



# Ron DeSantis claims that ‘unadulterated leftism’ marked his time at Yale. But did it?

BY JANE PARK AND MOLLY REINMANN  
STAFF REPORTERS

Ron DeSantis graduated from Yale with a history degree in 2001. More than 20 years later, he would come to refer to this degree as a “political scarlet letter.”

In campaign speeches and interviews, the Republican presidential hopeful has spoken of his alma mater as a place where “unadulterated” and “militant” leftism ran rampant.

The News spoke with several of the governor’s former classmates and professors who challenged the accuracy of DeSantis’ statements and pointed to the network of Yale friends who have become significant backers of his campaigns.

After graduating from Yale, DeSantis settled in Cambridge, Mass., where he earned his doctorate from Harvard Law School. In the two decades since, he has climbed the ranks of the Republican Party, from the House of Representatives to the Florida governorship.

Now, he is engaged in a battle for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination — a

battle he is fighting against, among others, former president Donald Trump and fellow Yale alumnus Vivek Ramaswamy LAW ’13.

Throughout his campaign, DeSantis has criticized Yale. In his 2023 memoir, he described surviving “years of indoctrination” among prep-school elites during his time as an Ivy League student.

“Man, when you got into that classroom, [it was] attacking religion, attacking people who believed, attacking God,” DeSantis said during a fireside chat with conservative political commentator Ben Shapiro earlier this year. “It was anti-American.”

DeSantis’ media team declined to comment for this article.

**The Yale of DeSantis’ memory**

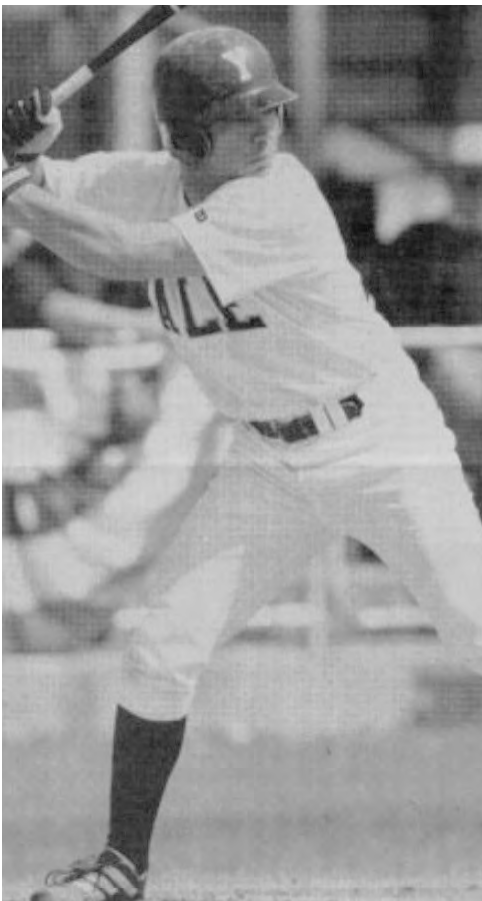
DeSantis published his autobiography — “The Courage to be Free” — in February. In it, he criticized the “woke agenda,” which he described as “a war on the truth” and driven by “the elite.” The book’s sales made the governor a millionaire, according to a 2022 state disclosure.

Recalling his time at Yale College, DeSantis described himself as an outsider among the crowd of kids from prestigious boarding schools, like Phillips Academy Andover, Phillips Exeter Academy and Groton School.

DeSantis contrasted the culture of privilege and prestige at Yale with his own upbringing, writing about his working-class background and long-time devotion to baseball. At the College, he was a member of the baseball team for four years; during his senior year, he was elected captain.

In addition to feeling socially out of place, DeSantis said that Yale’s political climate was a “major, major culture shock,” noting that Yale marked his first time encountering “unadulterated leftism.”

“I am one of the very few people who went through both Yale and Harvard Law School and came out more conservative than when I went in,” wrote DeSantis. “If I could withstand seven years of indoctrination in the Ivy League, then I will be able to survive Washington, D.C.”



Several cast doubt on Ron DeSantis ’01’s description of the University’s political climate during his undergraduate years./ **Yale Daily News**

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# Students share safety concerns after man shoots Palestinian students in Vermont

BY BENJAMIN HERNANDEZ AND ESMA OKUTAN  
STAFF REPORTERS

After three Palestinian college students were shot in Vermont last week, Palestinian students and supporters at all eight Ivy League institutions have expressed growing concerns for their safety and a need for increased protection from their universities.

The three victims of the shooting include Hisham Awartani, Kinnan Abdalhamid and Tahseen Ahmed, who are students at Brown University in Rhode Island, Haverford College in Pennsylvania and Trinity College in Connecticut, respectively. The suspected shooter, Jason J. Eaton, was charged with three counts of attempted murder, pled not guilty and was ordered by a judge to remain held without bond.

Student groups at all eight Ivy League universities — known collectively as the coalition of Ivy League students for Palestine — called on students to wear clothing with the colors of the Palestinian flag and keffiyehs, a scarf worn throughout the Middle East that has increasingly become a symbol of Palestinian identity and resistance — all week following the shooting. Two of the three victims in Vermont were wearing keffiyehs when shot; one of the victims said they were conversing in a mix of Arabic and English when attacked. Police have said that investigators are treating the shooting as a hate-motivated crime.

In a joint Nov. 26 Instagram post between Brown’s Students for Justice in Palestine and Yalies4Palestine, the groups wrote that the coalition of Ivy League students for Palestine is seeking to “reaffirm” the call to their respective administrators to take action against “anti-Palestinian racism.”

“Three visibly Palestinian students were shot in Vermont last weekend,” Yalies4Palestine wrote in a Nov. 27 statement to the News. “In the past few weeks at Yale, we witnessed doxxing trucks and hate speech calling for the death of Palestine in the residential colleges. Our universities are deeply unsafe for Palestinians and students in solidarity with Palestine—especially for our Black, brown, and Muslim classmates. This has been obvious to us all along; it is time that our administration guarantees our safety before more students are targeted.”

Abdalhamid was shot in the glute, and Ahmed was shot in the chest. Awartani was shot in the spine and is paralyzed from the midtorso downward according to his mother, as NBC News reported, and it remains unclear whether he will be able to walk again. Both Awartani and Ahmed are still being treated at the UVM Medical Facility, where they are reported to be in stable condition, as of the morning of Nov. 30.

SEE **VERMONT** PAGE 4

# Faculty pledge to defend doxxed students

BY BEN RAAB  
STAFF REPORTER

Over 100 Yale faculty and staff members signed an open letter in defense of students targeted by the so-called “doxxing truck,” which came to New Haven for three days to display names and photos of students it proclaimed “Yale’s Leading Antisemites.”

The truck, sponsored by conservative advocacy group Accuracy in Media, first appeared on Yale’s campus on Thursday, Nov. 16, and the letter was published Nov. 17. The truck continued to display Yale students on Nov. 17 and included both Yale and Harvard University students on the day of the Yale-Harvard football game on Nov. 18.

“We write as faculty, staff, and other members of the Yale University community who are deeply concerned about the repression of free expression on university campuses,” the letter reads. “We are committed to academic freedom and debate, and we wish to emphasize the importance of protecting all members of the university, particularly students, postdoctoral fellows, and other vulnerable members, in a climate of increasing harassment.”

The letter affirms support for the rights of Yale students to engage in nonviolent protest and lists four pledges to students and colleagues who are using “words, research, music, social media and civil disobedience to actively protest the war in Gaza.”

The signatories pledged to protect students’ rights to free speech and nonviolent assembly on campus, and also affirmed their willingness to engage in “nonviolent direct action, up to and including arrest” to protect students

against “censuring groups.” They also pledged to “amplify” student “cries for justice” and maintain open, curious spaces for learning in and out of the classroom.

“I signed and indeed helped to craft that letter because the right to study and critique state violence is fundamental,” Roderick Ferguson, a professor of women’s, gender and sexuality studies and American studies, told the News. “And if we can’t protect that right — especially at a university, then there are a great many principles that we would surrender.”

The letter also denounces “the wrongful accusation of ‘antisemitism’ for individuals who ‘question Israel’s current actions’” as creating a climate of intimidation and harassment that takes away from the mission of educational institutions; it further notes that conflating critique of Israel with antisemitism is “politically driven” and says that a number of Jewish writers, activists and artists have called such conflation “antithetical to Jewish values.”

“To suggest that critiquing a state for its actions against civilians amounts to racism is not only illogical but is also antithetical to the mission of academic inquiry,” the letter states. “Our intellectual mandate is degraded when we leave our students unprotected or we let misguided discourse and baseless attacks go unaddressed.”

Faculty who signed the letter include 19 members of the American Studies Department, 17 from the History Department, 15 from the Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department, 14 from the English Department, 13 from the Ethnicity, Race and Migration Department and

SEE **FACULTY LETTER** PAGE 4

# Report reveals average Yale College GPA

BY EVAN GORELICK  
SENIOR REPORTER

Yale College’s mean GPA was 3.70 for the 2022-23 academic year, and 78.97 percent of grades given to students were A’s or A-’s.

The data, which show a sharp hike in grades coinciding with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, come from a document presented at a November faculty meeting. According to economics professor Ray Fair, who authored the report, Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis distributed the document to faculty members who attended the meeting.

Even before the pandemic, the percentage of A-range grades was climbing — it reached 72.95 percent in the 2018-19 academic year, up from 68.97 percent five years prior. But in 2020-21, that share jumped to 81.97 percent. Fair dubbed the grading upturn “the COVID effect.”

“Some thought [the COVID effect] would be temporary, but it has more or less persisted. [It’s] probably the faculty going easier on students because COVID was a pain,” Fair told the News. “The report simply documents the his-

tory of grading at Yale ... It gives the ‘current state of grading’ and I think the numbers are straightforward to interpret.”

Fair sent the document to the News after the News reached out to ask his thoughts on grade inflation. Earlier this semester, the University Registrar’s Office denied the News’ request to access Yale College grading data, and the University has not published similar data in over a decade.

Fair later said that he sent the report with Lewis’ permission and would not have done so otherwise. Lewis told the News that he gave permission “in order to promote transparency.”

“As you can see, a large majority of grades in Yale College are in the A range (A or A-),” Lewis wrote in an email to the News. “This results in compression, making it difficult for instructors to use grades for their intended purpose of helping students understand areas of strength and others that need attention.”

Lewis added that, at the November faculty meeting, he encouraged faculty “to

SEE **GPA** PAGE 5

# Over 1,400 sign letter calling on Yale to combat antisemitism



University alumni, faculty and parents urged administrators in a Nov. 20 letter to take action against what they called a “tidal wave of antisemitism” moving through campus./ **Tim Tai, Senior Photographer**

BY BENJAMIN HERNANDEZ AND BEN RAAB  
STAFF REPORTERS

Over 1,400 Yale alumni, parents and faculty have signed a form in support of a Nov. 20 “Letter to Yale Administration to Combat Antisemitism,” addressed to Uni-

versity President Peter Salovey and Provost Scott Strobel.

Citing messaging about the University’s professed values of “Lux et Veritas” from its \$7 billion “For Humanity” capital

SEE **COMMUNITY LETTER** PAGE 5

## CROSS CAMPUS

THIS DAY IN YALE HISTORY, 1994. Yale Law School and School of Forestry and Environmental Studies signs agreement with Academic Computing Services to fund the cost of e-mails for their students and faculty.

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# BULLETIN BOARD



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## Superwoman House Tour: Blondie

Adam Winograd

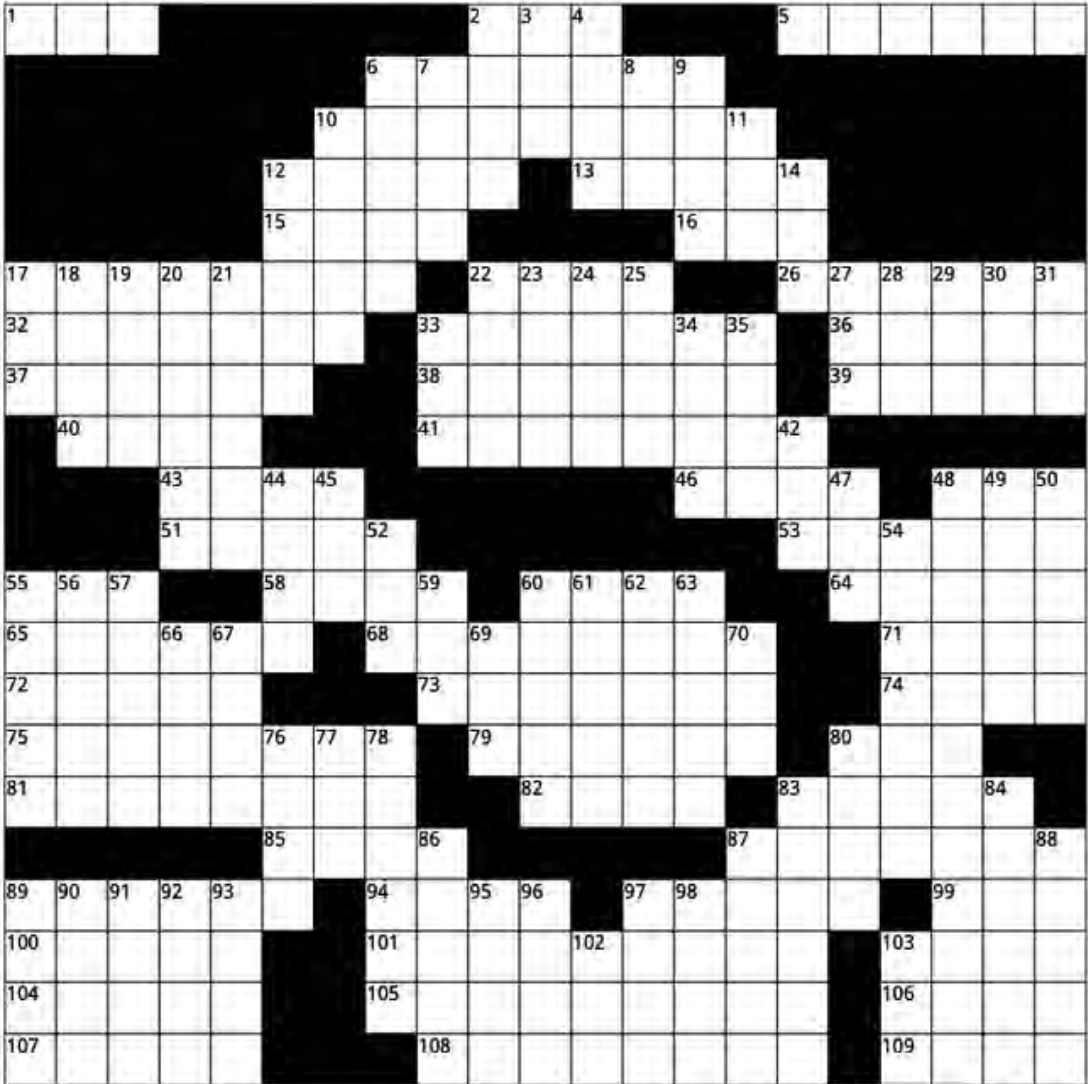
### ACROSS

- 1 "Meh", in modern lingo; \*with 5-across, album 12\*  
2 PRO; \*with 6-across, album 6\*  
5 Darknesses; \*see 1-across\*  
6 It comes after a perm?; \*see 2-across\*  
10 Set in place  
12 Divas' features  
13 One may be picky  
15 Hershey's toffee bar  
16 Drain  
17 Amendment number which allows women to vote; \*with 20-down, then repeating its own first syllable, album 5\*  
22 Eternally; \*with 46-across, album 9\*  
26 Edge  
32 Never to go live  
33 Three-pronged creation of Cyclopes  
36 Munch  
37 Mendicant  
38 Spark plug, for one  
39 Partner; \*album 7, within which the titular music video first showed the theme of this crossword\*  
40 Hindu Demon-God of Eclipses  
41 Niche  
43 Governmental finance bro  
46 S'\_\_\_; \*see 22-across\*  
48 Debt; \*album 4\*  
51 Lawns  
53 "Would you?"  
55 Temporal vasculitis  
58 More than half of the 8.045 billion people on this planet live there  
60 Souls; \*with 82-across, album 8\*  
64 Slip  
65 "The state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death," according to Ruth Wilson Gilmore  
68 Microtus pinetorum, familiarly  
71 Melee  
72 "Mercy!"  
73 Cellular division  
74 Earl Greys, to Dubliners  
75 Area opposite the spine?  
79 Gift  
80 \_\_\_ Ketchum, famous Pokémon trainer  
81 Without hesitation; \*album 2\*

- 82 Mythology; \*see 60-across\*  
83 Dog trick; \*with 99-across, album 3\*  
85 They can famously lift 10-50 times their body weight  
87 Primordial Greek God of the Sky  
89 Guitar manufacturer; \*with 107-across, Miss Americana herself, or album 1\*  
94 Lū'au dance  
97 Catfish  
99 "ASAP"; \*see 83-across\*  
100 Wee hour of the morning, say  
101 Plucking  
103 Rose (up)  
104 One hundredth of a Georgian lari  
105 Allusion  
106 Littoral US agents  
107 Quick; \*see 89-across\*  
108 Hated  
109 River in Lower Saxony, Germany

### DOWN

- 2 "Shoot"  
3 "when will u get here?"  
4 Heap  
6 Major train station of New Haven  
7 Bygone Russian leader  
8 Wave: Spanish  
9 Brooklyn's b-ballers  
10 Irritated  
11 President Nixon's legacy, which enforces the CSA  
12 Province in the southwest of Saudi Arabia, surrounded by Makkah, Al-Bahah, Jazan, Najran, and Riyadh  
14 Rotational meas.  
17 Crux  
18 NARI, before September of 2023  
19 Royal, giant serpent  
20 Fourscore; \*see 17-across\*  
21 Injury  
22 Ten-millionths of joules  
23 Wine: Italian  
24 Second drop-down category, usually  
25 Network of vessels or cells  
27 Pervasive injury area for NFL or NBA athletes  
28 Oarsmen's favorite character?  
29 Federal domain extension  
30 Check-up by an outside M.D., often for litigious compensation



- 31 NPO media organization where "All Things Considered" is hosted  
33 Word after zip, bow, knit, bolo, or ascot  
34 Standard  
35 It comes before and after a minuet  
42 Annular, pentameric amino-acid chain of hepatic origin (synthesized by the liver) and found in blood plasma after interleukin-6 secretion by macrophages and T cells... for short  
44 Son of Shem, and father to Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash, from the Table of Nations in Genesis 10  
45 Handheld video game console produced after GBA  
47 See 62-down  
48 Native people (and river!) located in what is now considered Virginia, comprised of various Algonquin-speaking tribes which merged in the 1680s  
49 Attempt  
50 Does and bucks  
52 Mouthful

- 54 Atlantic Ocean, to North American poets; Pacific Ocean, to Australian, New Zealand, Chinese, or Japanese poets  
55 Harsh  
56 Dugout  
57 Capital of Ghana  
59 Object  
60 It may come before position or presentation  
61 Echinus  
62 What 47-down might stand for when directed from the head  
63 Recently renovated tower of Yale  
66 Robert Michael \_\_\_, A.J. Soprano on the Sopranos  
67 Sew closed the eyes, usually of a falcon or hawk  
69 Pest  
70 Clock setting for NYC  
76 Letter opener?  
77 TV channel for "Wheel of Fortune," "Family Feud," "Jeopardy," "The Price is Right," and many more  
78 Jewish Queen, married to King Ahasuerus  
80 Yearly interest costs, expressed as pcts.  
83 Swelled  
84 Mentally irregular

- 86 Ultra  
87 Crumb  
88 Curse  
89 Kiddos  
90 From scratch  
91 Folkloric Himalayan beast  
92 Small, immature buds, to stoners  
93 Leave out  
95 It's "what happens when you're busy making other plans," per John Lennon  
96 They might be served at pubs  
97 The solar disk of Ancient Egypt  
98 Pristine  
102 100 square meters  
103 Subset of the UN which facilitates cooperation on issues regarding atmospheric science, climatology, hydrology and geophysics

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# OPINION

GUEST COLUMNIST  
ELISHA WIESEL

## Alumni support for Jewish students at Yale

What is it like being a Jewish student right now at Yale? How could we, as Jewish alumni, help? I sat with several dozen students at Chabad one evening before Thanksgiving break to support and to learn.

