


The **CORE**

**THE COLLEGE
MAGAZINE**

Fall 2024 Supplement to
The University of Chicago Magazine

SKYWALKERPARIS



A long, narrow hallway with walls made of stacked, colorful-painted wooden planks. The planks are painted in various colors like red, blue, green, and yellow. The hallway is dimly lit, with light coming from the far end. A person is walking away in the distance.

This past spring, students in the Calumet Quarter program visited Steelworkers Park, built on a former US Steel site in South Chicago. The site includes natural areas as well as remnant elements of the steel industry. Read more about the Calumet Quarter on page 28.

INSIDE

From the editor

PARIS DISPATCH

In the autumn of 1925, expatriate Janet Flanner, EX 1914, submitted her first “Letter from Paris” to the *New Yorker*.

When Harold Ross, the *New Yorker*'s first editor, commissioned the biweekly letter, he specified he had no interest in what Flanner thought. He wanted to know what the French were thinking.

This advice came to define Flanner's writing, which famously lacked the first-person pronoun: “You're safer with *one* or *it*,” she once said. “*J* is like a fortissimo. It's too loud.”

Not quite a century after Flanner's first letter appeared in print, the *Core*'s Metcalf intern, Isabella Romeu, Class of 2026, spent the summer studying in Paris.

Isabella's editor had different instructions: Keep a diary. Write in it as often as possible and as much as possible. Tell us about your coursework, your impressions of the city, your attempts to learn French, any goofy cultural misunderstandings: “Basically, the more copy, the better ... so we can all live vicariously through you.”

Isabella's finished submission—replete with the first-person pronoun—came in at more than 15,000 words. Read an (expurgated) excerpt on page 16.

—Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

Front cover: Inside Silencio, a Paris nightclub. Photo courtesy Isabella Romeu, Class of 2026.

Back cover: *Alexander Bridge*, a watercolor by Albert A. Michelson; UChicago Photographic Archive, apfi-04522.

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...the University of Chicago Magazine is a publication of the University of Chicago. It is published four times a year, in the Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. The magazine is a forum for alumni and current students to share their thoughts and experiences. It is a place where alumni can stay connected to their alma mater and where they can share their stories with their fellow graduates. The magazine is a valuable resource for alumni and a source of pride for the University of Chicago.

Alumni memories

DID YOU GRADUATE IN 1957, 1961, 1964, 1991, 1993, 2017, OR 2022?

If so, the University of Chicago Magazine needs YOU.

Each issue of the Magazine features Alumni News—the first section many readers look at when the new issue arrives. Four times a year, volunteer class correspondents collect news from other members of their College class, then write it up into their own bylined column.

What are your classmates up to at this stage of their lives? A new job, marriage, kids, publications, travel, hobbies, get-togethers with other alumni? As class correspondent, you can be the one who finds out all about it and lets everyone else know.

Here's a small sampling of alumni news that ran in the Summer/24 issue.—Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

For more information, or to volunteer as a class correspondent, please contact the Magazine's Alumni News editor at uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu.



You could be the next Hildy Jansson (Rosalind Russell in the 1940 comedy *His Girl Friday*).

Class of 1959

When I went off to college, at age 16, I developed a passion for classical music. I listened to mono LPs on a portable phonograph with a crystal cartridge, a one-watt amplifier, and a four-inch speaker. Then I read something in *High Fidelity* magazine: "For \$5,000 [maybe \$60,000 in today's dollars] you can get a car that will take you to California and back. Or you can get a hi-fi that will

take you to heaven and back. It all depends where you want to go."

Well, I knew where I wanted to go, so I started upgrading. Before long I had a 20-watt Williamson tube amp and preamp, a folded horn corner cabinet with Jensen speakers, and a Rek-O-Kut turntable with a GE magnetic cartridge. I was the envy of the dormitory.

Now I have no more physical media. Anything I could possibly want to listen to is a click away, with



Photo courtesy Everett Collection

a sound quality vastly better than anything I had before. But. This is the sad/ironic part. The heaven-and-back thing. Being 16 and hearing Beethoven's Seventh Symphony for the first time—even on a four-inch speaker—that was heaven.

—Ken Green, SB'59, class correspondent

Class of 1966

Gregory Gogo, AB'66, is winding up his law practice. The feeling of finishing up is exhilarating. No more 60-hour weeks, weekends in the office, and murder clients in the reception room.

—Dick Lyford, AB'66, class correspondent

Class of 1970

Vivian Duvall, AB'70, writes, "I've been traveling more than usual, but not to exotic places, just to Boston about once a month. In this late stage of life, I've found love with a former high school classmate who lives there. We share a love for the Magnetic Fields and enjoyed two nights of concerts of their 69 Love Songs recently in Boston. At 76, I realize I may never write the Great American Novel. My days of accomplishments, awards, and

accolades are over. But life is so precious and sweet. I wish the same for all our classmates."

—Seth Masia, AB'70, class correspondent

Class of 1990

Dear classmates, we had a few people send in two truths and a lie for this quarter's alumni news.

Louise Speth, AB'90, MST'90: I served the City of Logan, UT, as a police officer for 20 years. I traveled to Ireland with my son in January 2024 as a college graduation present. I ran the Chicago Marathon in 2022.

Robert Tell, AB'90, AM'96: I manage the mental health clinic at the Portland Veterans Affairs Medical Center. I've been a year-round bike commuter for 15 years. Like any good Portlander, I brew my own beer.

The lies: LS's Ireland trip was canceled due to COVID. RT does not brew his own beer.

—Beth Manning, AB'90, and Mike Oberlander, AB'90, class correspondents

Class of 2015

Presenting GPT Alumni News, "but make it sexy."

"Sizzling Update: Anisha Ganguly, SB'15, Ties the Knot! Class of '15, get ready to fan yourselves, because Anisha Ganguly has some seriously steamy news to share! She just said 'I do' to fellow alum Dan Friedman, AB'16, in a sizzling ceremony in Dallas. Sparks flew when they met during their Metcalf Internship in NYC, and now they're heating up Chapel Hill, NC, as Anisha joins the medical school faculty at the University of North Carolina as an assistant professor. With Dan's ecowarrior vibes, working at the Sierra Club, and their adorable fur baby, Pluto, this power couple is on fire! Keep it scorching, Class of '15!"

—Jay Cushing, AB'15, SM'16, class correspondent



Chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of North Carolina... **91** **92** **93**

Advertisement for IKEA featuring a cartoon character and a list of products: 1. Beamsund, 2. Samund, 3. Gravits, 4. Breva, 11. Egglif, 12. Plan, 13. Plan, 14. Plan.

Dear partners, in 2004 we celebrated a nearly 50 year history of... **94** **95** **96** **97** **98** **99**

... **00** **01** **02** **03** **04** **05** **06** **07** **08** **09** **10** **11** **12** **13** **14** **15** **16** **17** **18** **19** **20** **21** **22** **23** **24** **25** **26** **27** **28** **29** **30** **31** **32** **33** **34** **35** **36** **37** **38** **39** **40** **41** **42** **43** **44** **45** **46** **47** **48** **49** **50** **51** **52** **53** **54** **55** **56** **57** **58** **59** **60** **61** **62** **63** **64** **65** **66** **67** **68** **69** **70** **71** **72** **73** **74** **75**

I just hosted my 36th annual New Year's... **57** **58** **59** **60** **61** **62** **63** **64** **65** **66** **67** **68** **69** **70** **71** **72** **73** **74** **75**





By the numbers

FIVE FACTS ABOUT PHILIP VENTICINQUE, AB'01, AM'02, PHD'09

Venticinque became dean of students in the College this past February.



Salt merchants' guild ordinance (P.Mich. V 245, 47 CE), which appeared on the cover of Venticinque's 2016 book *Honor Among Thieves: Craftsmen, Merchants, and Associations in Roman and Late Roman Egypt* (University of Michigan Press).

- 1 He came to Hyde Park in 1997: "I'm a 28th year."
- 2 As a classics major, he learned Latin and Greek. In graduate school he added Coptic, "the last phase of native Egyptian," and became a scholar of Roman and Byzantine Egypt.
- 3 He taught classics for ten years at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa, commuting from his home in Hyde Park. This fall he is back in the classroom to teach *Greece and Rome: Texts, Traditions, Transformations*.
- 4 He is a papyrologist, meaning he studies works written on papyrus (as well as on pottery sherds). "I used to study ancient petitions," he says. "I had no idea that I was preparing for a life of receiving student petitions."
- 5 His last name means "twenty-five." He has theories about why, but no definitive answer.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE COLLEGE



This past summer, more than 1,000 incoming first-years signed up for *Haven*, a multimedia role-playing game designed to introduce UChicago's academic culture and help students practice free expression.



The John W. Boyer Center in Paris—named for the College's long-serving dean, John Boyer, AM'69, PhD'75—will have its grand opening this November. Read more about the Center and how philanthropy made it possible at alumni.uchicago.edu/center-in-paris.

This year students can choose three new minors:

- BUSINESS GERMAN**
- COMPUTATIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE**
- COGNITIVE SCIENCE**



Freedom of expression

“WHO ARE YOU PERSUADING?”

An excerpt from a speech to the Class of 2024.

By Heidi Heitkamp

*Former US Senator **Heidi Heitkamp**, the director of the Institute of Politics, was the first woman senator elected from North Dakota. A Democrat, she served from 2013 to 2019. Heitkamp delivered her remarks on Class Day this past May.*

Four years ago, I became a fellow at the Institute of Politics and was introduced to many of the students in this class. After six years as a United States Senator in Washington, DC, I was desperate for a reason to be optimistic about the future of our country and the world. I found that optimism and hope here at the University of Chicago in every student that I met and in every conversation that I had.

There’s an old saying that every person is the average of the five people who you spend the most time with. I chose to spend time with people who inspire me to be better, to think harder, and to believe our better years are ahead of us.

To the Class of 2024, you made it. COVID-19 robbed you of the last year of high school and denied you a normal beginning of your college freshman

experience. But yet you persisted, adapted, and achieved.

You are also graduating in the middle of a national debate about the meaning of free speech and free expression. The Chicago Principles and the Kalven Report are seminal doctrines in the study of free expression on college campuses. In my opinion, they are what make the University of Chicago a unique and thriving academic environment.

But in a few days—or for those of you who are pursuing graduate programs, in a few years—you will not be in a campus environment. The rules will change.

