

# the Rice Thresher

## ‘FLIPPING OVER THE ROCK’

### REMEMBERING THE FIGHT AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE

BY RIYA MISRA  
FEATURES EDITOR

*Editor's note: This story contains mentions of sexual violence.*

Three years ago, the Rice campus was enveloped by protests and discussions over the state of the university's sexual assault policies. Partially lost to the mists of time and overshadowed by the pandemic a few months later, these protests are largely unknown to today's student body after the numerous social disruptions these last few years have seen.

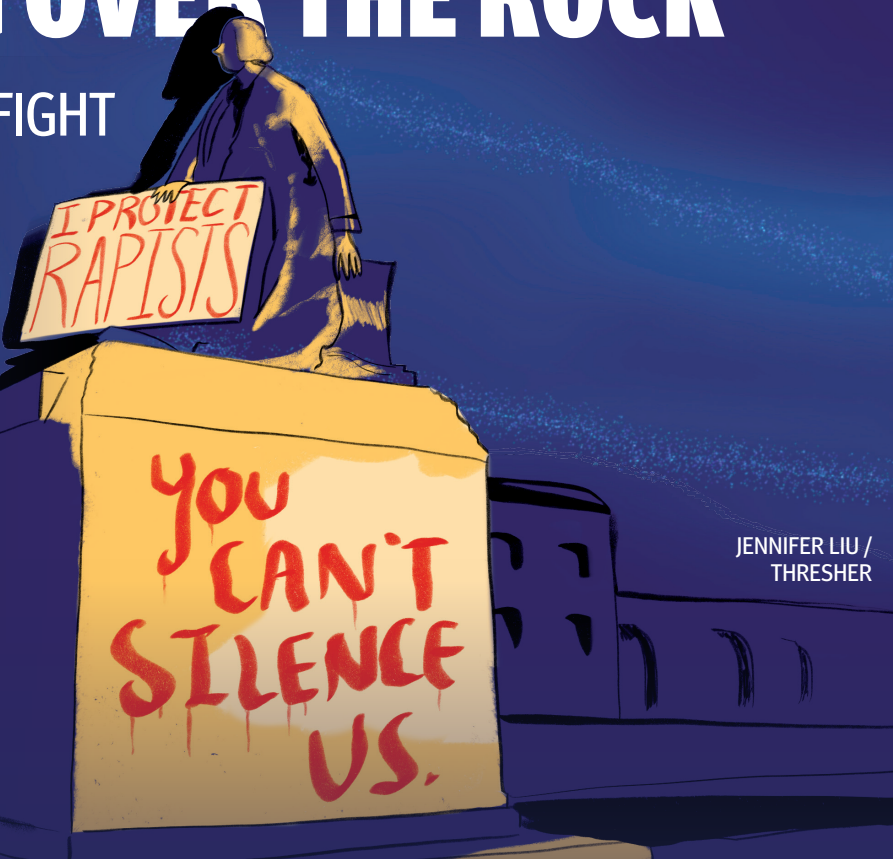
#### Origins of the protests

The protests were a reactionary spark to an anonymously published op-ed in the Thresher a month prior by Sydney Garrett, a Rice alum ('19), who later came forward as the author. In the article, Garrett detailed how her rapist found a loophole in the Student Judicial Programs proceedings, delaying the hearings long enough to graduate a semester early, before a suspension could take effect. The op-ed was born soon after this discovery, according to Garrett.

"The combination of ... my rage at how badly this was handled, and my rage [at] the way that the administration had treated me led me to write this op-ed," Garrett, who had graduated the previous year, said. "[I was] seeking some payback or justice for the way that I had been treated."

The protests occurred during Families' Weekend in September 2019. The first outcries were on Sept. 26 and 27, according to the Thresher's Oct. 2, 2019 issue, when a group of Rice students covered William Marsh Rice's status with signs and staged silent protests in front of parents. According to Maddy Scannell ('21), who served as the executive director of Students Transforming Rice Into a Violence-Free Environment from 2020-2021, students showed up to the protest wearing red and silently handed copies of Garrett's op-ed to parents.

"Part of me still feels really bad; that was supposed to be a really exciting and fun experience for parents to see their kids, especially if it's their first kid or something in college, to turn that into something very bitter and upsetting," Scannell said. "But seeing the change in demeanor and



JENNIFER LIU / THRESHER

opening up the eyes of these parents ... was, I felt, so important."

The decision to stage the protests during Families' Weekend was intentional, according to Scannell. Students took advantage of the events to alert parents and hopefully put additional pressure on the administration to take action.

“This whole idea of being so mistreated by these people who were supposed to protect us was a very familiar feeling.

Sydney Garrett  
RICE UNIVERSITY '19

"Once you start getting things in print, getting things to parents who are your financial base and getting things to donors, that may make the school look bad, I think that's really when people start to pay attention," Scannell said. "If it means flipping over the rock and seeing all the scary things underneath it, given the choice, I think [administration] would rather not."

The protests marked one of the first explicit displays of activism at Rice, according to Scannell. Christina Tan ('20), the then editor-in-chief of the Thresher,

said that the scope of the reactions to Garrett's op-ed was unexpected at the time.

"This was before George Floyd, before the massive protests of our generation. We didn't think there was the appetite for that kind of protest or mass movement in the student body," Tan said.

Garrett, too, said she was shocked by the fervor with which students reacted to her article, citing the protests as both a strange and validating experience as she witnessed her article being pasted up, handed out and protested with.

"[During] the process of being assaulted and then dealing with the repercussions of that, you really kind of get into this headspace of gaslighting yourself," Garrett said. "It [was] nice to hear this vocal outcry from all of these people that I know, either closely or distantly, and have them reaffirm for me that it was messed up."

She credited the op-ed's anonymity for its ability to reach and resonate with swaths of the student body.

"Once I published it, it kind of became not my thing anymore. It was just this piece of writing that didn't have a face or a name attached to it, so people [could] really take it and use it however they needed to or wanted to," Garrett said. "This whole idea of being so mistreated by these people who were supposed to protect us was a very familiar feeling."

SEE SEXUAL VIOLENCE PAGE 6

#### A THRESHER SPECIAL PROJECT

STUDENTS AT RICE SOUGHT ABORTIONS BEFORE ROE, DURING ITS REIGN AND WILL CONTINUE IN THE WAKE OF ROE'S FALL.

THE THRESHER TALKED TO ALUMNI FROM THE 1950S THROUGH THE 2010S TO BUILD A TIMELINE OF RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND ABORTION AT RICE.

PAGES 8-11

# ABORTION

through the ages

1970 **Anonymous alumna**, who traveled to Mexico for an abortion

“

Lots of people lost friends in their classes ... I was more terrified I was going to die. That was my mental association: Abortion is valuable and very risky.

1987 **Lora Wildenthal**, a Rice alumna and now a Rice professor

“

I thought my life would be over if I had to have that baby ... One can say, 'Let's not be too dramatic. Is it really the end of my life?' But it was not what I wanted to do.

2016 **Radhika Sharma**, a Rice alumna who felt silenced after her abortion

“

Nowhere did I see any literature, [any] resources, saying ... 'we have resources for you, we are here to support you.' In fact, I felt completely the opposite.

## Dancing in December: Volleyball a 5-seed in NCAA tournament after winning conference

BY CADAN HANSON  
SENIOR WRITER

For the fifth season in a row, Rice is playing volleyball in December. On Sunday, the No. 20 Owls were announced as a No. 5 seed in the quarter of the bracket hosted by the University of Louisville when the NCAA Division I Women's Volleyball committee announced the NCAA tournament field. The Owls will start off tournament play in the Waco regional against the University of Colorado on Dec. 1. After receiving their bid, head coach Genny Volpe said that the team is excited and ready to compete.

"It's always exciting to see your name pop up on the big screen," Volpe said. "We're excited to go and play at Baylor. We're just ready to get back in the gym and get to work."

If the Owls defeat the Buffaloes, who finished fifth in the Pac-12, they would move on to the round of 32 to face the winner of Stephen F. Austin University and the No. 4 seed Baylor University. According to fifth-year senior and Conference USA setter of the year Carly Graham, their first round match-up will be a good challenge for the Owls.

"Colorado is in a great conference so I know they've been playing great teams

all season," Graham said. "To make the tournament, you have to be a great team. We'll definitely get a good scout in and go out there and compete."

As the newly crowned C-USA champions, the Owls earned an automatic qualifier bid thanks to their 3-2 victory against Western Kentucky University in the conference tournament championship game. The Owls ended the season with a record of 26-3, with numerous matches against ranked opponents, including their potential second round matchup Baylor. The Owls were swept by the Bears the last time the teams met.

SEE VOLLEYBALL PAGE 15

# THE NEWS

## Ph.D. program to implement minimum stipend

BY HAJERA NAVEED  
NEWS EDITOR

Rice recently established a minimum yearly Ph.D. stipend of \$32,000 that will go into effect July 1.

According to Provost Amy Dittmar, Rice previously did not have a minimum stipend requirement while several peer institutions did.

“We established [a minimum] last week to ensure that doctoral students who are in the funded period of their studies will have financial support above next year’s expected cost of education,” Dittmar said. “The stipend for Ph.D.s typically varies by department. It will result in an increased stipend for many departments’ Ph.D. students.”

Rice also announced an increase in the medical insurance subsidy, an increase in the emergency loan fund limit, an expansion of parental leave from six to 12 weeks and an expansion of graduate meal plans to include dinner options, among other changes.

Brian Udall, a math Ph.D. student, said this announcement will result in a pretty significant increase from his current stipend of \$26,500.

“It’s a comforting feeling for sure,” Udall said. “Our old stipend is just low enough where there is definitely sometimes when I’m worried. Will I be able to save any real amount of money? And also just enjoy myself. There’s been a lot of times where I had to very carefully save money and say no to things I would want to do.”

Seiichi Matsuda, dean of postgraduate and doctoral studies, said he worked with the Graduate Student Association for input before implementing these changes. He said that he is grateful to the upper administration for identifying funds to make the changes possible.

“We will continue to stay connected to the graduate student community through regular meetings with individual students and student groups, take their insight and strive to improve the graduate student experience as a whole,” Matsuda said.

Matsuda said that considerations for a minimum stipend began around a year ago, when investigations for the initiative began.

“Provost Dittmar has now prioritized and established the minimum stipend with President DesRoches’ enthusiastic backing,” Matsuda said.

According to Dittmar, in addition to Ph.D. students’ stipend increase, the Doctor of Musical Arts, the only other doctoral program, will also see a stipend increase.

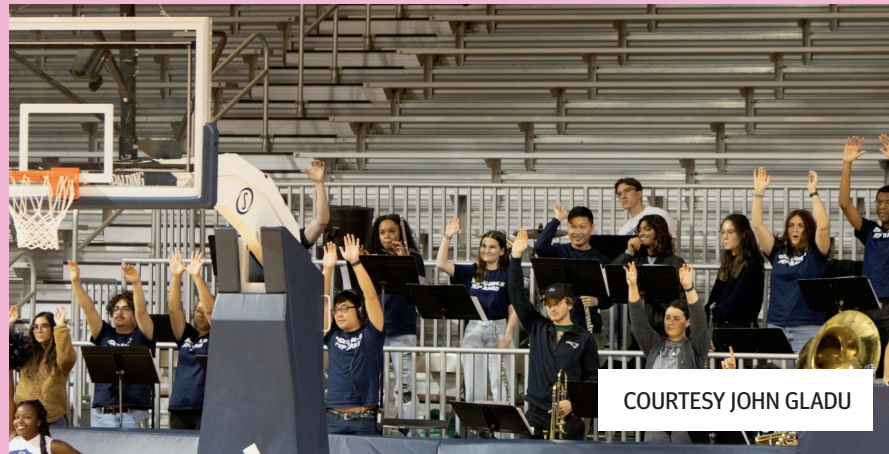
Udall said he hopes that Rice continues to make adjustments to the stipend to adjust for inflation and other circumstances.

“The fact that they weren’t already regularly raising [the stipend] with inflation is pretty frustrating,” Udall said. “So the fact that this is a pretty significant increase is pretty nice to see. I hope to see in the future more regular, smaller increases as the years go by.”

Dittmar said that enhancing and supporting graduate programs is one goal of the current administration, and these changes are a step towards it.

“We actively solicit feedback from graduate students about how to improve their experience at Rice, and we look forward to exploring more opportunities to support the communities that our graduate students create for one another,” Dittmar said.

## Owl Pep Band plays its first games this basketball season



COURTESY JOHN GLADU

BY SARAH KNOWLTON  
FOR THE THRESHER

The Owl Pep Band, which was introduced in September, debuted this basketball season. In previous years, the Marching Owl Band typically played at these games.

According to Deputy Athletic Director Rick Mello, the new band was formed to improve game experiences for fans as Rice transitions into the American Athletic Conference next year.

The new band has undergraduate students, graduate students, members of the MOB, Shepherd School students, students from other bands and a student athlete, according to Mello.

“I’m pleased with the progress,” Mello added.

Nathan Horton, an OPB member, said that the reason for the interest in membership can be attributed to the incentive of pay.

“When you get paid to do band, that’s a pretty obvious choice,” Horton, a Martel College sophomore, said.

Another OPB member, Benjamin Gomez, said that although he

considered joining MOB at one point, he chose to participate in OPB because of the lower time commitment and pay.

“I feel like [the MOB] is a bigger time commitment,” Gomez, a Duncan College freshman, said. “For the OPB, the practices are just two hours before the game if you have time. It’s very optional.”

MOB alumnus Jose Corea (‘21), who remains part of the band as an alum, said that this year’s change to the MOB’s schedule has impacted the atmosphere of the band.

“There’s kind of a somberness,” Corea said. “At this point in the year, we would be playing basketball games, and we don’t get to do that.”

MOB alumnus Ian Mauzy (‘14) wrote to the Thresher that the removal of the MOB from basketball games has made some students feel betrayed.

“I think the students feel — correctly — that something has been taken from them without their consent, let alone their input, and that they are not being given anything of comparable value in return,” Mauzy wrote in an email.

Mauzy also said that with these emotions present in the MOB, he does not look favorably upon the fact that OPB members are paid.

“I can understand wanting newer songs to be played at games, and all other things being equal, I’m in favor of musicians getting paid,” Mauzy wrote. “But neither of those are things that necessitated the creation of

a new organization. Those could have both been handled through existing channels. And in conjunction with everything else, fifty dollars a game looks like thirty pieces of silver.”

Corea said that MOB holds no animosity towards OPB members.

“There’s not really an enmity with the ensemble, just the idea of it,” Corea said. “We just want to stand in solidarity with our string players, our accordion players, even our woodwind players who wouldn’t be prioritized in a brass-centric pep band.”

The athletics department stated that although instrumentation would be restricted, they were committed to welcoming as many members of the MOB as possible, as well as members of the Rice community as a whole.

“The MOB alumni and the community members that have been part of the MOB, they’re part of the Rice community too,”

Mello said. “That’s why we’ve been very, very open with our willingness to invite them to be part of it.”

Najee Greenlee, a member of the OPB, said that he has had a positive experience with the band so far.

“Everyone is really welcoming, everyone is really kind,” Greenlee, a Lovett College freshman, said. “We have a good time.”

