



Candidates debate ahead of YCC election

BY JANALIE COBB, EVAN GORELICK & TRISTAN HERNANDEZ
STAFF REPORTERS

Six candidates are running for YCC president, the most in over 20 years.

On April 11, Yale College Council presidential, vice presidential and events coordinator candidates gathered to debate their platforms ahead of the YCC

election, which will take place April 12 through 14. The 12 candidates — the largest cohort running for YCC election in over 20 years — focused on Yale-New Haven relations, the establishment of a Middle Eastern and North African cultural house and advocacy for Yale’s first-generation, low-income community. Over 100 students filled a lecture hall in Linsly-Chittenden Hall for the event, which was hosted by the YCC in collaboration with the News. Editor-in-chief of the News Lucy Hodgman ’24 and YCC Vice President Iris Li ’24 moderated the event, asking both prepared and audience-solic-

ited questions. Candidates also presented opening and closing statements. “There hasn’t been this much interest in many years, and I believe that each candidate speaks for and represents ideas that will resonate across different parts of campus,” Li said. “It struck me how the mere candidacy of some people prompted more conversation around and inclusion of policy ideas not highlighted in previous races.” The candidate tickets are Sanya Abba-sey ’25 and Craig Birkhead-Morton ’24, Nyche Andrew ’25 and Madeline Gupta

SEE **ELECTION** PAGE 4



On Monday night, students gathered to watch 12 YCC candidates discuss their platforms and priorities. / Tim Tai, Photography Editor

The News is proud to present the special issue, Purpose in Pan Asian Pride, S1-S6



Yale, Harvard defeat Oxbridge

The four schools' track and field teams competed in Cambridge, MA.

BY PETER WILLIAMS
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

After a four-year break due to the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the world’s oldest intercollegiate international sporting events was back in action this week in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In this meet, there are only two team scores: Harvard and Yale’s combined men’s and women’s track and field teams versus Oxford and Cambridge’s combined men’s and women’s teams. Harvard and Yale took the meet by a score of 12–6 on the men’s side and 13–4 on the women’s side, extending their winning-streak to 30 years since their last loss in 1993.

SEE **TRACK** PAGE 4

Three student groups win Battle of the Bands



DJ Leon Thotsky, PJ Frantz and Tired of Tuesday to perform as Spring Fling openers. / Dante Motley, Contributing Photographer

BY BRIAN ZHANG
STAFF REPORTER

This year’s student lineup for Spring Fling has arrived. Set to take the stage alongside the concert’s big names are the rock band Tired of Tuesday, Whiffenpoofs alum PJ Frantz ’23 and producer Caitlyn Clark ’23 — who performs under the stage name DJ Leon Thotsky. The decisions were announced Sunday afternoon following Saturday’s Battle of the Bands, a competition between eight student acts at the Yale Farm. Attendees voted for their favorite acts to open for Pusha T, Ravyn Lenae and Dombresky, who will be performing at 2023’s Spring Fling. “I definitely wouldn’t be playing Spring Fling if it weren’t for my friends, especially the ones that are always sharing new music with me and encouraging

SEE **BANDS** PAGE 5

Elizabeth Alexander to give Class Day address

BY WILLIAM PORAYOUW & BRIAN ZHANG
STAFF REPORTERS

American poet, essayist and playwright Elizabeth Alexander ’84 will deliver the 2023 Class Day graduation address. Alexander was a professor of poetry at Yale for 15 years and served as the chair of the Department of African American Studies. Her involvement in education has far from ended since her departure from Yale, however. Alexander currently serves as the president of the Mellon Foundation, America’s largest benefactor of the arts, humanities and higher education. Class Day is one of two commencement ceremonies that take place on Sunday, May 21. In the morning, seniors attend a baccalaureate ceremony, which is then followed by remarks from the University

president and deans. There is an interlude brunch, after which seniors gather by residential college on Old Campus for Class Day exercises. “I am proud and excited to be selected as Class Day speaker and have the opportunity to address Yale’s graduating seniors and their loved ones in May,” Alexander said. “The seniors I met with who serve on the commencement committee were full of the hope and heart I encountered in Yale students every day as an undergraduate myself, faculty member and recent Yale parent. I cannot wait to experience commencement this year and look to the future together.” With a history spanning two centuries, the naming of the Class Day speaker has roots as a

SEE **CLASS DAY** PAGE 5



Alexander looks forward to delivering this year’s address on May 21. / Beinecke Library for Yale News

BY WILLIAM PORAYOUW
STAFF REPORTER

Jason Fish will serve as the next CEO of Yale Health, University President Peter Salovey announced on Monday. Fish, who serves as the chief medical officer of Southwestern Health Resources, a network of 31 hospitals with over 7,000 clinicians through a partnership between Texas Health Resources and the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, will replace Paul Genecin in the role. Genecin spearheaded the University’s health system for four decades, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, before retiring in January. Under Genecin’s leadership, Yale Health implemented electronic

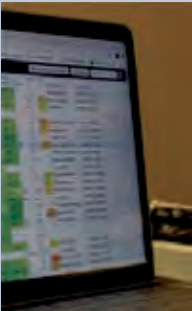
SEE **YALE HEALTH** PAGE 5

CROSS CAMPUS

THIS DAY IN YALE HISTORY, 1961. Electrical systems of both Berkeley and Grace Hopper were rewired to allow for the installation of proper air conditioning systems in halls of the residential colleges.

INSIDE THE NEWS

Yale’s first Indigenous language course will be offered in fall 2023. PAGE 6 **NEWS**



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BULLETIN



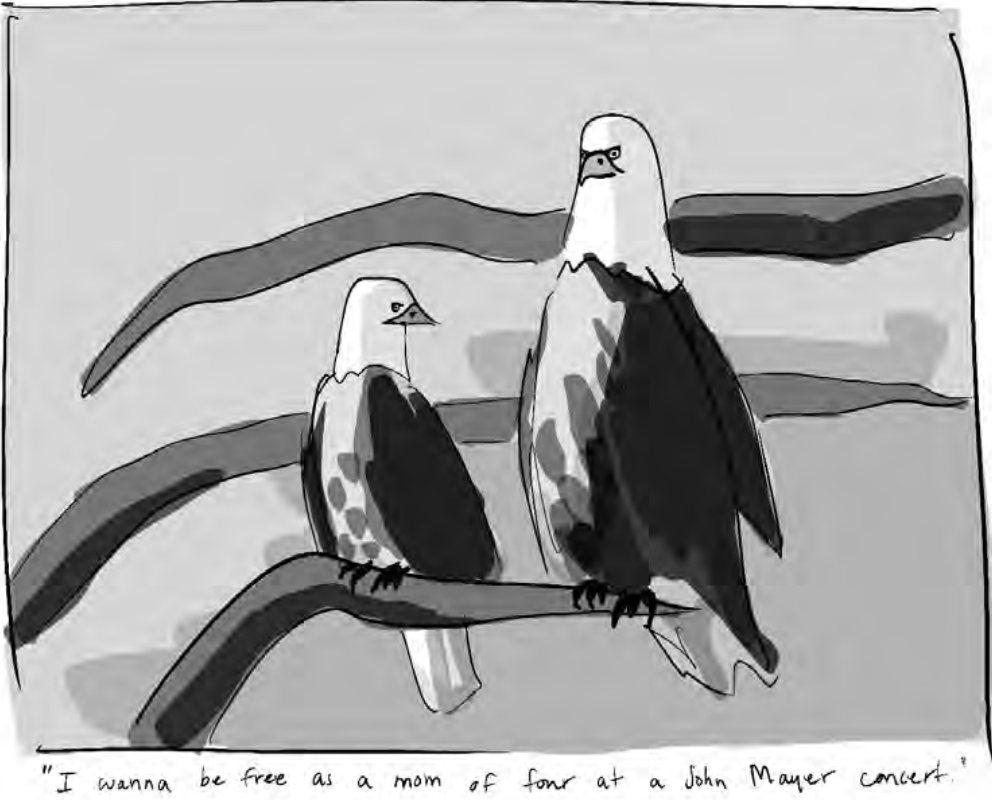
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OPINION

We need to be nicer to trailblazers

When Maxine Hong Kingston wrote her first book, “The Woman Warrior” in 1976, she originally intended to publish it as fiction, but her editor told her that nonfiction would be “the most accurate category” for her work because the label was so all encompassing that it even included poetry. And this sounded good to Kingston. She aimed to invent a new form for telling her stories and thoughts, and she believed it would be an honor to be shelved with poetry.

It’s hard to overstate the effect of Kingston’s work. According to Hua Hsu, writing for the New Yorker in 2020, it changed American culture, “For those who understood where Kingston was coming from, it was encouragement that they could tell stories, too,” Hsu wrote. “For those who didn’t, ‘The Woman Warrior’ became the definitive telling of the Asian immigrant experience, at a time when there weren’t many to choose from.”

Though “The Woman Warrior” received a lot of praise in its time, it was also criticized harshly by some Asian Americans for stereotyping, playing to the white gaze and airing the community’s dirty laundry. Many of her literary choices were read in the harshest possible light. For example, her translation decisions — rendering kuei as “ghost” rather than “devil” or even “asshole” — were seen as exoticizing or purposefully misleading rather than potentially just being her interpretation of the words or even a genuine mistake. These criticisms attacked not just Kingston’s work, but the authenticity of the experiences she described and her own integrity.

We are not kind to trailblazers. It’s not just books. People are mad at Mindy Kaling for her “careless conservatism” — always writing self-loathing Indian girls who fall in love with terrible white boys — and most recently, for losing weight. And it’s not just now. In the 1920s, people criticized Anna May Wong as a “female traitor to China” because she took roles which perpetuated Asian stereotypes. It’s a weird double edged sword in which we root for BIPOC creators and creatives to break into the mainstream but turn on them once they’ve reached a certain level of success. Although we know on an intellectual level that every individual work or representation can’t stand in for a community, that’s not how we act when evaluating the people and stories that come out of marginalized communities.

And this seems to happen regardless of the person’s thoughts on what they have to do break into their respective industries or their actual politics. Anna May Wong was very critical of Hollywood’s racist casting practices. And a few years after “The Woman Warrior” came out, Maxine Hong

Kingston wrote an essay titled “Cultural Mis-readings by American Reviewers” criticizing misreadings and exoticization of her work. In it, she lamented that many reviewers that rated her book favorably “praise the wrong things.”

“I have a horrible feeling that it is not self-evident to many Caucasian Americans why these reviews are offensive,” she wrote. “I find it sad and slow that I have to explain. Again. If I use my limited time and words to explain, I will never get off the ground. I will never get to fly.”

Kingston never set out to be the Asian American writer. It’s not her fault that her book was commercially successful or that she inadvertently created what we would today recognize as the tropes of Asian immigrant narratives. And it’s sad that many young Asian American writers either never read her work or intentionally avoid it because of the emotional baggage it carries — until recently, I was part of the latter group.

The kinds of representation that break into the mainstream do matter. Mainstream media is definitionally consumed by most people, and for better or for worse, blockbuster films, token Asian American novels and supporting characters written by non-Asian writers have informed the way people think about Asian Americans. And the stories we coalesce around, for better or for worse, shape the way we think about others. There is room for discussion and even debate about what kinds of stories we should tell about ourselves, but to descend on an individual for telling their own story or even for fudging it a little to get their foot in the door ignores the broader system. In the U.S., what is good for an individual is often not what’s good for an entire group of people, and we need to stop pretending that those interests aren’t in direct competition.

We can critique trailblazers all day, but we wouldn’t have anything to critique or anything better if they weren’t the first. We actually know this for a fact. Contemporary Asian American literary superstars such as Ocean Vuong, Viet Thanh Nguyen and Celeste Ng have all publicly stated about how they were influenced by Kingston’s work. Nguyen was even a student of hers at University of California, Berkeley. There’s a bravery to speak your experience into the record when there was previously nothing, even if you have to modulate that experience to get something on the page.

SERENA PUANG is a senior in *Davenport College*. Her fortnightly column, “*Reading the room*” analyzes culture and other contemporary issues through the lens of books. She can be reached at serena.puang@yale.edu.

YALE DAILY NEWS EDITORIAL BOARD

Sanya Abbasey ’25 for president, Maya Fonkeu ’25 for vice president

Editor’s note: Led by two co-presidents, the Editorial Board is an independent body of the Yale Daily News, separate from the newsroom. The Editorial Board is composed of 12 undergraduate students who represent a variety of backgrounds, interests and perspectives. No members may be editors or writers for the News.

On Sunday evening, the Editorial Board had the pleasure of meeting with each of the candidates running for the offices of president and vice president of the Yale College Council. With a historic number of 11 total candidates, the largest class in over 20 years, the 2023–2024 YCC election represents a rejuvenation of student life at Yale after the years of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each candidate championed their visions for student government at Yale by detailing the issues and policies they were most passionate about. After multiple years of uncontested or lightly contested elections, this year’s candidates represent many diverse parts of the Yale community, each with unique approaches, experiences and ideas for their positions. This year’s candidates are Indigenous leaders, athletes, transfer students, artists, extracurricular board members, student workers, ROTC members, community organizers, YCC senators and executive board members. Together they create an active and colorful portrait of student life and the Yale community at large.

We are astounded by the enthusiasm and dedication of all candidates this year: all tickets were competent and passionate, and we believe that candidates will honorably and responsibly represent the student body should they be elected. All candidates pledged to decline a salary if offered. The president and vice president positions are extremely time-consuming roles that require both dedication and passion throughout the term. In our endorsements, we will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate we interviewed. In doing so, we hope that our endorsements can also serve as a voting guide for those who are seeking to understand the race more broadly.

The Editorial Board endorses Sanya Abbasey ’25 for president and Maya Fonkeu ’25 for vice president. The Editorial Board chose to endorse a split ticket of two different candidates running on different platforms. We chose to do this, in part, because of the ranked choice voting system of the election in which students select their top choice candidate for each position irrespective of their partner. Among all of the extremely qualified candidates, Abbasey and Fonkeu stood out to the Editorial Board for a combination of their vision, efficiency and experience. Together, we are confident that they will effectively represent the student body and advocate for student interests in the coming year.

President: Sanya Abbasey ’25

We, the Editorial Board of the Yale Daily News, are pleased to endorse Sanya Abbasey ’25 for YCC president. We are impressed by Abbasey’s vision and humility, her commitment to mental health, her experience inside and outside the YCC and her determination to empower communities across Yale and New Haven. Abbasey’s extensive experience in other student organizations and grassroots organizing, together with Fonkeu’s pragmatism and YCC experience, will allow them to navigate the bureaucracy of the YCC and Yale Administration together without losing sight of a greater purpose and vision. She will be a president that builds strong relationships between the diverse communities of the Yale student body and strengthens the Yale–New Haven relationship.

A child of Pakistani immigrants, Abbasey is a sophomore majoring in History of Science, Medicine, & Public Health. In her role as the cultural and religious policy director of the YCC, she helped overcome resistance on religious housing accommodations policy by meeting with administrators and building a movement with other students through organizing a rally. However, her experiences elsewhere at Yale showed us that she is capable of advocating for many communities at once. Abbasey usually has 3 to 4 jobs at a time: she worked for the Admissions Office

for rural student outreach, was a peer notetaker for 3 classes in the Resource Office on Disabilities, worked at the Schwarzman Center, is an intramural secretary for Berkeley and a fellow at the Chaplain’s office. A dedicated and tenacious leader, Abbasey works with her community instead of speaking for them: in the past year, she improved Yale Dining’s labeling system for alcohol and allergens and increased accessibility of dining hall food. As president, we are confident that she will actively encourage student voice and discourse on campus, create a climate that will allow for open and honest discussions of issues that face the student community.

We are also impressed by Abbasey’s dedication to community organizing and her vision of empowering students and local communities through strengthening the Yale–New Haven relationship. Her vision begins in concrete action: as a tutor in the Dwight Hall program DEMOS, she taught science classes to New Haven Youth; as a tutor for IRIS, she taught the children of recent refugees and immigrants in after-school programs to acclimate them to the New Haven Community. Abbasey’s dedication to healing the exploitative, transactional relationship between Yale and New Haven does not lessen her focus on the student body. We believe that Abbasey’s commitment to holding the administration accountable for student wellbeing is complemented by actionable goals, building on her existing connections to cultural centers, student organizations and advocacy groups. If elected, we trust that Abbasey will bring her experience in community organizing to work towards the goal of “revolutionizing” YCC’s function and identity on this campus. We look forward to Abbasey extending her dedication to the causes she has worked on in the last few years to the entirety of Yale’s campus. Aided by Fonkeu’s administrative fluency and past experience in YCC administrative campaigns, we believe that their leadership will be grounded in both empathy and efficacy. Abbasey and Fonkeu’s unique blend of skills and experiences positions them to effectively tackle the challenges facing Yale students and the New Haven community, and to actualize their shared vision of a more equitable and inclusive campus culture.

Vice President: Maya Fonkeu ’25

The Editorial Board is excited to endorse Maya Fonkeu ’25 for YCC vice president. Fonkeu is both passionate and capable of connecting the YCC to the wider student body. She will be a vice president capable of laying out tangible goals and policies for a year in the YCC.

Fonkeu has used her previous roles within the YCC to organize free headshots for students, subsidize business attire through a policy proposal and lead a career readiness workshop. Having served on the First-Year Class Council and as a career resources director on the Executive Board, Fonkeu knows how to navigate the YCC and work with different branches to ensure student concerns are addressed effectively and efficiently. In her role as vice president, she would push for changes to how Yale deals with mental health and sexual misconduct. Outside of the YCC, Fonkeu is also involved with theater groups on campus and has used her time involved in these settings to connect with her peers and learn about how Yale can better support student groups.

Confident and adaptable, Fonkeu addressed numerous policy matters with detailed plans of action. When asked how she would tackle specific issues such as bringing a MENA cultural house to campus, Fonkeu laid out a plan for how to help students connect to the MENA community through better organization of peer liaisons while the house is being built. Alongside Julian Suh-Toma ’25, Fonkeu proposed that the YCC should be doing more to “meet students where they are,” stating that even though YCC meetings are open to everyone, oftentimes student organizations can not make the commitment to attend those meetings. As vice president, she would put in the effort to make herself more accessible to student organizations during their own meeting times in order to ensure that all student voices are heard.

