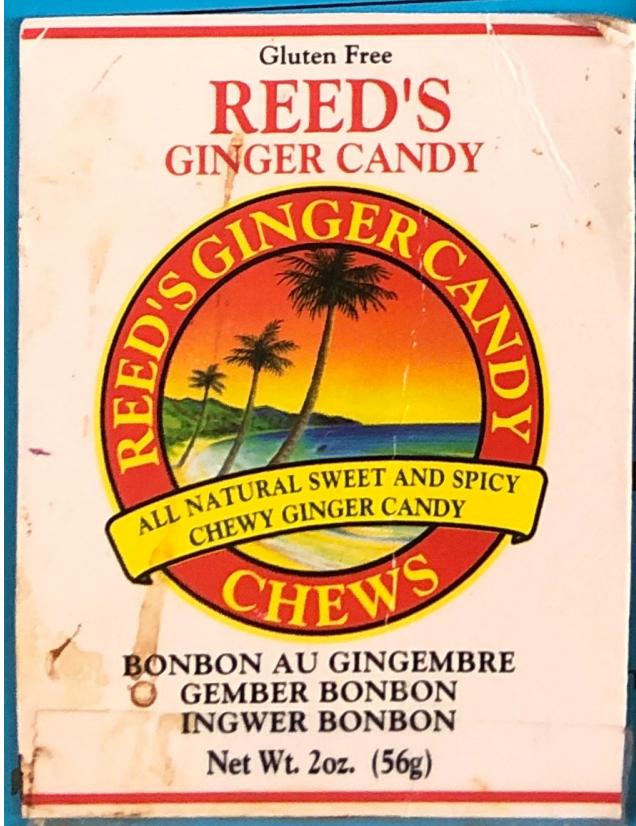


THE INDY*

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THE INAUGURAL ISSUE

*The College Hill Independent

THE INDY*

Volume 43
Issue 01
17 September 2021

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Letter From the Editors

The last time we were in Conmag, beer was drunk, music was played, and a lot of things were left behind, only to be found almost two years later by the next generation of *Indy* staff.

The good: A worn-out leather purse left in the ‘archive’ closet—
itself a bastion of ephemera and anti-chronological historiography.
In the purse: a gum wrapper, a spoon, three business cards (for
“The Center for Sexual Pleasure and Health,” “Good Vibrations,”
and a “Sexuality Speaker/Educator/Sexologist”), German lube, one
dangly earring, and a handwritten love letter from 2009.

The bad: A 2' by 3' Danby mini-fridge, opened once and promptly closed in the interest of public health and safety. It remains untouched. The jello container and assorted half-filled tupperwares are *not* property of the *Indy* and *will* be dealt with by *another* publication.

The ugly (duckling): On a far shelf, a mostly-dead succulent with twenty-four tiny green leaves and fifty-ish tinier brown leaves that disintegrate when touched. We plan to take great care of the *Indy*'s Charlie Brown Christmas Tree, as it guides us through the trials and tribulations of life after loss / life after your friends stop watering you for 1.5 years / life after life after life.

Glad to be back, good, bad, ugly, and all.

-MAD

Week in Indulgence

**TEXT ASHER WHITE
DESIGN ISAAC MCKENNA
ILLUSTRATION LIV LUNGER**



the Royal Family have the tendency to become offensively, unacceptably old; still, the clock is ticking for Elizabeth—how many more portrayals of herself will Queen Elizabeth II live to avoid watching?



Incidentally, the superspread-er event last weekend was not a baby shower for Offset Jr. (Onpoint?) but in fact the Brown University Inaugural Freshman Rave. It seems the return to campus has introduced an urgent new hedonism—an impassioned, if flawed, sense of YOGTCO (You Only Go To College Once) that encourages them to no longer take their embodied learning for granted and instead live as joyfully as they can. After all, next week marks the 10-year anniversary of fun.'s breakout single "We Are Young," a landmark anthem of youthful liberty for our generation (though it's not until December that we can celebrate the diamond anniversary of the Glee episode that

At the *College Hill Independent*, we're doing away with moderation entirely. Beginning with our next issue, we'll be expanding our Week in Review section from one page to 12 pages, eliminating the need for less popular sections like Features, Literary, or 'Metro,' and allowing our Week in Review editors to work through ideas to their fullest extent. If we've learned anything this week, it's that you can't have too much of a good thing.

-AW

Fork in the Road

PUZZLE BY LOUGHLIN NEUERT

cross

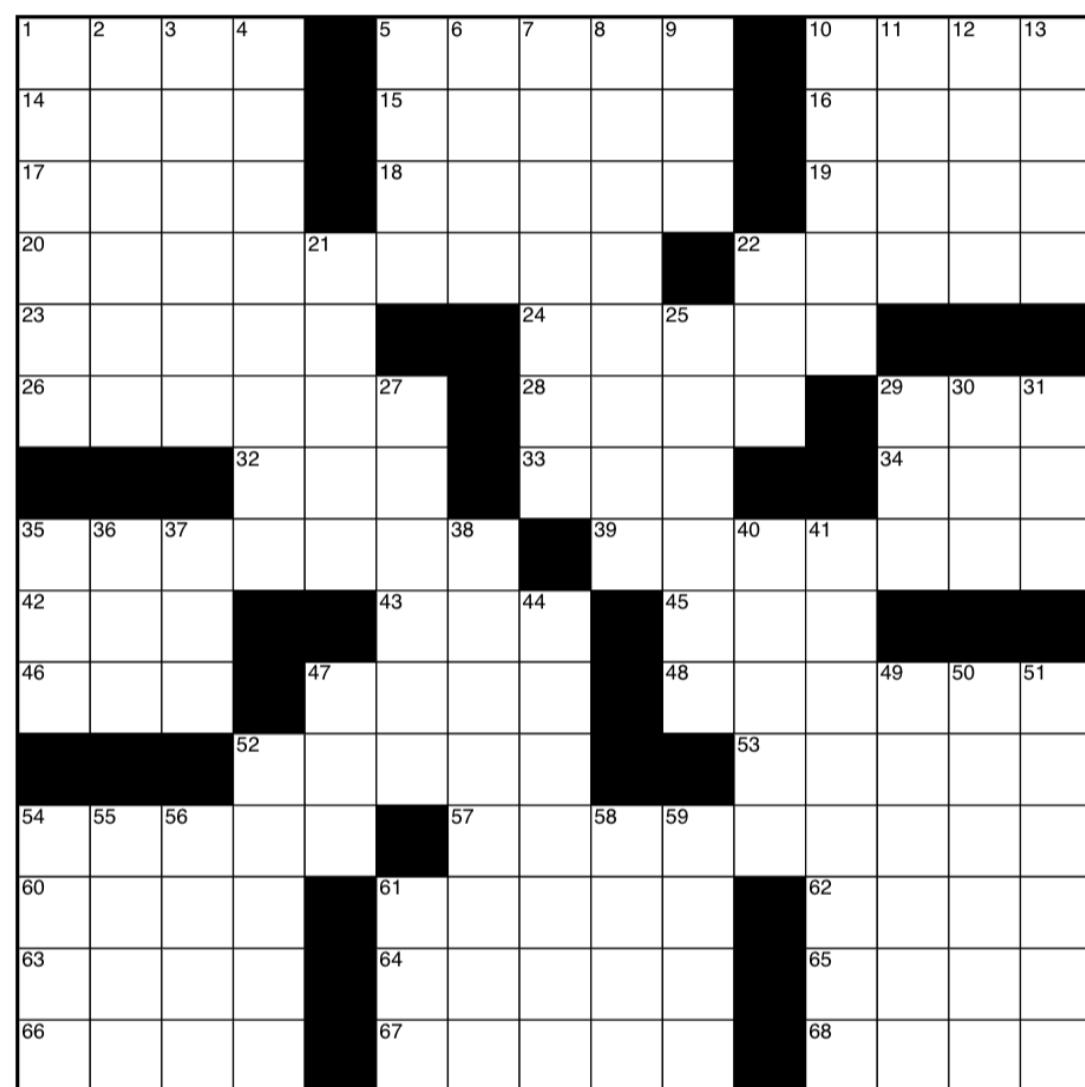
- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| cross | | | |
| Head, in France | 57 Where the caboose goes | 36 You may find them in TV remotes | 47 Portable bed |
| How hay might be priced (2 wds) | 60 ____ de Gallo | 37 Gastrointestinal tract, familiarly | 49 Words to a pirate captain |
| When repeated, a fish | 61 Spanish painter, with | 38 Where you might take a seat, or spread out | 50 Disenliven |
| Chunder, upchuck, etc. | 62 Ending with lemo- | 40 What holding 1, 13, 41, 52, and 59 to a map of Providence might reveal, for this puzzle | 51 Stop, as momentum |
| Tip-able transport | 63 With European, language family | 41 Center-right intersection with Power | 52 Center-left intersection with Power (Piezonis, firehouse) |
| As seen ____ | 64 Fable(d) writer | 44 How something challenging may be taken | 54 Hock a loogey |
| Winner of Survivor: Panama | 65 Call for a court to come to order | | 55 Eastside ____ Mart |
| Lighting and Maintenance firm in East Prov | 66 Parasitic arachnid that may carry diseases (like Lyme) | | 56 Rock band with the hit "Thunderstruck" |
| | 67 Coffee drink with chocolate swirl | | 59 Center intersection with Power |
| | | | 61 Lass |
| | | | 58 Alright! Fine! This one is bad, ok whatever. This was a popular hashtag in 2013 to describe people like ... Glenn Beck? Rush Limbaugh? Just get the acrosses and then look it up it'll be fine. |

Down

- The crossword grid consists of a 10x10 grid of squares. Some squares are blacked out, forming a pattern of shaded areas. The numbered clues are as follows:

 - 1 Far-left intersection with Power (GCB, parking lot)
 - 2 Home to Hamburg, Holland, and Hungary
 - 3 Sad, as a play
 - 4 Hamlet's castle
 - 5 Unit of land area
 - 6 *Indy* Vol. 42 Managing Editor
 - 7 San _____ fault line
 - 8 Where you might go with your mates for a cheeky pint
 - 9 Fair-hiring initis.
 - 10 Kind of eel
 - 11 Blue dye source
 - 12 Building block of the internet
 - 13 Far-right intersection with Power
 - 21 French hat
 - 22 Spell, curse
 - 25 Win back
 - 27 Thin wooden rods
 - 29 Food made with Taro in Hawaii
 - 30 Make a mistake
 - 31 Cartoon building block
 - 35 Group connecting educators and families, abbr.

Legend:
17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68.



Summer Slices

As long days begin slowly turning into longer nights, we wanted to give a final moment to reminisce about the summer—however it may have passed for each of us.