Sophia Flemister, who plays in both the MOB and the OPB, said that they had observed differences between the two ensembles, but enjoyed the atmosphere of both.

“I feel like [the OPB] is a different environment in that it feels a bit more professional,” Flemister, a Duncan freshman, said. “I enjoy the music, I enjoy the people, it’s a good time.”

Flemister said that to them, a combination of the values of both groups would be an ideal solution to resolve disputes.

“I think what needs to happen is kind of like a merging between the two groups, because I definitely see the perspective of having a new group but then also having the traditions of the MOB,” Flemister said.

Ethan Goore, MOB game producer, equipment manager and percussionist, said that he feels the MOB is more representative of Rice culture.

“The decision to replace the MOB with a traditional pep band sets a dangerous precedent of Rice replacing unconventional with traditional,” Goore, a Duncan College sophomore, wrote in an email to the Thresher. “The beauty of the MOB is that it isn’t just a band, it’s a community where everyone is invited to enjoy the gift of music performance in a supportive and fun environment.”

## Rice signs collaboration agreement with university in India



COURTESY RICE UNIVERSITY

BY VIOLA HSIA  
SENIOR WRITER

Rice signed an agreement with the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur on Nov. 14, marking a collaboration between the institutions for research, teaching and training.

Luay Nakhleh, dean of George R. Brown School of Engineering, said that this collaboration is the first move for the School of Engineering that will potentially establish Rice more prominently on the international stage.

“For the school of engineering, it’s very important for us that we expand our international footprint,” Nakhleh said. “We have regions of interest, one of them is India.”

According to Nakhleh, this collaboration began before COVID, back when President Reginald DesRoches was still the dean of the school of engineering. However, due to the pandemic, this collaboration was put on hold until now.

“We’re going [to India] to revive that program, to restart it, to start planning on concrete steps [other than signing agreements],” Nakhleh said.

The agreement, signed in early January 2020, is said to focus specifically on issues such as climate change and energy and materials science, according to Pulickel Ajayan, a professor from the department of materials science and nanoengineering.

“These problems need significant innovations in science and technology, and many universities around the world are engaged in addressing these major issues,” Ajayan said. “Our partnering with globally recognized institutions in different parts of the world gives us new opportunities, new understanding of various socio-economic factors that drive these issues and a universal view of the problems we are trying to solve.”

Provost Amy Dittmar said she is excited for the opportunities this partnership will open up for students.

“This is an exciting development for our faculty and students, and it advances our strategic priorities in the areas of global research, engagement and exchange,” Dittmar said. “This new agreement will provide valuable opportunities to collaborate with our colleagues and partners at IITK on research that explores and finds solutions to the pressing challenges of our time.”

In the spring, President DesRoches is planning to lead a delegation to Kanpur and institutions in Bangalore, Calcutta and Hyderabad.

# Fizz app bubbles with controversy amid popularity

BY BONNIE ZHAO  
MANAGING EDITOR

Fizz, an anonymous social media platform created by two Stanford University dropouts and currently catered to universities, launched at Rice on Aug. 27 and has since generated mixed reactions amongst the student population.

Teddy Solomon, the co-founder and COO of Fizz, said that Rice is the seventh university at which Fizz has launched. According to Solomon, Fizz became popular at Rice in a matter of days.

"We've seen that the number of daily active users [at Rice] has been growing since the launch and has never taken a downturn," Solomon said. "In a matter of 48 hours, [Fizz] took over."

Fizz requires a university-affiliated email address to register. Solomon said they created Fizz to provide people with a safer, more private and engaging space online.

"I spent the entire pandemic on Instagram, watching everybody's amazing lives. But here I was stuck in my room. And [social media] was not representative at all of my own life," Solomon said. "We wanted to create the platform that everybody around us was asking for. And they were asking for a platform that was authentic ... a space to express your thoughts and be able to connect with the community."

Solomon said that anonymity is key to Fizz's mission.

"Right when you strip away that name, you're able to be your authentic self. You're able to actually express yourself, and it removes the social anxiety that comes with everything," Solomon said. "Growing up in such a technological age, we're naturally and justifiably anxious and very socially anxious, and [Fizz] allows us to have enough authentic space where your name's not attached."

Daniel Cho, a McMurtry College senior who has been frequently name-dropped and discussed on Fizz, wrote to the Thresher that anonymity can be a source of misinformation and negativity.

"I'm alright with posts that tease me that are made by people I know, since they'll usually come up and be like, 'Hey guess what — it was me again, haha, hope that's alright,'" Cho wrote. "I think intent matters a lot ... So it's when people that I don't know start jumping on that train that it becomes something I'm not as happy with."

Cho said that though he enjoys Fizz and thinks it is a fun platform, it is problematic in a lot of ways.

"I have noticed some of my friends that have been mentioned on the platform feeling an immediate feeling of fear and resentment

... I don't think I've ever seen someone feel positively about being mentioned on Fizz," Cho wrote. "I would not, however, consider posts about me bullying. Bullying to me requires clearly malicious intent ... It's a lot more likely to be the product of a herd of people just dropping the most interesting thing they can think of, the first thing they can remember without fully realizing the negative consequences of doing so."

Solomon said that having moderators was their top priority from the start. Fizz's staff trained moderators to identify and delete bullying, doxxing, hate speech and other offensive content.

Moderators on Fizz are university-specific and solely consist of students of that university. Solomon said moderators' goal is to protect the individuals within the community and make sure that Fizz is a positive and uplifting space. To do so, moderators remove posts from the feed that are violating the guidelines, and they also utilize Fizz's report system to identify offensive posts.

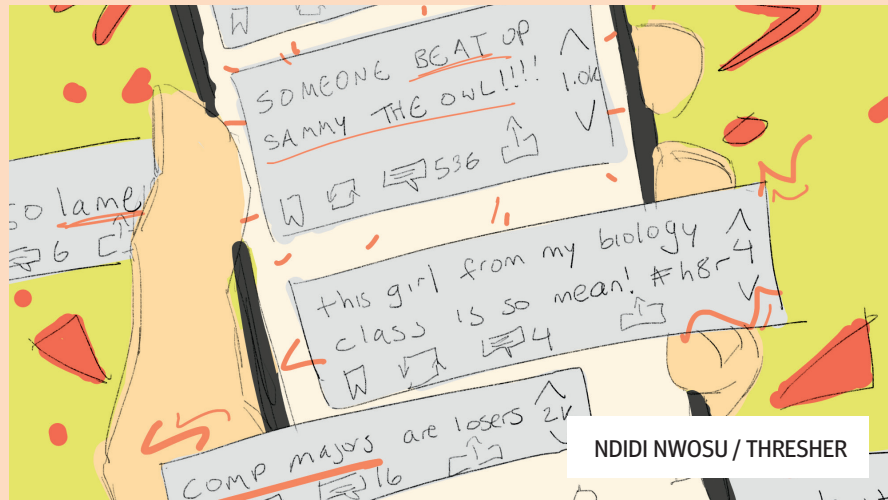
"[Moderators] were the first people that we recruited on campus," Solomon said. "We'll reach out to them online, we'll go through an interview process and we'll pick people who are going to moderate really objectively that are not going to inject their beliefs or whatever it might be into the platform, but people who are going to uphold the guidelines to the fullest extent."

Clara Ursic, who's mentioned as a "lovely face" on Fizz, said she has mixed feelings about seeing her name being mentioned.

"I was initially convinced it was just friends of mine that were trolling me. But I asked all my friends who have Fizz, and they all told me they didn't write it," Ursic, a McMurtry junior, said. "It was just funny, mostly ... But it was kind of unsettling when I think one of the comments on a post said, 'drop the Insta'. It was just weird to think that random people walking around Rice are talking about me. But I guess it's better [than] a rude comment."

Ursic is also an employee at Coffeehouse, the student-run business that has recently been the target of many Fizz posts criticizing its alleged poor management, long wait times and unprofessionalism.

"Again, just scrolling through, I thought it was funny and kind of absurd," Ursic said. "But then later that night, I actually had a Chaus shift, and as I was taking orders. I just couldn't stop thinking about it — about, 'Oh,



NDIDI NWOSU / THRESHER

this person that's ordering the latte right in front of me and smiling at me could possibly be thinking all this horrible stuff about us.' So I started feeling really self conscious. I was hyper aware of how efficient I was when grabbing stuff."

Ursic said that some of the criticisms on Fizz are valid critiques, but they can also be discouraging and dehumanizing.

"There are definitely things that we could improve on. It wasn't completely unfounded criticism on Fizz," Ursic said. "But the one that really got me was, 'The incentive is not to get fired, you lazy shit' ... The fact that it had 300 upvotes was insane to me."

According to Ursic, Coffeehouse should not be compared to businesses such as Starbucks, and she hopes her peers recognize Coffeehouse employees are just students.

"It just gives off this impression that they're expecting us to just be machines to make their coffee immediately ... There was someone complaining about how we talk too much [among] each other, and we're having too much fun," Ursic said. "It's just a little bit ridiculous. This is supposed to be our own fun coffee shop where you show up with fun hats and good vibes, and drinks are half the price of Starbucks, you know."

Rice's Fizz content took a shift from jokes and memes to political discussions around the time of the midterm election. According to Solomon, Fizz is extremely apolitical across communities on the app, but he's glad to see Fizz be an authentic space for authentic conversations that don't happen in real life.

"There's hard conversations that might not happen because of the stigma that exists in real life surrounding political debate,"

Solomon said. "They can happen on the platform, and we welcome that."

However, some recent Fizz content has also been criticized by users as being racist, antisemitic and fatphobic. One Fizz post currently with 438 upvotes reads, "... for all girls out there being overweight is number 1 bolder underlined turn off it's just the truth not fatphobic." Another reads, "Fatphobic is part of evolution no dude wants a fat pig as a wife. It is literally in our genes." At the time of publication, these posts are still undeleted.

Antisemitic content included posts and comments such as "Jews been getting babied like a mf all last month I'm lowkey tired of hearing that shit," in addition to posts and comments promoting conspiracy theories claiming Jewish people "control the US."

Natasha Patnaik, one of the two coordinators for diversity facilitators, said that for these particular posts, anonymity is clearly being misused in order to spread hate speech.

"The antisemitic and racist posts recently made on the app are entirely antithetical to Rice's Culture of Care," Patnaik wrote in an email to the Thresher. "As a student body, we should be striving to foster inclusivity and respect both in-person and online ... We hope people consider: is using Fizz worth sacrificing our Culture of Care?"

Ursic said that she thinks there is no perfect solution to the negatives of Fizz.

"I think with Fizz as an anonymous app, you can't eliminate the downsides of it ... without also eliminating the upsides," Ursic said. "I honestly just think it boils down to the actual people using it. And I guess I had a naive assumption going in ... that everyone around me is just really kind and open minded and caring ... [Fizz] slowly made me realize that not everyone around me necessarily thinks like that."

“Right when you strip away that name, you’re able to be your authentic self.”

Teddy Solomon  
FIZZ CO-FOUNDER

# Campus responds to Houston's city-wide boil water notice

BY MARIA MORKAS  
ASST. NEWS EDITOR

Due to a power outage at the East Water Purification Plant on Nov. 27 that led to water pressure dropping, Houston's main water system was under a boil water notice beginning late Sunday until Tuesday morning.

The Rice crisis management team sent out an email alert saying that all buildings east of Alumni Drive, including all of the residential colleges and the Rice Memorial Center, are serviced by the campus well and were not affected by the boil water requirement. However, buildings west of Alumni Drive, such as the Barbara and David Gibbs Recreation and Wellness Center, were impacted.

"Drinking water will be made available, as supplies permit, in the buildings with non-drinkable water," the crisis management team said in the alert. "If you live off campus, you should be boiling your water until the city communicates that the water system is OK to drink."

Even though Rice continued with scheduled classes on Monday, the

Houston Independent School District, among other districts in the city, canceled classes and meetings. Layal Haider, a Wiess College freshman, said one of her history classes was canceled because her professor's child couldn't attend daycare.

"I was a bit shocked because of how big Houston is," Haider, an international student from Bahrain, said. "I was aware that the electricity might shut off, and other things as such, but I did not expect basic things like a [lack of clean] water — and to be facing a [water boiling notice] ... I am used to hearing about these things in poorer regions."

Sam Nance, a Brown College sophomore who lives off-campus this year, said that the boil water notice was difficult due to the amount of water he uses throughout the day. He said that getting a pot and boiling water for all of his needs has been time-consuming.

"There definitely needs to be better city infrastructure and security so that one power outage, which results in a pressure drop for less than a minute,

doesn't deprive two million people of clean water for two days," Nance said.

Nance said Rice's response seemed focused on supporting on-campus students, rather than considering the entire student population and how this might adversely affect their health.

"While they offered water to people on campus, there wasn't any sort of initiative for students who lived off-campus," Nance said. "I wished they had done something, like give out free water bottles for people off-campus, too."

Haider said this entire situation speaks to the economic disparities in Houston and the privileges Rice provides.

"I thought, coming [to] Houston, that it would be more advanced. But when you go downtown, you see different [environments]," Haider said. "Rice is a bubble not [indicative] of the rest of Houston."



BEN BAKER-KATZ / THRESHER  
The Recreation Center closed water fountains Monday due to the notice.



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# OPINION

## EDITORIAL

## International issues deserve our attention, too

Anyone who walked through the academic quad on Monday encountered the statue of William Marsh Rice visibly covered by sheets of A4 paper that read “习近平下台,” which roughly translates to “Resign Xi Jinping.” Other signs read “No emperor in a republic” and “Not my president.” These signs are part of larger protests happening in mainland China — that are being echoed by Chinese people across the world — in response to nearly three years of aggressive COVID lockdowns across the country.

While these protests are monumental in both their scale and specificity, we’ve noticed that conversations about them and their impact on our international students have been largely non-existent.

This is not the first time this semester that we’ve noticed this phenomenon. Beginning in mid-September, protests broke out across Iran after a young woman was beaten to death by the regime’s morality police for violating the Iranian government’s dress codes. The reaction on campus was mostly crickets.

We are not trying to compare the situations in China and Iran; both are abhorrent in their own right. But whether it’s people holding blank sheets



**Our international students, while dealing with domestic social issues, bear the additional burden of conflicts in their home countries. While we might not be able to mitigate that burden, we as a student body can make an active effort to support these movements.**

of A4 paper symbolic of the Chinese government’s censorship, or burning hijabs in Iran, people around the world are trying to send a message. And when

they demand the attention of the world, it is imperative that we give it.

It might not be entirely incumbent on our small university to take direct action, it’s on all of us to pay attention when they talk. We should be cognizant of the issues beyond the hedges that are actively affecting the many international students on this campus.

So, when posters are being put up around campus, read them. When rallies are organized, like the one today in support of Iranian protests, consider attending. We understand that social issues here in the U.S. demand a lot of our attention. For example, we devoted four pages of this week’s special issue to coverage on the history of abortion at Rice. But it is also important to recognize that our international students, while dealing with domestic social issues, bear the additional burden of conflicts in their home countries. While we might not be able to mitigate that burden, we as a student body can make an active effort to support these movements. And at the very least, listen.

## GUEST OPINION

## Is using Fizz worth sacrificing our Culture of Care?

The social media app Fizz made its way to our campus earlier this semester, offering an anonymous discussion platform for exchanging messages and memes amongst Rice students. In recent weeks, antisemitic and racist posts were made by members of our community on this app. It is entirely hateful and dangerously intolerant.

