasies. Let us now commission Yarmolinsky to move forward and determine the extent of this syndrome among alumni. Should it be widespread, the University no doubt has a responsibility to formulate rites by which the demon may be exorcised.

E. C. K. READ '40

New York City

Editor's note: Mr. Read is on the trail of something big. At least two BULLETIN staffers have recurring dreams essentially identical to the one Read describes. The magazine will welcome communications from readers similarly afflicted.

Man and God at Harvard

To the Editor:

One of the features of Memorial Church services has always been the diversity of first-rate preachers one had the opportunity of hearing. Why isn't this just as good, or better, than the appointment not only of a preacher, but of a Roman Catholic priest and a rabbi to the University, as is reportedly being considered ("The Undergraduate," June, page 21)? Let ministers of all faiths preach in turn. This is excellent University recognition, and enough.

A. B. HORSFALL '30

Savannah, Ga.

Them as has, gits

To the Editor:

Hail to Lucien O. Hooper ("Nota bene," June, page 57)! Hail my pardner in life! Hail Lucien O. Hooper '18, a fellow traveler on a far different road, and a fellow admirer of wisdom. I heard Lucien O. Hooper calling from Wall Street, a place I've never been, and he said, "money comes faster when you don't need it than when you just must have it."

Friends, I've played poker all my life, all over Texas and Arizona and many other parts of the country, and I know what Lucien O. Hooper says is the God's truth. Sometimes, when I was young and ignorant, and happened to be broke, I'd set into poker games with two or three dollars I had borrowed out of the bill-paying money, desperate for money, and I'd have hopes of worrying that two bucks

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Letters

to the editor

Remember enemies

To the Editor:

I thought Fred Hapgood's piece in the July issue, "Remember Enemies," was a very fine thing. It spoke to me. I would like to see more pieces like it. I should think others would agree.

KEVIN LEWIS '65

Columbia, S.C.

Fashion in the making

To the Editor:

While I often discern in your pages good reasons for my antipathy to Harvard, I am also grateful for the faithfulness with which you convey a sense of the University in the diversity of its surface. I have the impression that in recent years you have undertaken to give a more serious portrait, so that the real worth of Harvard can be described at times through the slick veneer of its urbane smugness.

I do not for a minute envy Harvard its problems in undergraduate education, nor can I see it as possessing the resources to handle them in a worthwhile way. However, on occasion, through your pages I learn something of a much wider scope from reading about them. It is good at times to get an intimate look at fashion in the making, even when fashion has no appeal. Harvard has a mighty impact, be it for better or for worse.

ROBERT S. BART '40

Maiori, Italy

The art of acoustics

To the Editor:

Your lively account (August, page 9) of the acoustical deficiencies of the Fogg Museum Lecture Room (Hunt Hall) stopped just short of a surprise happy ending (of sorts).

When the room was completed in 1895, the acoustics were indeed so abominably bad that the lecture room had to be abandoned, to the embarrassment of all concerned, including President Eliot. Casting about for some (any) solution, he noted a capable young member of the Department of Physics (just promoted from laboratory instructor to assistant professor) and set him to work on the

problem. That is how Wallace Clement Sabine, one of Harvard's most distinguished scientists, came to found the modern science (and art) of room acoustics, devising the concepts of reverberation-time and absorption coefficients, and laying the groundwork for his acoustical design of Symphony Hall in Boston and for a very pervasive sector of the modern building-materials industry (look at the ceiling of virtually any office building).

The lecture room? It stoutly and successfully resisted his best efforts, but I respectfully suggest that it be considered, not as an unsolved problem, but as a highly successful catalyst, which initiated and brought about a valuable and important reaction without itself being altered in the slightest degree!

Further information on this subject (and well worth reading) may be found in William Dana Orcutt's biography: *Wallace Clement Sabine-A Study in Achievement* (Chapter VI).

JOHN A. KESSLER '42

Cambridge

See page 46 for details about Professor Sabine's instruments.

Whither Red Top?

To the Editor:

I am compelled to congratulate you on the accuracy (and diplomacy) of the column entitled "Annals of Rowing" appearing in your July issue [page 48], and signed "Blade." A very sharp blade indeed, in its precise description of Harvard undergraduate and graduate oarsmen's wishes, and the dilemma created by Yale's recent rather curious disability.

"Blade" correctly assessed undergraduate rowing enthusiasm for Red Top and a four-mile race in that location against an earnest opponent. With regard to "old Harvard oars," I think a specific note or two in order: in addition to the gift of Red Top itself, and production of the endowment referred to by "Blade" as generating \$12,000 a year, the old oars have raised and expended multiples of such an endowment in recent years for trips and equipment not

related to Red Top. There is little doubt that much of this recent capital would have been made available to increase the Red Top endowment, had the subject been raised. There is also little doubt that the very attractive Red Top property is capable of generating income during parts of the year when the crew is not in residence. This practical observation is noted in the late Mr. Herrick's book, *Red Top*, as having been made as early as 1929. From the standpoint of the old oars, the whole matter of Red Top is not properly subject to a "jaundiced view" [by Harvard's governing boards], but rather calls for responsible and constructive concern by all hands.

