

# THE MUDDRAKER

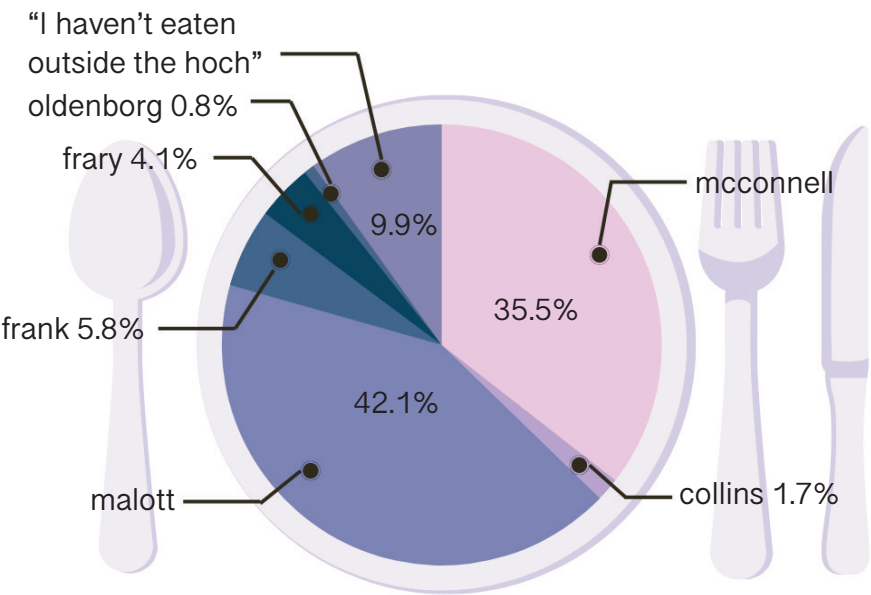
## MEET THE CLASS OF 2026

SURVEY BY MIRA KANIYUR | GRAPHICS BY DIYA GANGWAR

Hi Mudders! We surveyed this year’s frosh on their day-to-day lives, and we’re here to introduce you to (most of\*) the Class of 2026!

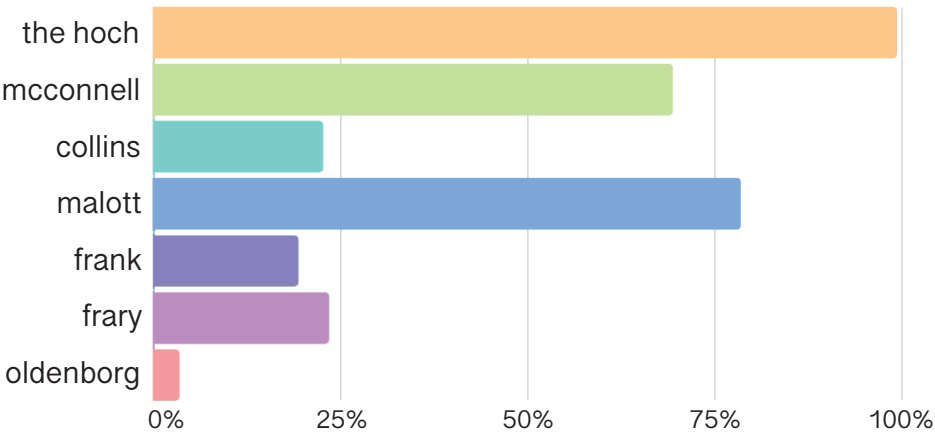
### FAVORITE DINING HALL

(EXCLUDING THE HOCH)

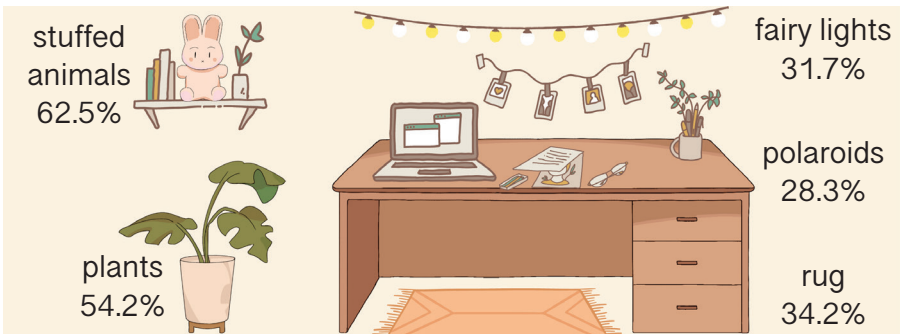


Frosh are making good use of the return of 5C dining — and they have clear favorites amongst the lot. Besides the Hoch, frosh favorites are Pitzer and Malott, likely thanks to a combination of their proximity and quality. We at The Muddraker (read: me, the author of the article) would also like to personally protest Malott’s win over Pitzer — clearly a statistical error since all the Pitzer enjoyers were too busy eating good food to fill out the survey. We were also surprised that there’s a frosh who has never gone to the Hoch!

### DINING HALLS VISITED



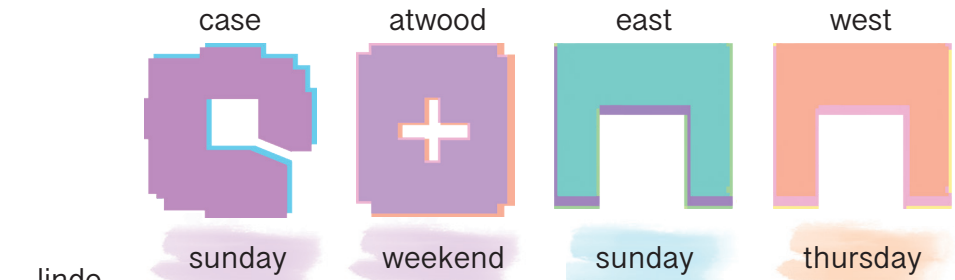
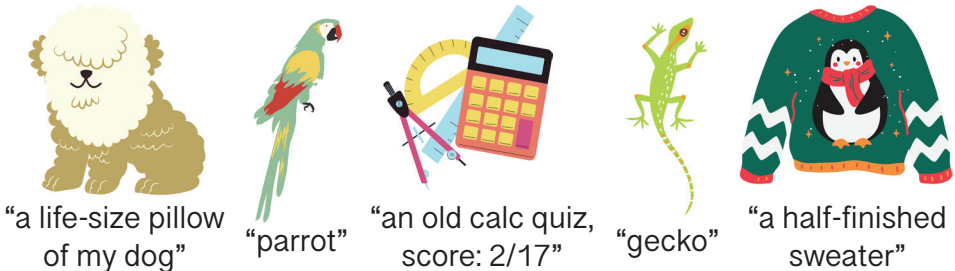
### MOST POPULAR ROOM DECOR



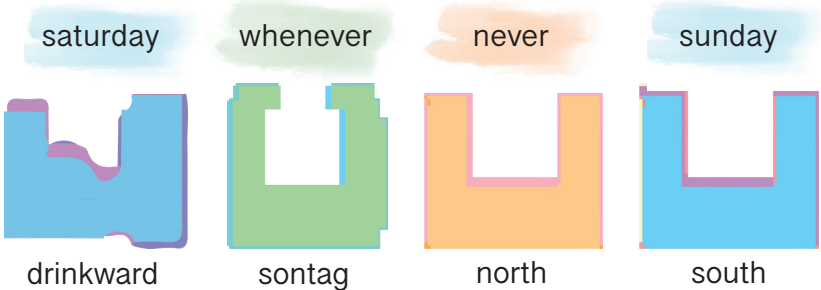
We frosh enjoy our flora and (fake) (fluffy) fauna. Stuffed animals and plants were by far the most common choices for room decor.

### ODD THINGS PACKED

We also asked frosh what they brought to Mudd that they thought nobody else did. That list included the following paraphernalia:



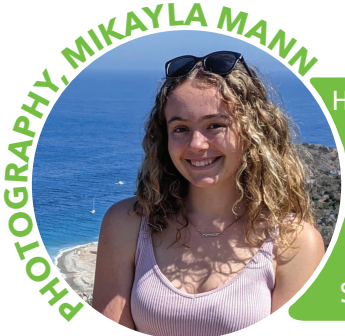
### PREFERRED LAUNDRY DAY



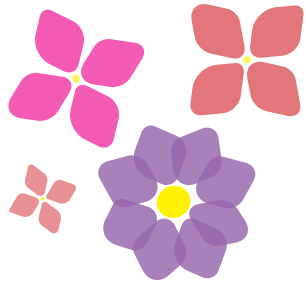
\*some of y'all — North, we're talking to you — do not check emails!

Looking to beat the crowd? Do your laundry early in the week.

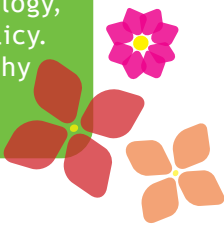
# MEET THE NEW MEMBERS OF MUDDRAKER E-BOARD



Hey there! I'm Mikayla Mann (Class of 2025), and I'm a Chief of Photography for The Muddraker. I'm planning to be an engineering major with an emphasis in biology, which means you can catch me proctoring in the machine shop this year! When I'm not on my zealous quest to make Mudd look as beautiful as possible through photography, you'll find me with my nose buried in a young adult fantasy novel, playing intramural volleyball, or fervently tending to my ever-growing succulent garden. I'm also guilty of being a huge Swiftie and indie-rock junkie. I'm super excited to be a part of The Muddraker team!



Hey! I'm Lea and a Chief of Photography for The Muddraker. I'm a sophomore majoring in Mathematical and Computational Biology, and intend to concentrate in Public Policy. Outside of academics, I love photography (duh!), reading, music, and beating my friends at various card games.



Hello! My name is Kaitlynn and I'm a Chief of Design for The Muddraker. Currently, I am leaning toward double majoring in Computer Science and Media Studies. My hobbies include reading Webtoons, creating graphic designs, drawing, and spending time at the HIVE. You may see me around in the Hoch ice cream line or helping to run events with the DSA Muchachos!



Hi! I'm Rebecca, Class of 2025, and one of the Webmasters for The Muddraker! I plan to major in engineering, probably with some kind of art concentration. I love making stuff (laser cutting, sewing, jewelry), animals, drumming, baking, and attempting to beat Lea at various card games.



## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear readers,

Thanks for picking up a copy of The Muddraker! This semester, The Muddraker has welcomed four new Editorial Board members, as well as quite a few new staffers from the Class of 2026. We're so happy to have them with us!

In this issue, you'll find a Q&A with senior Kaanthi Pandhigunta about Mudd's student-led play "Silent Sky" (pg. 3), student perspectives on Mudd's reimagined Core curriculum (pg. 4-5), and a tour of Mudd's department libraries (pg. 7). Our centerspread features Q&As with visiting chemistry professors Matthew L. Kromer and Alicia O. Hernandez-Castillo, who sat down with The Muddraker to talk about their lives both on and off campus (pg. 8-9).