So we asked our writers to send us a slice of their summer: freshly cut from sensations grown overripe in the sun, spilling out saturated fleshy joy, pips of anxiety, and bleeding vesicles. They tasted of cold, crisp apples plucked from a tree clinging to a slope into the sky, of the tingling glint of citrus that perfumes a warm room strewn with orange peels, of rotting kernels of corn that have soured with solitude. Or they tasted of doing nothing at all, just sitting in a stale afternoon on your sofa with no motivation to move.

I BLAME THE FRUIT AND THE OCEAN.

On our way to somewhere else, I lost you in the rain. It sliced through the bus windows and into the crevices of your elbows. I would have thought the window seat was a small gift, but you saw the rain and the roadkill. I didn't.

The rain stopped, and you were gone. I don't remember when you left. No one else seemed to notice. Your clothes were arranged on your bed into letters I couldn't recognize. Your phone was left on the bedside table buzzing more like a bee, stinger and all. It didn't answer well. The house smelled of orange peels. They were left in piles throughout the home, as were your clothes and my wrinkled recollections of you.

If I had known a moment could end before it could breathe, I would have taken the window seat.

I was following orange peels. It was an effort that resembled a trail if trails looped back on themselves and were unforgiving. Coastal cliffs turned into the forest as I searched for you. I wasn't uncalm.

It's unclear if the voices I hear are my calls echoed or others' half-hearted shouts. Our friends hadn't worried. They saw us sitting on a bus filled with rain, crumpled memories, my left shoe, and your easy, written messes. They knew that we'd return through the equation of it rather than the sensation. I believe Echo is the more likely companion, speaking in tones I don't believe my own voice could take. As the forest deepens, the voices quiet. The silence is a more comforting friend.

The forest is large enough that the only way I don't grow lost is by tugging myself along tree roots. The belly of my dress rips and my torso muddies. Every time my feet root themselves, I tug. I snap my own roots to watch them grow again, to break them again. I am yelling your name, to not yet find you.

Maybe you mentioned the rising seas of your insides, and I didn't hear it. I have a habit of hearing your words only for a moment, raindrops on my skin before they slide off. Water, time, patience, oranges, growth, dinner, care, haircut, criticism, affection, oranges, solitude, oranges. I might have heard you say you were feeling filled and nodded, playing my role of empathy. Then, a view of the ocean outside your window could have appeared. I might have pointed it out to you, all the while forgetting how much of that ocean was within you. You were all salt, sucking on sweetness, hoping for it.

I found you beneath a tree. It twists in on itself, chasing the sunlight, growing quickly. The leaves are odd, too big, out-of-proportion with the trunk that two arms can hold. Still, the leaves reach to the light and make do.

I talk about yelling your name from the cliffs to the forest, and you listen with eyes that watch ants crawl over leaves. You tell me about sucking oranges and what it feels like to need. You offer me one. It looks small in your swollen hands, filled with the water that sits in you. Your body is an overripe fruit, barely contained, softening with touch and the sun.

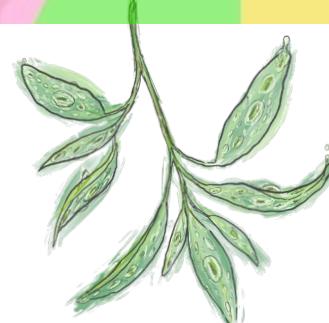
I think you may need to rot. I hold only your hand to balance your sloshing footsteps and leave room for your stubbornness. We walk back to the edge of the ocean, and the tides whisper me condolences. It feels promising, despite the lack of it. I know they will leave again, even if I can't understand how the moon compels them to.

Eventually, you smile. Water leaks through the cracks in your teeth until you are empty. Your stretched skin shrivels into a tighter shape. The water crawls back into itself. You cease your currents. You become as frail as that tree. I become me again with an orange in my stomach, a bit of sand in my right shoe, and my hands still wet from holding you.

I don't know if we could go back to that house filled with peels. There are few maps from such a place. We stand in a somewhere else yet uncharted. So we sit down to decide later.

-AC

APPLES ON MOUNT FUJI



"The mind is mountains, rivers, and the great earth; sun, moon, and stars."

-Dogen Zenji, 13th century zen master

The student reclines beneath orchard trees, sharp granite between the roots, and places palms on the incline. Looking up at the inquisitive moon, he spots a face staring down between branches—bark bleached whiter than his lunar countenance by cousin, the angry sun.

The student's gaze wanders away from celestial members of his family tree. Eyes wander down gnarled arms, as elderly branches sag in remembrance. Stoic apples glint red in the hand.

Younger, the student stared skyward to where mountain met god himself convinced what was green was higher up. The truth buried in thick swirling clouds of mist; a sage meditating upon the peak. Fruits unmatched for those who dare climb higher.

But he doesn't know the mountain. The grass is thin and decaying even at this altitude it still welcomes a tired body in solemnity dirt below, a bed for greenery, the sapling that stands in youthful envy of older siblings, innocence turning branches green.

The zenith enlightens no longer. It is the middle where he finds his path. The sage grows well in shade, dew-dropped and at peace. He rests, crown against the roots, and ponders what will grow tomorrow.

Leaving saffron stains in the soil, the sole wanders. What is left upon the mountain will surely roll downhill with time.

-AO

JOKES

money sticks to me and slides off. We love jogging around and tinkering with the local branches. Maybe they'll decompose and return later, or maybe we'll order pizza and heat up the furnace. The wall makes a joke, asking if anyone knows why there isn't a better name for a washing machine than just washing machine.

PURVIEW

Human beings play games of chance that lead to trophies. My life is a severance package, laughing tigers and spitting elephants. You're only alone when you feel like it, you punch your way through 11am. The corn's texture wasn't clear enough in your head, so I bought a thousand kernels and pieced it all together myself. I wanted the stalk to stand taller than me, to survive and advance.

MOVEMENT

A pleasant morning turns and curdles. The afternoon stinks. It's sticky and messy and wasteful. The sun smiles. A valve is turned counterclockwise, the ridges on your hand feel so comfortable. The metal coating is warm but not hot, a soft pretzel. I don't have to hear your voice right now, I can just sit here.

-HL



HOW YURI HERRERA IS USING ART TO DISSOLVE BOUNDARIES

An author's thoughts on politics, literature, and imagination

Born in Actopan, Mexico, Yuri Herrera is a contemporary author and professor at Tulane University. His works are known for opposing state violence at the US-Mexico border and narrativizing resistance. Herrera believes that all writers add something to the realities they depict, and therefore all writing is inherently political. He reimagines the border by making his characters moveable and fluid, highlighting the subjective quality of human-drawn boundaries. His poetic narrative style brings out heartbreak social realities and invites readers to reflect on the full migrant experience. He has written four novels: *Trabajos del reino* (2004), *Señales que precederán al fin del mundo* (2009), *La transmigración de los cuerpos* (2013), and *El incendio de la mina El Bordo* (2018). Lisa Dillman translated them all into English.

+++

Nell Salzman: Thank you so much for talking to me today. I'm a big fan of yours.

Yuri Herrera: Of course. It's an honor.

NS: My first question is, as a Mexican author writing about issues in the United States, how do you occupy a space as a sort of 'distant-close' observer [writing about issues in a country you no longer live in]?

YH: First, with the exception of last year because of the pandemic, I go to Mexico all the time. I don't lose touch with the Spanish language, with friends, my family, the rhythm of life. Of course I miss things. I miss the way the language is changing, which is really important to me. But at the same time, every single book that I have written has been done in Mexico and in whatever other [place] I've been living in at the moment—Charlotte, New Orleans, El Paso, France. I am a migrant in the sense that I'm not an immigrant or an emigrant, but I spend a lot of time moving between places. I feel comfortable moving. It gives me fresh perspectives, both in what I think I know and what I am constantly discovering. I do feel isolated in the United States sometimes, which can be good for work, but at the same time it can create difficulty. That is the nature of literature—when you're writing, you're often writing about something that has already happened or that you miss. You use your past experiences. So, in short, it's not easy but it's not supposed to be easy. I just have to deal with that.

NS: Based on your background in political science, I'm wondering how you use fiction to talk about politics and history? How do you depict violence?

YH: The first thing I'll say is just that I don't believe that literature is a reflection of reality the way a mirror is a reflection of reality. Literature is always adding something else to reality, not reflecting it. It includes emotions and reflections in its re-creation and re-representation of reality. If you agree on this, then every time you talk about reality—through science fiction or poetry—you're always somehow talking about real events in your life and in the world. And if you agree that it's not a mirror but a re-creation, then you're always putting something from yourself that is political. How do you put yourself in society? How do you understand gender? How do you understand power? Justice? Inequality? Even if you're describing a chair, somehow these ideas will be the background of what you're saying. But you shouldn't be worried about trying to convey a partisan opinion through literature. That makes it poor and weak. Just try

"Literature is always adding something else to reality, not reflecting it."

to be informed and respectful, and also try to use your imagination as a muscle to really say something relevant about reality.

NS: How specifically do you use your imagination?

YH: Good writing is not writing that obeys the dictionary but rather writing that comes up with fuller and more acute definitions of each word depending on what you're saying. Every word, even if it is an old word, can be used in a more precise way. Words are always changing in relation to context. That's where you come up with imagination. That's what made Shakespeare use the word "table" not as a noun, but a verb: "Let's

table this." We do this constantly.

NS: And how are imagination and politics connected? Are there some political moments into which you avoid inserting imagination for sensitivity reasons?

YH: There is definitely a political dimension that has to do with your specific topics and the moral approach to those topics. Mexico has suffered a horrible amount of violence, mainly caused by the war on drugs that was invented and financed by the American government. When I was a kid, the newspapers would rarely put a bloody body on the first page. Language was somehow more discreet. Then suddenly, pulpy language became mainstream. It became okay to show torture and bodies on the TV. Don't get me wrong, I'm all for transparency and information, but it's not okay to treat other people's bodies as meat. That is pornography. Pornography of violence. I deal with this by using silences in my writing. Silence tells the reader that there is no way to describe or express some events without turning them into cheap things. I sometimes put a veil on an event for readers, and they have to infer or imagine their own realities. This is an important thing that literature does, [it gives] you the tools to create things. As a writer, you can fill in the gaps, but you have to be humble enough to know when it's naive and pretentious to try to explain things that you simply cannot explain. You have to respect that.

NS: The link between imagination, politics, and privacy is really fascinating. Thinking about a more specific political issue, I'm interested in how you talk about the border. The borders in your books are portrayed like bodies—breathing, moving. How do your characters share in the border condition?

YH: Some people talk about the portable border, which has to do with how you live within the border. You are in between two different sets of rules—of behavior in society, of speaking—and that gives you the clarity that linguistic rules are arbitrary. Once we understand that this is a human creation, you start having a different perspective on your own freedoms. The border condition exists in many other spaces, where there are two sets of cultural rules clashing. It's very evident on the border, but it happens in every region in the United States. This frame is

also useful when creating characters. No character should be an immovable set of characteristics or features. That is a badly done character.