In our capacities as Teaching Assistants for Critical Dialogues on Diversity, we have often heard genuine surprise at the mere mention of such bigotry or extremism existing amongst our student body. The phrase, “I can’t believe someone who was smart enough to get into Rice would say/do something like that” is all too common. As such, our work and experiences with CDOD, and as Diversity Facilitator Coordinators with the Office of Multicultural Affairs, compel us to share our thoughts on this matter.

Make no mistake — these antisemitic posts were created by Rice students and likely posted under the shield of anonymity because these individuals are entirely aware of how completely antithetical these detestable posts are to the inclusivity we try so hard to foster and maintain here at Rice.

This is not who we are, and this is not what we stand for. We write this opinion piece, without the cover of anonymity and for all to see, because we firmly believe such hateful views have no place in our community.

Although we hope that the moderators (who are also Rice students) become more proactive in immediately removing



**We must show, clearly and unequivocally, that we do not support such bigotry. The easiest way to do so is to stop using the Fizz app and to stop supporting a platform which promotes the rampant spread of such hate speech, targeted cyber-bullying and harassment.**

such hate speech and misinformation, we cannot passively wait and hope a select few will address the issue. Aside from any legislative actions or policy proposals the Student Association may create in the future, the onus needs to be on each and every one of us to reject this hateful content. If we are going to be a community that is proud of its Culture of Care, then it is precisely in a moment like this that we must embody that support, respect, and inclusivity for one another.

As Rice students, we must show, clearly and unequivocally, that we do not support such bigotry. The easiest

way to do so is to stop using the Fizz app and to stop supporting a platform which promotes the rampant spread of such hate speech, targeted cyber-bullying and harassment. We cannot allow this app to detract from the Culture of Care we aim to cultivate here on campus, both in person and online.

Actions speak louder than words — and abandoning a platform with a design that lends itself to and encourages the proliferation of such hate speech is the single most effective step we can each commit to. You can get your Rice-related memes and jokes on GroupMe or Instagram — where there is at least some semblance of accountability inherent to what one posts.

Our question for our fellow students is plain, simple and unambiguous: is using the Fizz app worth sacrificing our Culture of Care?

### Natasha Patnaik

MCMURTRY COLLEGE  
JUNIOR



### Angelina Hall

BROWN COLLEGE  
JUNIOR



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### ABOUT

*The Rice Thresher*, the official student newspaper of Rice University since 1916, is published each Wednesday during the school year, except during examination periods and holidays, by the students of Rice University.

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# OPINION

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# FEATURES

## FROM FRONT PAGE SEXUAL VIOLENCE

### Frustration with Title IX policy changes

In May 2020, eight months after the Families' Weekend protests, the Department of Education announced changes to their federal Title IX policy, forcing schools such as Rice to make amendments to their own university policies.

The momentum created by the protests and the cultural shifts in discussions about sexual assault provided students with an unprecedented role in the policymaking process, according to Izzie Karohl ('22), who directed the Student Association's Interpersonal Violence Policy Committee and served as an undergraduate representative on the Title IX taskforce.

"I definitely think that the collective student outrage about the op-ed helped make it a priority for the administration to include an undergraduate and graduate student on that committee," Karohl said. "I genuinely don't think that would have happened, had it not been for the protests to show that student perspective is important in structuring the sexual misconduct case process."

Karohl has described her role in the policy changes as a bridge between student preferences and goals. She said her work largely entailed meeting with the executive committee of STRIVE, activists, survivors and people who had gone through Title IX cases, before giving feedback to administrators and pushing for policy priorities. Despite her involvement, Karohl said she felt the ultimate policy changes elicited mixed feelings from the Rice community.

"We wanted more genuine student and community feedback in that process. And it just did not happen. [It was] like a comment box on an email that no one saw," Karohl said. "I think initially after the process, I felt like that was kind of intentional. I felt like they put that feedback box out so late because they didn't really want the community feedback."

Richard Baker, the university's Title IX coordinator, countered some of the sentiments expressed by students at the time.

"I was surprised to learn that students felt that way," Baker wrote in an email to the Thresher. "In addition to collaborating with students in the working group, I met with students weekly and participated in two student-led town halls and discussed the process. While I appreciate their frustration, we did take efforts to be transparent."

### A "culture of care"

Prior to the op-ed's publication and the ensuing protests, topics of sexual assault and gender-based violence were rarely broached so openly, according to Scannell.

"We all kind of knew that there were rapists and people committing violence [who] were just on campus, going unchecked, especially graduating," Scannell said. "[But we] didn't know the extent to which that was enabled or facilitated by existing Rice policy, so that all that coming out was a shock to the system. Never so publicly had I seen someone being like, 'This fucked up thing happened to me, and I'm pissed.'"

Both Tan and Aliza Brown ('22) cited a failure in the culture of care — a key aspect of Rice's self-described close-

knit, community-oriented support system, often touted to prospective and current students alike — to keep students safe from violence.

"Before the protests, I felt completely alone in facing sexual assault on campus," Brown said. "During O-Week, I was exposed to so much talk about a supposed 'culture of care' that I figured sexual assault was very rare at Rice. Because of the protests, I learned how wrong I was."

Instead of protests and public conversations, discourse about sexual assault at Rice was largely governed by a "whisper network," which Tan described as stemming from student-to-student gossip that helped make individuals feel safe about who they interacted with.

"I think a lot of women and queer people at Rice have a whisper network of sorts ... I had heard so much already, just by being a student and being told to avoid so-and-so, or so-and-so walked in the room, and you're like, 'Oh, that person did XYZ,'" Tan said. "And I think that was a type of gossip that people used to survive and to make their own culture of care."

Looking back on the years since these events, Karohl acknowledges a deeper sense of awareness and accountability that has pervaded the student body, but still points towards a stagnancy in the current discourse around sexual assault.

"I don't want to say nothing's changed. I think that people are a little bit more aware, via [Critical Thinking in Sexuality] and these protests, of the

idea of consent and the idea of creating safer spaces," Karohl said. "But I think we just have this very one-dimensional view of how [assault] happens and where it happens."

Allison Vogt, associate dean of students and deputy Title IX coordinator, said that Rice has witnessed shifts in students holding their peers more accountable for problematic behavior. However, students such as Brown are still wary of how Rice's cultural attitudes towards assault continue to evolve, citing a critical need for continual education on violence prevention.

"I was worried that new students wouldn't understand the magnitude of the protests and what they meant: we, like most other campuses in America, are facing an epidemic of sexual violence," Brown said. "Without this knowledge, community support and fervor to combat the issue, I fear that survivors at Rice could return to a more silent state."

Tan said that one of the biggest challenges that the Rice community faces — and has

been facing for decades — is a lack of continuity as each class graduates, creating a loss in activist momentum over the years.

"Something really interesting about Rice is there's this four-year generational memory reset," Tan said. "I think the thing I want people to do is remember."

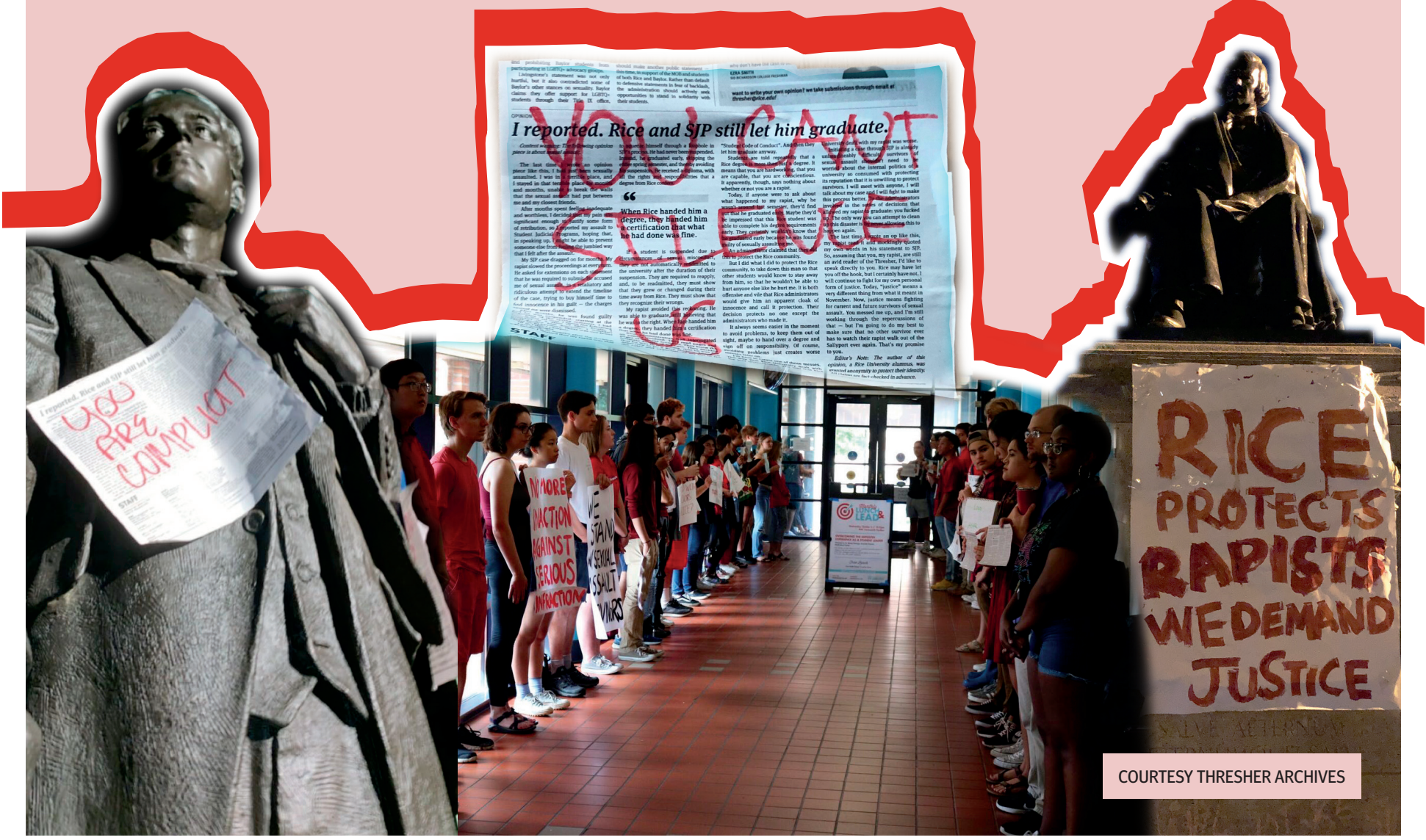
*Editor-in-Chief Morgan Gage has recused herself from this article due to her position as executive director of STRIVE.*

**"I felt like that was kind of intentional. I felt like they put that feedback box out so late because they didn't really want the community feedback."**

**Izzie Karohl**  
RICE UNIVERSITY '22

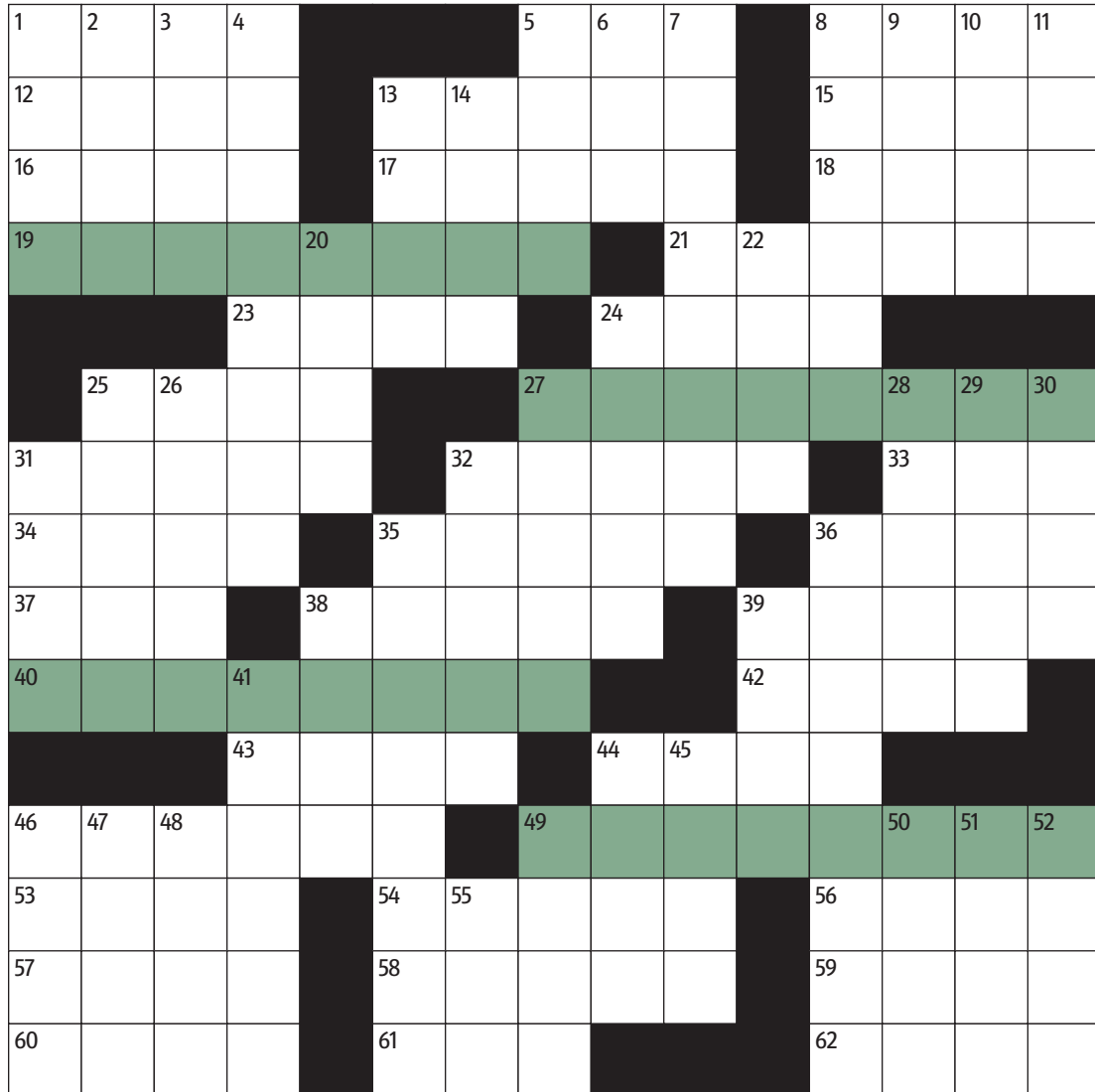
**"We all kind of knew that there were rapists and people committing violence [who] were just on campus, going unchecked, especially graduating. [But we] didn't know the extent to which that was enabled or facilitated by existing Rice policy."**