Having now steered into some undiplomatic waters left unruffled by "Blade," I must say that I was nevertheless so impressed by the "Blade" article that I read the whole issue with enjoyment, and a disposition to be convinced that a number of things besides crew are going well at Harvard.

E. H. BENNETT JR. '37

Marblehead, Mass.

Recurring dream

To the Editor:

The letter of E.C.K. Read '40 [BULLETIN, August, page 4] will doubtless evoke a tidal wave of response. Of course your staffers share his nightmare of panic about the final exam in the course for which one knows nothing, not even the location of the lecture room. I had always assumed that *everyone* who has experienced being an undergraduate at Harvard has this dream, as part of the heritage.

I am confident that Mr. Read, and all others similarly afflicted, will admit to variations on the general theme. For example, I have experienced the recurrent dream of the bluebook on which I write furiously for three hours, and then hand in—totally blank. The basic trauma is, and always will be, the same.

WALTER J. HANDLEMAN '53

Scarsdale, N.Y.

More dream letters, all poignant, will appear next month.

Letters

to the editor

Recurring dreams

The August issue carried a letter from E. C. K. Read '40, describing a recurring dream in which Read was back at Harvard, facing an examination in a course he had not attended, and for which he had done no reading. The mail provoked by Read's letter has been unusually heavy.

To the Editor:

At least once a year I dream I am about to enter Memorial Hall for a French or Early Byzantine Art exam, knowing full well I have never attended a lecture in the course or cracked one of the textbooks, much less bothered to buy one. It is a shattering nightmare and I wake up in a cold sweat.

I have not consulted a psychiatrist, but I believe this r.d. may somehow be related to another r.d. which has me locked out of my Lexington Avenue apartment building at midnight—stark naked.

LANSING LAMONT '52

New York City

To the Editor:

Perhaps twice a year comes the most destructive fantasy of my supercharged, achievement-oriented youth: I must face an exam in a course I totally ignored, even to the point of never attending a single class or cracking a single book. Upon awakening, I am only weakly convinced that it has been only a dream; I must rehearse a catechism including such points as date of graduation, degree of honors, and number of dependents declared on the last income-tax return, to be totally convinced.

We are on the trail of something bigger than Harvard; my wife has had the same dream without ever having attended Harvard.

RICHARD M. LOWENTHAL '64

San Francisco

To the Editor:

Ever since 1925 I periodically dream about German 1C. The fugue centers on getting to midyears on time. No part of venerable Sever Hall, where the exam

was scheduled, has escaped my nightmares—including the flagpole and the earthen-floored basement latrine. A more depleting variant involves a search for Professor Heinrich Conrad Bierwirth backward through time. It is even tougher to find an exam that began several days earlier, when racing with Instructor George Maxwell Howe, who is scurrying to retrieve those limpid bluebooks from an elusive classroom.

An antidote that obtunds the r.d.'s for several months is my annual tribute to David McCord's Harvard Fund.

CARL W. WALTER '28, M.D. '32
Boston

To the Editor:

Dear E.C.K. Read '40,

How did you know? I had that dream almost nightly for a decade after graduation. I think what started it was a whacky last term—I was taking intensive beginning German (two courses), Twentieth Century French Literature (one course), and thesis-for-credit (one course). With the consent of everyone involved, I was allowed to skip German for six weeks while I finished thesis, generals, and the literature course. Then I did nothing *but* German, took its exam on the afternoon of the last day of exam period, graduated, and married six days later.

While I am still married to the same wonderful Caleb Warner, both my tutor and my German teacher (Edward Addelson and Kurt Lessen) have since died. To both of them I will always be grateful for helping me limp through a very difficult stage in my life.

ALICE SIZER WARNER '50
Lexington, Mass.

To the Editor:

My parents (Harvard and Vassar), wife (Radcliffe), and I are all racked with dreams featuring exams for which we are totally unprepared. My customary nightmare is a five-minute black-and-white episode which does not actually include the exam, but the anguish prior to it. Out of four college courses I have prepared adequately for English and history, but have done literally nothing for perennially weak subjects like math. After reading

your last issue I found myself at the beginning of a conversational Spanish exam where the instructor was rattling off words at a rapid-fire rate. Naturally I don't speak a word of Spanish.

ARTHUR C. HODGES '57
Essex, Mass.

To the Editor:

E.C.K. Read has opened a Pandora's Box. I predict a deluge from candidates for the professional couch.

My recurring dream is even worse. The course is always something like Comparative Philological Thought in the Sixteenth Century. I can't even spell it, much less understand it. I plead with the Dean, who usually resembles Joseph Goebbels, that I never even signed up for the course. (A clue here. In real life I may be undistinguished in many things, but—being in politics—am close to a Magna in Self-Justification.)

Suddenly my wife's worried voice intrudes. I get up and take a cold shower.

Is there any hope for salvation?

BRUCE H. ZEISER '45
State Representative,
9th Norfolk District

Wellesley, Mass.

To the Editor:

E.C.K. Read's letter touched a sensitive spot in my own psyche. Although I do not experience a single r.d. on this theme, my nightmares feature a repertoire of variations on it, ranging from a duplicate of Mr. Read's to some in which only the exam-anxiety-Harvard elements are recognizable in an otherwise bizarre setting.