NS: I'd like to bring this idea of cultural clash back to your discussion of language. Could you speak a little about the translation of your works?

YH: There is no way to translate one text into another language. You have to sacrifice some things and come up with new things. It's like having an object in metal and wanting to make it in wood. It could look the same, but it's made up of radically different material. Language is a material, so you can't expect any translation to be faithful or precise. You have to understand what a phrase is doing—irony, emotion, musicality—and somehow manage to create that same thing but with other tools. Every translation implies a certain degree of loss. Your language disappears but at the same time, it's a reappearance. It's a second life for a book.

NS: Can you talk to me about your writing process? How do you decide what to write? Do you use your novels as a place to get out anger? Do you imagine yourself existing within your characters?

YH: It changes with every project, but what I will say is this. Once I finish a project, I've already been ruminating about the next one, even if I don't exactly know what it's going to be. It doesn't matter how focused I am on one project, there are always other things happening in my life. I'm always taking notes. I write ideas and words that I like. I write possible things that I think for some reason will be useful in the future. I pile them, and eventually, the piles that look random have some order. That's how I organize my ideas and notes. Also, each book has been different for me. In my new project, I'm writing about a historical character. The guy has been dead for more than a century. So, I've researched as much as possible about him—about the places he went, his ideology. I don't know what went on in his mind, but I can think about all the possibilities. In a way, writing allows me to understand the inner engines of the soul and the complexity of emotions. I play with consciousness and insert my own empathy.

NS: Do you have any advice about the writing process?

YH: It depends on how you best work, but the only advice I have is to keep doing it every day, even if it sounds absurd. Write a little bit every day. It's something I did from a very young age. I told myself I would describe a dog—its attitude or specific way of looking. Soon, I discovered that I wasn't just describing the dog, but I was expressing what my mind processed. We can all describe a dog, but we don't look at it with the same affection or patience. Attention means something different for every person.

NS: It's true. We all have our own lens through which we see and think about the world, and I know your lens has been science fiction. In line with this, how does science fiction allow us to talk about things we wouldn't normally?

YH: There is a medieval book called *Embajada a tamorlán* (1406) that should be translated into English. Medieval authors have a tendency to make things up. This book is different because it's about a Spanish ambassador going to China, and so the ambassador has to write truthfully. At one point, he describes an animal with horns, the skin of a leopard, the feet of a horse, and a really long neck. I was so confused when I read it, but then I realized that this man was looking at a giraffe for the first time in his life! I think we can all take a lesson from the ambassador. We should all describe things as if we're looking at them for the first time. This kind of surprise and amazement is what makes fiction good. Science fiction literalizes certain metaphors that we use to express our relation to objects.

NS: We're nearing the end of my questions. Is there anything you'd like to add?

YH: There's always something to add. But we shouldn't worry about that. With interviews, just like with books, sometimes you just have to decide to end them.

After doing this interview, **NELL SALZMAN B'22** went around for the rest of the day writing about dogs as if they were monsters.



SUMMER IN ISLAND

RHODE BITES



CIRCLES

The grass was dusted with circles. Earlier in the year, those circles were drawn with white paint, but in summertime, they were made out of people: strewn about, lying or sitting, fawning or flirting, always relapsing into some circular shape. I, too, was a circle-goer, sometimes creating an orb of my own, sometimes joining a globe of others under coils of shade. Days of July, all sky and lawn, were the sorts of days that gave me no choice but to unbutton my shirt and sit outside in some human-made circle. As the days offered themselves to me, I wanted nothing more than to be in the moment—but which moment? Not that one, not this one, nor any of those that scurried by seemed just right for me. I was too knotted up with arbitrary questions. Which churchyard housed the bones of John Donne? How can I surrender to the ivory governance of the piano by picking out any other melody notes than those of “Easy to Love” with my index finger? And more pressingly, if the British call ‘z’ zed, why not call ‘b’ bed and ‘d’ dead? And so my thoughts twirled between my cerebellum and frontal lobe like Degas’ piroetting dancers, overlapping with one another at times, diverging at others. It would seem as though my little interrogations were wholly unrelated, but if I really thought about it, they had some silly connections, like that Ella Fitzgerald, who popularized “Easy to Love,” was raised only by her mother, just like John Donne. I am reminded of nature’s cyclical return, and how life and people seem to regress into the same configurations—physical and otherwise. With all the world before me, a breeze slight enough to bend the yellow tulips on their stems, and the rest of those summer afternoons ahead, I spun circles of thought within circles of people.

-GW

ERRANDS

A few weeks ago I had to buy a book for my uncle. So I went to Paper Nautilus, which I had been told was a great bookstore. I saw someone get some kind of embroidered first edition book there at a low price, and they looked so excited as they were describing it. The book looked valuable, like it was bound in the age of the Medici. After skimming through the fiction section, I bought my book and made the decision to eat something. I had been told Cafe Madrid was a great cafe, and it’s striking. The white walls and the white tables—it’s so fun and stylish. It’s in Wayland Square. I walked in to get a croissant and after I paid, the cashier asked if I liked the book. I told them that the book wasn’t for me, I was giving it to my uncle. We fizzled out after that, and I went home, eating the croissant, wishing that I either explained more about my uncle or just bought something else.

-HL



-ES

Seasonal Drift

Spring came thrice for me this year. I drove up the coast, watching the season retract into itself in hyperspeed, as if running backwards on a timeline: refurling blooms, shrinking growth. To move through space became to move through time. I mirrored the reversal, retracting into myself.

Again and again and again: the bursting. At first, a sudden relief, a breath out of the hazy shade of winter grief. The second, a homecoming. The third time, on Brook Street, became a taunt: watch me change, watch me grow.

The edges of the seasons always served, if nothing else, to stabilize (how very northeastern of me). Change always rose and fell in quartets. Without that bleeding line, I felt pushed slightly off-kilter, out of place.

Now that I think about it, it may have been fitting that the seasons fell apart when they did: they were haunted by our rhythms. It wasn’t like that for you. Steady seasons—you stuck to your territory. Summer came as expected, not (as for me) like third time’s the charm. Things happened when they were supposed to.

It turns out that temperature marks time only superficially, and something else hid behind the mask we called summer this year. I know you felt it too. Last summer I told you that Providence had turned back into a space stripped of meaning. This summer, the meaning was the problem. It filled the thick, rain-washed air. Darting out from behind red brick corners, sizzling out of too-close lightning storms, vine-curving around doorways, streaking the water of Narragansett Bay with reddish kelp that tangled at my ankles.

-ES

HOT DREAMS

When June began to heat up, the days in Providence became a simple two-step of hot to less hot. It was a domineering rhythm to live by. A hot day was the same as a downbeat or a sunken head. A hot night was being rolled between some large thumb and forefinger until finding sleep. In Providence, as noises and tasks began to quiet, the underlying meter of summer was the weather.

With little else to think of, I became a fanatic. I checked the weather app constantly. I cursed at thin air. I pleaded for the humidity to break and the wind to turn west off the bay. I spoke of it with those who listened, some of whom kindly reminded me that the weather is what we talk about when there is nothing else to say.

On the one hand, the weather is reliably mundane, and it becomes interesting when more pressing matters fall away (only to become obscure again). On the other hand, we’re witnessing a sea change in the way we live by and talk about the weather. This summer, I ended each night facing the bay, peering into it for signs of sleep. I was moved by the thought of others lying awake at night, vesting religious stake in the image of a cool wind tugging at the water.

-HR

1234

Click clack
click clack
four boys in a shack,
well not quite a shack but a house whose walls crack.

They work on their screens,
remote working machines,
breaking for only a chat or a snack.

One, an ad man, writes techn’logical slogans,
two studies numbers but spends summers coding,
three writes a thesis of historical importance,
while four vets ideas for televised performance.

Oh, the beach? We went twice,
but it rained, oh it rained.
And our dishes were left in the dunes.

Drive back? Oh, why bother,
chipper four says to two,
Why serve dinner on plates, we’ve got spoons.

On some days it got humid,
and unbearably sweaty,
and no fans could outwit the heat.

But one, two, and three,
work hard sans AC,
as four reads in his chilled attic suite.

When the work day is done,
we descend on the courts
to climb over fences for tennis.

Four stands—melancholy—
while one and three volley,
and two dominates, what a menace.

After three months together,
boys become quite a bother
so they drive off to nature
to walk in silence and ponder:

Is the summer in fact a season preferable?
Providence, in fall, is certainly more durable.

-NRS

PORTUGUESE MAN O’ WAR

I saw my first Portuguese man o’ war washed up on a Block Island beach in late August this summer. Otherwise known as the blue bottle jellyfish or “floating terror,” the Portuguese man o’ war is a jellyfish-like marine hydrozoan notorious for its venomous sting, which leaves painful, inflamed welts on skin that are occasionally fatal. They have reportedly been washing up on southern Rhode Island beaches with increasing frequency this summer, causing beach closures marked by purple flags.

A man walking past where I was lying on the beach pointed it out to me. I stood over it, watching it quiver. Its bright blue tentacles—its most dangerous feature—were missing. I later learned that their tentacles can detach from their bodies in rough waves and still sting for days after severance. About the length of my size-seven foot, it resembled an inflated, transparent kidney with crimped edges, or a hollow, membranous empanada stained cobalt, emerald, and bubblegum pink. It wasn’t fleshy or gelatinous like washed-up jellyfish I had seen; it seemed more fragile somehow. Its outer layer thinner and more delicate, it seemed to be shallowly contracting and expanding, like a disembodied lung mechanically gasping for air. Or maybe that was just the wind forcing it to flutter.