**Maddy Scannell**  
RICE UNIVERSITY '21



COURTESY THRESHER ARCHIVES

# Winter Wonderland BY JAYAKER KOLLI CROSSWORD EDITOR



- ACROSS**
- 1 Oodles
  - 5 Dude
  - 8 Titular TV virgin played by Gina Rodriguez
  - 12 Swear
  - 13 Suggest
  - 15 Beasts of burden
  - 16 Pedi counterpart
  - 17 Danger
  - 18 Nice
  - 19 Severe snowstorm
  - 21 Egyptian birds
  - 23 South African tribe once led by Shaka
  - 24 No, in Nuremberg
  - 25 Comes in oat and almond varieties
  - 27 Sled type
  - 31 YouTube or TikTok offering
  - 32 Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, by another name
  - 33 Actress de Armas
  - 34 Like many drinks at Chaus
  - 35 Electric weapon
  - 36 Give up
  - 37 Epoch
  - 38 Organizes
  - 39 Zeal
  - 40 Event that marks start of winter
  - 42 Da Vinci's "Mona \_\_\_\_"
  - 43 Sterile crossbreed
  - 44 Messy eater
  - 46 Esoteric, or League of Legends Netflix series
  - 49 Common playground object after 19-across
  - 53 Passage between rooms
  - 54 Tire or shoe pattern
  - 56 Falsehoods
  - 57 Like some vaccines
  - 58 Domain counterpart, on a graph
  - 59 Designer Mode of "The Incredibles"
  - 60 Informal affirmations
  - 61 "Are we there \_\_\_?"
  - 62 Chair

- DOWN**
- 1 Ewe offspring
  - 2 Notable office shape
  - 3 Author Morrison of "Beloved" and "The Bluest Eye"
  - 4 Stirred a martini
  - 5 Blue jay, 10-down, or 21-across
  - 6 College, in the UK
  - 7 Pop superfan who knows all the words to "Beauty and A Beat"?
  - 8 "Chill, I'm only \_\_\_\_"
  - 9 Line on which the Earth rotates
  - 10 Hawaiian state bird
  - 11 Ceases
  - 13 Iridescent gemstone
  - 14 Country of llamas and Lima
  - 20 Fire Lord after Ozai, and brother of Azula
  - 22 Pre-med course code
  - 24 Result of jotting things down during class
  - 25 Prefix before phone or scope
  - 26 Pinnacle
  - 27 Fashion sense
  - 28 Measure of magnetism named for a German physicist
  - 29 Friend of Maria in "West Side Story"
  - 30 Brussels-based defense org.
  - 31 Competes (for)
  - 32 Ludicrous situation
  - 35 Toothbrush, hair gel, etc.
  - 36 Small disagreements
  - 38 Astound
  - 39 Netflix series starring Alison Brie
  - 41 "You're killing me, \_\_\_\_!"
  - 44 A plan may hit one
  - 45 Large mineral deposit
  - 46 Pirate greeting
  - 47 Uncommon
  - 48 Applaud
  - 49 Mailed
  - 50 Assistant, in Congress
  - 51 Actress Headey of "Game of Thrones"
  - 52 Test for aspiring lawyers, for short
  - 55 "Call Me Maybe" singer Carly \_\_\_ Jepsen

## World Cup fever infects campus

**BY DIEGO PALOS RODRIGUEZ  
THRESHER STAFF**

The FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 began Nov. 20 and has brought much of the world to a halt with each game. From last-second winners to amazing goals and seat-clenching upsets, the drama has been high and the world has been captivated by it. Students at Rice are no exception, with a number of watch parties taking place everyday to celebrate and give students a place to cheer on their favorite countries and players. The Pub at Rice has streamed many of the games and has been a hub for many soccer fans in the past week, according to Will Rice College senior and head bartender Jonathan Lloyd.



BEN-BAKER KATZ / THRESHER

"I like hanging out at Pub in general during the daytime, so finally getting to take advantage of Pub's drink variety while watching soccer is almost a dream come true," Lloyd said. "I am pleased to say that the 1 p.m. watch parties so far have been well attended."

Baker College senior David Pichardo said that even as a newcomer to the sport, watching the games at Pub has been a great experience.

"The atmosphere at Pub has been friendly, inviting and cordial," Pichardo said. "Despite my minimal knowledge of the sport, I find I am able to connect with strangers as well as connect more deeply with my friends who have a more vested interest in the game."

On the south side of campus, Sid Richardson College senior Son Nguyen said he began streaming games in the Sid Richardson commons for himself and his friends to watch, but the games started attracting large crowds.

"I wanted to watch the games and suggested it in the [intramural soccer Sid Richardson] GroupMe, and we just started streaming it in Sid commons," Nguyen said. "We didn't expect a lot of people to watch the games, since Rice students are pretty busy most of the time, but we were surprised that there are always [a lot of people] watching them, so we kept going."

According to Baker College junior Ramiro Cantu, who has streamed games at the MultiCultural Center and in Lovett College commons, watching the World Cup with friends has made him more invested in the games.

"I really never kept up too much with soccer in the past," Cantu said. "But now that we're

in college and with friends, it's been a lot more fun to keep up."

Connecting and enjoying the game with other fans has been a key aspect of the World Cup throughout the years, and many watch parties around Rice have been a catalyst in doing so. The scheduling for this World Cup has allowed games to be streamed during the school year, as opposed to the summer. Pichardo said this change has allowed him to interact with various cultures and soccer fans in a way he was previously unable to do.

Will Rice senior and Pub bartender Hannah Usadi said that the tournament's timing has led to more discussion about it around Rice.

"I have not consistently kept up with it, but it's super fun getting into it this year since it's during the school year when everyone can watch and talk about it in person," Usadi said.

The World Cup has already been filled with exciting wins and heartbreaking losses, but the trophy is still up for grabs. We asked students which country they wanted to see lift the trophy in the final match:

**Jonathan Lloyd:** "I am supporting teams from both sides of my family — England and South Korea."

**David Pichardo:** "I am half-Jamaican, and I know quite a few Jamaicans are huge Brazil fans, so I suppose I have a slight bias toward them."

**Son Nguyen:** "I am rooting for Argentina [and Lionel Messi] to win it all this year."

**Ramiro Cantu:** "I'm rooting for Mexico and the US because those are my countries, but I'm also rooting for all the green teams, in case Mexico and the US get eliminated."

**Hannah Usadi:** "I am rooting for Japan, but I think Brazil might win."



## Deck the halls with these holiday activities

GUILLIAN PAGUILA / THRESHER

**BY DISHA BALDAWA  
THRESHER STAFF**

and Del Monte streets are particularly renowned for their lighting designs.

If you are looking to explore Houston in its peak holiday season, want to escape campus during dead days or would just like to unfreeze your inner Mariah Carey, look no further for a list of holiday attractions around campus this December.

### Holiday Zoo Lights

Visit the Houston Zoo anytime before Jan. 8 between 5:30-10:30 p.m. to relax by the fire and toast marshmallows in front of the 33-foot tall Christmas tree. Take pictures with ski lift chairs in a wintry setting and dance on an interactive, illuminated dance floor. Tickets range from \$21 to \$27. The main zoo entrance is accessible from the Hermann Park/Rice U METRO station, or is alternatively a 20-minute walk from campus.

### River Oak Christmas Lights

Drive (or walk) through the River Oaks neighborhood to see mansions, shops, restaurants and huge oak trees wrapped in lights. River Oaks Country Club, Highland Village, Inwood Drive

### Discovery Green Ice Rink

If you missed the Holiday Skate by R-ICE but still want to ice skate, you are in luck. Discovery Green Garden has an open outdoor ice rink you can visit with your friends and family. They are open throughout the week at various times. Tickets cost \$17 (including skate rentals) and must be booked in advance. You can reach Discovery Green Garden by taking the Northline TC METRO to Main Street Square NB, followed by a seven minute walk.

### Christmas Village at Bayou Bend

Go sledding down a faux-snow slide, take photos with Santa and bring out your competitive side with scavenger hunts at the Bayou Bend Dec. 9 to 30. Open Sunday through Thursday from 5:30-9 p.m. and Friday and Saturday till 10 p.m., this Christmas Village is at the Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. A quick three minute ride from the Hermann Park/Rice U METRO Station, tickets cost \$15 for general admission and \$13 for MFAH members.

# ABORTION through the ages

1850

1854 Texas' first penal codes outlaws almost all abortions

1860

1870

1880

1890

1900

1910

1920

1925 Texas re-codifies their abortion bans

1930

1940

1950

1960

1967 Some states start to loosen their abortion restrictions

1970

1970 National Organization to Legalize Abortion's referral service began its advertising campaign in the Thresher

## Abortion before Roe

BY PRAYAG GORDY  
SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR

When Rice's inaugural class of 48 men and 29 women arrived in 1912, abortion was strictly illegal in Texas. Texas' first penal codes outlawed almost all abortions as far back as the 1850s. Originally criminalizing "[procuring] the miscarriage of any woman being with child," the laws were seldom updated over the following decades.

For much of the 20th century, abortion was not a hot topic on the pages of the Thresher. The first relevant mention of abortion came in the Feb. 15, 1952 issue in a story discussing the high death rates before 1650.

James Greenwood ('58) said he was not aware of pre-marital sex among his classmates. Cody Greenwood, who also graduated in 1958 before marrying James two days later, said she could not remember any discussion of abortion.

"To my knowledge in our class of 1958 there were no out of marriage pregnancies and no discussion or consideration of getting an abortion," Cody Greenwood wrote in an email to the Thresher.

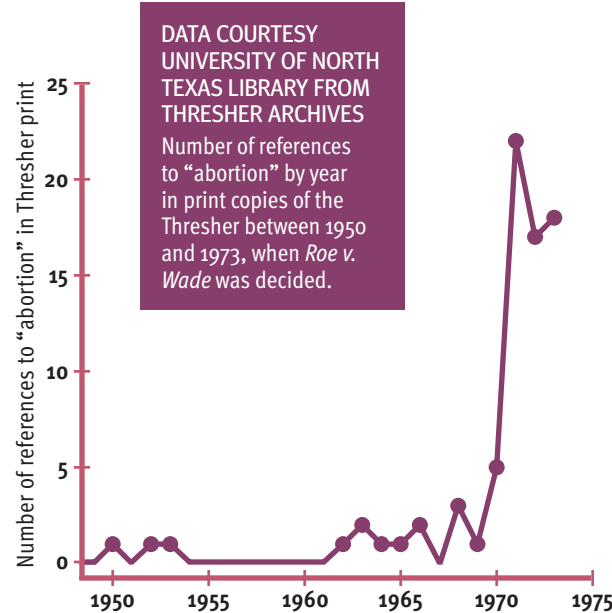
Abortion made it onto the pages of the Thresher more frequently starting in the 1960s. In 1963, the Thresher advertised a lecture on "Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion." In 1966, the paper printed a letter from a social critic about recognizing the "existence" of sex.

Later that same year, the Thresher wrote a front-page story titled, "Abortionist To Perform At Brown; Forum Sponsors Speaker At Rice." This "abortionist," as medical professionals who provided abortions were called at the time, claimed to have performed thousands of abortions where few were legal.

Also in 1966, nine doctors were brought into court in California, alleged to have provided abortions. Hundreds of doctors wrote in their defense, prompting California to slightly relax its restrictions on abortion. Within a few years, Alaska, Hawaii, New York and Washington state completely repealed their bans on abortion, and others loosened their restrictions.

The National Organization to Legalize Abortion's referral service began its advertising campaign in the Thresher in the Nov. 19, 1970 issue.

"PREGNANT? NEED HELP?" the advertisement asked. "The Abortion Referral Service will provide a quick and inexpensive end to your pregnancy."



## 'How could we go this far backward?' Anonymous, 1970

BY PRAYAG GORDY & CAROLINE MASCARDO  
SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR & FOR THE THRESHER

*This story contains explicit descriptions of abortion. An alumna interviewed was given the option of remaining anonymous in the interest of keeping their experiences private. The anonymous alumna was given a false name, which has been marked with an asterisk on first mention.*

Mary\* landed in Mexico and took a taxi to the hotel, where she saw many other young women.

"You would see people and go, 'I wonder if they're here for the same reason,'" she said.

A few weeks earlier, Mary's doctor told her she was 14 weeks pregnant. In 1970, abortion was illegal in Texas, where Mary, then an underclassman at Rice, lived.

Mary was the first person in her family to go to college, typical of many of her classmates at the time. Having a child, she feared, could send her home without a diploma.

"I [asked], 'What can you do for me?' and [my doctor answered], 'Nothing,'" Mary said. "But he said, 'I swear there was an article in the newspaper recently about an organization who helps young women who are pregnant find access to abortion.'"

In the years before the 1973 landmark case *Roe v. Wade*, which established constitutional protections for abortion, networks of volunteers connected women with doctors who performed abortions. Referral agencies pointed women to clinics in a handful of U.S. states where abortion was legal, as well as in Mexico, where on that fateful summer morning, Mary walked out of her hotel and into a car.

"There were probably four to six of us in [the taxi]," Mary said. "Nobody said a word to each other, and they took us to the clinic."

The drive continued in silence.

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PREGNANT? NEED HELP? Abortions are now legal in New York City up to 24 weeks. The Abortion Referral Service will provide a quick and inexpensive end to your pregnancy. We are a member of the National Organization to Legalize Abortion. CALL 1-215-878-5800 for totally confidential information. There are no shots or pills to terminate a pregnancy. These medications are intended to induce a late period only. A good medical test is your best 1st action to insure your chance for choice. Get a test immediately. Our pregnancy counseling service will provide totally confidential alternatives to your pregnancy. We have a should you wish to FOR FUTURE RE

the rice thresher, november 19, 1970—page 4

COURTESY THRESHER ARCHIVES

An abortion referral agency printed multiple advertisements in the Thresher, including in the Nov. 19, 1970 issue.

### 'I literally was escaping'

Mary was born into instability. Her parents had each married a handful of times, and she did not meet her father until her teenage years. Mary's sister mothered a child with a man who physically abused her for decades, and Mary herself was a survivor of sexual abuse.

"I literally was escaping a very different life, and that's what Rice represented to me," she said.

At home, Mary had received some reproductive health education, she said. But the pervasive culture deemed premarital sex as bad. "Good girls didn't," Mary used to say, "and good boys didn't pressure them to."

Rice was different.

"It was very much of a free-love universe world," Mary said. "Rice was way behind the East Coast, but it was still [that] everybody has the right to be a sexual being, and that this whole idea of monogamy is outdated."

“All of us '70s people look at the world today and go, 'This has to be a nightmare. How could we go this far backward?'”

Mary\*  
ANONYMOUS ALUMNA

There was so much opportunity and so little stigma on campus, according to Mary, that she and her boyfriend started having sex.

"But this ethos is still in your head, which is, 'I shouldn't be doing this, I shouldn't be doing this, I shouldn't be doing this,'" Mary said.

### 'We thought we'd moved the needle'

A few hours after arriving at the clinic, Mary came out of anesthesia safe and physically healthy. In the immediate

aftermath of her abortion, however, Mary said she entered a year-long period of turmoil — not because she believed abortion was immoral, but because she had been raised in an environment so vehemently opposed to pre-marital sex.

"I couldn't yet come to grips with the guilt of what I had done," Mary said. "I had done something that I had always believed was wrong ... It was just a tremendous amount of self-criticism about being sexually active and not availing myself of protection."

Mary went on birth control a year later, which she said helped her begin to repair her relationship with sex.