Looking to bring some greenery into your life? Flip through for plant-caretaking tips from Mikayla Mann, our very own plant-parent-in-residence (pg. 10).

Good things come in pairs — luckily, we have a lot of duos this issue: two short stories (pg. 11-12), two crossword puzzles (pg. 13-14), and two comic strips (pg. 14). Finally, take a break by going to our coloring page (pg. 15) or to the back of the issue to look at a map of all the Mudd-named places across America (pg. 16)!

Happy holidays,  
Michelle, Avani, and Shivani



## STAFF LIST

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STAFF WRITER: KISHORE RAJESH '25  
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ARTIST: ALEX SILVER '26

PHOTOGRAPHER: JOSAPHAT NGOGA '26  
PHOTOGRAPHER: ANANYA VENKATACHALAM '26



Interested in joining The Muddraker? To sign up, scan the QR code to the left.

HARVEY MUDD STUDENT THEATER PRESENTS:

# SILENT SKY

DIRECTED BY:

KAANTHI PANDHIGUNTA

HARVEY MUDD COLLEGE.

DECEMBER 2ND - 3RD, 2022

FREE.

## KAANTHI PANDHIGUNTA: BEHIND THE SCENES OF SILENT SKY, A MUDD PRODUCTION

Q&A by NATALIE COUCH  
and LAUREN WEST  
designed by Kaitlynn Gray



KAANTHI PANDHIGUNTA,  
the DIRECTOR.

INSPIRED BY DUAL PASSIONS FOR THEATER AND SCIENCE, SENIOR KAANTHI PANDHIGUNTA DECIDED TO DIRECT THE PLAY “SILENT SKY.” “SILENT SKY” IS A PLAY ABOUT FEMALE ASTRONOMER HENRIETTA LEAVITT AND HER DEDICATION TO THE STARS. PANDHIGUNTA ORGANIZED THE STUDENT-RUN, MUDD-ONLY PRODUCTION, AND GAVE THE MUDDRAKER A BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK AT THE DECEMBER PRODUCTION.

### Q: When did the play open?

A: “Silent Sky” happen[ed] on Dec. 2 and 3 in the Drinkward Recital Hall. It [was] free, but there [were] fee-less tickets anyway since there [were] a limited number of seats.



### Q: What inspired you to put on this play?

A: I was in a play called “Isaac’s Eye” my freshman year. It was, to my knowledge, the first student-led theater production at Harvey Mudd. It was super fun, and really nice because it was, in a way, made for Mudders. “Isaac’s Eye” was a fairly low time commitment compared to Pomona theater. I had also tried Pomona theater [in freshman year], but it was just too much work. [Pomona theater] was maybe four hours of rehearsal every day. “Isaac’s Eye” was a really good experience, and I made a lot of awesome friends through it. So, I wanted to continue that and create the opportunity for future Mudders to also participate in theater.

### Q: Why did you choose “Silent Sky”?

A: I thought “Silent Sky” was a good play for Harvey Mudd because it’s a blend of science and the human side. It’s about female astronomers in the 1900s, and what they had to overcome to make a mark in their field.



### Q: What were some challenges?

A: [One was] getting the HSA department to give us course credit for “Silent Sky.” They eventually did, and it was really nice of Prof. Fandell to do that, but we had to jump through a lot of hoops to get there. Now, a few of us are getting course credit, including the stage managers, the set designer, some of the dance choreographers, and me. Others are not doing it for credit. The difference is that people getting credit have to spend nine hours [each week on the play].



### Q: What were the best parts of putting on the play?

A: The best part has been just seeing how talented everyone is. So many people have brought their talents to the play. For example, we have music composers who have composed beautiful pieces for the show, and it was like, “Oh my God, I didn’t even know you could do that.” And then



we have our dance choreographers, who are creating some awesome dances, and our set designers and sound designers — they really know what they’re doing. And also obviously the actors. So it’s really awesome to see how talented everyone is.



### Q: Do you think that someone will be inspired to carry on the mantle, like you did from “Isaac’s Eye”?

A: What inspired me to do “Silent Sky” was the people who put together the last production. So I really hope student-led theater will continue, and give Mudders opportunities in the arts, where we may not have the opportunity to participate at the other Claremont Colleges.

### Q: In one sentence, tell Mudders why they should go see productions such as “Silent Sky.”

A: Come see what talents your friends have to offer!



# The New Core: Perspectives on a Changing Curriculum

By Mira Kaniyur

Frosh, ever wonder why upperclassmen get a haunted look in their eye when you ask them for help on Core homework? Upperclassmen, curious why the baby frosh next door have math homework due on Tuesday nights and also won't shut up about lizards and beetles? To answer all your questions about the new (and old) Core, I decided to cross the generational divide and interview both my fellow frosh and the occasional unsuspecting upperclassman about the new Core curriculum. These interviews took place at a variety of times and locations, including impromptu lunch conversations, Saturday at 7 a.m. over Zoom, and the day before this article was due. I asked students for their thoughts on the overall purpose of the Core and about specific changes to the Core curriculum.

First, I'll provide some background on the key changes to Core. On May 8, 2020, the faculty approved plans to modify the Core curriculum to allow students to take a four-course load in their first two years at Mudd, and remain on track to graduate in four years. Some of the changes to reduce courseload were implemented for the Class of 2025. They began by removing Math 82, Differential Equations, from Core for all students in the Class of 2025 and onward, although it remains a required course for many majors. They also removed the requirement to take an elective each semester in the first year.

This year, more changes were implemented starting with the Class of 2026 in order to further reduce student stress and improve the cohesiveness of Core. The option to take an elective in the first semester was removed. Major changes were also made to the chemistry and biology curriculum: chemistry was reduced from a two-course sequence to a single course, and the Core biology class was updated to focus on climate change rather than virology. Furthermore, students now take the accompanying lab for chemistry and biology in the same semester they take the respective course, instead of potentially a semester before or after.

Non-frosh have a variety of perspectives on the purpose of Core, but they all agree it's a vital and transformative part of the Mudd experience. Sophomore Shreya Balaji stated that "the purpose of a Core curriculum, generally, is for students to get a better understanding of what that particular university has to offer." Furthermore, she observed that because Mudd only offers majors in a small range of subjects, it can actually introduce every one of those subjects in Core. This allows students to make informed decisions when choosing majors. She also observed that Core "[gives] the students a general subset of skills that will be useful in their life, no matter what fields of study they wind up in."

Senior engineering major Kaya Lane echoed this sentiment: "in terms of having a good foundation,

I think [Core] did really well. Especially as a general engineer, it's important to know lots of different areas. And nothing is ever as pigeonholed as it can sometimes seem at school." However, she also remarked that the Core experience is far from homogenous, since students who come from more competitive high schools offering rigorous curriculums and advanced courses often have an academic advantage over their peers.

In contrast, sophomore Kishore Rajesh argued that the actual material taught in Core wasn't the main point, especially for those who ended up not majoring in those subjects. Instead, they said, "I don't think it's the material that's important. I think it's the fact that you have these new concepts and new material that everyone's struggling with — it creates a sense of camaraderie. [Core], in my opinion, [is] only to build camaraderie and a sense of community, which I think is really important at Mudd."

Freshman Grey Karis-Sconyers concurred, mentioning that the purpose of Core was to build a collaborative culture and deconstruct competitive mindsets and learning habits that students may have developed during high school. They suggested that Core's level of difficulty is intended to encourage students to collaborate, saying "[Core is] built so nobody can possibly get through it alone."

Both sophomores also commented on the usefulness of Writ 1, with Shreya specifically saying that, "the writing requirement is important because we're such STEM-focused individuals that sometimes it can be really easy to get caught up in the STEM and not think about the implications of our work, and how we would present that to people."

When discussing the changes to Core, many students brought up Chemistry, which was condensed from two classes — Chemistry 23a (3 credits) in the fall and Chemistry 23b (1.5 credits) in the spring — into one 4-credit course, Chemistry 42. Both Kishore and Shreya supported this change, feeling that it made the Core curriculum more balanced and manageable. All interviewees also agreed with the decision to push Chemistry, the earliest Core class, back from 7:40 a.m. to 8:10 a.m. and the decision to schedule biology and chemistry labs to align with their respective lectures. Recalling their experience in Chemistry Lab as part of the old Core, Kishore said, "I feel like I would have appreciated it more if I knew what a fuel cell was before building the fuel cell."

The class that has changed the most, however, is Biology 46, which in earlier years was named Biology 52, and focused on virology and disease progression, but has now been redesigned to focus on ecology and climate change. Shreya remarked on her own experience taking Biology 52 during the Covid-19 pandemic: "It's gotten more



uncomfortable to talk about disease progression in class, knowing that there are so many individuals that are suffering and have passed away from COVID. Students having that weight on them while also trying to focus on a core academic class during a semester that's not pass/fail — because we didn't have the option of taking Biology 52 pass/fail — that's really a lot." Biology 46 centers on climate change, studying how it affects organisms at a cellular level and ecosystems at large.

While the changes to the science courses' curricula and scheduling were the most prominent aspects of the new Core, there were also smaller changes to the Core math curriculum. For example, the asynchronous Complex Lab portion of Math 19, which serves as a crash course in arithmetic, algebra, and graphing with complex numbers, is a new addition this year. Shreya, whose class year didn't take Complex Lab, thought it was important to teach this material to any students who may be unfamiliar with it: "[The addition of Complex Lab to Math 19] is really important, because in E79, for example, we're dealing with a lot of complex numbers. And ultimately, it winds up being easier if you already learned some of this stuff." She also noted that removing Differential Equations from the math Core could make E79 more difficult, since E79 involves some differential equations. Although E79 does teach the basics of differential equations, additional exposure to it can make the class easier. She also argued that Differential Equations is applicable to most majors, including engineering, chemistry, and biology. Generally, students agreed on the importance of a strong mathematics Core curriculum, citing the applicability of math to all the majors.

When students were asked what changes they would have proposed if given the chance, there were a variety of responses. Shreya requested

bringing back Differential Equations to the math Core curriculum. Kaya suggested sequencing E79 earlier in the Core curriculum: explaining, “There is only one engineering core class. And there’s only one bio and one CS class too, but those are all in the first year — so giving people exposure to engineering early on would be nice. I don’t think the concepts [in E79] are too hard for freshmen to understand. You don’t really need any prior classes for it.”

Kishore advocated for a Core curriculum that better balances all subjects, noting that computer science has three credits in total, chemistry has five, biology has four, physics has six and a half, and engineering has four, with most subjects having a course and an accompanying lab or practicum. They suggested adding another computer science credit and perhaps lowering the courseload and credits dedicated toward some of the sciences.

