

THE UNDERGRADUATE

A-courting They Shall Go

by PHOEBE M.W. KOSMAN '05

A MONTH before our plans of study came due last May, many of my fellow first-years became frantic. Having to choose our concentrations when we couldn't choose what to wear Saturday night seemed both impossible and grossly unfair—none of our friends at other schools had to make the decision so quickly! One of my roommates changed from biology to English; another vacillated among religion, history and literature, and English; a third considered visual and environmental studies before settling on Romance languages and literatures. I, having come to Harvard with the express intention of concentrating in history and literature, smugly proffered advice until the week before the plan of study was due, when I got cold feet and started flirting frantically with the English department.

Such panicked indecision over concentrations seems universal at Harvard, where a concentration has to be chosen freshman year and curricular requirements make it hard to change concentrations later on. There is some hope that the current undergraduate curricular review may make the process less painful (see page 61); in order to alleviate the trauma in the meantime, this past October the Committee on Undergraduate Education announced a new program that will pair first-years in the process of choosing concentrations with upperclassmen. Acting not as advisers, but as knowledgeable older siblings, these upperclassmen—like legions of proctors, freshman advisers, directors of studies, and benevolent upper-class friends—will share their own experiences in making one of the

most important decisions shaping an undergraduate's time at Harvard.

Even though the program will no doubt be useful, like the rest of the arrows in the concentration selector's quiver, first-years should also consult the several other advisers I discovered in the basement of Lamont Library recently while avoiding coursework for my own concentration. There, coiled in the rolls of microfilm filed under "A147: Early English Literature," repose sharp-tongued and hard-headed

guides to choosing a concentration. I refer, of course, to Restoration-era courtship manuals.

"With the Restoration, courtship—in high society, at all events—lapsed again into an Ovidian sport," E. S. Turner writes in the breezy *A History of Courting* (published in 1955.) So, too, with spring, does the process of choosing a concentration lapse into a Restoration-era courtship ritual—the first-year taking the role of the suitor, and the concentration that of the courted. Canny students weighing the competing charms of various concentrations resemble fashionable seventeenth-century men (or, in the epoch's parlance, "gallants") considering the merits of the women in their social circle ("maids").

Freshmen attending



the information sessions of concentrations in which they have no real interest are but the latest incarnations of multiple-billets-doux-dispatching cad. First-years pursuing concentrations their parents view as "useless" are surely the descendants of those gallants who, disregarding the goal of what Turner calls the "game in which the prizes were titles and lands and fortunes," made "love matches" with impecunious ladies.

These parallels are rendered of practical, rather than historical, interest to the enterprising first-year who, reading a Restoration-era courtship manual, substitutes his or her own name for *gallant* or *lover* and *concentration* for *maid* or *mistress*. Then there is no need to struggle through a courtship that pamphlet writers simplified more than 300 years ago. Many of the guidelines tendered by the anonymous author of 1676's *The ART of MAKING LOVE: Or, RULES for the CONDUCT of Ladies and Gallants in their AMOURS* are of striking applicability. First-years will do well to remember that "We ought not therefore, though we finde a [concentration] infinitely fair and charming, to suffer ourselves to be entranced by [it], if [it] be not as infinitely Witty; for Wit makes all of the sweets of a reasonable life, and without it Love cannot render us happy, or at least for any long time; for there is nothing can entertain us long but the Charms of the Minde, which are able to make it endure eternally." Leyla, one of several of my blockmates who has had difficulty settling on a concentration, glosses the passage in explaining her jilting of social anthropology: "When you thought you found a good one that would interest you, you look at the courses and you realize you have nothing in common, interest-wise." Good advising and flexible requirements no more an appropriate concentration make than does a fair and charming mistress a good mate.

Mrs. Susanna Jefferson, author of the 1675 pamphlet *A Bargain for Bachelors, Or: The BEST WIFE In the World for a PENNY, Fairly Offered, To young-men for directing their choice, and to Maids for their Imitation*, proffers advice useful to first-years who choose concentrations based on their future profitability. She cautions: "Never let money bribe you to a loathed bed, or make you accept a [concentration] in

whose person you can take no delight. Yet do not on the other side cast away yourself for a pretty face, which three days Sickness can destroy. After [its] qualities, let your next consideration be [its] portion; for though Riches alone are not a sufficient ground for a Match (for then it would not be [choosing a concentration], but a bargain and Sale) yet they are excellent good and comfortable additions; the hottest love being apt to cool and decay, where there is not the fewel of a Compe- tent estate to feed and maintain it."

Had my blockmate Josu read this sage advice back in March, he would have been spared both an argument with his mother and the submission of a change-of-concentration form. Josu came to Harvard intending to focus on biochemical sciences, but found he didn't care for the courses. With an intuitive grasp of *The Art of Making Love's* admonition that "there is nothing can entertain us long but the Charms of the Minde," and having thoroughly enjoyed a couple of classes on Japanese history and culture, Josu submitted his plan of study as an East Asian studies concentrator. His mother, less than thrilled, argued the impracticality of his choice. Josu enlisted the help of an East Asian studies professor, but to no avail; his mother was adamant. And so, considering various fields/departments' portions, he decided on a joint concentration in East Asian studies and economics. Sensing a lack of flexibility, though, he changed to economics this fall, and plans to pursue a language citation for Japanese. Josu neither cast himself away for East Asian studies' pretty face, nor allowed himself to be bribed by the doctor's income biochemical sciences might represent; instead, the wisest of Restoration-era gallants, he took the middle way and found what Mrs. Jefferson calls "the temperate zone, where alone love delights to inhabit."