Yes, in the United States, you will always have the right of free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment. That means you can stand on a street corner and express your opinion. But the most important question you should ask yourself is, “Who’s listening?”

The essential purpose of free speech in a democracy is not just to express opinion or frustration but to persuade. Who are you persuading?

At the Institute of Politics, we have always sought to be a place for free

“In the United States, you will always have the right of free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment ... But the most important question you should ask yourself is, ‘Who’s listening?’”

exchange of ideas, a place to grapple with difference not as an exercise in debate, but as an expression of our values in a vibrant democracy.

As a politician whose election to the United States Senate was dependent on persuading 22 percent of people on “the other side” to vote for me, I have achieved some level of skill in the art of persuasion. I have walked into hostile rooms of voters who disagreed with me. My goal always was to listen and understand where people were coming from, and to express my opinion in a way that helped people understand my position better. If they changed their minds, that was a bonus. Listening to the other views for me was never a sign of weakness, but rather of intellectual strength.

Whether your purpose is to persuade politicians to support your cause, or to persuade your work colleagues or bosses of the brilliance of your good idea, I offer what I hope are some strategies for persuasion.

Really listen to the other side. I don’t mean give the other side equal time. I mean really listen—really understand a different perspective or point of view. A tactic of a good lawyer is to write the opposing brief

first. That way they are better prepared and better able to persuade. As a bonus to listening to the other side, you might just find some common ground to achieve a successful solution.

As we say in the West, “Leather up.” Put your armor on. There is a reason why football players trash-talk the other team. When you are angry, you lose the ability to perform at your highest level. Don’t overreact to everything that is said. Don’t fall into the anger trap.

Finally, give grace. At a recent IOP event, Rhymefest, a rapper from the South Side and an IOP fellow, was recounting his frequent summer experiences in Cody, Wyoming. He talked about the insensitive things that some denizens of Cody would say to him. When the moderator asked him, “How did you deal with that?” he said, “I gave them grace.” The simple act of immediate forgiveness may lead to reconnection, and reconnection may lead to another opportunity to persuade.

Read an interview with Heitkamp on page 80 of the *University of Chicago Magazine*.

UChicago creatures

AMBASSADORS OF THE SEA

Veterinarian Maria Chadam, AB'88, is over pocket pets and into sea turtles.



Maria Chadam, AB'88, releases a green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) at Red Reef Park in Boca Raton, Florida: "We release the turtles as close to where they were stranded as possible."

Maria Chadam, AB'88, the primary veterinarian at Sea Turtle Care and Conservation Specialists in Delray Beach, Florida, has been working with sea turtles since 2009. Her interview has been edited and condensed.

—Isabella Romeu, Class of 2026

I have always worked with dogs and cats and pocket pets—small rodents like hamsters, gerbils, and mice. You don't get trained in sea turtle medicine in vet school.

I graduated from Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine in 1998 and moved to Southern California. I started working in a vet clinic, and it clicked for me. It's medicine. When I was in the College, I wanted to go to med school and go into pediatrics. This is similar to dealing with humans, just with a different type of child.

I moved to Florida in 2005 and have been here for almost 19 years now. I do house calls for cats and dogs, and I also do sea turtle rehabilitation. I did not work with sea turtles until 2009, when

I started at Gumbo Limbo Nature Center, learning to do surgery.

Sea turtles are a very niche species for veterinarians. One of my first experiences was being trained to do eye surgery. It was intense but fun. I helped develop new techniques to take tumors off turtles' eyes. I stayed with that nonprofit until a year ago February, so I was with them for around 13 years.

Now I am affiliated with a new nonprofit, Sea Turtle Care and Conservation Specialists. I am their primary veterinarian and on the board. I'm helping the group to obtain a rehabilitation permit and a space for tanks in Palm Beach County. Right now we hold a stranding and release permit.

I have never been bitten myself, but I've seen other people

get bitten. It depends on the species. For example, loggerhead turtles tend to be more friendly, especially if they're being fed. If you have a tank with a window, for some reason, they like to go right up to the glass and look at small children.

Loggerheads get attacked by sharks, so they get a lot of flipper injuries. I enjoy doing wound management. Although loggerheads can be huge, you can drain the tank, go in there, and treat them without giving them a lot of sedatives. I find them relatively easy to work with and the medicine is satisfying.

Now hawksbills are feisty. They don't usually interact; they're solitary. Green sea turtles can go both ways. As a rule, the bigger and older the turtle is, the feistier and more aggressive they are, especially adult males.

The anatomy of sea turtles is really exciting. Their salt glands, which are behind the eyes and help regulate the sodium intake from the ocean water, produce a sticky substance that comes out of the eye like tears. They have magnetite crystals in their brains that help them use Earth's magnetic field to navigate. We think this guides them back to their original beaches where they had hatched to lay their eggs as adults. This "magnetoreception" is also found in some bird species, bees, salmon, lobsters, dolphins, and rodents.

We try not to bond with turtles because we're trying to teach the public not to anthropomorphize them. But we do name them. The names are usually based on a theme, but not always. In the past we've

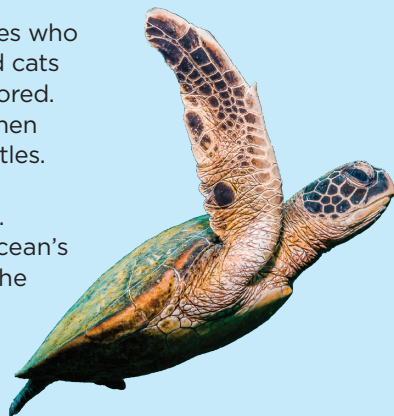
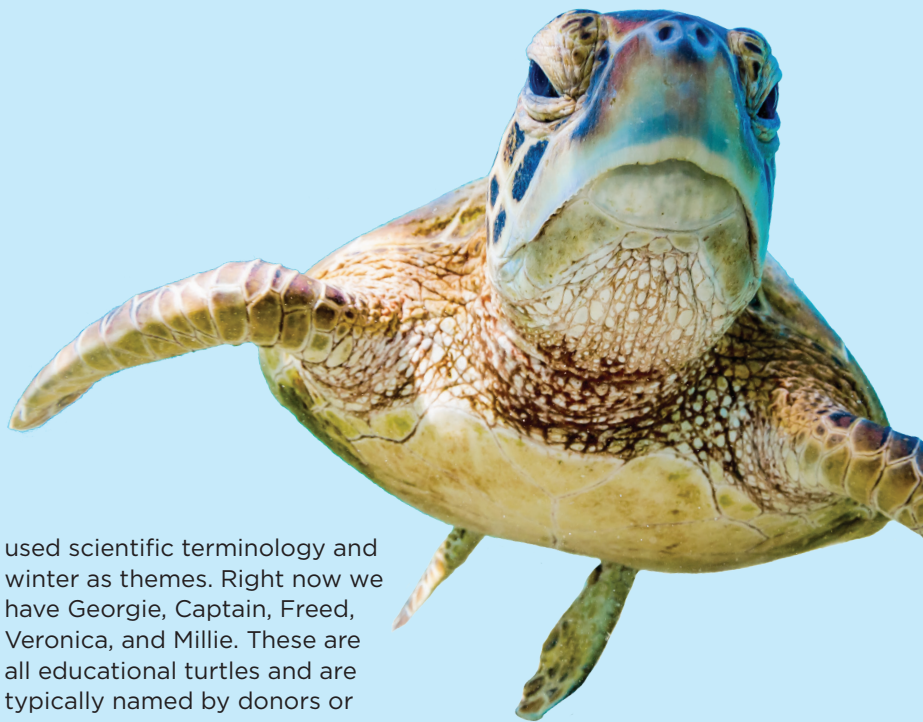
used scientific terminology and winter as themes. Right now we have Georgie, Captain, Freed, Veronica, and Millie. These are all educational turtles and are typically named by donors or school groups.

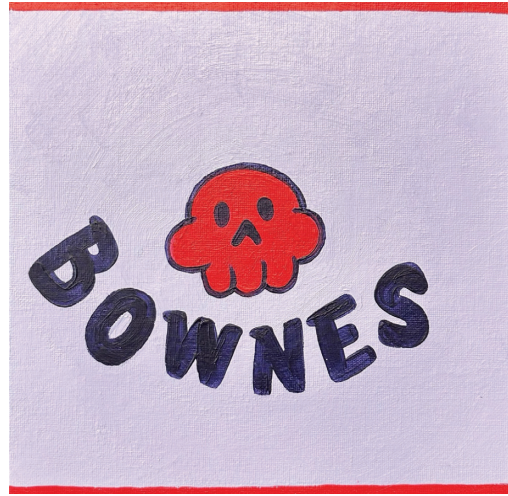
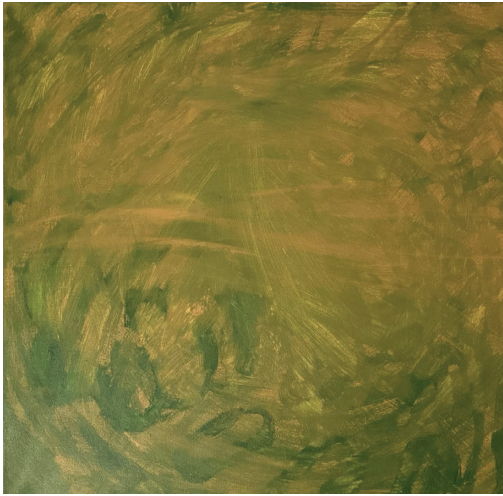
My most recent technician is in her second year of veterinary school at the University of Florida. I helped her get into veterinary school—it's a complex and competitive niche to break into. I'm mentoring her to take over what I'm doing. She has been soaking up my general knowledge for about four years already. I love mentoring young women. I started to get into doing that in the past five years.

I was a biology major, and I had people deterring me from applying to medical school. They told me it was just so competitive. When I worked in research out of college, I was in an anesthesia lab, and the doctors were even more discouraging of me going to med school. I don't want young women to have to go through that.

So many of my colleagues who have worked with dogs and cats all their lives have gotten bored. But it's hard to be bored when you're working with sea turtles.

I look at sea turtles as ambassadors of the ocean. They say a lot about the ocean's health. If they're thriving, the ocean's thriving.





Trent Davis's entries in the art contest: *Birthplace (Bownes)*, which was intentionally designed to be forgettable (on the left), and *Bownes*, which was intended to be memorable (on the right). *Birthplace (Bownes)* placed 17th in the forgettable contest. *Bownes* did not place.

