I learned quickly, after a few lonely
lars have come to define them and their
ies solely for their résumé,” Thomas says.
vard kids are the types who did the activi-
be unoccupied. “I don’t believe that Har-
us likes feeling productive even while
‘productive,’ and the overachiever in all of
get away from schoolwork and still feel
tracurriculars give [students] a chance to
new groups are formed because students

dency toward self-aggrandizement in
says, “Everybody here is a leader or wants
to be a leader.”

Although he is cynical about the ten-

toward self-aggrandizement in
some groups, Jordan Thomas thinks most
new groups are formed because students
feel the need to serve a specific cause. ‘Ex-
tracurriculars give [students] a chance to
to get away from schoolwork and still feel
‘productive,’ and the overachiever in all of
us likes feeling productive even while
doing something non-academic,” he says.

Rather than just hang out, we like to
have a cause. In a culture of high stand-
ards, it seems it may not be acceptable to
be unoccupied. “I don’t believe that Har-
vard kids are the types who did the activi-
ties solely for their résumé,” Thomas says.
“They probably believe that extracurricu-
lars have come to define them and their
lives feel rather empty without them.”

I learned quickly, after a few lonely
lectures and breakfasts at Annenberg,
The megrims continued at Columbia a week later. Schires had an off day, and two interceptions in the final two minutes wiped out a tenuous 13-9 Crimson lead, giving the scrappy Lions a 16-13 victory and effectively quashing any fugitive hopes of an Ivy title for Harvard.

The team gave Penn a tussle the following Saturday, but began badly by yielding 22 points in the first 16 minutes. Starting at quarterback for the first time in more than a month, Fitzpatrick injured his leg in the second half but went on to direct a ferocious fourth quarter rally that fell just six yards short of a tying touchdown. Penn’s 32-24 victory guaranteed the Quakers an undisputed league title for the fourth time in six years.

When Fitzpatrick was at full strength, his remarkable running ability gave Harvard’s offense an added dimension. At Yale, where he took the field wearing a knee brace and with his left ankle heavily taped, it was clear that his footwork would not be an element in the game plan. Nor did it need to be. Well guarded by his offensive line, Fitzpatrick mixed handoffs to Dawson, who gained 174 yards on 32 carries, with dropback passes. “I felt like Dan Marino back there, just surveying the field,” he said later. Throwing well, he completed 13 of 22 passes for 230 yards and four picturesque touchdowns. They came on a 26-yard strike to freshman wide receiver Corey Mazza in the second quarter; and a game-breaking 79-yard bomb to wideout Brian Edwards ’05 in the final period.

Yale’s league-leading offense, which had scored 40 points or more in five of the team’s games, put up eye-popping numbers: 30 first downs and 555 yards on 68 plays. Alvin Cowan, the versatile Eli quarterback, completed 44 out of 64 passes for 438 yards (a Yale record) and two touchdowns; receiver Ralph Plumb had 15 catches. But Harvard’s defensive unit came through in the clutch, holding Yale to a pair of field goals in the first half and mounting two stalwart goal-line stands. With Yale on the 3-yard line, 5-foot-8 cornerback Benny Butler ’04 made the defensive play of the game, deflecting a fourth-down pass to 6-foot-7 pro prospect Nate Lawrie. And with less than 30 seconds to play, it was the defense that administered the coup de grâce, scoring Harvard’s last six points on senior cornerback Gary Sonkur’s 37-yard runback of an intercepted pass.

**Tidbits:** On the fortieth anniversary of the death of John F. Kennedy ’40, the Harvard and Yale bands joined to spell out “JFK” and play “America the Beautiful” before the start of The Game. The attendance of 53,136 was the Bowl’s largest since 1987; when Harvard won by a similar score (37-20). In games played since the Ivy League’s inception in 1956, Harvard now leads Yale, 24-23-1.