-GS



Blood Sun

The haze enveloped us in a light orange glow the whole day appropriating the best part of a summer sunset, citrus orange rays that portend long, sultry summer nights become a rude awakening like a bleary hangover—I can’t tell what time it is. biking to breakfast with evening skies

Texting friends—wildfire?
the alien beauty of warm dusty air
muddled by the despair of breathing forest ash

The normal, shared, semi-comic acceptance of climate catastrophe turning to a sudden awkward gloom as once far-away consequences suffused our backyard converging with Providence pollutants into a terrifying blend of both local and foreign embers

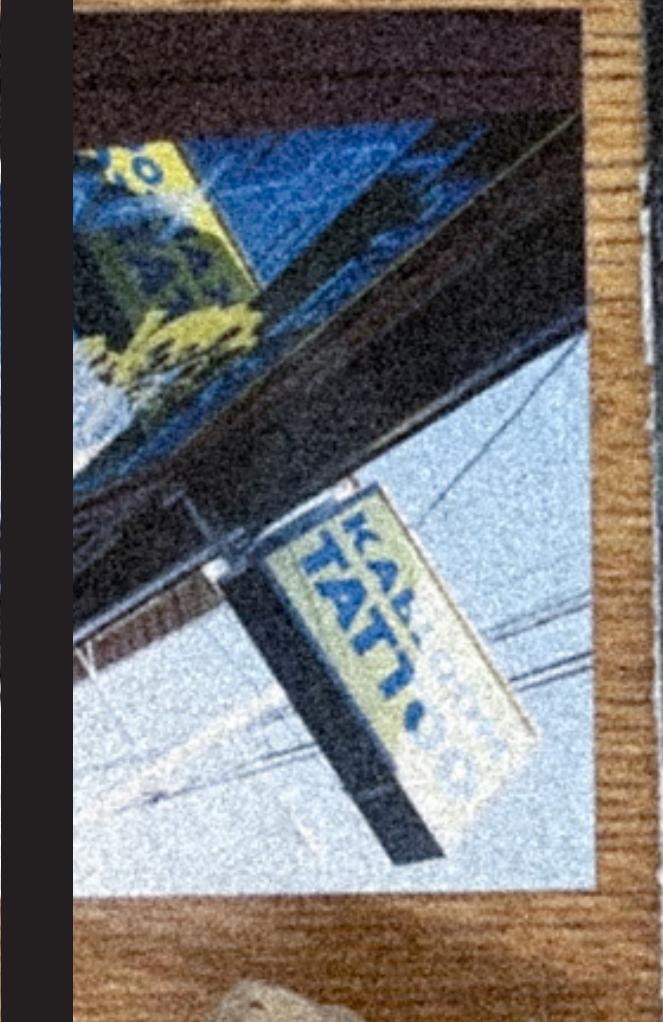
As evening falls the sun drops to the earth
a deep red orb peeking out from behind massive clouds of smog
I ride out on the East Bay bike path,
bloody reflections scattered across the water

I snap photo after photo,
missing the irony of recording as if unique
that which will only increase in occurrence

Home, I look out the window one more time
the sky finally returns to a comfortably regular color
Without light everything recedes into
a heavy charcoal black

-KS

*VOLUME 43



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Welcome to Dear Indy.

Our newest advice columnist, Indie, comes to Providence, Rhode Island with special expertise she's delighted to share with *Indy* readers. Indie is ubiquitous. She was the advisor to Mayor Buddy Cianci.

She was on the executive board of Fyre Fest. She's a Tinder-confirmed "Popular User." She's seen

every episode of *Law & Order: SVU*, *Love Island*, and *Survivor*. She's in the top 1% of Elliot Smith listeners on Spotify. She had a brief stint as Azelia Banks' publicist. She's made nearly every mistake under the sun—so you don't have to. And now she's here to grace us with her wit and wisdom. Indie welcomes submissions via email at dearindymail@gmail.com or via anonymous Google form.

OK Zoomer:

DEAR INDIE:

After a long semester inside, I want to meet new people...
but how do I meet people in classes? It feels so awkward
to just strike up a convo with masks and whatnot.

Love, Zoomer IRL

I was once told that in a group of at least ten people, AKA a seminar, there's always at least three potentials: one bestie, one nemesis, and one crush. So be on the lookout for each. Attract the bestie by locking eyes whenever someone says something idiotic. Confirm the nemesis by rolling your eyes whenever they say something idiotic, and then catch them doing the same for you. And attract the crush by pulling down your mask to take frequent sips of water. This will make them thirsty—both for you and for water—so hopefully you can catch a glimpse of the lower half of their face too.

Taking these relationships to the next step can be tricky. So after you've established attraction, amity, or animosity, move into your comfort zone, Zoomer: the digital realm. (If you don't know the name of your crush/friend/friend-crush, the "People" function on Canvas can come in handy). To make a friend: Friend them on Facebook. Message them about homework. Boom, friendship. To ask a crush out: Friend them on Facebook. Message them about homework. Follow up with a coffee/Seaweed's/study date text. Or match on Tinder to skip steps one and two. But make sure their views on Euclides or The Cold War or stoichiometry (idk I don't study STEM) aren't super cringe before you message—there's nothing worse than catching the ick on week three and having to avoid a failed date for the rest of the semester. Providence can be a minefield in that way. We've all been there. •

Dear Moving,

At the beginning of my relationship with my ex-boyfriend, I told him I was actually in love with another guy—a previous long-term hookup. As the relationship progressed, I fell in love with my boyfriend and thought about the other guy less and less. But the other guy was always a point of contention in our relationship because my BF knew I had some type of feels for him even if I denied it.

Last week, my boyfriend and I broke up... and on the same night I went and hooked up with the other guy. It was great. And I definitely have feelings for him. Am I the asshole?

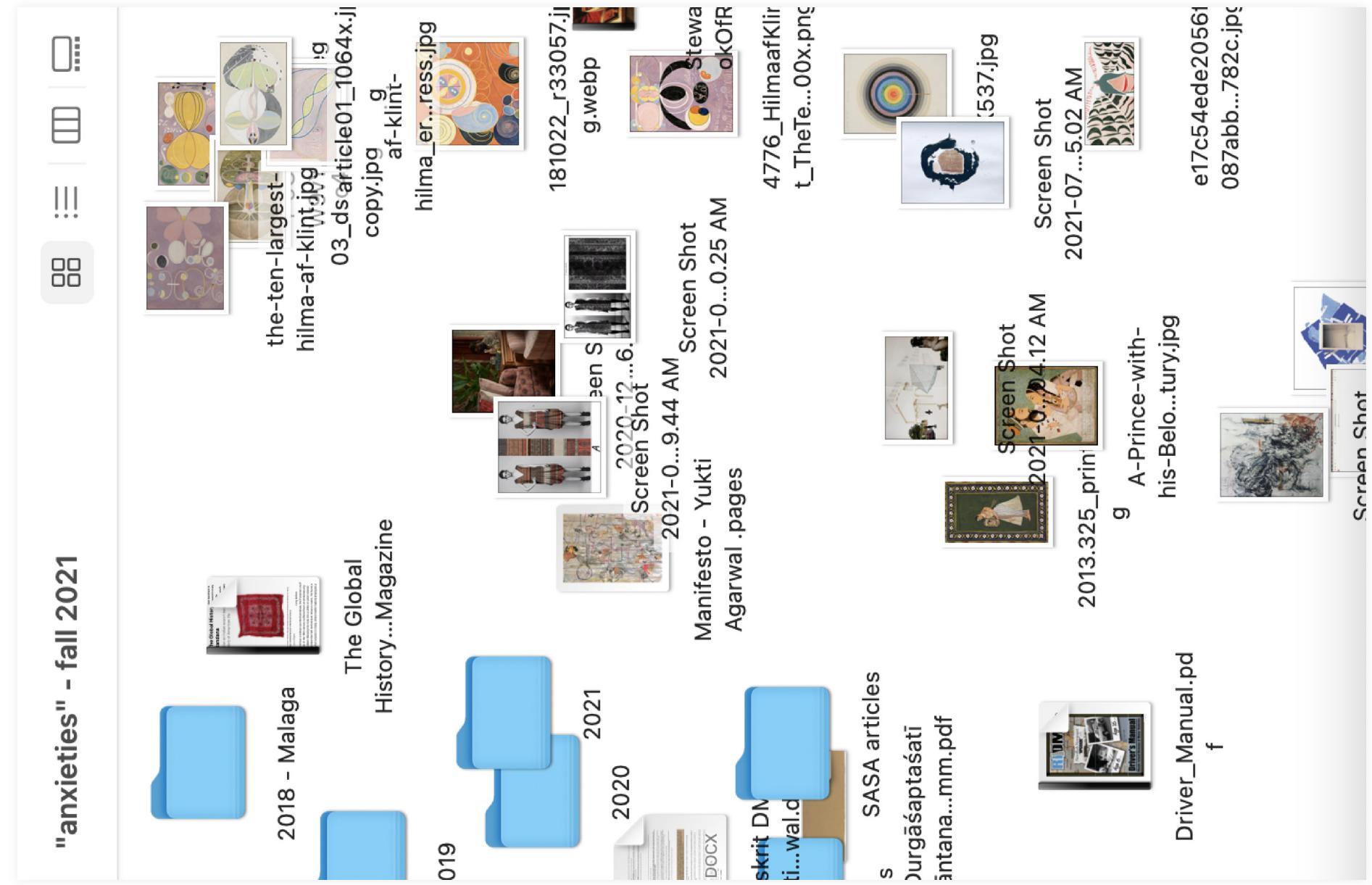
*Love,
Moving on too fast?*

Ah! The ol' bait and switch. We love to see it. (Indie maintains the best way to get over someone is to get under someone else.) Make sure your ex doesn't find out about your bang sesh, as gloating is neither classy nor nice, and you'll maintain your status of not-the-asshole. You were broken up—you've got free reign to pursue whatever fuckery you'd like.

But my real question, lovely, is why weren't you just with this other guy? Does he have a clue about how strongly you feel about him? This hookup sounds like it's more than just a post-relationship palate cleanser—your long-standing connection to this "other guy" might be worth feeling out. •

Love,

Indie



DISTRICT 3 CONTENDERS

Five Democrats vie to represent the East Side in a fast-approaching State Senate special election



On August 17, Gayle Goldin announced her resignation from the Rhode Island State Senate for a senior advisor position in the Biden administration. Goldin had represented District 3, which encompasses Providence's East Side and Fox Point, since 2012; she was known as a champion of women's rights and a leader of the progressive caucus.

An interesting—and potentially very consequential—special election will take place in Goldin's wake. After 2020, when several progressive candidates won upset victories against establishment incumbents, the balance of power in the State House underwent a seismic shift. These victories were due in large part to the Rhode Island Political Cooperative (RIPC), a progressive political organization founded in 2019 that helps identify, nurture, and ultimately elect progressive candidates. They've been quite successful in their short lifespan: in 2020, they successfully elected 10 candidates to offices across the state, including five to the State Senate. The RIPC is supporting Geena Pham in the District 3 election.

Goldin herself came very close to challenging the current Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio for his position, citing his opposition to abortion rights laws and favorable rating from the National Rifle Association as evidence of his conservatism. Now, Goldin's departure opens an opportunity for the RIPC to show its strength ahead of the 2022 statewide midterms.

The Democratic primary for the one-year role, which is all but certain to yield the eventual state senator, will be held on October 5. The *College Hill Independent* interviewed the candidates about their views on key issues facing Providence and Rhode Island.

THE CANDIDATES:

Geena Pham

Geena Pham, a public school teacher, carries the progressive banner in the special election. Like several other candidates, Pham has centered her campaign around Providence schools and the futures of the children occupying them. "My students are my biggest inspiration," she said. "I think a lot of people don't realize how in tune teenagers are with what's going on in the world, and I care a lot about their futures. They care a lot about their futures."