Psychology

DRAWING A BLANK

Trent Davis, AB'23, of the Brain Bridge Lab stages an art show for science.

*"This isn't a normal art exhibition," were the first words **Trent Davis**, AB'23, said when I walked into The Art of Memory this past spring.*

The exhibition, which Davis organized at Connect Gallery on 53rd Street, looked like an ordinary group show, with three walls of drawings and paintings, each labeled with its title and the artist's name. But the show's main purpose—as he wanted to explain right away—was to serve as a memory experiment.

The Art of Memory consisted of the 20 most memorable and 20 most forgettable artworks submitted in response to an open call. Unbeknownst to visitors, the most memorable works were all hung together on one wall. The most forgettable were hung on the opposite wall.

After seeing the show, visitors could take a test, using their phones, on which pieces they remembered seeing, and which ones they had forgotten.

*Davis, who double-majored in neuroscience and visual art, curated the show while working as lab manager at the Brain Bridge Lab, run by **Wilma Bainbridge**, assistant professor of psychology. Bainbridge's research focuses on memory, including the memorability of works of visual art. (See page 44 of the Fall/24 University of Chicago Magazine.)*

Davis explains how the contest worked, and whether his insider knowledge of memorability has influenced his own paintings. This interview has been edited and condensed.

—Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

Where did the art in the show come from?

Getting entries was one of the first big obstacles. I called a lot of art and community centers and listed the show on websites for artists. I also asked my friends who are artists here in Chicago.

Anyone was able to enter. We asked, “Do you consider yourself a professional or amateur, or somewhere in between?” It was a one-third, one-third, one-third split. Artists also had to choose whether they thought their artwork would be memorable or forgettable.

In one of the lab’s studies at the Art Institute of Chicago, artwork by famous artists was more memorable than artwork by less well-known artists. That raises the question, are these artists more successful because they have an intuition for what is memorable?

Is it hard to guess what will be memorable?

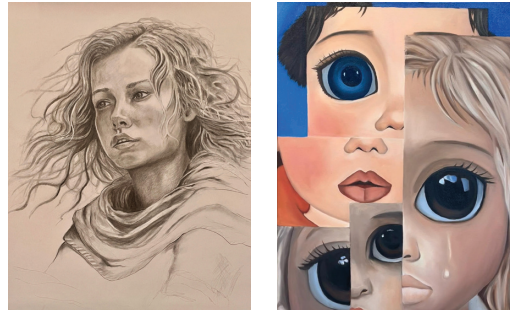
People are not great at predicting whether an image will be memorable or forgettable.

Some artists who entered the most memorable contest ended up placing in the most forgettable. They seemed a little upset.

How was the contest judged?

Through an online experiment—a very simple experiment. The 150 participants were shown a series of images and instructed to press a button on their keyboard whenever they saw an image repeated.

There’s an online platform with something like 150,000 people signed up. You can upload an experiment and they get paid to participate. That’s how the majority of our online human research is done.



These two images tied for first place in the most memorable contest: *Spirit of the Artist as a Young Woman* by Francine Luchsinger (left) and *Margaret Keane Tribute* by Joanna Li, AM’24.

So we tend to remember and forget the same artworks? It’s not influenced by what we’ve seen in the past or our own taste?

There’s some individual variation. But something about all the works on this wall makes them reliably memorable. On that wall, reliably forgettable.

When Wilma [Bainbridge] was in the space on opening night, she was like, which one was the most forgettable again? She had forgotten.

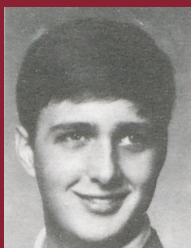
How did your own paintings do? They’re on a separate wall at the back.

I didn’t count mine in the experiment. But I was very surprised that my forgettable one made it into the top 20 forgettable artworks.

I was much more confident about the memorable one. I thought I’d make something very simple, centered, with text, because those are the trends we’ve seen as being more memorable. But apparently, I didn’t manage to do it.

INFINITY POINTS

The founders of Scav share its origin story.



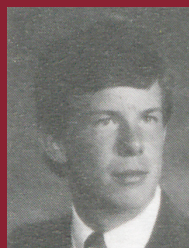
Chris Straus, LAB'84,
AB'88, MD'92



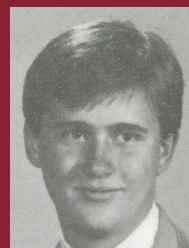
Cassie Scharff
Hallberg, AB'90



Diane Kelly, AB'90



Rick Jeffries, AB'90



Nolan McCarty,
AB'90

During Spring Quarter, the Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center organized Scav Hunt at UChicago: Seeking Fun, Finding Tradition, an exhibition about the origins of this annual communal quirkfest.

On “list-release eve,” May 1, Scav’s founders—**Chris Straus**, LAB'84, AB'88, MD'92; **Cassie Scharff Hallberg**, AB'90; **Diane Kelly**, AB'90; **Rick Jeffries**, AB'90; and **Nolan McCarty**, AB'90 (via Zoom)—participated in a panel discussion held at the Reg.

Patti Gibbons, AB'94, head of collection management and co-organizer of the exhibit, served as moderator. The discussion has been edited and condensed.
—Isabella Romeu, Class of 2026

Patti Gibbons: So I want to travel back to 1986. Chris, you had an idea.

Chris Straus: I was in Hitchcock-Snell—not Snell-Hitchcock, by the way. I thought, as a house activity, it would be fun to have a scavenger hunt. It got shot down miserably at the house meeting.

I kept thinking this really was a good idea. Maybe not just within one house, but house against house or student group against student group. We figured maybe we’d get seven or eight dorms. In that first year, we had 42 teams.

Patti Gibbons: How did the rest of you get involved?

Cassie Hallberg: I got dumped. I fell head over heels for a guy and got completely dumped. I thought, I better do something to pick myself back up. My RA knew Chris, and she made an announcement.

Diane Kelly: Cassie walks in my room and says, “Diane, we’re going to do a scavenger hunt.”

Rick Jeffries: I thought this was a bad idea. But I had a crush on Cassie Hallberg, who was exotic in two ways. She lived in the disgusting Pierce Tower, and she was from the Eastern time zone. I heard that Cassie was doing something and I could do it too. That was essentially my decision rule.

Cassie Hallberg: Thirty-eight years later, she finds out.

Nolan McCarty: Can confirm. I was the last to join. I had a miserable first quarter. I didn’t do anything but study and sleep. I needed to do something else.

Patti Gibbons: How did the first list come about?

Chris Straus: We sat in the Reynolds Club and tried to make each other laugh.



Scenes of Scav: collaboration, construction, costumes.

Rick Jeffries: If you've ever seen *30 Rock*, it's like the writer's room scenes. People making each other laugh, pitching stupid ideas.

It was always about trying to develop items that prompted involvement by the most diverse group possible. How could we get the nerds that lived in the library doing something, as well as those who wanted to get out and around Chicago?

Patti Gibbons: Scav has evolved over the years. But what feels the same?

Nolan McCarty: The willingness of students to not take themselves too seriously. I hate to say this—I love my students at Princeton [where McCarty is the Susan Dod Brown Professor of Politics and Public Affairs]—but Princeton students don't do things that will intentionally make themselves look silly. Scav encapsulates that aspect of UChicago culture.

Rick Jeffries: I was a misfit my whole childhood. I came here and fell in love with it.

The University is alive in this event. I'm so proud of what you guys [the students in the audience] have done to keep it alive, and I'm so grateful that nobody's died.

Patti Gibbons: Scav has lasted 37 years and has spread around the globe. How does that feel?

Cassie Hallberg: I love how it's evolved. I am so excited to see the list released tonight. I'm desperately going to try to stay up [until the midnight release time] because, at my age, that's hard.

Diane Kelly: It's fun to watch in a similar way that it's fun to watch a baby grow up. My daughter [**Emily Cambias**], Class of 2018, sometimes refers to Scav as "Mom's first baby."

Rick Jeffries: I take absolutely no credit for the idea. I take very modest credit for the execution.

Nolan McCarty: If I ever need to break the ice or raise money, the easiest way is to say, "Hey, I was one of the founding members of the UChicago Scavenger Hunt." Everybody recognizes that, and they're like, "No way. That's impossible." And I say, "Yes, I did. Look on *Wikipedia*."

See the online exhibit at lib.uchicago.edu/collex/exhibits/scav-hunt.





A portrait of Father Peter Funk, AB'92, by Douglas C. Anderson, AB'89, JD'92. Anderson, who serves as general counsel to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, enjoys creating art in his spare time. Like Funk, he played in a band (The Redundant Steaks) with Bert Vaux, LAB'86, AB'90, while in the College.

Roads less traveled

OF OBEDIENCE, OF SILENCE, OF HUMILITY

Father Peter Funk, AB'92, on life in a Benedictine monastery.

When **Edward Funk**, AB'92, came to UChicago as a music major, "I thought I was going to be a rock star," he says. Funk's band OM performed at Beat Kitchen, Double Door, Morseland, and Schubas, and had a regular slot at Phyllis' Musical Inn. "We had a small, very fervent following," he says, though unfortunately for the venues, "our music was so serious, people would just sit there and listen and not order beer."

OM's last gig was at Taste of Chicago in 1997. A few months later, Funk entered the Monastery of the Holy Cross, a Benedictine monastery in the South Side neighborhood of Bridgeport. According to its website, the monks seek God "through prayer, silence, work, and hospitality." Funk, who was given the name Peter as a novice, is also an ordained priest. He has served as the monastery's superior for the last 20 years.

Funk doesn't see his choice to become a monk as a repudiation of his earlier rock-star life, but as the same countercultural impulse turned up to eleven: "The things I'm protesting against in a monastery," he says, "are the same ones I was protesting against in a rock band." This interview has been edited and condensed.—Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

How was your College experience?

I enjoyed myself start to finish. I was very fortunate to have a scholarship. I'm not sure who endowed that, but I pray for him or her.

I was a serious student, but serious in the sense that I loved learning, not that I wasn't any fun, I hope.

I reread The Rule of St. Benedict to prepare, and he says you're not supposed to laugh. Why?

Those passages troubled me when I was first a monk. I think he recognizes that as we grow in humility, we won't have a preference for making a lot of jokes or laughing loudly. But not in a way that precludes gentleness or hospitality. If we do laugh—if we talk at all—it's gently and in deference to other people.