Regarding the overall approach towards Core, Shreya felt “the administration is honestly trying to improve and evolve the Core curriculum so that

it fits with that current generation of students ... if we even look at my year, 2025, versus the Core for the Class of 2023, for example, or the Class of 2022, you can see how much the Core curriculum has evolved, making sure that it’s the best possible fit for the incoming class.” Overall, the interviewees felt that the changes made to the Core curriculum would close critical gaps in student learning (such as the Math 19 Complex Lab, and the alignment of science labs with their lectures), while also making Core more manageable and balanced.

I also asked my non-frosh interviewees what advice they would give to current freshmen. Kishore told us to take advantage of pass/fail to have fun and get acclimated to college. They also urged us to work with friends on homework, and assured us: “Don’t stress, Core will be over eventually. So I keep telling myself at least.” Shreya extended the suggestion beyond just Core, saying, “Don’t worry about your grades too much, it’s more about getting a good foundation. Of course everyone’s going to care about grades, but try

not to let it take away from having a social life, and being a part of clubs, and being involved in the school in other ways.” Other outtakes from my interviews included much discussion of why Special Relativity is anti-rhino and why the new biology class is actually just a cool podcast about lizards and bugs, and much attempted prying about who was the best interviewee.



# New Core Impact Course Explores Climate Change



By Liam Chalk

Sophomores will be required to take STEM & Social Impact: Climate Change, the new Impact course in the Core curriculum, for the first time this spring. Students will explore climate change and how their positions as scientists and engineers can impact climate and society.

The new Core Impact course seeks to fulfill Mudd’s mission statement, which envisions students gaining “a clear understanding of the impact of their work on society.”

“The Core Impact course is a pretty good reflection of the goals of Harvey Mudd in the sense that they want you to understand both the theoretical and practical aspects of a problem,” said junior Cole Nagata, who took the pilot course last year.

The Impact course is the last addition to the new Core curriculum called “Four Courses with Optional Electivity” that Mudd faculty voted to adopt in May 2020. Other changes included dropping Electricity and Magnetism, as well as Differential Equations. Chemistry in the Modern World I and II will be condensed into one class, and the chemistry and biology labs will be scheduled to align with their corresponding courses.

The “Four Courses with Optional Electivity” curriculum aims to “increase joy of learning, reflection, mastery, and retention by allowing students to take a four-course load in the first four semesters, while still being on track to graduate in four years,” according to Mudd’s announcement.

Last spring, professors piloted two versions of the Impact course that students could take as electives. Core 179A and Core 179B both studied the science and social impact of climate change but had different course structures.

Core 179A was taught by Prof. Hamilton, Prof. Steinberg, Prof. Saeta, and Prof. Hawkins. Tuesday sessions were lecture-based, while most Thursdays had small group discussions. Different sections had different topics, titled Climate Policy and Governance; Geoengineering the Climate; Indigenous Knowledge, Eco-feminism and Western Science; and the Future of Nuclear Power. Last spring’s Core 179A course also discussed intersectional issues such as race- and gender-based prejudice. The course explored the disproportional impact of climate change on different identity groups including low-income communities who live close to polluted areas.

Core 179B was taught by Prof. Donnelly and Prof. Sullivan, who strived to “understand the roots and possible remedies for climate change from a variety of intersecting perspectives.” The class balanced studying the science of climate change with its humanity and social science implications. Assignments were centered around in-class group work and papers to reflect on the course material. The class culminated in a final project and presentation, where groups of three students gave 15-minute presentations on their research diving deeper into a topic at the intersection of science and society.

The new Core 179 course to be taught this spring will be very similar to the Core 179A pilot course. The curriculum is being adjusted based on feedback saying students enjoyed smaller section discussions and preferred consolidated large assignments instead of a greater number of smaller assignments. The professors are also working on improving the management of group work, especially for the final project.



# REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

## in California

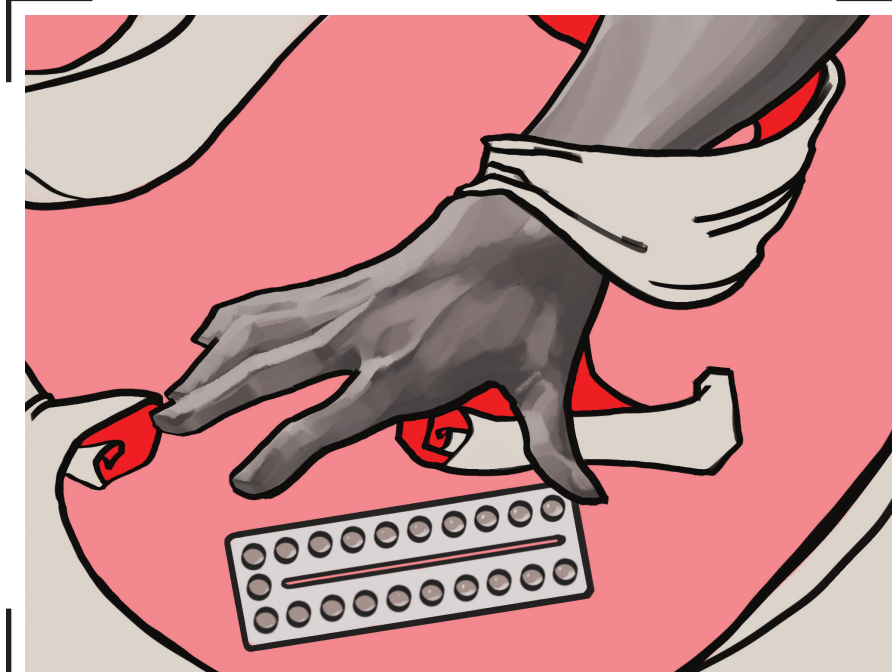
by Sydney Porto

In June, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled on the landmark case *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, overturning *Roe v. Wade*. They ruled that the Constitution does not confer the right to abortion, and states may make their own regulations concerning the issue. Since this decision, abortion restrictions have gone into effect in many states across the country. Policies for abortion access have changed swiftly in many states, as a result it is hard to keep track of exactly what the political reality is in any one place. However, Mudd is in a state that has worked to secure reproductive freedom; while other states have moved to limit abortion, California has sought to protect it and advance other issues of reproductive justice.

Recently the California State Legislature and Governor Gavin Newsom have taken several steps to increase access to reproductive healthcare in California. In March, Governor Newsom signed SB245, legislation that would prohibit health insurance plans from requiring out-of-pocket payments for abortion services. California already requires health plans to cover abortions, but this bill goes further to make abortion services financially accessible, and it is scheduled to go into effect in January 2023.

Then, in June, as other states moved to restrict access to reproductive healthcare in wake of the *Dobbs* case, the California State Legislature adopted a constitutional amendment, SCA 10, that protects an individual's right to reproductive freedom, including access to abortion and contraceptives. This amendment was on the statewide ballot in November. Also in June, Governor Newsom signed an executive order protecting a patient's medical privacy and a California Assembly Bill AB1666 which aims to protect individuals who provide, aid, or receive abortions in California from civil action. In the same month, the Governor also signed bill AB178, amending the state budget and appropriating more than \$200 million for reproductive health care.

Increasing access to contraceptives has also been a goal of the California State Legislature. Recently the California State Senate passed SB



523, the Contraceptive Equity Act of 2022, a bill that would expand access to contraceptive and vasectomy services. The bill requires “health insurers to provide point-of-sale coverage for over-the-counter FDA approved contraceptive drugs, devices, and products at in-network pharmacies without cost sharing or medical management restrictions.” This policy would also apply to insurance plans offered by both public and private universities and colleges. However, it should be noted that access to contraceptives has not

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Even though we go to school in a blue state that protects reproductive freedom, things are still not perfect...

”

been prioritized in the same way securing abortion rights has been over the past several months. Between May when the draft opinion of *Dobbs* was released and late July, the California State Legislature proposed 13 bills to protect abortion rights, but nowhere near an equal number of bills has been introduced related to contraceptive access.

Despite all this legislation, disparities still exist in access to contraceptives and abortion. With regard to abortion access, 40% of counties in California had no clinics that provided abortions in 2017, according to the most recent data

from the Guttmacher Institute. And, for contraceptives, there are policies which lead to inequities in access. By California law, pharmacists are required to fill valid birth control or Plan B prescriptions from a doctor, even if they have moral or religious objections. Pharmacists may additionally offer pharmacist-prescribed birth control; however, they are not required to do so. Pharmacies are also not required to carry or dispense Plan B over the counter, so if a pharmacist has a moral or religious objection, they do not have to provide Plan B to patients without prescriptions. These policies result in disparities in access. A study conducted from June to November 2017 found that three in four pharmacies in Los

Angeles offered over-the-counter emergency hormonal contraceptives, while only one in ten offered pharmacist-prescribed birth control. Even fewer pharmacies in predominantly Black, Latinx, or low-income neighborhoods have pharmacist-prescribed birth control. And almost half of the pharmacies in the study who sold over-the-counter emergency contraception also imposed age restrictions, even though the FDA removed these age restrictions in 2013.

Even though we go to school in a blue state that protects reproductive freedom, things are still not perfect, and there are many other places across the country that are actively restricting reproductive rights. This semester, Georgia Klein, Arianna Meinking, and I have formed a new club, Reproductive Justice @HMC (RJ@HMC), to become more engaged with the movement for reproductive justice. We are affiliated with Planned Parenthood Los Angeles, and in the future, we hope to hold volunteering events and forums to discuss issues of reproductive justice. We are also planning to reach out to SHS to make sure students at Mudd have access to the reproductive healthcare they need. We are hoping to encourage SHS to update information on their website and make emergency contraceptives more accessible to Mudd students. And, we will be sending out monthly newsletters to keep club members informed about current developments in policies around the country.

Interested in joining RJ@HMC? Email  
rjhmc-leadership-l@g.hmc.edu

# A GUIDE TO MUDD'S LIBRARIES

BY RUBY FOXALL, PHOTOS BY MIKAYLA MANN



Photos from left to right: Affinity Group Library, ASHMC Library, Physics Library, HSA Library

Looking to ISO a textbook? Want to finally read something light over break? We've got you covered! There are lots of places around Mudd where you can get books for free, whether for class or for fun. This is the definitive guide to wasting your time by reading random books instead of working on that assignment due tomorrow — also known as “productive procrastination.”

## PHYSICS LIBRARY — JACOBS 1st FLOOR, STAUFFER LOUNGE

Just inside the doors of Keck/Jacobs, you'll find a cozy little lounge full of blackboards covered in incomprehensible equations...and also some life-saving physics textbooks. The physics lounge is home to every Core physics textbook imaginable (even Prof. Sahakian's new mechanics textbook!), plus comfortable couches and a plethora of puzzles and board games. Sit down to grind out a Spec Rel pset, then reward yourself with a break to work on the latest thousand-piece puzzle laid out on the table in the corner.