It wasn't until Mary had children that she was able to fully see sex as a shameless act, she explained. Now, she believes it is important that young people have access to reproductive health information if they want to have sex.

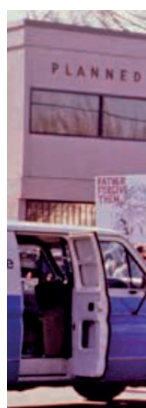
"Would [I] judge a young person for being sexually active?" Mary asked. "No. In fact, I very much want to say, 'Choose to do that under the right circumstances [and] be careful.'"

The years following *Roe* saw increases in women seeking legal abortions and a decline in its morbidity. Women also entered college and the workforce at record rates, in part attributable to the availability of birth control.

"All of us '70s people look at the world today and go, 'This has to be a nightmare. How could we go this far backward?'" Mary said. "There's so many arenas of life right now that I just cannot even imagine we're here. We thought we'd done a lot of good things. We thought we'd moved the needle."

Nevertheless, Mary remains committed to advocating for the right to abortion.

"I am one avid supporter of every agency having to do with reproduction ... because I believe it's so essential for women's futures to be able to make a conscious choice about this," Mary said. "That's what [*Roe* has] meant to me for the last 50 years, and I'm going to be committed to keeping this alive."



## The C Age. Wilde 1987

BY PRAYAG ANDRE SPECIAL & FOR T

COURTESY WILDENTH Wildentha student at



Timeline continued on the opposite page.





# ABORTION

Design by Robert Heeter

The Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June, ending 50 years of constitutional protections for abortion in the United States. Abortion in Texas is now illegal in almost all cases.

Students at Rice sought abortions before *Roe*, during its reign and will continue in the wake of *Roe*'s fall. The Thresher talked to alumni from the 1950s through the 2010s to build a timeline of relationships, sex and abortion at Rice. On the next page, we share our reporting on Rice's Reproductive Health Working Group. Coming soon, we look at pro-choice groups at Rice and anti-abortion organizations in Houston.

We will continue to cover abortion and reproductive health at Rice. If you have a story to share, reach out to [thresher@rice.edu](mailto:thresher@rice.edu).

To fully experience the project, visit [projects.ricethresher.org](http://projects.ricethresher.org).

COURTESY OF PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF HOUSTON & SOUTHEAST TEXAS RECORDS, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LIBRARIES

Anti-abortion protestors demonstrate outside of a Planned Parenthood clinic in Houston. Wildenthal obtained her birth control bills from this Planned Parenthood.



## Golden Lora Wildenthal,

BY PRAYAG GORDY & LEA PLASCENCIA  
SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR  
THE THRESHER

BY LORA WILDENTHAL  
L, far left, as a student at Rice in 1983.



Lora Wildenthal found herself in a sterile German hospital.

One woman in the ward, Wildenthal remembers, was a Turkish immigrant who had already birthed several children. She told the other women the doctors had sterilized her. It was unclear, Wildenthal said, whether she had a choice.

Another woman, possibly in her late 30s, lay in the bed next to Wildenthal's. She had spent weeks unable to decide the fate of her pregnancy. Finally, the doctors told her she was approaching the gestational limit for an abortion.

"Don't you think these doctors and nurses are creepy?" the woman asked Wildenthal. "I mean, how can we come in here and kill these babies?"

Wildenthal was furious. Wildenthal was there for her own abortion, in a German system that required a multiple-day hospital stay, with the procedure itself under general anesthetic — to scare women off, Wildenthal alleges.

Just a few months before, in 1987, Wildenthal graduated from Rice. Now, a few decades later, she is a professor in Rice's history department and a faculty associate in the Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality.

As a student at Rice, Wildenthal said she was thriving. She was happily sexually active, easily obtained her birth control from Planned Parenthood and even spent time living with her boyfriend.

"This was Golden Age stuff," she said. "I had access to whatever I needed access to, [and] I certainly would have had support systems for whatever had come up."

But in Germany, Wildenthal was afraid she would be stuck.

"I thought my life would be over if I had to have that baby," Wildenthal said. "I was all ready to go to graduate school, I knew that I didn't want a longer-term relationship with that very nice young man, it really felt like the end of life. One can say, 'Let's not be too dramatic. Is it

## The decades after Roe

BY PRAYAG GORDY  
SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR

The 1980s and 1990s saw record numbers of women seeking legal abortions. There were as many as 1.5 million legal abortions per year, according to the Guttmacher Institute, equivalent to 29.3 abortions per 1,000 women aged 15-44 at its peak.

The years following *Roe* were not without restrictions on abortion rights. In 1976, Henry J. Hyde, an anti-abortion congressman from the Chicago suburbs, introduced the Hyde Amendment, which prohibited federal Medicaid funds from being used for most abortions.

The Hyde Amendment particularly affected poor women and women of color, who are more likely to be on Medicaid — even though a disproportionate number of women who get abortions are low-income, young and women of color, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

"The feminist concessions around this kind of thing led to the Hyde Amendment and poor women, women on welfare, being cut off from medical care," Helena Michie, the director of the Center for Women, Gender and Sexuality at Rice, said.

At the same time, Rice was transitioning away from women's residential colleges. In 1981, Jones College became co-ed, and Brown College followed in 1987. Rice men then moved into the previously all-women colleges.

Kathy Behrens, a 1980 graduate who had moved from Jones College to the co-ed Will Rice College, said dating and sex were common in her time at Rice. She remembers the incoming class of freshmen women when she was an upperclassman at Will Rice.

really the end of my life?" But it was not what I wanted to do."

Though she said she felt her boyfriend may have stayed, it was not a guarantee. As both the daughter and sister of single mothers, she was certain that life as a single mother did not fit into her future plans.

**“The last thing I wanted to do was be a single mother, not because I think there's anything immoral or wrong about it if that's what people want, but it didn't look like very much fun.”**

**Lora Wildenthal**  
RICE UNIVERSITY '87

"The last thing I wanted to do was be a single mother, not because I think there's anything immoral or wrong about it if that's what people want, but it didn't look like very much fun," Wildenthal said. "From what I observe, it's a lot of poverty and a lot of struggle and a lot of hard work."

Forever the scholar, Wildenthal also worried she would have to end her education.

"I saw how when my sister had her children so early, she was never really able to get away from home, and I was very fixated on just declaring my independence," Wildenthal said.

When Wildenthal managed to push through German bureaucracy and end up in that hospital ward — and receive the abortion she unquestionably wanted — she was relieved.

"I was always relieved when I would realize [it's] been 10 years, it's been 20

"They were cute. They were accomplished. They were sassy," Behrens said. "They came in with strong personalities and ideas, and the guys just ate them up. I mean, it was like, 'oh my god.'"

Throughout the remainder of the '80s and '90s, anti-abortion activists continued to lobby against abortion access.

Internationally, President Ronald Reagan introduced the 1984 Mexico City policy, later known as a global gag rule. Under the global gag rule, any foreign organization that receives U.S. funding cannot provide any information about abortion, even with its own money.

Domestically, scores of legal cases reached the Supreme Court. Some, like *Thornburgh v. American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists*, invalidated abortion restrictions; others, like *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, upheld bans on federal funds paying for abortions.

In Texas in 1985, the legislature required licensed physicians to perform abortions instead of nurse practitioners.

Anti-abortion activists continued to organize, marching on Washington, D.C., launching student groups and demonstrating outside of abortion clinics.

Anti-abortion extremists committed some 110 acts of arsons and bombings against abortion providers from 1977 to 1988. In 1993, an anti-abortion protestor shot and killed a doctor who provided abortions.

In 1992, the Supreme Court heard *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*, a case which considered requirements such as a 24-hour waiting period before an abortion. The Court upheld *Roe* while allowing restrictions on abortion that did not pose an "undue burden."

Anti-abortion state legislatures used the *Casey* decision to pass restrictions that Students for Life, an anti-abortion group, says "make up the incremental approach to reducing abortions."

years [since my abortion]," Wildenthal said. "It wasn't a frequent reflection, it was more like thank goodness that was available."

In fact, Wildenthal said she never intended on having children. That changed when she and her husband, also a professor, finally found jobs in the same city. The news shocked her family, she said.

"If I were doing this against my will, this would be the worst thing in the world," Wildenthal added.

Among her areas of research, Wildenthal now studies gender and human rights. After Wildenthal finished her year in Germany and enrolled in graduate school, the study of women's and gender history was "exploding," she said.

The literature she studied changed her perceptions of history — and of herself.

"It's also fascinating to start reinterpreting your life, in terms of some of the analytical categories and problems that are set up in this literature," Wildenthal said.

Wildenthal said this motivated her to explore women's studies in her own teaching, and she has felt rewarded. Students, Wildenthal says, do not take women's studies courses "absent-mindedly." Many, like Wildenthal, see reflections of their own lives.

The last few years have seen a shift from Wildenthal's "Golden Age." In 2021, Texas passed a law, Senate Bill 8, banning most abortions after six weeks. After the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* earlier this year, almost all abortions are prohibited in Texas.

As her daughter graduated high school last year, Wildenthal said she wondered if those teenagers would have the same resources she did.

"[I was] just looking at that commencement and thinking how many people standing up on stage right now are going to be caught up in this," Wildenthal said.

Timeline continued from the opposite page.



**1973**  
*Roe v. Wade* is decided, offering constitutional protections for abortion

**1974**  
The first annual March for Life takes place in Washington, D.C.

**1976**  
The Hyde Amendment prohibits federal Medicaid funding being used for most abortions

**1980**

**1981**  
Legal abortions peak at 29.3 abortions per 1,000 women aged 15-44

**1984**  
Ronald Reagan introduces the Mexico City policy, prohibiting foreign organizations that receive American funding from offering information about abortion

**1985**  
Texas requires licensed physicians to provide all abortions

**1987**  
Brown College is the last Rice residential college to become co-ed

**1988**  
American Collegians for Life, later renamed Students for Life of America, is founded

**1990**

**1991**  
Clarence Thomas is confirmed as a Supreme Court justice

**1992**  
*Planned Parenthood v. Casey* is decided, upholding *Roe* while allowing restrictions on abortion that do not pose an "undue burden"

**1993**  
An anti-abortion protestor shoots and kills a doctor in Florida who provided abortions

**1994**  
Stephen Breyer is confirmed as a Supreme Court justice

Timeline continued on the next page.



Timeline continued from the previous page.



- 2000**
- 2003** Texas legislature passes the Woman's Right to Know Act, which required doctors to read "misleading" information about abortion to patients, according to the ACLU
- 2005** Texas bans abortion after 24 weeks  
John Roberts is confirmed as the Supreme Court's chief justice
- 2006** Samuel Alito is confirmed as a Supreme Court justice
- 2009** Sonia Sotomayor is confirmed as a Supreme Court justice
- 2010**
- 2010** Elena Kagan is confirmed as a Supreme Court justice
- 2011** Texas requires doctors to show patients a sonogram with an audible fetal heartbeat
- 2013** Texas requires facilities to meet the standards of ambulatory surgical centers and requires doctors to have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital
- 2016** Though the Supreme Court overturns the 2013 provisions in *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*, almost half of Texas abortion clinics had already closed  
Texas requires clinics to pay a heightened fee to bury or cremate fetal tissue; a court issues an injunction
- 2017** Texas tries to ban dilation and evacuation abortions, the most common second-trimester abortion method; a court issues an injunction  
Neil Gorsuch is confirmed as a Supreme Court justice
- 2018** Brett Kavanaugh is confirmed as a Supreme Court justice
- 2020**
- 2020** Amy Coney Barrett is confirmed as a Supreme Court justice
- 2021** Texas passes S.B. 8, banning most abortions after six weeks and allowing citizens to sue anyone who "aids and abets" a patient in seeking an abortion  
Texas passes a "trigger law" that would ban abortion 30 days after the Supreme Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*
- 2022** The Supreme Court overturns *Roe v. Wade* in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* on June 24  
Texas' trigger law goes into effect, banning almost all abortions in the state on Aug. 25

# The turn of the century

BY PRAYAG GORDY  
SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR

The turn of the century saw a ream of abortion restrictions passed in Texas and other states.

In 2003, the Texas legislature passed the Woman's Right to Know Act. According to the American Civil Liberties Union, the law required doctors to read "misleading" information about abortion to patients 24 hours before the procedure. Two years later, Texas banned abortions after 24 weeks.

In 2011, Texas started to require doctors to show patients a sonogram with an audible fetal heartbeat. House Bill 2, passed in 2013, further restricted abortion providers, requiring facilities to meet the standards of ambulatory surgical

centers and requiring doctors to have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital. Though the U.S. Supreme Court removed these provisions in 2016, almost half of Texas' abortion clinics had already been forced to close, according to the Texas Tribune.

"We're used to thinking of that sequence as incremental chipping away and incremental invention of new forms of intervention on the part of the opposition, to use the ideologies and language of protecting women in order to create functional barriers to care," Brian Riedel, the associate director of Rice's Center for Women, Gender and Sexuality, said.

As Texas continued to pass new restrictions, the courts continued to overturn them. In 2016, Texas tried to require clinics to pay a heightened fee to bury or cremate fetal tissue. In 2017, Texas tried to ban dilation and evacuation abortions, the most common second-trimester abortion method. Both bans created an "undue burden" on patients seeking abortions, the courts said.

At the same time, then-president Donald

Trump was fulfilling his campaign promise to nominate anti-abortion justices to the Supreme Court. Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett joined in 2017, 2018 and 2020, respectively, creating an anti-abortion majority.

In 2021, Texas passed the Senate Bill 8, banning abortion after the detection of a fetal heartbeat, which usually occurs around six weeks — before many people know they are pregnant. Other states had tried to impose "heartbeat bills," all of which the Supreme Court found in violation of *Roe v. Wade*. However, the Court declined to hear the case due to its unique enforcement mechanism, allowing S.B. 8 to take effect.

S.B. 8 created and relied on a system of private enforcement. Citizens could sue to block abortions and to penalize anyone who "aids and abets" a patient in seeking one, according to the ACLU.

Texas also passed a "trigger law" in 2021 that would almost completely ban abortion 30 days after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

## 'Why aren't we talking about this?' Radhika Sharma, 2018

BY DANIKA LI & ANDREA PLASCENCIA  
FOR THE THRESHER & FOR THE THRESHER

No two abortion stories are alike, but more importantly, no two abortion stories are spoken aloud on Rice campus.

During her four years at Rice, Radhika Sharma was a proud Brown College resident and a Rice Coffeehouse barista. She studied economics for job security and Asian studies for enjoyment, graduating in 2018. And during the spring of her sophomore year, she was faced with an unwelcome surprise: She was 10 weeks pregnant.

The second Sharma found out she was pregnant, she said she wanted to get an abortion.

Sharma did not face a moral dilemma, but she said she faced dilemmas in almost every other arena. She could not talk to her parents and did not feel comfortable approaching her magisters. She did not know how to explain to her male economics professor that she needed an extension. She felt no grief but did not understand why she could not stop crying. She did not know how to deal with an experience that no one wanted to talk about.

"Nowhere did I see any literature, [any] resources, saying, 'Our students who want abortions or students who are having abortions, we have resources for you, we are here to support you,'" Sharma said. "In fact, I felt completely the opposite."

In the weeks following her abortion, Sharma found herself stuck between feelings of shame, detachment and alienation, with no one to turn to outside of her close friends. Campus was both silent and silencing, she said, when it came to abortion.