There's also a whole section on corporal punishment. Did that trouble you?

Not that that was once practiced. As late as the 19th century, it was still a part of life in some monasteries in Europe.

On the other hand, the problem is, if one monk decides he's not going to cooperate anymore,

there's not much you can do. You don't have many ways to sanction him, except kick him out. But you don't want to do that, because you want to take seriously the idea that he's made vows to God.

It's a conundrum. In a community our size—when you only have eight guys—you can be very vulnerable.

What's the solution?

I'm not sure. Pray about it. And be really sober about discerning whether someone has a vocation.

I was so enthusiastic when I started. I figured monastic life would transform everybody. But there's something mysterious about a monastic vocation. Very few people have it these days.

What did your family and friends think?

My family wasn't super excited. I think my mother could have lived with it if I'd been a Jesuit—a professor or something like that. I have this world-class undergraduate education. How is that going to benefit me or anybody else if I go into a monastery?

But in my heart I was drawn to monasticism. To this idea of pursuing God alone.

What are the limits on your life? Could you get a beer at Maria's [a bar across the street] or go to Movies in the Parks, for example?

We tend to stay pretty close to the cloister. Occasionally, we'll go for a walk together for recreation, and we might stop someplace where we could get a beer. More often it's coffee.

Once a month, we watch a movie in house. We tend to watch classic movies. We watched an Audrey Hepburn movie last Sunday night, *How to Steal a Million*. I would personally like to watch more foreign movies, but the subtitles are difficult for older members.

I'm very cautious about contemporary movies, because it's not very healthy for monks who are trying to live a life of peace and celibacy. We watched *Father Stu* last year. Mark Wahlberg plays a boxer who becomes a priest, and there's a lot of profanity. Occasionally, we'll watch a fantasy action movie like *Mission Impossible*.

How did you come up with the name OM for your band? Were you into Eastern religions?

We were supposed to play the Battle of the Bands at the Shoreland, and we didn't have a name. One of the guys, who is now a fellow at King's College,

Cambridge [**Bert Vaux**, LAB'86, AB'90], had just finished a Sanskrit class. And he said, "Why don't we call ourselves OM?" I liked the idea that if one chants the syllable properly, one harmonizes with all sounds in the cosmos.

The way we talked about it is, we wanted to make music that was not only musically good, but morally good. Toward the end of the band, the more we explored this, the less we sounded like a rock band.

Were OM's lyrics about religion?

Generally spiritual themes, but not overtly religious.

It's no surprise that I would enter a religious order that's so imbued with music. We sing two or three hours a day, just gloriously beautiful music. There's so much incredible chant in the Church's tradition. It's a privilege to be a part of it. I find it amazing that we are chanting roughly the same melodies and the same words that some monk in Germany in 1100 was chanting.

Do you have to sing well to join a Benedictine monastery?

Not everybody's a great singer in the monastery. We drown them out.

What's the hardest part of being a monk?

I think I'm particularly well suited to the life. But obedience is definitely the hardest part. For everybody.

To have a really disciplined way of discerning God's presence is a challenge today. I think it was easier 300 years ago, probably a lot easier 800 years ago.

What brings you the most joy?

The great privilege of being able to spend a lot of time in prayer every day.

What could we learn from your way of life?

During COVID, we had all kinds of things to tell people. Most people were not used to being stuck in the house with everybody all day. Well, we do this by choice. Here's what *not* to do.

So that kept me going for a while on our blog.

Read Funk's blog at chicagomonk.org.

Watch a video of OM's final show at the Taste of Chicago at bit.ly/47wEgTN.

hoy 12:44 p.m.



Ca va ?

ISABELLA IN PARIS

Ca va

Ca va?

Les Jeux Olympiques. La mode.
Des hommes. During the European
Civ in Paris program, Isabella Romeu,
Class of 2026, saw it all.

Leído 1:08 p.m.

Ca va

10 juin

Bonjour! I am in Paris!

12 juin

Bonjour, mes amis! Today I visited the Louvre. I've never visited a museum of such magnitude, and it did not disappoint.

I decided to leave the *Mona Lisa* for last. I was never really interested (I just think there are better paintings out there), but since everyone sees it as a metonym for the Louvre, I left it for the end.

Now, I am a petite person. I can slip through crowds of people and go unnoticed. Of course, I used this to my advantage, coupled with the fact that I dressed for the occasion (i.e., like a Parisian).

I pushed and shoved my way to the very front, nearly yelling, "Excusez moi! Je ne parle anglais! Pardon."* I guess my accent was good enough because a man I elbowed out of my way (totally accidentally) said to his wife, "These French people are so rude."

The painting itself is rather small. What it lacks in size, it makes up for in awe factor. I was mesmerized, to the point where I had to be escorted out of the way by an employee.

17 juin

Today was the start of the quarter and reality hit: I have to do schoolwork. Study abroad isn't a vacation.

The Cité Universitaire, where we are staying, is located in the 14th arrondissement, but the University's Center in Paris is located in the 13th arrondissement. I must comment on French transport etiquette. The French find it really distasteful if you take a phone call or converse on public transit, and if someone bumps into you, it is your fault.

I arrived fashionably late to my first class of the day: European Civilization I with Daisy Delogu. Upwards of 1,000 years of European history in three weeks.

Later I had French, taught by Magdalena Faye. The French *r* is rather funny when pronounced by nonnative French speakers. It was particularly difficult for the native Spanish speakers. We are so used to rolling our *r*'s that this stark contrast was a linguistic shock.

Professor Faye must have noticed, because she turned her body to the side, loosened her jaw, and opened her mouth to show us that the French *r* uses the tongue against the *bottom* teeth, not the top. This was very helpful.



18 juin

Coucou!

I have a date on Thursday. His name is Maxime. We're going to the cinema to watch *Inside Out 2* (his recommendation). The only issue is I can't speak French and he says his English isn't great.

19 juin

Maxime came all the way from his job (near La Madeleine) to the Cité. I had mentioned in passing that my favorite flowers were peonies, and I was pleasantly surprised to see a man with a huge bouquet of pink peonies.

I really enjoyed *Inside Out 2*, or *Vice-Versa 2* in French. Afterward we sat on a bench by the Seine and talked for three hours. We had much in common, but I knew I shouldn't get attached.

21 juin

Today officially marks one week since I landed in the world's fashion capital. But Paris is not all glitz and glamour. In fact, most Parisians, particularly the younger generations, opt to style themselves after American Y2K trends: Adidas sneakers paired with shin-length socks, baggy everything, sports team jerseys, thick headbands, chunky jewelry, hobo bags for the ladies, fanny packs for the gents. This made me feel very out of place in my chiffon blouses, linen pants, and kitten heels. But I was hardly ever confused for an American. Mission accomplished.

Speaking of the French, I have another date today, with a guy named Martin. Today is a music festival that takes place all over Paris, with small and big artists alike hosting sets on the streets. Odd but intriguing. Martin said he wanted to take me to dinner and then walk around to look at the different sets for an "authentic Parisian experience."

22 juin

Because of the music festival, I had a difficult time hearing what Martin was saying. I'm not sure what it is with French guys underestimating their English skills, but Martin also thought his speaking and writing skills were subpar. We mainly talked in English, which I could tell made him uncomfortable because he only learned English to get into business school. I tried my best to speak French and asked him to fill in the words I didn't know.

Martin asked me about my hobbies, my musical interests, my favorite authors, if I enjoyed the opera or the cinema. It was a pleasant conversation. I had never met a man who enjoyed reading poetry.

27 juin

Today was the first *rendez-vous* (outing) with my French conversation leader. My group consists of Martin (not to be confused with the French man I hit it off with), Sanju, Neil, Charlotte, and myself.

Our conversation leader, Lina, was born and raised in the *banlieues* (suburbs) of Paris, but her parents are Croatian. She's a polyglot, fluent in English, French, German, and Croatian. Her personality is so mysterious, laid back, and humorous all at once. Lina told us she did cinematographic studies in college, and now she works in the French film industry. She spoke to us in English but made it very clear that she would eventually transition to strictly French.

***Isabella had not studied French before this program. What she lacked in fluency, she made up for with élan.—Ed.**



4 juillet

Lina took our group to her college, Césure, and gave us the full tour—even her favorite café. Lina and I, along with Charlotte, Neil, and Sanju, were chatting about the elections. The French don't do primaries like we do in the US. Instead, they have this two-round voting system where everyone throws their hats in the ring, and then it's like a gladiator match until only two or three candidates are left standing. Lina described the elections as if they were *The Hunger Games*.

After the conversation, I crammed for my Civ exam until 6 a.m. We were allowed a standard-sized index card for notes. I wrote on every possible corner of that tiny note card. When exam time rolled around a few hours later, I somehow didn't feel tired. I felt confident about my answers, especially on the Crusades.

8 juillet

New professor for European Civ II: **Oliver Cussen** [PhD'20]. We're set to tackle the French Revolution and the downfall of the French monarchy this quarter.

9 juillet

I'll probably find new wrinkles from how much I laughed in class today.

In Civ we were supposed to read Molière's *Tartuffe*—a classic play about the way people will follow anything under the guise of religion. Oliver had asked us to think of any modern-day/pop culture Tartuffes. Naturally we all jumped on obvious political figures. Then out of nowhere Lucy dropped a bombshell: Taylor Swift.

Lucy's argument was surprisingly compelling. Taylor Swift does have a fandom that borders on the fanatical. What followed was ten glorious minutes of Swifties versus Non-Swifties, with Oliver sitting back and watching the chaos unfold.

But the highlight of the day was French. We had a mini-project where we had to visit a boulangerie and pick up a quintessential French treat. Croissants and quiches were popular choices. I brought a chocolate éclair. Then Neil walked in, holding the sad, stale remnants of the baguette that Professor Faye brought to class yesterday when she was teaching us the different kinds of baguettes.

He began his presentation with "Ici, ma petite baguette." The class immediately lost it. There was something so absurd about Neil hauling in a leftover baguette instead of spending three euros at a boulangerie like the rest of us.

Our professor was laughing for a completely different reason. Once she regained the ability to speak, she explained the double entendre. Apparently, "ma petite baguette" is a not-so-subtle euphemism for ... well, you get the idea.

Naturally, I had to tell this story to Martin, and he burst out laughing before I could even finish.