Fonkeu wants to further draw back the YCC curtain for students by creating a process to formally track and inform students about policy proposals and where they are in the administrative pipeline. This plan would ensure that members of the student body can hold elected YCC accountable. Despite being a long standing member of the YCC, Fonkeu has avoided being dragged down by the bureaucratic environment of working with administration and is excited to further her role as a bridge between the administration and the student body. Fonkeu’s continued emphasis of the importance of hearing multiple perspectives on student-led issues highlights why she would excel as vice president of the YCC.

Final thoughts: Yale administration must commit to working with YCC

Policy proposals and personal achievements aside, we noticed a common thread in each of our interviews. All of the candidate tickets mentioned the difficulty of working with the Yale administration, either in their past roles in the senate or Executive Board or in their expectations about their work if elected. Candidates spoke candidly about the Yale administration’s unilateral decision-making in cases such as eliminating religious housing accommodations, eliminating summer storage options and evicting student organizations from the 305 Crown Street offices.

Candidates also spoke about the challenges of advocating for student communities in front of the Yale administration. Cultural and identity-based student groups, such as Indigenous students, Middle Eastern/North African students, FGLI students and transfer students, as well as activity-based student groups, such as student athletes, performers and ROTC students, struggle to gain adequate recognition and support from the Yale administration. While no ticket could speak for all of the identities represented at Yale, we are confident that our chosen candidates have the experience, the confidence and most importantly, the humility to listen to and understand their fellow students, and to bring their respective concerns to the administration effectively.

Candidates also spoke about the difficulty of getting individual administrators to hold themselves accountable for their decisions, and how deans and assistant deans would often redirect inquiries to each other in an infinite loop of bureaucracy. In the same way that students are expected to be accountable for their actions, both in and outside of YCC, we encourage all Yale administrators to engage in good-faith discussions with the YCC leadership, executive board and senate.

The Editorial Board will conclude this endorsement with a message to the Yale Administration. As students, we are proud to uphold the democratic processes of student governance: this Board and other student organizations write endorsements, the Yale Daily News profiles the candidates, each of whom is running a passionate and honorable campaign with the genuine goodwill of the student body in mind. But no amount of student enthusiasm and no extent of student advocacy can be effective if the administration is unwilling to work with its students and listen to their concerns. The Yale Administration must start to uphold its own values by engaging in open dialogue with both the YCC and other Yale student leaders, so that the democratic processes of student governance can thrive.

Read the rest of the editorial using the QR code below.



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FROM THE FRONT

“Music was my refuge. I could crawl into the space between the notes and curl my back to loneliness.”
MAYA ANGELOU AMERICAN AUTHOR

Yale and Harvard join forces to defeat Oxford and Cambridge

TRACK FROM PAGE 1

“Every four years, they come over here, and every four years, we go over there,” Coach Shoehalter explained to the News. “COVID-19 pushed it back, or else we would’ve been across the Atlantic ourselves last weekend.”

Started in 1893, this event predates even the modern Olympics — the Yale-Harvard versus Oxford-Cambridge track meet. Every two years, two of the four teams travel across the pond to compete. This year, Oxford and Cambridge Universities flew across the Atlantic last week to kick off their stretch of meets at four Ivy League schools, starting with last weekend’s meet at Harvard University. After missing a beat in 2021, the teams were back in action together for the first time since 2019.

Matt Appel ’24 took gold in the discus with a throw of 55.59m.

“There is absolutely a different atmosphere to the competition given the longevity of the tradition,” Appel wrote to the News. “In fact, while I was there I met the winner of the 1961 HYOC competition and we chatted briefly, which was a fulfilling experience. Also as of late I have been getting to be more familiar with the throwers at Harvard, who are both incredibly talented and enjoyable people to be around.”

Other top performers for the Bulldogs men’s squad in the meet were the 4x100m team of Jacob Kao ’25, Kit Colson ’25, Andrew Farr ’26 and James Grindle ’25 who took first overall with a time of 41.56s. Kao also took first overall in the 200m and second in the 100m. Aaron Miller ’25 took home gold in the 400m dash with a time of 48.75s, and Isiah Udofia



This week, Yale and Harvard teamed up to defeat Oxford and Cambridge as the British universities traveled across the Atlantic, continuing the world’s oldest continuous international sporting event.
/ Tenzin Jorden, Photography Editor

’26 earned gold in the long jump with a PR of 7.20m.

The women’s team also had several impressive finishes as Bharathi Subbiah ’24 kicked things off with gold in the long jump with a 5.45m leap. Carmel Fitzgibbon ’26 also notched a first place finish for the Bulldogs in the 800m with a 2:10.63 finish. Finally, Peyton Parker ’25 also took home gold for the Bulldogs in the 400m hurdles with a finish of 1:04.87.

“I felt that it was more “special” than just a typical track meet, given its storied history and the nature of the international collaboration,” Fitzgibbon wrote to the News. “The evening banquet and hosting the Oxford/Cambridge students at our school added an extra dimension to the weekend, as well.”

Because the 2021 meet was canceled due to the pandemic, the Bulldogs and Crimson will send 60 athletes across the Atlantic

this June to face off against their rivals at their home too.

Typically, this weekend’s past meet would just have been Harvard and Yale, and the top performer of each event for the Bulldog-Crimson combo would make the Harvard-Yale team that competes against Oxford and Cambridge in the month of June. However, this year, the coaches will determine the traveling roster for June based on this meet’s results.

“Harvard and Yale are each guaranteed a minimum of 22

athletes, with a total of 60 competitors combined from the two schools,” Coach Shoehalter explained to the News. “We choose only certain athletes, and we are choosing from this meet for this summer.”

In the meantime, the Bulldogs will head back to Storrs, Connecticut this weekend to compete in the UConn Northeast challenge.

Contact **PETER WILLIAMS** at peter.williams@yale.edu.

12 Candidates debate ahead of the YCC election

ELECTION FROM PAGE 1

’25, Austin Montini ’25 and Anouk Schembri ’24, Julian Suh-Toma ’25 and Maya Fonkeu ’25, and Ezana Tedla ’25 and Kyle Hovannesian ’25. Daven Yadav ’25 is running alone for president on a solo ticket. Olivia Lombardo ’25 is running uncontested for Events Director.

The debate often centered on uplifting specific identity-based groups on campus, with the most frequently discussed groups being the FGLI, MENA and Indigenous student communities, as well as student athletes.

Much of this discussion arose from the candidates’ individual identities, experiences and communities, especially when it came to Andrew and Gupta, who are running on Yale’s first all-Indigenous ticket.

“My running mate and I belong to one of the most underrepresented groups in Yale College as Indigenous women,” Andrew said during the debate. “As your President I will ensure that no one in the student body feels inadequately represented.”

Many if the other tickets also made commitments to support the Indigenous community at Yale, although one was met with criticism from Gupta. After Birkhead-Morton voiced his support

for the efforts of Indigenous organizers on campus, Gupta asked how he could claim to support decolonization while running against the first Indigenous vice president candidate in Yale’s history.

“I can’t do anything about that,” Birkhead-Morton, who is Black, responded. “My ancestors did not make a choice. I respect your candidacy a lot, and I support these issues.”

In addition to advocating for Indigenous communities, several candidates highlighted their commitment to FGLI advocacy in the context of a summer storage policy change announced on Mar. 8 by Dean of Student Affairs Melanie Boyd. The change revoked the ability for students to store their belongings in their residential college over the summer.

Boyd recently announced a stipend for summer storage for students on full financial aid.

But Hovannesian lamented the University’s lack of support for students that receive significant financial aid but do not have a zero parent share, promising to work with Tedla to remedy this disparity if elected.

“It’s not just the summer storage thing, but stuff tends to be prioritized for people who receive full financial aid,” Hovannesian said. “But I think it’s kind of useless if you have to pay just one dollar to

Yale but do not receive some support. I think we need to continue to pressure the administration and also use YCC resources.”

The candidates also discussed ongoing efforts to establish a cultural house for MENA students — a point that MENA students on campus have prioritized in recent years. Abbeysey and Birkhead-Morton in particular prioritized ensuring that MENA students get the support they need on campus.

“I don’t doubt the sincerity of all the candidates on the stage but I am a little wary of the popularization of a MENA cultural center,” Abbeysey said. “I just want to say that this is something that actually matters to a lot of students on campus and it requires work, and I have put in the work in past years to help them.”

Student identities, however, were not the only topic of conversation at the debate. Yale-New Haven relations also arose frequently during the discussion. Many candidates promised to advocate for Yale to do more to contribute to the city of New Haven and its surrounding communities.

“Yale rests in an ivory tower and has a real responsibility to do the healing,” Suh-Toma said. “We need to actually invest in our relationship with the community in New Haven.”

While many tickets positioned themselves as experienced and dedicated YCC policymakers,

others emphasized their experience as outsiders ready to bring a fresh perspective to a bureaucratic organization.

Montini and Schembri — a student-athlete and transfer student, respectively — stressed the perspective they brought as “normal students,” not seasoned YCC representatives, as a benefit to their ability to enact meaningful change in the organization.

“At the end of the day, if you’re happy with the current way the YCC has been conducting, then it should be an easy choice to vote for any of these people,” Montini said. “But if you’re not, I think you should give us a chance at least to show what we can do.”

Their ticket is not the only unconventional one this election season: Yadav decided to enter the race without a running mate. If he is elected as president, his vice president will come from a different ticket.

“I did reach out to many candidates I thought would be killer in this position,” Yadav said.

“All the vice presidents over there are very passionate and very smart, capable people, and I would love to collaborate with any of them. Honestly, if we don’t even agree on certain issues, we can easily find common ground.”

In her statements during the debate, Lombardo touched on many

of the same issues as the presidential and vice presidential candidates, although through the lens of events planning on campus. She believes that the Events Coordinator has the ability to truly engage with underrepresented groups across campus as well as the New Haven community.

“Unfortunately, Yale College Council events lack a lot of institutional memory and history,” Lombardo said. “We need to make sure that events are structured around what the students’ needs and wants are rather than events that have been taken over the years. We also have to lean into what works and make things more financially accessible.”

The wide breadth of students running for election this year excites Li, and makes her hopeful for the effectiveness of YCC next year. Li told the News that there “hasn’t been this much interest in many years” and that the candidates represent many views from many different parts of campus.

Results of the election will be released by 9 p.m. on Saturday, Apr. 15.

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Three student groups win Battle of the Bands

BANDS FROM PAGE 1

me to get out there and DJ even when I get shy or nervous,” said Clark, who revealed that she applied for Battle of the Bands an hour before the deadline due to self-doubt. “No sneak peaks yet, but people should get ready to dance hard!”

Drawing inspiration from Octo Octa, Eris Drew, Darwin and Ben UFO, she has been DJing and producing for almost a year, learning through YouTube videos and her own research. For her, the most gratifying part of producing and remixing music is putting on a

good party for people to enjoy themselves and their company.

Though skill and practice are important, she explained, it is even more essential to watch the crowd and cultivate an environment where everyone has a good time and is able to connect with the music. A modified recording of her Battle of the Bands setlist can be found here.

Like Clark, Frantz — who performed a set of original songs as well as a cover of Billie Eilish’s “Happier Than Ever” on Saturday — is still exploring his musical interests. Boasting an Instagram following of over 15,000,

he first started gaining traction through TikTok, where a video of him performing his song “downbad” garnered over 50,000 views.

He is hesitant to box himself into a particular genre but said that if he had to describe his work, it would be a blend of indie and “sad boy” pop. To prospective Spring Fling attendees, he added that they can expect more unreleased songs on the “big day,” in addition to various Easter eggs he intends to drop through his social media platforms.

The lead up to the big day will also bring practice, excitement, hard work and anticipation from Tired of Tues-

day, members of the band wrote in a collective statement to the News.

“We are immensely grateful that the hard work we put in translated into a fun show for both the band and the [Saturday] audience,” the statement read.

Tired of Tuesday members — Cameron Rao ’23, Conrad Cuevas ’23, John Paciga ’23, Adin Ring ’23 and Ian Richardson ’25 — mentioned that being in the audience at Battle of the Bands was as fun as performing themselves.

After dancing to the other acts — which included last year’s BOTB winners Strictly Platonic — they played a collection of original

songs and covers in a rock set with indie, pop and jazz undertones.

“Honestly I’m just happy to be here playing music with friends,” guitar player Cuevas said. “As cool as playing on a big stage is, it really wouldn’t matter if we didn’t have a total blast every time we played together. This is one of those bucket list experiences that none of us will ever forget.”

The 2023 Spring Fling is slated to take place on April 29, 2023 on Old Campus.

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FROM THE FRONT

“*Music doesn’t lie.*”
JIMI HENDRIX AMERICAN MUSICIAN

ULA urges boycott of Pizza House, citing worker abuse

KHUAN-YU HALL
STAFF REPORTER

Following allegations of verbal and physical abuse against a worker at Pizza House by his manager, Unidad Latina en Acción, a local immigrant advocacy group, is calling on the New Haven community to boycott the pizzeria.

Javier Lavado, a former employee of Pizza House, alleges that on Feb. 25, he was verbally and physically assaulted by his manager, Luis Nagera. Lavado alleges that an intoxicated Nagera called him homophobic slurs and shoved him after the two disagreed about the proper way to put cheese on a pizza. After their altercation, Lavado said he called the pizzeria owner for help but received none, as Lavado does not speak English and had difficulty explaining the situation. He then called the police, who offered no assistance either.

“I told the police officer that I called him because I need [your] support, and I need your protection, and I need you to do something,” said Lavado, as translated by ULA co-founder John Lugo. “But the police officer told me not to tell him how to do his job, and then told me that nothing happened here ... I left my country because I was receiving threats and hate [for being] gay, and now here I am suffering the same.”

A few days later, Lavado got a call from Pizza House informing him that he had been fired.

Neither Pizza House management nor Nagera responded to requests for comment.

Lavado then called ULA, which he has been a member of since he came to the U.S. from Peru in 2020. The group decided to write a letter to the owner of Pizza House, detailing the abuse that Lavado had suffered at the hands

of Nagera. Lugo told the News that he hoped to convince the owner to begin a mediation process between Lavado and Nagera, hoping to get Lavado his job back.

When they attempted to deliver the letter to the owner of Pizza House, Peter Papadopoulos, on March 9, ULA said that Papadopoulos refused to meet with them and accused Lavado of trespassing.

Lugo also told the News that they had received previous complaints from workers regarding Nagera’s behavior, especially similar stories of Nagera acting aggressively while intoxicated. Unlike previous reports, Lugo said that Lavado’s was the first incident where police were involved and where an employee was fired immediately.

“If the manager doesn’t like somebody, he fires them or puts so much pressure and harassment on them that they leave,” Lugo said.

“We feel like this is not a healthy place to work, so we sent a press release with some demands.”

Lugo also said that ULA sent a complaint to NHPD for not arresting Nagera for his verbal and physical harassment of Lavado when Lavado called them to the scene. Lugo says this complaint was submitted last week.

Captain Rose J. Dell, media liaison and public information officer for NHPD, told the News that he was unable to find anything matching Lavado’s account of the original incident or Lugo’s complaint regarding the police’s response.

ULA’s boycott of Pizza House began about three weeks ago. ULA is asking that patrons boycott Pizza House until Nagera is fired and until Lavado receives compensation from Pizza House.

“It has been a positive response from the customers,” Lugo said. “We tried to advocate with the cus-

tomers that they have the power to say something about this kind of injustice. In many of the places downtown, in the kitchens they are immigrant workers. They’re mistreated all the time ... it’s time to say no to this kind of behavior. They should treat their workers as human beings, not as slaves.”

Unlike Lavado, many of the workers who have come to ULA with workplace complaints are undocumented, according to Lugo, and so they fear losing their job or facing deportation by reporting abuse to the police.

Lugo added that ULA is currently working with the city government to try to design better protections for workers.

Pizza House is located at 89 Howe St.

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Jason Fish to serve as new CEO of Yale Health

YALE HEALTH FROM PAGE 1

medical records, opened its facility at 55 Lock St. and launched Yale College Community Care, a mental health service for students. Fish will officially begin his term on July 1.

“I am excited and honored to have been chosen to be the next CEO of Yale Health, and I am eager to begin working with the talented staff meeting the needs of the dynamic community,” Fish told the News.

As the leader of Yale Health, Fish will have to address the most pressing issues affecting students today, from mental health to sick student policy. He will be expected to collaborate heavily with Philomena Asante, a pediatrician and public health leader who has worked at Boston University, Northeastern University and the Boston Public Health Commission. Asante was named the new chief of student health earlier this month.

Fish said that upon his arrival on campus, he intends to spend a significant portion of his time learning about the needs of the University community, which will guide the future direction for Yale Health. He added that he would incorporate input from faculty, staff, students and their families to ensure the success of the student health provider. However, he did not specify any priorities to the News that he would be reviewing as of yet.

In his email announcement, Salovey spoke about Fish’s medical and operational background in a variety of health-related areas, including mental health services, healthcare inequality research and COVID-19 hospital response.

“Dr. Fish has introduced initiatives — spanning the continuum from wellness to advanced disease — that have improved patient outcomes, increased quality and efficiency of care delivery and enhanced support systems for staff,” Salovey wrote in his email. “These initiatives include efforts to partner with mental health providers to improve screening and treatment.”

Mental health care has become a particularly meaningful issue for many students at the University. Genecin himself wrote a column for the News defending



Fish, the chief medical officer of Southwestern Health Resources in Texas, will take the helm of Yale’s student health services. /Courtesy of Amber Shumake

Mental Health and Counseling services in 2015 and confirming that Yale Health would address concerns made by students at the time. Last fall, Yale was subject to a class action lawsuit by mental health advocacy group Elis for Rachael and two undergraduates claiming that Yale discriminates against students with mental health disabilities.

Fish said that he planned to meet with members of the Yale

community to review the “needs of the university community.”

“Incorporating input from the faculty, staff, students and their families about their needs and any ideas that arise out of those conversations will be paramount for our continued success,” Fish told the News.

Fish did not directly respond to an inquiry as to how he planned to delegate mental health support resources through Yale Health.

University COVID-19 coordinator Stephanie Spangler, who chaired the search committee for the CEO of Yale Health alongside vice president for human resources John Whelan, told the News that the decision to select Jason Fish was made in collaboration between the executive search firm Russell Reynolds and the committee.

“Dr. Jason Fish emerged as the clear choice — with a rich record

of accomplishments and abundant skills — to partner with Yale community members to build upon Yale Health’s considerable strengths and lead it into the future,” Spangler wrote in an email to the News.

Fish completed his residency in general internal medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles.

