“It’s ultimately the best day of our/your lives, with pancakes,” said Kelley Tackett ’20, one of the leaders of the Archaeology Departmental Undergraduate Group, also known as the DigDUG, in response to what exactly she and her co-president, Amanda Brynn ’21, were doing with five plates piled high with fluffy flapjacks. Scattered amongst the plates were bright slips of paper with phrases like “i dig u” and “archaeolo-gee ur cute” written on them—themed valentines for attendees to make for friends and loved ones, since it was February 14.

“I wanted to eat pancakes and I wanted to have all of my friends here and I really like [the archaeology] building, so at the intersection of all those things is this event,” Tackett continued. In the cover photo for the Facebook event, Brynn’s original drawing of pancake stratigraphy was featured, complete with pancake layers A-E and three syrup deposits.

The event idea was simple: eat pancakes, make valentines, and hang out. The communal awe over attempts to craft chocolate chip and sprinkle designs (all archaeology themed, of course) on the breakfast cakes only enhanced the sense of hominess in the room as morning light poured through the windows of the Joukowsky Institute. About a dozen people came and went, archaeology concentrators and non-concentrators alike, throughout the course of the event.
Tackett and Brynn drove the event and are as colorful as they seem on paper. Tackett is a triple concentrator, swims butterfly for the varsity swim team, copy edits for the *Brown Daily Herald*, and swing dances to boot. She wore a red dress with a teal patterned coat and plenty of glitter eyeshadow to make her sparkle. Brynn is also an intended triple concentrator and makes leatherwork in her spare time. She was a sharp contrast to Takett, sporting a beige tank top and muted brown and green paisley pants.

As the Indiana Jones theme song played in the background, people chatted about archaeology—digs they went on, theses they’re writing, speakers that will visit—but also caught up on life. At the same time, those who weren’t filling themselves with pancakes and chocolate were adding stickers and toy dinosaurs to their valentines to give away later.

A feeling of peace and relaxation filled the air. Nothing seemed quite as perfect as serving breakfast to those you care about on a Friday morning. Not everyone came in with high spirits, but they all left with a full belly, a smile, and probably a valentine.

That peaceful feeling seems to appear every weekend at King House, a gender-inclusive literary society. They host IKHOP, or International King House of Pancakes, each Sunday from noon to 2pm. Inside the house on Hope St, they push together mismatched tables and pull up an assortment of chairs and benches to seat everyone family-style for brunch.
“IKHOP started in 2001,” said Kenneth Noble ‘20, former president of King House, “and was a way for people outside of Brown to get involved.” According to Noble, the Providence-community-building aspect of IKHOP, which was originally just a rush event, has fallen away over the years, but the heart of the event has been consistent.

“We do it weekly now primarily because I felt that if we did IKHOP a lot, we could really build a stronger community and get a lot more interest and name recognition,” Noble explained. He headed the effort to make pancakes a more consistent part of King House’s culture, but for reasons that may be somewhat unconventional.

“I believe that cooking is one of the fundamental ways of acting non-violently. You get to meet people on your own terms and it shows the idea of a home and our belief in trying to share,” he said. Sitting in a red rolling desk chair spreading Nutella on a pancake with a fork, it’s difficult not to see what Noble means. Around the room, students chat with each other about a variety of topics, including Pokémon, plant care, Icelandic phonetics, and how delicious the triple berry coffee cake is this week.

The kitchen door is left open, so everyone can see the chefs of the week, flipping flapjacks in a variety of wildly different but oddly charming pans. If you ask someone to pass the butter, they will always oblige, though they might ask whether you want vegan butter or cow’s milk butter, just to be sure.
On the walls are drawings and paintings made by house members, mural-style, with big sweeping gestures and bold colors. Every so often, they hang new paper and start fresh, recoloring the space to match those who inhabit it.

Attendance varies greatly, but, according to Noble, was 30-40 people per week at peak operation of IKHOP. Now, some weeks are just 10 people, others are two dozen. No matter what, there are always plenty of pancakes to go around and many interesting conversations to have. Attendees would have to actively work to feel excluded in the space, drinking out of one of the many mugs from the King House cabinets and eating off of endearingly chipped plates.

Afterwards, all are welcome to inhabit King House’s common areas to do homework, read, or simply relax among people who understand the value of quiet coexistence. Couches, chairs, the floor, and even a giant red velvet bean bag are at the disposal of anyone who might desire.

The DigDUG and King House aren’t the only groups on campus who have discovered the secret allure of pancakes. Technology House, a co-ed program house on campus, hosted an event in January called “Crack of Dawn Pancakes” where participants made pancakes together at midnight.

Even more significant, National Pancake Day in the United States was on February 20—perhaps part of the reason why pancake-centric events are so popular on campus during the winter time.
A variety of brunch restaurants sported special pancake deals and some bars in the city of Providence held events that included the delicious breakfast food.

Despite the variety of contexts that pancakes get placed in, one thing appears consistent: they are employed when someone wants to bring a group of people together to share in a common experience. College is a great time and place to leverage that kind of togetherness, inviting the comfort and hominess of breakfast carbs into the minds and hearts of students.