For the record: Fitzpatrick became the third Harvard quarterback to pass for four touchdowns against Yale. Larry Brown ’79 did it in 1978 and Neil Rose ’02 (’03) in 2001. Clifton Dawson ran for more than 100 yards in each of the last six games. His 1,187 yards rushing is Harvard’s second-highest single-season total. Only three other Crimson backs have ever gained more than 1,000 yards, and Dawson is the first freshman in Harvard and Ivy League annals to do so. He also scored 12 touchdowns. The 27-0 shutout of Cornell was the first that Harvard had posted in Ithaca since 1893. This year’s 10-game scoring.
total of 317 points is exceeded only by the 327 scored in 2000.

Déjà vu: Dartmouth rained on Harvard’s parade in 1903, upending the Crimson, 11-0, in the first game played at the Stadium. This fall’s Stadium centennial celebration was marred as well by a Big Green victory....In the Princeton cliffhanger, the Tigers missed what would have been a winning field goal in the final minute of play. The same thing had happened with seven seconds remaining in the 2001 game. Harvard has won eight straight games and parts of two others, Ryan Fitzpatrick earned an honorable mention. An economics concentrator from Gilbert, Arizona, and Dunster House, Fitzpatrick will captain the 2004 team. ～“Cleat”

Saber-Fighting Warrior
At the en-garde line, Eunice Yi thrives amid the swordplay.

“There is something so visceral about facing off against another person,” says fencer Eunice Yi ’04. “You line up at the en-garde line, and you both know that the point has to end by someone hitting someone else.” Yet a fencing bout also exudes stateliness and ceremony. First, the athletes test their weapons to confirm that the electrical circuits inside—which help score the bout—work. Then the fencers salute their opponents, the fencing officials (called “directors”), and, in national tournaments, the audience. Failure to obey protocol may be penalized.

After these niceties, controlled mayhem breaks out; rigid formalities attempt to ritualize the underlying savagery of the sport, which, like boxing, is a nearly pure form of one-on-one combat. Saber may be fencing’s least civilized event. Of the three weapons—foil, épée, and saber—the saber bouts are the least precise and the fastest moving.

Eunice Yi holds her saber and mask in front of a photograph of Harvard fencers from another era.

Encore: Captain Dante Balestracci, a superlative linebacker, is the league’s first player to earn first-team all Ivy honors four times. He led the defensive unit with 96 tackles and was magnificent in the Yale game, making eight tackles, blocking an extra-point attempt, and bulling for a first down on a fake punt that set up Harvard’s first touchdown. Balestracci received the team’s Crocker Award, presented to its most valuable player. Five other Crimson players made the all-Ivy first team: freshman back Clifton Dawson, guard Joe Traverso ’04, linebacker Bobby Everett ’05, and defensive backs Benny Butler and Chris Raftery ’04. Though his injuries sidelined him for three games and parts of two others, Ryan Fitzpatrick earned an honorable mention. An economics concentrator from Gilbert, Arizona, and Dunster House, Fitzpatrick will captain the 2004 team.

How fast, you ask? Yi has won five-point bouts (the directors award points depending on a fencer’s success with attacks, parries, and counterattacks), in just 30 seconds, although the bouts can also last several minutes.

Foil and épée are “point weapons”: those who wield them score by touching the opponent with a spring-loaded, electrically conductive tip. But saber is a slashing weapon; you can strike your opponent with the whole blade. “Saber is a lot more flamboyant,” explains Peter Brand, Harvard’s head fencing coach, a saber fencer himself. “It’s more athletic, the physical requirements are greater, and you have to make very quick decisions, much faster than with the other two weapons. In saber, it’s both a lot easier to score, and a lot harder to defend.”

Saber, then, is a game of offense. Cavalry soldiers once used the weapon, which is lighter than the other two and has a large bell protecting the hand and wrist.

“Something about saber attracts really intense people,” Yi says. “Or, maybe fencing with a saber makes people very intense! During a bout, you can vocalize, though you can’t gloat. There’s more yelling in saber—it’s more aggressive.” Aggressive enough that at almost any point in the season, which lasts from November to March, Yi can show you some arm bruises, since the scoring zone in saber is the entire upper body. (Épée fencers, whose target is the whole body, may have leg bruises as well.)

Yi, Harvard’s top female fencer, has thrived amid the wild swordplay. “She’s extremely competitive and fights hard,” says Brand. “Eunice is very quick, strong, and tall—that’s important, because of the