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Poet Elizabeth Alexander ’84 to give 2023 Class Day address

CLASS DAY FROM PAGE 1

long-standing tradition at Yale. Recent speakers appointed by the Class Day committee for Yale College have included high-profile politicians, writers and other influential individuals, from Academy Award-winning actor Tom Hanks to former vice president and current U.S. president Joseph Biden.

According to the graduation committee and Alison Coleman, a special events director and lecturer in the Yale English department, this year’s ceremony speeches will center on love, gratitude, community and comedy. Though a set theme is not chosen for any given year, there is often a common fabric that connects the speeches.

Coleman added that Alexander had met with the committee mem-

bers to hear about the projects they are working on for class day, and to listen to what topics would be “meaningful for [the class] to hear about” in her speech.

Alexander will speak for approximately 25 to 30 minutes during the ceremony, Coleman said. While speakers are only obligated to provide a speech, they often stay longer to “enjoy the ceremony.”

Alexander’s poetry explores themes like race, politics and motherhood. Notably, her poem “Equinox” explores the experience of contending with the death of a beloved family member and “Race” discusses the interdependent relationship between race, family and poetic language.

Having grown up in a household immersed in politics — her father serving as the for-

mer United States Secretary of the Army and chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, her mother as a writer and professor of African American women’s studies at George Washington University and her brother as a senior adviser to Barack Obama’s presidential campaign — she has spoken extensively on using art and writing as mediums to overcome discrimination and violence.

“Through her writing, scholarship, and philanthropic leadership, Elizabeth Alexander has long exemplified values that are at the core of a Yale education: the pursuit of light and truth and a commitment to serving society,” Dean of Yale College Pericles Lewis said. “In poetry and in prose, hers is one of the most elo-

quent voices of our time, and her Class Day address will be a highlight of commencement weekend for our graduating students and the wider community.”

Coleman also spoke about the class anthology, a keepsake book that includes visual and written artistic submissions from students. Crediting Zaporah Price ’23 for the organization and soliciting of pieces, she alleged that this year’s collection, featuring short anecdotes, longer reflective pieces, a comic, art and photography, will be “unusually poignant” due to the diversity and vibrancy of submissions.

Price has also compiled a new section called Departing Proverbs, which will feature words of wisdom from University faculty and administration across all 14 residential colleges.

The Class Day committee emphasized that they are “trying to include as many students as possible in Class Day,” and are still accepting submissions for the class history.

“The spirit is that ... it is a day for everyone — and so I’m really excited about the work everybody’s doing because they are pulling in so many different perspectives, whether it’s individual, or organizations and groups that are meaningful parts of the class experience,” Coleman said.

Reshma Saujani LAW ’02 was named Yale College Class Day speaker in 2022.

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NEWS

“Music can change the world because it can change people.”
BONO IRISH MUSICIAN

Yale to offer first Indigenous language course in fall 2023

BY MIRANDA WOLLEN
STAFF REPORTER

Yale has informally offered Indigenous languages as part of the University’s curriculum for over seven years through the Native American Cultural Center and the Directed Independent Language Study program, but this fall marks the first time that studying one will fulfill the language distributional requirement.

Patrick DelPercio, a Cherokee language instructor at the University of Oklahoma, will join the University’s faculty to teach a lecture course focusing on Cherokee language and culture.

“Other home speakers can take heritage language classes at Yale, but not Indigenous students,” Director of Undergraduate Studies of Linguistics Claire Bowern told the News. “Particularly for Indigenous students, it seemed very out of place that one can do one’s language requirement by studying languages from all around the world... except the Indigenous languages of the Americas.”

Indeed, students and community members have advocated for course and language credit for Native American languages for years. As far back as 2018, students have petitioned for those classes to be offered officially for course credits, noting the disjunction between Yale’s historical exploitation of

Indigenous resources and the lack of attention paid to those peoples on course syllabi.

Professor Ned Blackhawk, of the Western Shoshone, noted that up until now the onus has fallen largely on Native students to create their own classes — which they often take for no credit. Native language learning “evolved and eventually moved into the ‘community class’ model,” Blackhawk explained.

“The NACC has held the vast majority of the language courses and has often been overseen by the NACC directors,” Blackhawk said.

Sandra Sánchez GRD ’24, a PhD candidate who attended Professor DelPercio’s first lecture, wrote that they hoped that Yale might in the future form stronger relationships with Native people and communities.

“With the wealth of resources and collections here, I can imagine a future where language revitalization, preservation and education can happen if the right care and respect is taken to support tribal-University relations,” Sánchez added.

Though the course may not be offered in this month’s course selection process, it will be available in the fall through add-drop period and will employ a number of University materials. Interaction with — and reclamation of — the University’s own historical resources has long been a major focus of Indigenous curricula on campus.



YASMINE HALMANE / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Yale will introduce the first Native American language class which can satisfy the college’s language requirement.

Bowern noted that the limited documentation and archival material which exists on Native peoples is often held within the walls of the very institutions which have historically excluded those communities. She pointed to the Belonging at Yale Initiative’s emphasis on curricular reform.

“We don’t want to lock things up in archives and make it difficult for the communities whose cultural her-

itage they are to have access to those materials,” she explained.

Community access is important for local Indigenous peoples like the Quinnipiac, Mohegan and Wápanâak in Southern New England, she said, who have sought access to materials preserving their linguistic and cultural roots.

Sánchez expressed hope that the University would facilitate

the expansion of Native Studies at Yale, and that new course offerings would help bring University-owned materials into the hands of Native communities and students.

Yale’s Native American Cultural Center is located at 26 High St.

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Housing lottery begins under reformed draw process

BY BENJAMIN GERVIN
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

This past Wednesday marked the first sophomore and senior housing lotteries since Dean of Yale College Pericles Lewis announced a new streamlined draw.

While each residential college previously had its own process and set of deadlines, housing now runs on a shared timeline. Every sophomore and senior with intent to live on campus participated in the first lottery on April 5. For juniors, the lottery will take place on April 19. Students can view the complete timeline on the Yale College Housing Portal.

The new draw “will ultimately lead to greater fairness across the whole college,” Lewis told the News.

Last year, the large number of students who had delayed their matriculation during the COVID-19 pandemic created a housing shortage that forced some students off-campus. This year, the University is able to guarantee on-campus housing for all undergraduates.

About one-third of the residential colleges have oversubscribed housing — meaning that there are more students seeking to live on-campus than available beds — while one-third have undersubscribed housing. The University plans to offer an on-campus room to every undergraduate in the draw by evening out these numbers.

“Everyone who declared intent will get a room,” Lewis said. “It’s not exactly like peanut butter, but it will be roughly even across all the colleges. Every place will be pretty full, but not super tight.”

The University will also try to accommodate those who initially did not declare their intent to live on campus. Lewis told the News that students who did not manage to declare by the deadline would be added to the “list.”

Lewis confirmed that the University will need to make use of “some annexed housing.” Annex housing places students in rooms outside of their residential colleges. Students who are annexed will be housed in a few different spaces around campus.

Arnold Hall, near Davenport, and McClellan Hall, on Old Campus, will host a mix of students from different residential colleges. Other annexed students may still have the chance to live in a residential college — just not their own.

“It’s just a question of whether you are willing to live in the annexed space,” Lewis said.

Lewis explained that a shared timeline aims to make the housing process more uniform across campus, although with “fewer charming local customs.”

River Sell ’25 recalled a few of these customs from last year’s Morse College housing draw.

“The housing aides and the groups — only the group leaders had to actually be there — were all gathered in the Morse common room for room draw,” Sell said. “They randomized the order of picking at the beginning.”

This year, students from all residential colleges received an email with a predetermined selection appointment. At that time, housing groups will be able to choose a suite from the remaining options in their draw on the Yale College Housing Portal.



TIM TAI / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

After the announcement that the University would standardize the housing draw across residential colleges, Dean of Yale College Pericles Lewis told the News what students can expect in current and future years.

Lewis revealed that the new draw was also created to reduce the burden on the residential college deans. He added that the residential college deans shared his excitement about the change in the process.

“I think the goal here is for them to focus on the things they’re experts in, which is academic and personal advice, rather than having to deal with logistics,” Lewis said.

However, Joshua Li ’26 said that he liked the thought of a residential college dean leading the housing process.

“So much of residential college life is working with your dean and head of college,” Li said. “If I ran into trouble during the housing process, I’d much rather talk to them informally than to a housing office I don’t know.”

Lewis also commented on the University’s plans to reform the housing process further.

Last month, the University changed its housing policy to allow students to request single-gender floors after weeks of student requests for religious housing accommodations. In future years, Lewis told the News,

requests for religious accommodations will occur earlier, giving students more time to decide whether to live on or off campus.

The Office of the Dean may also push to select first-year Counselors earlier in the year. FroCos are sometimes required to transfer residential colleges, meaning a change could also afford them more time to determine their living situations.

Yale’s first dormitory — Connecticut Hall — was built in 1750.

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Philomena Asante appointed chief of student health

BY KAITLYN POHLY
STAFF REPORTER

Yale’s search for its new chief of student health has concluded, as a Thursday email to the Yale community announced that Philomena Asante has taken on the role.

Following a four-year tenure, Christine Chen stepped down from her position as chief of student health in September. In an email to the Yale community on Thursday, Chief Medical Officer Jennifer McCarthy announced that Asante’s appointment took effect on March 30.

“Dr. Asante has experience in student health, primary care and

public health. In recent years, her career path has focused on the intersection of health and education,” McCarthy wrote in the email. “We look forward to Dr. Asante bringing a renewed focus and guidance to this very important leadership role at Yale Health.”

After graduating from Harvard College with a degree in literature and French, Asante received a master’s in public health from the Harvard School of Public Health and her medical degree from the University of Rochester School of Medicine.

Asante completed her residency in pediatrics at Westchester Medical Center — an affiliate of New York Medical College — before

pursuing a post-graduate fellowship education in Boston.

In Asante’s new role, she will be in charge of student health and wellness initiatives across campus, in addition to working with Yale Mental Health and Counseling and spearheading the expansion of the new student health office.

“We are excited to welcome Dr. Asante and are currently coordinating an extensive on-boarding and orientation process to ensure success,” chief clinical operations officer and interim Yale Health director Nanci Fortgang told the News.

In addition to supporting Yale Health’s broader effort to move past the COVID-19 pandemic, Asante told

the News that she hopes to increase access to high-quality clinical care and to further integrate health and wellness into life on campus.

“We want to break silos and meet students where they are — it’s a community public health approach to health and wellness,” Asante told the News.

On a more personal note, Asante shared that coming to Yale is a “homecoming” for her, as her father attended Yale Law School and her mother worked as a midwife at Yale New Haven Hospital.

McCarthy told the News that the search for the new chief of student health was led by a team of stakeholders from different areas of the university.

Stakeholders provided feedback on the role’s importance and helped the search committee craft a detailed overview of the experiences and qualities that were most important to look out for when interviewing candidates.

“Our search committee worked with a search firm who specializes in higher education roles, and they conducted their national search,” McCarthy wrote to the News. “We are very hopeful that as we move to the other side of the pandemic, Dr. Asante will lead her team in many clinical endeavors.”

Yale Health is located at 55 Lock St.

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NEWS

“Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to silent.”
VICTOR HUGO FRENCH WRITER

Yale announces joint research initiative with state of Connecticut

BY YASH ROY AND KHUAN-YU HALL
STAFF REPORTERS

Following U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen’s visit to Connecticut and Yale last week, Governor Ned Lamont, New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker and the Yale Tobin Center for Economic Policy announced a set of policy collaborations between the University and the state.

Under the newly-announced collaboration, the Tobin Center will work with New Haven Public Schools to study different metrics of educational performance, the Department of Energy and Environment Protection Commissioner to identify ways to better fight climate change and strengthen Medicaid coverage in the state.

“Here in Connecticut, we are fortunate to have leading academic researchers like those at Yale’s Tobin Center who we can partner with to ensure that the policies we are imple-

menting are efficient, methodical, and produce the best results for the residents of our state,” Governor Lamont said. “I appreciate their willingness to partner with us, and academics at the state’s other great universities, on these efforts.”

The announcement last week came on the heels of Yellen’s visit to Yale last week as part of her national tour to discuss President Joe Bidens’s “Investing in America” agenda.

Lamont announced that senior members of his administration — including Chief of Staff Jonathan Dach, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Commissioner Katie Dykes and Office of Early Childhood Commissioner Beth By — and Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro met with Yellen at Yale University’s Tobin Center for Economic Policy to discuss Biden’s plan for expanding economic opportunity and boosting productive capacity in Connecticut.

Yellen also highlighted the latest investments that states will receive from the Inflation Reduction Act, the CHIPS and Science Act. These investments, according to Yellen, are aimed at building a clean energy economy, rebuilding crumbling infrastructure, strengthening supply chains, spurring manufacturing and creating well-paying jobs across the United States.

According to the U.S. Treasury Department, states play a critical role in implementing these new investments and research universities are integral to deploying skills and talent in support of essential public policy goals.

To further these efforts, the Lamont administration and the Tobin Center announced a series of new steps that respond to Secretary Yellen’s call for states to implement inclusive and green policies and for academic economists to utilize their skills in support of state efforts.

“I am grateful to Secretary Yellen for providing thoughtful perspectives regarding the federal administration’s economic priorities in the context of the Yale Tobin Center’s research and policy work,” University President Peter Salovey said. “By convening leaders such as Secretary Yellen and working collaboratively with faculty members across the university, the Tobin Center is helping to set the national agenda and informing domestic public policy through evidence-based research.”

Local officials hope that the collaboration with the Tobin Center will empower them to improve their education policy through scientifically driven findings. According to Elicker, increasing access to high-quality childcare and early education will have significant impacts not just on students and their outcomes but will also free parents to participate in the workforce, thereby boosting the New Haven economy.

New Haven Public Schools’ Director of Communications and Marketing Justin Harmon, echoed Elicker’s sentiments, hoping that the research of the Tobin Center would allow access to education to be improved, benefiting both students and their parents.

“We know based on the experiences of our families that high-quality childcare and early childhood education are essential to parents’ full participation in the workforce, as well as to the wellbeing of our children,” Harmon told the News. “We are pleased to partner with the Tobin Center to provide longitudinal data on school choice outcomes that can contribute to a formal assessment of those linkages.”

The Tobin Center is located at 87 Trumbull St.

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New Haven’s first violence prevention coordinator reflects on resignation

BY MIA CORTÉS CASTRO
STAFF REPORTER

On March 28, almost four months after stepping into the role, Reuel Parks — New Haven’s first violence prevention coordinator — notified the Mayor’s office of his resignation.

Parks, a longtime parole officer and community member, originally stepped into his role on Jan 4. Though passionate about what his position does for the city, Parks made a “personal decision” to step down from the role. He will instead continue his work as the technical director of Community Hands In Action Mentoring Program, or CHAMP — an organization he founded in 2014 that provides mentorship to children who present at-risk behavior. He will also continue to serve as a member of the Hamden Board of Education.

“I’m passionate about working to make our communities safer and deeply believe in the mission and work of the Office of Violence Prevention,” Parks wrote in a statement to the News. “However, this particular position was simply not the right fit for me personally at this time.”

While in the position, Parks was in charge of coordinating programming and efforts aimed at reducing community violence. Forming collaborations between various New Haven departments, agencies and organizations, the coordinator role takes steps to increase New Haveners’ access and use of these programs. With a combination of prevention, intervention and support, the violence prevention coordinator’s programs target individuals, groups and communities who are either involved in or prone to violence. The coordinator mostly works towards specifically reducing gun violence.

In addition, the coordinator is also the leader of PRESS, New Haven’s Program for Reintegration, Engagement, Safety and Support. The program, which the city launched in April 2022, is a collaborative effort to reduce gun violence around the city, involving departments including the New Haven Police Department and the city’s Community Service Administration.

Parks’s decision to step down from the role has shocked many community members who looked forward to seeing his contributions to the city.

“I was disappointed to hear of his resignation,” said Leonard Jihad, executive director of the Connecticut Violence Intervention Program. “I hoped he could impact the expansion of PRESS to achieve its goal of creating a true collaboration between local and state municipalities as well as local nonprofits in their shared mission of reducing community violence.”

Mayor Justin Elicker, however, said he supports Parks’ decision to leave the role. Elicker asserted that the programs New Haven has in place for violence prevention will “continue uninterrupted.” He expressed that he is committed to continue working on these programs, but feels satisfied with the city’s current progress.

While the Elicker administration searches for Parks’ permanent replacement, they have appointed executive director for the Department of Community Resilience Carlos Sosa-Lombardo to serve as the interim violence prevention coordinator.

“While it’s unfortunate that Mr. Parks’ tenure was a short one, I can also appreciate that he thought the position was not the right fit for him personally at this



MIA CORTÉS CASTRO/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Four months after being appointed, Reuel Parks resigned from the violence prevention coordinator position.

time,” said Elicker. “For the right person, the coordinator position promises to be a really meaningful and impactful one, spearheading important and innovative initiatives that are already underway as well as developing new pilots and programs that will help us further advance the work violence prevention and interruption.”

Parks’ last day as violence prevention coordinator will be April 12.

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Yale Dems hosts former White House Press Secretary Jay Carney ’87

BY EVAN GORELICK AND SOPHIE SONNENFELD
STAFF REPORTERS

Former White House Press Secretary Jay Carney ’87 spoke to students about his life and career at a talk in William L. Harkness Hall on Thursday.

Yale College Democrats hosted Carney, who became the longest-serving press secretary of the 21st century, for the speaker event, which was moderated by David Acquaaah-Mensah ’25. At the talk, students asked about Carney’s proudest and most challenging moments in the White House, his work as an Amazon executive and his reporting days during a question-and-answer session that followed.

Dems president Josh Guo ’24 said that his organization invited Carney to speak because of how his unique experiences in political journalism have shaped his perspectives on public policy.

“Mr. Carney is someone who had an inner look on President Obama’s presidency and holds an understanding on how important policy, such as the Affordable Care Act, is created and presented to the public,” Guo told the News. “We hope that many more members of the Yale community are inspired to enter similar careers in political journalism and communications.”

As an undergraduate at Yale, Carney majored in Russian and Eastern European studies. This interest in the Soviet Union spurred his choice of major once he reached college. Serendipity struck for Carney when Gorbachev came to power, as it allowed him to focus his senior thesis not only on historical facts of the post-Stalin Soviet Union but also on what was happening in the



DANTE MOTLEY/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

From playing in a rock band to reporting in Russia, Carney spoke about his career path at the talk on Thursday evening.

region in real-time. Suddenly, Carney explained, his studies at Yale became “the most interesting story in the world.”

Carney worked as an intern with Time Magazine during the summer before his senior year at Yale. After college, Carney landed a job as a reporter with the Miami Herald and later became Time’s Miami Bureau Chief. While he enjoyed covering stories in Miami, Carney said he wanted to report in Moscow. In 1990, Carney got his wish when Time sent him to Moscow as a correspondent. He stayed there for three years covering the Soviet Union’s fall.

“So I was very focused as I left [Yale], on getting to Moscow somehow as a reporter, it took me a little while but not that long,” he joked.

Students who attended the event enjoyed hearing about Carney’s journey from Yale to reporting

and, eventually, to the White House under the Obama administration.

“Overall, I liked the event,” Prince Osaji ’26 told the News. “I thought it was cool to hear about [Carney’s] journey from being a reporter to working inside the White House, and I thought the shift in his perception of the government during this transition was interesting. He was also very relatable, so that was enjoyable too.”

Other attendees, including RJ Kelly ’25, said they enjoyed hearing from Carney because his perspective on politics and journalism is grounded in actual experience in a presidential administration.

With his shift from sitting in front of the podium to speaking behind it, Carney said he initially had “a lot to learn” about how White House communications teams operate. For example, Carney said he quickly realized that lining up more inter-

views is not always best. Instead, Carney said he grew careful about how to use interviews as a resource, understanding that each interaction with the press can be “high-risk, high-reward” for an elected official.

In other ways, Carney said the transition was easier, as, for example, he became a bit less restricted in his ability to express political opinions.

“I believe deeply in the President’s agenda and the goodness of Barack Obama and Joe Biden and agree with what they believe in,” Carney said. “And suddenly I could say so and not only say it but fight for it and advocate for it. That was incredibly liberating.”

One of the hardest moments on the job, Carney said, was when he had to field questions from the press about the White House’s botched management of their Obamacare

website healthcare.gov, which he described as a “slow-moving train-wreck.” On the last day of enrollment, people attempting to use the website were faced with delays, outages and glitches.

Looking at the current Biden White House, Carney celebrated the work of former Press Secretary Jen Psaki and current Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre. He said he feels Biden’s communications team has done well so far.

“I think Karine does a great job of keeping her poise, getting the information out and handling the tough questions without making herself the story,” he reflected. “You don’t want to be caricatured on Saturday Night Live. It means something has gone wrong.”

During the event’s question-and-answer portion, one attendee asked about Carney’s work as Amazon’s senior vice president of global corporate affairs. Given the criticism Amazon has received from elected officials over labor, corporate tax and environmental issues, the student asked if Carney’s Amazon role aligned with his values and previous work under Biden and Obama.

In response, Carney highlighted Amazon’s move to raise their minimum wage to \$15 an hour in 2018 among other more recent bumps in pay for some workers.

“I’m not saying Amazon is perfect by any means, but I did feel comfortable there [morally], because of what we’re doing on wages,” Carney said.

Carney served as White House Press Secretary from 2011 to 2014.

Sophie Wang contributed reporting.

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

YUAA’s Project Liquid tests liquid rocket engine



MARIA KOROLIK/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

The Project Liquid Team at the Yale Undergraduate Aerospace Association tested their liquid rocket engine for the first time on April 2.

BY JAMES STEELE
STAFF REPORTER

The Project Liquid Team at the Yale Undergraduate Aerospace Association conducted the first test of their liquid rocket engine on April 2.

Whereas before, only select systems of the engine were examined individually, last Sunday’s test marked the team’s first time testing the engine as a whole. The team — led by Jonah Halperin ’26 and Henry Demarest ’25 — is currently in the process of refining some of the subsystems of the engine and hopes to conduct another test before the end of the year.

“A lot of people in YUAA and a lot of Yale engineers in general are interested in space exploration, and the aerospace industry,” Demarest said. “And most modern rockets use liquid propulsion. So we wanted to bring that technology and get more familiar with the technology while we’re in undergrad.”

The project was started by Ryan Smithers ’25 in Fall 2021. Since then, the team has grown to over 30 members. The team currently works on the engine within one of the storage spaces of the Mann Engineering Student Center in Dunham Laboratory.

The engineers hope to create a rocket engine able to theoretically output 200 pounds of force if loaded with rocket fuel. According to Demarest, this number, while not comparable to the rocket engines corporations or governments can produce, is significant because the engine could theoretically lift most people. The team currently has no plans of testing the rocket with combustible fuel, but hopes to prove the engine’s capability with water tests.

Halperin notes that through the building process, the team is focused on the application of mechanical engineering. He said that the mechanical engineering program at Yale is very theory focused.

“[Theory is] great, obviously, to know how to design things,” Halperin said. “But when you start going on to Master’s degrees, and you’re saying what’s an NPT versus SAE fitting? What is the correct sizing? And just starting to understand how you take those theoretical ideas and put them in a practical application. So the idea for this club is that we’re able to do something really cool, build a rocket engine, and learn stuff that is going to be even cooler.”

Project Liquid consists of four smaller subteams: test stand, electronics and control, feed system and thrust chamber.

The test stand subteam builds the metal frame structure that physically contains the components of the rocket engine. The electronics and control team connects all of the wiring for the engine, as well as the electronic sensors, and writes the programs for the engine. The feed system subteam deals with the plumb-

ing of the engine — routing the engine fuel and the highly pressurized gas used to pressurize the engine. The thrust chamber team designs the injector and the portions of the engine that would need to handle extreme heat if tested with real rocket fuel.

“Progress has really picked up this semester and it’s really motivating, especially for the incoming class of 2027,” Kidus Abebe ’26, the thrust chamber subteam lead, said. “When we present our project during Bulldog Days and again during the extracurricular bazaar, I think it’s going to be really motivating.”

Great enthusiasm was shared amongst many of the engineers in the project. Abebe, Halperin, Demarest, Jack Griffin ’26, Cayden Cerveney ’26 and Aaron Cope ’26 all shared their passion for the project and the group’s camaraderie.

According to Halperin, the project would not have been possible without the support

received from Yale. Many members of the faculty have individually supported the project in areas such as part acquisition, procuring space to work and securing equipment. Yale Environmental Health and Safety has also helped to manage project safety.

“We’re a group that’s doing something awesome; we’re building a rocket engine,” Halperin said. “There is no person who can’t walk out of that room right now and say, ‘I didn’t contribute something,’ because everyone has been able to help ... Continuing to build and giving undergraduates a chance to really understand what industry is like, understand what engineering can be, and even just what good teamwork is, [that’s] something that we’re looking forward to.”

Dunham Laboratory and the Mann Center are located on Hillhouse Avenue.

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Yale researchers develop telescope to test drone calibration

BY ARJUN WARRIOR
STAFF REPORTER

A team of Yale researchers has developed a small radio telescope at Wright Laboratory and is putting it to use to study a technique that could be used to help calibrate the radio beams of larger telescopes.

The developing researchers hail from the lab of Laura Newburgh, an assistant professor of physics whose work focuses on cosmic microwave background radiation. The telescope uses radio waves and quadcopter drones to help fine-tune and adjust telescope beams — how telescopes see into the sky. The telescope was installed on the roof of Wright Lab in March 2021, after about a year of work.

“Most of the sophisticated science we do is designing the payload for the drone,” Will Tyndall GRD ’25, the project’s lead, said. “The telescope is quite rudimentary as far as scientific telescopes go. It doesn’t make scientifically valuable measurements, but what it does is it provides us with a way to measure the radio signals we’re producing with the drone.”

Tyndall emphasized that although the testbed telescope is an important component of the project, the drone is the key. He noted that the telescope

is a 3-meter dish that may have originally been used for sports gambling, television or radio.

Tyndall said that the value of developing the drone calibration technique was driven by the budgetary constraints of research projects in cosmology, which often require massive arrays of telescopes. Unlike optical telescopes, which only take a single image, when using radio telescopes, astronomers take multiple readings. The resulting map created by these readings must then be deconvolved, or simplified to account for the shape of the telescope’s beam, which influences the images gathered by the telescope.

While Tyndall said that sophisticated, motorized radio telescopes which can be pointed in multiple directions exist, he explained that they were too expensive for many projects in modern cosmology.

“To do future generation experiments, you need thousands of dishes,” Tyndall said. “If you have a thousand dishes, the price per dish is suddenly a really important factor, and you need to find a way to save a lot of money. The way to do that is by building a really big array of stationary dishes ... All of the money you have in each of these dishes has to go into the electronics, instead of motorizing.”

Although these non-motorized radio telescopes are often the only affordable option for researchers, they also provide less precise measurements than motorized ones, according to Tyndall. With more sophisticated, steerable telescopes, “you can do a lot of this beam calibration by just pointing at radio sources,” Tyndall said, but the same is not true for stationary telescopes.

Drone calibration techniques offer a potential solution to this problem. This approach uses the positional data of a drone in conjunction with the signal measured by a telescope to map out the telescope’s sensitivity in different directions.

“The drone can fly around and measure which way the telescope is looking,” Michael Faison, a lecturer of astronomy and the director of the Leitner Family Observatory and Planetarium, said. “If you have the drone directly over the telescope, you hope it gets a strong signal, but if it flies over here, 10 degrees off, how much signal do you get?”

Newburgh explained that researchers were already capable of using drones to calibrate the beams of relatively small telescopes, but in order to predict the beams of larger dishes, mathematical transformations had to be made to small tele-



COURTESY OF WILL TYNDALL

Researchers have been using the telescope to improve future accuracy measurements.

scopes’ measurements of the drones’ positions. The project focused on testing these transformations with measurements made of the drone by the testbed telescope.

While Tyndall said he enjoyed working on the project, he acknowledged that working with drones is not without its challenges.

“The drone actually flew away once because of a magnet that was on

top of it and we had to rescue it out of a tree,” Tyndall said. “It’s a bit demotivating to have your thesis project in a tree with rain clouds coming in.”

Tyndall explained that a paper related to the project is currently in progress.

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“Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to silent.”
VICTOR HUGO FRENCH WRITER

Augustin Hadelich, Yale Philharmonia perform concert

BY TOBIAS LIU
STAFF REPORTER

World-renowned violinist Augustin Hadelich first learned the Brahms Violin Concerto when he was 10. In the nearly thirty years since, has performed it dozens of times all over the world. Hadelich’s mastery of the concerto shone when the Grammy award-winning professor of violin at the School of Music played the work last week in Woolsey Hall.

On Thursday evening, the Yale Philharmonia — led by Grammy nominated principal conductor Peter Oundjian — performed Brahms’ Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 77 with Hadelich in addition to a new edition of Bruckner’s Seventh Symphony created by Professor Emeritus of Music Paul Hawshaw.

“It’s one of those pieces that every time I return to it as an adult, I felt like I could find even more in the piece and get back more from the piece,” Hadelich said of the Brahms work. “I became more aware of the interaction of the violin with the orchestra and how beautiful it is that you are always hearing the violin with the instruments in the orchestra ... that’s the reason why it never gets old.”

Most performances of Brahms’ Violin Concerto are played with Joseph Joachim’s cadenza — a virtuosic solo passage in the middle of a concerto — in the first movement.

But Hadelich wrote his own cadenza a few years ago and performed it on Thursday night.

“[Writing my own cadenza] helped me play the rest of the piece because I was basically composing with Brahm’s material, getting to know the material better in, in a different way,” Hadelich said. “It’s brought me even closer to the music.”

To Hadelich, what makes Brahms’s Violin Concerto so special is its “back and forth dialogue” between the orchestra and the soloist.

“There’s a really intense excitement that comes from playing with student orchestras as opposed to playing with professional orchestras,” Hadelich said. “I [was] really excited to play with [the Yale Philharmonia] because it’s such a collaborative piece ... and their excitement is contagious.”

Hadelich described the stage as “one of his favorite places to be these days,” elaborating that his nerves melted into energy when he steps onto it.

A nearly-full Woolsey Hall gave Hadelich a standing ovation after his performance, prompting him to perform an encore, his arrangement of Carlos Gardel’s “Por Una Cabeza.”

“He’s probably one of the greatest, if not the greatest, living violinists in the world,” said Emily Shehi MUS ’23, one of Hadelich’s four current students at the School of Music.

After an intermission, the Yale Philharmonia performed Hawshaw’s new critical edition of Bruckner’s Seventh Symphony. As co-editor of the “New



MIRIAM VIAZMENSKI/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

On Thursday night, the Yale Philharmonia performed Brahms’ Violin concerto with Augustin Hadelich.

Anton Bruckner Complete Edition,” Hawshaw started working on creating complete editions of Bruckner’s works twelve years ago.

On this particular edition, Hawshaw said, he spent the past five years working with the Seventh Symphony’s autograph manuscript in Vienna.

“In the case of creating this edition, it was largely a ques-

tion of working from the autograph score and then consulting the first edition to see where the differences were,” Hawshaw said. “The real challenge lay in the awful lot of changes that took place between when he composed the piece in 1883 and when it was published in 1885—some of these changes were in his hand and others were in the hand of one of his students, and

the real trick was trying to figure out which of the changes had Bruckner’s approval. The ones that didn’t, in a critical edition like this, need to be taken out.”

Hawshaw’s next project is a critical edition of Bruckner’s Second Symphony.

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Tracy K. Smith delivers 2023 Foundational Course Lecture

BY MIRANDA WOLLEN AND JANE PARK
STAFF REPORTERS

Harvard professor and Pulitzer-winning poet Tracy K. Smith delivered the Yale English Department’s annual Foundational Course Lecture to a packed lecture hall on the evening of April 11.

The series was established in 2018 in order to expose current and prospective Yale English students to the poetic voices of recent generations. Last year, Nobel winner Louise Glück delivered the lecture. The series caters especially to students in ENGL 125, 126, 127 and 128, the department’s core courses for completion of the major.

“When I read a poem, I know there’s a piece of the poet I’m getting, and then there’s a piece that’s bigger and different from the poet that’s in there,” Smith said at the lec-

ture. “I don’t think I’m what you get if you read that poem — I hope you get you.”

Smith — Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach Professor at Harvard Radcliffe Institute, 2012 Pulitzer Prize winner and 2017-2019 U.S. Poet Laureate — was introduced by Marc Robinson — acting director of undergraduate studies for the department — and Richard Deming — the director of creative writing.

In his introduction, Deming said that there is a “collective urgent need” for Smith’s work and noted the inherent collectivity to poetry, the “need to be urgently human” that it instills in readers.

Smith took the podium to rousing applause.

“I always feel so much more heartened and hopeful about the world when I’m in spaces where people like you are telling me about

what they’re caring about, what they’re working on,” Smith said. “We desperately need that.”

Smith read a number of poems both original and translated, spanning a two-decade career in poetry. She began with a selection of translations from Chinese poet Yi Lei’s “My Name Will Grow Wide Like a Tree: Selected Poems.” Li died in 2018, in the midst of her translatable collaboration with Smith.

Smith moved next to a series of pieces from her 2021 collection, “Such Color: New and Selected Poems,” which has been distributed to students currently enrolled in foundational courses.

According to Deming, the collection speaks to the power of poetry — its ability to “[pinpoint] our attention in a moment and to the moment where we are.” Smith’s words articulate difficult reflections about the

past while creating a hopeful vision for the future.

“We, all of us, together, have a need to look unblinkingly at the past — its griefs, its wreckage — acknowledge all that it encompasses and then find a way forward,” Deming told the News. “Throughout her book... she builds out of the act of bearing witness — in details and specifics — the possibilities for hope, for joy. Her poems show that the work is still out there in front of us.”

She spoke to a number of difficulties in her craft — the constraints and necessities of form, the use and confusion of negative space and the finicky necessity of loosening the iron grip she is sometimes inclined to hold over her work at its inception.

Smith’s reading was followed by a question and answer ses-

sion and a reception outside the lecture hall.

English major Madeline Poole ’25 left the reading with a new appreciation for Smith’s work.

“It was a privilege to hear her own interpretations of her creations, and the process she undertakes to produce them: how she considers form, and how she pushes her poems from repeating what she already knows,” Poole told the News before rushing off to hunt for her own copy of “Such Color.”

This year’s Foundational Courses Lecture was held in the Humanities Quadrangle.

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Yale School of Law hosts joint environmental law and food policy conference



HANWEN ZHANG/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Occuring in person for the first time since the pandemic, “Rethinking Resilience” brought students and speakers to examine the crossroads of climate and food.

BY HANWEN ZHANG
STAFF REPORTER

Students and speakers from across the country spent a weekend at the Yale Law School for its annual environmental law conference, which began on March 31 with a new multi-disciplinary twist.

For the first time in history, the 2023 New Directions in Environmental Law Conference was held as a joint event with the Food Law Student Leadership Summit, bringing together experts from both fields to discuss the intersection of climate and food policy. The three-day event — titled “Rethinking Resilience” — returned in person for the

first time since the COVID-19 pandemic to offer a slate of talks about climate resilience, policy simulation events and networking opportunities for attendees.

“I found it really ... inspiring and motivating to see so many people that are concerned about this field,” said Molly Oberstein-Allen, a student at Columbia Law School who attended the conference. “Seeing ... the people who are doing work in so many different aspects of it has just been really, really exciting.”

At an event that brought two fields of law together, the panels embraced a diversity of issues in the climate and food world. Discussion topics ranged from ocean conserva-

tion to Indigenous sovereignty and sustainable business practices, with panelists who drew on their expertise in nonprofit sectors, private corporations and legal research.

Keynote speaker Clifford Villa, deputy assistant administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Land and Emergency Management, opened the event with an address that married concerns about environmental justice with issues of food access. New climate patterns posed detrimental impacts to agriculture, he explained, drawing a direct line from increasingly erratic weather patterns to the mounting food insecurity across the globe.

“If you went back to that first assessment report on climate change in 1990, [the IPCC] knew that it would affect lives; they knew it would affect ... access to food and fuel and medicine,” Villa said.

Today, access to food is startlingly unequal. Villa noted that roughly 10 percent of US households are food insecure. Of those, 16 percent are Latino, 20 percent Black and 25 percent Native American. Nearly 39.5 million Americans currently live in food deserts — places where barriers to transportation, income inequality and discriminatory urban zoning prevent access to fresh food from grocery stores.

Villa added that the root of the problem was not so much insufficient food supply as inefficient food transport and waste. To increase access, he advocated for grassroots

urban agriculture efforts and spotlighted an EPA-led soil testing program that had been unveiled in an industry-impacted neighborhood in Eugene, Oregon.

The final speakers of the weekend trained their focus closer to home, with the city’s director of food policy Latha Swamy and Mayor Justin Elicker speaking about developments in New Haven.