Students made hearts with their hands as they recalled faculty members who had reached out to express support. But they winced as they shared their pain at hearing Oct. 7 described as an “extraordinary day” by an associate professor, at hearing the hateful phrase “river to the sea” chanted by Yale students threatening the dissolution of Israel and at seeing a campus dance troupe raise funds for a Hamas-associated Palestinian militant group.

Is some form of intervention needed? Most said yes, insisting that calls for genocide require unmitigated condemnation rather than silence. Some felt disciplinary action was needed. Others almost apologetically explained that being from Europe, where antisemitism has raged far more violently than here, their first instinct was to keep their heads down. There was considerable interest in the pending alumni letter pressuring the administration for action. Students expressed their appreciation that alumni were showing up.

But the question I heard students grappling with was how to engage with former friends suddenly repeating propaganda designed to isolate and harm the Jewish people.

Your sharp, curious minds and open, brave hearts are all you need.

Engage with facts. If it isn't commonly known that Israel sought peace with the Palestinians in 1947, 2000 and 2008 and was rejected each time, it needs to become commonly known. The same goes for sharing the history of Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2006.

Ask open-ended questions.

Engage with empathy. When my father taught at Yale in 1982, his class tackled head-on the failure of the Israeli Defence Forces to prevent atrocities against innocent Palestinians by the South Lebanese Army at Sabra and Shatila.

Voice anger that we are on trial for existing.

The Talmud says that when challenging someone, “לאנש אהר קלוקע” (לֹא־תִקְרַקְהֶם וּמִיָּהּ הַיְּהוּדִים): the left hand should push away and the right hand should draw near.

Hear the story of my friends Derek Black and Matthew Stevenson:

Derek was the heir apparent to Stormfront, the premier neo-Nazi Internet forum. As the child of the site maintainer, they were raised to promote hatred. They went to college in Florida, intending to remain anonymous while they studied. They hosted radio shows in secret which railed against immigrants and Jews.

On campus, they met Matthew Stevenson, an observant Jew and fel-

low student. Derek discovered the magic warmth of Shabbat dinners at Matthew's apartment, and they built a friendship grounded in everything from country music to Tolkien. Not long after, Derek was discovered and outed for their racist double life. They were ostracized by almost all who encountered them.

Except for Matthew, who kept talking to them. And Allison Gornik, Matthew's friend, who at first stormed away from the Shabbat table, but then returned to it week after week, insistent on hammering through point after logical point to probe the defects in Derek's thinking.

Derek's wheels turned.

After some time, Derek issued a manifesto rejecting the hate they'd helped spread and publicly declared their Stormfront account closed. They told me the push and pull together drove their profound change.

To fight antisemitism is to fight ignorance.

At Yale, students are fighting the ignorance of those calling to “globalize the intifada.” The ignorance of the educated class comes from the pain of seeing Gazan people suffer deeply from their tragic electoral choices. It's a different ignorance than that shown by white supremacists who wave tiki torches and chant “Jews will not replace us,” but it is no less dangerous. It is as much of a lie that we prey on Palestinians as it is that we prey on the white man.

It hurt to hear students ask on Thursday night: Why doesn't the university see us?

I don't know that it doesn't. But I know for a fact that many Jewish alumni see you, including me. You shine brighter than you realize.

We're proud of you who talk to those with different perspectives, even if they are Hamas defenders or appeasers or fellow Jews who consciously stand in opposition to our people. Your right handed embrace is a strength.

We're proud of you who assert a harder line, who are demanding action from Congress or exposing double standards in national papers, who are pushing with the left hand.

We're proud of you who try different approaches in different situations.

And proud of you who fight ignorance simply by standing strong and going about your lives, refusing to let grief and fear overwhelm you.

We're proud of you and know that each of you has the power to make heartfelt, impactful choices as you fight ignorance, demonstrate Jewish values and share your light in the darkness.

**ELISHA WIESEL** graduated from *Davenport College* in 1994. *His father, Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and author of the Holocaust memoir “Night,” was the visiting Henry Luze scholar at Yale College in 1982. Contact him at [elisha@eliewieselfoundation.org](mailto:elisha@eliewieselfoundation.org).*

GUEST COLUMNIST  
JULIAN DANIEL

## The last great American dynasty?

“There goes the last great American dynasty,” rhapsodizes Taylor Swift on a track from her pandemic-era hit album “folklore.” Her song “the last great american dynasty” draws inspiration from her Rhode Island beach house — but she might as well have been talking about the Kennedys.

Today, America's star-studded political dynasty, which has birthed one president and three would-be ones, is crashing to an end.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr, nephew of John F. Kennedy, is currently running as an independent candidate for president. His campaign recently switched campaign managers to Kennedy's own daughter-in-law, never a good sign for a supposedly credible national campaign. But it's no wonder that the campaign is struggling, when the candidate at its head has made no secret of his eccentric conspiracy theories on subjects ranging from climate change (a hoax fabricated by shadowy elites) to WiFi (causes cancer) to COVID-19 (genetically engineered to spare Jews and Chinese people). Even the campaign's signs proclaiming “I'm a Kennedy Democrat” seem like only a desperate bid for nostalgia-fueled traction.

Thinking back, you could point to Sept. 1, 2020 as the date when the collapse of the Kennedy dynasty became real. That's when Rep. Joe Kennedy III, JFK's great-nephew, was defeated in a bid to replace incumbent Massachusetts Sen. Ed Markey. It was the first time any Kennedy had lost an election in Massachusetts. His defeat, credited to the Kennedy heir's difficulty in explaining his reason for taking on the progressive incumbent, left the family without a member of Congress for nearly the first time in over seven decades.

It's worth understanding, however, that America's most famous political dynasty has been flawed from its start. Like their spiritual cousins across the Atlantic, the British royal family, the Kennedys have had their fair share of sordid scandals: infidelity, the forced lobotomization of Rosemary Kennedy, the infamous death of Mary Jo Kopechne in 1969. These are sordid secrets from decades ago, and it's unfair to tarnish an entire family with the sins of a few of its members. But the myths that persist about the Kennedy dynasty, particularly its founder, contribute to a rose-

tinted affection towards the family that is unfortunately misplaced.

President John F. Kennedy exists on a pedestal in American memory as a saintly, idealistic figure. The son of powerful business mogul Joseph P. Kennedy, who relentlessly groomed his sons to seek political office, JFK was a brilliant orator whose methods of gaining political power never matched the idealism of his rhetoric. In 1960, while competing in a must-win state primary on the way to the Democratic nomination, Kennedy deployed family money on a ruthless scale to buy up votes, delivering suitcases of cash to county bosses. “I feel like an independent merchant competing against a chain store,” remarked one of Kennedy's primary rivals.

Throughout the campaign of 1960, Kennedy leveraged his father's wealth and connections to the media alongside his own charisma and that of running mate Lyndon B. Johnson. He ultimately eked out a victory over Vice President Richard Nixon by the incredibly narrow margin of less than 0.2 percent of the popular vote, a fact left out from narratives around Kennedy's campaign centering on his fabled debate performance against the slippery, sinister Nixon.

The myth-making around the Kennedy administration itself is even stronger. It's worth noting that Kennedy's domestic agenda, on issues from civil rights to social programs, had been almost entirely stalled in Congress before Kennedy's fateful November 1963 trip to Dallas. Judging from Kennedy's pro-escalation policy on the Vietnam War, it's likely that a second Kennedy term would have tarred the former Massachusetts senator with the same war-monger brush that colors the public perception of Lyndon Johnson.

However, it was Johnson who, as Kennedy's successor in the Oval Office, succeeded in passing transformative legislation. The Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965), which helped dismantle Jim Crow in the South; the Immigration Act (1965) which ended discriminatory national quotas and effectively created Asian America; and the creation of Medicare and Medicaid as part of Johnson's flagship War on Poverty. These laws and programs which transformed American society and shaped the lives of millions were the effect of Johnson's legisla-

tive mastery, which succeeded where Kennedy's famed oration had failed.

Yet it is Kennedy whose martyrdom by an assassin's bullet left him to live on as a hero in the American public consciousness, regularly listed by members of the public among America's greatest modern presidents (historians, of course, disagree in their assessment of his three years in office). Since JFK, the Kennedy name has become the most powerful in American politics, propelling the political careers of two influential senators (RFK Sr. and Ted), three congressmen, and today, the anti-vaccine activist RFK Jr.

It's the power of this Kennedy name, mythologized by the myth-making around JFK and coupled with the family's great wealth, that's given a leg up to the numerous family members who have taken their turn to run for office. It's the power of this myth that gave Joe Kennedy III the audacity to run for Senator from Massachusetts in 2020 propelled by little more than a family name.

There are those who might say that in some way, the American people need the Kennedy family; that at a subconscious level, we need our own royal family to mythologize and elevate to our nation's highest offices. Even with the last Kennedy gone from the halls of Congress, the fascination continues. QAnon conspiracy theorists latch on to the Kennedy name. Netflix has announced plans for a big-budget series about John F. Kennedy, following the model of “The Crown.”

There was a moment, in the long 1960s, when America yearned for a Kennedy to be our savior. In Massachusetts, that moment lasted right up until Joe Kennedy III's defeat broke that spell. And now, perhaps the last Kennedy to walk the national stage pushes a quixotic campaign, propelled by little more than ravings of a crank sheathed in a famous name.

The myth has been dismantled; the famous name of a certain Irish-American family from Massachusetts has been brought back to Earth. Maybe now, we can look back with a truthful and critical eye at the real legacy of what was once the last great American dynasty.

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## The Right is wrong about Yale

On Monday, the Yale Daily News published a piece investigating Governor Ron DeSantis' claims that “unadulterated leftism” marked his time at Yale. Readers will not be surprised to find that most of his professors and peers did not corroborate his claims of “militant leftism.” While DeSantis' comments perhaps reflect true personal discontent, it seems clear that they are primarily a political calculation, meant to gain support from his voting base. Yet he is incorrect that Yale indoctrinates students and pushes them to the left — in fact, evidence seems to suggest the opposite.

DeSantis claims that he is “one of the very few people who went through... Yale... and came out more conservative than [he] went in.” To the contrary, Yale has a long conservative tradition, largely founded in the ideas of William F. Buckley Jr., founder of The National Review. In recent years, Yale has produced some of the nation's most prominent conservative names: DeSantis himself, Ohio Sen. J.D. Vance and Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley to name a few. Not to mention former presidents George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush and Supreme Court justices like Brett Kavanaugh, Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito.

Clearly, DeSantis is not a political outcast among Yale alumni. The real question is, why is Yale, a liberal institution, producing so many staunch conservatives?

Like all good tales, the problem with DeSantis' statements is that they contain a fragment of truth. Campuses like Yale's are extremely liberal, sometimes to the point of maddening homogeneity of thought. Whether or not this was true in 2001, the liberal majority on campus currently limits discourse to the point of

alienating not just conservatives but, perhaps more importantly, other liberals and moderates who do not agree with them on every issue.

I am a registered Democrat. I have always argued in support of LGBTQ rights, abortion access and addressing climate change. The truth is, I and many of my friends have become disillusioned centrists, who scorn people like Trump and DeSantis but are reluctant to agree with some of the politics of our more liberal peers. Many of us are considered conservatives on campus for not falling in line, even if we wouldn't be outside the Yale bubble.

### THE REAL QUESTION IS, WHY IS YALE, A LIBERAL INSTITUTION, PRODUCING SO MANY STAUNCH CONSERVATIVES?

In fact, many of my best conversations at Yale have been with self-identified conservatives, who at least grant me the respect of disagreement. They are pleased when we do agree, rather than appalled when we don't. They do not assume my accordance, so they try to win it. In most campus liberal circles, on the other hand, I have found it to be often assumed that everyone already agrees, and if they don't, they're not worth the time. As a result, liberal spaces can feel devoid of the debate

and exploration that many people sought at Yale in the first place.

Contrary to DeSantis' claims, the Right flourishes at Yale. Not only do they better hone arguments by being forced to defend them, but they have a smaller, tight-knit community. Conservative organizations on campus offer a long tradition, many resources, and the sort of rich discourse other areas of Yale lack. Standing on the principle of freedom of speech, many of these conservative spaces appeal to students who may not agree about anything but their identity as free-thinkers. At Yale, the Right accepts centrists. The Left doesn't.

William F. Buckley once said, “A conservative is someone who stands athwart history, yelling Stop, at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who so urge it.” In our day and age, conservatives are not stopping anything. Both ends of the political spectrum are radical to the extreme. So I urge my peers who are less partisan to stand athwart our political divide and yell “Stop.” Stop drifting to extremes and start having real conversations. Find the people who will have them with you. I want to be proud of this institution and the people who come out of it.

This is a message to fellow centrists and to the silent, moderate majority. Do not be afraid to convey your beliefs. The positions of those around you, who are more extreme, may sound more certain, but it is likely that yours are more necessary.

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FROM THE FRONT

“December, being the last month of the year, cannot help but make us think of what is to come.”

FENNEL HUDSON, AUTHOR

# Faculty commit to defending doxxed students, up to arrest



More than 100 Yale faculty and staff members signed an open letter in defense of students targeted by the “doxxing truck” before the November recess./ Nathaniel Rosenberg, Contributing Photographer

## FACULTY LETTER FROM PAGE 1

10 from the African American Studies Department, as well as 11 from the School of the Environment.

Greta LaFleur, the director of graduate studies for the American Studies Department and who signed the letter, wrote that they were particularly alarmed to see the truck broadcast the names and faces of five graduate students in their department.

LaFleur said they signed the letter for multiple reasons but that the “first and absolutely most important” reason was the truck’s “clear targeting” of Black, brown, Southeast Asian, Muslim and Jewish students.

LaFleur added that they think Accuracy in Media, or AIM, likely picked the names of students off of the list of signatories to an Oct. 17 “Statement on the Yale Administration’s Position towards the Ongoing Violence in Palestine,” which criticized University President Peter Salovey’s initial statement on the war. The student statement called on the Yale administration to “take a moral stand against Israel’s bombardment of Gaza and the genocide of the Palestinian people.”

Despite there being 1,193 names attached to that letter, LaFleur wrote that the group operating the doxxing truck chose to exclude white, non-Jewish and non-Muslim students who had signed it.

“It is clear to me that AIM cherry-picked the signatories it would target on the basis of race and religion,” they wrote. “It weaponized racism and Islamophobia to make its specious claim about antisemitism, which is devastating in turn given that actual antisemitism has been markedly on the rise.”

By Friday, Nov. 17, the truck had targeted at least 15 graduate students. The News reported that 12 of those 15 were students of color but has not confirmed their religious affiliations.

LaFleur’s comments echoed the letter, which expressed specific concern with the “vicious targeting, public shaming, and surveillance of faculty and students of color in particular.”

Adam Guillette, the president of AIM, wrote in an email to the News that the organization targeted “hateful students who signed an antisemitic pledge” at Yale. He called LaFleur’s claim that the truck targeted Black, Brown and Muslim students “baseless.”

Yale Yale denounced the doxxing incidents in a Nov. 16 statement on Nov. 16 and added that the University had reached out to students who appeared on the trucks “to provide support and resources.” The University Registrar emailed students on Nov. 17 with a “Student Directory Opt-out Option,” to inform students of the steps to removing their name from Yale’s directory. While the Nov. 17 email did not mention the doxxing campaign, it reflected similar guidance as in one of the resources promoted on Nov. 16.

AIM currently faces a lawsuit — which a doxxed Columbia student filed on Monday, Nov. 13 — for violation of civil rights, defamation and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

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# Palestinian and Muslim students express safety concerns after shooting in Vermont

## VERMONT FROM PAGE 1

The shooting comes amid rising tensions on college campuses, including rising Islamophobic and antisemitic incidents. Per a report by the Anti-Defamation League’s Center on Extremism, antisemitic incidents reported nationwide jumped by 388 percent between Oct. 7 and Oct. 23 compared to last year. According to a report by the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the organization received 216 percent more reports of Islamophobia and anti-Arab incidents between Oct. 7 and Nov. 4 than it did last year.

"At this time, quite honestly I feel like no Palestinian is safe anywhere. So it's really frightening. It's really traumatizing," Abdalhamid's mother told ABC News. She also spoke out against what she called “dehumanizing” rhetoric about Palestinians in the United States.

At Yale, before Thanksgiving break, a “doxxing truck” with billboards displaying the names and

faces of Yale students — mostly of color — under the title “Yale’s Leading Antisemites” arrived, later showing both Harvard and Yale students on the day of the Yale-Harvard football game. Doxxing trucks also made visits to both Columbia University and Harvard University, among other schools.

An undergraduate at Yale wrote anti-Palestine messages on a whiteboard in a Grace Hopper College entryway, including one declaring “Death to Palestine.” Head of Hopper College Julia Adams affirmed that “academic freedom and the expression of views and dissent are rightly protected.”

“The shooting of three Palestinian university students last weekend in Vermont was horrifying – but not shocking,” Imam Omer Bajwa, director of Muslim life in the Chaplain’s Office, wrote in an email to the News. “It is part of a growing pattern of anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab and Islamophobic rhetoric and violence across the country.”

Bajwa said that many student leaders and activists have warned that violence of this kind was “inevitable” due to “prejudiced rhetoric” amplified in the media.

He stated that as the director of Muslim life at Yale, his role is to provide support to Muslim students, adding that “the demand [for support] is greater these days.”

Bajwa noted that his office is in regular conversation with senior administration about how to best support Muslim communities at Yale.

“To be honest, students are deeply concerned,” Bajwa wrote to the News. “This act of violence comes on the back of the ‘doxxing’ truck which brought its toxic message of hate to campus during the Harvard-Yale game. Students are rightfully concerned about being targeted. All students deserve safety and security as a basic right on campus. All students deserve freedom from harassment”

In a recent Instagram post, the Muslim Students Association

wrote that Islamophobia continues to “haunt” the Muslim community at Yale and wrote that since Oct. 7, the date of Hamas’ attack on Israel, there has been a rise in “verbal harassment, doxxing, stalking and repression” toward Muslim and Arab students.

The group also called on Yale to explicitly denounce the message written in the Grace Hopper entryway.

“This creates a campus culture in which Muslim students do not feel safe, seen, or heard,” Yale’s MSA wrote in their Instagram post.

Dean of Yale College Pericles Lewis said that the Yale Police Department is working to ensure there is “good security” on campus amid rising student safety concerns and said he is “horrified” by the recent Islamophobic violence.

He recommended that if people on campus have security concerns, they should reach out to their residential college deans, their heads of college, the director of Muslim life in the Chaplain’s Office or the

staff at the Asian American Cultural Center, which has peer liaisons and dedicated spaces for Middle Eastern and North African, or MENA, students.

“It’s just such a horrible thing and my sympathies go out, of course, to the victims themselves and the families of the victims,” Lewis told the News. “I also can only imagine that for many Muslim students or Middle Eastern Arab students, this would be a time of a lot of fear ... it is very important to us that our students of all backgrounds feel safe to study on campus.”

The Yale College Council, along with other student groups, has lobbied for a distinct cultural center for MENA students since at least 2018.

