



Court blocks eviction of migrant workers by boss-landlord

BY MAGGIE GREETHER AND LAURA OSPINA
STAFF REPORTERS

Around a month after Edgar Becerra arrived in New Haven from Guatemala on a work visa sponsored by MDF Painting & Power Washing, Becerra fell from a 32-foot ladder while on the job. Weeks later he fell from a two-story window while working. The falls landed him in the hospital on multiple occasions.

Suffering from hip pain and spinal injuries, Becerra says he reported his workplace injuries to MDF Painting. Instead of providing worker's compensation, MDF fired him and tried to send him on a flight back to Guatemala days later.

Since his arrival in New Haven, Becerra has been living at 200 Peck St. in Fair Haven, at a house owned by his boss, Mark DeFrancesco, along with at least 19 other migrant workers who had come from Guatemala on H-2B visas sponsored by MDF. While still living at 200 Peck St. Becerra filed a workers' compensation complaint on Oct. 23; two weeks later, his boss and landlord, DeFrancesco, served him and another tenant-employee, Josue Mauricio Araña, an eviction notice.

Becerra and MDF have been embroiled in two legal disputes: Becerra's worker's compensation case and DeFrancesco's eviction claim. On Monday, the Connecticut Superior Court denied the eviction, but left the door open for DeFrancesco to evict Becerra and Araña through a different method. Becerra is awaiting his worker's compensation hearing next week.

The News spoke to two experts who said that obstacles to reporting



The migrant worker and his sponsor company have been embroiled in two legal disputes: a worker's compensation case and an eviction claim./ **Needhar Ghandi, Senior Photographer**

make it difficult to workers' compensation abuse, but cases like Becerra's are part of a wider pattern of thin protections for migrant workers.

Tyrese Ford, Becerra's housing court lawyer, said he hopes Becerra's case raises awareness about the ways migrant workers in New Haven remain vulnerable.

"Hypothetically, if Edgar had never reached out to us and let us know the situation, would the public have known about their situation?" Ford said. "How would we have known that was going on around the corner on 200 Peck St.?"

Becerra suffered multiple injuries, allegedly slept on the street after eviction

MDF's website advertises a close-knit team, urging workers to join a company that's like an "extended family." But Becerra's experience with MDF, as he described it, paints a different picture.

SEE **EVICITION** PAGE 5

No evidence to support computer science course plagiarism allegations



Several students on Fizz, an anonymous campus chat app, claimed that computer science professor Arman Cohan copied slides and homework for his course on Natural Language Processing from a similar course at Stanford./ **Zoe Berg, Senior Photographer**

BY BEN RAAB
STAFF REPORTER

The News found no evidence to support a student-circulated claim that Professor Arman Cohan copied a Stanford University course's curriculum for his course on Natural Language Processing.

A post on the anonymous campus chat app "Fizz" claimed that Cohan "copied the entire Stanford CS224N curriculum," including lectures and homework, without attributing credit. The post received 1,600 upvotes as of Monday, and four follow-up posts from other users also received over 1,000 upvotes.

"No, I did not base my syllabus on Stanford's cs224n or any other existing courses from other places," Cohan told the News. "I'd like to emphasize that NLP is a pretty well-established course with several available textbooks, and any overlap in course content with another university stems from the fact that the subject matter we teach is well-established and has a common core of knowledge."

The News reviewed lecture slides from Stanford's CS224N course, called Natural Language Processing with Deep Learning, offered in winter 2023 and found no notable similarities between the Stanford materials and Cohan's. All language and visual

material included in Cohan's slides appeared original.

None of the users who posted plagiarism allegations on Fizz responded to the News' requests for comment in time for publication.

When approached by the News on Sunday, Professor Christopher Manning, who taught Stanford's CS224N in Winter 2023, looked at Cohan's slide material in comparison to the Stanford version.

"Nothing in the lectures particularly seems copied from cs224n," he wrote. "They seem quite distinct"

Only one homework assignment has been released so far for Cohan's

SEE **PLAGIARISM** PAGE 4

State of the City address disrupted by pro-Palestine protests



Protesters from several groups promoting a ceasefire resolution halted the mayor's annual address for 25 minutes./ **Yurii Stasiuk, Contributing Photographer**

BY YURII STASIUK, ETHAN WOLIN AND ARIELA LOPEZ
STAFF REPORTERS

Mayor Justin Elicker's State of the City address descended into chaos on Monday evening as protesters interrupted a speech touting New Haven's growth to press the Board of Alders for a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza.

About 100 pro-Palestine activists filled the back of the Aldermanic Chambers to demonstrate frustration with the alders' lack of legislative action on a proposed ceasefire resolution. The activists

caused a 25-minute pause in the mayor's speech, only allowing it to continue shortly after New Haven Police Chief Karl Jacobson warned that disruptors could face arrest.

The activists were affiliated with a variety of organizations and did not appear to have collectively coordinated the outburst of criticism or the ensuing chants. Their persistent disruptions prompted increasingly sharp responses from Board President Tyisha Walker-Myers.

"Let the mayor finish," Walker-Myers yelled into her microphone.

SEE **PROTESTS** PAGE 4

Four takeaways from State of the City

BY MIA CORTÉS CASTRO AND ARIELA LOPEZ
STAFF REPORTERS

Around 200 alders, city officials, attendees and pro-ceasefire protesters gathered at City Hall on Monday evening to receive Mayor Justin Elicker's annual State of the City Address.