The European Civ in Paris program—which crams three quarters of material into one intensive quarter—includes weekly group excursions to historic sites in Paris and beyond. In addition, for European Civ III, taught by sociology professor Kimberly Kay Hoang, students had to plan their own individual daylong excursion and then write about it.



“Life is nonsensical, and we’re all just stumbling through it, making awkward small talk until the inevitable collapse.”

26 juillet

Yesterday was my final exam for the second Civ sequence. The previous night was spent studying the Haitian and French Revolutions. I would not be too upset about a B+. I am in Paris. I should be happy.

I love the architecture of Paris. It is much easier to admire when the streets are empty.

Most of the public transportation lines have been shut down due to the Olympics, so it’s increasingly difficult to get around. It gives me an opportunity to explore the city. When Reece and I were walking home, we passed by multiple parades for the Olympics that eventually led down to the Seine. We had QR codes given to us by the University, so we were able to get past the crowds and watch, from a distance, a snippet of the opening ceremonies.

28 juillet

I SAW SIMONE BILES COMPETE AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES. AHHHHH!!!!!!

31 juillet

For tonight’s French conversation, we visited the Théâtre de la Huchette, a small theater in the 5th arrondissement. All UChicago students, regardless of what French level they were, saw *La Cantatrice Chauve* (The Bald Soprano), an absurdist “anti-play” by Eugène Ionesco. The premise, according to our French professor: an English couple, the Smiths, host their friends, the Martins, for an evening of meaningless conversation.

The best way I can describe this play is an hour of nonsensical middle-class banter. The actors spent a suspicious amount of time staring into space, which I found oddly amusing. Who knew existential dread could be so relatable? Life is nonsensical, and we’re all just stumbling through it, making awkward small talk until the inevitable collapse.



13 août

Today was the big day: the final oral exam for French. It was one of those exams that's just a bunch of audio clips in rapid French, and your job is to fill in the blanks.

Thankfully, Martin helped me study, sticking closely to what Professor Faye said would be on the exam—how to order food, salutations, conjugations. We went over everything until I could practically order a three-course meal in my sleep.

Some of my favorite words and phrases he taught me, not on the exam:

- *Miam miam*: The French equivalent of “yum” (because food deserves its own cute phrase).
- *Tu me nargues*: “You’re mocking me” (not that I ever would, Martin!).
- *Mon gars*: “My guy” (or “bro,” if we’re being less formal).

The exam itself had six sections, so six audios total. There were bonus words thrown in, and I have to say, I nailed every single one. Walking out of that exam, I felt like I could conquer the world—or at least Paris. I didn’t think I got a perfect score, but I knew I’d done well.

(Spoiler: I actually got a perfect score.)

15 août

Today was one of those days that felt like a scene from a movie. Martin invited me to his hometown, Rungis, about 45 minutes south by the RER train. It’s far from the bustling energy of Paris, and I could feel the difference the moment we started our walk.

We were on a mission for ice cream. As we strolled, Martin pointed out his old middle school and high school. His university, the Sorbonne, is far from here. We also passed by his mom’s house. I didn’t meet her, but I did notice the beautiful garden in front—gardenias, peonies, and roses, all perfectly arranged.

Ice cream in hand, we headed to a nearby park to catch the sunset. The park was quiet, almost as if it was just for us. There was a playground nearby, and without thinking, I hopped onto one of the swings. Martin gave me a push.

It was one of those moments you wish you could freeze in time. We stayed until the last light faded, and I couldn’t help but think how lucky I was to have had a moment like that.

Sorry for being sappy, my dear readers.

18 août

Against all odds, I’m not stranded in Paris. I missed my initial flight, because of course I did. Paris traffic was an absolute nightmare. It got so bad that I ended up abandoning my Uber mid-ride and making a break for the train.

As I headed to security, it hit me that I was really leaving Paris—and all the memories I’d made—behind.

It was a bittersweet moment.

Au revoir. 🌸

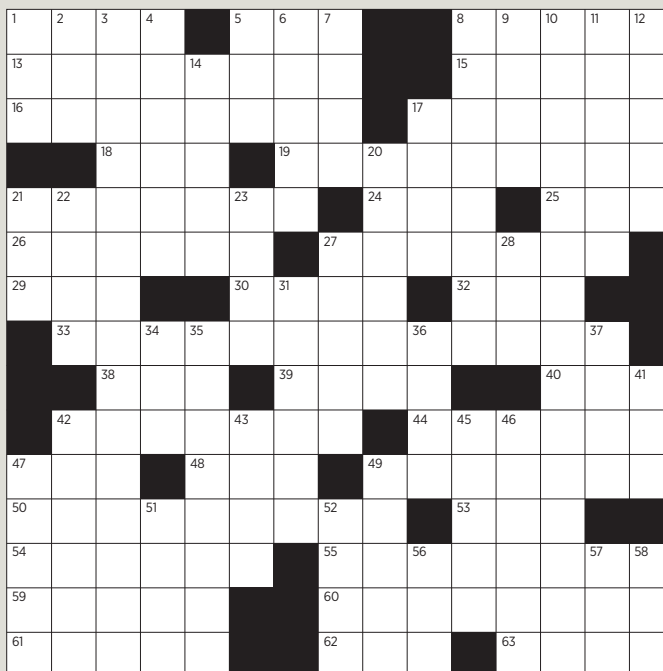


PUZZLING BEHAVIOR

Meet the undergraduate cruciverbalists who design puzzles for the *Maroon*, Family Weekend—and occasionally the *New York Times*.



by Benjamin Recchie, AB'03



Core Power,
a puzzle
codedigned
by Henry
Josephson,
Class of 2025,
and Benjamin
Recchie, AB'03.

ACROSS

- 1 Ellipsis points
- 5 Movie studio owned by Howard Hughes
- 8 Univision news anchor Jorge
- 13 Higher risk
- 15 Oak starter
- 16 The Core's entertainment at a tailgate party
- 17 Del Fuego, among others
- 18 Tasty steamed bun
- 19 The Core's colony on the seafloor (2 words)
- 21 Displaying feelings
- 24 US gymnast Raisman
- 25 CourtTV successor
- 26 St. Louis bread company
- 27 Designed to make a big impression
- 29 Canine call
- 30 Follow-up to a good drive
- 32 Mens ____
- 33 The Core, writing to a friend
- 38 1998 Gloria Estefan hit
- 39 Starchy plant of the South Pacific
- 40 Mr. Onassis, to Jackie
- 42 What starving students often did at free dinners (3 words)
- 44 Cancel at last minute (2 words)
- 47 Drink daintily
- 48 A penny, en français
- 49 Uploads to Canvas, e.g.
- 50 The Core's instrument of attack on a wine bottle
- 53 Choose
- 54 Where to find guards and centers, for short
- 55 The Core's solution to a midlife crisis
- 59 Years
- 60 Even meaner
- 61 Model rocket manufacturer
- 62 Abbr. that could stand for a humanities major or a STEM major
- 63 Scorch, like a steak

DOWN

- 1 Referees of America's airwaves
- 2 Expression of amused surprise
- 3 Personal measure of global warming (2 words)
- 4 Deep inside
- 5 De la Plata or Grande, e.g.
- 6 Swift beau
- 7 Hydrox imitator
- 8 Train home (2 words)
- 9 Taiwanese computer manufacturer
- 10 Dry response to "Isn't Hyde Park sorta cold in the winter?" (4 words)
- 11 Toy star system
- 12 Dumpster fire
- 14 Group often preached to
- 17 Small, at Starbucks
- 20 Stealth fighter name
- 21 Clean Air and Water Act enforcer
- 22 Fashion designer Jacobs
- 23 Use an electronic cigarette
- 27 Snake oyster, for short (2 words)
- 28 Saw leader
- 31 Occasion to see Boston in Boston or Chicago in Chicago (2 words)
- 34 Pastrami on ____
- 35 Think again
- 36 De Niro's joint
- 37 Quick walk
- 41 Companions of outs
- 42 Condiments for fries
- 43 Bob Marley's hairstyle, for short
- 45 Higher than
- 46 Pushes
- 47 Sniper's accessory
- 49 Oath-bound
- 51 Kind of jerk
- 52 "Behold!" to Pilate
- 56 Thrown household accessory
- 57 Gossip, spilled
- 58 To forgive it, divine

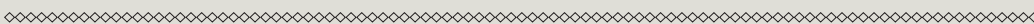
1. PROLOGUE

1. Novel beginning

I started solving crossword puzzles when I was a teenager, leaning over my mom’s shoulder at breakfast, taking pride in finishing it with her without resorting to a puzzle “cheat book” like the thick, well-thumbed, nicotine- and coffee-stained paperback that sat next to my grandmother’s chair. But when I went

to college I fell out of the habit. I would glance at the puzzle section as I skimmed the paper ... but “Who has the time?” I would ask myself.

Little did I know that not only do some UChicago students have the time to solve their daily crossword puzzles—they also make time to *build* them.



2. PANDEMIC

2. Plague, e.g.

THERE’S A STORY I heard over and over again from the nucleus of undergraduate puzzle creators: they liked crosswords before COVID-19, but they didn’t start constructing puzzles themselves until they were bored out of their skulls during the pandemic.

Pravan Chakravarthy, Class of 2025, began creating puzzles around May 2020: “The combination of trivia and wordplay and logic was exactly what I liked to do.” He started with mini crosswords (typically 5” x 5”), then progressed to full-size puzzles (usually 15” x 15” in weekday editions of newspapers and 21” x 21” on Sundays). “I realized that, oh, these aren’t just AI generated,” he says. “A lot of thought and effort and artistry is put into them.”

Garrett Chalfin, Class of 2027, fell in love with crosswords while at sleepaway camp as a kid and even submitted an early attempt to the *New York Times* in the seventh grade. But it wasn’t until COVID hit that he revisited the idea. In a “hopelessly bored state,” he says, he was scrolling through his computer apps and started tinkering with the crossword puzzle software. This time, his imagination caught fire.

“COVID really gave me the time to dive into it,” says **Henry Josephson**, Class of 2025. “I was like, it can’t be that hard to

make these things. I solved them all the time. It’s just a bunch of words in a grid, right?” The ones in the *New York Times*, he discovered, are “just crossword puzzles that people made and sent in,” he says. So he searched for puzzle construction software online and started building his own.