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FROM THE FRONT

“December, you’re the present beneath my Christmas tree.”  
NEIL SEDAKA, AMERICAN SINGER

# Over 1,400 alumni, faculty and parents sign letter calling on Yale to combat antisemitism

COMMUNITY LETTER FROM PAGE 1

campaign, the letter states that Yale “has abdicated its responsibility” by failing to ensure that people of all backgrounds have the necessary support to “study and thrive” at Yale. Over 1,700 alumni have signed a similar letter at Princeton, while over 1,800 have done so at Harvard.

“We write to you as a community of Yale University alumni, faculty, and parents, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who have been deeply saddened to watch the tidal wave of antisemitism sweeping across campuses all over the United States,” the letter reads. “In sum, Yale has enabled a climate of hostility to Jews and pro-Israel voices.”

The letter comes amid a national rise in both antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents at peer institutions following Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack — including at Columbia, Cornell and the University of Pennsylvania, which are facing federal inquiries over alleged antisemitism and Islamophobia on their campuses.

According to a report by the Anti-Defamation League’s Center on Extremism, there was a 388-percent increase in antisemitic incidents reported nationwide between Oct. 7 and Oct. 23 compared to the previous year. Concurrently, according to a report by the Council on American-Islamic Relations, CAIR received 216 percent more reports of Islamophobia and anti-Arab sentiment between Oct. 7 and Nov. 4 than it did last year. This past Sunday, three Palestinian students — undergraduates at Brown University, Haverford College and Trinity College — were shot and wounded in Vermont in a suspected hate crime.

The Nov. 20 letter contains descriptions of three incidents that Yale has allegedly tolerated on campus, which, the letter claims, do not live up to the

University’s “lofty values.” It also outlines a three-part proposal to “tackle antisemitism.”

Among the steps outlined in the proposal is for Salovey to issue a directive “recognizing and condemning” antisemitism at Yale and for the University to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism. The letter also requests that the University discipline faculty or students “who threaten Yale’s Jewish community” and that it create a task force to address the “welfare and safety of Jews at Yale.” The last leg of the proposal requests for the University to diversify its faculty to include Jewish and pro-Israel members under a subheading labeled, “Include the Jewish narrative.”

The letter details three instances of what it describes as “hate speech” that have enabled “a climate of hostility to Jews and pro-Israel voices.” The examples include professor Zareena Grewal’s tweets in support of Palestinian resistance, rally chants by students in Yalies4Palestine and the University’s decision to host an allegedly antisemitic activist — French-Algerian author Houria Bouteldja — on a Jewish holiday.

“I have made clear that antisemitism, Islamophobia, and hatred toward Palestinians and Israelis are emphatically against our values and principles at Yale,” Salovey wrote to the News when asked about the letter. “On campus, we are focused on the well-being of students, faculty, and staff and are actively providing support and resources. This is part of an ongoing effort.”

Some community members, however, feel that the University has not done enough to protect its Jewish students.

Lawrence Cohen, a professor emeritus at the School of Medicine, wrote that he signed the peti-

tion because “to remain silent was not an option.”

“The heinous October 7th Hamas attack paradoxically sparked a rise in anti-semitism on many college campuses,” he wrote. We should have learned our lesson from the 1930’s when Hitler was espousing similar anti-semitic invective.

In his response to the News, Salovey wrote that the University has been collaborating with national Jewish groups and communities for the past two years as part of an effort “to enhance a supportive campus climate” for Yale’s Jewish community and to combat antisemitism. He added that, through partnerships with the Academic Engagement Network and Hillel International, Yale has also developed workshops and training opportunities as part of its core programming for Belonging at Yale — the name that the University ascribes to its diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging efforts.

One of the requests the authors listed in their proposal was for Yale to add antisemitism training to its diversity, equity and inclusion plans. According to Salovey, among the efforts that the University has worked on are “specific skill-building activities,” such as “in-depth professional workshops and training, including on antisemitism” for faculty and staff who work on inclusion, belonging and the prevention of and response to discrimination and harassment.

But Shira Wolosky, a former associate professor of English at Yale and a parent of a Yale alum, wrote that she sees the University’s “increasing administrative surveillance through ‘Diversity, Equity and Social Justice’” efforts as a “misdirection of funds” that “in fact suppress diversity.”

“I signed the letter in my extreme dismay and distress at the flood burst of anti-Jewish activism at Yale and other American universities,” wrote Wolosky, who is currently a

professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. “Yale has betrayed its own commitments, both to democratic education, independent thinking, and the basic government of its own campus to protect and defend its own students.”

**Cited antisemitic incidents**

Alleging a “failure of the duty to protect Jewish students,” the letter highlights incidents in which Yale has “enabled a climate of hostility to Jews and pro-Israel voices.” Specifically, it notes three categories of instances: hate speech from faculty, hate speech from peers and “hate speech from visiting academics / exclusion of pro-Israel voices.”

Among the events listed is a series of tweets that American studies professor Zareena Grewal posted to X, formerly known as Twitter, in the wake of Hamas’s attacks on Israel. The posts prompted a petition to oust Grewal from the University, which has since garnered over 56,000 signatures.

“We were shocked when the response of a Yale professor to the heinous Hamas terror attack was to celebrate it on our very own campus,” the letter reads. “A Professor of American Studies should know the difference between resistance and war crimes. Yale’s Jewish students cannot feel safe in her classroom while she celebrates the slaughter of their friends and family.”

The letter also cites recent chants from members and supporters of the student group Yalies4Palestine, referring to the group’s Oct. 25 walkout, during which participants chanted, “When people are occupied, resistance is justified” and to written statements of “from the river to the sea” made by supporters on the group’s Instagram page. The letter says that such a phrase “calls for the genocide of Jews” in the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

“Chanting in support of genocide outside the dormitories of Jewish students constitutes harassment and creates an unsafe environment,” the letter states.

Members of Yalies4Palestine said that the phrase “from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” is a “call for liberation, not expulsion.”

“It is a call for freedom and equality for everyone between the river and the sea. It is our vision of a future in which Palestinians may live and move freely within their homeland, unrestricted by apartheid and military occupation. Those who raise alarms at our slogan do so to deflect from the fact that the openly genocidal state they defend is on record about its intent to expel Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank.”

The group also described a “deeply unsafe” environment for Palestinian students on campus, pointing to the shooting of three Palestinian college students over the weekend, the appearance of the conservative advocacy group Accuracy in Media’s “doxxing truck” around campus and messages declaring “Death to Palestine” written on a whiteboard in Grace Hopper College.

“Our universities are deeply unsafe for Palestinians and students in solidarity with Palestine — especially for our Black, brown, and Muslim classmates,” the group continued. “This has been obvious to us all along; it is time that our administration guarantees our safety before more students are targeted.”

Before Yale College’s November recess, more than 100 Yale faculty members signed an open letter pledging to defend doxxed students.

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# Faculty report reveals average Yale College GPA, grade distributions by subject



Seventy-nine percent of Yale College grades were in the A range for 2022-23./ Yale Daily News

GPA FROM PAGE 1

make use of the full range of grades where appropriate.”

Fair’s three-page November grading report — compiled using data from the Registrar’s Office — has two tables. Table 1 provides data on Yale College grades since 2010, including letter-grade percentages and mean GPAs. The table does not include data from the 2019-20 academic year because spring-semester classes were graded under a “universal pass/fail” policy.

Table 2 breaks down grading data by academic subject. In general, STEM subjects seem to have lower percentages of A-range grades, and humanities subjects seem to have higher percentages.

There is significant variation in the frequency of A-range grades across “large-enrollment subjects,” ranging from 52.39 percent for Economics to 92.37 percent for History of Science, Medicine and Public Health. Lower-enrollment subjects display similar variation, ranging from 57.36 percent for Engineering and Applied Science to 92.06 percent for Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies.

Table 2 does not include languages, art and music, which, per the report, “may differ from the other subjects regarding grading issues.” The report also notes that Philosophy and Psychology have higher percentages of Credit — “CR” — grades than other subjects, which may distort their percentages in the table.

The Harvard Office of Undergraduate Education presented a similar report on grade inflation to the university’s Faculty of Arts and Sciences in October. The report found that 79 percent of grades given to Harvard College students for 2020-21 were in the A range — virtually identical to Yale’s percentage for 2022-23.

Harvard’s report also registered a discrepancy in A-range grades between STEM and the humanities.

In 2001, when a Boston Globe report found that 91 percent of Harvard seniors graduated with Latin honors that year, the Globe called Harvard honors “the laughingstock of the Ivy League.” Harvard’s faculty, in turn, called grade inflation “a serious problem.” At the time,

Yale went on the record saying that it would not release grading data because doing so could cause professors to grade more leniently when they learned how others were grading.

But the University changed its tune in 2013, when then-Yale College Dean Mary Miller created an “Ad Hoc Committee on Grading” to curb grade inflation and ever-climbing GPA cutoffs for Latin honors. The Committee, chaired by Fair, issued a preliminary report that included grading data showing that 62 percent of grades awarded to Yale College students in spring 2012 fell in the A range.

On the basis of the Committee’s final report in 2014, Yale’s faculty voted to have summaries of departments’ grades dis-

tributed to other departments every year. The Committee also recommended that the University implement non-mandatory grading guidelines, but the faculty rejected the proposal.

Fair said that the faculty has not attempted to address grade inflation in the years since. Although most Yale faculty members agreed that there was grade inflation in 2017 — when the percentage of A-range grades was approximately six points lower than it is now — fewer said that they viewed it as a problem.

Yale College does not use the A+ letter grade.

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# FROM THE FRONT

*“Who is not a love seeker when December comes? Even children pray to Santa Claus.”*  
ROD MCKUEN AMERICAN SINGER

## Ron DeSantis claims that ‘unadulterated leftism’ marked his time at Yale. But did it?

According to DeSantis, experiences at Yale would later shape his political ideology. The overly liberal campus “allowed [him] to see the future,” he said — one where he now shapes Florida’s educational policies.

As governor, DeSantis has signed state legislation restricting how concepts such as systemic racism can be taught in core classes at public universities. In March 2022, DeSantis signed the Parental Rights in Education bill, which prohibits classroom instruction on gender identity or sexual orientation in kindergarten through third grade or if not considered “age-appropriate.”

### Are DeSantis’ claims of a “militant left” at Yale an “anachronism”?

DeSantis’ time as an undergraduate history major — from 1997 to 2001 — marked a distinctly tame period for political discourse at Yale, according to Paul Freedman, who was the director of undergraduate studies for history in 2001.

Freedman, who self-describes as a left-leaning historian, did not agree with DeSantis’ characterization of Yale’s political climate. He stated his confusion with the “militant left” the governor described.

“1997 to 2001 was not an era of major controversy,” Freedman said in an interview with the News. “This is before 9/11. It’s before the invasion of Iraq. So it’s not as if the campus was divided by some political issue, as to some extent would be the case after the invasion of Iraq. It was also well after the fall of the Soviet Union and any renewed controversies about the Cold War. So I don’t think those sentiments really existed by the time DeSantis came.”

To the extent that there were left-wing undergraduates at Yale at the time, Freedman said their main cause was focused on organizing a graduate student union. Yale’s graduate student union did not win recognition until last year.

Freedman added that, while the graduate student unionization efforts drew many left-leaning undergraduates, he would “definitely not” describe their demonstrations as “militant leftism.”

“I’m not sure I can imagine what the ‘militant left’ would be at that time, as opposed to say, during the Vietnam War or the aftermath of World War II,” he said. “There’s a certain anachronism about all of this.”

Conservative undergraduates, specifically within the history major, have always been a minority, Freedman said. But he described those students as an “articulate, well-organized, not tiny” minority. The same is true for most elite universities, Freedman said, specifically citing Harvard and Brown.

According to a 2017 News survey of University faculty, nearly 75 percent identified as “liberal” or “very liberal.” By contrast, 7 percent of faculty described themselves as “conservative,” with only 2 percent identifying as “very conservative.”

“There always was this kind of esprit de corps of conservatives here, because they were a minority, but a proud minority with a long tradition,” Freedman said.

At the turn of the millennium, the Republican Party was the “country club party,” Freedman said. He added that it was the party of elites and many Yale graduates.

Even if the University’s population was liberal at the time, many of its most prominent alumni were not. Freedman pointed to the Bushes — George W. ’68 and George H.W. ’48 — both of whom gradu-

ated from Yale and were members of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity, as was DeSantis, before going on to become American presidents.

He added that the dimensions of offensive elitism and militant leftism which DeSantis has used to describe his time at Yale reflect a “21st-century sense of injustice and exclusion” that did not yet exist in the late 1990s.

“It was a liberal campus for sure,” Freedman told the News. “But that is not what DeSantis is claiming. His attitude isn’t ‘I felt lonely because I wasn’t a liberal.’ It’s ‘I felt outraged because they were tearing down my country.’ Certainly that wasn’t true, at least among the faculty.”

### Politics in the classroom

At an event with the Republican Jewish Coalition earlier this year, DeSantis criticized the content taught in his Yale classes.

At the University, he said, he was taught that the Soviet Union was the “victim” in the Cold War and that the United States was to blame.

As an undergraduate, DeSantis enrolled in a class on the Cold War taught by historian John Lewis Gaddis. According to Eire, Gaddis is among the department’s conservative minority.

The News reached out to Gaddis about the political climate at Yale around 2000, but, having been away from the University for the 1999-2000 academic year, Gaddis told the News that he did not feel qualified to make an informed judgment.

In an email to the News, Gaddis wrote that he has no specific memory of DeSantis in his class, which he said regularly enrolled several hundred students.

Gaddis told the News that his course “certainly did not, as DeSantis’s ‘memoir’ implies, blame the U.S. for the Cold War” or promote any of the anti-American sentiment DeSantis recalled.

Eire said that conservative students have always tended to gravitate toward and react well to Gaddis’ classes.

When asked to characterize Yale’s political climate, Eire said that Yale has always been, and likely will continue to be, a liberal place. Yet, despite his conservative opinions, Eire said that he did not ever recall feeling shunned for his political views. He did mention that conservative students told him they keep their views “quiet.”

“Conservatives view the Ivy League as ultra-liberal, because it is,” Eire said. “But what most conservatives don’t realize is that the Ivy League is just the frost on the tip of the iceberg. Every other American university is pretty much the same. If you have a college degree, it’s probably from a liberal institution.”

He described the liberal leanings of American universities as a “painful” reality.

Based on his own experiences as a conservative faculty member and on conversations with conservative students, Eire said that he thought DeSantis’ feelings about Yale were “genuine.”

“But that doesn’t necessarily cancel out the fact that he’s very politically shrewd,” Eire added.

### Politics outside the classroom

Cristina Noriega ’01, who was in the same senior secret society — St. Elmo Society — as DeSantis, said that the University’s campus at the time “did seem liberal” and that “people were very activist-oriented.” She recalled an anecdote where Yale students had posted “ugly signs” about George

W. Bush when he was running for president while Bush’s daughter, Barbara Bush ’04, was a student.

Though there were many liberal students who were opposed to Bush, Noriega said that on campus there were “a lot of conservatives that supported him too.”

Nick Sinatra ’03 — DeSantis’ close friend and former fraternity brother who has donated to his presidential campaign — also said that the political climate at Yale at the turn of the century was heavily left-leaning.

“It was very liberal for sure,” Sinatra told the News. “I’m sure it’s no different than it is now. If anything it’s probably more liberal now.”

Sinatra said he first felt political tensions on campus in the lead-up to the election of 2000. He described the election as the first time he felt the “great divide” in the country.

According to Sinatra, politics were not a constant feature of campus discourse in the early 2000s. He added that before Sept. 11, 2001, he did not remember students’ political conversations being emotionally charged.

“We’ve got this crazy divide now, but I think back then, it wasn’t so personal,” Sinatra said. “It’s gotten more personal over the years.”

In the lead-up to the 2000 presidential election, Sinatra was in the minority of Bush supporters on campus, he said. He was involved with the Yale College Republicans in supporting the Bush-Cheney ticket that year. According to Sinatra, DeSantis was not part of any political group on campus.

Sinatra remembered the College Republicans, while nowhere near as large as the Yale College Democrats, as a “pretty substantial group” that met regularly and distributed flyers on campus.

Like Eire and Freedman, he recalled the professors skewing heavily liberal. But for the most part, Sinatra said that he never felt that any professors were “outspoken” about their views or that classes were heavily imbued with political rhetoric.

He said that “militant” — the word DeSantis used to describe Yale’s liberal population — was a stronger word than he would use.

He said that at times engaging with Yale’s overwhelmingly liberal population led to productive discourse — it helped him learn from the other side and hone his own political views.

“As somebody who was on the other side of the fence, I didn’t find [Yale] offensive,” Sinatra told the News. “I appreciated the friendly debate around politics when I was there. I learned from the other side, in terms of how they viewed things, and that sharpened my views of things on the more conservative side of the aisle.”

### “Fish out of water” or an “odd bird”?

DeSantis has publicly described his feelings of political alienation at Yale, comparing himself to a “fish out of water.” According to Noriega, a fellow member of St. Elmo Society, this alienation might have been more about personality than politics.

Noriega described DeSantis as an “odd bird,” a consensus she said was shared by several women in St. Elmo.

Noriega found out about DeSantis’ successful run for governor in Florida through article links that were shared in a Facebook group chat with other St. Elmo Society alums.

Her initial response was shock.

Noriega has previously spoken on DeSantis’ character for a New York Times article. She and two other St. Elmo members detailed how DeSantis rolled his eyes and

seemed “bored and disinterested” when she shared her experiences as a Latine woman growing up in San Antonio. DeSantis’ spokesperson told the Times that it was “frankly absurd” for one to remember “such a detail from decades ago.”

For Noriega, her perception of DeSantis has remained firm in her memory due to his “stand-offish” behavior throughout their senior year.

“That’s why I remember him so well,” said Noriega. “I don’t remember a lot of details, but I remember how he made me feel. There’s other people in society that I don’t have any concrete memories of at all, because they were friendly, but we didn’t stay in touch. But I remember him because I was like, ‘What is it with this guy? You know, there’s something off about him.’”

She said she did not view DeSantis’ depiction of Yale as an elitist campus as necessarily accurate. Noriega said that most Yalies were “a part of the mix” and she was surprised by the diversity of Yale.

While students who had alumni parents and came from private schools were present while DeSantis was a student, they made up a minority of his graduating class, according to a Yale University Fact Sheet for the class of 2001.

Forty-six percent of the class of 2001 came from independent schools, while 54 percent graduated from public high schools. Fourteen percent of DeSantis’ peers were legacy students.

“Yes, there were the Andover-Exeter kids,” said Noriega. “I had come from a public school in San Antonio, so that was very foreign to me, too. But there were plenty of other people from diverse backgrounds ... The thing about Yale that struck me was how diverse it was. San Antonio, Texas, is predominantly Latino, it’s kind of homogenous in that sense. When I went to Yale, there were people from everywhere and all different races and everything like that.”

Noriega knew very little about DeSantis as a Yale student, other than the fact that “baseball was a big thing for him,” she said. According to Noriega, he would arrive at the weekly St. Elmo meetings wearing his baseball uniform.

Sinatra first met DeSantis when he was a first year and DeSantis a junior. Sinatra’s first-year roommate was on the baseball team and would often invite his teammates over to watch sports games.

On the day Sinatra met DeSantis, the governor was among a group of baseball players eating pizza and watching wrestling in his common room. Over time, it became something of a ritual — Sinatra recalled there being many times when he would order food and watch games with DeSantis and his baseball teammates. The two remain friends today, according to Sinatra.

Sinatra said DeSantis was quiet and studious as an undergraduate. Sinatra said he remembered DeSantis darting around campus with a backpack full of dense history textbooks.

Outside of his studies, DeSantis’ undergraduate experience was defined by his involvement in two all-male spaces on campus: the baseball team and the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity.

Throughout its nearly 200-year existence, Yale’s DKE chapter has been at the epicenter of many controversies. DKE’s hazing practices — which include a seven-day “Hell Week” during which members allegedly beat pledges with hangers and smeared them

with condiments — made national headlines in 2000.

When Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh ’87 LAW ’90 — a member of DKE — was accused of sexual assault in 2018, scrutiny of Yale’s chapter entered national discourse. A 1985 photo of DKE members waving a flag made of women’s underwear resurfaced as the group was saddled with accusations of misogyny and sexual assault.

In 2018, following allegations of sexual assault, the fraternity suspended all social activities. DKE then lost its lease and was effectively inactive for four years. In the spring of 2022, the fraternity publicly returned to the undergraduate social scene.

According to Sinatra, DKE in the early 2000s was mainly, but not exclusively, composed of athletes. He said it was a 75-25 ratio of athletes to non-athletes. Baseball players, football players and lacrosse players comprised the fraternity’s athlete population, according to Sinatra.

Sinatra lived in the DKE fraternity house during his junior year. He described it as a space where members would study and socialize “a bit” during the week, but spend a lot of time socializing on the weekends.

He said membership in the fraternity was akin to a “brotherly connection.” While some members turned to DKE as their main social outlet, others were less involved, Sinatra said.

“On the weekends, you had people coming through and hanging out, ordering pizza and watching football games or baseball games,” Sinatra told the News. “I think people joined DKE for that reason, you know, for that sense of strong relationships formed through doing activities together. It was a chance to be part of an organization that’s bigger than yourself.”

Sinatra described DeSantis as “the exact opposite” of an active DKE member. DeSantis was a starter on the baseball team and a diligent student, which, Sinatra said, consumed most of DeSantis’ time.

Sinatra emphasized that he had no memory of DeSantis’ involvement in the fraternity’s Hell Week.

While he was not involved in DKE on a day-to-day basis, Sinatra said DeSantis would frequently show up to the fraternity’s weekend social events. Sinatra said that during the fall, DeSantis organized opportunities for his DKE brothers to gather and watch World Series games — gatherings that first brought Sinatra and DeSantis together in the fall of 1999.

Sinatra spoke to the general perception of athletes on campus at the time, saying they were viewed as inferior by their peers.

“I felt that athletes were generally looked down upon by a lot of professors and some students,” Sinatra told the News. “Athletic events just weren’t really well attended.”

According to Nicole Lim ’04, who was a member of the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority, DKE was known as “one of the jock frats.” She said that she knew DKE’s hazing process was “intense” from anecdotal information shared within her sorority.

Though Lim said she could not remember if she ever attended a DKE party, she recalled that most of their parties were also predominantly composed of athletes...

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*“December is the time for remembering the past and reaching toward the future.”*  
RALPH WALDO EMERSON AMERICAN ESSAYIST

# Democratic Socialists of America stage pro-union protest at Chapel Street Starbucks

BY JAKE SIESEL  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

As customers flocked to the Starbucks on Chapel Street in New Haven for handcrafted holiday refreshments, representatives from the Democratic Socialists of America staged a protest, distributing flyers describing Starbucks union-busting practices.

The protest at the New Haven location was part of what the Starbucks Workers Union called a “Red Cup Rebellion” as employees at locations across the country walked out on Starbucks’ annual “Red Cup Day” on Thursday, Nov. 16. The flyers protesters handed out displayed a QR code which scanned to a page with information for customers to call the Starbucks complaint line and voice their distaste for the corporate policy.

Some patrons stopped to listen to protesters’ grievances; however, most passersby still trickled into the store.

Lex Schultz ’24, co-chair of Yale’s chapter of the Young Democratic Socialists of America, and Francesca Maria, co-chair of the New Haven chapter of the DSA, stood arm-in-arm educating patrons on what they described as unethical corporate practices. The DSA is the largest socialist organization in the country, whose members organize around housing injustice, reproductive rights and solidarity with Palestine and Cuba.

They coordinated with Starbucks Workers United, the union representing over 9,000 Starbucks workers nationwide to catalyze a “Red Cup Rebellion” across the country. Since Red Cup Day marks one of Starbucks’ busiest events for baristas, the Starbucks Workers United wrote that it is one of the “most infamously hard, understaffed days.”

“The company has engaged in union-busting like bullying workers, firing workers in retaliation



JAKE SIESEL / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

The Yale and New Haven DSA chapters coordinated a call campaign against Starbucks’s regional office, encouraging customers to speak out against union busting by the company.

to organizing and more than 250 documented labor law violations,” Maria said. “We are asking people that enjoy Starbucks coffee to call the Starbucks regional office in a small show of solidarity with their baristas. Today is Red Cup Day, you’re making record profits, you can afford to treat your workers well, to pay baristas well, to fix your staffing issues and stop union-busting.”

According to the National Labor Relations Board, Starbucks has committed over a dozen labor law violations in the past year. The NLRB also accused Starbucks in 2022 of failing and refusing to collectively bargain with 21 unions at different locations.

In an email to the News on Nov. 22 from a Starbucks spokesperson, the company attributed the lack of progress toward contracts to the unions’ unwillingness to meet with the company.

“We respect our partners’ right to organize, freely associate, engage in lawful union activities and bargain collectively without fear of reprisal or retaliation,” the spokesperson wrote in a statement attributed to Starbucks. “We’re encouraged by the progress we’ve seen towards first contracts at stores where union representatives have approached bargaining with professionalism and an actual interest in discussing

partner priorities with our bargaining committees.”

Three Connecticut Starbucks locations — in Danbury, West Hartford and Vernon — have successfully unionized with assistance from Starbucks Workers United. However, the Chapel Street branch has not yet initiated a unionization process.

The protesters outside the New Haven location capitalized upon the wave of customers to spread awareness and amplify the voices of disgruntled baristas.

“We want their baristas to be happy and have a liveable wage,” Schultz told the News. “Starbucks needs to commit to ending union-busting practices and stop violating federal labor law.

It should be up to the workers to decide if they wish to unionize or not.”

Melanie Ulloa ’27 started working at the Chapel Street Starbucks in early September. Ulloa, who is from Hialeah, Florida worked as a barista at the Miami Lakes Starbucks branch during her senior year of high school. She complimented the organization and structure of her South Florida management team but said that there was a stigma surrounding joining a union.

She told the News that her experience working at the New Haven location has been significantly worse.

“In September, [buy one, get one free] Thursdays were a nightmare,” Ulloa said. “Corporate makes discounts, and stores don’t get notified until a week prior. We couldn’t alter our hours because at that point our schedule had already been made. We were simply understaffed.”

Ulloa emphasized that unionization of the Chapel Street branch remains a slim possibility. She said that most employees at the location are adults with children and multiple jobs with urgent issues to attend to.

When asked if interested in unionizing the Chapel Street location, Ulloa empathized with the movement but offered a blunt response.

“I don’t think I would unionize,” she said. “Unionizing is a very valid desire given the lack of communication between partners and management, the lack of resources and corporate changes. But it requires passion, effort and drive, not enough for me to consider the movement.”

The Red Cup Day promotion occurred nationwide on Thursday, Nov. 16.

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# Soulful Threads vintage store opens on Chapel

BY KENISHA MAHAJAN  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Depop seller Krystina Jackson — better known under her seller name “Soulful Threads” — opened a vintage store of the same name on Chapel Street last week.

The store, which opened on Friday, Nov. 24, is a part of the Shops at Yale, a collection of over 65 stores located in Downtown New Haven. Soulful Threads is the first second-hand vintage store in the Shops at Yale — and Jackson, who is from Connecticut, said she is excited to bring Soulful Threads’ unique offerings to the New Haven community.

“I’ve always loved fashion and clothing. I’ve always been the girl with the cute outfit. I grew up thrifting with my friends because we couldn’t afford anything at the mall,” Jackson said. “It’s the only thing that I’ve done consistently in my life and I’m happy to do again and again.”

The store features an array of pieces, largely drawing inspiration from 90s and early 2000s styles. The racks are lined with vintage graphic tees, flared jeans, camo cargo pants and brands like JNCO and Parasuco.

Prior to opening the physical store, Jackson had been a seller on Depop, a popular app for selling second-hand clothing, since she was 16 years old. After graduating college and losing her first job due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Jackson returned to selling clothes and focused on growing the Soulful Threads brand.

Jackson has lived in New Haven and New York, where she moved temporarily to expand Soulful Threads. Over the last few years, Jackson hosted at least twenty pop-up shops in New York and Connecticut, including six events in New Haven.

“I think New Haven is really in its prime, and we don’t have anything like this store around here,” Jackson said. “After COVID I think a lot of young people moved over here because it’s just like a quaint little town, but we still have a lot of the things that a place like New York has to offer.”

David DelVecchio, director of real estate asset management for Yale University Properties, wrote that Soulful Threads brings new, innovative offerings to the community.

DelVecchio highlighted the importance of having a female and minority-owned business as a part of the Shops at Yale, as they continue to seek a diverse group of tenants.

Amanda Amparo Espinal, who works at the Soulful Threads store, mentioned the significance of it opening in Downtown New Haven.

“I hope that other people see this as a safe space. Not only that, [but also that] they find really cool unique pieces here and they feel confident in their clothes,” Espinal said.

One of the reasons Espinal chose to work at Soulful Threads was because of its focus on repurposing items and providing an outlet for self-expression for those who visit the shop. For that reason, the shop features an array of pieces and offers a 10 percent discount for all students year-round.

Jackson said that she has spent years building a brand that largely caters to young people and is centered around the preferences of Gen Z. Along with the revival of vintage styles, Jackson mentioned that something that sets younger people apart from other demographics is their greater concern with sustainability and buying second-hand items — as evidenced by the rise of platforms like Depop and vintage stores.

“We’re the generations that honestly, like care the deepest about the earth, because, we’re the ones that are going to have to deal with everything when shit hits the fan with the earth,” Jackson said.

Espinal noted that a large number of customers have come in since opening and found unique pieces in the racks, adding that she appreciates the environment of the shop and what it can bring to potential patrons.

Above all, Jackson said that Soulful Threads serves as a vehicle through which people can experiment with their styles and self-expression.

“Wear whatever the fuck you want to wear, be whoever the fuck you want to be,” she said. “And if somebody gives you hate for it, just let that fuel your passion to be a little bit weirder tomorrow.”

Soulful Threads is located at 1022 Chapel St.

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KAREN LIN / SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

Soulful Threads, a second-hand vintage store on Depop, opened a physical store in New Haven last week.



KENISHA MAHAJAN / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Prior to opening the physical store, Jackson had been a seller on Depop, a popular app for selling second-hand clothing, since she was 16 years old.



ARTS

*“December is a month of invitation to forget ourselves in the service of others.”*  
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON SCOTTISH ESSAYIST

Yale Jazz Initiative releases new Christmas album

BY LUKAS NEL  
STAFF REPORTER

Ahead of the holiday season, the Yale Jazz Initiative released an album on Oct. 1.

The album, now available for listening on Apple Music, YouTube and Spotify, is called “This Christmas with Night is Alive.” Yale lecturer and American saxophonist Wayne Escoffery led an ensemble of musicians from the University and beyond, blending traditional holiday tunes with contemporary jazz.

This project is a landmark in Yale’s Jazz Initiative, showcasing a synergy of experienced artists and emerging talents from Yale. It features the Black Art Jazz Collective, including Jeremy Pelt and James Burton III, as well as musicians such as bassist Richie Goods, pianist Xavier Davis and drummer Quincy Davis. There are a total of eight tracks on the album, all renditions of some of the Christmas biggest hits: “Let it Snow,” “We Three Kings,” “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas,” “Sleigh Ride,” “White Christmas,” “This Christmas,” “O Holy Night” and “The Christmas Song.”

“I thought the [artists] really did a good reinterpretation, staying right on the line of jazziness while keeping the features of the original tunes,” Evan Branham ’24 told the News.

According to Escoffery, the album was created with the intention to be enjoyed year-round. It maintains complex jazz harmonies and rhythms and preserves the traditional “integrity” of Christmas songs, he added.

The album also marks a musical milestone for Yale junior Teddy Horangic ’25, who recorded for the first time as a primary artist on the album and a major vocalist for three of the tracks.

Horangic told the News she grew up first on a sailboat and later in a renovated bus which she said has had a strong influence on her musical style. She found her rhythm in the diverse sounds of bluegrass, country, punk, R&B and soul that permeated the various places she grew up in, she said.



COURTESY OF WAYNE ESCOFFERY

Professor Wayne Escoffery led the ensemble to create their new album, titled “This Christmas with Night is Alive,” blending holiday classics with contemporary jazz.

But it was jazz that resonated with her, a discovery she made at the age of 10. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she took a gap year and dove into the New York City music scene, busking in Tompkins Square Park and performing at various venues across the city.

“I was really being educated by mentors who would let me sing with them, literally learning on the job playing with people on the street,” Horangic said. “I basically came to Yale with a background of being a working musician in New York City, which is a very different lifestyle.”

At Yale, she continued her involvement in jazz under the guidance of Escoffery, who also gave her the opportunity to perform in the Christmas jazz album. Horangic described the experience as a significant “learning opportunity.”

Her experience recording the album was a departure from her usual live performances.

“It was an amazing opportunity, my first time. It’s a fun album, and it was a great learning experience,” Horangic said. “[In live performances], you have to be

aware of your audience and how they’re feeling the music. [Meanwhile for studio recordings, it’s more] “being able to be in a space with [other musicians], which was pretty amazing.”

She told the News she is planning to record more albums in the future.

Escoffery explained that the album also highlights the prominence of jazz in the greater New Haven community, particularly the genre’s role in telling and cementing the histories of communities of color.

“Jazz is America’s classical music, born out of the Black American experience,” he said. “It fosters diversity and inclusion. So it’s important to have America’s really indigenous music that came out of the Black American experience represented at Yale.”

“This Christmas with Night is Alive,” is available for listening on YouTube at This Christmas with Night Is Alive - YouTube.

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Yale Dramat puts on ‘Fiddler on the Roof’

BY LUCIANA VARKEVISSER  
AND TOMMY GANNON  
STAFF AND CONTRIBUTING REPORTERS

The Yale Dramat’s fall main-stage production debuted a unique take on the Broadway classic “Fiddler on the Roof” from Nov. 15 to Nov. 18.

“Fiddler on the Roof” kicked off with a nearly full audience at the University Theatre. The production was chosen as the Dramat’s fall mainstage, which is typically a musical theater production — and this show was no exception. This version of the musical, directed by Drewe Goldstein and produced by Matthew Siff ’25, stands out from many previous renditions with unique choreography, set choices and performances.

“This is not your grandma’s Fiddler,” said musical director Isaac Yu ’24, who is also a former managing editor of the News. “We’ve worked so hard at telling Fiddler in a really interesting and innovative way, and I hope people see that and enjoy that aspect.”

“Fiddler on the Roof” tells the story of a man named Tevye, husband and father of five daughters. Tevye and his family live in a Shtetl, a small Jewish community, in imperial Russia during the early 1900s.

The production follows Tevye as he tries to protect his daughters and install them with traditional values in the face of changing social morals.

“There are elements of the traditional staging,” said Mia Kohn ’27, who plays Tevye’s daughter Chava. “Our director Drew was absolutely brilliant, and she has added layers to the story that just deepen the connection to the story that many people feel.”

The show took a few creative liberties on the classic Broadway rendition, including directorial

changes and moments of audience interaction. Police officers never appear directly on stage, and their robotic vocals are accompanied by a bright spotlight from offstage. In this way, the lighting takes on a character of its own.

The stage consisted of two levels: a raised platform made of wooden planks, and the main stage.

The primary actions took place on the raised platform, but in this rendition the actors are on stage for the entire show, seated in rows of chairs on stage left. Because of their constant presence, they always remain in character.

Additionally, a partition was lifted to reveal the band at the beginning of Act 1, and they stayed visible to the audience and in relevant costumes throughout the remainder of the performance. These features, in addition to the main characters occasionally breaking the 4th wall — the protagonists would often talk directly to the audience members — added a unique meta element to the production.

Fiddler features some Broadway classic songs, such as “Tradition,” “If I were a Rich Man” and “Matchmaker.” As musical director, Yu was responsible for teaching the cast their harmonies and conducting the 16-piece orchestra.

Some songs featured complicated harmonies, which required all members of the ensemble to be skilled vocalists.

“Everybody in the ensemble is a fantastic singer, and they’re really carrying the show,” Yu said.

Along with intricate vocals, actors also had to be skilled dancers in order to execute the elaborate dance sequences, choreographed by Isabel Menon ’24. The dance sequences were energetic and sometimes solemn, and they were dispersed throughout the entire show, not just the big musical numbers.

The costumes, designed by Skyler Glaser and Daphne Raskin ’25,



LUCIANA VARKEVISSER/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Under director Drewe Goldstein, “Fiddler on the Roof” ran for a total of four shows.

were also distinct for each character and accurate to the time period.

“I thought the costumes and set were good,” said spectator Bella Le ’27. “[They] created an atmosphere that invited into the story’s universe.”

Through song, dance and dialogue, “Fiddler on the Roof” tells

the story of the strength of family through thick and thin.

“I think the cast and the plot, honestly, do a really great job at establishing a sense of community,” Menon said. “I hope that the audience comes away from the show with a bit more togetherness.”

Jerry Bock — composer of Fiddler on the Roof — was born in New Haven.

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# SCITECH

“So quiet subtle is the beauty of December that escapes the notice of many people their whole lives through.”

FLORA THOMPSON ENGLISH NOVELIST

## COVID-19 infections to rise this winter, researchers predict

BY FAREED SALMON  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

A new Yale study modeling future COVID-19 trends found that cases will likely rise during the winter months.

A group of Yale and University of North Carolina at Charlotte researchers compared and modeled COVID-19 with its evolutionary precursors, analyzing the seasonality of COVID-19 surges across the globe.

“This research showed the average probabilities of COVID-19 infections over a year given the virus is endemic,” Jeffrey Townsend, a biostatistics professor at the School of Public Health, told the News. “This is pretty useful to have.”

Townsend noted that there have been several COVID-19 surges over the past few years. However, many researchers have struggled to project international COVID-19 cases due to the variability across global health systems.

Townsend added that COVID-19 is still relatively young compared to other respiratory viruses.

“We’ve only started seeing [COVID-19] human infection a few years ago and it’s all been in the pandemic phase,” Townsend said. “If you just try and look at when people got infected, the season and the climate, it’s very hard to come up with an expectation.”

Inspired by previous research on the longevity of COVID-19 immunity, Townsend and his team observed four other coronaviruses that were evolutionarily related to COVID-19, have been present for decades and caused a common cold. According to Hayley Hassler, a research associate at the School of Public Health and the team’s lead data analyst, the team sifted through

various research studies on different coronaviruses to help predict COVID-19 trends.

By comparing the genetic sequences of different coronaviruses

infection frequency fluctuates throughout the year. Most of the coronaviruses had higher rates of transmission in the winter months, though they each had

more closely related coronaviruses to possess similar trends in seasonality.”

Townsend said they localized the relative frequency of coronavirus transmission to major

to limited data from the Southern Hemisphere, they were unable to include it in their model.

“Unfortunately, there hasn’t been much research in the past in the Southern Hemisphere, but every location is important,” Townsend said.

The team’s model also had other limitations. The datasets involving older coronaviruses didn’t have a standardized age range. Some datasets were restricted to children while others contained data from multiple age groups. The team is also unsure whether COVID-19 will settle into a consistent seasonal pattern.

Townsend and his team’s research predicts COVID-19 transmission rates once the virus becomes endemic, or when it begins to follow regular immunity patterns and the disease spreads at a low level.

Still, the team believes their research will benefit public health professionals. Aia Nisho ’21, a co-author of the study who helped write the manuscript, said that knowing when and where the virus will be can help providers reduce and mitigate COVID-19 transmission.

“If we don’t accurately predict outbreaks, we’re at risk of much higher rates of infection,” Nisho wrote in an email to the News. “In ‘at-risk’ communities, such as hospitals and care homes, this translates to an increase in potential fatalities. I hope the findings of this project will be used to efficiently direct funding to public health education in communities we found to be most at risk at different times throughout the year.”

