Win, an agronomist trained in Myanmar, points out a demonstration windbreak that protects a field of lentils and cattle forage from the scorching winds, helps to retain critical moisture, and promises a source of future firewood. Proximity paid local farmers 2,000 kyat, the going rate for a day's work, to plant the seedlings three years earlier.

Past fields fringed with palms (a source of food, sugar, roofing materials, and sap fermentable into liquor), a modest valley descends down a dirt road lined with agaves toward Kangyikone village. While the delta rebuilt from Cyclone Nargis's flood surge, the Dry Zone cruelly suffered an extended drought, so here, too, Proximity extended aid funds for infrastructure projects. Villagers built a trap for silt and dug out and lined the pond beyond that provides their drinking water during the first part of the dry season—reducing by a month the period during which they have to push barrel-mounted carts up the road to buy water from the nearest pumped well. In an area where family income averages perhaps $500 to $700 a year, working on the project earned each household an extra $36 in wages.

Inside the monastery at the village center, U Thu Nanda, the abbot, offers apples, tangerines, water, pastries, and peanuts—the local crop—to accompany conversation. Given demand from the three villages that share the water, the first question asked concerns the potential to enlarge the pond's capacity. During the past three seasons, Yarzar Naing Win has introduced the practice of planting a “green manure” crop to enrich the soil and retain moisture between peanut harvests. It is not an easy sell: the technique requires an extra five days of cattle-powered plowing and seeding during a normally fallow period after the harvest, when the farmers cherish their rest, too. Yarzar Naing Win illustrates the process with a simple video on his tablet—something farmers can see, without having to travel to another village to observe.

Yet those who have ad-

Yesterday’s News

From the pages of the Harvard Alumni Bulletin and Harvard Magazine

1924 With more than a thousand freshmen enrolled in the College and the Engineering School combined, President Lowell warns in his annual report that Harvard will have to shrink the size of future classes or reduce services to its students until the number of qualified teachers increases.

1939 “The Undergraduate Week,” by William R. Frye ’40, reports that Harvard’s four youngest freshmen “will have to go to bed early if a newly revived Cambridge ordinance is enforced, for it provides that persons who have not passed their sixteenth birthday must be off the streets before 9:30 p.m.”

1964 Asserting that “This program for [dining-hall conversation] tables doesn’t mean only intellectual and exotic interests should be represented,” senior James J. Gaffney and 29 other Quincy House residents organize an American sports table; their first guest speaker is a scout for the Boston Celtics.

1989 Debate ensues after the demolition of the pseudo-Colonial, blue-and-white Quincy Square Gulf gas station at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Harvard Street. While some protest the building’s destruction, others praise the tentative plans for a new hotel (for guests of the University) scheduled to be erected in its place. (That hotel, in turn, is now being converted into swing-space accommodations for those undergraduates displaced by the rolling renovation of the Harvard Houses.)