Swamy explained that the city’s food policy department — among the first in the country — has helped guide local residents through municipal land acquisitions and food business start-ups. The department has also created the community advisory board, a group of 60 members representing underprivileged neighborhoods, from which the city will solicit feedback for future policy.

Mayor Justin Elicker affirmed his commitment to sustainability but foregrounded the difficulties of balancing the city’s immediate necessities with longer-term visions of environmental care and responsibility.

In a city embattled by rising homicide rates, homelessness and shrinking operating budgets, he pointed out that local governments lack the “capacity” to fulfill all of their desired climate efforts. He urged environmental activists to work with him while recognizing that large-scale change will also call for action on the state and federal levels.

“It’s not that simple,” Elicker said. “These challenges are very, very complicated.”

The need for more legislative action found practice in the event’s policy simulations, where attendees had the opportunity to translate panel discussions into the amendments and laws they wished to see.

Gabriella Mickel ENV ’24, student at the Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University and the Yale School of the Environment, applauded the “creative ... municipal policy and legal solutions” but said she hoped for more statutory law that would support environmental justice initiatives.

According to event organizer Gina Hervey ENV ’22, who is also currently studying at Pace’s law school, this connection between topics of food and the environment provided a space for unique conversations that synthesized many of climate change’s challenges.

As a Detroit native and master’s student of public health at the University of Michigan, Asha McElroy said she walked away from the conference with new ideas about increasing her community’s access to nutritious and affordable foods.

“To hear the different perspectives on food sovereignty ... was really amazing,” McElroy said. “It helped... me to shape my definition of food sovereignty.”

The Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy was established in 1994.

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WEEKEND

A Definitive, Unbiased Ranking of All of The Best DCOMs

// BY HANNAH KURCZESKI

It's 8:00 p.m. on Jan. 20, 2006. You're sitting on your couch, watching a New Year's scene unfold. Gabriella and Troy are belting out "Start of Something New" for the first time, and you don't know yet that Zac Efron is lip syncing to someone else's voice.

"High School Musical" was not the first Disney Channel Original Movie — or DCOM — but it has reached such an icon status that it's the first movie that pops into most people's minds when DCOMs are mentioned.

But just because it was the first, that doesn't make it the best.

If you're feeling nostalgic, never fear! I've curated a definitive ranking of all of the best — and worst — childhood DCOMs, using the following incredibly strict criteria:

Romantic Cheesiness: I am a sucker for a good romance arc. I'm not saying there needs to be a love story for it to be a good DCOM, but I am saying that all of the best DCOMs are, in some way, about love.

Plot Originality: There are certain things that I not only expect, but need from a DCOM: the awkward meet-cute, the 2010 fashion, the fact that every high schooler drives a car nicer than my own, the main character's-best-friend-that-is-actually-way-cooler-than-the-main-character and, of course, the finale scene that somehow, always seems to take place at a prom. We watch DCOMs in part because we love the clichés — and because in some cases, the DCOMs invented the clichés. Nevertheless, I have extra appreciation for the movies that went that extra mile and at least *tried* to be original.

Singability: Let's be honest — all of the best DCOMs are musicals. You can say I'm wrong, but you know I'm not.

My Own Bias: I'll admit, some of these movies played a much smaller role in my childhood than others. I'd be remiss not to acknowledge that my own nostalgia will be just as much of a factor in my rankings as all of the aforementioned factors.

For the sake of my own sanity, I didn't include any DCOMs that were based off of TV series — ex. "Wizards of Waverly Place: The Movie." How can you judge them without taking into account the series that they stemmed from? Answer: you can't. I can't pit Alex Russo or Phineas and Ferb against characters that I haven't spent four seasons getting to know. It wouldn't be fair.

Without further ado, here is my ranking:

20. "Zombies." "I've always wanted to see a movie about a cheerleader falling in love with a zombie!" said no one ever. Complete with a pastel pink-and-green color scheme and songs that are better left unheard, this movie is entirely irrelevant and unnecessary. It's also one of the more recent DCOMs, which means that it doesn't provide viewers with the same nostalgia as its predecessors. I only put it on this list because I wanted to talk about how much I hate it.

19. "How To Build A Better Boy." This is one of those movies that I forget exists. I remember being really excited for it to come out, but my memory of this movie

ends there — which can only mean that it was mediocre and forgettable.

18. "The Cheetah Girls." I blame movies like this one for convincing my younger self that a record producer would sign me to his label if I sang loud enough in the supermarket. The story is cute, and I love a movie that celebrates friendship, but some parts of it are too unrealistic for me to get over. The movie's climax comes when the Cheetah Girls save a dog from a construction site by ... singing? I love originality, but this might be too original.
17. "Halloweentown." It's one of the earliest DCOMs on this list, and it got two sequels for a reason. It's silly, it's fun, it's got magic annnnddd I don't remember much else but I remember that I liked it. I'm not going to bother including the rest of the Halloween-towns in this list, because they'd all be ranked the same. They lose points for only being fun to watch in the fall.
16. "Cadet Kelly." No one asked for Disney to make a movie about a military academy, but they made one anyways and it's ... not bad. Hillary Duff might just be the queen of DCOMs, and as Kelly, she manages to both lead her drill team to second place in regionals and rescue her father after he falls off a cliff. Would it be too cringey to say that Duff's Kelly is a total girlboss?
15. "Camp Rock." Don't hate me for putting this one so low, but I ... I'm just not the world's biggest "Camp Rock" girl. I love Demi Lovato, but Mitchie is hard to watch sometimes. Plus, Joe Jonas's haircut is not great in this movie. Still, I'll admit that the music and plot are fun and that this movie was the reason I always wanted to go to a sleepaway camp as a kid — a dream that was sadly never realized. "Camp Rock" might not be my favorite, but as Mitchie once said, "she's really good."
14. "Camp Rock 2." It's better than the first, though not by much. It's still cringey, but at least Joe has a better haircut in this one!
13. "Descendants." Yes, we've all seen way too many little girls dressed up as Mal for Halloween, but I'm here to argue that "Descendants" deserves justice. I've always been a sucker for a fractured fairytale, and between Dove Cameron, the late Cameron Boyce and Kristen Chenoweth, the cast is both iconic and incredible. "Evil Like Me" is a banger, and it's time we start talking about it. The rest of the "Descendants" movies aren't on this list because, to be quite frank, I haven't seen them, but I have confidence that they're probably just as good.
12. "Let It Shine." This movie had everything: romance, a mistaken identity and the rap battle to end all rap battles. Not only is "Let It Shine" fun, but it has a great message. Even if it didn't have a stellar plot, it would still make this list because of its music. Wow. If you can't watch the movie, at least listen to the soundtrack, because it's phenomenal.
11. "Geek Charming." You have to hear me out on this one. I understand that objectively, this movie has kind of a bad plot, and Sarah Hyland's character isn't fun or quirky. She's

- actually just a bitch. But something about "Geek Charming" is so bad that it's good. Sure, it's the cliché of all clichés, and sure, it's incredibly unbelievable that a high school guy would choose to film a documentary on one of his classmates as an "exposé on popularity," but all of those things only make me love "Geek Charming" more. Call me crazy, but it's one of my guilty pleasures.
10. "Radio Rebel." What would we do as a society if this movie hadn't given us that Debby Ryan meme? I take back what I said earlier about Hillary Duff being the DCOM Queen, because that title most certainly goes to Debby Ryan. I absolutely devoured this movie when it first came out, and I always secretly wanted my high school prom to be canceled so that I could throw a Morp of my own. I also secretly wanted someone to get up onstage and sing a song for me the way Gavin does for Tara. None of those things occurred, so clearly, I am not Radio Rebel.
9. "Teen Beach Movie 2." Do I love this movie, or do I just love Ross Lynch? I think the answer is both. When the characters of Ross Lynch's favorite movie accidentally enter the real world, chaos ensues. It's hilarious and beachy and there's plenty of singing, plus a feminist plot twist. Even though they end up forgetting their history, the characters Brady and Mack manage to fall in love all over again, proving that they were "meant to be" all along.
8. "High School Musical 3: Senior Year." I've said it before, and I'll say it again — Sharpay Evans deserved better. How can you tell me that after working her butt off for years and getting upstaged by some random new girl, she still doesn't get into Juilliard? That unfairness aside, we all know that "HSM3" is amazing. It's just not as amazing as the other two. Also, realistically, there's no way Gabriella would have had to leave before the end of her senior year for Stanford. That's just not how college works.
7. "Motocrossed." The first time I saw this movie, I didn't realize it was a DCOM. My dad showed it to me and told me it was one of his favorites. Maybe that was just because he was obsessed with motorcycles, but this movie is so underrated. It's about a girl who takes her twin brother's place in a motocross race after he breaks his leg, all against her overprotective father's wishes. For the entire movie, everyone tells the main character, Andrea, that she can't race or do certain things "because she's a girl!" and in the end, she wins the race, secures a corporate sponsorship for her family's racing company, gets with a hot motorcycle man and proves that girls can do everything that guys can. My synopsis doesn't do this movie justice at all; it's a true hidden gem.
6. "High School Musical." I already know that I'm going to get a lot of hate for placing the original "HSM" anywhere but at the top, so I want to clarify: I LOVE this movie. It's "High School Musical," how could I not? This is the DCOM of all DCOMs, the reason that Zac Efron and Vanessa Hudgens are household names. This movie defined my very unrealistic expectations for what high

- school would be like. It is bold and fun and, dare I say, generation-defining. Maybe this is wrong of me, but I didn't want to let "HSM"'s societal relevance and greater impact blind me from judging the movie and its content, which again, is GREAT. Maybe I just watched it too many times as a kid, but it's not my first choice to turn on. It's so predictable. Sue me.
5. "Starstruck." This movie does not get the appreciation it deserves. I know, I know: it is SO cheesy, but that's why I love it. Swoon-worthy popstar Christopher Wilde accidentally bumps into and falls in love with Jessica, the only girl that isn't falling at his feet. It's exactly the kind of plot that all of those horrible y/n One Direction Wattpad and Tumblr fanfictions had, and yet I eat it up. It's cheesy, yes, but it's also cute and nostalgic. Do I still listen to "Hero" unironically?... maybe.
4. "Princess Protection Program." Five words: Demi Lovato and Selena Gomez. Sometimes I forget this movie exists, and then I remember and it makes my day, because this movie is just. that. good. Demi is a princess in hiding, and Selena plays her tomboyish roommate and eventual best friend. When evil forces try to come after Demi, Selena plans to trick them into taking her instead, all so she can save Demi. "PPP" is fun and unique and is one of my all-time favorites to rewatch.
3. "Teen Beach Movie." Don't lie: you know all of the words and choreography to "Cruisin' for a Bruisin,'" and rightfully so. There's nothing not to like about this movie. Everything from the soundtrack to the color scheme is perfect, and Ross Lynch and Maia Mitchell lead a talented cast of singers and dancers into the world of "Wet Side Story." "Teen Beach Movie" manages to be cheesy, unique, romantic and silly all at the same time. I wish I lived in their world, tbh.
2. "High School Musical 2." I will die on the hill that this is the best of the "HSM" trilogy. It has all of the best songs: "I Don't Dance," "Bet On It," "Fabulous," "Gotta Go My Own Way," the list goes on. You know in your soul that "HSM2" is the most quotable, most singable and most memorable — you're just too afraid to admit it.
1. "Lemonade Mouth." A lot of different movies could've taken the Best DCOM crown, but when I considered my criteria, "Lemonade Mouth" won by juuusssstt a little bit. With songs like "Determinate" and "She's So Gone," it's got a killer soundtrack. Plus, it's got Bridgit Mendler, Hayley Kiyoko and that guy from "Dog with a Blog" that everyone had a crush on as a kid (or at least I did). It's also got that great romance between Bridgit and the guy-that-lowkey-looks-like-he-could-be-her-brother and Mo and Charlie. It also checks off all of the nostalgic "high school" tropes while still feeling fresh. No movie has ever made me crave lemonade more than this one. You can disagree all you want, but this is my go-to when I'm feeling nostalgic and want to return to the Golden Age of DCOMs.

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WKND Recommends
Doing a sunset hike to East Rock.

CREW: Bulldogs cruise to victory, winning 12 of 13 weekend races



YALE ATHLETICS

The Yale heavyweight crew team defeated Dartmouth to win the Olympic Axe, while the lightweight team bested Georgetown.

BY SPENCER KING
STAFF REPORTER

Yale dominated this weekend’s crew races, as all three of the Bulldogs’ crew teams scored big wins. The weekend began with the heavyweight team facing off

against Dartmouth College for the Olympic Axe in a home race at Gilder Boathouse. As has often been the case in recent years, the Bulldogs dominated the Big Green, winning four of the five races — including the Varsity 8 — to retain the Olympic Axe, which it has held

since the prize was created in 2004. “It was a solid race,” said Luca Liautaud ’25, who stroked the 3V. “We focused on keeping things lively and simple and quick. We brought great energy to the warmup, and the race fell into place from there. We’re pretty keen on

pushing on and seeing what we can do in the weeks ahead.” The Varsity 8 defeated the top Dartmouth boat by more than two seconds with a time of 5:26.70. Meanwhile, the women’s team turned in an equally dominant performance in Saratoga

Springs, New York against Syracuse University and Cornell University. The team won all five races of the day, including a massive 15-second win in the 2V. The Elis also secured the Cayuga Cup when the Varsity 8 finished their race in 6:25.621, defeating the top Syracuse boat by more than five seconds and demolishing the Cornell Varsity 8 by nearly 41 seconds. “All of our crews raced well today,” head coach Will Porter said to Yale Athletics. “There were great conditions for racing. We are slowly making progress with all of our lineups. I’m really proud of the team today.” The lightweight team put the cap on an excellent weekend when it was their turn to race at Gilder Boathouse. They continued the Bulldogs’ dominance and won all three races against the Georgetown Hoyas. “I think that Saturday was really exciting,” 3V coxswain Jackie Weyerhaeuser ’25 said. “It was nice to have wins across the board and the team is looking forward to the races to come.” The Varsity 8 turned in another strong performance to lead the way for the Elis, putting in an impressive 5:35.6 time, leading the Georgetown Varsity 8 time of 5:38.4. The lightweight team now will turn its focus to its Ivy League races, with hopes to continue their strong start to the spring season. “The team is feeling energized after two successful race weekends against the Naval Academy and Georgetown,” Blake Weyerhaeuser ’24 said. “The 1, 2, 3v and 4V have yet to lose a race but the close wins mean we can’t rest easy and must keep pushing to find more speed.” This weekend, the heavyweight and lightweight teams will both host University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University on the Housatonic River, while the women’s team will travel to Cambridge to face rivals Harvard University.

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TENNIS: Bulldogs dominate Dartmouth, fall to Harvard

BY GRAYSON LAMBERT
STAFF REPORTER

This weekend, the Yale men’s and women’s tennis teams got off to rocky starts as both fell to Harvard University on Friday. However, both teams were successful in their quests for redemption by dominating Dartmouth College on Sunday. The women’s tennis team (9–11, 1–2 Ivy) started their weekend in Cambridge, where they lost to Harvard (10–8, 2–1 Ivy) 1–4. Vivian Cheng ’23 was the sole Blue and White pointwinner, trouncing the Crimson’s Angel You 6–1, 6–3. “Vivian did a phenomenal job this weekend being extremely dominating in both performances,” head coach Rachel Kahan said. Chelsea Kung ’23 battled through the third set, where she ultimately fell to Charlotte Owensby 3–6, 7–5, 3–6. Rebecca Lynn won her first set at No. 5 singles in a tiebreaker and was tied in the second set when she was pulled off the court after Harvard won their fourth point. The Elis returned to New Haven to take on Dartmouth (4–11, 0–3 Ivy), looking for a win to close out their weekend. The Bulldogs won the doubles point and three singles points, blanking the Big Green in the Bulldogs’ first home Ivy match of the season. Doubles duos Cheng and Rhea Shrivastava ’23 and Ann Wright Guerry ’26 and Kung defeated Ashley Hess with Chidimma Okpara and Brooke Hess with Katie Weber with scores of 7–5 and 6–2, respectively. “I think our team succeeded in keeping good energy and gritting out the match against Dartmouth,” Guerry said. Both Kung and Cheng drew scores of 6–0, 6–2 against their Hanover counterparts. The men’s tennis team kicked off their weekend at home, battling Harvard (15–5, 3–0 Ivy) to an unfortunate 2–5 loss for the



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The Yale men’s and women’s tennis teams fell to Harvard on Friday but defeated Dartmouth on Sunday.

Bulldogs. In doubles, Theo Dean ’24 and Aidan Reilly ’25 defeated Crimson Ronan Jachuck and Henry von der Schulenburg 6–2. Dean was also victorious in singles, beating Harris Walker 6–2, 6–3. Luke Neal ’25 sealed the second point for the Blue and White when he toppled Alan Yim in a third set victory 6–4, 2–6, 6–2. “On Friday against Harvard, Luke Neal did a great job at No. 5 singles,” captain Dean said. “He sat out the match against St. John’s, so to come back into the lineup and commit so

well to the things he’s been working on recently was a great effort by him.” On Sunday, the Elis closed out their weekend with a 7–0 blank at Dartmouth (11–10, 1–2 Ivy). In doubles, Renaud Lefevre ’24 and Vignesh Gogineni ’26 beat Miles Groom and Waleed Qadir 6–0. Dean and Reilly extended their weekend doubles win streak to two, defeating Alex Knox-Jones and Logan Chang 6–1. Dean, Reilly and Walker Oberg ’25 were straight set winners in

singles. Gogineni, Michael Sun ’23 and Neal all eked out third set wins. Next weekend, both the men’s and women’s teams will take on Penn on Saturday and Princeton on Sunday. “We’re looking forward to challenging both Penn and Princeton,” Dean said. “Both of those teams beat us earlier this year but we’re tougher, fitter, and better than we were two months ago, so we’re excited to take it to both of these teams.” Penn’s men’s team (10–8, 2–1 Ivy) is ranked third in the Ivy

League, and Princeton’s men’s team (12–12, 0–3 Ivy) is at the bottom of the Ivy League rankings. Princeton’s women’s team (12–6, 3–0 Ivy) leads the Ivy League rankings, and Penn (11–6, 1–2 Ivy) is third in the league. Yale’s men’s team is ranked fifth in the league, and Yale’s women’s team is ranked seventh. Yale’s men’s team is currently ranked No. 75 in national rankings.

