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THE NEWS' VIEW

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One week later, beginning to heal

Now suddenly, as if much too soon, it is Friday again.

A week's distance from the early morning car accident that killed four Yalies, injured five of their friends, and left the campus worn and bleary brings with it something in the way of comfort -- but little of what might be called relief.

It began with dawn seven days ago, when most of us were sleeping. Since then we have witnessed tragedy and recovery, collapsed into tears and ourselves, and come together to ease, as best we could, out of what might be the longest weekend Yale has seen.

This week has been filled with remarkable warmth and quiet generosity, though -- from the outside world to a University turned inward, focused on caring for its aching own. The flowers came first, piling on the doorsteps of the Delta Kappa Epsilon house, sent by students and parents and people who had seen the broken Chevrolet Tahoe and the icy interstate on television. Then came diligent e-mail updates from masters and deans; notes and letters and baseball bats of support from other universities; and, of course, the airplane tickets to memorial services handed out to overwhelmed classmates and grieving friends.

Then came the stories, the countless memories that became part of speeches and eulogies throughout the week. Andrew Dwyer '05, Kyle Burnat '05, Sean Fenton '04 and Nicholas Grass '05 very abruptly became the center of our lives, the idyllic, characteristic Yale men we no longer have the chance to walk by on Cross Campus, read about on the sports pages, or call for help on a problem set. You may not have known them last week. You know them now.

And now it is Friday again: another frozen morning in what has been a relentless January. Today we are a week removed and busy, occupied mercifully with classes and the end of shopping period. In a way, Yale hums as it always has, but in truth the anxiety lingers: People you eat with in the dining hall should not vanish, someone who is 19 or 20 years old is not supposed to die. There is still a sense that a grave and arbitrary injustice has been done. But meanwhile, the flag hangs at half-mast on Beinecke plaza and another weekend begins. We are edging back toward the ordinary and continuing, ever so gradually, to heal.

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