A few examples may be of use in your research.

1. It is final exam time. I have been delayed in reaching the exam room. I take my seat. I recognize no one in the room. As I pick up the question sheet, I realize I am in the wrong place. I dash out and try frantically to find my exam without success. There is a horrifying sense of time slipping by irrevocably. I awaken with a pounding heart.

2. I am seated in a large dim room. I pick up the question sheet. It is written in a foreign language, not one word of

which I can understand. The instructor, whom I recognize, begins to speak. His words convey no meaning to me. My fellow students fall to work, while I remain paralyzed, staring at the questions.

3. I am in the right place, I understand the exam, I start to write. Before I complete the first question, the papers are collected. Everyone else seems to be satisfied with the time allotted.

Although I managed to stay on the Dean's List throughout my stay at Harvard, it was a costly effort. I paid for it in the beginning of a series of migraine headaches that lasted for almost twenty years. The headaches were tied directly to the reaction to final exams. The recurring dreams, unlike the headaches, have not stopped. The last one occurred this summer, not more than three weeks ago.

I congratulate Mr. Read for uncovering this phenomenon. Perhaps the BULLETIN will be able to report how common the experience is among the alumni.

WILLIAM D. JOYCE '50
Worcester, Mass.

To the Editor:

It is the only dream I ever have. I dream I am running up and down the stairs of Sever Hall, about to take a final exam in advanced French, but I don't know where the classroom is because I haven't been to any of the classes. It is always a huge relief to wake up.

ANSTISS HAMMOND DRAKE '62
Chicago

To the Editor:

My dreams are worse because I want to read the books and hear the lectures. I also share in Mr. Read's sense of panic.

SAMUEL L. M. COLE '39, M.S. '40
Scotch Plains, N.J.

To the Editor:

Mr. Read should be more than thankful for his nocturnal tranquillity, since there seems to be only one course he is having trouble with. My recurring and almost nightly dream goes like this.

I am back at Harvard College. I have been sent there by somebody in law school who, even though I was granted a law degree in 1948, thinks I should go back to college to make sure I have graduated properly.

If I don't they will take away my law degree.

I argue—but he is unflappable. I cannot find my classes, my books, or my room. No one can be of any help, even though

they are thirty years younger than I and much more knowledgeable.

I leave my battered suitcase behind a guitar in a room full of garrulous but friendly twenty-year-olds.

I take the subway into South Station and make some wrong turn, winding up on a train which leaves me in Worcester, Hartford, or Providence, depending on the night of the week.

It is only two hours before exam time. The few books I have are somewhere on the subway heading for Ashmont.

The next train for Boston doesn't leave for an hour, and no one is sure it will run at all.

I solve the problem by waking up. I might add that I have company in my misery, because my wife goes back to Vassar every night and hasn't graduated yet.

I might also state that I sing her to sleep with a lullaby written by Mr. Read over thirty years ago, which goes, in part:

Here we are, out of marijuana,
Pulling all the keys out of the piano,
Two sleepy meatballs, by dawn's
early light,
And too much on the ball to say
good night.

Please continue your efforts to trace down the meaning of the Read Syndrome.

BANCROFT G. DAVIS '41
New York City

To the Editor:

I graduated from both the College and the Business School, but my dream is always set at the College. I will follow with great interest what would seem to be fascinating research into the epidemiology of this archetypal nightmare.

MICHAEL BLUMENFELD '55,
M.B.A. '60
New York City

To the Editor:

... It makes me wonder whether most Harvard men are not really anxiety-ridden neurotic grinds beneath their poses of success and self-possession. Perhaps you would distribute a confidential questionnaire with your next issue, and we would find the real results of a Harvard education.

PETER H. GIBBON '64
Tarrytown, N.Y.

To the Editor:

The E.C.K. Read nightmare, you will discover, is widespread. I began having the same dream in graduate school after the war. I thought my dream was unique,

Bill Campbell came to Northfield Mount Hermon and taught remedial reading at a local school.

Bill wanted to go to prep school but he didn't want to be a "preppie." He liked what his friends told him about Northfield Mount Hermon and a visit confirmed what he'd heard.

Sports and "involvement" are important to Bill Campbell. In his senior year he was co-captain of soccer, hockey and lacrosse, and was elected All-American for New England in soccer.

In his last term, he chose an apprenticeship to help a local high school student with a reading difficulty. Bill's comment: "I'm going to get him through."

When he leaves his home in North Carolina to go to Brown next year, Bill may pursue his interests in teaching. Whatever he does, he'll beat the average. He wasn't an average student here. But then again, we don't think anybody is average.



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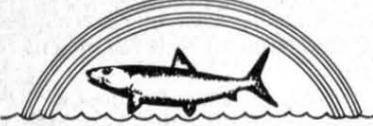
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because at college I took an Old Testament course in the Divinity School, which I attended once. When exam time arrived, I realized my lack of preparation. *Panic!*

The nightmare continued for 20 or 25 years until a group of us discussed our nightmares and discovered we all had suffered that one. There have been no recurrences since that discussion.

HAROLD M. BAILIN '43
Silver Spring, Md.