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“Receiving this award from my peers is especially meaningful and an honor that I truly embrace.”
MIKE BROWN SACRAMENTO KINGS HEAD COACH

BASEBALL: Bulldogs drop three games in Ivy series

BY BETSY GOOD
STAFF REPORTER

This weekend, the Yale men’s baseball team (9–16, 4–5 Ivy) competed in a three-game series against Columbia University (16–11, 7–2 Ivy) at home at the George H.W. Bush ’48 Field in New Haven.

Although the Bulldogs fought hard, they fell to the Lions in a three-game sweep in games on Saturday and Sunday.

The Bulldogs had a doubleheader to kick off the games Saturday, losing the first game in a tight 1–0 loss. In the afternoon, the Bulldogs fought hard, but fell again by just a single run in a 3–2 loss.

“I think we learned that we are a good team that can compete with anyone, but in doing that we also learned that in order to compete with anyone, we need to take care of the margins,” pitcher Colton Shaw ’25 wrote to the News. “Little details caught up to us in all three games and if we take care of those, who is to say we don’t come out of that series feeling a little different. Just need to come out better next weekend.”

Both teams got off to a slow start in the first game on Saturday, combining for just five hits and zero runs across the opening three innings. In the top of the fourth, the Lions scored the first and only run of the game as Andy Blake reached home plate on a passed ball.

Daniel Cohen ’26 started on the mound for the Bulldogs in the morning and was relieved by Josh Richardson ’24 in the top of the sixth. Despite strong performances on the mound, the offense failed to drive in a run to even the score.

In the second game of their doubleheader on Saturday, the Lions hit a homer in the top of the first to kick off the scoring. In the bottom of the second, the Bulldogs tied up the game off a double to left-center from Beck Milner ’26, which brought Tommy Martin ’25 home. In the top of the third, the Lions struck again and gained a 3–1 lead with a double down the left-field line bringing one run in, and another run off an error.

No runs were then scored until the bottom of the fifth when Jeff Pieran-



YALE ATHLETICS

This weekend, the Yale baseball team continued Ivy play with three games against Columbia at home in New Haven.

toni ’24 singled, bringing Jimmy Chatfield ’24 home. Chatfield represented the last run of the game against the Lions, bringing the final score to 3–2.

Shaw pitched a long nine innings for the Bulldogs, allowing two unearned runs and four hits. He also had six strikeouts while on the mound.

“I think our pitchers really competed for us this weekend,” Martin wrote to the News. “They did their job, but unfortunately we had a few too many mistakes and couldn’t score as many runners as we needed to.”

In the last game of the series on Sunday, the Bulldogs fell to the Lions 5–4 in a tight back-and-forth game.

The Lions scored the first run of the game in the top of the first, but the

Bulldogs came back to tie the score in the bottom of the inning off an error by the third baseman, bringing Chatfield in for an unearned run. In the top of the fourth, the Lions scored, making the score 2–1; They then scored again in the top of the fifth off a double which brought another run in.

In the bottom of the sixth, Hanson singled to left-center, bringing Chatfield home for his second run of the game.

In the top of the eighth, the Lions seemed to pull away, scoring two more runs to bring the game score to 5–2. The Bulldogs inched closer to the Lions in the bottom of the eighth with a run scored from Martin. The last run of the game came on an unearned run from Carson Swank ’23, making the final score of the game on Sunday 5–4.

“This week we plan to focus on winning the margins,” Milner wrote to the News. “Limiting walks, errors, and runs that are otherwise preventable. Losing three games this weekend by a mere one run each shows us just how important each out is in the game. If we can strive for perfection here, we will find success.”

During the games last weekend, the Bulldogs invited youth baseball teams, family, friends and others from New Haven and surrounding areas to come and meet the team. The children in attendance were able to run the bases after the doubleheader on Saturday.

“My highlight of the weekend was the Kids’ Day we held on Saturday after Game 2 of the doubleheader,” Milner said.

“Although we lost both games that day, everyone got together with smiles on our faces as the kids ran the bases. They were all so excited to be on the field, and their joy was a reminder for me why I play the game. We signed autographs and met the kids. All in all, it was a heartwarming experience.”

Looking ahead, the Bulldogs will compete against the University of Hartford (2–20, 0–0 CCC) at Dunkin’ Park in Hartford. The Bulldogs will then look to get back on track in Ivy play against Dartmouth College (1–23, 0–9 Ivy) in Hanover, New Hampshire over the weekend.

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WOMEN’S LACROSSE: No. 16 Bulldogs fall in Top 25 showdown

BY SPENCER KING
STAFF REPORTER

The No. 16 Yale women’s lacrosse team (9–3, 3–1 Ivy) lost its chance at completing an undefeated Ivy season after a 16–6 loss to the No. 17 University of Pennsylvania Quakers (7–4, 3–0 Ivy) on Saturday.

The Bulldogs started strong, leading 4–3 at the end of the first quarter, but that would prove to be the high point for the team.

The second and third quarters went significantly worse for the Elis, as they were shut out while the Quakers went on an 11–0 run. The hole they found themselves in proved to be too much, as UPenn cruised to a 16–6 win.

“Our recent loss against Penn does not define the team we are, and the team we have created this past season,” Alex Hopkins ’25 said. “We take this loss and learn from it and I am confident that we will reflect and perform as a team better than we have ever prepared before for a game.”

The loss dropped the Bulldogs to second place in the Ivy League with a record of 3–1 and sets up a dramatic end of the season, as two of their final three games will come against teams sitting at 2–2.

Next weekend will be an especially important game, as the Elis will travel to Cambridge to take on rivals Harvard.

“For our next Ivy games we are focusing on being more detail-oriented,” Sophie Straka ’25 said. “Making sure we control all the little things we can control so that we get the outcomes we want.”

Despite the setback, the Bulldogs remain the cream of the crop in the Ivy League as the highest nationally ranked women’s lacrosse team among the Ancient Eight.

The focus will now be on moving forward, learning from the

loss and finishing out the final three regular season games strong before entering Ivy playoffs.

“We never want to be the same team as we were yesterday,” Marymegan Wright ’25 said. “In

other words, we’re always striving to get better.”

The bright spots for the Bulldogs came from a pair of sophomores on offense and a strong goaltending duo.

Attacker Jenna Collignon ’25 and midfielder Taylor Lane ’25 both posted hat tricks, while goalies Cami Donadio ’25 and Luanna Summer ’24 combined to make a season-high ten saves for the Bulldogs.

The Bulldogs will travel to Harvard Stadium this Saturday for a 3:30 pm showdown with the Crimson.

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YALE ATHLETICS

The Yale women’s lacrosse team suffered a setback against No. 17 UPenn when it fell to the Quakers 16–6.

FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 2023

Gale Daily News

A SPECIAL ISSUE FOR PAN ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

PURPOSE IN PAN ASIAN PRIDE

When I travel to my ancestral homeland, I encounter a city both familiar and unfamiliar; traditional and new. Heritage manifests not only in our intimate worlds through food, language and culture, but also the larger environment around us. I hope to depict the scintillating, overwhelming feeling of discovering this for the first time.

WORDS BY SOPHIA ZHAO

THROUGH THE LENS



March 10, 2023 marked the 64th anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising Day. Just a city block from the United Nations Headquarters, thousands of Tibetans gathered on this day, singing, praying, and calling the world to recognize and act against the cultural genocide and illegal Chinese military-occupation of their homeland.

Words by **TENZIN JORDEN.**
Photos by **TENZIN JORDEN.**



PAN ASIAN PRIDE

Introducing the Pan Asian Heritage Month issue

Welcome to the News’ special issue celebrating Pan Asian Heritage Month! We are excited to publish and showcase content centered around members of the community — including personal essays, profiles, event coverage, podcasts, videos, photography and illustrations.

In this special issue, our staffers and guest contributors share content about their personal experiences grappling with beauty standards, reflect on unspoken gestures of love and discuss the diversity among those who identify with the term “Asian.” We encourage you to read about ways to combat the Yagüe with Asian remedies and learn lessons derived from growing up in a nail salon.

We also encourage you to check out our multimedia content for this spissue, which includes a YTV segment on the Asian American Student Association’s Night Market, several illustrations, photo series capturing personal experiences and a podcast on the complexities of media representation.

Through our contributors’ words, glimpse the lives of Chinese American fencers at Yale. Break the silence about menstrual health among Asian American girls. Reflect alongside Olympian Laura Zeng on what it means to look Asian in a Team USA jacket. These stories range from the big — like Asians aspiring to a medical career — to the small — like a plate of cut fruit. We invite you to revel in the in-betweens — from a plane traveling to Shanghai to the white space between “Korean” and “American.”

We would be remiss not to acknowledge the gaps in our coverage. Though we employ the title of Pan Asian as aspirational, we have not adequately showcased the experiences of all the people and communities who embrace

Asian identity. Such is the challenge of a special issue: we will never be able to portray every individual or communal lived experience. Instead, we hope that this collection of content inspires you — our readers — to think further about the polyphony of the “Asian experience,” which is colored uniquely by the narratives of each individual. And we hope that this special issue inspires the News — including ourselves — to think critically about our assumptions about who associates with what identity-related terms, as well as which communities are excluded from our coverage and why.

We want to shout out first-time contributors to the News. Thank you for trusting us with your experience, as well as your words, your photos, your artwork — and all of your voices. We appreciate your time and dedication in collaborating with us on this project, and we want you to know that this issue would not have been possible without your contributions and hard work.

Moreover, we are grateful to our staff members — including reporters, desk editors, copy editors, production and design editors, audience editors, photographers, illustrators, YTV editors, podcast editors and management — who graciously contributed their time and work to the creation of this issue.

Lastly, we want to thank you — our audience — for your readership! We welcome any feedback about this special issue. Please feel free to contact us at editor@yaledailynews.com, or any of the team members individually. We hope you enjoy!

SOPHIE WANG, MEGAN VAZ, SAMANTHA LIU AND ANIKA SETH are the editors for the *Pan Asian Heritage Month Spissue*.



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Korean-American: Embracing “and” instead of “or”

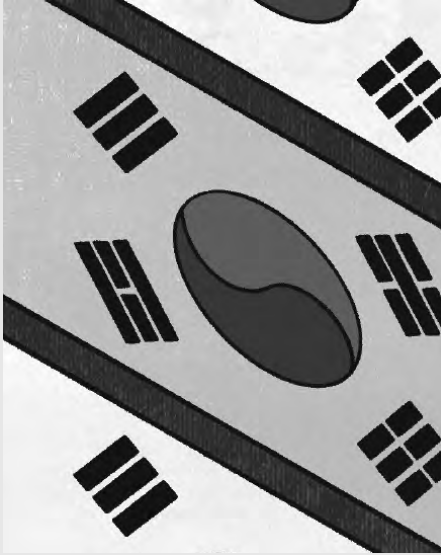
I’ve always had a complicated relationship with the term “Korean-American.” I grew up in a traditional Korean household with two parents who spoke the language fluently, but I would also receive the lowest grades in my Korean language classes at church. I loved watching K-dramas, but I could never fully comprehend what was happening without the English subtitles for guidance. At school, I automatically didn’t fit in with my white peers, but I was also excluded by the Korean students, who spoke exclusively in Korean.

I distinctly remember having my cousin over at my house one day when I was in middle school. She’d brought her four-year-old daughter along. As I was showing her my very old — and very dusty — doctor’s play kit, she turned to her mother and asked, “Why isn’t she speaking Korean if she is Korean?” Part of me wished I hadn’t understood what she had said, but at that moment, I knew I was faced with an inherent truth: I was too American to be Korean. But, I was also too Korean to be American.

By middle school, I decided that if I couldn’t fully connect with my Korean identity, then I would just have to try to connect more with my American one. So, I opted to take Spanish as a second language instead of Korean. I insisted on only eating Western food at school — I even refused to tell people my middle name solely because I thought it would be too difficult for a non-Korean person to pronounce.

Making these changes felt liberating, at first. For a long time, I viewed my Korean identity as something that was holding me back. From what, I’m still not entirely sure, but I finally felt like I belonged. When my grandparents visited for two weeks in the summer, though, I recognized that trying to gain Americanism caused me to lose my connection with my Korean heritage.

I already came to terms with the fact that our language barriers would cause a bit of a struggle, but when my grandparents tried to ask my parents about my interests, we had no common ground. The more they tried to talk with me about Korean culture, the more frustrated I became with myself. In prioritizing my Americanism, I realized that I was completely disconnecting myself from generations of culture and tradition. No matter how hard I tried, being Korean



JESSAI FLORES/ILLUSTRATIONS EDITOR

was something I could never change. So, what point was there in being ashamed of that part of myself when I could choose to embrace it instead?

From then on, I started making conscious efforts to reconnect with my Korean roots. I practiced speaking Korean with my grandparents over the phone, I took pride in having my kimbab or kimchi fried rice stand out amongst a sea of sandwiches and reheated pizzas, and when senior graduation rolled around and I was asked how to properly pronounce my full name, I took the time to teach my vice-principal the phonetics of my middle name. Not only was it a written reminder of my origins, but it made up one-third of my actual name — if it was going to be said in front of my entire graduating class, it was going to be said right.

I still find myself struggling with my Korean-American identity. Even now, writing about being Korean is a challenge in and of itself. Growing up, I always used to feel like I had to choose between being Korean or being American. Now that I’m older, I understand that I can find value in both cultures. Rather than throwing myself into my Korean or American sides, I’ve learned to find a healthy middle ground: one that captures the unique and individual identity of Joanne Jaekyung Lee.

JOANNE LEE is a first year in Silliman College from Irvine, California. She can be reached at joanne.lee.jjl236@yale.edu.

Finding “something genuine inside” for Asians in medicine

Discourse around Asian American medical experiences has become more prevalent in recent years. While the journey is by no means done, recent initiatives at Yale, including a book and mental health talk by Jenny Wang and a trauma-healing program by Eunice Yuen, mark certain progress — or at least awareness — in empowering Asian Americans toward seeking physical and mental health treatments.

Last year, an article by the News titled “Going to the doctor when you’re Asian in America” explored the complexities of how Asian Americans experience healthcare. The piece focused on patient perspectives, noting cultural challenges which prevent Asian American individuals from seeking medical specialists and from communicating empathetically with their families. However, there is little consideration into the opposite side of the discussion: how Asian American physicians and healthcare workers navigate the medical profession.

The case exists that Asians are already overrepresented in medicine, comprising 7 percent of the national population but 17 percent of all active physicians in 2018. More simply, as one blog post by James Allen — former medical director of Ohio State University East Hospital — asked in its title, “Why Are There So Many Asian Physicians in the U.S.?”

Like larger discourses about affirmative action, arguments for enhancing diversity in medicine remain vague about Asian Americans. A 2001 report from the National Academy of Medicine — which focused on addressing diversity problems in the medical profession — grouped Asians with other “minorities” in its introduction. However, the report mostly omitted them in its actual discussions of institutionalized racism as medical schools — barriers which did not seem to apply to Asians, the report implied.

The report eventually turned to using “URM” for “under-represented minority,” to describe the

challenges faced by medical professionals of color. This left Asians to be a “non under-represented minority,” an oxymoronic phrase which physician-writer Pauline Chen equated to a “gaslighting double-negative.”

One reason why the discourse dwindles when it comes to Asian American physicians is the belief that a doctor is a “dream” profession for Asian kids. Indeed, a quick Google search with Allen’s query proliferates articles about meritocracy, financial stability and parental expectations.

“There’s definitely a very common stereotype of the Asian child pushed by their parents to go to medical school, to meet a very specific idea of success,” Sarah Ho MED ’26 said in an interview with the News.

However, that stereotype is dying — if not dead already — for Justin Zhu MED ’24. Zhu explained that what drew him toward medicine was the feeling of mentorship: as the oldest child in his family, he had grown up teaching and playing with his two younger siblings. Later, when he started working as a physics tutor in his junior year of college, he recognized that teaching had always brought him fulfillment.

“Being able to connect with other students and be a part of their journey was really rewarding to me,” Zhu said. “In my mind, medicine was a way to do that with patients longitudinally.”

Zhu also noted that both his parents were physicians, and he grew up exposed to medicine, but he never took it for granted as a career he should pursue.

“My parents were never like, ‘You have to do medicine,’” Zhu emphasized. “In fact, seeing some of the things that they did — working really long hours, being stressed about their job — were kind of turn-offs about medicine.”

None of the other individuals interviewed by the News cited parental expectations or financial stability as influences toward their decision to pursue medicine, though Jason Wang ’26 posited that it may have played a subconscious role.

Nevertheless, the perceived motivations that Asian Americans may go into medicine for “wrong” or non-altruistic reasons — parental pressure or prestige — still abound.

One study found that reviewers of Medical Student Performance Evaluations are more likely to characterize Asian students using “grindstone” traits — “hardworking,” “conscientious” and “diligent” — compared to white students, who prevailed in adjectives demonstrating compassion, such as “caring” and “empathy.”

Zhu referenced a statistic that Asian American medical students tend to score lower during their clerkship years, when they are placed on clinical rotations and allowed to interact with patients firsthand.

“During that one year of hospital shadowing experience, the grades suffer,” Zhu explained. “One aspect of it is that Asian Americans can be perceived as passive, disinterested or not engaged with the team.”

With this statistic in mind, Zhu recalled having to act “extra proactive” and “go above and beyond” during his clinical rotation, speaking up whenever possible and making phone calls after rounds to connect with families.

The struggle for proof of leadership capacity persists past graduate education for Asian Americans. Across all U.S. medical schools, the number of deans of Asian American descent has increased from zero to one in the past twenty years. In 2015, less than 1 percent of hospital chief executive officers were of Asian descent.

“I do have concerns of when I’m attending as a full doctor eventually, ‘Will I be taken as seriously as a white male counterpart?’” Ho asked.

Like Zhu, Ho explained that medical school was never an expected path. The financial allure of a medical career has waned, noted Ho, with soaring tuition and debt costs.

At Yale, the 2022-2023 tuition costs to attend the School of Medicine exceeded \$100,000, summing to

\$522,723 over five years. These financial factors have fueled anxiety for prospective pre-medical students.

“There was a big fear I had [that] if I do this whole pre-med thing and go to medical school and pay so much money — what if I end up hating it?” Ho told the News.

Ho entered college with a general interest in neuroscience, but without definitive career goals. She had been choosing between a Ph.D., M.D. or MD/Ph.D. program. It was not until she experienced the human-centric aspects of care that she felt drawn toward a career as a physician. While she was conducting an undergraduate research project that required her to meet with patients and to facilitate interviews for qualitative data collection, the opportunity for patient interaction resonated with her most deeply.