In Connecticut, there have been 1,375 COVID-19 cases in the past week.

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YALE DAILY NEWS

Researchers at Yale and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte projected surges of COVID-19 in the winter months.

to COVID-19, the researchers were able to draw an evolutionary tree of the virus.

According to Hassler, the researchers discovered the numerical proportion of infection for every month in the year, which highlighted how often

distinct ranges of months when infection was highest.

“From there, the model leverages the evolutionary relatedness of the coronaviruses to predict the proportion of monthly cases COVID-19,” Hassler wrote in an email to the News. “In this sense, we’d expect

temperate cities. The researchers can then predict where the COVID-19 surge will be most prevalent based on proximity to major cities.

Townsend and his team incorporated an abundance of data from the Northern Hemisphere, but, due

## Federal program to reduce health disparities is ineffective, YSPH finds

BY JESSICA KASAMOTO  
STAFF REPORTER

A new study from the School of Public Health has found that the Health Professional Shortage Area, or HPSA, program has little effect on reducing disparities in healthcare access and health outcomes.

The HPSA program is a federal program that designates specific geographic areas, populations or facilities with a shortage of primary, dental or mental healthcare providers. The researchers found that 73 percent of the regions the program designated as high-need areas still experienced healthcare shortages ten years after their original designation, despite the HPSA’s efforts to mitigate disparities.

“[This study] demonstrates the inability of [a] well-intentioned health policy to achieve its goals,” Leslie Curry, a professor of public health at the School of Public Health, wrote in an email to the News. “Physician shortages and the associated impacts on mortality have not improved even after a decade of policy implementation. Clearly the HPSA program needs to be refined, and hopefully, this study compels action. This is another excellent example of why it is essential to work at the intersection of evidence generation and policy development.”

The study was led by Justin Markowski GRD ’24, a doctoral candidate studying health policy and management, Jacob Wallace, an assistant professor of public health, and Chima Nduemele, an associate professor of public health who also works for the Institute for Social and Policy Studies.

According to Markowski, the HPSA incentive program was founded in the 1960s, and it has continued expanding through the subsequent decades. Underserved areas petition on the state level to be identified as HPSAs. The program then offers various incentives, such as student loan forgiveness and medicare reimbursement, to encourage physicians to continue practicing in these areas.

“[The HPSA program is] a critical part of the healthcare safety net, and it amplifies a federal approach to identify and mark need and underserved communities across the country,” Markowski told the News.

Though the program’s primary goal is to reduce physician shortages

program is having its intended effect. To test the program’s effectiveness, Markowski and the other researchers identified the number of physicians and mortality rates in different areas around the country. Then, they compared HPSA-designated areas with “control counties,” areas that had similar demographics to HPSA counties but never petitioned for HPSA designation.

After this analysis, they found that there was little difference in physician density or mortality rates between HPSA counties and the controls.

“We believe that the program is really great at identifying and characterizing a salient problem ... [but] it just has been ineffective at ameliorating that need,” Markowski said. “We believe that this is due to incentives that are not tuned appropriately or targeted or sufficiently targeting the right areas.”

The study then identifies two alternative strategies to improve the program’s effectiveness. First, they suggested that the program should expand some of its incentives, such as giving providers in underserved areas greater autonomy.

Second, the researchers suggested that the program use incentives aimed at recent medical school graduates rather than current physicians. Markowski said that this strategy may be effective because many physicians tend to stay in a certain area once they establish a panel of patients, and many of these HPSA areas don’t have any physicians at all.

“It’s important to discuss and think critically about and the other incentive is definitely looking at the actual mechanisms of healthcare practitioner decisions,” Markowski said. “The idea is that maybe if we think really carefully about attracting young physicians and really helping them make the decision and shift that burden toward wanting to practice in an underserved area.”

Markowski believes it is important for the program to think of more creative solutions and incentives to mitigate physician shortages and health disparities. Overall, the team said that researchers should conduct future studies to examine whether these solutions are effective.

Jess Graham GRD ’28 praised the researchers for questioning the



TIM TAI/SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

A new study found the Health Professional Shortage Area program to be ineffective in reducing healthcare shortages.

of Public Health are trying to determine whether current

current policies are having their intended actions and if they are

The School of Public Health was founded in 1015.



SPORTS

Strong rebounding from Townsend for Yale win

M BASKETBALL FROM PAGE 12

nent, something they did just twice in last year's 13-game non-conference schedule.

Forward Casey Simmons '25 extended the lead to 59-49 at the 10:46 mark of the second half, but the Seawolves refused to let them pull away, knocking down multiple threes to keep the game within single digits.

The Elis kept them at a safe distance, though, and two Mbeng free throws with a minute remaining sealed the win.

Improvement on the boards

After Townsend grabbed another offensive rebound late in the second half, Stony Brook Coach Geno Ford leaned over to his assistant and called Yale the "most illegal offensive rebounding team in the world."

But Jones praised Townsend for his physicality, calling him a "workhorse."

"I think we lost the Rhode Island game because we got out-toughed," Jones said. "We did not get out-toughed tonight, and Nick was a big part of that."

Jones, whose motto is 'defend, rebound, share,' said his team needed to show "more urgency" on the offensive glass following Sunday's loss. The Elis more than doubled their season's offensive

rebounding average of 7.7, which ranked 334th in the nation coming into last night's game.

Progress on defense

Despite allowing the Seawolves slightly more points than their season average of 69.2, the Bulldogs forced 15 turnovers and made life difficult for opposing players inside the paint. Stony Brook did much of their damage from the three-point line, hitting 10 of 22 shots from beyond the arc.

Yale's perimeter defense has been a weakness this year, allowing opponents to shoot 36.7 percent — down from 33.8 percent last year — from the three-point line heading into Wednesday, ranking 289th in the country.

Coach Jones expressed confidence that this year's defense would return to last season's elite level.

"We should be as good as we were last year, just not yet," he said. "We have some more work to do than I thought we would, but I feel really good about this team and our chance to be special!"

Jones also experimented with some new looks on the court, playing first-year center Samson Aletan '27 alongside the seven-foot Wolf at times throughout the game.

Aletan, an athletic, defensive-minded player, is Yale's highest-rated recruit ever.

"It depends on the match-ups we're playing," Jones said on whether Wolf and Aletan will appear on the court together moving forward. "But I think Samson is a tremendous talent and he needs opportunities on the floor."

Around the league

Princeton (7-0, 0-0 Ivy), Harvard (6-2, 0-0 Ivy) and Cornell (6-1, 0-0 Ivy) all won on Wednesday night, each building on impressive seasons thus far.

All three teams have risen in kenpom.com's Division I rankings since the start of the season. Princeton, which made national headlines at the end of last season with a Cinderella run to the Sweet 16, was ranked 51st as of Wednesday night despite starting out in the 123rd spot. Harvard has risen close to 100 spots as of last night as well, starting at 227 and now sitting at 139. Cornell, beginning at 131, is at 111.

Yale, comparatively, began the season ranked 71st nationally, but now sits in the 95th spot. But for Jones, rankings mean nothing.

"I'm focused on us," he said bluntly.

The Bulldogs head back on the road this weekend, tipping off against Vermont at 7 p.m.

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COURTESY OF DAVID SCHAMIS

The Bulldogs head back on the road this weekend, tipping off against Vermont at 7 p.m.

Elis excited for indoor track and field season

TRACK AND FIELD FROM PAGE 14

ter performances when it matters. I think the meet Dec. 9 will be a good checkpoint to see where we're at as a team and I think we'll be pretty happy with the results."

Last season, the men's and women's teams left room for improvement, with both teams finishing at the bottom of the pack at the Hep-tagonal Indoor Track & Field Championships — or HEPS — indoor and outdoor track and field championships. However, that is not to say that the teams lacked bright spots.

On the men's side of events, the team has two experienced throwers returning. Appel and Chris Ward '24, who both had impressive seasons last year, will return for a final year. Appel was on the podium nearly all season, setting a school record in the discus with 58.38 meters in one of the last meets of the outdoor season. Ward improved all season long to accompany him on many podium appearances toward the end of the indoor season and then much of the outdoor season.

Additionally, Brian Di Bassinga '26 will return to the Bulldogs' jumping squad, having nearly set a school record in the triple jump in one of his first meets as a first year last season. On the track side of the competition, leading sprinters James Grindle '25 and Jacob Kao '25 will return for the Bulldogs, and dis-

tance runners Kay and Owen Karas '26 are coming off impressive cross country seasons to lead the Bulldogs' distance squad.

The women's team will also have some prominent returners, although they are coming off the loss of last year's captain and mid-distance star Samantha Friborg '23.

"We have some great athletes in our sprints, hurdles, jumps, and throws that have been working hard this fall," said head women's Cross Country coach Taryn Sheehan. "We expect to make some major contributions this spring."

In the field events, the women's team also has two experienced throwers returning to the lineup in Bella Bergloff '24 and Kalei Memmer '25, both of whom frequently appeared on the podium for the Bulldogs. Kiera Suh '26 will return to lead the Bulldogs' jumping squad, having notched many impressive finishes in her first year.

On the track, Claire Archer '26, Kyra Pretre '24 and Kathryn Rodrigues '24 are all coming off successful cross country seasons and figure as likely candidates to lead the distance squad for the Bulldogs. Sydney McCord '24 also returns to the sprint squad after many strong finishes last year, and pole vaulter Eileen Yang '24 looks to build on strong finishes last season for the team as well.

Meanwhile, the team is look-

ing forward to using this indoor season to prepare for the championships in May.

"Often, we use indoors as a way to get back to some fundamental parts of training and use it as a way to ultimately prepare ourselves to run the best in May when the championship part of the outdoor season takes place," said Sheehan. "This is a great chance to learn how to be great racers in challenging tight indoor race settings, especially in the shorter events."

The News spoke to Lucas Mylon '27 on how he thinks the preseason will help the team prepare to be a formidable competitor this year in the indoor and outdoor seasons.

"Preseason we are really building and preparing ourselves for the season," Mylon said. "Paying attention to the small details like running form, stability, injury prevention so that we make sure we have a good healthy season. It's still very early but coaches are keeping us motivated and giving us individual attention for our own minor issues and things to improve upon."

The Bulldogs have their season opener next Saturday, Dec. 9, in Coxé Cage.

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YALE ATHLETICS

The Bulldogs have their season opener next Saturday, Dec. 9, in Coxé Cage.

Elis celebrate first win at home

W BASKETBALL FROM PAGE 14

19-point lead up to the very last moments of the game, thanks to a three-pointer by Lola Lesmond '26 off an assist from Lucy Lynn '27. Lesmond, who missed the majority of her season last year due to an injury, earned her first career points this game, a milestone for the sophomore. Ultimately, the Bulldogs left victorious over the Red Foxes, winning 61-45.

Eshe told Yale Athletics that this three-pointer was a huge victory for Lesmond and the team.

"It's a really big deal for [Lesmond] to find her confidence and see one go down," she said. "Not only did she find her shot, but the team did an excellent job executing and getting her an open look."

Yale maintained an advantage over Marist in almost every

category. They had 12 points off Red Fox turnovers, 38 points in the paint over Marist's 22 and nine second-chance points off rebounds.

The win proved a testament to the strength of all players on the Bulldog team. Six players had at least six points, with McGill leading the team with 11 points. McDonald and Capstraw followed shortly behind, with 10 and eight points, respectively. Clark, though normally the leading scorer, took a step back to allow her teammates a chance at the bucket, heading the team with eight assists.

The Bulldogs play again at home at the John J. Lee Amphitheater against the University of Massachusetts Minutewomen (1-7, 0-0 A10) on Friday at 7 p.m.

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YALE ATHLETICS

The Bulldogs play against the University of Massachusetts on Friday at 7 p.m..

Bulldogs excited for next season

FOOTBALL FROM PAGE 14

"Woody" Knapp Memorial Trophy and kicker/punter Jack Bosman '24 earned the Ledyard Mitchell Award for proficiency in kicking.

Offensive lineman Kiran Amegadjie '24 received the Ted Turner Award for interior linemen.

"The moment this season that stands out to me as the most important was the week following the Cornell loss," Owens said. "Personally, I was stressed about the team's lack of success, and did some soul-searching with Coach Reno and the other leaders of this team to turn the season around both mentally and physically."

Other awards given to players were the Hammer, Yale Football Captains, Special Teams, D-Line and Edwin Foster ("Ted") Blair Awards, given to linebacker Jermaine Baker '24, Owens, wide receiver Joey Felton '24, Patterson and Vaughn, respectively.

On Nov. 20, Vaughn was named Ivy League Defensive Player of the Week for the second week in a row. During The Game, Vaughn had an interception and forced a fumble, in addition to a team-leading 10 tackles, which included seven solo stops and 1.5 for loss. Vaughn completed the season with 88 total tackles.

Vaughn ranks first in the Ivy League with an average of 1.3 tackles for loss per game and ranked third with an average of 8.8 total tackles per game. Vaughn's contributions and the efforts of the rest of the Bulldog defense limited Harvard to only 73 yards of rushing offense.

"We had so many guys contribute," Reno said to Yale Athletics. "There are names you don't even know that made amazing contributions to this team whether it was on the scout team on a Tuesday or blocking a kick or running down a kickoff. That's who we were."

Defensive lineman Zion Dayne '24, who blocked a punt for the second consecutive game, Daniyan, who broke up a pass and made four tackles and running back Joshua Pitsenberger '26 who rushed for 99 yards were also listed on the Ivy Honor Roll.

On Nov. 21, 14 members of Team 150 received All-Ivy recognition, with seven earning First Team All-Ivy, two earning Second Team All-Ivy, four earning Honorable Mention All-Ivy and one earning Academic All-Ivy recognition.

Offensively, Amegadjie, Mendoza, Tipton and Grooms all earned First Team All-Ivy. Patterson, Vaughn and Owens all were named as First Team All-Ivy defense.

"I am most proud of the resiliency that Team 150 showed throughout

the season," Shaffer said. "Starting off a season with two consecutive losses is a very disheartening way to kick the season off, but the team was able to bounce back and put together a championship season. A very impressive feat that took a lot of dedication and hard work from our guys."

Tight end Jackson Hawes '24 and Pitsenberger were named Second Team All-Ivy Offensive players, and offensive lineman Michael Bennett '26, defensive lineman Alvin Gulley, Jr. '25, linebacker Hamilton Moore '24 and defensive back Sean Guyton '25 received Honorable Mention All-Ivy recognition. Durand was also selected Academic All-Ivy.

On Nov. 27, the New England Football Writers Association announced their 2023 All-New England team, which honors the best Division I players by position in New England every season. They recognized Vaughn, Owens and Tipton. Owens ranks second on the team in tackles, behind Vaughn, with 55.

"I am looking forward to discovering what the identity of Team 151 will be," Shaffer said. "Each team at Yale has a life and history of its own, so as we close out Team 150 it is important that we begin to uncover what Team 151's identity will be as we begin our off-season."

The Yale football team's most recent accomplishment was on Nov. 28, when Grooms was named a finalist, alongside Brown wide receiver Wes Rockett, for the Asa S. Bushnell Cup as the Ivy League Offensive Player of the Year. Grooms received the honor last year, and winning the award this year made him the second player in Yale history and the sixth in league history to do so.

During the 2023 season, Grooms ranked first in the league with 22 passing touchdowns and had a total of 2,451 yards of offense — 1,863 yards throwing and 588 rushing.

The Bushnell Cup recipient is determined by the Ivy League's eight head football coaches and is given to the player who demonstrates leadership, competitive spirit, team contribution and accomplishments in play.

"Team 151 feels motivated and ready to begin our journey," Shaffer said. "I am extremely excited to help lead this team into our off-season training."

The Ivy League Offensive and Defensive Players of the Year will be announced at the New York Athletic Club on Dec. 11 at a press conference and reception co-hosted by the National Football Foundation (NFF) and the Ivy League.

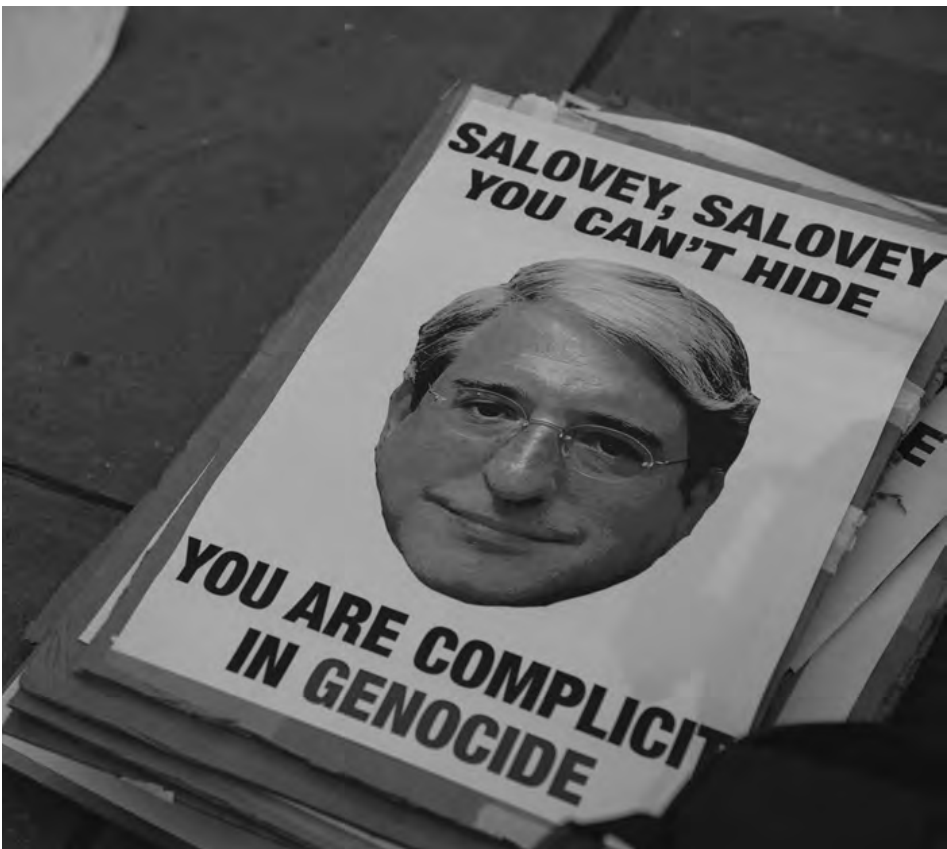
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# THROUGH THE LENS



## SILENT PROTEST CALLS FOR CEASEFIRE IN ISRAEL AND GAZA



Photos by **Ellie Park** and **Collyn Robinson**.



# Two separate break-ins in Branford, Pauli Murray suites on Monday

BY ARIELA LOPEZ AND HANNAH KOTLER  
STAFF REPORTERS

Several non-Yale students broke into a Branford College suite late Monday evening. Yale Police also responded to an attempted theft in Saybrook College earlier in the evening and a separate break-in Monday morning in Pauli Murray College.

The Yale Police Department apprehended three non-Yale individuals — whom the YPD identified as juveniles — involved in the attempted theft in Saybrook and the Branford break-in, in addition to a non-Yale-affiliated adult who broke into Pauli Murray.

**Branford and Saybrook**

According to Yale Police Chief Anthony Campbell, YPD officers were notified that four juveniles were attempting to steal bikes from the Saybrook courtyard — which is adjacent to Branford’s courtyard — at 6:34 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 27. When Yale police officers arrived on the scene, they apprehended one juvenile. Campbell added that the YPD then received a second call stating that Yale students had encountered two juveniles in a Branford suite located in entryway C.