Pham, 27, was raised by a single mother who came to the US from Vietnam as a refugee. She grew up in public housing, and became the first in her family to attend college. Now she teaches high school English in Massachusetts. It's these "lived experiences"—from her upbringing to her status as a public servant—that Pham said separate her from the rest of the candidates. If elected, she would be the first Asian-American in the Rhode Island General Assembly.

Pham has been endorsed by progressive RI state representatives like House Rep. David Morales and Sens. Tiara Mack and Sam Bell, as well as the Black Lives Matter Rhode Island PAC. The RIPC, though, "has been the best support I could have had in the campaign I'm

In regard to Governor McKee and Mayor Elorza, Pham said, "I have a progressive stance. What I believe in is different than our leadership, and I'll leave it at that."

Ray Rickman

Ray Rickman, an eminent Rhode Island civil rights activist and former state representative, waited to see who was running in the election before jumping in at the last minute. He sees the position as a powerful way to help the schools, and sees himself as the only candidate with the requisite experience—though in his words, "I'm not running against anyone. I'm running for an office."

Rickman, 71, has placed public schools—which he argues are even worse today than they were after a damning Johns Hopkins report on the district two years ago—at the forefront of his campaign. "I'm going to be laser-focused on the Providence public schools," he said. "I'm going to be their protector and advocate. They do not have one. I'm willing to go to war with anybody over this." He says he's already talking to a foundation about funding a Spanish immersion program for Providence teachers, so English-speaking teachers can communicate with parents not fluent in English (approximately 55 percent of PSD students come from homes where English is not the primary language, according to the department's website).

Many of Rickman's ideas revolve around opening dialogues between the state and traditionally oppositional groups, such as unions or universities. For example, Rickman wants a contractual provision requiring public employees like teachers and police officers to have individual formal meetings every three years, in which they are asked the question, "Should you be in this system in three years?" Rickman thinks such meetings, along with making it easier to move while keeping one's pensions, would encourage problematic teachers and cops to leave.

In talking about her plans for Providence, Pham sticks to familiar progressive lines, bringing national politics to the local level. She maintains that she's the only candidate who has signed the Green New Deal pledge—she would push for a statewide Green New Deal—and the No Fossil Fuel Money pledge. Combating climate change runs through all her ideas: For example, she wants to incorporate energy efficiency into affordable housing initiatives and Providence Public School District (PPSD) renovations.

In addition to more funding, "what Providence public schools need is strong, reliable leadership," she said. "We need to look at school level, department level as well. We need to work on getting and retaining great teachers." She thinks the new teachers contract had positive elements, but also some that "deter new teachers from wanting to come back." She identifies a lack of collaboration "between the union and the politicians" as the root cause of PSD's dysfunction. "I believe that because I have that experience as a school teacher, I can build those bridges."

While Pham thinks it's "important to have the universities and colleges we have in Providence," she "doesn't believe there should be any sort of tax exemptions" for Brown's properties "because in the end that does not actually help the people who live in those communities."

Despite his declared disillusionment with policing, though, Rickman thinks "the vast majority of cops are not bad cops." He contends that policing can be improved through "bias tests" and a "more interactive, preemptive" force (which many studies say can actually reinforce racial biases). He rejects the idea of redistributing police department funding; if police budgets are cut, "women and minorities will be the first ones let go," he argues. For Rickman, these departments need to be "deconstructed, not defunded. I'm not talking about firing anybody—probably a three-year plan. But you can't take a certified racist and expect a class to change him," he said.

In terms of city finances, Rickman believes Providence needs "new revenue sources and an endowment." He wants the city to seek significantly more grants from foundations and gifts from wealthy East Siders, who he said would donate more to a "well-controlled" endowment.

Brown University, whose endowment recently rose to \$4.7 billion, could step up its lacking contributions to Providence as one of those revenue sources. But despite Brown's surging finances, Rickman cautions against trying to alter the status of any of the university's tax-exempt properties. "Politicians that tell you they will tax Brown," he said, "are hypocrites and liars." But he does want to impose a tax on all institutions in Rhode Island that have an endowment of \$4 billion or more: "Brown will not get hurt with a new tax." He criticizes Brown for promising local organizations donations that never come—Brown "never says no"—while funnelling money to national groups like the Red Cross and the NAACP that help boost its prestige. Since 2008, Brown has "turned inward" and become "selfish," he said. He would

like Brown to invest in research on diabetes, which disproportionately affects Black communities, and has already spoken to the dean of the medical school about this project.

When it comes to Mayor Elorza, Rickman wishes there were a law against current mayors running for higher office, at least until the end of their term. He also thinks Elorza should have resigned after the state takeover of PSD. Rickman says Governor McKee hasn't been in office long enough for him to have an opinion on the governor's performance.

Rickman also alleges that the Republican candidate in the special election, Alex Cannon, lives in a building whose backyard is technically in Pawtucket, which Rickman says would disqualify him from the race.

Hilary Levey Friedman

The first to officially declare candidacy, Hilary Levey Friedman is an author, sociologist, and advocate, as well as a visiting assistant professor in Brown's Department of Education. Friedman, 41, had announced in April that she was exploring a run for a General Assembly seat, but did not specify which branch she was considering (House or Senate) until Goldin's exit. She resigned from her position as president of the Rhode Island chapter of the National Organization for Women in order to run—"it's the logical next step" from legislative advocacy, she said.

Friedman has so far brought her academic work, which focuses on child socialization, to her campaign priorities of improving the Providence schools and ensuring public safety.

With her policy experience, relationships with state representatives, and experience working at the state house, Friedman believes she "can hit the ground running." What's more, Friedman thinks she fills a sweet spot among the candidates: "I'm in that space where I have experience, but... I don't have the baggage of people who have run before and weren't able to accomplish certain things."

Providence has "failed" its public schools for decades now, Friedman said. She's looking forward to upcoming governmental reviews of the PSD funding formula and the state takeover. For now, "we needed a transformational teachers contract, and that's not what happened," she said. (On July 30th, the Providence Teachers Union voted to ratify a new teachers contract that contained only modest changes to its predecessor.) "That was disappointment," she continued. Friedman stressed the need for more teachers of color and contractual changes that help retain newer, younger teachers.

Brown "does good things for Providence," Friedman said, but "it has made promises it needs to deliver upon," such as fulfilling the original goals of the Fund for the Education of the Children of Providence. And although she contends there's no avenue for compelling Brown to pay more to the city, she maintains that "no non-profit should be able to free ride."

Asked about the local uptick of crime, Friedman argues that "seeing everything as connected" is crucial. "We have to address the underlying roots" of poverty and lacking education systems, she said. At the same time, though, she pointed to the reported dearth of Providence police officers as detrimental to public safety.

Friedman has worked with various gun violence prevention organizations, including RI Moms Demand Action and the RI Coalition Against Gun Violence, the latter of which has endorsed her for the senatorship. From the legality of high-capacity magazines and assault weapons to the lack of safe storage laws, "there's a lot of work to be done in that area," Friedman said.

Although Friedman believes the term "defund the police" has become too politicized to be useful, she appreciates the conversation it has opened. Friedman is "totally willing to consider" repealing the LEOBOR, though she won't commit to it. "And we shouldn't be treating ATVs and dirt bikes 'as if they're legal,'" she added.

Sam Zurier

Sam Zurier, a lawyer and former Providence City Council representative, is also competing

for the job. Zurier, 62, has lived in Providence for most of his life. He grew up on the East Side and returned fourteen years later, leaving to attend Yale, study at Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship, and clerk for current Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer. Zurier is positioning himself as a savvy, experienced candidate who will enter office with ready-made solutions for the problems Providence faces.

What separates Zurier from the other candidates? "Having experience and skills to accomplish things, tangible things," he said. He chaired the Education Committee on the City Council, served on the Providence School Board, and worked to successfully reopen the ailing Nathan Bishop Middle School. Zurier casts his plans for Providence and Rhode Island in terms of untapped money and resources that are dammed behind layers of sluggish bureaucracy. For example, Zurier laments Rhode Island's halting disbursal of federal American Rescue Plan funds, which he argues should go to eviction assistance, affordable housing, and the school system.

When it comes to Providence schools, Zurier has a three-step plan. He wants to focus on teacher morale, allocate more money to the chronically underfunded district, and codify the right to education in the Providence constitution. He argues that this last move would allow a court to review whether the rights of Providence children are being addressed—and, in doing so, "take it out of the political arena."

While Zurier appreciates the work of Brown students and professors in the Providence community, he thinks the university itself could do much more. But he does not see "a broad effort" to tax "all university properties as going anywhere—it will go to court, and the state will lose," he said, due to a contractual "poison pill" Brown built "to prevent this type of action." Even so, he thinks "the state may have authority to impose taxes on other Brown buildings that are not 'mission-critical.'"

Zurier extends his professed pragmatism to his views on policing. If elected, he would support reforms to the LEOBOR, but not a full repeal, of which "we don't know all the consequences." He advocates for "greater resources" for both law enforcement and mental health counselors with de-escalation training, rejecting what he sees as the false dichotomy of defunding the police. (After proposed boosts in the next budget cycle, the Providence Police Department budget—the largest in the state—will sit at \$93.8 million, constituting around 17 percent of the city's total budget, according to The Boston Globe.)

The ATVs and dirt bikes plaguing Providence streets are an "enforcement headache," Zurier said. He'd support higher penalties, including criminal prosecution, for such violations.

Bret Jacob

Bret Jacob, an aide to Providence Mayor Elorza, is another progressive newcomer in the special election. After facing poverty and homelessness in his youth, Jacob, 27, is running because he believes "our public systems should be investing in people, and providing opportunities for them, and it shouldn't be up to chance—it should just be the standard."

Jacob says he's the only candidate in this race who has both the "lived experience" and "experience implementing progressive solutions" necessary for the role. Along with his role as Providence's LGBTQIA+ Liaison and the city's Director of Research and Development since 2020, Jacob cited his time as Mr. Gay Rhode Island and his work on a large-scale food drive at the beginning of the pandemic as evidence of his know-how.

Like his fellow candidates, Jacob wants to use the senatorship to provide more funding to the Providence Public School District—to revitalize English Language Learner programs, the dilapidated buildings, and the lacking social-emotional support networks for both students and teachers. Jacob dismissed discussion of the new teachers contract, instead directing focus to the urgent need for state action on district funding. He agrees with the charter school

moratorium "to better understand what the impact will be" on the public school district.

To fund the "bold investments" Jacob wants to see in schools, housing, and resilience to climate change, the state must "increase the tax rate on the top one percent" of taxpayers. "Our tax system is upside down," he said. "We have working families paying a higher percentage of taxes than the top one percent."