To the Editor:

Sometimes I do get to the class, or exam, but very late and totally unprepared. Or I desperately race back to my hopelessly distant room to search for non-existent notes. And the bell in Memorial Hall tolls for me.

The thing is not confined to Harvard, though. My wife dreams the same dream about Randolph-Macon College, and I know of cases going back to earlier school days.

To belabor the obvious, there is a lesson here on the tyranny of schedules and tests in our educational system—or is that too easy?

GEORGE H. WOLFSON '37
East Hampton, Conn.

To the Editor:

... My dream has a minor variation in that I'm not real sure it's Harvard, and I wonder what the hell I'm doing back in the academic arena.

Why should such a weird thing occur at the dawn of senility?

Are these dreams particularly common among the summas, magnas, PBK's, and other "greasy grinds" of yesterday? I wonder.

JONATHAN B. RICHARDS '34mcl,
LL.B. '37
Red Oak, Iowa

To the Editor:

Even the thought while awake induces a suggestion of the dream panic.

How great the day when the demon may be exorcised.

WALTER R. AMESBURY JR. '36,
M.B.A. '38
Philadelphia

To the Editor:

I wonder if it occurs only after a fairly long interval after one has left Harvard. I am about the same vintage as Mr. Read, and the r.d. did not give me trouble until recent years.

At any rate, with all the great minds that will now be brought to bear on the

subject, the cure for the affliction will undoubtedly be forthcoming shortly!

HENRY W. MAXWELL '41
Hinsdale, Ill.

To the Editor:

Doesn't Harvard have someone who can straighten this out for us? I'm tired of feeling guilty about missing all those classes.

LAWRENCE HOWE '42
Chicago, Ill.

Editor's note:

Dr. Randolph Catlin, associate psychiatrist to the University Health Services, suggests that "anxiety dreams" like Mr. Read's may serve a positive function: they provide a way for the subconscious to release current tensions. In daily life, a person may be facing anxieties that he cannot tolerate directly. His dream displaces these anxieties to a past experience that is more familiar and tolerable—like exam-taking.

In some cases, however, it may be that exam-taking was a truly traumatic experience, like an airplane crash. The sleeper dreams and redreams it in order to gain control of it. "Eventually," says Dr. Catlin, "he no longer wakes up screaming."

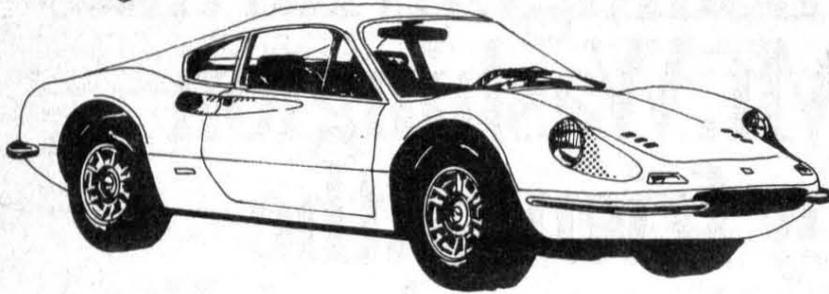
Dr. Catlin believes Harvard people may be particularly susceptible to exam-taking dreams, because they came to college under unusual pressure to achieve.

The magazine also asked Gary E. Schwartz, assistant professor of personality psychology, for his comments. Professor Schwartz replied: "The irony of this request is that while on a two-week vacation in Maine, which has just ended, I had two dreams of a very similar type, only couched in a professor's role rather than that of a student. My dream was that I had forgotten to prepare my reading lists and introductory lecture for my psychophysiology course. I had forgotten when the course was to begin, and had no idea where it was to be held. This reminded me of my graduate days at Harvard: although I was a successful student, I nonetheless had on a few occasions a dream of having forgotten to take a final exam, or having improperly fulfilled course requirements.

"Ever since Freud's monumental work on psychoanalysis, dreams have been used as one indication of people's underlying conflicts and concerns. Although today many psychologists and psychiatrists place little credence in overinterpreted dreams, most behavioral scientists would agree that significant stresses



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experienced during the day may emerge in one form or another as a dream occurring during specific states of sleep. The life of a college student, particularly involving courses and grades, is a major period of human stress. Even though one may handle these stresses effectively, this does not necessarily mean that the significant memories and images have disappeared. Also, when one's post-college life involves complex interactions with careers and family, dealing with problems and schedules, yet continuing to personally grow and advance, it comes as little surprise that such a person would experience similar conflicts in his dreams, including the restimulation of earlier, unresolved stresses.

"At the same time, the wish to return to those earlier, 'less stressful' times at college would also act to bring out college memories.

"I suspect that this may be a universal dream for college students, though it may well be more prevalent for Harvard than for other universities, given the high quality and motivation of its students, and the demands and stimulation afforded by the Harvard environment. Since I have seen little experimental research performed on this particular topic, I would welcome finding a Harvard student in psychology interested in doing a thesis on understanding the full determinants and significance of this dream.

"P.S. On reading this to my wife, she—an alumna of another university—reports having similar dreams."

The policy of Harvard Magazine is to print all letters from readers on matters of substance. The editors reserve the right to abridge longer letters to fit the space available. More word from troubled dreamers, as well as communications on other subjects, will appear in the November issue.