## ENGINEERING LIBRARY — PARSONS 2nd FLOOR, HALLWAY & ENGINEERING LOUNGE

The engineering department library is tucked away on the second floor of Parsons, but if you find your way up there without getting lost, you're in for a treat. The library is made up of two sections, one by the professors' offices and one in the engineering lounge. In both, you can find all kinds of textbooks on engineering, covering topics from materials to dynamics to environmental and civil engineering... and even some physics content, including several books by Richard Feynman.



## HSA LIBRARY — PARSONS 1st FLOOR, HSA LOUNGE

At the entrance of Parsons lies the oft-forgotten HSA lounge and library. This collection of books is eclectic and represents a wide variety of humanities, social sciences, and arts content. Sometimes profs will leave out free boxes of books for you to take! The HSA library is also home to several old Spectrum yearbooks, so if you ever wanted to see Prof. Breznay's senior page, now you know where to go.

## BIO LIBRARY — OLIN 2nd FLOOR, BIO LOUNGE

Hidden on the seldom-frequented second floor of Olin is the biology department lounge and library. Here, you can find cool books about biology and every biology thesis ever written. Enjoy the chameleon tape dispenser and the nice view of the 5Cs from the windows!



## AFFINITY GROUP LIBRARIES — LAC 2nd FLOOR, RIGGS ROOM

On the second floor of the LAC lies the holy grail of interesting reading. Several affinity groups have libraries in the Riggs Room, including PRISM, APISPAM, and MUNCH. These libraries are funded by the Office of Institutional Diversity and you can request books through the relevant affinity group. You can check out books on a variety of topics, from fiction (sci-fi, fantasy, romance, contemporary, etc.) to non-fiction (history, (auto)biography, etc.).

## CHEM LIBRARY — KECK 2nd FLOOR, CHEM LOUNGE

You can find the chemistry department library in one of the department's two lounges in Keck (on the second floor). This room has all kinds of chem books, plus a special feature no other library on campus has — an escape hatch for Prof. Van Ryswyk in case his lab catches on fire! The hatch is well-hidden and doesn't take away from the ambiance of the space, and the lounge sometimes has snacks for you to nosh on while slogging through your chem homework.



## ASHMC LIBRARY — PLATT 1st FLOOR, HALLWAY

For all your Core textbook needs, check out the ASHMC library in Platt! Just inside the door near the Green Room and Career Services, you'll find several large bookshelves stuffed with all kinds of textbooks. Beyond Core, you can also find interesting books from various off-campus classes covering a dazzling array of topics, and more yearbooks. Make sure not to remove the textbooks from Platt though!

# A N A L Y Z I N G

Article by Shreya Balaji, Ananya Purwar, and Aanya Pratapneni.

Photos by Josaphat Ngoga and Mikayla Mann, as well as courtesy of Prof. HC and Prof. Kromer.

Harvey Mudd College has one of the top undergraduate chemistry programs in the nation. We wanted to learn more about what inspired two visiting profs to get into the field of chemistry, their current research, their opinions on the new Core curriculum, and also some fun facts about them!

*The quotes in this article have been edited for length and clarity.*

## Q&A WITH PROF. HC

**Prof. Alicia O. Hernandez-Castillo**  
Visiting Assistant Professor of Chemistry  
Ph.D., Purdue University

**Could you introduce yourself to the Mudd community?**

I'm Prof. HC. I was originally born in France, but my mom is from Mexico. I did my bachelor's in Mexico City, my Ph.D. in the U.S. at Purdue University, and then my postdoc in Berlin. I also have a bachelor's in music for piano and a master's in musical composition because I couldn't decide what I wanted to do. And then eventually, I realized that I actually wanted to do science. After my postdoc, I realized I liked teaching and research, so academia seemed like a good place for me. I wanted a research-focused place, and Harvey Mudd really fits what I like because I don't do standard chemistry. I do something in between engineering, physics, and chemistry.

**Where did you live before coming to HMC?**

I did my postdoc in Berlin before coming here. I spent three and a half years in Berlin; it's a really cool city and has a lot of art. I love modern art. We lived on the outskirts of Berlin, near the border between Berlin and Brandenburg, really close to the river and the bridge where they exchange the spies in the movie "Bridge of Spies."

**How do you like Mudd so far?**

I love it. I absolutely love it. It's the dream place to work. I'm not kidding. I love interacting with the students. I love teaching the students. I love how participative and excited about learning you all are and all your energy and your questions. And I love the fact that you're always excited even at 8 a.m. in the morning, and that you can match my energy most of the time. That's literally my favorite part. My second favorite is the Machine Shop and the Makerspace.

**How did you become interested in physical chemistry?**

I actually didn't know I wanted to be a chemist; I thought I was going to be a musician. In my last year of my bachelor's, I got a fellowship to go to Juilliard, so I went to Boston for a year. And when I was in my last semester of Juilliard, I realized that there were people that were amazing, and I was okay, but I was never going to be amazing. And I needed to figure out what I was actually going to make money out of. I have always been good at science, so I got into chemistry, and I was like, "I'm going to be a chemist." Then I got into the chemistry lab and I was like, "I'm so bad." I was struggling really hard, but I



*Left: Prof. HC with her dog, Hamilton. Middle: Prof. HC working in her new lab.*

*Right: Hamilton helping out with some data analysis.*

had picked it, and I couldn't change it, right? I went from music to science; I couldn't go home and be like, "Mom, I think I'm bad at another thing." So I was stuck with it and would have to try it. And then I took physical chemistry and thought, "Well, this is boring, but I'm good at it." Then, I took quantum mechanics. The spectroscopy part of the class – how light interacts with matter, and the fact that the molecules talk to you – seemed unbelievable. When I saw a signal in a lab for the first time, I felt as if the molecules were talking to me. And I can't shut up, and the molecules also don't shut up. I was like, "Yeah, this is my thing." I just found my thing.

**How do you think music fits in with chemistry?**

Music is something I've always enjoyed. And the way I see it in chemistry is in the waves. I'm always interested in the way that the acoustics of things work; for example, the way a music room is acoustically designed to keep sound waves out. We have to cover our spectrometer chamber with a material that can keep the microwaves out, so I'm always curious, how do we use the material for that? My research is about how molecules resonate, so my brain is always trying to figure out what the molecules are listening to.

**What music have you been playing recently?**

I mostly play classical music now, because I don't have enough time to play anything else. Classical music was hammered into my brain, mostly because of classes, but I also really like Joe Hisaishi, who composed for the Studio Ghibli movies. I love Studio Ghibli, so when I have a chance, I sometimes go through the music from those movies. I really enjoy those pieces. I don't compose much nowadays, but sometimes I go through old compositions. During my postdoc, I composed a few plays for a friend that has a theater company in Spain, but I've barely played anything since I started this job. I need more hours in a day.

**Do you have any hobbies or talents outside of chemistry and music?**

I don't have a lot of talents, but I do have hobbies. I love running; I run every day. I haven't run as much this semester, but I've run a few half marathons in the past. The longest I've run is 17 miles. [My dog] Hamilton is off-leash, so he runs more since he goes back and forth. I also really enjoy playing with him. I've always really liked animals. When I was a kid, I knew all the fun facts about animals, and dogs in particular. I also like reading a lot. I'm currently reading "It Starts With Us" by Colleen Hoover.

**What cool things are you working on in your lab?**

A microspectrometer. The analogy is that we're yelling at the molecules by sending a lot of power, and then the molecules are whispering back to us. The signals that we receive from the molecules aren't super high, so we need to develop ways to listen to and record them. I think the way we see the spectroscopy of matter is beautiful: we're using the same waves that your microwave uses to heat food, but we're targeting the gas phase instead of the condensed liquid phase. In the condensed phase, your molecules are trapped, so you just have this little dance with your water molecules. But in the gas phase, the molecules can freely rotate. And we see that energy difference between them, and it tells us exactly where the atoms are positioned and the bond lengths and angles between all of them.

**What are five songs or pieces of music that you're listening to right now?**

"Giant Steps" - John Coltrane

"Gimme Shelter" - Rolling Stones

"The Sorcerer's Apprentice" - Leopold Stokowski and Philadelphia Orchestra

"Huapango" - Alondra de la Parra and Philharmonic Orchestra of the Americas

"Out of the Woods" - Taylor Swift

# C H E M I S T S

## Q&A WITH PROF. KROMER

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**Prof. Matthew Kromer**  
**Visiting Assistant Professor of Chemistry**  
**Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

### **What does a typical day in your life look like?**

I'm actually a very habitual person, so it's almost identical every single day. I wake up, walk my dog, and then make coffee. Then I drop my dog off to daycare, and I bike to campus. Depending on the day, I either go teach, prep for teaching, or prep for research. At the end of the day, around 5:30 p.m., I bike home, pick up my dog from daycare, and then make dinner. Depending on the day, I might do more teaching prep or grade or just chill out and watch TV or something. Then, I go to bed every night at 9 p.m. I'm very habitual about that.

### **What made you choose chemistry?**

When I finished high school, I was not very academically focused. I just applied to the closest college to where I lived, and went there. I chose to study biochemistry because it was my best subject in high school. At the time, I wanted to be a pharmacist, believe it or not, so I decided to do biochemistry, then go to pharmacy school. But during my sophomore year of undergrad, I started research in a biology lab, and I got hooked on research. And then I went to grad school for electrochemistry because I really like chemistry related to energy conversion, energy storage, and addressing issues with sustainability.

### **As a chemistry professor, what is your opinion on the changes to the Core courses in chemistry?**

I like the changes. Although I find it challenging to teach the amount of material given in Chemistry in the Modern World in a single semester, I also agree with a lot of the structural changes to the course. We're able to go over more information in the plenary sessions. Then the recitation sections are great for doing the group work that we did in Chem23A and Chem23B. My favorite thing about the new Core chemistry is that lab and lecture correlate and build off each other really well. It is really rewarding for students to learn stuff in

lecture and then go actually do it in lab. So, I'm really happy that there's a stronger correlation between lab and lecture now.

### **As a visiting professor for the last few years, what have you thought about your experience at Mudd?**

It's great. I don't want to leave. I've grown so, so much as an instructor from being here because the students are really great. It's a really supportive environment. In terms of faculty, there are lots of great opportunities for me to learn from colleagues and the Division of Student Affairs and Office of Academic Affairs on how to more appropriately teach students. It's been super awesome. I really, really have enjoyed it.

### **What are the pros and cons of working at such a small school?**

At bigger universities, it's way harder to find the amount of student engagement and interaction that I get at Mudd. At other schools, I find it's very easy to sort of get lost in a sea of students. It's more difficult to develop mentor-mentee relationships with them. At Mudd, it's definitely so much easier. I feel like I've been able to help students become better scientists and better professionals, and help them learn about possible careers.