According to Nati Tesfaye ’26, who lives in the affected suite and is a staff reporter for the News, there were four individuals involved in the break-in. At approximately 6:40 p.m., Tesfaye said, students found three juveniles inside of their suite. A fourth juvenile was outside the suite acting as a lookout. Tesfaye, who is also a staff reporter for the News, said that the three individuals in the suite took food and electronics.



LUCAS HOLTER/SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

Yale Police confirmed that non-Yale affiliates broke into one suite in Branford College and another in Pauli Murray College on Monday.

Tesfaye told the News that a Branford College student who does not live in the affected suite reported the break-in to the Yale Police Department.

While YPD did not specify whether the Saybrook and Branford incidents are linked, Campbell said that three trespassers in total were arrested, charged, given summons and released to a guardian — including the individual apprehended in the Saybrook courtyard.

The arrested individuals returned the stolen electronics once confronted by members of the suite, Tesfaye said. He added that

the juveniles claimed to be students at a New Haven high school.

Branford administration did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Saybrook Dean Adam Haliburton declined to comment.

**Pauli Murray**

On Monday morning, YPD officers also apprehended a non-Yale affiliated adult in Pauli Murray.

Officers discerned from video surveillance that the individual was let into the college by a Yale student, who swiped the individual into one of the Pauli Murray gates and proceeded to attempt

to burglarize an unlocked suite. According to Campbell, the suspect claimed that the door to the entryway was “wide open.”

Campbell told the News that the individual attempted to steal cell phones from a suite.

“The suspect was arrested and charged with trespassing and burglary,” Campbell wrote in a text to the News on Nov. 28.

In an email sent to Benjamin Franklin College students at 5:50 p.m. on Monday, Head of College Jordan Peccia informed his students of the incident in Pauli Murray.

“This morning at 6 am, an intruder entered a suite in Pauli

Murray College,” Peccia wrote. “The students in the suite immediately called Yale Police; no one was harmed; no property was taken. The suspect was quickly apprehended and is now in jail.”

Danielle Lee, a member of the suite, which is located on the second floor in Murray’s D entryway, recounted the break-in in a phone call with the News.

At approximately 5:50 am on Monday morning, Lee woke up to find her phone in front of her suitemate’s door. Upon waking her suitemate up, they found a non-yale affiliated man in her suitemates’ room. The man was silent and exited the room when Lee called the Yale Police. Lee noted that the police officers and Murray staff were empathetic to their experience.

“Keep the suites locked,” Lee said. “The hallways inside the residential colleges may not be like a part of your home... I don’t think [the man] would have gotten in if all our suite doors were locked.”

Campbell told the News that YPD “typically” does not have to send a community-wide alert after making an arrest “because there is no threat to the community.”

“Stop putting tape on the doors and the hangers,” Campbell advised. “Do not let anyone you do not know into the college.”

According to statistics published by Yale Public Safety, there were a total of 20 on-campus burglaries in 2020 and 11 cases in both 2021 and 2022.

Apprehended juveniles are brought to the New Haven Police Department.

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# Emmett Shear ’05 briefly appointed OpenAI CEO amid chaotic turnover

BY BEN RAAB  
STAFF REPORTER

Yale alum Emmett Shear ’05 was CEO of OpenAI for 72 hours last week amid the ouster and subsequent reinstatement of Sam Altman.

Shear, who previously served as the CEO of Twitch, was named interim CEO of OpenAI on Nov. 19,

OpenAI, a nonprofit artificial intelligence startup and prominent player in the tech world, is known for creating ChatGPT.

Altman’s ouster came after he had served four years at the company’s helm — he was first appointed CEO in 2019.

“Mr. Altman’s departure follows a deliberative review process by the board, which concluded that he

Shear ran OpenAI for 72 hours before the company announced that Altman would be brought back on as CEO. It is unclear whether Shear will remain at OpenAI in any capacity.

“Coming into OpenAI, I wasn’t sure what the right path would be,” Shear wrote on X following the announcement. “This was the pathway that maximized safety alongside doing right by all stake-

Altman attended Stanford for one year before dropping out.

“Shear’s brief consideration for a leadership role at Open AI is encouraging and represents a positive stride for Yale’s Representation in tech” Gerstein wrote to the News. “Emmett’s potential leadership role at Open AI is encouraging, particularly because Open AI is an especially desirable company

the life of classmate and friend Justin Kan ’05 that broadcasted via a webcam attached to Kan’s head.

The site quickly grew into one of the pioneering applications of live video platforming, particularly in the gaming sector. In June 2011, under Shear’s leadership as CEO, the company spun off its gaming content to create Twitch, a live-streaming service focusing on video game content. In 2014, it sold to Amazon for a reported \$970,000,000.

“It was obvious to those of us who had him in our classes that he had a passion in computer science,” Y. Richard Yang, a computer science professor, wrote to the News two days after Shear’s appointment as interim CEO. “It is not surprising at all that a top Yalie like him is the choice of leader for an organization that is developing among the most advanced computer science technologies with potentially most profound societal impacts.”

According to Yang, Shear took the “most demanding” computer science courses at Yale, including CPSC 690, an independent research track designed for graduate students. Yang described him as “highly capable but humble,” and someone who had a specific passion for exploring the impact of technology on society.

As a junior in 2004, Shear and a team of three other students entered a debate competition on “Voting in an e-Democracy” held by the Yale Faculty of Engineering, per computer science professor Michael Fischer.

Shear and his team made the final round, and at the recommendation of Fischer, turned their arguments into a publishable paper, titled “Tiny Systematic Vote Manipulations Can Swing Elections.”

The paper, using sample data from the 2000 U.S. presidential election, suggested that a hypothetical election attacker could modify the software on voting machines to arbitrarily change a small number of votes on each machine and concluded that just one vote on each electronic voting machine could have changed the outcome of the 2000 U.S. Presidential election. It was first published within the Yale Computer Science department, and then in the Association for Computer Machinery’s journal.

ChatGPT first launched on Nov. 30, 2022.

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WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Shear, a computer science major in Davenport College, served as interim CEO for 72 hours before the company board of directors chose to reinstate CEO Sam Altman.

following the removal of Sam Altman by the OpenAI board of directors on Nov. 17, two days prior. Microsoft quickly hired Altman after the ouster, but he was subsequently reinstated as OpenAI CEO on the night of Nov. 21.

“The appointment, even if temporary, is significant both for Yale’s reputation and the tech community as a whole,” computer science professor Mark Gerstein wrote to the News. “Leaders in the tech industry serve as pivotal role models and inspirational figures for those pursuing technical professions.”

was not consistently candid in his communications with the board, hindering its ability to exercise its responsibilities,” the company said in a Nov. 18 blog post.

The next day, even before Shear’s appointment as interim CEO, The Verge reported that the board was in discussions to bring Altman back as the company’s chief executive. On Nov. 20, a day after Shear was appointed, reports emerged that 95 percent of OpenAI workers had threatened to quit if Sam Altman were not reinstated as CEO.

holders involved.”

Among the changes at the company following Altman’s reinstatement, the company’s board of directors saw turnover in its membership; the new members include former Harvard University President Lawrence Summers and former Salesforce CEO Bret Taylor.

Gerstein said that Shear’s brief stint as OpenAI CEO is especially notable given Yale’s “limited presence in tech leadership” compared to peer schools such as Stanford University and Harvard University.

for many individuals involved in generative AI.”

Shear lived in Davenport College and majored in computer science during his time at Yale, and he expressed an interest in tech and entrepreneurship throughout his undergraduate years.

In 2005, during his senior year, Shear was admitted to the inaugural cohort of startup accelerator Y Combinator, where he co-built a calendar application called Kiko that eventually sold for \$250,000 dollars. A year later, he co-created Justin.tv, a 24/7 live video feed documenting



# YCBA conservation project prioritizes clean energy, audience engagement amid closure

BY CONNOR ARAKAKI  
AND JOSIE REICH  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTERS

For the past nine months, the Yale Center for British Art has been closed to the public for a building conservation project, which aims to include more sustainable and climate-conscious design choices within the museum.

The conservation project, slated to finish before the museum's reopening in 2024, includes replacing the roof of the museum and its 224 skylights, according to Building and Preservation Manager Dana Greenridge. These skylights were a standout feature of the original architecture and were famously dubbed by building architect Louis I. Khan as the “building’s fifth elevation.”

Nonetheless, Greenridge wrote to the News that the current project is an opportunity to “take advantage of the many advances in technology since the 1970’s, including materials that are more durable and environmentally sustainable than their predecessors.”

In addition to these replacements, the museum will be transitioning its entire lighting system, which uses halogen lights, to LED lighting with financial support from the Frankenthaler Climate Initiative, or FCI.

Founded by the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation in 2021, the FCI supports clean energy use for the visual arts.

“FCI was established by the Foundation in association with RMI and Environment & Culture Partners in 2021, and it is the largest private national grant-making program to address climate change action through cultural institutions,” the Foundation wrote in a statement to the News.

In 2022, the YCBA and the Yale University Art Gallery each received \$100,000 grants from the FCI to undergo an LED lighting conversion project.

To date, the FCI has garnered over \$10 million in funding to support 175 energy efficiency and clean energy projects at 147 institutions across 34 states, accord-

ing to spokesperson Shea Sherry of the initiative. According to Sherry, clean energy projects such as that of the YCBA speak to a “trend” of accountability for museums to have climate-friendly infrastructure — which not only includes the efforts of the FCI, but also an international Gallery Climate Coalition that aims to reduce the art sector’s carbon emissions by a minimum of 50 percent by 2030.

To ensure that these new climate design choices preserve the aesthetics of the museum, the YCBA consulted with Yale-affiliated faculty and greater industry experts, such as School of Architecture Dean Deborah Berket. For Greenridge, the conservation project is an infrastructure upgrade that must be approached “holistically” because of the cultural and historical significance of the Louis I. Khan building.

Khan was a modernist architect known for designing massive, heavy buildings. The architecture of the YCBA is renowned for combining these characteristics with a simplistic interior that, during the daytime, is illuminated without artificial light. The building was the architect’s final project and was completed two years after his death in 1974.

“One of our priorities is to select high functioning materials and products while also preserving the essence of Kahn’s aesthetic vision for the building,” Greenridge wrote to the News.

In light of the museum’s closure, the YCBA has introduced online and in-person events, off-site exhibitions and art loans to continue engagement with the Yale and Greater New Haven communities, and also to reach a broader international audience.

Throughout closure, the YCBA continued its online Artists in Conversation series and has also offered in-person events in collaboration with other campus institutions. In September, the YCBA co-presented a concert with Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Corinne Bailey Rae, celebrating her fourth studio album “Black Rainbows.”



TIM TAI/SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

Since its closure in February, the YCBA has begun a conservation project and holds events celebrating artistic endeavors.

In November, the museum held the annual Norma Lytton Lecture featuring former president and CEO of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Daniel Weiss Yale MPPM ’85.

In addition, over 60 works from the YCBA’s collection have been moved to the YUAG as a part of a special exhibition titled “In A New Light: paintings from the Yale Center for British Art.” Since March, the exhibition, running until Dec. 3, has featured works by John Constable, Gwen John, Angelica Kauffman, George Stubbs and J. M. W. Turner.

According to YCBA Deputy Director and Chief Curator Martina Droth, the museum’s education department coordinated weekly tours of the exhibition with YCBA docents and student guides, and after the exhibition’s conclusion, some paintings will remain on view at the Gallery into the new year.

The YCBA has also loaned its works to national and international institutions in order to preserve audience engagement and reception of the museum’s collection. Over the summer, drawings and paintings by William Black, John Linnell and Samuel Palmer were included in a solo exhibition at SITE Santa Fe. The museum has also lent works to the Baltimore Museum of Art, the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Jewish Museum in New York. In addition, Sir Reynold’s painting, “Mrs. Abington as Miss Prue, in ‘Love for Love’ by William Congreve,” was spotlighted in an exhibition titled “Crown to Couture” at the Kensington Palace in London.

In preparation for the museum’s reopening in 2024, the YCBA is working on two special exhibitions that will accompany their collection reimagined by the conservation project’s renovations. The special

exhibitions will celebrate the 250th anniversary of Romantic painter J. M. W. Turner’s birth and will present drawings and paintings by contemporary artist Tracey Emin. Citing the audience turnout of a symposium on J. M. W. Turner, hosted by the YCBA in September, the museum anticipates similar reception with their reopening exhibitions.

“The phenomenal turnout is indicative of interest in and excitement about one of Britain’s most celebrated painters, who will be the subject of an exhibition at the YCBA in 2024,” YCBA Associate Director of Research Jemma Field wrote to the News.

The YCBA will be making a formal announcement about the reopening in January 2024.

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# Yale West Campus Farm builds community through gardening and stewardship

BY HANWEN ZHANG  
STAFF REPORTER

On a quarter-acre lot tucked beside Yale’s West Campus front parking lot, visitors do not need to have a green thumb to cultivate cucumbers or community.

With its second year in operation, the West Campus Farm — a community-managed space led by farm manager Jordan Williams — is connecting researchers and students through tending to the farm. Though still in its infancy, the growing pilot program has been teaching the community about farming, sustainable food systems and responsible land management.

“I’m just trying to make sure that this is more of a public space, more of a welcoming space,” Williams told the News. “Part of what I’m trying to do is make [the farm] more accessible and to make people aware that it’s here.”

With 44 raised garden beds, the farm offers a small plot for any hobbyist gardener willing to take care of it. Williams said that the farm follows a community-supported agriculture model, where members invest their time in helping with the space’s upkeep in exchange for shared harvests.

Since joining the farm, Williams has grounded his gardening practices in an ethos of permaculture. He said that permaculture, which prioritizes responsible stewardship of the land and resource use, has helped establish the farm as an example of sustainable practices. Crops are grown pesticide-free and fertilized by compost, fish emulsions or mycorrhizae.

Williams added that the farm’s focus on crop rotation and organic gardening has helped remind community members about the relationship between food sovereignty and health in an age of increasingly destructive agricultural practices.

“Having a relationship with the ingredients that you’re using and growing your own food, is really essential to people’s health,” Williams told the News. “It’s empowering to grow your own food.”

According to Williams, the lot has existed for almost a decade. Christelle Ramos, assistant director of communications for Yale Hospitality, wrote that prior to 2021, the lot — formerly known as the Yale Landscape Lab — was loosely managed by a small group of West Campus students and staff volunteers. Yale Hospitality brought Williams into the position last year to help coordinate community events and oversee maintenance, per Ramos.

Williams said that he has sought to increase the farm’s presence on the 136-acre campus. Over his first year as farm manager, he has created a GroupMe, email lists and weekly volunteer sessions for anyone interested in helping. Volunteers with garden beds can enter the space to work at any time of the day.

“The vision for the farm is centered on fostering community engagement and supporting various educational initiatives,” Ramos wrote an email to the News. “We aim to create a space to uplift and support the community—where nursing students and faculty members can take breaks to recharge, spend quality time, and even put their knowledge into practice.”

Williams said his emphasis on community-building and diversity has extended to the farm’s gardening philosophy. During a tour of the lot, he pointed to the heirloom tomatoes growing alongside black-eyed peas and mini cucumbers. Sorghum stalk brushed against corn husks in the greenhouse.

The space is also home to a handful of more lesser-known species, such as ground cherries, horsetail and burdock. A sixth-generation farmer, Williams has also introduced okra and Gungo peas that pay homage to his roots in Jamaica, Georgia and Alabama.

“A weed is just a plant that we don’t know what to do with,” Williams said. “But to me there’s no such thing as a weed. Every plant has a use.”

The harvest is not large enough to regularly supply the menus of the West Campus cafe, which serves roughly two hun-



HANWEN ZHANG/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

The research campus’ farm is looking to draw new members and plants as they wrap up another planting season.

dred diners each day. However, Williams noted that some of the crops occasionally are featured in the cafe’s specialty farm-to-table dishes. The cafe has even used the farm’s purple sweet potatoes in fudge brownies and used a couple pounds of harvested blueberries to make jam. Williams explained that he often leaves the harvest for community members to take.

Nursing students, researchers and staff members are also invited to engage in a different kind of experimentation at the farm which is across the parking lot from the nursing school and science labs.

Molly Skinner-Day NUR ’25, a School of Nursing student, joined the farm during her first year and said that she rekindled her passion for gardening in the process. This year, she cared for a garden bed by planting butterfly seed mix, esca-

role, lettuce, parsley and kale. She added that the reward of spending time in nature and with others has led her to consistently return to the farm.

“For our schedules, [visiting the farm is] really tough,” Skinner-Day said. “But sometimes just being able to be out for an hour or even less is really helpful.”

Despite the successes of this year, Williams spoke about the challenges of transforming the space. Given West Campus’ seven-mile distance from New Haven, he said there has been difficulty in “building a community from scratch.” He has continued recruiting new volunteers to ensure the farm can “accommodate all the different needs from different people.”

The farm has also contended with unwanted visitors — voles and rabbits — and grappled with the effects of climate change.

According to Williams, gardeners this year had to “adapt” to a dry spring and abnormally rainy summer. He explained that even small shifts in seasonal patterns can often compromise plant immune systems, making them more vulnerable to white flies or diseases like powdery mildew.

Members of the farm have since cleared their garden beds for the season, but the work does not stop. Williams said he has started preparing the seed ordering list and planning for next spring. Skinner-Day said she is looking forward to trying out new vegetables and growing garlic in the interim.

“Being a farmer is also being a scientist,” Williams said.

Yale purchased West Campus from Bayer Pharmaceuticals in 2007.

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SPORTS

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*“I am looking forward to discovering what the identity of Team 151 will be. Each team at Yale has a life and history of its own, so as we close out Team 150 it is important that we begin to uncover what Team 151’s identity will be as we begin our off-season,”* DEAN SHAFFER ’25, NEWLY ELECTED YALE FOOTBALL CAPTAIN

M B-Ball: Wolf puts Yale over Stony Brook

BY BEN RAAB  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Yale forward Nick Townsend ’26 was just happy to get the win. The men’s basketball team (5–3, 0–0 Ivy) defeated Stony Brook (2–4, 0–0 CAA) 79–71 Wednesday night in John Lee Amphitheater. Townsend scored a career-high 22 points and became the first Yale player since 2016 to record 15 rebounds. But after the game, he deflected attention from his individual showing. “It was an important team win,” Townsend said, in response to a question about his milestone performance. “We needed to get back in the win column and part of that is rebounding, so we take great pride in that.” A 13-point favorite entering the game, the Bulldogs got off to a slow start, trailing 29–28 after 15 minutes of play. Townsend made two

free throws to put Yale ahead with 4:21 remaining in the first half, and they held onto the lead for the rest of the game. Point guard Bez Mbeng ’25, playing through a groin injury, tallied 18 points, and forward Danny Wolf ’26 tallied 11 points to accompany nine rebounds — five on offense — and four assists. Yale’s 18 offensive rebounds were a welcome sight for home fans following Sunday’s 76–72 loss to Rhode Island, in which the Bulldogs got out-rebounded by a margin of 40–26. “I was really happy with our rebounding, that made me feel good about who we are,” Head Coach James Jones told the News. Still, Stony Brook’s 71 points marked the sixth time in seven Division I games that the Bulldogs have allowed over 70 points to an oppo-

SEE M BASKETBALL PAGE 10



COURTESY OF DAVID SCHAMIS  
Yale bounced back from Sunday night’s loss with 79-71 victory over Stony Brook.

W B-Ball: Bulldogs best Marist, earn first win of season



YALE ATHLETICS

The Yale women’s basketball team sealed their first season win with a victory over the Marist Red Foxes.

BY MEREDITH HENDERSON  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The Yale women’s basketball team (1–6, 0–0 Ivy) faced Marist (2–4, 0–0 MAAC) at home in the John J. Lee Amphitheater inside Payne Whitney Gymnasium on Tuesday, Nov. 28. They returned from a seven-day break after traveling to Pennsylvania and California, where they faced off against Lehigh University, University of the Pacific and University of San Francisco. In Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, they battled hard against Lehigh, but ultimately fell 75–90. In California, the Bulldogs suffered two losses, 59–66 and 59–75. After this long stretch of away games, the Bulldogs returned well-rested and ready to secure a win at home.