Picture credits

Pages 9, 58-9, 73-4, Lilian Kemp; 11, 19, 20, 48, 76, Rick Stafford; 12, Joe Kovacs; 13, 15, Anne Fadiman; 19, 20, Paul Donahue; 27, 29, 61, Christopher S. Johnson; 28, Harvard University News Office; 32, Paul Birnbaum; 33, Harvard University Archives; 36 (bottom), Time Inc.; 50, 54-5, Harry Dodson; 51, Mark Shwayder; 57, Ted Dully; 80, Barbara Boatner.

Is she by any chance a relative of Clifton Fadiman of "Information Please" fame?

RICHARD L. HAPGOOD '25

Gloucester, Mass.

Editor's note: his daughter.

Inadvertently, we failed to give the name of the Sahara expedition in full. It is the Harvard-Smithsonian-National Geographic Sahara Total Eclipse Expedition.

We also omitted the name of Clarence Truesdell, Ed.D. '68, who with Mr. and Mrs. Robert Citron was a co-founder of Educational Expeditions International.

Recurring dreams

To the Editor:

I... designate myself a senior member of the Recurrent Dreams of Harvard Club (the R.D.H. Syndrome) as suggested by the letter of E. C. K. Read '40 in the August issue. For nearly half a century I have dreamed at varying intervals of needing to start out hurriedly across the Yard to take an examination that has not been completed. This produces a most uncomfortable frustrated feeling, often accompanied by a sense of guilt and not always ameliorated by awakening.

The origin of this dream seems not too difficult for me (though I must vigorously assert that in teaching affiliation with the Department of Psychiatry here these past four years since retirement from medical practice, and still thus actively engaged as Emeritus Professor of Clinical Medicine, I have all too vividly learned that impressions that seem quite obvious usually have a deeper, more significant meaning). The dream stems, I believe, from the "speaking knowledge of German and/or reading knowledge of French" requirement of the twenties at Harvard. I had to struggle through three sessions of that French writing bedevilment before my qualifications were acceptable!

Except as related over and over to my ever-sympathetic wife that my nightmarish screams were due to the fact that "I had that Harvard dream again last night," this is my first opportunity for a satisfying ventilation. I'm grateful for it.

Any really *old* Freudians around?

ROBERT C. ROTHENBERG, M.D. '24
Cincinnati, Ohio

To the Editor:

Like E. C. K. Read and other correspondents, I have dreamt more than once that exam time was hurtling down on me in a

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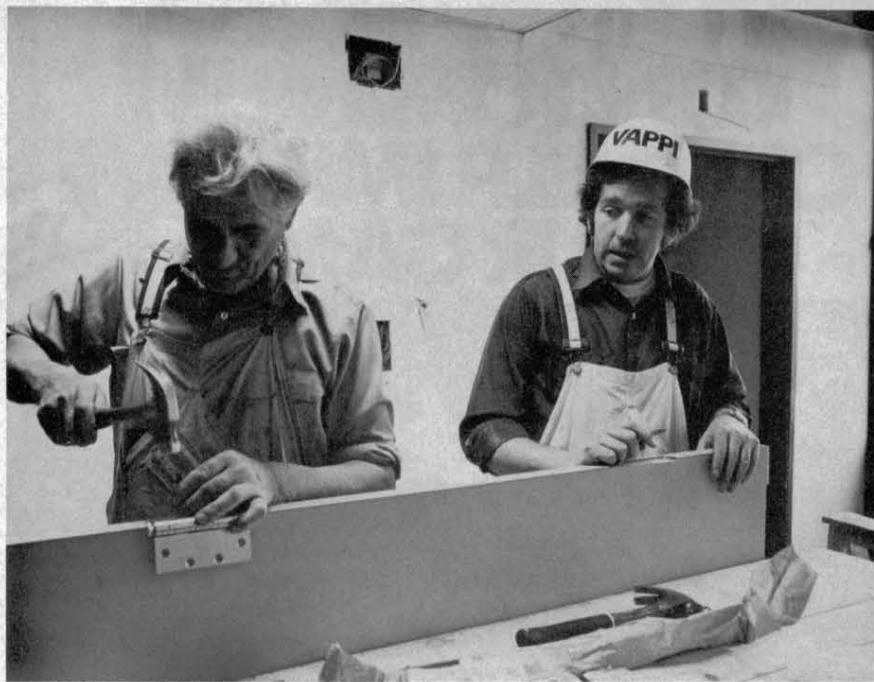
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college course in which I had done no reading and attended no lectures. Even more frightful to me, though, are these nocturnal situations: (1) I am on-stage with the rest of the cast on opening night and realize that I not only haven't memorized my part but haven't even read the play. (2) I am in charge of a newspaper edition and can't seem to get any copy sent to the composing room; the hours slip by; the deadline is coming; little or nothing is in type.

MAX HALL, *Nieman '50*

Cambridge

To the Editor:

I am not a Harvard graduate, but... my dream is essentially identical to the one described by Read, except that in my dream I am back at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Not only do I not know where the class meets, but I don't even know the time of day or the day of the week. I have had this dream on three occasions, one quite recently. The subject is mathematics, which I did not study at the college level.