“I liked having that chance to connect with people and learn about their life stories,” Ho said. “It was very affirming that I loved talking to people and helping them.”

Such a relationship, according to prospective pre-medical student Anjali Dhanekula ’26, is “something you can’t get anywhere else.”

Dhanekula, who initially grew up watching medical television series including Grey’s Anatomy and Chicago Med, was initially allured by the high-drama shows. Being interested in medicine, she said, just felt like “hopping on the bandwagon” at first.

It was not until Dhanekula shadowed a plastic surgeon, specializing in reconstructive breast surgery, that she was struck by how a doctor could change someone’s life.

“He made them look and feel as close to how they felt before their cancer,” Dhanekula explained. “And after he’d do these surgeries, he’d follow up with them again, and make more appointments and it’s just a special relationship.”

These stories — in which individuals found value in supporting and empathizing with others — are commonly cited reasons for why people choose medicine, but rarely the perceived reason for Asian Americans.

ceived reason for Asian Americans.

Instead, pervading explanations argue that medical school is appealing for Asian Americans because it is meritocratic. With the academic standardization created by the Association of American Medical Colleges, or AAMC, which includes rigorous MCAT and board exams, it appears that the “best and brightest,” as measured solely by competency and grit, can be rewarded with a white coat.

“Whenever I told people that I wanted to go to medicine, it didn’t seem like it didn’t seem like they were surprised,” Dhanekula said. “It felt like they were saying, ‘Oh, yeah, that makes sense.’”

However, such a defense for the “studious Asian” stereotype overlooks the disparities within the 11,000 Asian individuals who apply to U.S. medical schools annually. Underrepresentation remains a problem for varying ethnic groups within the Asian American community. Laotians, Cambodians and Indonesians, for instance, each make up less than 0.4 percent of these applicants. There is no public data about representation of these Asian subgroups beyond U.S. residency, either.

Asian Americans are still vying for legitimacy in medicine, Ho reiterated. But both Ho and Zhu said they believed their cultural identities and experiences help them be more empathetic to patients, not less. More specifically, Zhu described learning the nuances of communicating with patients of non-English speaking backgrounds, while Ho said she hopes to be especially attentive toward patients who may have been socialized to be more passive or quiet with doctors.

“At the end of the day, in medicine, if you’re going to put yourself through fifteen years of med school, you’ve got to have something genuine inside of you,” Wang said.

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SPISSUE

Asian American Girlhood: periods, the pill & the talk

BY KAYLA YUP
STAFF REPORTER

Nine years ago, I missed the health class where they split up fifth grade girls and boys for the puberty talk. I was busy volunteering at field day, picking up plastic cones and ushering small kids around. I unfortunately never made that class up. But it would have been my only opportunity to talk about those things with an adult. In many Asian families, the birds-and-the-bees and other women’s health topics aren’t really up for discussion.

I’ve seen “the talk” on TV, but I’ve never heard of an Asian parent giving one. To be clear, this is not a scientifically robust observation — I’m sure there are outlier Asian parents who talk about sex with their kids freely. But that is overwhelmingly not the case. Though the silence often comes from a place of protection and love, the stigma around women’s health is frankly outdated.

It’s hard to become a woman, but even harder when shame and secrecy surround it. In this generational cycle, the potential for inherited wisdom evaporates in place of stigma-laden silence.

I spoke to women from a range of Asian backgrounds to compare our lived experiences and start (finally) opening up conversations.

Menarche: the start of it all

Girls typically get their first menstrual period — called ‘menarche’ — between ten and fifteen years old. It’s the first sign of womanhood as hormones hijack the body. Nikita Paudel ’25 described her first period as “very traumatic.”

“What I understood when I was a child was that when you get your period, you kind of don’t really have your freedom anymore because bad men, bad people can abuse you and you can become pregnant,” Paudel said. “I vividly remember not wanting to have my period because I was afraid that my freedom would be stripped from me.”

That’s what she understood from family and the general chatter around periods in her Nepali culture. Paudel, like me, attended Baltimore County public schools, so she said she also had the “little course” in elementary school where they give you deodorant and explain what a period is biologically. But she recalled still not fully understanding what it meant “socially” to have a period.

From a young age, Paudel noticed the taboo and shame that came with menstruation, “at least in [her] Nepali household.” Her period came when she was 11. Unsure if it was her period or not, she showed the stain to her mother.

“I kind of remembered seeing an angry or disappointed face on my mom’s face,” Paudel said. “And I started bawling my eyes out in front of her, just realizing that like, ‘Oh, I don’t know, is my mom disappointed in me?’ I was just confused.”

Paudel said that in the western parts of Nepal, there is a practice called “Chhaupadi” which restricts a woman’s activity while on their period. The most extreme versions involve sending women to an outside hut. According to the UN, the practice continues, perpetuated by myths surrounding menstruation, even though the Supreme Court of Nepal banned chhaupadi in 2005.

Though Chhaupadi is technically banned, Paudel noted that some of those practices and the stigma that surrounds menstruation “still linger on.”

For the first couple days of her period, she was not allowed to eat at the family table, come into the kitchen, or go near the prayer room. For around three days, she tried to follow these rules, until her dad intervened and said, “At that point, why don’t you just throw her out?”

Paudel said that at age 11 and through high school, she would have interpreted her mother’s reaction to her first period as “disappointment.” But at 20 years old, knowing her mother better now, she would say her mother was more “scared” than anything.

“Because now, I am going into a different phase of my life where people can hurt me,” Paudel said. “And my body changing and me turning into a woman, I think that had a lot more to do with it than disappointment [...] Upon a lot of reflection, I do think it was just her being worried or her not fully understanding what was going to happen.”

Paudel noted that taboo around menstruation is seen around the world, but she suspects it to be “more concentrated” within Asian families and immigrant families in gen-



ARIEL KIM/CONTRIBUTING ILLUSTRATOR

eral. She compared it to topics such as mental health, which aren’t really discussed among immigrant families.

But things have gotten “much better” since, Paudel said, and menstruation is no longer a taboo in her house. She found that living in America influenced her parents’ thinking, in terms of understanding of what it means to be on your period.

Ngoclynn Huynh ’25, who is Vietnamese American, and Ariel Kim ’25, who is Korean American, both said that periods are considered “natural” and “normal” things to talk about in their households. However, Kim mentioned that it is considered good “manners” to hide menstrual products, such as by wrapping a pad in toilet paper when throwing it out, so that others can’t tell when you’re menstruating. Aeka Guru ’25, who lives in India, said that when someone buys a menstrual product, it’s often wrapped in newspaper or an opaque black bag. Across different Asian cultures, there seems to be a sense of wanting to hide when you’re on your period due to stigma.

Karley Yung ’25, who is Chinese American and the president of the menstrual equity group YaleBleeds, connected the stigma surrounding women’s health in Asian cultures to women still being seen as “the inferior gender” whose issues are “not considered worthwhile” to discuss. Her experience with menstruation was speaking about it in hushed voices and hiding her pads.

“It took an incredible amount of convincing for my mom to get me tampons and let me eventually use a menstrual cup, given the stigma and ‘relationship’ of using internally inserted menstrual products with virginity,” Yung said. “I found this to be very frustrating.”

Guru said that her household is a little more progressive, in terms of her talking openly about her period with her parents. She also brought up how in her culture, there is a religious ritual conducted when a girl gets her first period. It’s a beautiful celebration of a girl becoming a woman, that gathers the whole family to give you gifts and to throw rice and flowers on you. Guru sees progress in breaking down the taboo around menstruation — some companies in India are even offering period leave.

“But I still think just in general, becoming a woman is really difficult,” Guru said. “Especially in households where even some mothers may not feel comfortable talking about their own lives, it could be difficult for daughters because they feel like they don’t have an ally.”

Menarche is the first step in becoming a woman, and the silence around it foreshadows the greater shroud of mystery around women’s health topics in Asian families.

So you want to get on birth control?

Paudel’s best friend from home used to throw up every time she had her period. So, the friend’s parents, who are white American, got her on birth control when she was around 11, and that was that. But when Paudel started having symptoms “degradative” to her health, she knew it would not be the same for her.

In her junior year of high school, Paudel had to be taken to the nurse’s office because she almost fainted from the severity of her period symptoms. Her doctor agreed that birth control would be a suitable next step for managing her symptoms. But Paudel’s family was very hesitant..

“Why do we need to be on it? This is for grown women, this isn’t for kids like you,” Paudel recalled her mother saying to her.

The general sense was that the only reason to use birth control was to prevent birth, Paudel said. According to her, there is plenty of misinformation around birth control within Asia. Common concerns are that birth control causes infertility, or that birth control is only an excuse to have sex.

Though Paudel eventually convinced her mother to let her get birth control, she noted that many of her Asian friends have had to do “some crazy things” to get birth control. One friend tried going to her doctor to get birth control confidentially, but the insurance bill was sent to her home, landing her in trouble.

Yung had a similar experience. In her Asian household, discussion of birth control as a method to control heavy or painful periods gets shut down, as it would be “unnatural.”

Huynh said that there is often an educational barrier when it comes to Asian parents’ understanding of birth control. Her parents did not have sex education in Vietnam, and they grew up in a time when birth control was not common or accessible. This makes birth control a more taboo topic.

In my women’s health seminar this week, our guest speaker said “the pill” freed women from the chains of their biology. Likewise, Asian friends have expressed to me that their parents should be happy they were “being safe,” but the stigma is pervasive. Even when away at college, the newfound independence and bodily autonomy comes with anxiety you can’t seem to outgrow.

I asked Guru, who has experience in educating on sexual health-related issues, for advice on asking Asian parents for permission to get on birth control. Her personal advice was to demonstrate to parents that you’ve done your research on birth control, including potential side effects and risks, and emphasize that you want the kind of relationship that enables open conversations.

I still could not imagine asking my parents for birth control. But I agree with Guru that most Asian parent-child relationships do not enable talk about contraception and sex. And to me, that’s dangerous.

If you’re not giving me ‘the talk,’ who will?

When you ask an Asian parent where you came from, a common joking response is “we found you in the trash.” For Huynh, this answer represents the greater mystery around sex education and women’s health topics in Asian families.

Huynh mainly relied on her older sister to teach her about periods. But when it came to birth control and sex, even her sister didn’t want to discuss it for fear of encouraging sexual activity.

The problem is that a parent, armed with the wisdom of lived experience, is naturally the best guide for a child. However, in Asian families, when mothers can go as far as to cover their child’s eyes during kissing scenes in movies, physical affection is not so normalized.

Paudel never saw people kiss in South Asian media during her childhood, whereas she had heard of non-Asian friends watching sex scenes (embedded in Western movies/TV) with their family.

“As an Asian woman, college comes with a lot of unlearning and relearning what sex is and how to talk about it,” Guru said.

It was “nerve-wracking” and a bit “crazy” for Guru to see sex talked about during first-year workshops with CCEs. She could not believe that there were condoms openly on display in laundry rooms. But she eventually became more comfortable. When Guru told her parents she became a CCE, they were surprised at how okay people were with talking about sex. Guru has made an effort to talk to her family more about the sex-positive culture here. Now they’re a “bit more open” to it, though she said they probably see her more as adjacent to the culture or “at least watching it” then involved in it.

Guru emphasized that immigrant parents who did not go to college in America may assume that the often sexualized depictions of college life in TV shows and movies mirror reality. Guru has not “had those conversations” with her parents yet. She thinks it is better to try “chipping away” rather than “shattering” their norms when it comes to sex. One day, maybe you could even ask about a parent’s first time and advice for safe communication surrounding sex — but that takes time.

If you don’t get the talk, your ideals and norms of sex may not be realistic, Guru said. It may come from the movies or porn, which contain behavior that is not always healthy and shouldn’t be emulated. Even peers may have misconcep-

tions when it comes to ideals for sex, so talking to them isn’t always the best resort.

Huynh found it comforting to go through the Communication and Consent workshop as a first-year, since most conversations she had around sex and consent beforehand were from the internet.

“It was affirming in a way,” Huynh said. “It felt like we were all on the same page, and we all agree that this is how it should be. I can’t believe it took me till I was 18 to have this talk. I wish I could have had this when I was younger.”

She said sex education provides important knowledge about consent and healthy conversations — whether you are currently sexually active or not.

“We rarely talked about sex explicitly in my family, and when we did, it was only spoken about in a way that told me that sex was only for procreation,” Yung said. “At no point was pleasure or intimacy discussed; in fact, I was taught that as a woman, it was supposed to be painful but something I needed to do to have kids.”

Huynh noted the nuance of growing up with two different cultures as Asian American women. One culture may be “telling you not to talk about this” while another is saying “speak out, learn about this.” Parents who grew up in Asia may not understand that experience, growing up in a time where hypersexualization happens at a young age, Huynh said. She recounted already being insecure about her body in fifth grade.

To Huynh, in the age of social media it feels “almost inevitable” that children will find out about sex. It’s either internet sludge or a mature adult to guide a child through this phase of life.

Breaking the cycle

Though the job of raising a girl into womanhood should fall on both parents, a mother is a daughter’s natural role model and mirror. And if we’ve learned anything from the Oscar-winning Everything Everywhere All at Once, it’s the complexity of mother-daughter relationships in Asian culture. It’s hard to judge our moms for their silence or their perpetuation of stigma because they too endured it all.

“My mom also had a very, very rough coming of age into womanhood,” Paudel said. “And I didn’t really fully understand her story. At the end of the day, she went through her own struggles and battles to get where she is today. While it would have been nice to have been able to talk about it, I also fully understand if she was not ready to unpack her own trauma coming into those conversations.”

Paudel said that if she ever has a daughter, she hopes to be a resource for her.

Huynh also wants to break these cycles of silence, and personally show her kids how to go about things safely and feel supported.

“My parents have been through so much, especially as refugees,” Huynh said. “But they just keep going and they don’t look at the past. I think that that’s why conversations about women’s health are still taboo, because there is a very dark history behind it.”

Huynh’s mother had her older sister at a young age, around 19.

“She has told me like nothing about it,” Huynh said. “She’s never warned me about getting married, having kids younger — she never warned me against that either. That’s like a part of her life that she just does not talk about.”

I also only have a fragmented understanding of my mother’s upbringing. I know she was the youngest of seven daughters, and that she wore high heels while waiting. I know she once had the “perfect golden tan” when she was ten, and now the sun just burns her. But when I ask her deeper questions, she often acts as if her history were irrelevant to me.

Our mothers had to become women once too. It’s not fair to blame our mothers for deeply-entrenched cultural stigmas around womanhood that they too are confronted with. And it’s too late to be raised any differently. So, perhaps the most important part of opening up these conversations about Asian womanhood, is learning who our mother was before she was our mother. What did becoming a woman mean to her?

Moreover, what did becoming a woman mean to you?

The cycle ends with us. Let’s talk.

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PAN ASIAN PRIDE

LESSONS I'VE
LEARNED IN A
NAIL SALON



// BY ANH NGUYEN

Have you ever wondered why Vietnamese people are the proprietors of most nail salons that you visit in the United States? When American actress Tippi Hedren came to visit a refugee camp in Northern California, a group of Vietnamese women there became fascinated with her long, polished nails. In hopes of finding vocations for the newly arrived Vietnamese refugees, Hedren flew in her personal manicurist to teach them how to do manicures. From then until now, the nail industry has exploded, and I am quite certain that at least one of the nail salons in your local neighborhood is Vietnamese-owned and run. As the daughter of two Vietnamese boat people, nail salons are an important part of my identity. 1952 Montrose Boulevard holds a special place in my heart, and it's ultimately one of my homes away from home.

My mom was pregnant with me in the first year that she opened her nail salon, Montrose Nails, at the end of 2003. If ever asked how long the salon has been open, I simply add a year to my age. Convenient, right? Over the course of my past 18 years and the past 19 years that the salon has been open, I've come to learn a few lessons. So in the spirit of Pan-Asian American Heritage Month at Yale, I'll share a few:

1. There is such a thing as the perfect red. What's the difference between "OPI Red," "Big Apple Red," "Got The Mean Reds," and "Candied Kingdom"? The first two are classic reds, the OG's if you will. You're either an OPI Red or a Big Apple Red girlie. If you're feeling a bit more grunge, you'll go for "Got the Mean Reds." If you're looking for the perfect holiday red, "Candied Kingdom" is the one.

Only my fellow nail salon babies would know the craft that is distinguishing between red nail polishes, or even between pinks. You might say they're the same color, but no, no. One is certainly a tad more purple than the other. I personally attribute my grasp of color and vague knowledge of color theory to the hours I've spent doing inventory on nail polish and finding the perfect shades for customers.

2. You learn to put up with a lot. I don't think I have to explain this one. Karens. Annoying little kids. The occasional drunk person. A client loudly talking sh*t about her ex while said ex is in the room across getting waxed. Not like that ever happened... (The walls are very thin, and they subsequently had a shouting match in the nail salon.)

3. Manicures can go a long way in forming family and community. There's something unique about growing up in a nail salon around the same regular clientele. I've known some of our customers my entire life — literally. I'm extremely close with them — as in one of them attended my 4th grade spelling bee and once took me to yoga class with her. They were some of the first people to teach me bits of English, as I ran around as a young child gibbering in Vietnamese. They saw me through my talkative, shy, and self-assured phases. You'd expect comments like "Oh you've grown so much!" to come from extended family, but for me, it comes from both of the aunts I see at Christmas and the women who frequent the nail salon each holiday season. You could say they are a part of my extended family — every time I come back to the salon for December break, it feels like I'm having a reunion as I talk about what I've been up to at Yale.



// PHOTOS COURTESY OF PHILIP NGUYEN

But even beyond regular clientele, the community that my mom has created around Montrose Nails is a bit like family. Through the weekly mani or pedi, she's created a tribe, as my older sister put it, that surpasses the biases or prejudices that I thought were unchangeable about my parents' characters. While homophobia and anti-Blackness manifest themselves within our Asian American communities, my mother and aunts overcame that. We simply gossip harmlessly about the community, bond over picking the right polish color and nail art, debate the best burger spot in Houston (FYI it's currently Burger Bodega), and discuss how to cook up the fresh fish one of my clients brings in for my mom (food exchange has become a big phenomenon in the salon).