Crosswords were instrumental in bringing Josephson to UChicago: he wrote his application essay about them. He intended to join the crossword puzzle club, but it turned out to be moribund.

There was one graduate student, **Chris Jones**, SM’19, PhD’22, who contributed an occasional crossword section to the *Chicago Maroon*, but even that was “a little more dead than I realized,” says Josephson. Jones asked Josephson and Chakravarthy—who had met on Instagram as incoming students before arriving on campus—if they had an interest in reviving the section.

“We looked at each other. We were like, yeah,” Josephson says. “There were never any tryouts, never any leadership struggles or anything.” Chakravarthy became the *Maroon’s* head crossword editor; Josephson, crossword editor.

Together they’ve developed a UChicago-specific word list “so that we can have MANSUETOs and WOODLAWNs and SOSCs,” Josephson says. And SCAVHUNT, of course.

3.	B	I	G	T	I	M	E
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3. To a great degree

CREATING PUZZLES for yourself is nice, but it's nicer to see them shared with the world. Josephson notes that he and Chakravarthy have an obvious outlet in the *Maroon*, and they've recruited other crossword creators on campus, including **Eli Lowe**, Class of 2027. "I didn't even consider creating puzzles until I found out that the *Maroon* had a crossword section," Lowe says. "I decided to go to a crossword section meeting and instantly was hooked. Creating puzzles scratched that same itch that solving them did, but to a much greater degree."

But there's no bigger feather in one's cap than the *New York Times* crossword. Not only is it the most prestigious, but it also pays well—up to \$2,250 for a Sunday puzzle from an experienced contributor. Most publications pay a fraction of that; Chakravarthy notes, "If you want to make a living doing crosswords, you have to be an editor."

The *Times'* crossword editors will also give feedback on a rejected puzzle, allowing novice constructors to hone their craft. Josephson recently received a rejection from the *NYT* that focused on the number of proper names crossing each other, which can trip up puzzle

solvers if they're at a loss for both names. Other papers, such as the *Los Angeles Times*, don't pay as well; however, as Chakravarthy explains, because they get fewer submissions, they can offer even better, more detailed feedback.

Several *Maroon* crossword contributors have been published in the *New York Times*, most notably Chalfin, who had two Sunday puzzles published last year. **David Litman**, Class of 2027, has also been published in the *Gray Lady*. Chakravarthy has not had a puzzle in the *New York Times*—yet—but he has been published in the *Los Angeles Times* and *Universal Crossword*, which syndicates its puzzles to newspapers across the country. And just as this story was going to press, Josephson had his first puzzle accepted by the *New York Times*.

No student, however, has seen as much success as UChicago's provost **Katherine Baicker**. Her puzzles have been published not only in the *New York Times* but also the *Boston Globe* and the *Wall Street Journal*, to name a few. And like the students, she created her first puzzle in January 2021, when she had more free time in the evenings due to the pandemic.

Rule #2: Avoid "crossword glue," such as ULU, a traditional Inuit knife, and "obscure European rivers" like Switzerland's AARE.



4. Many a city street layout

IT'S NEVER BEEN EASIER to build a crossword puzzle. As recently as the 1990s, puzzles were put together through trial, error, and artistry. But the rise of easy-to-download crossword puzzle software with names like CrossFire and Ingrid (get it? *get it?*) has put puzzle creation within reach of the interested amateur.

In Josephson's *Maroon* bio, he states that he "would love to build a crossword puzzle with you. Seriously. Let's find a time." I asked him if the offer was still good. "I'm definitely still interested!" he replied. (He also noted that no one else had ever asked: "The set of people reading *Maroon* bios is probably pretty small.")

Josephson and I settled on a rough plan: we would choose a theme, then he would put the theme answers into a symmetric grid and build out the black squares. He would use Ingrid to fill out the remaining squares and edit them. Finally, we would work on the clues together.

Before you go any further: the remainder of this section contains details of the creation of the crossword puzzle you see here, and therefore is rife with spoilers. If you plan on solving this puzzle, go off and do it now. I'll wait.

whistles softly

Okay, finished? Did you beat the time of *University of Chicago Magazine* editor **Laura Demanski**, AM'94, who solved it in 14 minutes and 39 seconds? If so, well done.

Right—here we go.

Josephson and I started by brainstorming the theme. (As Lowe puts it, a good puzzle prompts you to "think laterally" and leads to "really rewarding aha moments" even as "it is important for the theme to not be too forced.") We independently landed on the idea of the theme for the puzzle being something related to the *Core*. Josephson suggested words where the clue contained "core"—think BODYBUILDER—but I proposed the opposite, with answers that contained "core" (or a soundlike syllable, like MARINECORPS). Josephson was skeptical, but gamely promised to try both approaches; as it turned out, he said, my idea grew on him as he was building out the grid. The trick is to come up with words that not only fit with the other words but also are novel enough to be fun.

(Chakravarthy described to me three things he steers clear of in his own puzzles. One, "unfair crossings," where two obscure answers cross—think proper names. If you have no idea of the answer, you're completely stuck. Two, "crossword glue," which he describes as "answers that you only see in crosswords," such as ULU, a traditional Inuit knife, or "obscure European rivers" like Switzerland's AARE. And three, duplicates within the same grid. "This just happened to me the other day," he says. "I didn't realize it until I was halfway through clueing.")



In no time, Josephson produced the puzzle you see on page 22.

The next step was to write up the clues: “The most creative lateral thinking part with the fewest constraints,” he says.

I’ve written a lot of trivia questions in my time—like, a *lot*—and here I felt I could truly contribute. But I had to avoid the classic trivia trap of writing an impossible question to show off how smart you are while stumping the player in the process. (Fun lives in the narrow space between “too easy” and “too tough.”)

For example, I initially clued 5 Down as “1982 Duran Duran hit,” but Josephson gently reeled me back in: “I’m not sure what the average age of *Core* readers is, but I also worry about people getting this.” (The answer, if it had made it into the puzzle, was RIO.) And while I was certain that people would easily get 59 Across with the clue “Respighi subject,” even Josephson had to Google that one. (You knew it was PINES, right, as in “The Pines of Rome?” Of course you did.) Back to the drawing board.

Meanwhile, I struggled to find clever ways to address some otherwise common words, such as 51 Down,

KNEE. Josephson covered for me by filling these out (including ones more relevant to the younger alumni, such as 49 Across, in which one SUBMITS to Canvas). And I confess that I got a warm fuzzy feeling when he wrote “I like this a lot!” next to my clue for 30 Across: “Follow-up to a good drive.” (That’s PUTT, naturally.)

My sole disappointment: he didn’t use one of my suggested answers, CORREGIDOR. (My proposed clue: “The *Core*, besieged by the Japanese.”) Oh, well. Maybe next puzzle.

I asked Josephson how he’d score our puzzle on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the Platonic ideal of a crossword and 1 being something not even worthy of a placemat at Denny’s. “I’d probably rate this around a 5,” he replied. “I don’t think I’d submit this grid if I were hoping to sell it to a publisher like *NYT* or *WSJ*, but I’m also not ashamed to have my name attached to it.” (“My biggest gripe is that theme is pretty basic,” he explained, so that’s on me, readers.)

And to all who think you can do better—well, the software is online. Give it a try!

5.	T	O	U	R	N	A	M	E	N	T
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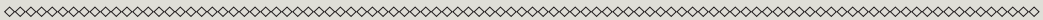
5. The Masters, e.g.

IN OCTOBER OF 2022, Chakravarthy and Josephson held a crossword tournament at Family Weekend. (“We didn’t ask for any permission from anyone and just booked a room, made some grids and posters, and kicked it off,” says Josephson, although the next year’s iteration was held in cooperation with College Programming and Orientation.) Over three rounds, individuals or groups (there were many student-parent team-ups) competed to complete three crossword puzzles with the least time elapsed and the highest accuracy. While it might sound tense, “it’s supposed to be casual, and for anyone who wants to just

solve some puzzles,” Chakravarthy says. “People have competed for just the third puzzle and solved it in like 10 minutes. And people have competed in all three puzzles and used all the time.”

And for the winners, says Josephson, “We mention them in the [*Maroon*] (assuming they’re okay with it), and the prize is a custom puzzle!”

It’s proven quite popular: the 2023 edition of the tournament had roughly 150 contestants. “I can’t wait to do it again for the fall,” Chakravarthy says. Further plans might include an expansion to Alumni Weekend as well, so keep your eyes peeled and your pencils sharpened.



6.	E	P	I	L	O	G	V	E
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6. Coda relative

“**ONE OF THE BEAUTIFUL THINGS** about UChicago is that if you are interested in a weird, niche, nerd thing,” Josephson says with evident delight, “there are several other people here who are also interested in it and are maybe better at it than you.”

Chakravarthy recognizes that he occupies an enviable seat at the *Maroon*, where he and Josephson can publish their own work without limit. After they graduate, though, that outlet will dry up. He says he might publish his puzzles—

ones that he doesn’t get published elsewhere, that is—on a private website: “There’s going to be potentially a lot of unpublished work that I’ll be producing.”

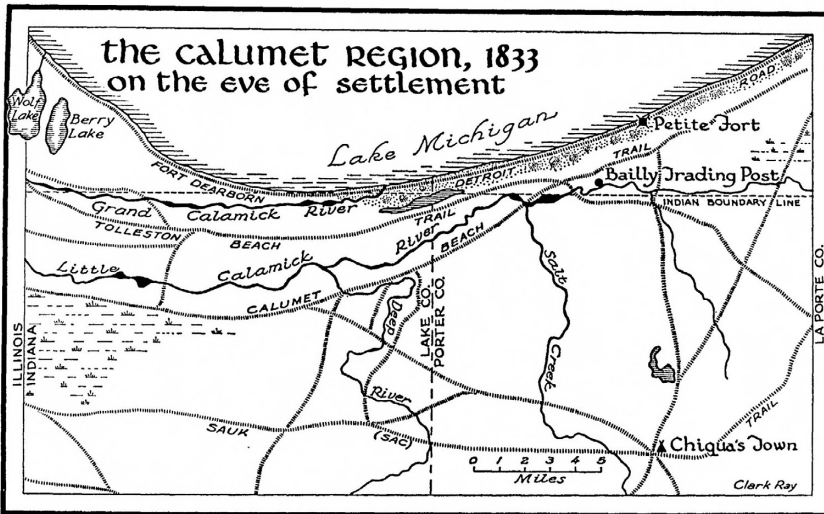
For Chalfin, creating the puzzles is its own reward. “I enjoy writing puzzles because no two puzzles are the same. Each one excites me and presents my brain with a unique challenge,” he says.