Brown, too, needs to do more to "contribute to the vitality of our neighborhoods," Jacob contends. The university "has a history of displacing neighborhoods, particularly neighborhoods of color," he said, and "their continued encroachment on private property that falls off the tax rolls shifts the burden of taxes onto Providence residents." He wants the city to "open a dialogue" with Brown to increase their contributions. But in terms of any legislative path to tax Brown more, Jacob says he "still needs additional clarity on what legal authority" the legislature has, although so far it seems "limited."

Under McKee, Jacob believes there needs to be more transparency in the American Rescue Plan disbursal process. He also said that the recent teachers contract spearheaded by McKee was a "missed opportunity" to engage with the community. Jacob was hesitant to discuss Elorza, given that the mayor is his boss. Jacob's campaign website does not mention working with Elorza.

Jacob admits that ATVs and dirt bikes are a "public nuisance," and that "everyone deserves to feel safe." But, he said, "we cannot arrest and confiscate our way out of this problem. He wants the General Assembly to "work collaboratively with communities across the state to identify a different outlet for ATV riders."

In regard to police officers, Jacob said that "we're asking our police departments to do a lot of work that inhibits their ability to make relationships with the community... and to focus on serious crime." He supports reallocating police funding to mental health professionals, as well as "financially incentivizing municipalities to develop parallel responses to address the 96 percent of other calls that may not require a badge or a gun."

"This is going to take time," he added. "There are a lot of folks who want to see these investments made, and they also want to still feel safe. I'm under no illusion that this will happen right away, divorced of public safety." Jacob supports a "full repeal" of the LEOBOR, which he calls "a barrier to justice and to the accountability and justice that survivors of police misconduct deserve."

To combat climate change, Jacob wants the General Assembly to invest in "jobs that support the green economy," address food waste, open more community gardens, and aid marginalized communities on the frontlines of climate change in insulating and winterizing their homes.

The existing leadership of the State Senate is up for a vote in 2022. Jacob is "willing to see" if any "progressive champions" emerge, but also maintains that the leadership can earn his vote if they prioritize progressive legislation.

Important dates for the election

(<https://www.ri.gov/press/view/41902>):

September 14, 2021: Last day to submit a mail ballot application for the primary

September 15 – October 4, 2021: Early in-person voting period for the primary

October 5, 2021: PRIMARY (if necessary) – Polls open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

October 3, 2021: Last day to register to vote in the special election

October 12, 2021: Last day to submit a mail ballot application for the election

October 13 – November 1, 2021: Early in-person voting period for the election

November 2, 2021: ELECTION DAY – Polls open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

SACHA SLOAN B'23.5 is already tired of talking to politicians.

RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT, STRIKE!

Community organizing in the age of precarious work

"I only started driving because I was trying to find something to do with my life. I thought, 'this is going to help me to free up some time so I can make other plans,'" Meleka Edwards, a former Uber driver and organizer with We Drive Progress, told the *College Hill Independent*. "And that was definitely not the case. The more that I drove, the less that I earned, which meant I had to drive even more. And I think that's the trick."

Originally from Oakland, California, Edwards worked as a teacher before she began driving for Uber in 2018. Quickly disillusioned with the work, Edwards joined We Drive Progress, a driver-led coalition that fights for workers' rights. Edwards worked alongside Hector Castellanos and Saori Okawa—two drivers at We Drive Progress—who filed a lawsuit in collaboration with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) to oppose Proposition 22 for violating the California state constitution. As of August 20, 2021, their effort was successful: Alameda County Superior Court Judge Frank Roesch ruled Proposition 22 unconstitutional and unenforceable.

Judge Roesch's ruling marks a critical turning point in the fight over labor misclassification. Prop 22 defends the heart of rideshare companies' business models: using the novelty of "platform work" to classify workers as independent contractors instead of employees entitled to basic rights and protections. "Essentially what Uber and Lyft have found is a legal loophole," Edan Alva, former Lyft driver and organizer with Gig Workers Rising, told the *Indy*. With this model, companies are able to significantly reduce labor costs by denying drivers a guaranteed minimum wage, health insurance, unemployment insurance, sick days, the right to organize, and more. Further, this classification shifts liability and maintenance costs from the company onto individual drivers. Workers incur the cost of damage to their vehicles and their physical health while on the job, meaning that they end up swamped with unseen operational expenses. Perhaps most importantly, subcontracted workers—as defined by Prop 22—cannot unionize or bargain collectively, blocking off drivers' only truly viable way of exercising labor power to improve their material conditions.

Rideshare Organizing

Judge Roesch's ruling is the latest update in a long fight over labor classification at rideshare and delivery companies like Uber, Lyft, and Instacart. In 2019, workers successfully advocated for AB 5, a California law that legally defined rideshare drivers as employees entitled to minimum wage, insurance, and other benefits. "We worked very hard for AB 5 to be passed at the time. Which just shows you, drivers can achieve a lot, workers can achieve a lot," Alva told the *Indy*, "Unfortunately, the next time around we could not compete with 200 million dollars." Just months later, rideshare companies spent 200 million to overturn AB 5 with Prop 22, returning drivers to contractor status. Prop 22 passed in California in November 2020 with 58 percent of the popular vote. Now, it is uncertain whether Judge Roesch's rejection of Prop 22 will remain intact. Edwards told the *Indy*, "Right now, we are very happy, but it's still an uphill battle. We know that Uber and Lyft won't stop. We know that they are going to appeal." Prop 22 has far-reaching implications for workers—if independent contract status is protected, companies in every sector may be able to legally disregard all labor rights and protections won by workers throughout the 20th century.

History of Independent Contracting

The contracted business model is not limited to rideshare companies, and must be read in conversation with systemic changes to labor and corporate power. The 1970s' labor evolution, often associated with the rise of neoliberalism, is commonly referred to as the 'rise of the knowledge economy.' This ideological shift leaned towards privatization, valorization of entrepreneurship and individual responsibility, and a shrinking social safety net. In the United States, middle-class manufacturing jobs, which often did not require a college degree yet offered benefits, access to unions, and a clear path of advancement within a company, were replaced by automation and global supply chains. Accordingly, wage disparities between high-paid-high-barrier, and low-paid-low-barrier skyrocketed.

This shift was accelerated by the invention of the World Wide Web in the 1990s and the ensuing "internet-enabled economy," as described by digital humanities lecturer Nick Srnicek. Companies such as Amazon, Google, Facebook, and Uber revolve around their digital infrastructure—their websites and apps—as their main source of value. Unlike powerhouse firms from the 20th century like Ford or General Electric, who owned both their labor supply and manufacturing processes, 'platform firms' focus on patenting their digital infrastructure while contracting out physical capital to reduce overhead costs. For example, Uber reports employing 22,800 full-time workers—engineers and other high-salaried tech workers—whose average salary is \$113,000, while relying on an underclass of 3.5 million subcontracted drivers who are paid, on average, \$19,900.

Economist David Weil coined the term the "fissuring" to describe a firm's decision to focus on their intellectual products while outsourcing manufacturing and in-house service work to third-party contracting firms. This model restructures the firm to support a much smaller echelon of highly paid "knowledge workers" such as programmers, engineers, and businessmen. The larger body of service workers, including custodians and bus drivers, and white-collar contract workers, such as secretaries and managers, are deprived of their employee status, though their work stays the same.

In platform firms, contract jobs are far outpacing the growth rate of full-time employment. A Working Partnerships USA study found that since the '90s the number of Silicon Valley jobs in the subcontracting industry has grown three times as fast as overall Silicon Valley employment." Further, subcontracting exacerbates existing inequalities, as the same study showed that contracted workers are more likely to be people of color, women, housing insecure, and dependent on public services. They report that although only "7 percent of full-time employees were Black and Latino," these populations comprised "26 percent of white-collar contractors and 56 percent of blue-collar contractors."

The "fissured" workplace is a blueprint for rideshare and delivery companies, though privatized labor is endemic to the US labor market as a whole. As labor scholar Veena Dubal notes, "independent contracting did not originate with the platform-enabled gig economy." Taxi-cab companies began ramping up the use of subcontracted drivers in the '70s. Similarly, FedEx implemented independent contractor classifications as early as the '90s. Uber and Lyft are just the next incarnation of deregulated work, further naturalizing a business structure depen-

dent on exploitation.

Community Extraction & Parasites

"Uber and Lyft, they are parasites of their environment," Alva told the *Indy*. Rideshare companies rely on public and community infrastructure—such as roads, cars, and drivers—while simultaneously moving as much capital as possible away from local communities. In San Francisco, a state commissioned report found that the rideshare workforce is 80 percent people of color and 60 percent immigrants. Driving can be an attractive source of income for individuals who are systematically excluded from other areas of the job market. This falls in line with the historical employment patterns of San Francisco taxi companies, who naturally attracted immigrant populations for the accessibility and the autonomy afforded by the work. Through the '70s, cab driving in San Francisco was "regulated, union work," Dubal writes, where drivers could earn at least minimum wage and enjoy relative stability. However, the rise of subcontracting dissolved that stability, taking advantage of politically and economically vulnerable populations, and relying on their lack of alternative options.

"There is no health insurance. For the first time I had to file for myself and for my teenage son. We couldn't quite fit into the absolute poverty level, but I still had to pay hundreds of dollars, a lot more than I could afford," Alva told the *Indy*, "[Drivers]...become entirely dependent on government assistance, whether it's health insurance, public housing, or other economic benefits." Prop 22 claimed to provide health insurance subsidies for drivers who work more than 15 hours per week. However, a survey from National Equity Atlas sampled 531 drivers in California after Prop 22 passed, reporting that only "10 percent of respondents" received the anticipated health insurance stipend, and "40 percent of respondents" had never heard about their ability to qualify.

Rideshare companies are not concerned with making insurance accessible to their driver population. That is because these companies save money when their workforce cannot access basic benefits. The intentional inaccessibility of company healthcare pushes many drivers to rely on Medi-Cal—California's public healthcare option reserved for those living below 138 percent of the poverty level—or remain uninsured and reliant on emergency room visits to address health problems. Either way, companies systematically undercut their workers with the knowledge that government assistance programs will fill in the gaps, leaving workers to navigate applying for public assistance programs, and local governments to pay the price.

Further, rideshare companies do not pay into their communities, often evading taxes that would go directly to public infrastructure. Uber "has been using a complex tax shelter involving around 50 Dutch shell companies to reduce its global tax bill," Business Insider reports, often providing no tax dollars to the state.

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The final outcome of Judge Roesch's ruling on Prop 22 remains unclear. The group representing Uber, Lyft, and other rideshare companies is expected to appeal the judge's decision—kicking the case up to the California supreme court—a move that could take longer than a year to come to resolution.