4. Little things go a long way. One of the things I've always admired about my mom is the way she remembers everything about her clients (seriously, I think she's the paragon of peak client relations). She'll recognize their voice over the phone, know exactly what services they want to make appointments for and remember the name or number of the polish that they like to wear. For the clients she's especially close with, she'll bring the occasional container of fish sauce or fried egg rolls. My mom's attention to detail and care for each of her customers is what keeps them coming back, and the way she goes about running her salon has informed the way in which I care for my own community here.

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What did it mean to be Asian-American as an elite athlete?

// BY LAURA ZENG

When I was 12 years old, I attended my first international rhythmic gymnastics competition. After being named to the junior national team of the United States that year, I soon began traveling abroad annually, training and competing in various tournaments and World Cups across Europe. By the flag on my arm, I was representing my country. But by the nature of my face, I was representing my race. At that age, I could already feel the weight of responsibility, but I didn't know exactly what it meant. I was too young to understand the gravity of my privilege, even though I knew it was special. When someone asks me what it means to be Asian-American, I think about my family — about my memories growing up and the things I learned we shared with a broader community. It's an identity that is ever-changing, but always permanent — and centers around my relationship to a culture. But when I think about the question in the context of being an athlete, the focus shifts. That understanding of my identity was formed more narrowly, through a relationship between myself and the "public." Separate from the people around me, I learned to be aware of how I was projecting myself and how it was being received. I was developing a relationship with my image — which felt both powerful and fragile at the same time. Throughout my career, I feel like my role of representation played out on two levels, because I was a minority in two respects: American in the global schema of rhythmic gymnastics and Asian in the general arena of sports. In the most popular sports at the Olympics — like swimming, track and field, or artistic gymnastics (the discipline most people think of when they hear "gymnastics") — the United States is a force to be reckoned with. Representing America carries a certain clout and implies medal contention. Both times I competed at the

Games — in Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2021 — it was both exciting and gratifying to be momentarily associated with this prestige, because it wasn't something I experienced normally. For the past 20 years (except for the Tokyo 2021 upset), every rhythmic gymnastics individual Olympic winner has been Russian — and every podium made up of gymnasts from Russia, Belarus, or Ukraine. There are many factors that go into this historical Eastern European dominance, from the origins of rhythmic gymnastics in the Soviet Union to the embedded infrastructure and tradition of the sport in these countries today. But the bigger point is that unlike many others, being American in rhythmic gymnastics meant being an underdog — and constantly trying to fight for respect. To be Asian then, might seem like an entirely separate issue. But the hyphen in "Asian-American" was never bringing together two disparate identities for me so much as encompassing one that was fully-intertwined. I was raised in the suburbs of Chicago, but by two immigrant parents who came from China. I am fully Asian, but I am also fully American — and not one more than the other. The origins of my name — like the nature of my identity — cannot be separated or compared. "Laura" and "Zeng" are stuck together as one. And no matter where in the world I was, I was always introduced in the same way and recognized in the same manner. During control practices (or mock competitions) in training, my coaches would announce my name with the same bravado they used at competitions to mark the moment as something meaningful. I grew up attaching myself to my whole name and knowing my identity as a complete entity. So in every performance, I was exactly who I was. For any achievement I made or record I set, if I was doing so as the first American — then I was doing so as the first Asian-American too. And there was something kind of beautiful in that inevitability,

because it meant that being Asian was never secondary to being American; rather, it was fundamental. But just because I knew who I was didn't mean I didn't notice who was around me. Growing up, I spent a lot of time training at Novogorsk, an elite athlete compound in Moscow. I would go there for a few weeks every few months with my coach, so I could train somewhere in between various competitions and learn from the best. Novogorsk is where all the top Russian athletes trained — and while it was a privilege to be surrounded by such excellence, it could also get incredibly lonely. The onus was on me to have learned Russian (which unfortunately, the farthest I got was gymnastics jargon). But even then, it was jarring to be around only Eastern European women for such long periods of time. When I was younger, a few gymnasts from Japan and Korea would also be training at the complex, to which it was always nice to see their "familiar faces" — even if the most we interacted with was just a few small smiles and nods. One might say the quality of this purely "visual" representation seems superficial — how could I feel solidarity with an Asian gymnast just by her mere presence? But the thing about representation is that it can be precisely just that: potentially visual. Rhythmic gymnastics is an aesthetic sport. It's not just about what you do, but how you do it; not just about what you're doing, but how you look while you're doing it. I was trained to be acutely attuned to the small and subjective details, from the rhinestones on my leotard to the color of my lipstick. Presentation more than mattered — it was essential. And with such a heightened level of scrutiny, constant comparison was inevitable. In the context of aesthetics, representation is everything. To be clear, there are actually a good and growing number of Asian rhythmic gymnasts in America. And sometimes I did train and travel with Asian-American teammates, for whom I was always



// ALICE MAO

glad to have implicit solidarity with. But my formative years in the sport were spent abroad and as I progressed, I felt the difference more acutely. Among my Asian friends in public school at home, I was an outlier in a different way. And while stereotypes are diminutive when used as a shorthand for the whole picture, they do contain kernels of truth: most of my peers including myself did Kumon, played piano and were (thankfully for me, only briefly) encouraged towards STEM. So when I became an "athlete" first and foremost — and quit piano, among other things — my path became more and more distinct. Considering there are no scholarships, collegiate programs, or demonstrated financial incentive to entice them otherwise, it honestly makes sense why most immigrant parents wouldn't choose to put their kids in the sport in the first place. Of course, I can speak now to the intangible and invaluable benefits my path has brought me — but at the time, the payoff was not immediately clear. For that, I have only my mom and my dad to thank. They believed, showed and taught me that it doesn't matter what I do — so long as I put my heart, soul and mind into doing it well. They guided me towards following an initial passion, even though it wasn't a

guaranteed investment. They took the risk — and thus the care — of letting me do something different, even though it wasn't the norm. In retrospect, what motivated me intrinsically as an Asian-American elite athlete is thus probably no different from what motivates many Asian-Americans everywhere: I wanted to make my parents proud. But what motivated me in addition to that was a relationship I developed with an audience and the responsibility of representation. Being Asian-American as an elite athlete ultimately made me very self-conscious, but it also taught me the power of humility. The question of identity is one that is specific and personal, while the question of representation is one that is abstract and public. I think it's confusing because sometimes my answers will overlap and I'll realize that I've only understood my identity so far in the context of representation. But at its core, what it means to be Asian-American and what it means to be Asian-American as an elite athlete are two very different questions: both important to ask, but also important to separate.

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PAN ASIAN PRIDE

Asian American Collective of Theatermakers debuts ‘Love Letters’

BY JANE PARK
STAFFREPORTER

Under hazy purple lighting, a wooden table sits at the center of the stage in the Saybrook Underbrook. On it are two glasses of water and two large stacks of paper. Empty chairs await the arrival of two lovers, who prepare to transcend time and place through their letters to one another.

Written by A.R. Gurney, the play “Love Letters” unfolds through the epistolary form — an entire love story narrated by the decades-long correspondence between Melissa Gardner and Andrew Makepeace Ladd II, within the backdrop of east coast elitism and affluence. As the play consists of two actors simply reading letters to one another on stage, “Love Letters” is known to be a classic for busy actors and low-preparation performances.

However, the Asian American Collective of Theatermakers’ production of “Love Letters” departs from typical productions of the play. With four different pairs of actors playing Melissa and Andrew on different nights, this production will showcase the same love story through different iterations — all in the overarching context of an Asian love story.

“When you’re writing letters to each other, it’s because you’re at a distance and you’re literally separated, but in theater, you are literally together,” said Sam Ahn ’25, who directed the show and plays one of the Andrews. “The end message of the play is an optimistic and hopeful one, which is that being together live is better than texting, emailing, even letters — that being together is when we can love each other best.”

Four performances of the AACT’s production of “Love Letters” will take place between April 6 and 8.

Projected behind the actors will be a quote from Jay Caspian Kang’s book, “The Loneliest Americans.” Using Kang’s words as a framework, the production aims to portray Asian American loneliness as the result of failing attempts to assimilate to whiteness and the hollowness of the label of “Asian-American.”

“The Asian diaspora is so varied that the experiences of one Asian-American is so different from that of another Asian-American, particularly by ethnic group,” Ahn said. “Loneliness comes from trying to connect, when you don’t have anything to connect about... besides you just decided to call yourself [Asian American]. I find that compelling and compatible with the message of the play, which is trying to connect with each other when you’re lonely.”

According to Ahn, “the [play’s] characters, at their core, are extremely lonely,” an experience that resonates with the Asian-American experience.

The last two sentences of the projected quote by Kang reads: “There are no shared struggles between, say, the wealthy child of Indian doctors... and the first generation undocumented immigrant from Fujian province... How do you create a people out of silly connections? And yet, what else are we supposed to?”

For Ahn, the answer to Chang’s question lies in love.

“What else are we supposed to do?” Ahn said. “I think the answer just has something to do with love. That’s not something we talk a lot about in politics. But I think it is something we should talk about. Empathy, love, these kinds of things are things that should define Asian America.”

With few props and characters, most of the play’s movement occurs through the reading of letters. As stage manager Risha Chakraborty ’25 notes, the relatively minimal and sparse nature of the set helped create a viewing experience as “authentic to letter writing as possible.”

Though the characters exchange letters from different parts of their lives, from early childhood to their fifties, and send greetings from all over the world, the two actors sit at the same wooden table, merely inches apart from one another. According to Chakraborty, the desk plays an important role in communicating the essence of Melissa and Andrew’s relationship — as well as the heightened intimacy of letter-writing.

“The fact that the desk is the center prop is really crucial to highlighting communication and the love that is conveyed between these two characters via letter writing,” Chakraborty said. “What’s really interesting is that [the desk] puts them in close proximity, even though we’re trying to portray that there’s this physical distance. It highlights the emotional proximity, and the writing is creating this bridge between the two characters.”

The first letters Melissa and Andrew exchange with each other are written when the characters are six years old. As more and more letters are read, audience members wit-



JANE PARK/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

“Love Letters” is the first production sponsored by the AACT and features an all-Asian ensemble.

ness a love that ages and develops with the characters themselves. With most of the actors’ movements and the physical landscape staying constant throughout the show, the indication of time passing is dependent on the script itself and actors’ speech and mannerisms.

Time flows differently in this production of “Love Letters.” Most productions of this play feature older actors, acting from the perspective of people looking back on earlier parts of their lives. With most of the cast members in their early twenties, Ahn wanted to portray young Melissa and Andrew not only reading letters from their past but reading letters from the future.

While the power of this play “comes usually from looking back,” Ahn hoped to emphasize the “haunting” nature of looking into one’s future. Similarly, for Thomas Kannam ’26, who plays the role of Melissa, imagining their character’s older self had personal significance.

“On a personal level, we often don’t see older, trans and non-binary people in media,” Kannam said. “That’s not a reality for a lot of them. So it has been really exciting for me to play with and imagine myself and the elders who came before me who didn’t make it there and how their life played out from an acting perspective.”

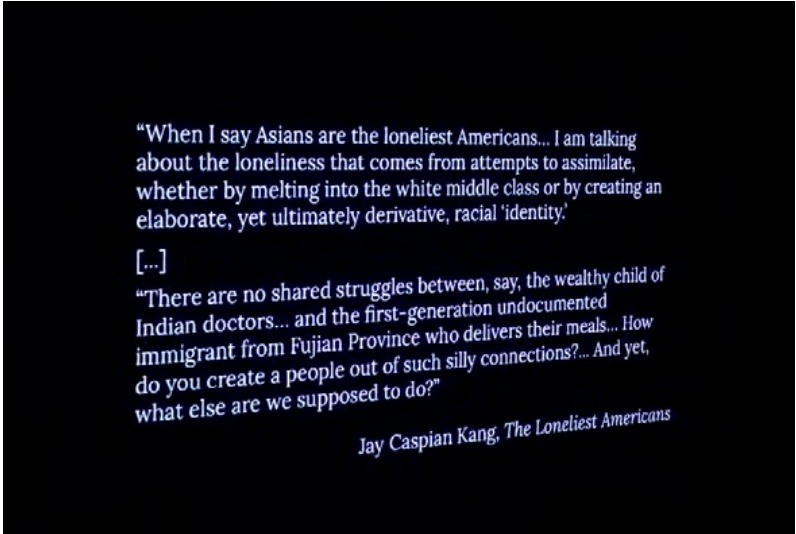
With a total of four pairs of actors performing throughout Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, the actors have created unique interpretations of Andrew and Melissa’s relationship. Despite these differences between stagings, Ahn stated that an element of trust is an important presence in all of the performances.

The chemistry between actors was formed over a rather short rehearsal period, as each pair only practiced with each other for two two-hour rehearsals. However, finding an intense intimacy between actors was a crucial element in truly evoking Andrew and Melissa’s love story.

“This is such an intimate text,” Ahn said. “When you’re working with just another person, that’s an intimate connection. You have to trust the other person more, just because you are wholly dependent on them, and they’re wholly dependent on you. Trusting somebody as a theatrical exercise, that’s the antithesis of the play. The play is all about, not completely giving yourself over to another person and being blocked by loneliness and yourself.”

“Love Letters” will be performed at the Saybrook Underbrook.

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JANE PARK/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Jay Caspian Kang’s ‘The Loneliest Americans’ is a book where Kang explores class and identity among Asian Americans.

Tan Pin Pin discusses collective memory and history

BY MIRANDA JEYARETNAM
UNIVERSITY EDITOR

Journalist Han Shanyuan flipped through photographs of Chinese student activists in 1950s Singapore for the camera, pausing to tell the director

to look through the photos, director Tan Pin Pin said at an event at Yale on April 10. The documentary follows several people in their attempts to preserve memories and archives of pre-independence Singapore, from Han’s photographic archives to a Japa-

Asia Studies and the Jackson School of Global Affairs. Marcus Yee GRD ’28 moderated a Q&A with Pin after the screening.

“There’s so much in Singapore that almost feels like you need to make a decision about your life every time you produce something that might question the official narrative,” Tan said. “[The film] was more about what keeps people continuing to document ... it was a documentary about the documenting instinct.”

Tan emphasized that the film — like the forms of documentary that it features — rested on a kind of “tenuousness” about “how we know what we know today about ourselves.” Information about pre-1965 Singapore was filtered through the film’s subjects, at times through an additional translator, and then through the film itself. This move underscored the precariousness of amateur and personal attempts to record history, leaving just a “faint silhouette of a City that could have been,” according to the film’s synopsis.

One of the subjects in the film, Ivan Polunin, was a medical doctor who documented peoples and wildlife in colonial Singapore and Malaysia on rare color films. As Tan interviews him, Polunin frequently loses his train of thought, something he says was a result of a recent brain surgery.

Following a four-week sold out run at The Arts House in Singapore in July 2007, “Invisible City” won the Asian Vision Award at the Taiwan International Documentary Festival, the Prix de la SCAM at Cinema du Reel and the Asian Cinema Fund at the Busan International Film Festival.

Yee, who is a member of the Council on Southeast Asian Studies graduate student committee, said the film “questions gaps in history, memory and documentation.”

“This film not only looks at memory itself, but how memory is constructed through these different actors and you follow them around in such a careful and intensive way,” Yee said.

Tan’s first film in 2005, Singapore GaGa — which follows the soundscape of Singapore’s buskers, street vendors and elderly Chinese dialect readers — was the

first documentary in Singapore to have a cinema release.

Following Monday’s screening, Yee asked Tan about how the film relates to her larger oeuvre.

“You could say it’s a manifesto ... for why I make films,” Tan said. “But it is made by interviewing other people who are like me, connecting or doing the laborious task of coming up with answers about our country for ourselves or in the case of the Japanese reporter, not necessarily our country.”

Yee also asked Tan about how the landscape of documenting Singapore’s collective memory has changed over the years. He noted how there has been a sharp increase in memory projects, particularly with the 50th anniversary of Singapore’s independence in 2015 but also a simultaneous “clamp down” of alternative histories.

Back in 2007, these types of projects felt like something that only she and a few others were conducting, Tan said, whereas in the last few years there has been an “explosion” of recording or narrativizing Singapore’s development. At the same time, she underscored that a narrative that “questions” or critiques the foundations of modern Singapore may still have a “difficult time surfacing.”

“With this film, I just wanted to show that it’s really kind of a private affair when someone just takes questions and runs with it,” Tan said. “I also wanted to show the labors of remembering and the labors of recalling and that it could, at the end of the day, be one person’s job or role to take the work to its natural conclusion.”

In response to a question from the audience about the role of fear in both the process of making the film and that of the film’s subjects, Tan said that she wanted to show how Han, for instance, was “extremely unsettled” about whether or not to show his photographs. Like for Han, the documentation of alternative histories in Singapore can be a question not only of memory but of safety.

In her own practice, the “moment of reckoning” came more so when she was editing her 2013

documentary “To Singapore, With Love,” which follows nine Singaporean political exiles who left Singapore in the 1960s and 1980s during Operation Coldstore and Operation Spectrum — the country’s political arrests of dissidents, activists and student leaders who had suspected ties to the Communist Party of Malaya. Most of them were detained without trial.

The documentary was banned by the Singapore’s Media Development Authority in September 2014 on the basis that it undermined national security and presented “distorted and untruthful accounts” of how and why the film’s subjects left Singapore. Following its immediate ban, a group of 39 artists in Singapore issued a statement petitioning for the reversal of the ban, while over 350 Singaporeans traveled to Johor Bahru, Malaysia, for the release of the film.

Tan said that she often gets asked about how the political and media landscapes have changed in Singapore over the last decade or more, to which she responds that things have remained the same, if not gotten worse.

Jill Tan GRD ’25, an anthropology PhD candidate from Singapore, told the News that “Singapore GaGa” was the first Singaporean film she had watched when it was screened in her secondary school. “Invisible City,” was also of interest to her as an anthropologist of Singapore and “fellow chronicler and documenter of life and moments of encounter there.”

Tan’s most recent work, “walk walk,” is a site-specific public art installation at a bus terminal. A film plays inside the terminal’s ticket office, inviting viewers to consider the relationship between walking and freedom. The film will be screened five times a day from this year till 2025.

Tan was one of two Singaporeans invited to join the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 2018.

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MIRANDA JEYARETNAM/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Singaporean film director Tan Pin Pin’s work interrogates the documentation, presentation and sanitization of Singaporean history.

that some of these photos may have to be censored.

After the 2007 documentary “Invisible City” came out, Han was visited by Singaporean Internal Security Department officers who wanted

nese journalist who interviewed a war veteran that lived through the Japanese occupation of Singapore.

“Invisible City” was screened on Monday, Apr. 10, an event co-sponsored by the Council on Southeast