“There is no better feeling when, after hours—or days, or weeks!—of work, I finally look at a finished puzzle of my own creation. Something I’ve done.” 🌸

PIPE DREAMS

Students in the Calumet Quarter program learn about the complicated, jolie laide region just south of Hyde Park.

By Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93



The Indiana section of the Calumet Region before it was transformed by industry. This map was originally published in *The Calumet Region, Indiana's Last Frontier* (Indiana Historical Bureau, 1959).

FRIDAY IS FIELD TRIP DAY.

In Paris, where UChicago runs more than 20 different study abroad programs, Friday is the day for excursions. It's field trip day in the Calumet, too, because the Calumet Quarter was modeled after study abroad.

The Calumet Region—the name means “pipe” in French, a reference to ceremonial pipes used by Native Americans—is not far. It begins less than ten miles south of Hyde Park and runs into northwest Indiana. As for its exact borders, “It’s a great question,” says **Mark Bouman**, a scientist at the Field Museum and one of the Calumet Quarter’s three instructors. He gives a long, complicated, geographer’s answer—but the short version is, there is no one answer.

An easier way to understand the Calumet Region is to list what’s in it.

The Calumet includes the city of Gary, Indiana (population 67,000, one-third its peak size in 1960). It includes the Indiana Dunes, a region that’s split up among the Indiana Dunes State Park, the Indiana Dunes National Park, and lots of private property. There are working steel mills and other heavy industry in the Calumet, as well as million-dollar lakefront homes. “A patchwork of ownership,” as Bouman describes it.

The Calumet is also home to more than 1,500 species of plants across a remarkable diversity of ecosystems. In fact, the entire notion of an ecosystem developed out of important early research by botanist Henry Chandler Cowles, PhD 1898, on the plants in the Dunes.

The Calumet is a fascinating, contradictory, imperfect, sublime part of the world. This past Spring Quarter, 13 College students signed up to study it.



Mark Bouman (center) and students hike up the Succession Trail at Indiana Dunes National Park on a windy April day.

THE FIRST FRIDAY OF THE QUARTER, the students went on an introductory tour to the Calumet, which was titled “The good, the bad, and the ugly.” On another Friday, they toured Pullman, the planned community on the far South Side where Pullman railcars were once built. On another, they visited Gary and met the mayor. On another, they saw the Metropolitan Water District’s Deep Tunnel system, 300 feet underground.

This particular Friday trip, to the Indiana Dunes, began the night before. The students went camping (arguably, glamping) at the Dunes Learning Center—on a campground built by US Steel in the 1940s for the families of its workers. The students slept in sleeping bags, but the cabins were heated and had hot running water.

Despite, or possibly because of, these comfortable quarters, most of the students agreed to go on an optional nighttime hike led by Bouman. Even though it was raining. “It’s amazing what you can see at night,” he says. One of the students had never been on a hike before.

The next morning, after breakfast in the Cowles Lodge (named for the UChicago botanist), the students pile onto a small bus, driven by a woman who cheerily introduces herself as Mona. The other Calumet Quarter instructors—geographer **Mary Beth Pudup** and art historian

Jessica Landau—are on the tour, too, as is instructional assistant **Derick Anderson**.

The first stop of the day: the Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, which recently added a trail, the Indiana Dunes Indigenous Cultural Trail, on donated land.

The Dunes is the number one tourist destination in Indiana, says Christine Livingston, the center’s director. With O’Hare and Midway Airports so close, it is the “easiest national park to access,” she says. The area has a complex, interesting story that’s “very undertold.”

To develop the trail, she worked with the Potawatomi and Miami, as well as Indiana Dunes Tourism and the Indiana Dunes National Park. She was warned that “the tribes are difficult to work with,” but her experience was “absolutely the opposite,” she says.

The tour concludes with a quick look at the trail, which is still in progress; its design reflects the tribes’ values and insights. As just one example, the murals include local animals such as sandhill cranes and river otters—but no white owls, which are seen as harbingers of death. “We had a mural of an owl, actually,” Livingston says. “So we have repainted all of our murals.”

The students are clearly impressed with Livingston’s efforts to include everyone in the decision-making. “I will never cut a museum slack ever again,” one student says as they board the bus.



Left: Students pause on the Succession Trail to try to identify a plant. Right: Kris Krouse of the Shirley Heinze Land Trust explains the ecological importance of one of the trust's parcels.

THE NEXT STOP is the Indiana Dunes National Park, which, confusingly, wraps around the Indiana Dunes State Park.

The bus stops to let a freight train pass. "It's one of the most dangerous crossings in the region," observes Paul Labovitz, past National Park superintendent, the host for this segment of the tour.

Mona knows where she's going, but for many visitors, just finding the park is a challenge. Considering the heavy industry surrounding the park, and no obvious boundaries, you might well ask, "Where are you taking me? Into the mill?" says Labovitz. "You'd think, 'None of this makes sense to me.'"

Labovitz, who retired last year after more than 35 years with the Park Service, wears a green Indiana Dunes National Park jacket and a pair of binoculars around his neck. Throughout the tour, he supplies a steady stream of facts, anecdotes, jokes, and sarcasm.

The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore was established in 1966. It became a national park in 2019, which "changes nothing and everything." The number of visitors doubled. The funding did not change. "Soap and toilet paper will break you," he observes.

Labovitz and Bouman lead the group on a short walk down to West Beach. The Chicago skyline is tiny in the distance, like the view from Promontory Point in miniature.

"But on that side it's terrible," a student remarks as she shoots a photo of the Burns Harbor plant. The park's neighbor to the east is the last integrated steel mill built in the United States, Bouman explains. It opened in 1964 as part of a park compromise. "They bulldozed five miles of high dunes right here," he says matter-of-factly.

"I was thinking about sacrifice zones," Anderson remarks. In Pudup's course, Environmental Transitions and Unnatural Histories, the students learned a host of useful—if depressing—terminology.

Sacrifice zones: Populated areas that have been heavily environmentally damaged.

Wastescapes: "Landscapes on the margins, wounded spaces, garbage graveyards, or derelict sites," as described by one of the course readings.

Superfund site: A contaminated area requiring long-term cleanup, according to the EPA. "The wastescapes of wastescapes," as Pudup describes them in class.

Drosscapes: Former wastescapes reclaimed for new uses. Steelworkers Park, built on the former US Steel site in southeast Chicago, is one example.

It's a chilly, blustery day. One student pulls his arms out of his fleece and hugs his torso. Another chucks a rock into the rough waves.

Bouman points out a plaque with a famous quote from Senator Paul H. Douglas (D-IL; formerly a UChicago economics professor): "When I was young, I hoped to save the world. In my middle years, I would have been content to save my country. Now I just want to save the dunes." It was Douglas who introduced the controversial bill to establish the Indiana Dunes National Monument in 1958.

The group turns and heads up the Succession Trail, named because the walk is an astonishing real-world demonstration of ecological succession—all in about 25 minutes.

"The point of this trail," which includes a series of wooden staircases, "is to walk you through the successional phases," Bouman explains. The beach is bare sand. Farther back from the water, "grasses start to fix the sand in place, and soil slowly accumulates." After that, "you

start to get the colonization of shrubs and then trees, and by the time you get to the top of the dune, you're in a forest." This was what Cowles was describing in his landmark dissertation, "An Ecological Study of the Sand Dune Flora of Northern Indiana."

"I've been learning about ecological succession since middle school," one student remarks. "I never knew it was discovered here."

As they make their way up the trail, Pudup, Landau, and several of the students constantly stop to bend over plants with their phones—not to snap photos, but to try to identify them. Although it's only 15,000 acres, the Indiana Dunes is one of the top five national parks for biodiversity, Labovitz says, rivaling the much larger Great Smoky Mountains.

The motley collection of plants along the trail grow in unlikely juxtapositions: a prickly pear cactus next to an Arctic bearberry, for example. "Botanically," says Bouman, "it's doing what the rest of the region is doing."



University of Chicago students on a class field trip led by Henry Chandler Cowles, PhD 1898 (second row, center), chair of the department of botany, in 1911.

AFTER A BAG LUNCH the group gathers in an area sheltered from the wind to hear Labovitz talk/joke/rant about the National Park and its neighbors: “You don’t expect to see this kind of wild place tucked in between residential homes and heavy, heavy industry.”

A few years ago, there was a fish kill. “If you know anything about fish,” Labovitz says, “when you see dead catfish, you should really worry.”

Industries in Indiana are given permits that specify how much cyanide, benzene, hexavalent chromium, and so on they can discharge into the waterways. The waterways in the Calumet flow into Lake Michigan, which happens to be the source of Chicago’s drinking water. In Indiana they talk of “permit exceedances,” Labovitz says, then translates: “It’s a spill.” And when it comes to spills, Indiana is a “self-reporting” state.

“Every tributary going into Lake Michigan from Indiana is brown,” Labovitz says. “The lake is a beautiful blue, right? Until it’s not. When is that? Five years? Five hundred years?”

Despite his exasperated tone, “I’m not a tree hugger by any stretch. I’m a

business guy.” He wants the industries of northwestern Indiana to do well, but “we don’t want them to kill us and Lake Michigan in the process.”

Labovitz doesn’t mince words about the National Park’s other lakefront neighbor, either: Ogden Dunes, an affluent residential area to the west. When lake levels rose, residents wanted to construct a barrier to protect their homes. The National Park fought them in court and lost. Two acres of coastal wetland were destroyed “to protect private houses that someday will get washed away by the lake,” Labovitz says. “The lake always wins.”

Lake Michigan naturally rises and falls, he says, and these changes are “best handled by the natural coastline” rather than a rock barrier, which just accelerates erosion at either end. Lake levels have numerous long-term cycles: “a 30-, 60-, 150-, and 1,500-year cycle,” he says. “Even sunspots somehow affect the water levels in the Great Lakes. I’ll pause a moment while your head explodes.

“We have no control over lake levels. None,” he says, adding, “You couldn’t give me a house on Lake Michigan.”

STUDYING THE CALUMET

The Calumet Quarter—a collaboration between the Chicago Studies program and the Committee on Environment, Geography, and Urbanization (CEGU)—is offered every other year and consists of three courses, which vary. Students in the Spring 2024 program, called The Power of Place, took these courses.