"I have never heard of a student having an abortion on campus, there's never a conversation I've had that involves that," Sharma said. "I



COURTESY RADHIKA SHARMA  
Radhika Sharma pictured at Rice, where she graduated in 2018.

found out almost at the end of my senior year about one other person who had one."

"There are things we talk about all the fucking time," Sharma added. "We talk about Beer Bike every other second, we talk about Baker 13 every other second, we talk about our tests, we talk about what's going on with administration, we talk about anything, we gossip all the time. Why aren't we talking about this thing that does affect so many students? This actual reproductive rights issue? What is it, what is it, what is it?"

**I really want to be clear about how poorly resourced I felt by Rice. That has to be addressed.**

Radhika Sharma  
RICE UNIVERSITY '18

Unwanted or unviable pregnancy affects thousands across Texas. Around 50,000 to 55,000 Texans obtained legal abortions each year from 2014 to 2021, with the majority being patients aged 20-29. In 2018, there were only 12 licensed abortion clinics in the entire state, down from 44 in 2014 and 62 in 2011.

Sharma acknowledged her privilege in her ability to make an appointment at the Houston Women's Clinic and afford the \$600 cost. However, she said that nothing about the process of having an abortion was a privilege, referring to the experience as "dehumanizing."

24 hours before the procedure, Sharma said she had to attend an appointment where clinicians showed her an ultrasound and questioned her repeatedly about her motivations.

"The fact that by law, you're required to be guilted into having these emotions and into

feeling shame and then have to wait 24 hours to have the procedure done is so extremely fucked up," she said.

Due to both trauma and strong drugs taken orally and vaginally, Sharma said she doesn't remember much of the procedure itself. However, she said she felt very alone during the appointment, despite the crowdedness of the clinic.

During the remainder of the spring semester, Sharma struggled deeply to process her experience, and reconcile the theoretical gestures and the silent realities of support she received from administration, structures and institutions at Rice.

"I really want to be clear about how poorly resourced I felt by Rice," Sharma said. "That has to be addressed."

A few weeks after the procedure, Sharma scheduled an appointment with the counseling center, not out of a sense of grief but because she felt like she ought to. She still hadn't processed the event and didn't understand how to begin.

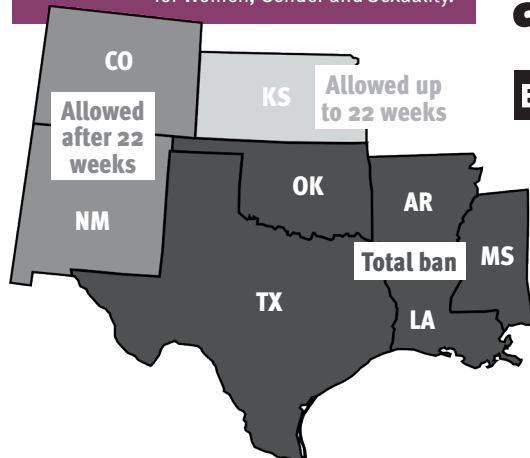
When the day arrived, Sharma said she left her counseling appointment feeling awful. She did not discuss the abortion process itself with her counselor, but rather her physical symptoms in the weeks before she found out she was pregnant. The counselor undermined Sharma's symptoms. Sharma shouldn't have felt morning sickness at only 10 weeks — she would know because she'd had two kids, the counselor said. Sharma's immediate reaction: "What the fuck?"

"I was ... met with someone who did not have any clue of how to actually make space for me and validate my experience," Sharma said. "It definitely contributed to my shame, making me feel like it [was] so clear that Rice students don't get abortions and I [was] just alienated in this experience."

Looking back on her experience, Sharma said she is thankful she was able to rely on her partner and close friends to get through the remainder of a difficult semester.

"If Rice knew how to support students when they're going through things like this, they would be able to show clear ways that they can make space for a student to be able to process this," Sharma said. "I had all of my friends that helped me through this. It was not Rice creating a path for me to be able to know that I was cared for and safe."

DATA COURTESY NEW YORK TIMES  
The states surrounding Texas form a "patchwork" of abortion access, according to Brian Riedel, associate director of the Center for Women, Gender and Sexuality.



## Moving forward after Dobbs

BY PRAYAG GORDY  
SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR

When the U.S. Supreme Court issued their ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* on June 24, *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, and constitutional protections of abortion rights died in the United States, one year shy of the landmark case's 50th anniversary. Two months later, all abortions in Texas are now illegal, except to save the life of the mother. Abortion providers can receive life in

prison for performing an illegal abortion. The neighboring states of Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma have similar bans, though abortion remains legal in New Mexico.

"There's going to be a patchwork connection," Brian Riedel, the associate director of the Center for Women, Gender and Sexuality at Rice, said. "In Texas, with problems to the east [and north], the push is to go west, which for people in the west half of Texas is more achievable than for people in the east half of Texas."

Helena Michie, the director of the Center for Women, Gender and Sexuality, said it is not surprising that *Roe* was overturned.

"It would be really easy to construct a kind of progressivist timeline where everything was getting better and better until ... it all went away," Michie said. "Well, abortion rights have been under assault since *Roe* was passed."

# Rice addresses sexual health accessibility and campus recruitment after Dobbs

BY PRAYAG GORDY  
SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR

Rice has purchased a vending machine to sell discounted contraceptives and has formed a task force for its launch, according to Dean of Undergraduates Bridget Gorman.

Gorman, the co-chair of Rice's Reproductive Health Working Group, said the task force consists of six undergraduate students, two graduate students, two staff members and two faculty members.

The first vending machine, which has not yet arrived, will be located in Student Health Services, which is accessible at any time with a Rice ID, Gorman said. The task force will look at usage of the first machine and decide if and where to add additional machines, she added.

The machines may store a combination of contraceptives and traditional vending

machine merchandise in an attempt to decrease potential stigma of using the machine, Gorman said.

The RHWG has also created an FAQ to answer questions they received through a form on their website. As of publication, the RHWG has received 132 form submissions, Gorman said.

"It was not as much as I thought we would get," Gorman said. "I was like, 'Are we going to get 1,000?' But we didn't."

Rice administrators are also worried about recruitment now that abortion is illegal in Texas. Attracting faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students may become more difficult.

"We're hearing examples of faculty that are pausing to rethink or faculty that might rethink coming here," Amy Dittmar, the provost and the other co-chair of the working group, said. "It just means that we need to be even stronger in other ways so that we can hopefully negate some of the effects, but I'm sure there's some people that are going to choose to not come."

Gorman said the impacts on faculty recruitment and retention will be more clear after the end of the yearly hiring cycle.

Some faculty, including Helena Michie, the director of the Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality, have chosen to not participate in recruitment. When prospective undergraduate students and their parents would tell Michie that they changed their mind about applying to Rice, Michie said she realized she had no rebuttal.

"I want to say 'yes, but Rice is great' or 'yes, but Rice is very supportive of reproductive freedom,' 'yes, but Houston is a blue city ... and Rice is committed to the wellbeing of their students,'" Michie said. "All of that is true, but I couldn't marshal it as an objection."

Brian Riedel, the associate director of the CSWGS, said that Rice should also focus on domestic violence prevention, increasing access to contraceptives and expanding sex education.

"The concern for me is also to make sure that the Critical Thinking in Sexuality class does not become the only place that bears the burden of educating students about

what's real, because that's a disservice to that class," Riedel said.

Gorman noted that in addition to an optional sex education session to CTIS, Rice is partnering with the Baylor Teen Clinic to offer additional sex education classes.

Michie said she hoped Rice would have made a stronger statement of support for abortion rights.

**“**  
**We're hearing examples of faculty that are pausing to rethink or faculty that might rethink coming here. It just means that we need to be even stronger in other ways so that we can hopefully negate some of the effects.**

**Amy Dittmar**  
RICE UNIVERSITY PROVOST

"I think that the Reproductive Health Working Group is very devoted to the health of particularly students, and also staff and faculty and supporting their health," Michie said. "That is very admirable, and it is the most immediate job of a university. I think the more important job as a university is to articulate values and to be independent of constraints opposed in a really violent and cruel way."

Michie, who said she has been an administrator and understands the pressures of reporting to multiple stakeholders, added that Rice has been "brave" in opposing other Texas laws, such as COVID-19 policies and DACA restrictions, but not here.

"We are less constrained than [the University of Texas], we are less constrained than small private universities with a smaller endowment, we are less constrained than universities that are [more] dependent for research funds on the state legislature or state grants," Michie said. "If we can't do it, what university can?"



ARTS MOODY CENTER FOR THE ARTS 5

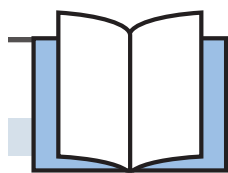
MOVIE NIGHT AT THE MOODY DEC. 2, 6-8 PM OUTDOOR MOVIE

FREE WEST SERVERY CINNAMON ROLLS

FREE STUDY BREAK

RICE

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



## Writer Anna Meriano talks youth literature, community



COURTESY ANNA MERIANO

Writer and Martel College ('13) alumna Anna Meriano spoke with the Thresher about writing children's books and finding community.

BY HADLEY MEDLOCK  
ASST. A&E EDITOR

Since facing her first bout of writer's block when scribbling down a story in kindergarten, Anna Meriano said she knew she wanted to be a writer. A Martel College ('13) alumna, Meriano has watched those childhood dreams come to life as a middle-grade and young adult author published by HarperCollins and Penguin Random House. After writing fantasy stories about a family of brujas running a fictional Texas bakery and tales of girls finding belonging on their local quadball team, Meriano understands the power of children's literature in shaping youth perspectives and works to share diverse stories of family, adolescence and friendship.

Meriano did not always think being an English major and having author aspirations was a practical choice, though. While at Rice, she decided to pursue a certificate in teaching as a backup plan but soon found she was just as passionate about that as she was writing. This led to her working as a tutor for Houston-area students.

"I think I kind of always knew I wanted to be a writer, [but] I think there were definitely times throughout high school and college where I thought, 'Oh it's not practical, I'm going to make sure I have a practical backup plan.' That's why I went for my teacher certification," Meriano said. "But I'm glad I did it, because I found out that teaching is also a passion."

For Meriano, Rice was a vital time to hone her writing skills and make valuable connections. She said she deeply appreciated the community Rice was able to provide her with and took part in activities like Rice Players, the Marching Owl Band and the (now nonexistent) Rice quadball team. She even went on to find a quadball community during her time in an MFA Creative Writing program at The New School in New York and has used the sport for inspiration in some of her stories.

"I actually met a team in New York City [during undergrad] and was able to talk to them in advance and have some people that I knew and somewhere to go that wasn't just my 12-person [creative writing] program," Meriano said.

One of her most formative experiences at Rice, though, was a public speaking class with English professor Dennis Huston, now retired. Meriano said she was able to learn skills that prepared her for her job as a tutor, as well as speaking at author events and panels.

"It was the whole semester of just everyone giving speeches, so it was very good practice. Uncomfortable practice but good practice," Meriano said. "Speaking events for a writer, as a kid lit writer, especially school visits, are a way that a lot of [writers] supplement their income."

Because of the impact her favorite stories had on her as a child and the comfort they still bring her, Meriano said she had always been interested in middle grade writing despite the lack of children's literature classes at Rice. Recalling childhood stories that lacked adequate female or diverse representation, Meriano said she wanted to be mindful of what younger generations were subconsciously absorbing through her books.

"We want to be extra cautious about what we're putting into books to make sure nothing is slipping in that will build up biases, prejudices or hurt readers, like lower their self esteem without meaning to," Meriano said. "[For] kid lit, I think we're all extra aware of the power that we have to influence people."

Through her stories, Meriano works to be able to celebrate and share her own identities, as well as empowering and highlighting the experiences of others. Her first series, "Love Sugar Magic," is about a young Mexican-

American girl growing up in Rose Hill, Texas who discovers that the women in her family have magical powers.

"It was meant to be a real celebration of the joy of Mexican-American culture, and it was intentionally created for that reason," Meriano said. "[Writing it became] a big 'screw you' to some people and what they were saying about what my culture means or what my life means."

Meriano also hopes to represent her home state of Texas in a way she rarely encounters in literature.

"[In] some ways, I always want my writing to be representing Texas in a way I don't usually see Texas represented," Meriano said. "[I want to make sure] I'm representing the students that I see with their identities, their queer identities, their diverse cultural identities, because that's what I see when I live in Houston. That's what you see when you live in Houston."

Meriano said finding friends to swap stories with and support her passion for writing, quadball and everything in between was vital in getting to where she is today. She encourages current undergraduates, not just other aspiring authors, to find communities at Rice that can help support them.

"Find the community of people that is going to support you. Find the people that you can go to when things aren't going well," Meriano said. "When things are going well, they'll cheer for you. When things aren't going well, they'll be there to support you. Overall, I think Rice is a great place to do that."

“

**It was meant to be a real celebration of the joy of Mexican-American culture ... [Writing it became] a big 'screw you' to some people and what they were saying about what my culture means or what my life means.**

Anna Meriano  
AUTHOR, MARTEL COLLEGE '13

## Rice Riyaz reflects on team bond, prepares for Dhamaka show

BY SHREYA CHALLA  
THRESHER STAFF

Each week, the members of Rice Riyaz spend hours rehearsing and perfecting their every dance move. Riyaz is Rice's premier co-ed Bollywood fusion dance team that competes in national circuits. Their hard work will culminate in their performance at Dhamaka, a showcase organized by the Rice South Asian Society, at the Grand Hall on Dec. 4 from 5 to 8 p.m.

Milan George, Riyaz's logistics captain, joined Riyaz as a freshman.

George said that despite not having much professional dance experience before coming to Rice, performing with Riyaz has been unforgettable.

"One thing that was so appealing for me when I heard about Riyaz was the fact that dancing experience wasn't required ... From traveling

nationally to late night practices, Riyaz helped make some of my most memorable memories my freshman year," George, a Duncan College sophomore, said. "At the end of last year, I decided to join the

executive board to help Riyaz continue being a memorable experience."

Eliza Jasani, one of Riyaz's dance captains, echoed George's sentiments. Jasani has been passionate about dance since she was a child. She said that while Riyaz was an opportunity for her to learn about Bollywood dance, her favorite part about Riyaz is the bond that the team shares.

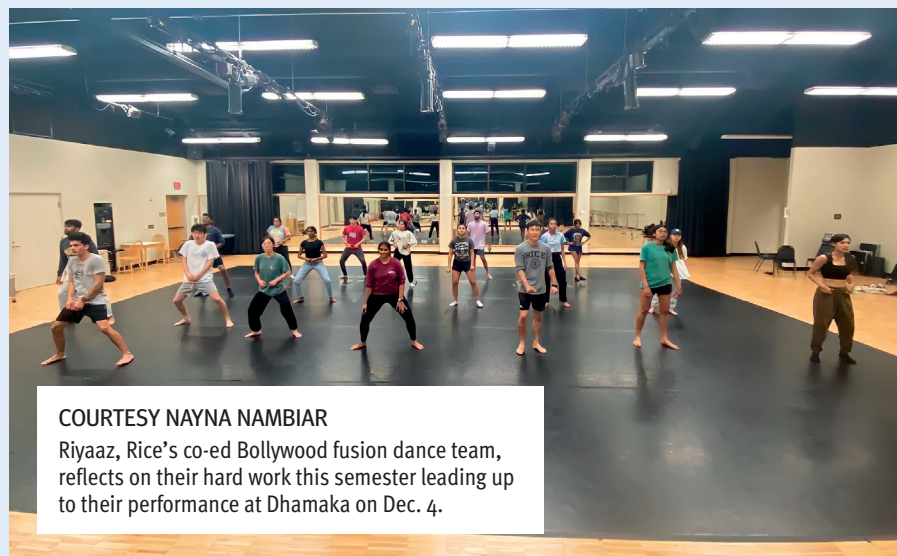
"We spend more than seven hours each week practicing with each other and working towards a common goal," Jasani, a Duncan sophomore, said. "This, alongside

many of our shared cultural identities, helps us form amazing lifelong friendships."