IT IS NOT ONLY first-years, though, who may profit from the lessons of Restoration-era courtship. Concentrations would do well to heed the advice of Robert Codrington's 1664 *Youth's Behavior: Or, Decency in Conversation Amongst Women*, which, E. S. Turner reports, contains this passage: "You shall observe one to simper with her

lips that she may the better cover the deformity, or the greatness, of her teeth...another doth lay an azure complexion on her veins or doth imbolster her decayed breasts to purchase her a sweetheart." While concentrations, mercifully, do not resort to such cosmetic wiles to woo first-years, they do stoop to trying to purchase sweethearts through another means: food.

Many concentrations provide munchies, ranging from tailgate to cocktail-party fare, at their late-March information sessions. I found history and literature's spread—Oreos and Coke—disappointing, especially when, as my friend Rina breathlessly reported in the *Crimson*, Romance languages and literatures offered, "along with Pepsi, Canada Dry, and Diet Coke...neatly laid-out rows of Carr's Water Biscuits, Brie wedges, and French bread slices on plates with paper doilies. There were also assorted cookies from boxes of Pepperidge Farm's Entertainment Collection (Milano, Geneva, Bordeaux, Brussels, Lisbon, Chessmen, and Chocolate Pirouettes) arranged in enticing circles. The pi ce de resistance was a white porcelain bowl with a blue flower pattern filled to the brim with fresh strawberries." This performance, Rina continued, was one-upped by the history department's *chocolate-dipped* strawberries—but, retaining her critical faculties, she also noted that the history department's presentation left something to be desired: "the Pepperidge Farm cookies were served in their paper ruffles and the pretzels in their plastic bag."

Concentrators enticed by these offerings—and concentrations seeking to purchase concentrators—ought to make note of Codrington's admonition: "Few marriages succeed well that derive their beginnings from amorous desires. Marriage hath need of nobler foundation and must walk more warily. This boiling affection is worth nothing." Prude that he is, Codrington is right: bravely ignoring the boiling affection I felt for the fresh fruit the English department offered, I walked more warily and found that a marriage with history and literature had a nobler foundation. After all, as *The Art of Making Love* cautions, "the more surprizing and charming these Syrens are, stand more

upon your guard, and suffer not your selves to be vanquished."

Not all first-year/concentration marriages are as happy. My blockmate Leyla says bitterly: "At first they're like...oh so easy, so flexible, so wonderful, et cetera, et cetera. Then you find out all those hidden requirements, that there's very limited room for people to write a thesis, that basically if you do this concentration, you'll have zero flexibility." If others have misgivings about your concentration, *The Art of Making Love* suggests, you, too, should be cautious: "When one loves a fair [concentration] who hath forsaken another...he

hath reason to be disquieted at it; and how firmly establish so e're he be in the heart of that [concentration], yet he ought to fear his good fortune...and be afraid he may lose what he has gained, as well as the other."

Even Mrs. Jefferson admits that the perfect wife "lives very privately, some say 'tis at the sign of the Philosophers-Stone, in Phoenix Alley, in Non-such street; but" she continues encouragingly, "if you will but observe [these] Directions, and add thereto a competent dose of your own discretion, 'tis much to be hoped you may light upon one of her Sisters." There is no perfect concentration, and Harvard's cur-

ricular corset makes it difficult, initially, even to choose an acceptable match. But, absent better signposts, if we resort to the aid of Restoration-era courtship guides there is some hope we may light upon one of her Sisters with whom, as Leyla sighs, we can "tough out the hardships in the relationship to get to the good happy times, mainly when you can take courses in stuff you're really interested in." ▢

*Berta Greenwald Ledecy Undergraduate Fellow
Phoebe Kosman, of Winthrop House, considers her engagement to history and literature a successful love match so far.*

SPORTS

A Satisfying Season

A WIPEOUT on the slippery Astroturf of the University of Pennsylvania's Franklin Field dished the football team's hopes of gaining a second consecutive Ivy League championship. Winless in Philadelphia since 1980, Harvard took a 44-9 licking from a formidable Penn squad that effectively grounded the record-setting aerial act of Crimson quarterback Neil Rose '02 ('03) and wide receiver Carl Morris '03. With a convincing win at Cornell the next weekend, the Quakers sewed up the Ivy title for the third time in five years. That same weekend brought Harvard the best possible consolation prize: a wind-swept 20-13 victory over Yale.

Played under wintry conditions before a near-capacity Stadium crowd of 30,323, the 119th iteration of The Game gave Harvard an Ivy record of 6-1 and second place

A chill wind, gusting to more than 40 miles per hour, made passing a risk in the Yale game. But in the third period, two long aeriels from reserve quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick to star receiver Carl Morris set up touchdowns that helped Harvard to a 14-point lead. Beating Eli cornerback Greg Owens (20, right), Morris hauled in the first of Fitzpatrick's throws for a 50-yard gain. For the second consecutive year, the acrobatic receiver was voted Harvard's most valuable player and Ivy League Player of the Year. A senior, Morris received invitations to play in the postseason East-West Shrine Game and the Hula Bowl.

in the final standings. Holding Yale's league-leading rushing attack to 86 yards, the Crimson defense had a red-letter day. So did sophomore backup quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick, who came on late in the first half to jump-start the offense. His running and passing generated a three-touchdown rally in the third period,

effacing a 6-0 Yale lead and putting Harvard ahead to stay. Touchdowns two and three were set up by long passes to Morris, an all-America candidate and the most accomplished receiver in Harvard football annals. A four-year letterman, Morris can list eight school records on his résumé when he interviews for a position in pro-