IRVIN FANE

Kansas City, Mo.

To the Editor:

Is the unconscious trying to tell us that life is like the dream 'course'? There are no books, no fixed times and places; you do not know the answers (nor does the professor). Many of us who gloried in college still yearn to read the book, write a beautiful exam, and please the mythical professor. The sooner we reconcile ourselves to the fact that college was a useful irrelevance, the better.

But we can dream, and do.

ANNE W. PRESCOTT '52

San Francisco

Credits

Pages 4, 26, Lilian Kemp; 4, 9, 17, 18, 47, 57, Rick Stafford; 4 (top), John van Schalkwyk; 4 (bottom), Christopher S. Johnson; 11, Steve Rosenthal; 15, Kim Fadiman; 17 (top), Dick Raphael; 19, John Nordell; 25 (top), Elisabeth Wilson; 25 (bottom), Frank Rossi; 33, 34, Oak Ridge National Laboratory; 45, Anne Fadiman; 48, Paul Birnbaum; 51 (top left), Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Harvard College Library; (top right), Schloss of New York; (lower left), F. Muller; 55, Charles Hefling; 59, Dick Hamilton; 74, Wide World; 22, Eric Allon.

Lyrics on pages 44-45: "C Is for Cookie" and "Nobody" © 1973, "What Makes Music" © 1971, Jonico Music Inc.

Letters

to the editor

ACORN

To the Editor:

In Arkansas, the farmers are fighting the eastern establishment from their own back yards. Arkansas Power and Light Company (AP/L), is being petitioned by farmers and concerned-citizens groups in central Arkansas about their proposed coal-fired electric power plant. Arkansas Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), through its affiliate, Protect Our Land Association (POLA), have brought together the farmers who stand to lose from what the State Planning Commission has called "possibly the biggest polluter in the world."

At issue is the potential for damage to the agricultural production, recreational facilities, and personal and real property of one of the world's most fertile cotton and rice regions. The farmers are not asking that AP/L refrain from building the plant, but rather that they have guarantees for the continuance of their livelihood. The Army Corps of Engineers, the State Game and Fish Commission, the State Planning Board and the Pollution Control Board, have taken up the issue and the demand for further study and guarantees.

Each group has asked for an independent study of the total potential environmental impact, to supplement the earlier insufficient AP/L study. The major concern is the unthorough study of potential effluents and emissions damage. Very low levels of certain effluents, especially some carbon and sulfur compounds and mercury, may be lethal over relatively short periods of time. All of these elements are found in coal in high (for general industrial usage) proportions. Cotton is especially susceptible to sulfur-dioxide damage.

The Arkansas Public Service Commission has postponed its hearing on the matter until all parties have been allowed time to respond to AP/L's answers to 139 questions generated by ACORN. The questions grew out of generally perceived shortcomings in the initial impact study. The Public Service Commission is considering hiring an outside group to do a new and "independent" study. The issue now depends on ACORN's ability to convince the Commission and Harvard that

AP/L's history of irresponsibility as a corporate citizen demands their further intervention.

How is Harvard involved? Harvard, along with the Harvard Yenching Institute, is the largest shareholder in Middle South Utilities, the sole owner of AP/L. Further, George F. Bennett '33, former Harvard treasurer, serves on the board of directors of Middle South. President Bok has repeatedly spoken of the need for corporate investors to use their share power to affect ethics of business leaders. Unlike Gulf Oil Corporation in Angola-Mozambique, AP/L is totally within the purview of national law and moral opprobrium. Many Arkansas community leaders have said that Harvard's time has come, though President Bok may disagree.

ACORN makes three basic recommendations to the Harvard community. In following these recommendations, Harvard can make the hearing postponement very worthwhile:

- a. Harvard should sponsor a thorough study of the plant's impact;
- b. Harvard should use its social and economic muscle to pressure AP/L to place in escrow money sufficient to cover potential ambient air and land damages;
- c. Harvard should voice an official position on its investment and corporate-citizenship policies.

So now people in Arkansas will finally know where Harvard really is at.

JULIUS D. KEARNEY '74

Cambridge

More recurring dreams

A letter from E.C.K. Read '40 describing a recurring dream appeared in the August issue. Since then the Read Syndrome has assumed epidemic proportions. The editor, feeling that it is high time to wake up, brings the correspondence to a close with the cases below, and extends his sincere sympathy to all remaining victims.

To the Editor:

Reader E.C.K. Read '40, his friend Nat Benchley '39, and your two staffers are

indeed not the only ones afflicted with the recurring nightmare of having to take an examination at Harvard in a course they had never attended. I myself have experienced this dream on many occasions and each time have been seized with a sense of panic the likes of which, I am glad to say, I never did experience as a student at Harvard.

What is more, I know of at least two other Harvard men who suffer from the same nocturnal affliction. One is Wilfrid Owen '34 of the Brookings Institute whose casual mention of his recurrent dream first set me wondering about the extent of this syndrome among Harvard alumni. The other is Professor George Wald whose confession on this subject appeared in "Examining at Harvard," a collection of essays written by members of the Harvard faculty back in 1963 and reprinted in the Bulletin earlier that year.

... Can we hear from others?

