LEVERETT & HARVARD EVENTS

10/10: University Holiday for Columbus Day
10/11: National Coming Out Day
10/11: Lev Student-Faculty Dinner at 5:30pm in the Masters Residence and then the DHall
10/12: National Fossil Day from 1pm to 5pm at the Harvard Museum of Natural History (26 Oxford St.)
10/12: That's Entertainment! Exploring Careers in Film, Theater, Music, and Dance at 4:30pm at OCS (54 Dunster St.)
10/13: (Not just) Sherry Hour at 5pm in the SCR
10/13: Community Night at 5:30pm in the DHall
10/14: Harvard Job and Internship Fair from 1:30pm to 4pm at the Sheraton Commander (16 Garden St.)
10/14: Harvard 375th Celebration Dinner and EXTRAVAGANZA at 5pm in the DHall (followed by a parade to Tercentenary to eat a 15' x 18' H-shaped cake)

RIDDLE ME THIS...

1) What has a head, a tail, is brown, and has no legs?
2) What English word has three consecutive double letters?
3) What did the doctor say to the invisible man?
4) If you drop me I'm sure to crack but give me a smile and I'll always smile back. What am I?
5) Three switches outside a windowless room are connected to three light bulbs inside the room. How can you determine which switch is connected to which bulb if you may enter the room only once?
An apple a day keeps the doctor away, laughter is the best medicine, and you can dance your cares away: all classic adages on which we can rely. Or are they? Is there such a thing as too much golden deliciousness, lethal amounts of dancing, or an overdose on laughter?

Yes, in fact... there is! Between the 14th and 17th centuries in mainland Europe, there were a number of well-documented cases of "dancing mania" where large groups of people would be seemingly overtaken with the urge to dance erratically and uncontrollably over extended periods of time. One of the earliest known cases went down in Bernburg, Germany when eighteen peasants sang and danced around a church during a Christmas Eve service. The most well-known occurrence, though, is probably the Dancing Plague of 1518 which occurred in Strasbourg. According to Wikipedia, the mania started when a "woman named Frau Trofia began dancing in the street; within four days she had been joined by 33 others, and within a month there were 400, many of whom suffered heart attacks and died."

Frightening. There were various "outbreaks" of the mania in France, Germany, England, Switzerland, and the Netherlands in the years from the 14th to 17th century, when they abruptly ended. Surely, laughter is still good for you, right?

FALSE. Well, at least partially. Similar to the dancing mania, there was in 1962 a "laughing epidemic" in Tanganyika, present day Tanzania. It started with three students at a boarding school in Kashasha, and spreading to over fifty-percent of the students by the days end and shutting down the school for months. While at first, only children were affected, the laughter spread throughout villages in the surrounding area. Laughter quite literally became contagious. It is generally agreed that both the Tanganyika laughing epidemic and the dancing manias of the Middle Ages fall under the category of "mass psychogenic illness" in which large groups of people suffer from similar symptoms of neurotic disturbance without any known physical or biological cause. So, next time you chuckle at a friend's joke or grind on that cute boy or girl at a room party, think about the chaos (and hilarity) that may ensue.

(Source: Wikipedia.com)

Haikus for the Week:

This H-shaped cake is bigger than my room (because I live in Dunster)

as midterms approach lamont starts to smell funny and sounds like crying

Aerial View of Leverett Towers and Dunster House, 1962.

Historic Leverett
(Source: Harvard University Archives)

John W. Weeks Memorial Bridge, 1926

Yo-Yo Ma after his Leverett House concert for the Harvard College's 350th anniversary celebration, 1986.