In the first period, the Red Foxes won the jump ball and hit a jumper, quickly putting them up 2–0. Four different Bulldogs retaliated, including a three-pointer by point guard Jenna Clark ’24 and two successful jump shots by Nyla McGill ’25. At the end of the first period, the Bulldogs led 11–8. After the break, the game moved to the second period, which began with a layup by Brenna McDonald ’24, one of the Bulldog posts. The layups in the second quarter proved to be crucial toward extending the Yale lead, contributing to eight points out of fifteen scored in the second quarter. The Bulldogs led by nine points at the half with a score of 26–17. The Yale defense put on a clinic, allowing Marist only 17 total points in the first half.

Head Coach Dalila Eshe told Yale Athletics that the team executed their plan in the second half, which contributed to their success. “The offense was awesome; we distributed the ball well,” Coach Eshe said. “In the first and second quarter we were trying to get the offense going, and we did in the third and fourth quarters, which is flipped from what we’ve usually been doing.” Once the half ended, Kiley Capstraw ’26 immediately hit a layup, followed by a Clark jump shot. The third period felt like a lost cause for Marist as the Bulldogs extended their furthest lead of the game of 17 points. The third period ended with the Bulldogs maintaining their lead, 44–31. The fourth saw the Bulldogs continue to dominate, holding a

SEE W BASKETBALL PAGE 10

Track and Field: Season around the bend



YALE ATHLETICS

Distance runners will be joining their sprinting, throwing and jumping counterparts on the larger track and field teams for their indoor season on Dec. 9.

BY PETER WILLIAMS AND KATE ESTEVEZ  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTERS

Yale’s Cross Country season came to a close on Nov. 10 when both the men’s team and women’s team ran in the NCAA Cross Country Northeast Regional Championships. Captain Sean Kay ’24 moved on to run in the NCAA National Championships on Saturday, Nov. 18. The Bulldogs are looking forward to their winter season — indoor track and field — which will run from December to March. Yale Track and Field will kick off their indoor season at home in New Haven on Saturday, Dec. 9, at Yale’s Coxo Cage, which was named after Eli hammer thrower Charles Edmund Coxo, class of 1893. Coxo allegedly

donated the \$300,000 — approximately \$10 million today — needed to build the facility. “Our goals this season as a team are very simple, to finish as high as we can at indoor and outdoor HEPS,” Matt Appel ’24, one of the men’s team’s star throwers last year, wrote to the News. “I don’t really feel that it’s fair to name certain returners or newcomers as people to look out for because we’ve all been putting in a lot of work as a team, and everyone has made leaps. What I will say is that I feel the team is much more bought in than last year and I’m hoping that translates into bet-

SEE TRACK AND FIELD PAGE 10

FOOTBALL: Season of success, a look toward Team 151

BY AMELIA LOWER  
STAFF REPORTER

The Elis (7–3, 5–2 Ivy) closed out their season with a decisive 23–18 win over Harvard (8–2, 5–2 Ivy) in front of a crowd of 51,127 fans at the Yale Bowl, earning a share of the Ivy League Championship and individual awards, honors and recognitions in the weeks following their victory. The Bulldogs have had an exciting couple of weeks following their victory over the Crimson during The Game on Nov. 18, naming their Team 151 Captain and earning a variety of honors to close out the 2023 season. “I am most proud of how this team came together when it mattered the most,” Team 150 captain and defensive back Wande Owens ’24 said. “We had a rocky start, but we kept at it, found our identity, and latched onto it. The season is never easy, and I am very proud of our resilience and ability to withstand the rain.” The Blue and White saw success on both sides of the ball during the 2023 season. Offensively, Yale finished second in the Ivy League in scoring offense. Quarterback Nolan Grooms ’24 led the league in passing

touchdowns (22) and passing efficiency (149.6), while wide receiver Mason Tipton ’24 ranked first in the league and 10th in the FCS with 10 touchdown receptions as well as third with 786 receiving yards. Yale ranks first in the FCS in blocked punts (5), second in blocked kicks (6), fourth in 3rd down conversion percentage (.490), 13th in kickoff returns (23.00) and 18th in team passing efficiency (148.36). Defensively, Yale had 129.8 yards per game of rushing defense, an average of 19.90 points per game in scoring defense. The Bulldogs rank 24th in the FCS in team passing efficiency defense (117.38) and had a total of 22.0 team sacks this season, ranking sixth in the FCS in tackles for loss (75.0). “I’m really proud of the team,” head coach Tony Reno said to Yale Athletics. “It wasn’t an easy season. We had to fight through so many things, and when we finally got a foothold, it was like we exploded.” The annual postseason banquet was held on Sunday Nov. 19 following The Game at the Cullman-Heyman Tennis Center. The team’s 26 seniors were honored at the Banquet, in addition to the announcement of the team captain of Team 151 and the team awards.

Linebacker Dean Shaffer ’25 was elected captain of Team 151, which will play next year in the 2024 season. Shaffer has served as a leader within the linebacker group throughout his time at Yale and now will lead the entire team, following in Owens’ footsteps. “Dean has been a great leader for us as an underclassman,” Reno said to Yale Athletics. “There isn’t a better person than Dean to bring Team 151 together. I’m excited to see his growth as a captain.” The Charles Lotus Award, awarded to the most valuable first-year player, was given to defensive back Osize Daniyan ’27, both the James Keppel Award for offensive players and the Jordan Olivar Award were given to wide receiver Mason Tipton ’24 and the Greg Dubinetz Award for linemen was given to defensive lineman Clay Patterson ’24 and offensive lineman Jonathon Durand ’24. Linebacker Joseph Vaughn ’24 and running back Spencer Alston ’24 earned the Chester J. LaRoche Award, offensive lineman Jonathan Mendoza ’24 and wide receiver Aidan Maloney ’24 earned the Frederic Woodrow

SEE FOOTBALL PAGE 10



CHRISTINA LEE / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

After the Yale football team defeated Harvard and claimed their share of the Ivy League Championship, Team 150 players have earned a series of honors, recognitions and awards.

STAT OF THE WEEK

18.7

THE AVERAGE POINTS SCORED FOR DANNY WOLF ’26 OF THE YALE MEN’S BASKETBALL TEAM IN THE ATLANTIC SLAM TOURNAMENT, EARNING HIM TOURNAMENT MVP HONORS.



# WEEKEND



//JESSA FLORES

## My home. California

// BY ALEXANDER MEDEL

California, as Frank Sinatra once sang, is “a land that paradise could well be jealous of.” To the thespian, it is where stars achieve immortality on the silver screen. To the techie, it is where innovators cradle the infant technologies of the digital world. To me, it is home.

I was born and raised in California — Northern California, to be exact. I have called the San Francisco Bay Area home for the past 18 years and counting. California was where I took my first steps, said my first words, made my first friends and found my first love. It was, naturally, the land of my firsts. Yet, the first time I came to appreciate California truly was on a cold autumn evening at a bustling airport in the Midwest.

Roughly two weeks ago, I found myself sitting in front of a gate at McNamara Terminal at Detroit Metropolitan Airport. I successfully completed the first leg of my trip back home for Thanksgiving. Staring at the screen above the gate counter were two words cast against a navy blue background in bold, white, sans-serif text: San Francisco. Upon seeing those words, I felt an epiphanic rush of undiscovered excitement and energy that encouraged me to reflect. I have always appreciated my home, albeit placidly, yet that appreciation has since matured. The emotion is the same, yet the feeling is different. Having spent the last few months on an opposite coast of the country, home has taken on a greater meaning for me.

Before moving to New Haven, home and its surroundings were an afterthought. I never cared much about the commutes I would take on U.S. 101 or I-280 or the signs marking city limits I would pass on my way to school. I never paid much attention to the rolling vineyards I would watch from my window on road trips through Napa, or the winding cliffs and crashing waves that caressed the Pacific Coast Highway on the road to Big Sur. I never gasped as loudly as the tourists on my left and right would when they caught a sight of the Golden Gate Bridge peeking through the fog, or of the sun shining through the aged foliage of redwoods in Muir Woods. Even beyond the Bay Area, my travels have taken me to the shores of Lake Tahoe, the rich farmlands of the San Joaquin Valley, the plains of the Mojave Desert, the beaches of Los Angeles and the restaurants of San Diego. In my young mind, these places and experiences would always be a ride away. I was never compelled to appreciate them beyond their aesthetic beauty since they would always be there. They were as accessible as my backyard would be. Suffice it to say, I took them for granted.

Beyond the tangibles, however, is the fact that my calling California “home” extends well beyond its sights — also to its people. A great number of my friends remain in California as they follow their academic journeys, while others, like me, have traveled in pursuit of their intellectual callings. Regardless, we are all Californians by heart and home, and thinking of the Golden State while in New Haven brings back memories of evenings playing pool at a friend’s house, going birding on the San Mateo Coast or high school hijinks that only now mature in hilarity as time passes.

California, also, is synonymous with the family I love. My parents and a substantial majority of my relatives live in California. If the sights of California make my home pretty to the eye, it is my family that makes California a place

where my heart can smile. On some days, when I have finished my many readings for my political science lectures or my problem set for calculus, I let my mind wander back home. And as my thoughts breeze through the places I have known and seen, they bring me to scenes of my mother wrapping her delicious lumpia or my father listening to his Elvis records. These images of my friends and family now rest as mental vignettes captured in the library of my mind. They exist now as memories to be cherished, not as scenes I would encounter presently in my day-to-day life.

Now that I have spent months away from California, all these memories have taken on a greater significance in my mind. They have encouraged me to reflect and better appreciate that which I have taken for granted for many years of my life. I can count, on one hand, how many times I have traveled on a Connecticut highway; I have become the classic college pedestrian on city sidewalks. The California Coast or the bridges that span the San Francisco Bay are no longer in view; they remain only in the confines of a Google search or a digital wallpaper. My friends are no longer a car ride away; they are scattered across America’s time zones as marbles tossed along a rug. In all, the absence of home has only made me appreciate it further and grow in gratitude for it.

Before flying out to New Haven a few months ago, my father told me that “distance makes the heart grow fonder.” He knowingly quoted a pithy adage, one as inseparable to the modern romantic comedy as a smartphone is to a teenager, to challenge my way of thinking. As someone who appreciates nuance, I never understood how a blanketing, solitary sentence such as this one can encapsulate the intricacies of life. But, his imparting this saying to me reminded me that sometimes, the best way — perhaps the only way — to teach a certain lesson is to state it simply. My father, in imparting this saying, was not necessarily alluding to any distant romances that might come my way, but trying to tell me that wherever I may roam, I must not forget about my home and my love for it.

Thus, in the spirit of the Thanksgiving season, I developed a new sense of gratitude for home 2,000 miles away from it. I came to love California more in Detroit. With a keen sense of appreciation, I now yearn for the chance to stroll on a beach in Carmel and feel the waves slip through my fingers. I now long for the moment I can warm marshmallows over a campfire with friends while exchanging stories and songs. I now pine for the rich smell and taste of my mother’s homemade Filipino delicacies as my father hums along to a track of “It’s Now or Never.” I, now a much wiser and more contemplative self, intend to immerse myself in every moment and to wrap myself in the present beauty that I call my home whenever I find myself in California’s embrace.

To quote Sinatra a second time, “it’s very nice to go trav’ling, but it’s oh so nice to come home.” He was right. Notwithstanding the fact that my adventures are wonderful, my escapades are thrilling and my travels are enthralling, there is a profound, indefatigable and irresistible allure to my home that no other place can emulate. Thinking about this as the seats around me filled with rushing passengers, I found myself grateful for my home with a gratitude rooted in firm earnestness and deeper understanding. This gratitude rests well in my mind where I can rely on it to keep California not as some place distant or mystical, but simply as the home that is near and true in my heart.

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WEEKEND

REFRESHING

# Why we should be thankful for Eli Roth

// BY ABRAHAM PAYNE

Think with me, if you will: Why are there no major Thanksgiving-related pieces of media? Why does Charlie Brown have to bear the entire weight of the holiday on his tiny little shoulders? Sure, we have a few songs to listen to each year. Bing Crosby’s “I’ve Got Plenty to be Thankful For” or various food related songs like James Brown’s “(Do the) Mashed Potatoes”, Ray Charles’ “Sweet Potato Pie”, or my personal favorite, the “Glee” rendition of “Turkey Lurkey Time” all come to mind, but we be expected can’t just listen to a food playlist all day. Food isn’t the only thing Thanksgiving is about, right?

We run into a similar issue looking at films. We have the aforementioned “A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving” — even though it’s technically only a television special — and the animated “Free Bird” along with films that aren’t really about Thanksgiving at all but contain some aspect of the holiday like “Knives Out,” “You’ve Got Mail” or “Planes, Trains and Automobiles.”

Potentially an even better question: why do we not have a major Thanksgiving inspired horror movie? Horror is a genre that will famously exploit anything, for better or for worse. We have John Carpenter’s “Halloween” or “Black Christmas,” “My Bloody Valentine” and for god’s sake we even have “April Fools Day,” but where is the love for the tastiest holiday of them all? Don’t the Pilgrims deserve a good scare too? Any horror fan can tell you that holiday horror is a classic, and it seems strange that we’ve yet to have a major motion picture to tackle such a popular holiday.

Eli Roth aims to change that this year. To bring Thanksgiving to the heights of cinema this fall with his 2023 slasher flick ... “Thanksgiving.”

And who better to star in this film than ... Addison Rae?

And our co-lead is ... “Grey’s Anatomy”’s very own McDreamy?

And the film is a feature-length version of a parody trailer from a previous film?

I don’t know about you, but I smell an Oscar. Maybe even a Nobel Peace Prize.

So, on Thanksgiving eve, I set upon the Mayflower — my 2009 Honda Odyssey — to my local movie theater to witness the cinematic event of the year.

And to my suprise, the film was actually ... delightful? Now, it’s no moody, slow burn like “Halloween” or a commentary on women’s agency and systemic misogyny like “Black Christmas,” but it’s undoubtedly fun as hell. We open on a riot in a Walmart style superstore that results in the deaths of multiple shoppers and sets up the motive for the killings the following Thanks-

giving. The scene is almost too realistic, and its claustrophobic direction was too much for some moviegoers in my theater. From that point on, the film is a 90 minute slash-fest with increasingly brutal and creative killings — a trampoline-related kill sticks in my head particularly well.

The film focuses on a group of teens who are stalked by a killer wearing a John Carver — yes, the Pilgrim — mask as they scramble to figure out his identity. The film utilizes social media in a refreshing, grounded way that feels like at least one real teenager was consulted when writing the script. The whodunit aspect is also well done, with the opening scene establishing multiple potential suspects with different motives, even though fans familiar with the genre will likely pick out the real killer within the first few minutes.

Most importantly, however, the film is unquestionably Thanksgiving-related. The final act is framed around a Thanksgiving dinner and the setting lends itself nicely as a town committed to celebrating Thanksgiving in an over-the-top manner. There are a plethora of Thanksgiving themed puns throughout, and even the killer’s motive is vaguely related to the themes embedded within the holiday.

That being said, the film is not for the faint of heart, and if you’re looking for a family friendly film to throw on while at your grandparents house this holiday, “Thanksgiving” is probably not your best option.

So, is Eli Roth’s “Thanksgiving” the start of a Thanksgiving film renaissance? Do we even need a Thanksgiving renaissance? Only time will tell, but one thing is for sure: It won’t be long before “Thanksgiving 2” carves its way into theaters.

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// YALE DAILY NEWS

# Unsatiated: A Review of 'The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes'

// BY IDONE RHODES

Warning: spoilers ahead!

Lionsgate knew what they were doing when they released “The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes” on Nov. 17, just as college students around the country were returning home for Thanksgiving. After all, what is Thanksgiving if not an opportunity to sit in your childhood bedroom and reminisce about simpler times gone by? In an attempt to fully embrace the time machine experience of the film, I brought my parents along with me, and we even returned to the same theater where I had watched the other installments of the franchise as a tween.

“Songbirds & Snakes,” based on a 2020 novel by Suzanne Collins, is set about 64 years before Katniss enters the arena, when a young Coriolanus Snow (Tom Blyth) is tasked with mentoring another District 12 tribute, Lucy Gray Baird (Rachel Zegler), as she competes in the 10th annual Hunger Games. The prologue follows Snow’s development from a kind hearted but ambitious student to a ruthless upstart on his path to becoming the villain we see in the later films. Though the film certainly delivers by way of nostalgia, it fails in its ultimate ambition to offer a cohesive portrait of this young man’s descent into evil.

The film introduces Snow as the last hope of his noble, but diminished family. In front of his posh Capitol classmates, he performs as one of them, shoving extra food in his pockets to secretly eat later and wearing a dress shirt adorned with beads that his cousin Tigris (Hunter Schafer) fashioned from bathroom tiles. His only ally outside of his family is the principled and idealistic Sejanus Plinth (Josh Andrés Rivera). Juxtaposed with his snobby, entitled peers, Snow naturally earns the audience’s sympathy.

As Baird is introduced, defiantly making her way to the stage of the reaping ceremony, the stubborn echoes of Katniss come to life on screen. Smug as she sings in the face of death, Baird’s voice rings out through the tinny transmission into the Capitol auditorium where Snow and his classmates watch; the chemistry between these characters is somehow palpable before they have even met. A moment like this is the film at its best because it plays on all of the tropes that fans of this franchise love: star-crossed lovers, ill-stacked odds and a female protagonist who insists on playing by her own rules.

But before Baird opens her mouth, her costume, designed by Trish Summerville, speaks for itself. In contrast with the monotony and conformity of the other tributes’ downtrodden garb or even the clean cut uniforms of Capitol students

like Snow, Baird’s colorfully kaleidoscopic skirt and intricately embroidered corset immediately mark her as the one to watch, someone who knows how to be noticed. Even as Baird fights for her life in the arena, her costume gets dirtier and degraded but nevertheless remains, becoming an embodiment of her undiminished spirit.

Blyth and Zegler are due praise for the first act of the film, during which they heighten the drama of their characters’ connection while also maintaining a mesmerizing ambiguity as to their true motivations. Leading up to the Games, the towering clean lines of the Capitol buildings and the panoply of rooms of the academy are Snow’s fatal space disoriented society. In the film, Snow is positioned as one another. The masterful performance is delightfully extended by another. However, aside from the romantic cat and mouse game between Baird and Snow, the build up to the Games left something to be desired. It’s unsurprising that this earlier iteration of the Games would not entail the glitzy spectacle of later films, but it also failed to craft suspense which the competition could play out. The focus remained largely on Snow and Baird, so the audience knows little about the other tributes beyond vaguely sketched traits and allegiances.

As a result, the pathos of the Games fell flat. With limited information about the personalities or stories of the other tributes, the dynamic of the competition was a sanitized fight between the ‘good guys’ — Baird, her fellow District 12 tribute Jessup Diggs (Nick Benson), as well as a few other underdogs — and everyone else. The film tried to counteract this lack of nuance by giving other tributes their moment in the spotlight, but throwing in dramatic displays of humanity felt like a patch up job, a lazy attempt to elicit an emotional response from the audience.

More interesting than the Games themselves was Snow’s own fight for survival outside of the arena. Every scene between Snow and the strange Head Gamemaker Dr. Volu-



mina Gaul (Viola Davis) was crackling with dangerous electricity; she becomes his true mirror, a reflection of his darkening nature. The line between right and wrong wears increasingly thin as Snow schemes to ensure Baird’s victory, and the full cunning of his character is realized — cunning which can be lethal when pointed in your direction. At the end of the Games, Snow is on the precipice of evil, but he has not yet crossed the threshold.