C. KENNETH ORSKI '53

Paris, France

To the Editor:

... The basic facts were the same: no classes attended, no books read, but I am always in the midst of an all-night poker game the day before the exam!

SHERWOOD E. BAIN '45, M.B.A. '49
Boston

To the Editor:

Curious... until I read E.C.K. Read's letter, and your subsequent editorial note, I thought that the famous recurring dream was my own unique problem.

One reason for this is that my recurring dream is based at least partly on a tragi-comic sequence of events that took place the spring of my senior year. A group of us were looking for a suitable course to round out our final schedule, and one of our number—a real expert on the course catalogue—came up with an offering that met all our rigid criteria. This course met at the right time (early afternoon) on the right days (Tuesdays and Thursdays) and in a convenient place—Sever Hall. (The fact that it met upstairs, in what must have been a broom closet in the architect's plans, was only a minor drawback; ground-floor classes were preferable but one had to concede a point or two occasionally.)

That its subject matter was "The Economic History of the Early Mediterranean" was almost incidental to its nigh-on perfect scheduling.

On the first Tuesday, our trio showed up for the course, which enrolled a baker's dozen or so and was presided over by an elderly, gentlemanly scholar, Professor Blake. On subsequent days one of our number usually did his turn, taking notes for the other two. However, it soon became apparent that both the course and the professor presupposed a substantial knowledge of antiquity (a fact we'd overlooked in the catalogue) and we began to have second thoughts about the "coup" we'd been chortling over.

Worry gave way slowly to panic as we realized we were in way over our heads. The professor kept things moving at a good clip through currency exchanges and trade balances along the Anatolian coast line, highly technical agricultural problems in the Peloponnesus and God only knows what else. . . but whatever it was it was way out of our league. Our classmates were no help whatsoever. Most were grad students, all were grinds, contemptuous of the counterfeit scholars we so obviously were; and the worst of the lot was a cadre of hard-core Radcliffe types in sensible shoes, bullet-proof glasses and hair pulled back tightly into ugly buns. As I recall, they had but one facial expression—a scowl; and zilch sense of humor. Every attempt at striking up the most pitiful conversation in the hopes of finding out what was going on was struck down with an *hauteur* worthy of Catherine the Great.

Instead of the carefree gut-course routine we had anticipated, we were trapped in a real catastrophe. We began to attend every class. The texts (when we could beat our gung-ho classmates to the few available copies) were written in English, but they might just as well have been in one of the many languages of the Levantine lands they covered. Somehow or other we got through hour exams and other booby traps, with heroic efforts at bull. We did notice that Prof. Blake seemed unwell, but, even unwell, he was so far ahead of us that we scarcely had time to be concerned.

As the spring wore on we got further and further behind and final exams became an obsession. Our classmates began to display a rare measure of emotion—a smirking glee at our obvious sad state of affairs. At the close of our final class, Prof. Blake said he'd see us at final exams and wished us luck.

But that was the last time we saw him as, early in the Reading Period, he suc-

cumbed (to a heart attack, we were told). The tragedy of his death was doubly significant to us; because, if all else failed (as it seemed to be doing), we figured we might plead to him for a certain degree of mercy on the final exam. . . a quality we couldn't anticipate from anyone else. Now who would prepare the exam? We'd never seen or heard of any faculty member besides Prof. Blake in connection with the course. Or, was one of the grinds a section man in mufti? The nightmare was very real.

We never did find out who prepared the exam. But, we later suspected that, because the course was so obscure, Prof. Blake had no staff back-up, and hence the test came out a mere formality—an exercise in attendance. Whoever wrote it knew only slightly more than we did; so our weeks of sweating it out ended swiftly and anti-climactically in C's all the way round.

The intervening 23 years may have dulled (or perhaps embellished) my recollections of all this; but anyway, that's how I got my r.d., which r's a couple times a year, and always in the spring—right about Reading Period. Nembutal, anyone?

Sincerely,

NATHANIEL FROTHINGHAM '50
Sherborn, Mass.

To the Editor:

. . . Completely unprepared as I am, I still want to give the final a try. However, as in Mr. Read's fantasy, I don't even know where the exam is being given. As time runs out I frantically search the Yard, asking for help from passers-by. No one knows; no one has even heard of the course. Relief comes only with awakening.

ROBERT L. RICHARDS '49

Boston

To the Editor:

. . . I not only had never attended a single meeting, but failed as well to take the final exam. . . It was an agonizing situation. Until later, when I received notice from the instructor that I had passed the course with a creditable grade! Unfortunately this dream was not of the recurring variety.

GEORGE L. GLASHEEN '29

Wilbraham, Mass.

To the Editor:

. . . My father-in-law, a product of Northwestern and the University of Arizona, has the same dream. It may be that he started having the dream after spending six weeks at one of the Business

School summer sessions. On the other hand, I met a Yale man last week who claimed to have the identical dream, so we may not be able to claim it as Harvard's own.

CHARLES J. WEST '50

Phoenix, Ariz.

To the Editor:

I've been having that dream for years. It's so regular I hardly pay any attention to it anymore. I thought everyone had it. Everyone I know has it.

Incidentally, the axe never falls. I always wake up before I flunk out, just as I always did when I was in school. It would be interesting to know if anyone ever has this dream who actually did flunk out.