Further, rideshare companies are launch-

ing clone laws in other states, indicating that the fight over misclassification will continue on varying timelines throughout the country. If allowed to proliferate, the economic logic underlying Prop 22 has the power to systematically degrade labor supports for service workers, allowing whole sectors of the industry to skate by under lower standards.

These effects are already taking shape. Following Prop 22's passage, Albertsons, one of the largest grocery store chains in the US, announced that it was replacing most of its full time delivery drivers with independent contractors from companies like Doordash.

The way forward for rideshare drivers is not easy. Abolishing Uber and Lyft will not address the underlying conditions which allowed for their success in the first place: decades of coordinated political and economic assault on organized labor in the US. Backtracking provides little relief, as replacing rideshare companies with traditional taxi services is redundant—taxi companies had already adopted subcontracted labor years before rideshare apps were invented.

Further, rideshare work is not inherently bad—it can support immigrant and other vulnerable communities for whom this work may uniquely suit their needs. Thousands of drivers would have their livelihoods threatened if Uber and Lyft disappeared without a replacement.

Given these challenges, the fight is twofold. Firstly, defeating the subcontracting model as it operates under Prop 22 is essential in improving the material conditions of rideshare drivers. And secondly, reversing Prop 22 alone is not enough to solve the rideshare problem. At the root of this fight is a gross imbalance of power. Alongside legislative change, cultivating worker power is essential in allowing workers to define their own liberatory futures and carve out spaces of resistance against total corporate control.

Out of fear, Uber and Lyft have attempted to strangle workers' right to organize, unionize, and find community in each other. "When Lyft

and Uber were still paying reasonably well, they also created all sorts of forums for drivers to physically meet. Eventually, all of these things were pulled away. In fact, now they severely discouraged people from interacting with one another," Alva told the *Indy*. But workers like Alva and Edwards

have been organizing for years, resisting by growing worker coalitions as countervailing networks—the most effective way of centering the demands and experiences of actual drivers.

Similarly, the Driver's Cooperative offers an entirely worker-owned model for rideshare work. Since May 30, 2021, the Driver's Cooperative has operated an app called Co-op Ride in New York City. Their business model is democratically controlled, meaning each driver is a member who owns one share of the company and has voting power over business decisions. Profits are split by all drivers, and the Driver's Cooperative reports that their drivers earn "8 to 10 percent more than Uber and Lyft rides" because they extract a smaller commission. So far, they have enlisted more than 3,000 drivers with hopes of gaining traction in the city and potentially growing into other locations.

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Edwards and Alva have both moved on from driving, though they continue to organize for workers' rights in the Bay Area. Edwards now works as a substitute teacher and Alva is a manager at a defense firm. However, both still occupy independent contractor positions, inviting their own host of challenges.

Near the end of our call, Edwards describes her frustration that her pay rate as a substitute teacher switched without warning. As a con-

**"How much is enough?
How much is too much to
take?" - Mekela Edwards**

tracted worker, her company operates with little accountability to the teachers. "I'm just hoping that I won't have to take any action against this substitute agency too. Or you will hear from me again," she said, laughing.

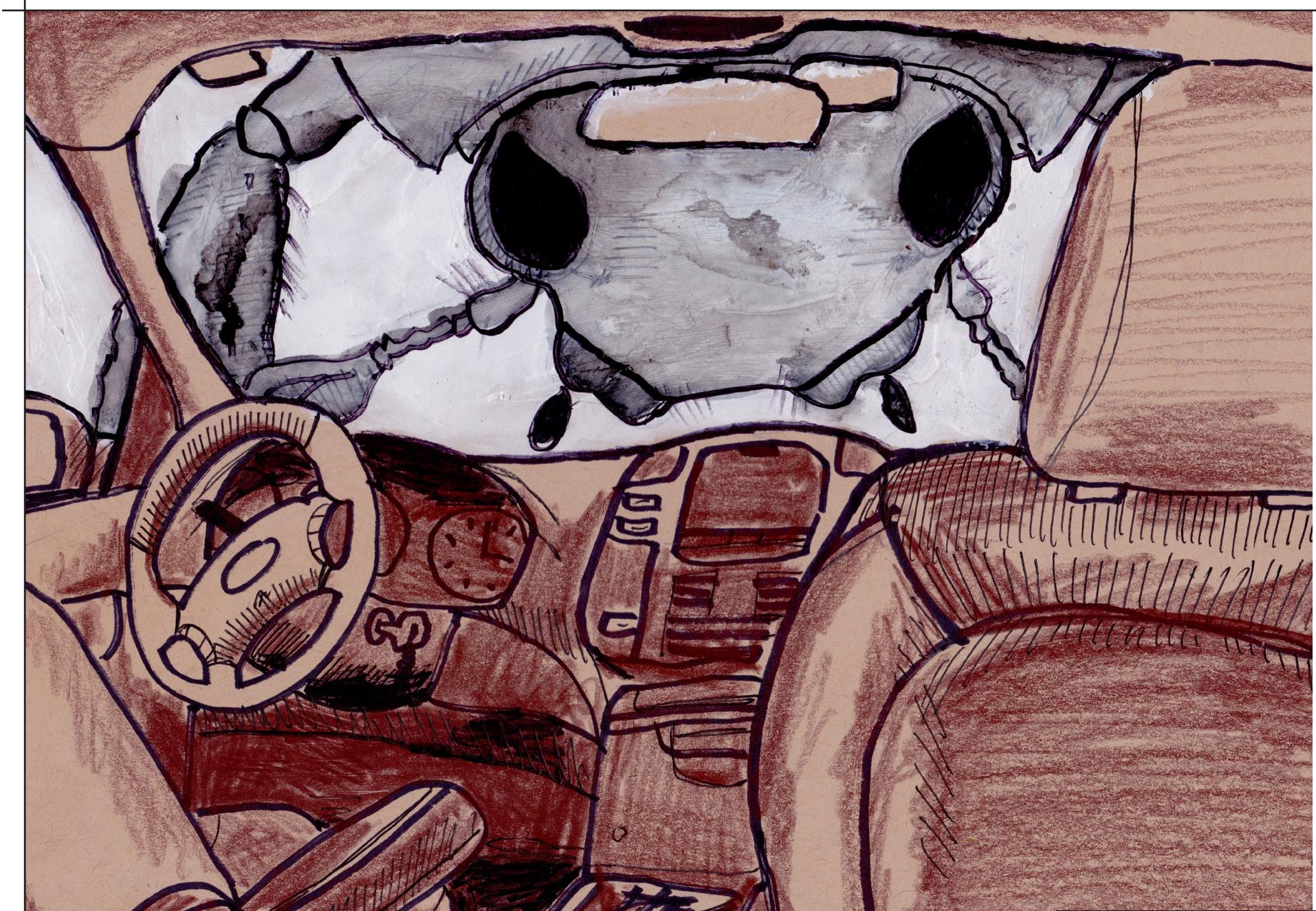
Rideshare companies serve as just one case study on the destructive consequences of the subcontracted workforce. As Edwards' and Alva's experiences show, the swing towards precarious labor reverberates far beyond

any single law or company, shaping the future of work in nearly every industry. Though systemic problems can make individual actions feel futile, Prop 22's ruling as unconstitutional can only be attributed to the work of Edwards, Alva, and thousands of other drivers who continued to rally, mobilize, and show up for their community.

"If you take Lyft or Uber, tip your driver," Alva told the *Indy*. "Tip in cash if you can. Support politically. Support unions, support candidates that support labor. If you can, donate to organizations like Gig Workers Rising."

Ultimately, workers are the ones who will continue to fuel the labor struggle. If you use rideshare services but are concerned with the exploitation, donate to your local community labor organizations. There are drivers everywhere who know what needs to be changed and are already committed to fighting for their rights.

LAUREN FUNG B'22 wants to join your carpool.



the bulletin manifesto

Thoughts on Space, Creation, and Engagement*

This is The Bulletin—the back page of the *Indy*.

The Bulletin is for local organizers, small business owners, and community members to share mutual aid funds, events, and information to mobilize support for direct action against structural violence in our community. With this iteration of The Bulletin we hope to engage in political education for all *College Hill Independent* readers, editors, writers, collaborators, co-conspirators, our community, and ourselves. As part of the *Indy's* mission to share and explore leftist frameworks, this page will serve as a physical site for building collective understanding, action, and solidarity around freedom struggles in our community.

We want to use this space for imagination and creation. We want to consider frameworks and ideas that break apart, transform, and create new worlds—worlds in which pleasure and care are a priority, worlds that center our precious connections with each other and the environment that we occupy.

We want to talk to people. We want to talk to those in the Providence community who are doing the hard work of dreaming and the hard work of turning dreams into realities. We want to talk about ongoing struggles: the fight for reparations, abolition, sex workers' rights, land back, and food justice. We want to talk about what it means to be a part of the Brown and RISD community, to ask how we can support and join liberation movements while tied to the spaces and resources of the university.

The *Indy* is intimately and inherently linked to both Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design. We work on stolen Narragansett Land in a building made possible by Brown's endowment—which is *a lot of fucking money* that was originally generated by the trans-Atlantic slave trade and has been consistently regenerated by centuries of dispossession, exploitation, and participation in violent structures. The *Indy* receives more funding from Brown than the Black Student Union, Students for Justice in Palestine, and Native Americans at Brown combined. It has historically been occupied by white, upper-class students, creating and upholding an inaccessible and pretentious community. This is not to negate the work of students of color, low-income students, and others operating from the margins who have resisted and attempted to transform the *Indy* through peer mentorship, the stipend program, and more. It is to acknowledge that we are directly opposed to white supremacy culture within the *Indy*, hidden behind “progressive” politics and fancy words.

In imagining and creating new worlds, we must avoid centering ourselves. This is not a space for us to muse on what we as students at elite institutions can do better without actually taking action, nor is it an opportunity to pat ourselves on the back or achieve some type of dead-end ‘wokeness.’ As Christina Sharpe describes in her book *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, we exist in the aftermath—in the wake of slavery—and must develop practices that allow us to both “inhabit and rupture” this reality. She refers to this as “wake work.” We are invested in wake work, which means that The Bulletin is a space for facilitation, amplification, and encouragement that is constant and ever-flowing.

How do we hope to do this?

- [1] politicize and educate ourselves.
- [2] show up.
- [3] care for ourselves and each other.

