

HARVARD NEWS

Harvard Yard To Become Parking Lot



By Johnny Parkyard

CAMBRIDGE, MA — A controversial scheme aimed at softening the impact of the current economic crisis on the university's endowment was revealed last Monday, after a project member accidentally emailed several megabytes of relevant information to the Harvard community. The sender, a junior member of the Committee for Endowment Preservation By Any Means Necessary (CEPBAMN),

mistakenly attached several confidential documents in an email entitled "Worldz most fuhunny Piczzzz - forwahd to yur friehdnzz" (sic) containing the critical instruction "send to 20 friends within the hour, or something bad will happen to you", along with several frightening life stories of people who failed to meet the requirement. After the incident, HSP contacted and interviewed the sender, who will be referred as Q.Z. for security reasons. Q.Z. admitted that he had confused the folders "Funny Pix" and "Top Secret Documents - Handle With Care" on his desktop, evidently a common occurrence in the Harvard bureaucracy.

CEPBAMN's most radical proposal includes the full exploitation of one of Harvard's most precious resources — namely, the Harvard Yard. Among several ideas discussed by the committee, which included having freshmen cultivate bio-fuels in the yard, the most striking — and the one finally adopted — included a resolution to utilize the yard to provide comprehensive car parking facilities. The person who conceived that idea, who we will simply call U.U., describes the proposal in one of the documents: "Over the last century, generations and generations of Bostonians and people from all corners of the world were raised with the dream of 'pahking the cah in the Hahvahd Yahd'. It is no secret that the invention of automobile was prompted by the 1888 visit of Karl Benz to Harvard, where he reportedly wandered for quite some time in the yard and finally shouted 'Yes! We should invent something that people can pahk in zie yahd!'. Yet, all subsequent university administrations have strongly resisted this idea."

The U.U. document continues, "This won't be a simple parking lot. We have no doubt that people will flock to have their cars parked in the most famous parking lot in the world. Numerous members of the world elite, from oil-rich sheiks to major blue chip business players, from oligarchs to shipping tycoons, will not resist paying top dollar for the prestige of having their automobiles resting on the grounds that saw the creation of the finest learning institution on the globe." He further describes supporting schemes: "A store can be opened in Harvard Hall which could sell memorabilia such as T-shirts, hats, scarves or burkhas reading 'I pahked my cah in the Hahvahd Yahd', or bumper stickers claiming

'My other car is pahked in the Hahvahd Yahd'. The proposal also admits: "This is not an entirely new idea. A similar scheme was suggested during the Panic of 1893, which included turning the yard into a parking lot for carriages." The plan was ultimately deserted due to fears that the cost of removing horse dung from the yard would offset the profits. "They were amateurs." U.U. concluded. "They didn't realize that they could sell the dung as a lawn fertilizer to suburban dwellers."

A few hours after the CEPBAMN documents leaked, the issue had already strongly polarized the Harvard community. Many opponents of the project claim that turning the yard into a mere parking lot will literally alter the academic atmosphere of the institution. "The noxious emissions from these expensive, super-performing, super-polluting cars will make learning unbearable," says John Green, 25, a SEAS environmental scientist. "It's not easy to make scientific breakthroughs when you're breathing Lamborghini exhaust instead of air."



Others worry about the impact on monuments and landmarks in the yard. "John Harvard's statue will be severely affected by these emissions, potentially altering its color and wearing out its surface," explained Sarah Schwartz, a single, 32 year-old sculptor and materials scientist. "I mean, look what happened to the statue of liberty? Anyway, are you doing anything later tonight?"

Professor Peter Smartfield, 44, expressed strong disagreement. "Its about time they got rid of this hideous green lawn and covered the whole damned thing with asphalt! The walkways just aren't enough. Also, that aqua stuff they put on the ground in the Spring to make the grass grow in 3 days scares the shit out of me."

Marina Widener, 38, had a milder opinion: "Desperate times require desperate measures. We have to do this to weather the economic storm. I want to make sure the university is still around when my kids apply. I think they have a pretty good chance of getting in."

Harvard officials have yet to comment, leading most to conclude that the CEPBAMN plans are likely to be realized. Will we see old cars parked next to the older John Harvard? Will the added income to the University's coffers actually offset the billions lost in the recent financial crisis or just utterly traumatize the tranquil atmosphere of the Yard? Will the dream of the millions of people wanting to see their cah pahked there be fulfilled or shattered? In either case, HSP fully expects the price of parking in the area to go up dramatically.