MICHAEL HILTON '68

Stevenson, Ala.

To the Editor:

. . . I am taking the CEEB English Achievement test (multiple choice, like most such). . . I discover that the item I'm working on is one off from the number on the answer sheet. Frantically, I begin to search for the item I skipped, only to discover that the items on the answer sheet are numbered in *random* order! I contemplate trying to straighten out the mess, and the mind boggles. . .

LESLIE HORST '67

Bethlehem, Pa.

To the Editor:

I don't recall the exam dream; but when I was stage-managing shows at Harvard and had the problem of a complete change of set on a darkened stage with the audience watching and waiting for the change to end, before opening I would begin having dreams in which I was in the middle of the stage, taking part in a change. But I did not know which change it was, so I couldn't tell if my crew was moving the right things. I had lost my checklist. All around me things were going wrong; time was being used up; and I couldn't set things right. The dream persisted into the run of the show, and recurred occasionally thereafter.

Often in such shows more serious problems existed, about which I was also worried; but, perhaps because they weren't under my control, I never dreamed about them.

Other stage managers I've known have had similar dreams. And actors I've known dream of being on stage before an audience (the audience is essential in their dreams and in mine) without knowing what the show is, or anything except that another actor is looking to

them to speak with desperation in his eyes. The dreamer does not know what he should be saying, and cannot remember lines from any show at all.

Perhaps the essence of such dreams is a fear of being unable to control situations you usually can control? I didn't have disastrous scene changes, and assume most of the exam dreamers usually did well on exams.

DAVID BROWNELL '63, Ph.D. '73
Collegetown, Minn.

To the Editor:

Excerpts from the diary of an undergraduate.

Thursday, June 9, 1937—Cambridge.

Tomorrow will be the final exam in my half course "The History of the French Revolution." The catalogue states that the course is given in two halves, concurrently. Have not been to any lectures—have done very little reading. Plan to cram all night. Have just learned exam is in Harvard Hall, where lectures were apparently given.

Friday, June 10, 1937—Cambridge.

Was correct that exam for both halves given in Harvard Hall, concurrently. Entered wrong room and took wrong exam. Questions vaguely familiar. Wrote furiously. Expect a C+ with any luck.

Monday, July 9—Cruising in Maine.

Bluebook of History Exam arrived today with following remark on front cover: "If Harvard College gave the grade of F, you would undoubtedly be the first student to receive that grade. Your grade is E—." Signed W.F.L.

Later in life:

Thursday, June 14, 1973—Cambridge.

I keep having this recurring dream but Commencement proceeded according to plan.

WILLIAM G. ANDERSON '39
University Marshal

Cambridge

P.S. Questions for the editor:

- (1) Who could W. F. L. be?
- (2) Why does this dream recur every year before Commencement?

To the Editor:

In case the beleaguered students ever wondered, r.d.'s occur on the other side of the lectern, too. I never had a student-type r.d. during my years as a Radcliffe undergraduate, or afterward, for that matter. However, I have awakened in many a cold sweat after dreaming the following:

1. It is the first day of a new semester. I

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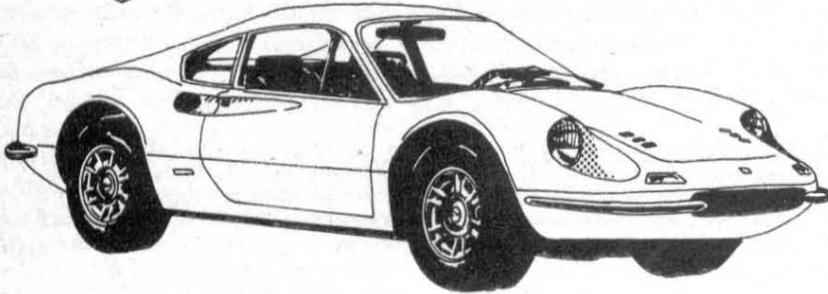
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search all over the campus but I can find neither my classroom nor my class.

2. It is five minutes before my next class. I have neglected to prepare a lecture, and I have no previous knowledge of the subject. I can see the students in the classroom, assembled to await an hour's worth of wisdom.

3. I am peacefully asleep. I roll over to look at the clock. It is precisely time to begin my first lecture of the day.

Does this indicate that profs are as neurotic as students?

SUE LIEBERMAN SOLOMON '62
Assistant professor of science
management and statistics,
University of Maryland

College Park, Md.

To the Editor:

...The dream invariably has the elements Mr. Read describes. And the panic is real. Panic because the total culture in which American children are raised makes no real—yes, verbal, but little more—effort to provide for failure...

SHERWOOD R. MERCER
Havertown, Pa.

To the Editor:

...Should the University (or Harvard Magazine) formulate the necessary rites, I would appreciate having an exorcism kit and instruction sheet.

RICHARD W. LODGE '63
Nieuw Vennepe (N.H.), The Netherlands

To the Editor:

...It is no dream. I know a Harvard who never attended the lectures, never read the books, did not know where the exam was held, and passed the course...

But then all the Harvards live in a dream world.

METCHIE J. E. BUDKA '40
The Bronx

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