### **What are your plans after Mudd?**

Right now, I'm on the job market. I'm applying



*Prof. Kromer working in the laboratory with a student.*

to tech positions at other smaller universities that are hiring tenure-track chemistry faculty. I'm also applying to some other universities that are a little bit bigger, but are looking for a teaching-focused professor. The idea there is that I would do pretty much everything I'm currently doing now, like mentoring research students. And it would be at a slightly bigger institution compared to Mudd, so instead of 900 students, it would be 10,000 or so students.

### **Word has it that you traveled in a van with your dog for a year. What was that experience like?**

After finishing graduate school, I was really burnt out. I just did not really have a lot of motivation to do a postdoc or keep doing academic research. So, I bought a van in February 2020. When COVID hit in March 2020, I took advantage of the opportunity and built out the van while working on my dissertation at the same time, finishing my Ph.D. in May 2020. In August 2020, I got my dog Bowie, and I became an online teaching professor at various institutions. I would do all my teaching duties in the morning and then I would go rock climbing afterward. But you can only do van life for so long, and I wanted to build a career – which is why I applied for this job.

### **What's your favorite meal at the Hoch?**

I typically follow a vegan diet, so I usually just go to Veggie Valley. I'm pretty easy to please when it comes to food, but I really enjoy the General Tso's tofu as well as the Hoch's Moroccan eggplant stew.



# A CARETAKING GUIDE for the passionate plant parent

So you want to take care of a plant? Maybe you just potted your first succulent at the DSA Fall Festival, or maybe you saw the pretty cacti outside the Trader Joe's on Foothill and couldn't resist buying one. Well, you're in luck — I've compiled a comprehensive guide of everything you need to know as a fledgling plant parent. After going through this checklist, you'll be all set to raise plants of your own! I'll begin with a bit of background on how I became a plant mother. My love for flora and fauna actually stems from my mom, who is an avid plant caretaker herself. We have shelves and shelves of succulents outside our house, many of which we've grown from other cuttings (more about that later). When I was a young teenager, I started tagging along with my mom to various garden festivals, and we would always come home with at least one box full of new plant babies. I found tending to my plants very calming and somewhat addictive, and from then on, I couldn't stop! I find it so rewarding to nurture something and watch it grow happily under my care. Now, I'll share my tips with you so that you can feel this fulfillment too!

by Mikayla Mann  
designed by Isabel Godoy



It's a good idea to have in mind which plant(s) you want before you start shopping for them, so you can plan accordingly for other supplies (like soil, fertilizer, and pots) later. I mostly grow drought-friendly plants, especially succulents, cacti, and plumeria (a shrub/small tree with fragrant flowers, native to tropical America). I'm from San Diego, and these types of plants thrive around my home (and they will in Claremont too!). My choices are usually very subjective, based on how the plant looks. If given the option between multiple plants of the same kind, choose the one with the most "pups" (small budding plants that have sprouted from the larger plant) if possible.

## 1. CHOOSING YOUR PLANTS!



*Christmas Carol Aloe*



*Gollum Jade*



*Pink Jelly Bean Succulent*



*String of Dolphins*



*Plumeria*

## 2. CHOOSING YOUR SOIL AND POT.

For succulents and cacti, there's usually a special soil known as succulent potting mix. If you can't find that, a good rule of thumb is two parts sand, two parts potting soil, and one part perlite/pumice (from The Spruce, a home decor website). Make sure to choose a well-draining pot with at least one hole on the bottom — you don't want your plant rotting from water sitting in the soil. It's okay if your pot doesn't have holes, but you'll have to be more careful about watering (see the watering tip below). Feel free to experiment with all kinds of pots — there are some super cool ones out there, and you can decorate your own too!



## 3. POTTING/PROPAGATING.

Did you know you can propagate plants? No, not like error propagation — succulents can easily reproduce asexually via cuttings from a mother plant. If you want to try your hand at this, make sure you use clean shears to cut off a small, healthy-looking piece of your "mother plant." Then let the cutting dry out for 4-5 days, which will allow the end to callus over so that it can easily form roots. After that, you can pot your plant! Start by filling the pot with a good amount of soil on the bottom, enough so that if you put your plant or cutting on top, it will stick out of the top of the pot. Then, dig a shallow hole in the center of the soil (using your finger or another tool) and place your plant inside. Make sure the hole is deep enough that the plant feels sturdy when you place it all the way inside. For small plants, this is usually about half a finger length. Support your plant with your hand while you fill the rest of the pot with soil. Throughout this process, make sure to lightly compress the soil with your hands so that it can hold the plant up while still providing some aeration for the roots.

## 4. LOCATION.

First of all, make sure your plants get sun for at least 6 hours per day. There are infinite places for you to put your new plant, depending on whether you want to show it off, maximize sunlight, or anything else you have in mind. If you want to arrange displays of

your succulents, a good book to check out is *Designing with Succulents* by Debra Lee Baldwin. I know people who have put plants on their dorm windowsills (Case windows are perfect for this). As an Atwood resident, I prefer to maximize the use of my balcony and arrange all of my plants and pots outside to show them off!

## 5. WATERING.

*Don't overwater your plants!!!* I know some of you are very enthusiastic about taking care of your plants, but there is such a thing as smothering them with too much love. It is especially easy to overwater succulents and other drought-friendly plants, which will lead to root rot. Make sure to look up the watering guidelines for each of your plants. One good book I recommend for these tips is *Succulents: The Ultimate Guide to Choosing, Designing, and Growing 200 Easy-Care Plants* by Robin Stockwell. As a rule of thumb, it's every 1-2 weeks for most succulents.

## 6. TROUBLESHOOTING (a.k.a. debugging for the CS-inclined).

Are you afraid your plant has gotten too much or too little water? If your plant looks mushy or black, it's probably rotting. :( But some plants can be saved! If it's just a leaf rotting, and the rot hasn't started from the roots, then you can cut off the parts that have gone bad and save the rest of the plant. On the other hand, if the plant looks crispy and brown, it's been underwatered. My main tip is to adjust your watering schedule accordingly and don't freak out!

## 7. DEBUGGING (LITERALLY).

Unfortunately, your plant will sometimes get bug infestations — some common ones I've seen are mealybugs, spider mites, and ants. There are guides for getting rid of each of these pests online (I recommend "Common Pests on Succulents and Easy Treatments for Them" on the Succulent Plant Care website), but a common remedy is to rinse the plants with a strong stream of water and spray (or rub using a cotton swab) alcohol on the leaves.

## 8. ENJOY!

You've worked hard to bring your first plant to life — now it's time to appreciate how far you've come! Congratulations; you're well on your way to becoming a professional plant parent :)



# Judiciar



Story by Ian Gray McGuire // Art by Alex Silver

“The device was obviously of Thounvar make. Lacking embroidery, forged of unstained wood, hanging blade overcome with waves of rust, no sensible craftsman would make something so gauche. Though, guess I should call our town lucky it saw so much time locked up in an old shed; no need to care for something with such a vile and seldom-realized purpose.” Jacques spoke through a suppressed shudder.

The Judiciar leaned in. “And what was it that raced through your mind prior to the manifestation?”

“My emotions at the time? Well, to be honest, my heart was pounding. I knew none of the others would be able to sleep after what needed to be done that day, so I volunteered out of a sense of” — she fumbled for the word — “protecting them, I guess. Someone needed to loose that rope, and it might as well have been me. Still didn’t mean I wanted to be there, standing up on that stage, the crowd of people bigger than I’d ever guess. Who would have thought so many people would come to see a funeral? Well, you know, execution, not funeral, but in our eyes Malcolm was already dead.”

The Judiciar shot her a glare that could tear through a Khainvar stronghold.

“Sorry sorry, I know you and your order are against that type of thing. The Witch’s funeral. Shows what we knew though,” Jacques spoke with a feigned chuckle, “since it was right about then that he up and flew away.”

“And the bonds fastening him to the device? We have multiple eye-witness reports that he was secured leading up to and during the proceedings.”

Jacque began pulling a shaking hand through her speckled brown hair, the lighter shade a sign of a bloodline long since diluted, before noticing, forcibly stopping herself.

“Well, it was the strangest thing. One moment he was bound to the board, sure as sunshine, but the next moment he sort of slipped and floated away. It was as if our laws and rules didn’t apply to him anymore, as if the Witch was beyond mortal ken.” Jacques paused, wonder and terror flashing across her face. “But there’s more. A sort of, feeling came over me. One moment I stood quivering, nerves a jumble, but the next — well the next I stood strong. I felt that I was immutable, unstoppable. Brave enough to stride through a LiKor’s den and strong enough to protect the whole village from harm. I was the people’s champion, I could take any burden. It was as if, almost as if—”

“The mask you wore came true.”

Jacque slowly nodded.

The Judiciar scrawled something in his notebook, then with a dramatic gesture furiously circled something on his page again and again. “Thank you,” he stood and made to leave, “your cooperation here has saved your town much heartache.”

Raising a hand in a deferential motion. “Sir?” The Judiciar snapped back to his witness, black cloak swishing in his wake.

“What are you going to do once you’ve caught it?”

“What the codes demand.” Voice resolute, the Judiciar turned to the door, massive iron sword gleaming as he made his exit from the room and entrance into the foyer of Fallowfield town hall.

Embellished pillars, designed more to catch the eye than for a purpose as lowly as holding up the ceiling; a veritable menagerie of desks, chairs, and small tables, each its own

ecosphere of pretty baubles and long since forgotten party gifts; and a carpet bearing a detailed depiction of the buffed and glassed exterior of the building sitting afore the setting sun, painting the floor in brilliant shades of yellow and orange. Yes indeed dear reader, the foyer was quite the fitting picture of the Khainvar way of life. The one exception was an odd painting hanging halfway covered by a window drape. It was woven of deep blues and putrid browns, in quite a nauseating display of color and artistry, yet it expediently transported the viewer into a realm of riverboats and adventure. Given the dusty old frame, lacking even an attempt at staining it gold, the Judiciar placed it as Bhyvar make, and the old hunter’s mind began to turn.

Scurrying out of a side room, from which the cries of several clinging guests echoed forth, came a plump man in suave dress, hair as black as night, and face worn with exhaustion.

“I do very much so hope that your talk with captain Jacques went without a fuss. All the others came out that door mumbling and quite nearly cowed to death. She’s

a look of wander crossing his face, “besides, I haven’t even puzzled out what we’re dealing with here. For that, more research must be pursued.” He snapped the journal shut with a resounding thwap.

“But you’ve interviewed nearly everyone at the incident. What more could you ask for?”

“Whatever came before the manifestation. As mayor, I assume you can bring me record of the crime?”

“That I could indeed,” spoke Sir Franken, fiddling with his pocket watch, “but I know just as well as anyone what happened. Mal—” he corrected himself, “The Witch had too much to drink at Pollyandul’s place, flew into a drunken rage, and killed Felys, the poor lad. Some say he smashed his victim’s head open with a wine bottle, but rumor says he did it with fell magics.”