Elicker's now fifth-annual address aimed at highlighting the city's accomplishments in the past year, as well as tracing future plans. The speech highlighted elements of the city's Vision 2034 plan, which will determine the city's next steps during the next 10 years, preparing for New Haven's 250th anniversary. Elicker also emphasized visions for how the city can ensure that its growing population of 139,000 can thrive.

"With such a milestone, it's a time for us to reflect on both where we stand as a city today and where we want to go in the future — the values we hold, the challenges we face, the progress we've made and the continued work that's required to uplift more of our residents so they have the

opportunity to thrive," Elicker said in his address.

Housing takes center stage

Elicker's address emphasized, among many broad topics, on the city's affordable housing initiatives.

Elicker cited 1,900 new housing units built since 2020, when he was first inaugurated, 900 of which were affordable units. He mentioned 3,500 additional units in planning right now, 40 percent of which will be affordable.

"Every resident in our city deserves to live somewhere safe, clean and affordable," Elicker said in the address.

Many of these units were funded by American Rescue Plan Act funds — federal funds intended for use in economic and community recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Projects like the city's first non-congregant shelter, the redevelopment of a twelve-acre housing site on Church Street and proj-

SEE **TAKEAWAYS** PAGE 4

Connecticut Legislative session kicks off with State of the State

BY OLHA VARYNYCH
STAFF REPORTER

HARTFORD — Feb. 7 marked the first day of the 2024 Connecticut legislative session. The main agenda item of the shortened 13-week session is adjustments to the \$26 billion annual state budget for fiscal year 2025, which starts in July.

The House and Senate convened in the Connecticut State Capitol at 10 a.m. At the session's commencement, Speaker of the House Matthew Ritter, a Democrat, called upon his colleagues to

embrace mutual understanding during the session.

"I'm not asking anybody in this chamber to ever limit your views and your passion. Fight for the things you believe in," Ritter said. "But I asked you not to fight each other. Because I don't think many of you really understand what your colleagues are going through."

Ritter pointed out that several members of the House have been battling cancer, or coping with the grief of losing spouses and grandfathers — all within the last three months.

SEE **STATE OF STATE** PAGE 4

CROSS CAMPUS

THIS DAY IN YALE HISTORY, 1990. Two Yale scientists Leo Hickey and David Taylor discover the world's oldest flower fossil. The 120-million-year-old plant provides new insight into the evolution of flowers.

INSIDE THE NEWS

Students and administrators weigh merits of viewing admissions files.

PAGE 11 **NEWS**



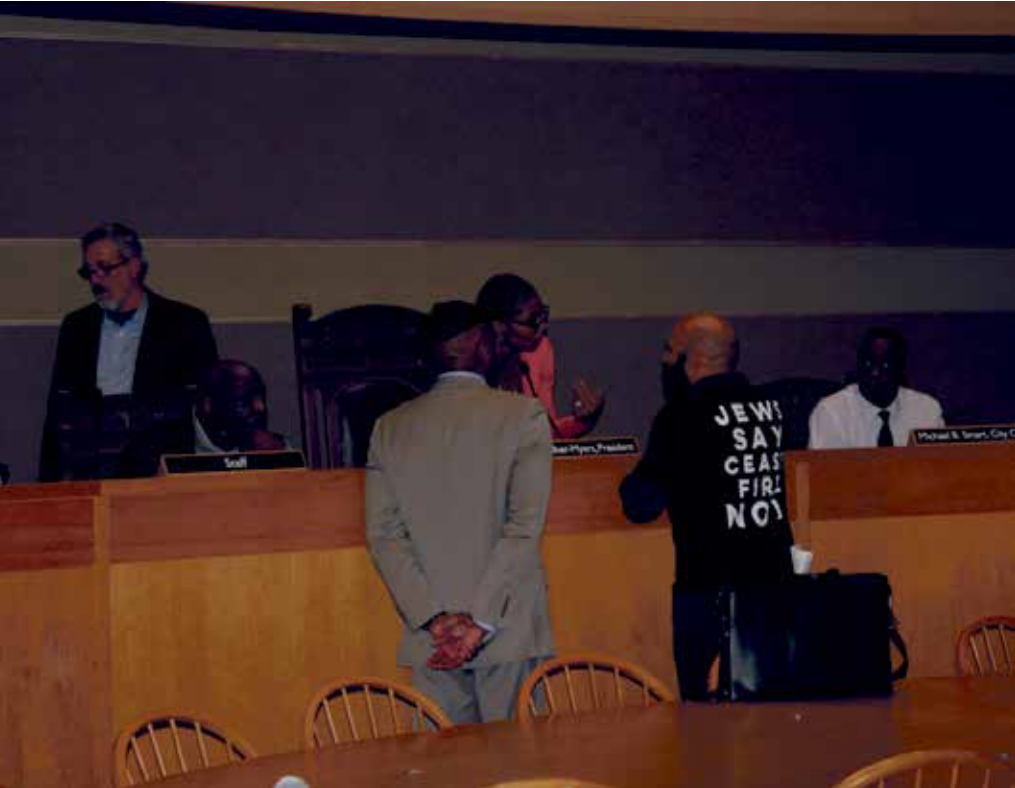
- PAGE 3 **OPINION**
- PAGE 6 **NEWS**
- PAGE 8 **ARTS**
- PAGE 9 **SCITECH**
- PAGE 10 **SPORTS**

- UNION** