

Harvey Cox brings life, livestock, laughter to Harvard



More than 1000 people turned out to see the long-awaited (more than 200 years), long-dreaded (by the Harvard News Office) grazing of a cow on Harvard Yard.

The event was carried out in celebration of the retirement Harvey Cox, who is Harvard's 9th Hollis Research Professor of Divinity, and of the publication of Cox's new book on faith.

The right to graze a cow in the yard was granted with the establishment of the Hollis Chair in 1721 by university donor Thomas Hollis, a wealthy London merchant who was a Baptist, like Cox, but never set foot in the Yard. The first Hollis professor and his son evidently graze cows there—but according to the Rev. Peter Gomes, Cox is the first since then to exercise the right—which Gomes said was akin to being given a parking space in Harvard Square, today.

The cow, borrowed for the day from the Farm School in Athol, MA, was named "Pride" —which Cox said presented difficulties because he's a professor of religion and pride is one of the seven deadly sins. The Farm School thus allowed Cox to temporarily change the cow's name to "Faith," which is apt because Cox's new book is called *The Future of Faith*.

However, after one of Cox's friends pointed out that Harvard

does not consider pride a sin, Cox decided to call the cow "Pride Faith". In his talk, Cox brought up the importance of treating the Earth and all of its beings with respect.

Somewhere in there, a man in a long black robe and shiny gold running shoes delivered an oration in Latin (all I could understand were the occasional "moos,") which drew laughs from the erudite crowd—or perhaps from those with translations in hand.

After the talks, Cox, Faith Pride, Gomes and hundreds of other people followed a band of tuba players—whose repertoire consisted mainly of "Old Macdonald Had a Farm" – across the stair landing of Memorial Church and the Cambridge St. overpass and through the campus to the Divinity School.

There, the crowd grazed on sandwiches, punch, and cake, and the cow on a bale of hay. More speeches were followed by music played by "The Soft Touch Dance Band," with which Cox plays the saxophone.

When I asked Cox if the event had gone as he had hoped, he responded, "Better!"

I'm sure the News Office, which feared that bringing in livestock would make Harvard a laughingstock, is glad it's over.

In case you can't tell, it was the most fun I've had in a long time; I'm glad I had a chance to be a part of it.

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