The Judiciar let out a condescending sigh. “And this folkloric nonsense is precisely why a written report is superior to the spoken word, just bring me the document.”

Sir Franken scurried off to do as requested before sheepishly remembering that, while usually on the front of his mind, he was mayor, and so sent an aide to fetch the file. Sir Franken strode back to the Judiciar as a tense quiet fell upon the room. The sounds of Jacques bidding adieu Sir Franken’s guests, with all the stalwart assuredness usually ascribed to her post, were heard, and Franken checked his pocket watch twice in the same interim. Through it all, the Judiciar stood straight, completely aware of his surroundings and as if assured the master of them. Nothing crossed his face save what he put on it, and to read his emotions would be to read the tides themselves.

“So,” said Sir Franken, his pale hopeful voice daring to break the quiet, “do you want to know how I was knighted?”

“No,” drawled the Judiciar, mind narrowed on that of his hunt.

“Err, well then what about you? You must have visited a great many strange and foreign lands in your service. Why don’t you tell me about those?”

“My Order wishes it never disclosed wherefore and wherefrom my kind have

gone.”

“Well look sir, man, Judiciar, you’re being quite unpleasant now. I’m just trying to strike up harmless banter. The way you react to what I say, why it’s barely like you’re human at all!”

At this, the Judiciar let out a smile, one that crossed his face in a jagged line, displaying a long row of gleaming teeth. If Sir Franken hadn’t been a sir but instead a Shrew, a Palawan Badger, or even a Barbary Lion, he would have bolted away in fear, for in the animal kingdom such a display would be to die for. But here, in the overly civilized foyer of Fallowfield town hall, Sir Franken merely edged back nervously, not yet sure if he was in on a joke, or the very one being made fun of.

It was at that moment precisely when the aide returned, presented the file, and quite expeditiously fled the room. The Judiciar sat to read the file, and Sir Franken, finally seeing his chance to withdraw from the domain of such a poor and punctual conversationalist, opted to attend to his most nervous guests in the neighbouring parlor.

It was only after they were all overly-pampered, promised pretty baubles, and sent out the door in a huff, that the word-weary Sir Franken finally strolled back to the foyer, a napkin to his brow. What he saw there bore little to lighten his mood, for without a trace the dark man who had so dominated the otherwise opulent room had vanished.



made of sterner stuff, I know, but it’d still be nice for you to be, well, nice, every once in a while.”

The Judiciar eyed the man as a temperamental crowd would a floundering comedian.

“Jacques may be captain of the guard, but beneath the uniform she’s still a person,” spoke the Judiciar in an uncharacteristically compassionate tone, “you’d do well to remember that.”

The man paused, eyes flicking to the now empty sideroom and back to the Judiciar before settling on the carpet.

“Right then,” he quivered, eyes downcast, “Well then, at least tell me this, how goes your case? Have you deduced any clues from which you shall track down and slay your quarry? Shall I have the town up in arms?” A chivalric exultation taking over his voice.

“Patience,” said the Judiciar, eyeing the Bhyvar portrait with a keen eye, “If my craft were of the common man, you wouldn’t have called me here, now would you?”

“Of, of course,” stumbled the mayor, “but I still don’t see why we can’t have extra hands out on the hunt so to speak. Fallowfield isn’t big, but it isn’t small either. With a few additional eyes we could—” he trailed off, blubbing ideas despairing to a murmur in face of the Judiciar’s scowl.

“An untrained mob bearing pitchforks and torchfire is the last thing we need. And trust me, when a Witch is involved things escalate fast.” Turning back to his notebook,

## SHORT STORY



**Uurgh.** The pounding headache hadn't gone away. Maybe it was chronic LeetCoditis after all — but Harvey didn't know for sure. All he knew was that bubble sort was  $O(n^2)$  and that his final round interview was today. *That's all that was important, anyway.*

Trudging down the stairs, Harvey admired his Final Round Housing for the last time. Ever since he'd moved in, he'd taken full advantage of the amenities that had come with passing the behavioral round: his single-family home came with free breakfast, bubblegum-flavored floss, and a bed with sheets. He couldn't believe he'd ever slept on a sheetless bed back in his Second Round Apartment. Memories of First Round Housing were tucked even more deeply in the depths of his brain — *had he really lived in a shed for 3 months?*

Sitting down at the kitchen table, Harvey shook his head in silent disbelief. *Thank god for my dad.* Harvey's dad was a government official working in the Amazon branch, and he'd been able to pull some strings. Indeed, everyone in Harvey's family had interned at Amazon, making him part of some sort of infinite legacy.

The sound of rapid murmuring snapped Harvey out of his trance. Mudd came down the stairs, his elevator pitch reverberating through the near-empty room. Seeing Harvey in the kitchen, he stopped mid-sentence. "You like it?"

Harvey smiled wryly at his brother. "Who cares if I like it or not? It's what F.A.A.N.G. thinks that matters."

***People with The Offer socially segregated, spending their days reveling in the feeling of achievement...***

He'd always had mixed feelings about the F.A.A.N.G. government — though it guaranteed its citizens basic necessities, those amenities differed vastly depending on one's recruitment status. Though he had to admit, the perks were great once you got The Offer. "Mudd, let's go. And ditch the tie. We're recruiting for SWE, remember." As they walked out the door, Harvey's mind was running in circles. As someone in the Final Round, The Offer felt within reach, and he couldn't stop thinking about it. People with The Offer socially segregated, spending their days reveling in the feeling of achievement and splurging on expensive drinks and trips. Though they smiled at Harvey in passing, they never spoke — he felt a distance between them, an uncomfortable mix of jealousy and superiority. Not like the smiling or passing happened much, anyways: those with The Offer removed themselves from friends

and family, only to be seen again when their loved ones also received Offers.

Harvey saw a figure tackle Mudd to the ground. Seeing who it was, he relaxed and smiled: "Seeley! You scared us!" Seeley, Harvey and Mudd's only friend, laughed heartily. No one really had friends; socializing wasted time people could be spending memorizing algorithms. Seeley was a recruiter, so Harvey and Mudd justified an exception. "Did y'all see the new welfare plan from today?"

***No one really had friends; socializing wasted time people could be spending memorizing algorithms.***

have to submit your resume and cover letter. They're also expanding the number of LeetCode tests so there are more chances for the tent-livers to get First Round Housing." He smiled wistfully, then sighed. "Supply chain issues, you know."

"That's awesome," Mudd replied. "I'm glad they're expanding the number of opportunities for qualified people."

Harvey nodded slowly, then furrowed his brows. "What about people without much coding experience, or people without a 2024 graduation year?"

Seeley raised his eyebrows. "What do you mean? Welfare isn't supposed to help *everyone* who needs it. You gotta earn it, you know — by being good at CS and stuff."

"Okay, but like, not everyone has a competitive programming background, has a parent in software, or knew they were gonna do SWE when they came out of the womb. And those people need support, too."

Harvey thought he was making a really valid point, but Mudd and Seeley seemed to find it hilarious. "Are you," Seeley wheezed, "are you saying recruiting *shouldn't* determine social status?" Harvey sighed, blocking out the laughing as best as he could.

[ONE WEEK LATER]

Mudd's eyes lit up. "I heard back!" Harvey tore off his headphones and sprinted to Mudd's setup. "Oh my god. *We are thrilled to extend you an offer to join Amazon* —" Harvey's eyes widened, and he quickly wrapped Mudd in a big hug. "I'm so proud of you!"

The initial euphoria waning, Mudd replied: "What about you? Show me your Offer Letter."

Harvey rushed back to his laptop and clicked excitedly into his inbox. He cleared his throat. "*Hi Harvey, we*

*appreciate your interest in job opportunities...*" His voice trailed off. "...we will not be moving forward..." His heart dropped.

"...Oh." Mudd's expression flattened, and he took a tentative step back. "I'm sorry."

"No, it's okay," Harvey replied, head pounding

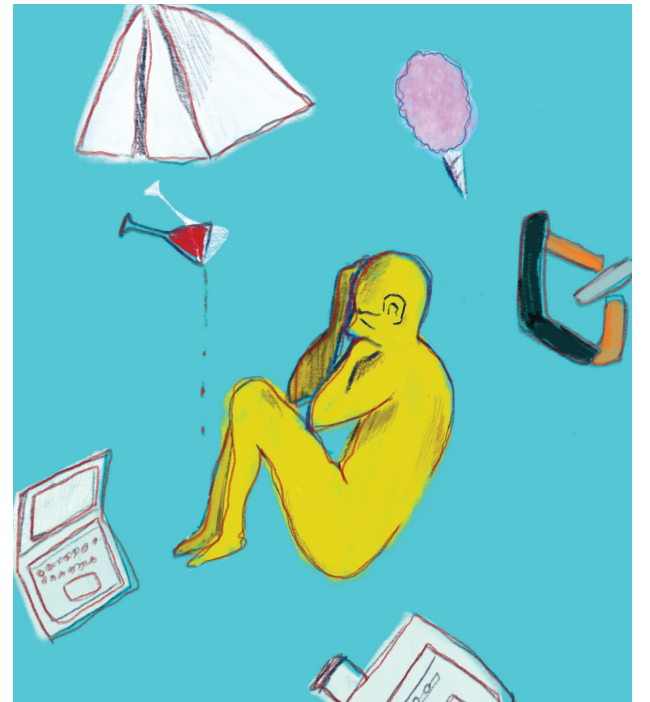
***Welfare isn't supposed to help everyone who needs it. You gotta earn it, you know — by being good at CS and stuff.***

harder than ever (a clear Leetcoditis flare-up). He glanced at the bubblegum floss sitting on the table, wondering which tent he'd be moving into once he was evicted. He tried to be happy for Mudd — who was probably moving into a mansion.

Mudd turned around to head upstairs. "It sucks we won't be able to talk anymore. I'll miss you." His voice was suddenly soft and solemn.

"What?" Harvey ran after him. "What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean. That's just how it is— people with the Offer are supposed to hang out among themselves. I'm gonna have to learn how to show off



and buy expensive things. It's a different lifestyle from *all of yours*." He gestured at some invisible audience. "It's gonna be hard for me to get used to."

Harvey stood there, dazed and confused. "Mudd." Tears welled up in his eyes. "It doesn't have to be like that. You don't *have* to do those things. You can still say hi to me in the streets. You're always welcome in my tent, even though there won't be running water or electricity or anything. I promise I'll grind algos and move to the First Round sheds ASAP."

Mudd sighed. "I don't know, Harvey, I really don't. You just gotta fix your resume and grind interview prep. Then you can be with me in Offer Housing, which is gonna be so great."

"Dude, no." Harvey surprised himself by how passionate he sounded. "Don't you ever think about how *weird* life is? Can't we spend a day — no, even a meal — without talking about LinkedIn? Mudd, don't you want a life? I just want to play piano and beach volleyball and join, like, Muddraker or something."