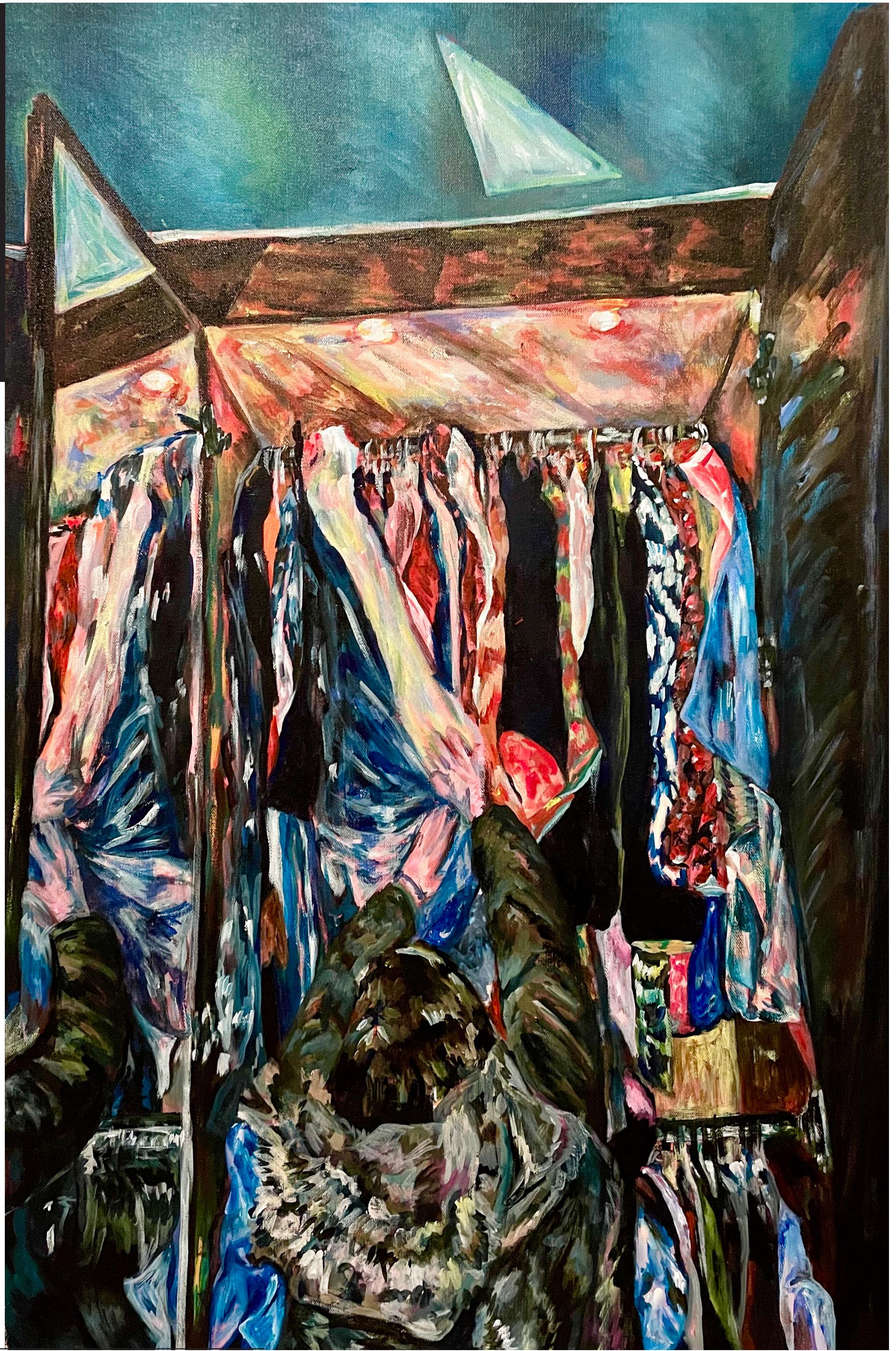
these steps are not mutually exclusive

Supporting liberation movements within our community requires a shared commitment to education and action. The Bulletin will collaborate with local organizers and community members to bring information to this page—be it a date and time for an event, a short interview, or a piece of revolutionary art. This page is also a space to share Providence happenings that help us feel connected to ourselves and our community. As adrienne maree brown so aptly describes in their book *Pleasure Activism*, “[practicing] care—for ourselves and others—is political resistance.”

If you have an event, action, story, or piece of art to share on this page, or want to learn more, reach out to us indybulletinboard@gmail.com.

-DYLAN, LILY, & AIDA

*The ideas framing our writing and thinking are informed by the work and intellectual labor of Black feminist thinkers and doers such as adrienne maree brown, Audre Lorde, Mariame Kaba, Ida B. Wells, bell hooks, Barbara Christian, the Combahee River Collective, Angela Davis, and many others—known and unknown.



The Bulletin zine!?

At the end of this semester, The Bulletin hopes to compile its pages to create a small zine to be distributed where you find this paper, in order to make the politics and art displayed here all the more permanent and accessible. A zine ("zeen") is an independent publication that is cheaply produced and distributed for free or at a very low-cost. For both practical and ideological considerations, zines are made accessible in all kinds of DIY forms, as pamphlets, photocopies, tri-folds, and digitally as PDFs or websites.

While zine-making has no formal definition, the practice is deeply grounded in the underground press and protest culture of marginalized groups. By bypassing mainstream magazines and media, “zinesters” (zine-makers) can share their personal and political lives, cultural obsessions, and uncensored opinions on the world around them. Since the term was first coined by 1930s/1940s sci-fi fandoms, zine-making has been employed by organizers, social critics, and artists as a means of sharing information with local and transnational communities. While zines have been increasingly appropriated by capitalist corporations (Urban Outfitters sells a zine kit as coffee table decor!), zine-making continues to be a crucial practice for marginalized voices disseminating and publishing subversive, creative, and caring work.

Can the *Indy* produce a zine?

As an “alternative” publication funded by the immensely wealthy institution that is Brown University, an *Indy*-zine might be somewhat oxymoronic. As we use this space to consider this question over the next few weeks, we want to learn more about the storied history of zine-making and the stakes of calling what we may eventually create “a zine.” In the process, we also hope to read and learn from some fantastic zines, expanding our understanding of the medium and the topics that matter to us.

If you have a zine that we should read, or a useful zine-making resource to share, please send it along to us at indybulletinboard@gmail.com.

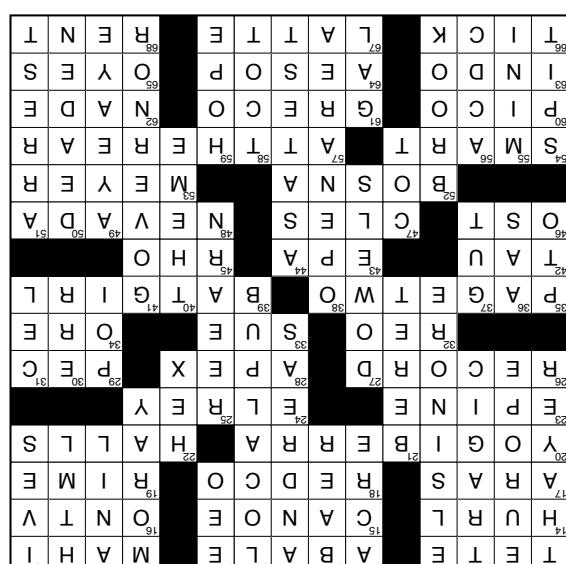


Past Actions

On Thursday, September 9, advocates from the Rhode Island Homeless Advocacy Project (RIHAP) and the Rhode Island Homeless Bill of Rights Defense (HBoR) Committee erected tents on the Statehouse lawn to protest the state's failure to support people experiencing homelessness throughout the pandemic. There are currently 1,026 people on waiting lists for individual and family shelters, while the state has only 608 year-round shelter beds, all of which are currently full. On September 14, the state-supported hotel room program will end, forcing 212 people onto the streets. Hundreds more may become homeless as the Centers for Disease Control's partial eviction moratorium ends. To address this crisis, advocates are demanding that:

1. The Governor and the General Assembly must immediately mobilize a taskforce to find creative ways to add 500 new housing units with supportive services to house as many of those living outside as possible.
 2. The Governor and General Assembly must ensure that those not housed as winter approaches have hotel rooms or safe shelter beds.
 3. The Governor and General Assembly must find a site for the House of Hope sponsored tiny home Echo Village to provide alternative safe shelter.

As of September 15, the Governor and General Assembly have yet to sufficiently respond to these demands.



Upcoming Actions

- **March & Rally to Shut Down Plymouth**
(by AMOR, BIJAN, and Never Again Action Boston)—Sept. 23 @5:30-8 PM
A march from Plymouth Rock to Plymouth County Correctional Facility to protest ongoing injustices against those detained by ICE at Plymouth, and to call for the end of contracts between Plymouth County and ICE.

Upcoming Community Events

- **Youth Open House (by Providence Student Union)**—Sept. 17th @ 3 PM
An event open to all Providence High School youth! Tour the PSU office and meet PSU members, hear about upcoming opportunities, enjoy some pizza, and more!
Location: 769 Westminster St.
 - **Outside (by Public)**—Sept. 19 @ 3-8 PM
A community gathering with food, live music, artists/vendors, and more! Run by Black & Latinx folks :)
Location: The Steel Yard— 27 Sims Ave.
 - **Weber Renew Ribbon Cutting**—Sept. 23 @ 12-1 PM
Attend to learn more about Weber Renew's programs and services, and how to get involved with Rhode Island's center for harm reduction and recovery services. Harm reduction supplies will be available.
Location: 124 Broad St., Pawtucket

Accounts to follow to keep up with community actions & efforts

@dare.pvd
@amornetwork
@tenantnetworkri
@wegrasptheroot
@railroadpvd
@abolishpvd
@closehighside
@blackandpinkpvd
@harm_redux_pvd
@qtma.pvd
@coyote.ri
@risdsjp
@pvdstudentunion

Mutual aid* & community fundraisers

*Mutual aid is “survival pending on revolution,” as described by the Black Panthers. Join in redistributing wealth to create an ecosystem of care in response to a system of institutions that have failed or harmed our communities.

- **Community Cares: Sponsor a Family for the Holidays** (by DARE)
<https://tinyurl.com/fjwf6m8y>
Fill out Google Form to sponsor a family for Thanksgiving and/or Christmas!
 - **COYOTE RI Closet** (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics RI)
Now accepting donations of hygiene products and new and used women's clothing at the Love and Compassion Day Health Center; 92 East Avenue, Pawtucket RI, 02904. Contact Sheila Brown (401) 548-3756 to donate or collect items.
 - **PVD Student Union's Well-Being Fund** (by Providence Student Union)
Venmo or Cashapp @pvdstudentunion.
Through this fund, Providence public high school students and their families are able to apply for financial support for anything from school supplies to utility bills.

Opportunities

- **AS220 is hiring!** Head to as220.org/jobs to read more details and apply for the current open positions: Development Associate and Live/Work Program Manager.
AS220 is a non-profit community arts organization located in Downtown Providence. Learn more at as220.org.

Texts mentioned (and unmentioned) that we're thinking about:

Pleasure Activism, adrienne maree brown
In the Wake: On Blackness and Being, Christina Sharpe
We Do This ‘Til We Free Us, Mariame Kaba