In addition to their time practicing together, George said that they hold social events at least once a month.

"Personally, I like to think of it as a family," George said. "As

a newbie, you're put in 'big-little' groups. 'Bigs' are oldies [whom] newbies can turn to if they have any questions. It doesn't have to be about Riyaz. I remember turning to my 'bigs' multiple times last year. I've made



COURTESY NAYNA NAMBIAR

Riyaz, Rice's co-ed Bollywood fusion dance team, reflects on their hard work this semester leading up to their performance at Dhamaka on Dec. 4.

countless friends and am continuing to learn how to lead a team."

Jasani said that dancing helps her decompress and hang out with her friends after long days.

"When we take breaks during practice, members will be talking to each other about their days, cracking jokes or trying out new dance steps," Jasani said. "It's a really nice environment to be in."

When they aren't preparing for Dhamaka or organizing social events, Riyaz is busy vying for their spot in dance competitions. This semester, the group focused on choreographing and practicing a three-minute set that they used to apply to competitions.

"This year, we're fortunate enough to have been accepted to eight [Desi Dance Network] competitions," George said. "We're so happy that our hard work paid off, and we can't wait to show a piece of that hard work to our friends and family at Dhamaka."

Each grade has had the chance to choreograph their own pieces for the show, which George said will be bittersweet for new and old members alike.

"It's a proud moment when we see our newbies put something together all on their own," George said. "It's also a bittersweet feeling seeing our seniors practice for their last Dhamaka. We all just can't wait to have fun on that stage."

## Holiday concerts that sleigh



KATHERINE HUI / THRESHER

Last year's Acappelloza concert featured five of Rice's a capella groups for an evening of performances in the Grand Hall.

BY MORGAN GAGE  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

While campus studies for finals, a capella groups on campus are studying their sheet music in addition to hitting the books, rehearsing and preparing for end of the year performances during the last week of classes and into finals.

The Rice Apollos and Rice Low Keys have a joint holiday performance Saturday, Dec. 3 at 7 p.m. in the Rice Memorial Center Chapel. The Rice Philharmonics have a holiday show Tuesday, Dec. 6 at 7 p.m., also in the RMC Chapel. The Philharmonics will also be performing for a Fondren Library study break Wednesday, Dec. 7 at 2:30 p.m. with ornament crafting, snacks, coffee and tea provided by Fondren.

Perry Lin, the Apollos' music director, said that he is looking forward to seeing how the Apollos and Low Keys "mesh together."

"We prepare our own parts, and then we come together and do one joint rehearsal to see how well we can blend across one rehearsal," Lin, a Jones College senior, said. "So I'm excited to see how we match [joint performances] in the past. There's been room for work in the past, so I'm hoping that we can sound extra good this year."

Sophia Cha and Kennedi Macklin, music directors of the Low Keys, are

excited that this performance gives the Low Keys a chance to explore new musical possibilities with the additional range of the Apollos. Cha hopes that the joint concert also gives students a chance to support more a capella groups on campus.

"I feel like a lot of the time people only go to one or two a capella groups, because you only go to performances that your friends are performing in," Cha, a Brown College sophomore said. "So this is a great opportunity to see work that other people on campus are putting in. I hope [our performers and audience] get to hear something that they haven't before."

The Philharmonics, who rehearse three times a week according to music director Audrey Ma, will have their Dec. 7 performance in addition to a study break at Fondren and off-campus performances. Ma, a Wiess College junior, said their holiday show will be complete with fun skits between songs, choreography and a "chill" energy.

"This year, we have a lot of new Phils ... so they've gradually gotten to see how we work as a group and stuff," Ma said. "And having fun during concerts is a really big part of it, so I'm excited [to] give them that experience as well. Because ... the holiday concerts are always just really fun and chill, and we're not really focusing as much on technical things, like how good we sound. It's more ... as long as we're all happy."

## Poets explore intersectional identities

BY IVY LI  
THRESHER STAFF

On Nov. 18, The Department of Modern and Classical Studies hosted a poetry reading with two award-winning writers: multi-genre writer Leslie Contreras Schwartz ('02) and poet Benjamin Garcia. Having known Schwartz when she was a student at Rice, Aranda invited her, and then she invited her colleague Garcia.

"There's a growing Latinx cadre of writers and poets," said Aranda. "People should know Houston is a world magnet for nurturing local Latinx writers and poets and for drawing them into Houston."

Both poets grew up in Houston, and Schwartz was the Houston Poet Laureate from 2019 to 2021. Currently, Schwartz and Garcia teach at the low-residency MFA program at Alma College in Michigan.

Both writers selected poetry that explored different perspectives around race, gender, sexuality and social class centering on Latinx identities. Through her poems, Schwartz is able to explore intersectional aspects of her identity, including themes of misogynistic violence specific to the Latinx community.

"Latinx are not a monolith, and trying to be as specific as possible is how I try to be true to my story," said Schwartz. "I wanted to capture authentic experiences in my community and from my own lived experiences, which can look differently than the North American or European white experience."

Schwartz's poetry uses nonlinear narratives and form to reflect the real experiences of her poetry's narrators. Akin to visual art, poetry is a medium through which she can express ideas in ways inaccessible through discourse or prose.

"I see myself as a multi-genre writer," Schwartz said. "A lot of what I write is genre-fluid, and my work is pigeonholed [by publishers] into different categories that are not necessarily true to the work that I'm doing."

Among the pieces Schwartz read, her poems "Shame, Documented" and "an object the girl an object," are both composed of fractured lines that explore what it means to be deprived of bodily agency.

"['Shame, Documented'] is based on documentation from undocumented people who were detained and first-person accounts of what happened to them. So most of this poem is made from quotations," said Schwartz.

In poems like "The Language in Question" and "The Great Glass Closet," Garcia also explores the language surrounding bodily agency in the intersectional aspects of being LGBTQ+ and Latinx.

"Moving through the world as a queer, brown person, I can't not think about my identities," said Garcia. "Even when I'm writing about something that's on the surface not about queerness or Latinx identity, sometimes that comes through."

Part of that de-stigmatization comes down to giving himself permission to write what he gravitates towards, Garcia explained, rather than what is publishable.

*This article has been cut off for print. Read the full article at [ricethresher.org](http://ricethresher.org).*



COURTESY LESLIE CONTRERAS SCHWARTZ  
The Department of Modern and Classical Studies recently hosted a poetry reading with writers Leslie Contreras Schwartz ('02) and Benjamin Garcia.

## Review: 'The Nutcracker' loses its footing this season



COURTESY THE HOUSTON BALLET

BY GINA MATOS  
FOR THE THRESHER

Upon entering the Wortham Center for the annual holiday show, there is an unmistakable anticipatory energy in the air, accompanying their signature Christmas tree and bubbly mingling between well-dressed patrons. "The Nutcracker" is undeniably a holiday favorite for audience members, but their excitement for the show may be misguided. Despite the show's remarkable popularity, the Houston Ballet's production falls short of the original's charm.

For starters, Stanton Welch's "The Nutcracker" makes diverging directing choices from its predecessors, perhaps hoping to give a new feel to the renowned fairytale. However, some of these choices dampen the audience's connection to the show and the characters' connections to one another. For instance, the stage feels noticeably empty in various instances. In many "The Nutcracker" productions, a prominent aspect of the story's staging relies on its onstage spectatorship, allowing the audience to inclusively experience the performance alongside the characters. In

removing spectators from the stage, the audience becomes removed as well.

Additionally, the lack of Clara's spectatorship onstage deadens the production's second act. Clara disappears amid the performances in the Land of Sweets, causing the production to lose its purpose through lack of audience engagement. Because of the connection audience members create with Clara on her journey in "The Nutcracker," it is crucial for audience interest to keep her on stage. Consequently, this directing choice creates a strong disconnect in the production.

Further, some of the show's choreography choices dilute the chemistry between characters — most importantly, the connection between Clara and the Nutcracker. At times, the choreography fails to provide room for chemistry-building between characters. At the Stahlbaum house, Clara's and Drosselmeyer's choreography fails to communicate Clara's instantaneous captivation and chemistry with the Nutcracker doll. Clara's signature move of hitting the Rat King with her pointe shoe is notably omitted and further contributes to Clara's lack of engagement with the Nutcracker. Making these distinct choreography choices diminishes the story's special chemistry between the two leads.

However, the highlights of Welch's reimagining of "The Nutcracker" shine within the production's technical successes and individual talents. Many of Tim

Goodchild's costumes and scenic designs are bedazzling and magically fabricated with extremely elegant detail. The iconic, tree-growing scene is especially effective, as the dancers afterward look truly toy-size onstage. Particularly, one of the finest images in the show is the unmasked Nutcracker lying beneath the Christmas tree surrounded by falling snow.

Many of the show's individual dancers also sparkle throughout the performance. Clara (Tyler Donatelli) glides and flutters with a simultaneously youthful and mature liveliness. Drosselmeyer's dolls (Kellen Hornbuckle, Song Teng, Elivelton Tomazi, Ryan Williams) are extremely believable in their rigid, animated movements. The Flurries (Allison Miller, Danbi Kim, Jacquelyn Long, Bridget Kuhns) live up to the story's trademark pine forest scene, gracefully twirling and leaping across the stage with agility and impressive athleticism. Of course, the dynamic duet between the Nutcracker (Chase O'Connell) and the Sugar Plum Fairy (Beckanne Sisk) is mesmerizing with its incredible technique and chemistry. The Arabian dancer (Yuriko Kajiya) and the Russian dancer (Yu Wakizuka), are surprising spotlights of the night, impressively in control of the demanding choreography.

All in all, I recommend this production to first-time goers of "The Nutcracker" seeking a feel-good show. Otherwise, Nutcracker devotees like myself should expect a show that strays from the holiday classic.

# SPORTS

## Rice in line for bowl due to academics despite UNT loss, 5-7 record

BY DANIEL SCHRAGER  
SPORTS EDITOR

It looks like Rice football's intellectual brutality is finally paying off. The Owls appeared to miss out on the postseason when their 21-17 loss to the University of North Texas on Saturday left them at 5-7 for the season, one win shy of the threshold for bowl eligibility. However, losses by a pair of 5-6 teams later that night guaranteed there wouldn't be enough six-win teams to fill all 41 bowl games. The remaining spots will now go to the 5-7 teams with the highest Academic Progress Rate – a metric that measures the academic performance of a school's student athletes. Rice had the highest APR of any five-win team, and is now in line for their first postseason berth since 2014, assuming they accept.

After the game, head coach Mike Bloomgren said that, while he's upset the team couldn't get to six wins, he'd love the opportunity to compete with his squad one more time.

"There's a lot of people that poured a lot into this program over the years and this is not the result any of us wanted, this was not the goal we set," Bloomgren said, "I told them, if for some reason, as these scores unfold today, if we're lucky enough to get an opportunity to play in a bowl game, I'd be excited to play this game with them, [and to] put a plan together to go get these guys a win because there's a lot of seniors that are torn up right now in that locker room."

As for Saturday's game itself, the Owls headed to Denton looking to snap a two-

game losing streak against a Mean Green team that needed a win to clinch a spot in the Conference USA title game. Freshman AJ Padgett, starting at quarterback in place of injured junior TJ McMahon and redshirt-junior Wiley Green, got off to a slow start, losing a fumble on Rice's opening possession after a blocked North Texas field goal attempt. However, Padgett said that he wasn't phased by the turnover.

"Going through the week, my mindset was, 'man, I play football, I'm going out there to play football,'" Padgett said. "So I was just really excited all week to get out there and play. So the nerves, they were all gone, I got it out of my system early before the game."

The Mean Green couldn't take advantage though, and the teams traded punts on the game's next two possessions. UNT finally broke the tie in the closing minutes of the quarter on a 45-yard touchdown pass from Austine Aune to Jyaire Shorter.

Padgett started to find his footing in the second quarter, leading Rice on a drive deep into North Texas territory that resulted in a missed field goal, before setting up the game tying touchdown with a 46-yard pass to the North Texas six. The Mean Green answered with a quick touchdown drive, but Padgett even the score again, hitting freshman receiver Braylen Walker down the sideline for a 48-yard touchdown. According to Padgett, he was thrilled to help his classmate get his first career touchdown.

"That's a guy I just love throwing the ball too," Padgett said. "He's a freshman, came in with me, so we have that special bond, so

that just felt great being able to get him his first collegiate touchdown"

Neither team scored in the third quarter, although Rice drove into field goal range before missing the kick, but it took just two plays for the Owls to take the lead in the fourth on a 24-yard field goal. The Mean Green then marched down the field in eight plays to reclaim the lead on a six-yard touchdown pass from Aune to Ikaika Ragsdale. Rice went three and out on their next drive, but got the ball back with four minutes left after forcing a punt. But a pair of sacks put the Owls at fourth-and-23, and Padgett's desperation heave was intercepted, effectively ending the game. According to Bloomgren, the Owls had plenty of chances to win at the end but couldn't take advantage of them.

"We were really close but we did not find a way to get this win," Bloomgren said. "I'm

frustrated because there's a lot of things that I think we'll see on film, a lot of things that I saw live that I think affected the outcome."

The loss marked the third in a row for the Owls, and their fifth in seven games after starting the season 3-2. They finish the regular season 5-7 and 3-5 in conference play. After his fifth straight losing season, but also the program's best total since 2015, Bloomgren said he and his staff have made their case to be brought back for another season.

"Those things are for people above my pay grade," Bloomgren said. "Progress is clear, it's defined, but is it enough? Those are for other people to make those decisions. I know what we've done, I know what this coaching staff has done, and I would challenge anybody to do better [than] what this group has done on the field and off."



COURTESY ROSS JAMES - RICE ATHLETICS  
Quarterback AJ Padgett attempts a pass against North Texas. Making his first career start, Padgett threw for 229 yards and a touchdown, but the Owls fell 21-17.

## Karlgaard's dilemma: Bloomgren is the cause of progress, stagnation

When Rice moves to the American Athletic Conference next season, they'll be one of three teams in the AAC named the Owls. If they opt to change their nickname to avoid confusion, might I suggest the Tortoises. The Owl football team has religiously followed the "slow-and-steady" model since head coach Mike Bloomgren took the helm in 2018, adding one win each year, with the exception of the pandemic-shortened 2020 season.

Five years into his tenure, Bloomgren is just 16-38, a mark that would seemingly put his job in jeopardy. But under his leadership, the team has taken a small but noticeable step – one win, to be exact – each year.