Mudd only looked more confused. "Harvey, people only 'have lives' in movies. Movies aren't real life. Muddraker became LeetCode a long time ago." He looked at Harvey questioningly. "And what's wrong with LinkedIn?"

Harvey took a few deep breaths to calm himself down. "Nothing," he murmured, turning away. "Nothing's wrong with LinkedIn."

- ACROSS
- 1 Jerry’s partner

4 “Fine” school subject

8 Integration calculations

13 The elements of the empty set

14 Betty of early film fame

15 Specifically

16 \_\_\_\_\_ impasse

17 Purchase at a clothing store in Tamil Nadu

18 Now, in Guadalajara

19 Dip for chips

21 Location of this puzzle

23 Ged and Gary, for example

25 Escort

26 What you ask when you’re waiting for someone

28 Blog letters

29 Notorious justice

32 Argue against someone

37 Something between crèmes?

38 Activity, or this puzzle’s theme

40 Grass in the morning, perhaps

41 Results of wiping whiteboards and vacuuming floors

42 Tolkien creature

43 College admission test

44 Seinfeld played one

45 Coat opener?

47 Piercing location in the nose

52 Small coconut cakes

56 Rainbow maker

57 Play \_\_\_\_\_ in

58 Mudd equivalent of 10 As at Harvard?

60 Blues singer James

61 What Menkoi Ya serves

62 0 - 0 in Inner Tube Water Polo, for example

63 Something Saul Goodman did

64 Santa \_\_\_\_\_, California

65 Group of people on YikYak

66 Data storage device

	1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11	12
13					14					15				
16					17					18				
19				20		21			22					
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57						58			59		60			
61						62					63			
64						65					66			

- DOWN
- 1 Result when you do 59-down to a list of numbers

2 Acquitted \_\_\_\_\_ counts

3 Genius group

4 6-pack, perhaps

5 Explore

6 Donut shape

7 Sea animal that surprisingly doesn’t have 8 legs

8 Many Nintendo competitors, or “So Long, Astoria” band

9 Tolkien Kingdom with many horses

10 Furry creature shown alongside C-3PO

11 Billion ending?

12 What 13-down studies

13 Studier of 12-down

20 End of \_\_\_\_\_

22 Chooses for a purpose

24 Dot in a musical score

27 Wisdom, for example?

29 Move, in realtor speak

30 Exploding sound

31 Needlefish (plural)

32 Surrender

33 Draft bovines

34 Food label abbr.

35 Code block with catch

36 Feeling when 37-down doesn’t work

37 Authentication for Sakai, Gradescope, etc

39 Radiohead song

43 Tennis player Williams

45 More ashen

46 Navel type

48 Prof. Groves’ printing hobby

49 Shakespeare’s Andronicus

50 He in Barcelona

51 Angry (misspelled)

52 Shakespeare’s Antony

53 Shrinking Asian sea

54 Possible result of too much food

55 Clairvoyant

59 Way to get the 1-down of a set of value
- stay tuned for solutions to be published at [themuddraker.org](https://themuddraker.org)

# NAME TAGS

BY NATHAN HASEGAWA ‘25

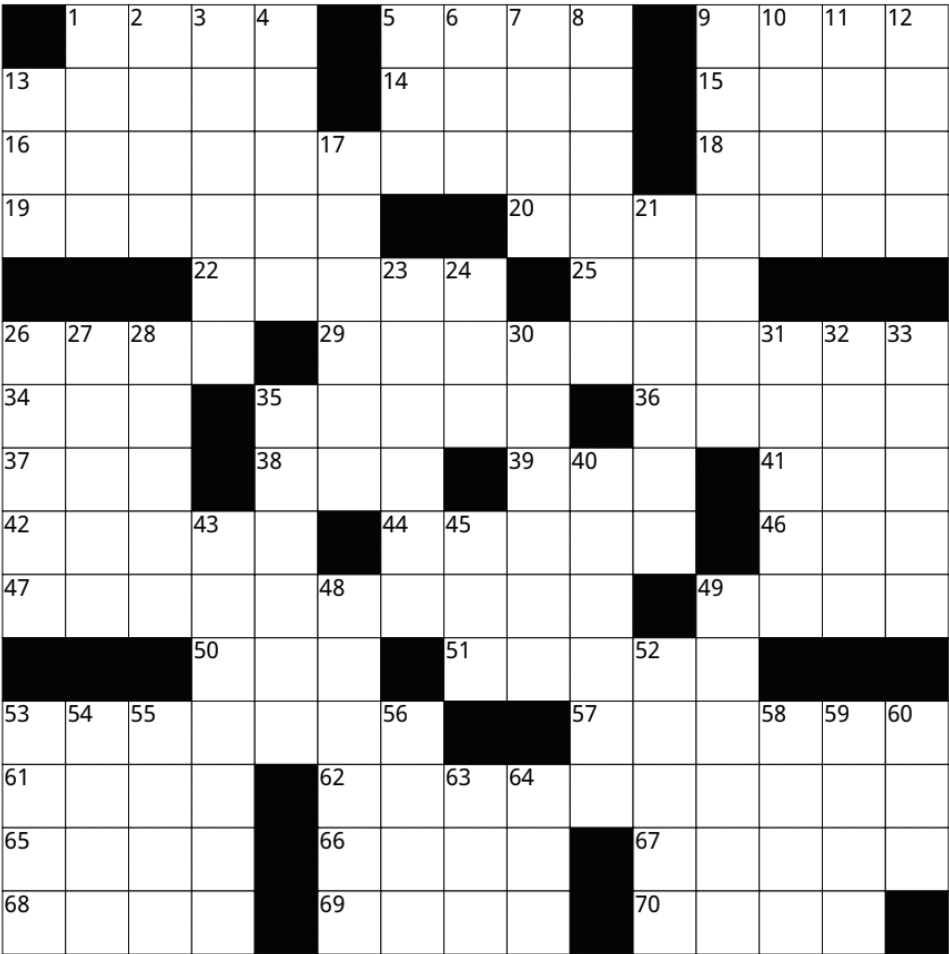
ACROSS

- 1 Take a wrong step and get grounded for it?
- 5 Sand on a golf course
- 9 Rounded platelet lump
- 13 Who has thrown more NFL touchdowns than Tom Brady
- 14 Ambience
- 15 Verdi opera
- 16 \*Sweetener used in some frosh chem labs?
- 18 Hawaiian garlands
- 19 Its fourth derivative is itself
- 20 Getting struck by lightning, some say
- 22 Taunt... or, phonetically, the first and last letters of “taunt”
- 25 With 1-Down, “The Shape of Water” director Guillermo
- 26 Book before 1 Samuel
- 29 \*Debugging techniques sometimes used in Computability & Logic?
- 34 Arkansas governor Hutchinson
- 35 Cook
- 36 White-plumed bird
- 37 Where you might find Hurricanes and Lightning?
- 38 “Raggedy” doll
- 39 Mail company with brown trucks
- 41 Took the bait?
- 42 Benjamin Franklin, religiously
- 44 “Quiet!”
- 46 Actor and stuntman Cruise
- 47 \*Umbilical used in some E79 practicums?
- 49 Second digit before a decimal point

- 50 Hubbub
- 51 Thanks: Fr.
- 53 Where college students pledge
- 57 Revise together
- 61 Centers of attention
- 62 Stan Lee character created in 1963... or a hint to the structure of the starred clues
- 65 End of a blessing
- 66 Bottom of a unicycle
- 67 Yank
- 68 “Titanic” obstacle, for short
- 69 Slow-cooked dish
- 70 Imitates

DOWN

- 1 See 25-Across
- 2 Australian bouncers?
- 3 Close to, as friends
- 4 Cylindrical pasta shape
- 5 Symbol of torque
- 6 Floor cover
- 7 Riyadh resident, e.g.
- 8 Procession on the street
- 9 Cell phone history
- 10 Place
- 11 As a Keats poem
- 12 To-do list entry
- 13 “Saturday Night Live” network
- 17 One of 48 for “Saturday Night Live”
- 21 Hate with passion
- 23 A haiku only has one
- 24 Greek goddess of the dawn
- 26 Marvin Gaye’s genre
- 27 “Yeah!” singer
- 28 Actress Shire
- 30 List with an undetermined number of elements



- 31 What politicians and pastors do
- 32 Reveal
- 33 E79, informally
- 35 Like gory movies, maybe
- 40 What an arrow might do to a target
- 43 Popular activity on wheels
- 45 Its slogan is “Think”
- 48 Assimilates one’s opposition
- 49 Keeps occupied
- 52 \_\_\_ Mesa, Calif.
- 53 Gymgoer’s concern
- 54 City home to a pasta-themed museum
- 55 Taiwanese laptop brand
- 56 First semester frosh course, informally
- 58 Meme that became the namesake for a popular cryptocurrency
- 59 Some retirement savings accounts
- 60 Common file extension in computer science courses
- 63 Valuable you might find at rock bottom?
- 64 Not a lot

## ADVENTURES OF WALLY THE WART

### Wally the Engineer

By Dry Sockets Bob



## BAD TATTOO IDEAS

### Sqirls, Sqirls, Sqirls!

By Dry Sockets Bob



# SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENT ART

# waverly wang: drawing ii

**“Prismacolor”** is part of a triptych of self-portraits that I made in my Drawing II: Representation course. We were told to make a work inspired by a conventional representation of the body. The inspiration for my self-portraits was magazine cover photoshoots. In particular, I was interested in how stylists and costume designers transform the model they are photographing into someone almost unrecognizable. I imitated the centered composition of magazine covers and tried to focus on making myself look unrecognizable, important, and iconic.