PLANNING FOR LAND AND LIFE IN THE CALUMET

Instructor: Mark Bouman,
Field Museum; former
geography professor at
Chicago State University

OBJECTS, PLACE, AND POWER

Instructor: Jessica Landau,
assistant instructional
professor, CEGU

ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSITIONS AND UNNATURAL HISTORIES

Instructor: Mary Beth Pudup,
instructional professor, CEGU

As a final project for the program, students designed their own field trip to Big Marsh Park, a former industrial site on the southeast side.

BACK ON THE BUS (Landau spots a coyote running along the edge of the highway) the students meet the next guest lecturer: Kris Krouse, executive director of the Shirley Heinze Land Trust.

He's worked there since 2005. When someone first told him about the job, he had two questions: Who's Shirley Heinze? And what's a land trust?

Shirley Heinze, Krouse explains, lived in Ogden Dunes and died in 1978, when she was in her early fifties. With \$30,000 (about \$106,600 today) her friends established the land trust in her name. The trust now owns 3,400 acres across six counties. The goal is to permanently preserve these natural lands, protecting them from development.

Krouse wears a blue plaid shirt and a baseball cap with the trust's logo on it. During his part of the tour, he shows the group two of the trust's parcels. The first is along the East Branch of the Little Calumet River, which flows to the National Park. The corridor is unique, Krouse explains, because "it's still intact in a lot of ways"—it hasn't been entirely ditched or otherwise altered. It's home to more than 700 species of plants. And there are now three kayak launches along the corridor, so visitors can see it all up close.

"Blue-gray gnatcatcher," Bouman interrupts. He's looking at the Merlin app, which identifies bird calls. There's also "a hawk in here somewhere."

Krouse grew up in Indiana, and like Labovitz, he has to strike a balance with industry: "You can't get one or two degrees away from your immediate family without knowing somebody that works at a steel mill."

At the same time, there's increasing pressure on industry to think about ecosystems. "We had a big fish kill. I'm sure Paul mentioned it," he says. "That's the same river we're putting people on to go kayaking."

The second stop: a parcel of land that's perfectly flat and obviously "an old

field," Bouman points out. It's adjacent to the Heron Rookery, "a disjunct part of the National Park," Krouse explains. "Birds love it."

Ironically, the previous owner of this farm founded Stop Taking Our Property (STOP), a local organization that opposed the National Park, which "created a lot of animosity," Bouman says. But a land trust doesn't take properties by eminent domain. It buys them from willing sellers and pays fair market value, Bouman explains.

Back on the bus, the group is headed to its final stop, the town of Beverly Shores. After the 1933 Century of Progress fair, a group of model houses was brought there by barge and installed along the shoreline.

Krouse stands at the front of the bus, explaining about the trust's new nature preserve in Gary: "a globally rare dune and swale habitat on the west side," not far from the city's public high school. His shirt has short sleeves, and he seems distracted by something on his right forearm.

"Okay, so this is a—shifting gears for a second," he says, pinching at something with his fingers. "This is a tick."

"Oh my god," exclaims Landau.

"I'm going to pass it around so everybody knows what it looks like," Krouse quips. "No, I'm dead serious about this." He explains the importance of checking yourself for ticks, estimating that he gets 50 ticks or so a season, but he has never been ill with Lyme disease.

After hours of appreciating nature—while hearing about the unrelenting industrial threats to it—the students seem unfazed by this legitimately scary natural threat.

Once again, it's a case of learning to coexist. 🌸

Read more about the Calumet quarter at mag.uchicago.edu/calumet-quarter.

THREE POEMS BY FIRST-YEARS

*A selection of work created in Poetry
and the Human.*

In Spring Quarter, Poetry and the Human divides.

The Humanities Core sequence Poetry and the Human—designed by **Sarah Nooter**, professor of classics, along with other faculty—has a unique structure. During Fall and Winter, all students study poetry from an academic perspective. In Spring they have a choice: stay where they are, or switch to an affiliated Arts Core course ... and write their own poems.

The Spring Quarter syllabus focuses on three poetic forms: haiku, ghazal (an Arabic form consisting of rhyming couplets), and sonnet. The forms come from “three different languages, three different time periods,” says humanities lecturer **Richie Hofmann**, who taught the course for the first time this past academic year. The strict requirements help students refine their thinking: “If it has to rhyme in a certain way, or there has to be a certain number of syllables,” he says, “it often leads to new discoveries.”

Hofmann selected these poems for the *Core*. **Owen Seropian**, Class of 2027, wrote “on being alone,” during the ghazal unit; the others came out of the sonnet unit.

“And America nearly became Uncle Musto’s Avalon” by **Christian Turk**, Class of 2027, was inspired by his uncle’s story of crashing his car into the Brooklyn Bridge. His uncle’s friends, afraid of being deported, called the police, then fled. (Uncle Musto lived, earned two degrees, and had a career in banking.)

“Pacific Coast Time,” by **Charlotte Quintanar**, Class of 2027, a humorous poem about climate change, was inspired by the work of Black ecopoet Ed Roberson. Like a sonnet, it has 14 lines. But Quintanar was also influenced by the other forms she studied.

“Ever since our haiku unit ... I have seen the world in five syllables, tapping out on my fingers multiple haikus every day in my head,” she wrote in her final portfolio. During the ghazal unit, she learned to look for “details in my day-to-day that I would have normally ignored (such as, how does the stem of a dandelion bend when a butterfly lands on it, or how does my forehead skin crinkle when I am confused on a math question).”

Hofmann, the author of two books of poetry, has published work in the *New Yorker*, the *Paris Review*, *Poetry*, and other journals. Read more about his teaching approach at mag.uchicago.edu/richie-hofmann.

ON BEING ALONE

by Owen Seropian, Class of 2027

I go to bed when my roommate is off
in his dreams

and I wake up when he is off at his
classes.

I eat lunch next to strangers
and I stare at the back of their heads to
try to see their faces.

I sit in a cubicle at the library
and I get a notification, “MAIL: Get 50%
OFF Californ...”

I go on a walk
and I talk to the birds as they fly away
from me.

I sit on a bench leaving room for one
more
and I stand up from the bench with
room for three more.

I play cards with myself
and I won this time around.

I say goodnight to my roommate
and I respond, “Goodnight to you too.”



PACIFIC COAST TIME

by Charlotte Quintanar, Class of 2027

My liquid body – water in a flesh glass
spills out into the boundless brine.

My house is under water.

Or millions of years ago it would have been
under a prehistoric sea with no 7-Eleven,
Brandy Melville, or Petco
(nobody was buying a dinosaur at Petco,
silly... you could just take one outside)

Millions of years from now will the
44.8 million, 5 bedroom - 6.5 bathroom,
on 28926 Cliffside Dr, Malibu California
be underwater again or overlooking an arid
plain? A wasteland? A desert?

Who wants dessert? I can make
Pillsbury pre-made brownie mix? Funfetti?

And enough to fill you and your growing
shadow across the water.

Maybe then you will eat enough to forget,
that you are thirsty

AND AMERICA NEARLY BECAME UNCLE MUSTO'S AVALON

by Christian Turk, Class of 2027

illegal alien in a spaceship
on the brooklyn bridge flying across asphalt
parades into a pillar
cascading towards a casket

wealth weighing his crown, pressuring
his temple
crucified by corporate corruption
suits and suites: America's sweets
the terre of tiered tears; tender and forties
are torn treaties' treat

his cries fall on the denied defeated, deafened

illegal aliens in their spaceship
pass the brooklyn bridge flying across asphalt
they see the wreck, for signs of life
they check
the sirens sing silently, they cannot stay

the strobes and systems will send
them away.

THAT'S ITALIAN! (SORT OF)

In 1949 the University of Chicago Settlement League published a charity cookbook, *Settlement Dough-nations*, to support recent immigrants to Chicago. Many of the recipes were submitted by faculty wives, who were credited by their own name, followed by their husband's.

Laura Fermi (Mrs. Enrico) contributed a recipe for pizza pie. It ran in the casseroles section, along with recipes for tuna fish casserole with potato chips, Russian fluff, and meat luncheon ring. Pizza was still a novelty in late 1940s America, and this recipe clearly reflects that.

Reader, I made it. Just as written. I was tempted (75 years after Fermi wrote the recipe) to substitute mozzarella for the American cheese and anchovies for the sardines. I did not.

I served it to my family. We tasted it with trepidation. And ... it was actually pretty good.

Then we all had seconds—just like with regular pizza.—*Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93*



PIZZA PIE (*American version*)

YOU WILL NEED

- Dough for 1 shortcake (as recipe on any prepared biscuit mix)
- 1/2 lb. package of easily melting cheese (American pasteurized)
- 1 can sardines
- 3 good-sized tomatoes, sliced
- 2 tablespoons salad oil

Pat shortcake dough thin to cover bottom of 8x12-inch baking pan.

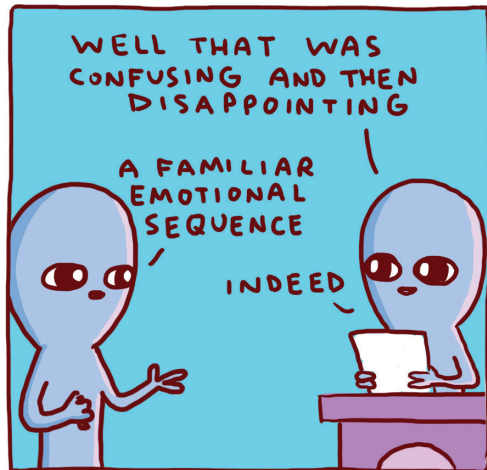
Slice cheese. Open and clean sardines. Place slices of cheese first on top of dough, then alternately with pieces of sardine. Top with sliced tomatoes. Sprinkle with salt and baste with salad oil. Bake in a 375° oven until dough is well cooked (about 40 minutes). Cut into servings after it is baked.

—*Laura Fermi
(Mrs. Enrico)*



Strange Planet

By Nathan W. Pyle



NATHANWPYLE

Ibidem

**ALEXANDER BRIDGE
BY PHYSICS NOBELIST
ALBERT A. MICHELSON**



*I wanted Beauty, with a capital B.
I hadn't had any in Indiana.*

—Janet Flanner, EX 1914,
on why she settled in Paris