This puts Athletic Director Joe Karlgaard in a bind. On one hand, he has given Bloomgren five chances to prove that he's the right person to lead the Owls forward, and each time he's responded with a losing record. On the other hand, it's impossible to ignore the progress the program has made since he took over. Why start over

now, when the team looks on the verge of becoming a winning program?

Bloomgren deserves a ton of credit for the progress Rice has made. After taking over a team in steep decline, culminating in a one-win season in 2017, he broke Rice out of its tailspin. An award-winning recruiter during his time as an assistant at Stanford University, Bloomgren has expanded Rice's recruiting efforts beyond Texas, and worked the transfer portal and junior college circuit to bring in the kind of talent needed to compete in the conference. He also articulated and implemented a clear vision for the program: a physical, run-first team that plays smart football and wins at the line of scrimmage. Having such a clear goal has given the program something to work towards.

But as much as he is responsible for the progress they've made in recent years, there's reason to believe that the program is nearing its ceiling under his leadership. The team may have added a win from their total last year, but they were still solidly

in the bottom half of Conference USA. The Owls tied for seventh place out of 11 teams in C-USA and were only one game out of a tie for last place. In their two games

“  
While five wins seems like an accomplishment, the underlying numbers suggest that this Owls team wasn't all that different than, say, their 3-9 team in 2019 that finished fourth-to-last in point differential – they just won an extra game or two on last-second plays.

against the conference's bottom teams, they were blown out by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and only beat Louisiana Tech University after a failed two-point conversion attempt in overtime.

Even more alarmingly, the Owls point differential was the second-worst in the entire conference, scoring the second-fewest points in conference play and allowing the fourth-most. All three of their conference wins came in the final minutes of games that just as easily could have gone the other way. While five wins seems like an accomplishment, the underlying numbers suggest that this Owls team wasn't all that different than, say, their 3-9 team in 2019 that finished fourth-to-last in point differential – they just won an extra game or two on last-second plays.

This points to the larger problem that's plagued Bloomgren his entire time at Rice. As I've written several times, Bloomgren's emphasis on controlling the time of possession battle amounts to nothing more than shortening the game so neither

team has a chance to run up the score. This works great if you're an overmatched team trying to pull off an upset. But in theory, the better team should want more possessions to lower the chance of a fluke loss. Bloomgren has done a lot to improve Rice's depth chart, but still coaches like he's trying to hide a bad roster. As a result, the Owls consistently play down to weaker opponents. In his tenure, they've only won five FBS games by more than one score, and only two FBS games by 20 or more.

Some of the best teams in college football win by controlling the clock with a dominant run game; that's what Bloomgren's teams did at Stanford. But he's yet to show that he can build the offensive line necessary for that style of football on South Main. Unless he's able to consistently recruit a dominant offensive line – a long shot with Rice's academic standards and proximity to much more prominent programs that take top talent, especially as they face stronger opponents in the AAC – or learns to play to his team's strengths, the Owls will keep making incremental progress before leveling off around 0.500.

It's not a foregone conclusion that the team would be better off without Bloomgren. He's a known commodity who's shown he can build a solid program, and letting him go would mean taking a risk on someone who could be far worse. I'd go as far as to say he's the reason the program is where it is right now. But he's also the reason it's not improving nearly fast enough, and Karlgaard will have to take that into account too as he decides what's best for the future of the program.

### UPCOMING GAMES

Men's Basketball  
**RICE vs Prairie View A&M**

**Wednesday, 11/30**  
**7:00 p.m.**

Volleyball  
**No. 20 RICE vs Colorado**

**Thursday, 12/1**  
**4:30 p.m.**

Women's Basketball  
**RICE vs TCU**

**Friday, 12/2**  
**7:00 p.m.**

Swimming  
**RICE @ Texas A&M**

**Saturday, 12/3**  
**2:00 p.m.**

Men's Basketball  
**RICE @ Texas State**

**Sunday, 12/4**  
**2:00 p.m.**

Daniel Schrage  
SPORTS EDITOR



# WBB knocks off A&M for best start in program history

BY REED MYERS  
SENIOR WRITER

College Station was full of upsets over the holiday weekend as the women's basketball team capped off the weekend by upsetting Texas A&M University 66-58. The victory pushed the Owls' record to 6-0, earning them the best start in program history.

According to head coach Lindsay Edmonds, the Owls' experiences from last year have carried over to their record-breaking start in her second season.

“  
I felt like they weren't worried about what was across the chest of the opponents; they were just playing basketball.

**Lindsay Edmonds**  
HEAD COACH

“Last year, we were pretty inexperienced, myself included,” Edmonds said. “This is a group that played a lot of minutes last year, and so I think they had that confidence, and they knew that they had won in close games before. I felt like they weren't worried about what was across the chest of the opponents; they were just playing basketball.”

Battling on the road for the fourth consecutive game, the Owls found themselves in a difficult matchup as the Aggies' offense was focused on pounding the ball inside to their physical frontcourt players. According to senior forward India Bellamy, preparing for the Aggies' frontcourt was at the forefront of their minds during the Owls' preparation for the game.

“We go head to head and practice every day and make sure we get better



COURTESY RICE ATHLETICS

The Rice women's basketball team celebrates after their upset win over Texas A&M. The win moved the Owls to 6-0 on the season for the first time in program history.

as a team to make sure our posts all get better,” Bellamy said. “So just going against [Aggies freshman forward Janiah] Barker helped us. She had a great game, but it helped us to get somebody else to score and help our team defense.”

The back-and-forth contest saw the two teams deadlocked at 25 points apiece at halftime. The Aggies made a 10-2 run to open the third quarter, but the Owls made their own run to close the quarter and took a one-point lead entering the fourth quarter.

According to Edmonds, the third quarter gave the Owls the momentum to add to their lead in the fourth quarter and seal the game.

“I thought the third quarter was really big for us,” Edmonds said. “Texas A&M came out and made a big run to start the third quarter. But we came back with our own run, and then I think we felt like we had the advantage in the fourth because of that.”

Rice was able to tack onto their lead in the latter stages of the fourth quarter thanks to two timely three-pointers from senior guard Katelyn Crosthwait.

The versatility of the Owls' post players allowed them to attack the Aggie defenders in the paint, off the dribble and from beyond the arc. The trio of Bellamy, sophomore forward Malia Fisher and senior forward Ashlee Austin accounted for 36 of the Owls' 66 points.

Austin, who sparked the Owls' offense off the bench with 16 points and three assists, relished getting the victory in College Station after the game.

“We've played A&M two times before, [and] we missed the game last year because of COVID,” Austin said. “So it just feels amazing to come in here and get that win finally. I feel like we've been waiting for it since our freshman year. So it's really a full circle moment.”

This marked the program's second victory in 11 games against the Aggies. The Owls will look to build on their fast start when they host Texas Christian University on Friday night at Tudor Fieldhouse.

## FROM FRONT PAGE VOLLEYBALL

Graham said that playing against the top competition is the most exciting part about postseason volleyball.

“Postseason is a lot of fun,” Graham said. “You're playing against great competition, and it's just a really competitive atmosphere. We're all super excited to go play and compete against high level competition.”

The Owls' senior class, led by Graham and middle blocker Anota Adekunle, is no stranger to the NCAA tournament. They've earned a postseason bid in each of their five years at Rice, and Volpe said that the senior veteran leadership will be

crucial to the Owls' success this week.

“It helps a lot to have those veterans giving advice ... to the younger players that have never experienced this before ... but also knowing what it takes to win,” Volpe said. “They've been to the tournament and lost in the first round and been to the tournament and won the first round.”

While the Owls have been frequent fliers at the NCAA tournament, they have yet to make it past the second round. According to Volpe, making it to the tournament is not enough this year, the team is looking to make a deep run.

“Our expectation is not just to be in the tournament but to advance in the tournament,” Volpe said. “Our

expectations are even higher this year and we want to go as far as possible.”

“  
It's been a joy to coach this team and we're gonna go as long as we possibly can to keep this season going.

**Genny Volpe**  
HEAD COACH

With her final tournament approaching, Graham says that she wants to leave it all on the court and keep her Rice career going.

“We want to leave everything out there and play Rice volleyball the way

we know we can,” Graham said. “I think we're just really excited to go compete against awesome competition and looking forward to playing together and hopefully keep playing together as long as possible.”

In her 19th season at Rice, Volpe is making her eighth NCAA tournament appearance. Following Sunday's selection show, Volpe expressed how proud she was of the team's fight and perseverance throughout the entire season.

“I'm so proud of this team,” Volpe said. “We've put in a lot of work this year, and we've battled through a lot of tough matches and came out on top. It's been a joy to coach this team, and we're gonna go as long as we possibly can to keep this season going.”



KATHERINE HUI / THRESHER

Three Owls celebrate a point during a game earlier this season. After winning the conference title, Rice heads into the NCAA tournament as a No. 5 seed.

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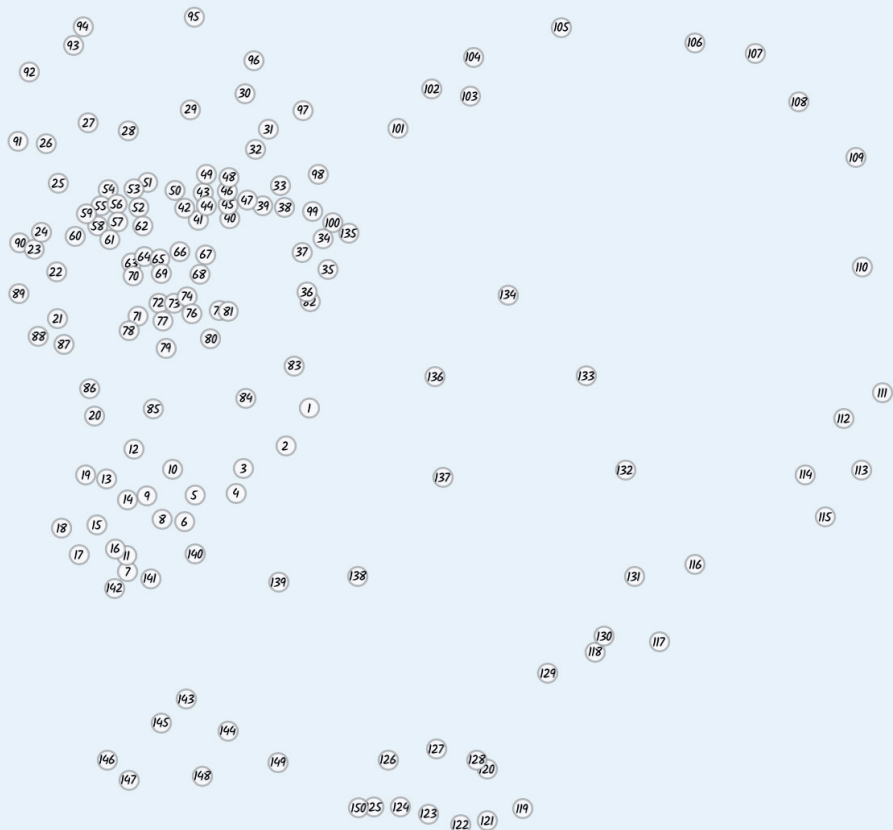


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# Holidays Puzzles from the Backpage!

## Connect-the-Dots



## WORDLE

5-letter grid:


Keyboard layout:

Q W E R T Y U I O P

A S D F G H J K L

ENTER Z X C V B N M

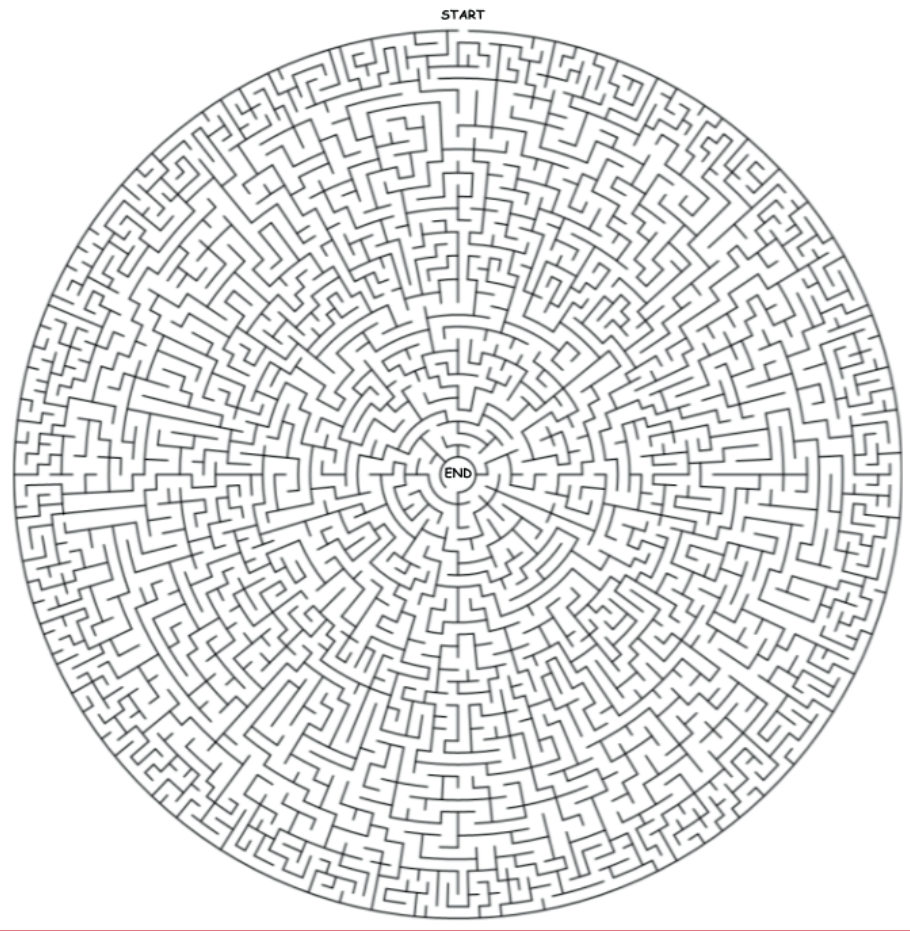
Please turn in your first guess underneath the door of HBH 416 with return address. Allow 1-2 business days for processing. We will return it colored in to your residential college mailbox. Please turn in your second guess in the dropbox forty paces east of the rustication fountain. Further instructions to come.

## Riddle of the Week:

Mike needed six wins to get into a bowl game, he only got five but made the bowl anyway. How'd he do it?

*Answer: Intellectual brutality*

## Holiday Maze: Nightmare Edition



## CHESS

White to move. Can you win in six moves?

8	♔	♔	♔	♔	♔	♔	♔	♔
7	♔	♔	♔	♔	♔	♔	♔	♔
6	♔	♔	♔	♔	♔	♔	♔	♔
5	♔	♔	♔	♔	♔	♔	♔	♔
4								
3								
2				♙				
1			♙	♔	♙			
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h

The Backpage is the satire section of the Thresher, written this week by Andrew Kim, Ndidi Nwosu, Timmy Mansfield, and special guest Daniel Schrage, designed by Lauren Yu. For questions or comments please email [dilfhunter69@rice.edu](mailto:dilfhunter69@rice.edu).

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