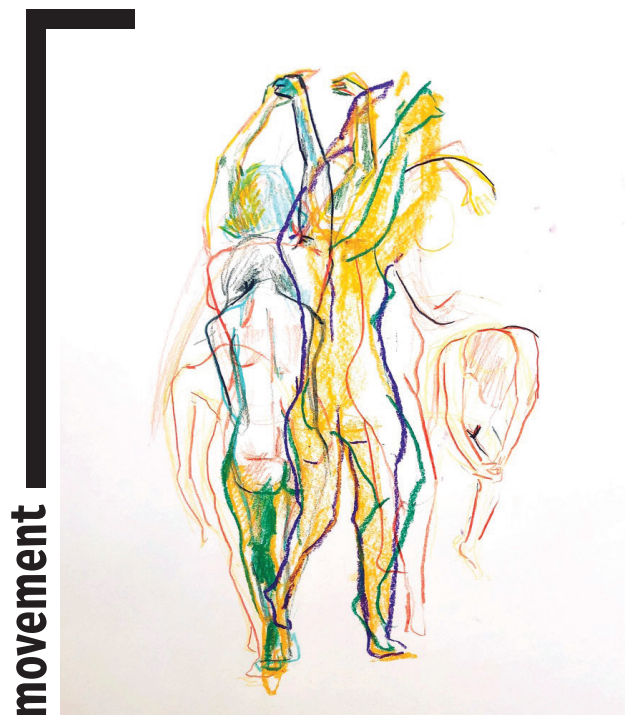
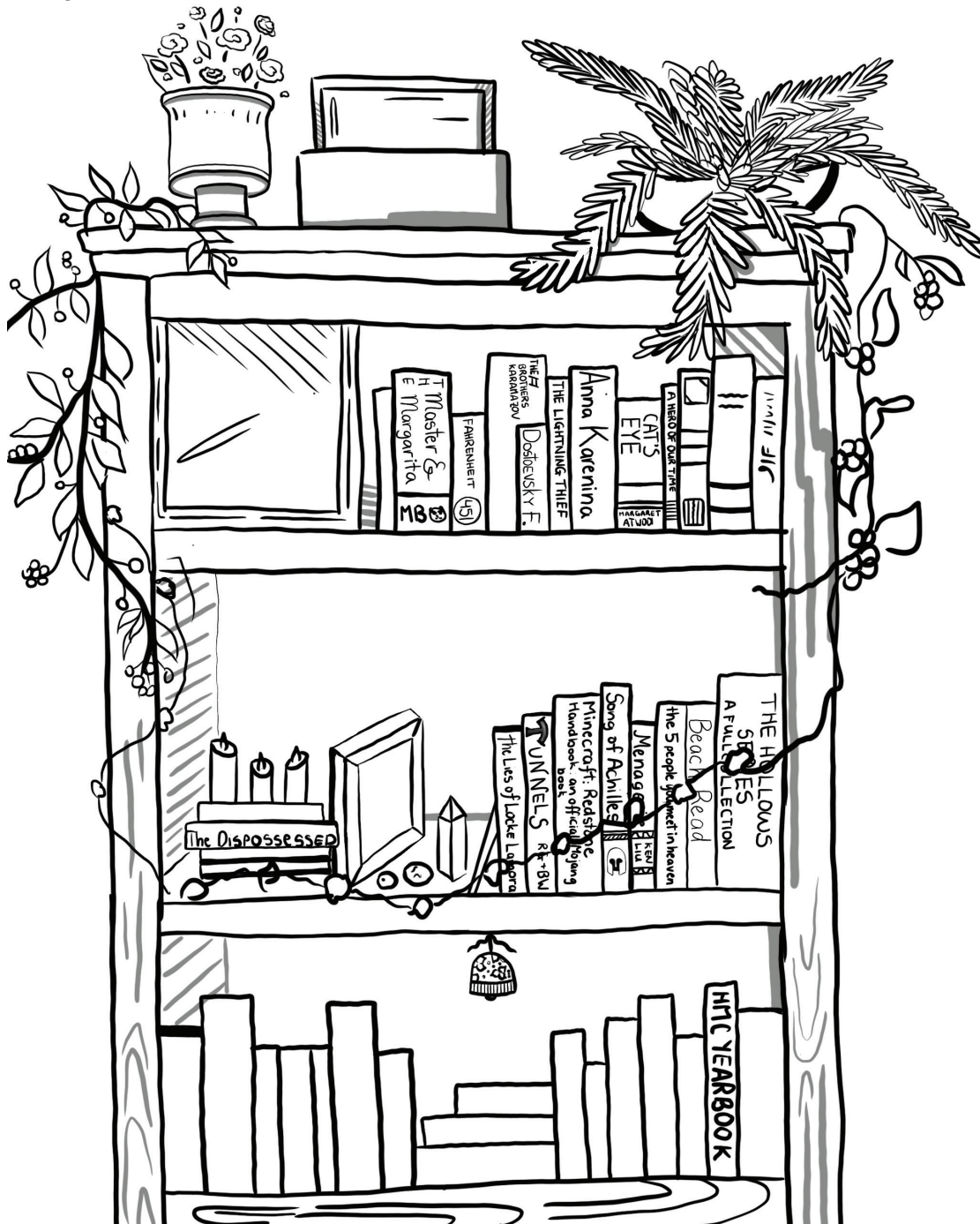
**“Into Character”** is another piece from my Drawing II course where we had to do a piece based on performance art. I was inspired by actors and how they get into character. As a reference, I used my favorite actor Freddy Carter, who portrays Kaz Brekker in the show “Shadow and Bone.” In particular, I was interested in exploring how Carter is a friendly person in real life but portrays a darker, more villainous character onscreen. At first, I was only going to have two colors as a metaphor for that metamorphosis, but later, I decided to include a mixture of many colors to show how actors create complex characters by taking apart multiple sides of themselves and slamming them into one.

**“Movement”** is a piece I did during a live drawing session of a moving figure in my Drawing II course.



## alina's coloring corner

Indulge in your inner artist and color this bookshelf in any way you want!



# the MUDD MAP

a Comprehensive List of  
Places Named After Mudd

by Lea Twicken &  
designed by Serena Mao

We've all been there.

The conversation after committing to Mudd or at the Thanksgiving table catching up with distant relatives:

"Oh where are you going to school?"

"Harvey Mudd College."

"Hmmm, I haven't heard of that..."

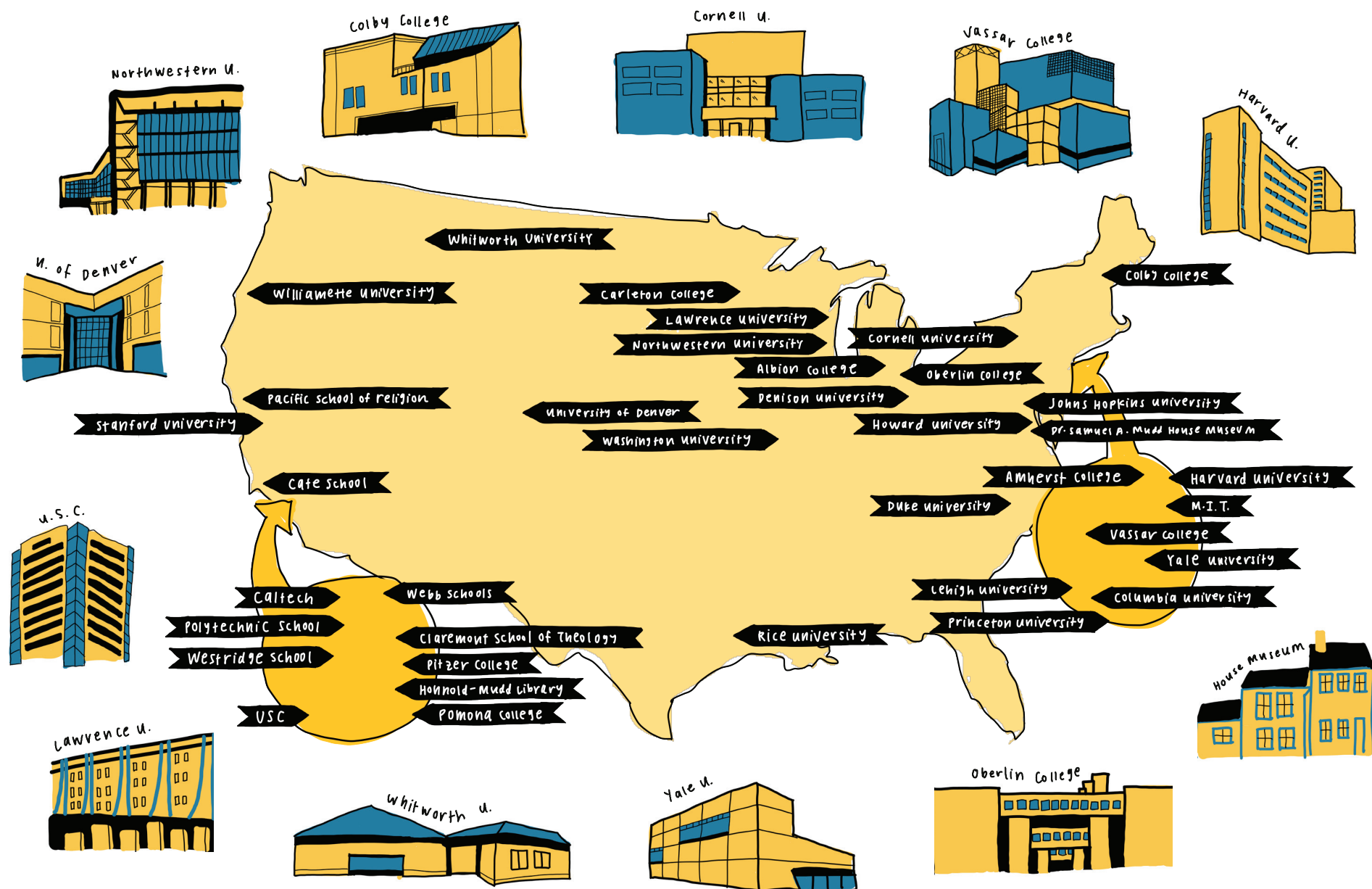
"Most people haven't... It's a small liberal arts college in Southern California focusing on STEM subjects..."

But though Harvey Mudd may be small, and though most of America hasn't heard of us, the reach of the Mudd name is vast. Several other buildings at the 5Cs are named after the Mudd family, and 35 colleges and boarding schools across the country have Mudd buildings. Perhaps most notably, our rivals Caltech have not one, but two Mudd-named buildings! It seems that Caltech may be trying to imitate their superior neighbor, as is Pomona with its Mudd-Blaisdell

Residence Hall and Seeley G. Mudd Building.

Some other Mudd buildings (satellite Mudd campuses, maybe?) have adopted not only Mudd's name, but also our distinctive architectural style. Columbia University's Seeley W. Mudd Building wiki page showcases the following description: "The Seeley W. Mudd Building, affectionately known as Mudd, is arguably one of Columbia's ugliest buildings, and unarguably one of its worst named (appropriate for its ugliness)." Harsh.

The most interesting Mudd building, however, is not even part of an educational institution. The Dr. Samuel A. Mudd House Museum near Waldorf, Maryland, was once home to the doctor who set John Wilkes Booth's broken leg while he was on the run after shooting and ultimately assassinating President Abraham Lincoln. After Booth was caught, Dr. Mudd was arrested for conspiracy to kill the President. Though I cannot confirm whether Dr. Mudd was related to Harvey Mudd in any way, I think his story serves as a good reminder of why Mudd students must understand the impact of their work on society.



Clockwise from the top: Cornell University's Mudd Hall, Vassar College's SGM Chemistry Building, Harvard University's SGM Building, the Dr. Samuel A. Mudd House Museum, Oberlin College's SGM Learning Center, Yale University's SGM Library, Whitworth University's SGM Chapel, Lawrence University's SGM Library, University of Southern California's SGM Building, University of Denver's SGM Science Building, Northwestern University's SGM Library for Science and Engineering, Colby College's SGM Science Building.