The film falters most in its final act. In order to squeeze in Snow and Baird’s relationship as well as Snow’s fall from grace, it offers only spits and smatterings of plot detail and leaves the audience to fill in the rest. Snow, punished for cheating to save Baird, is sent to District 12 to serve out a term as a peacekeeper, and Sejanus accompanies him. There, Snow reunites with Baird, and the two have a fleeting realization of their love which is thwarted when Sejanus gets embroiled in an unclear rebellion plot that fails as quickly as it is introduced. Fearful of being implicated in the scheme, Snow betrays his best friend and leaves him to die at the hands of the peacekeepers.

Though I understand director Francis Lawrence’s impulse to foreground Rachel Zegler’s rich voice as much as possible, cutting out some of the musical performances in the latter part of the film would have given more space for the audience to ruminate on the pivotal moment when Snow uses his cunning against someone he loves instead of in their defense. In the aftermath of this betrayal, the hasty dissolution of Baird and Snow’s relationship gave me whiplash and lacked emotional force. I wanted to care about these characters, but I wasn’t given the time to. The film manages to end with a portrait of a hardened, loveless Snow restored to his position in the Capitol, but I was unsatisfied with how we got there.

Though I found the film imperfect, it was still an enjoyable movie-watching experience because of my love for the franchise as a whole. Frankly, the film could have been incoherent mush, and I would have stayed for moments like the reaping ceremony when the spirit of the original movies flickered across the screen. From mentions of Katniss to the introduction of the Jabberjays along with a slew of other easter eggs, “Songbirds & Snakes” is a delightful complement to the “Hunger Games” pantheon despite its missteps.

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## WKND Recommends

Showing up to that 9 am lecture.





// BY NORAH RANSIBRAH-MANAKUL

Judging by the number of Yalies who can’t point to Sacramento on a map, we need to offer a new course on elementary geography next semester.

To set the scene: it was one of the first duty nights of fall. Back when the high of moving into college was still pumping us with energy, and the rush of trying to find our forever-friends turned every person into a potential conversation partner. The September heat still lingering past sundown. The smell of takeout wafting through the air. The room packed with sweaty 18-year-olds, fanning themselves with paper plates and floating from couch to windowsill to armchair, looking for a place to perch.

We were sharing intro spiels — major, college, hometown — and learning how to make small talk — filling lulls of conversations with recent Yale revelations — the dining halls! the doors! — and asking how everyone was settling in.

As I was leaning on the back of an armchair, crammed between a windowsill and some other first-years from my college, the conversation turned to hometowns. Specifically, the question of what our favorite part was — or what we would miss the most.

Moving out of state for college means losing that little bit of shared context with people. To describe Sacramento is to speak in relation; three hours eastward from the bay, two hours westward from the mountains, and no, not close at all to L.A. Many people say the best part of living in Sacramento is how close you are to all of Northern California’s interesting parts: the Pacific Ocean, San Francisco’s city life, Napa’s vineyards, and skiing in the Sierra Nevadas.

I would like to mount a defense for Sacramento as a gem in its own right. In complete transparency, I really live in a suburb around half an hour away. The city sits at the tip of the Central Valley, which is bookended on two sides by foothills of rolling grass that turn gold in the summer sun. To get to the city, I drive down a highway that splits between the hills, going up and down and up and down again until the very last crest, where, for a few moments at the top, the whole valley opens up in front of you and the skyline of the city glimmers in the distance.

As I gained my independence with driving, my friends and I took it upon ourselves to explore the city on our free afternoons and weekends.

Sacramento was born a gold rush town, and Old Sacramento still looks straight out of a Western film with its wooden storefronts and old-fashioned candy shops. The top of the parking garage there affords the best view of the Tower Bridge — California’s real golden bridge — over the Sacramento River.

A short walk away is the Golden One Center: the home of the Sacramento Kings, where a purple beam shoots into the sky for the entire city to see when they win a home game. The city is interspersed with government buildings, but it doesn’t feel like the head of the nation’s largest economy. Much of the city is still bordered by farmland and open space. At the peaks of the summer heatwaves, time seems to slow to a crawl.

On 12th street is Hiso, the Asian Fusion restaurant we frequented after school dances and concerts, where I found the city’s best-fried potstickers and Thai Tea. East Sacramento is known for the picturesque houses and sycamores of the “Fab 40s,” where the whole town comes together to see the Christmas lights. I’ve frequented any cafe with a mocha and pleasant ambiance; I’ve combed through every used bookstore for Joan Didion’s works. She came from this city too, you know.

Film junkies may make the Sacramento connection to Greta Gerwig’s “Ladybird.” The main character: Angsty Teenage Girl with Pink Hair who wants to escape the city and “go where culture is, like New York... or at least Connecticut.” At times, Ladybird is downright insufferable, but you can’t help but root for her.

Funnily enough, I had my own pink hair phase when I was 17. And the airport from which Ladybird makes her escape to the East Coast is my airport — the same one where I said goodbye to my family before flying to Yale for the first time.

Gerwig is a Sacramento native herself, and the city is as much of a character in the film as a backdrop. Ladybird experiences the trials and tribulations of high school relationships — platonic, romantic, and familial — at the city’s most iconic sights. The McKinley Rose Garden, the Tower Bridge, and even the mural of a Midtown convenience store make their appearances.

Right before I got on the plane to go to Connecticut, my best friend and I drove around the city one last time. We laid in the grass in front of the State Capital and took photos in front of places featured in the movie.

Ladybird ends with a phone call. “Hey, Mom. Did you feel emotional the first time that you drove in Sacramento? I did, and I wanted to tell you, but we weren’t really talking when it happened. All those bends I’ve known my whole life, and stores, and the whole thing.” I took my last drive; I tried to commit every detail to memory.

So here I am, “where the culture is.” Sacramento is not exactly my hometown, but in my mind, it is still my city. I couldn’t tell you one thing I miss most; one store or park or tree-lined avenue would be inadequate ambassadors. Sacramento is someplace where everything is more than the sum of its parts. Maybe that’s why this capital city flies under the radar. Maybe that is my favorite part.

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# QRSThanksgiving

// BY ANNA CALKINS

My family has no shortage of zany traditions for just about every holiday. Our oddness piques around the Thanksgiving table.

Usually, we spend thanksgiving in Chicago. One year, we spent Thanksgiving in California visiting my grandfather, where we substituted turkey for fresh fish and football for swimming. No one liked this very much, and a nasty sunburn really killed my mood. The palm trees and spray tans killed the vibe. It was fun, but we were all excited to get back to our classic Chicago festivities, resplendent with hats, frozen fingers and pink noses.

We start the day with our immediate families. At home, the kitchen becomes an industrial bakery and we produce five or six batches of cranberry bread, making miniature loaves for family, friends and neighbors. Our wages are limited to whatever spills from the Kitchenaid, which — under my sister’s watchful eye — is very little. The counter goes from brown to white with flour and batter sticks to our fingertips. It’s also the first day of the year that my mother will allow my dad to put on Christmas music, so the whole production is to the tune of Alabama’s entire holiday album.

Next, we head to my aunt’s house for football and dinner preparations. I’m the proud all-time rusher in these games.

Finally, when we sit down to dinner, our most unique tradition comes out of the woodwork. We play a round of the alphabet game, where we go around the table and say something we are grateful for in alphabetical order, repeating every item listed before stating our next addition.

Without the alphabet game, I would never realize that I take quails, quinces and question marks for granted. Plus, annually expressing our family’s immense gratitude for Yaks has never failed to get a laugh out of me.

Until it became tedious.

I, the youngest in the family, am now 18, and the game does not get more fun as you reach adulthood, even though my cousins and I may still be at the proverbial kids’ table. It’s a drag. The game takes longer and longer to complete. Our aged, shrinking brains have become less and less creative. We don’t appreciate creative choices, but we do appreciate whispered jokes.

Even my dad gets bored of it. Last year, I asked why. He explained that it was important to my aunt’s family that we played and they treasured every year’s list of gratitude. When I asked my cousins and my aunt, though, I received a very different explanation. They also were growing tired of the game, but admitted that they had to continue to play because it was important to my immediate family. We had entered a vicious cycle.

This all seemed a bit suspicious to me. I started to poke around and try to find out how this whole tradition started and evolved. After much scrupulous detective work, I determined that no one really knows why we play, let alone who introduced the game to the table.

My cousins and I commiserate over the dreaded alphabet game, but a secret part of me is grateful that we keep playing it. It’s almost like trauma bonding. It makes our Thanksgiving dinner unlike anyone else’s — that I know of — and gives us an opportunity to laugh together. Plus, it gets the kids’ table and the adults’ table communicating beyond “pass the potatoes.”

The tradition has become a little cringeworthy, but I’ve come to realize that it was never supposed to be trendy or whatnot. The tradition doesn’t have to be fun for it to be important. We just need to do it every year. The beauty of the tradition comes from this consistency, not from its poetic nature or a meaningful origin story.

The alphabet game makes for some real gems, too. This year, after a request to amend the game to just “the vowel game” was rejected, we reluctantly expressed our communal gratitude for ovals, lemons, salt and tequila. And quinces, too.

Unfortunately for all the future Calkins, I’ll probably carry on the tradition as long as I can spell.

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// ZAHRA VIRANI

## WKND Recommends

Asking your professor for their Spotify Wrapped.



# Canada’s wingman

// BY CHLOE BUDAKIAN

Monday, Oct. 9 is not a particularly exciting day for most of the Yale population. But for an albeit small, but fun-loving subset, Oct. 9 is a day of great merriment, a day to reflect upon “the bountiful harvest with which Canada has been blessed.” There are no pilgrims, there is no Macy’s Day Parade, but Canadians across the nation still eat turkey and give thanks. I could not tell you why we have a national holiday that seems to just copy the American holiday but with no actual purpose. But ripped-off turkey is still turkey, so I can’t complain.

That night, we stream into the Pierson Fellow’s Lounge to begin our feast: Lays Ketchup Chips and Coffee Crisps. If you have not been equated with such delicacies, that is probably because you are an American and therefore not as cool. Yes, I am aware that the vastness of the American junk-food empire means that there are many more things that Americans can eat than Canadians cannot, but please let us have this.

As I reach into the bowl of Ketchup chips — which are as disgusting as they sound — a small smile spreads across my face. As the radioactive red powder from the ketchup chips smudges a printed-out copy of “O Canada,” my small smile becomes a very big one.

At the head of the table sits a man in a bright red sweater. He wears aviator-framed glasses and a toothy grin that grows impossibly larger as he surveys the room. For a few minutes, he makes sparkling conversation with his fellow Yale-Canada compatriots, and soon we are all drawn into his conversation.

“The connections you make at Yale are great,” he tells us, “but the Canadian connections at Yale, oh boy!”

I turn to the one Canadian student here that I know, and we smile. Our network is huge.

We tune back into red-sweater-man’s speech and he mentions the “Toronto Canadian Club.” Not T’ronnno, but Toronto. With a hard T. I gasp.

The student next to me squeezes my arm. No citizen of the true north strong and free would dare to pronounce the second “T” in Toronto. He might as well have said that Canadian thanksgiving is for giving thanks and not for crossing the border to begin holiday shopping. That’s blasphemy. The jig was up.

And yet, never in my life have I witnessed someone with such obvious Canadian sensibilities. He’s sunny and gregarious. To everyone. And for Pete’s sake, he supports the Montreal Bagel.

As I attempt to divine some explanation for his support of the round weird bread in question, he hands out copies of the Yale Journal of Canadian Studies. I let out an audible giggle. He is so outwardly Canadian; he just doesn’t speak like one.

“I’ve kind of been in charge of Canadian studies for a few years now, and I’ve been wanting to build it up. We’ve reached a point that I’ve been trying to get to.”

A couple weeks go by, and I am now speaking to red-sweater-man on the phone. He has clarified a few things for me. His name is Dr. Jay Gitlin, he is not Canadian, but rather one of the leading experts on French North America.

“That explains the Montreal Bagels,” I exclaim.

He laughs. “I know, it’s blasphemy!”

Gitlin explains that he fell into learning about Canada during his time as an undergraduate at Yale. His encounters with French North American students, and his learning about New England’s French communities were so compelling that wrote his history senior essay on the “Forgotten Frontier.” French communities in New Orleans, St. Louis,

and Detroit. As a scholar, Jay’s mission is to call French North America to people’s attention. On campus, he explains, he is especially devoted to the Canadian cause.

Yale has a storied relationship with Canada, Gitlin tells me. When he was a graduate student here, he worked with Robin Winks, a leading scholar in U.S.-Canada relations and African Canadian History. In the 1970s, Winks convinced Canada to give a gift to Yale as a bicentennial present. However, the Canadian government did not let their generosity go without strings. Yale is now obligated to “maintain a Canadian presence in the curriculum.”

“So Robin looked at me and said Jay, tag, you’re it.” Gitlin is the chairman of the Committee on Canadian studies, he teaches “Québec and Canada from 1791 to the Present,” he was one of the founding members of the Yale Journal of Canadian Studies.

“Isn’t that wacky?” Gitlin remarks. This is not the only wacky story Gitlin has in his wacky story arsenal. He tells me about William Smith, who “... dig this, was the first chief Justice of Canada! A Yale guy, class of 1745. Don’t ya love it!”

I also hear about John Reed Kilpatrick, Class of 1911 and owner of the New York Rangers. Not Canadian himself, he was responsible for bringing on Yale hockey coach Murray Murdoch who is, you guessed it, Canadian.

“Ever heard of SSS?” Ah yes, Sheffield-Sterling-Strathcona Hall, yet another Yale monument meant to preserve the glory of its donors only to be reduced to an acronym.

Strathcona, Gitlin explains, is in reference to Donald Smith, 1st Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal (I call him Don for short). Before his time as the third S of SSS, Don was the owner of the Hudson’s Bay Company and President of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The Canadians are everywhere.

I consider mentioning to Gitlin that the wacky story model is one of the primary paradigms of the Canadian educational system. Per my elementary school training, I can now pass on the knowledge that WonderBra, instant mashed potatoes, the arm on the International Space Station (the Canadarm, if you will) were all Canadian inventions. And I will have you know the light-bulb was a Canadian creation stolen by one Thomas Edison.

I hold my tongue.

“In other words, it’s like wow. Who knew! I didn’t know about this!” Gitlin’s excitement is pure. It is simultaneously serious and giddy; his knowledge is thorough but veiled in a guileless enthusiasm.

He is on a mission to bring Canada’s greatness out of hiding and onto campus. To achieve his goal, Gitlin is attempting to raise more money for Canadian studies. One source of revenue, he hopes, will be the journal, which is already “being distributed in academic circles.” Gitlin also wants to endow the journal, as well as a position in teaching, to ensure that both will continue indefinitely. “I want to bring Yale closer to Canada, and Canada closer to Yale,” he declares.

Canadian history seems to fascinate Gitlin. Why he finds Canada itself appealing, is harder to pin down. “It’s sort of a cliché that Canadians are polite, but they are polite! It’s a very civil place. And I think that’s true. I think they’re polite and civil, but not boring. I think Canadians are fun loving.”

I take the compliment. And Gitlin is right. There is a simplicity to the Canadian interaction: it’s genial. It’s enjoyable. You seldom experience the post-conversation hangover that characterizes a sizable number of my American interactions.

But that intensity has its perks. Sure, Canadians are amiably low

affect, but so are its cities. They are orderly. They are not stuffed precariously with too many people and places, they are not dizzying. Perhaps this sounds positive in theory, but in reality it’s kind of eerie. The romance of the hustle and bustle is missing. The emptiness is palpable.

Gitlin does not share in my uneasiness. “To me, Ottawa is what Washington DC wishes it could be. Some people think Ottawa is boring, but I think it’s fun!” He enjoys watching the Changing of the Guard on Parliament Hill and going to the open-air market.

I mention that I like skating on the Rideau Canal.

“You’ve got a canal, you’ve got a river, you can take boat rides. Come on!”

If Canada had a wingman it would be Gitlin.

After our call, I sit in silence for a moment. I don’t have any revelatory epiphanies about my split Canadian and American allegiances, but I do acknowledge that much of the world that I am used to — the order, the civility, a customary kindness — is absent here.

Because Canada feels so similar to the United States, both its history and its cultural proclivities remain largely out of sight. Even I gloss over these things. Gitlin’s work in illuminating Yale’s relationship with Canada is not only interesting, it’s necessary. And perhaps I do miss Ottawa a little.

I stare down at my personal copy of the Yale Journal of Canadian studies. I leaf through it and find Gitlin’s remarks. He first outlines the Yale-Canada history, he thanks Robin Winks, and he leaves us with these parting words:


“What is the difference between a Canadian and an American?”

A Canadian knows the difference. Vive la différence!”

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## Bursting the bubble: learning the secrets of bubbling on campus

// BY JULIETTE PROPP



It was a warm Tuesday afternoon and blankets were sprawled all over cross campus with carefree students soaking up the sun. I had spent the day hunched over my bio notes in Starr and squinted at the blinding light as I exited the grand library doors. After my eyes had time to adjust from the intense glow of my laptop to the golden rays of the early October sun, I saw iridescent bubbles floating through the air. My demeanor instantly changed.

Yale needed bubbles, and Will Walker delivered. I’m sure everyone reading this has heard of “The Bubble Guy,” before. You know, the person you see blowing huge bubbles, putting smiles on everyone’s faces. But have you met them, blown bubbles with them, asked about their process?

The sophomore from Ezra Stiles College discovered their love for bubbles in high school with the help of their mentor, Mr. Matthews.

“He was the bubble guy, and I really loved what he did,” Walker explained. “He would make bubbles in the courtyard in the mornings, and he’d leave them out during exam weeks. He wanted to make students happy and share his passion with the school that he worked at.”

When Walker came to Yale, they thought they had left their bubbling days back home in South Carolina, until a friend convinced them to bring bubbles to New Haven last year. With a few tips from Mr. Matthews about recipes and wands, Walker began their own bubbling operation. They also credit Kathryn Dunn and Marc Levenson, faculty members of Stiles’ Head of College office, for helping them get off the ground.

Through trial and error, Walker developed a recipe for their bubble solution and operated out of their mystical lab, doubling as a Lawrence hall bathroom. The simple, three ingredient elixir consists of guar gum, unscented Dawn dish soap and water. Crafted to command bubbles that shimmer and dance through the air, Walker expertly fashions their bubble wands by connecting mop strings to poles with key rings.

For Walker, bubbling hits two birds with one stone; it combines their fascination with chemistry with their love for bubbles. They started out bubbling on Old Campus last year, and since then have expanded to Cross Campus and Stiles college courtyard.

“I really liked going to cross campus, mainly because it’s one of the only green spaces at Yale that isn’t gated off, so I’d meet people that aren’t Yale affiliated, that can be on cross campus, especially families,” Walker also bubbles for events for different residential colleges and causes.

Not only does bubbling bring joy to Walker, but to the entire Yale community. As a beholder of the bubble myself, they transport me to earlier times where I found joy in the simplest of pleasures. For a brief interlude, I shed the weight of academia and find myself caught in a moment of childlike wonder, even if the bubbles last only as long as their delicate dance in the breeze.

Walker is currently working to expand their bubbling operation. After conducting a thorough investigation, I have discovered that Walker plans to form a club in the hopes that students can learn the bubbling process and carry it on. With the institutional funding that Yale provides for clubs, Walker would be able to experiment more with their bubbles. They revealed to the news that they want to try making new wands that can blow a bunch of small bubbles simultaneously, and make huge bubbles that people can stand inside of.

Not only does Walker want to carry on the tradition of bubbling at Yale, but they also want to share the feeling that bubbling brings them.

“I feel like so much of what I work for has to last forever — it has to be something that sets a record or works toward a finite goal like an assignment or a task. But bubbles don’t work toward a goal; it’s making something for the moment, enjoying it, and knowing that it’s not going to last any longer than that.”

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Cheer for the Tottenham Spurs!  
(even though they’re losing currently)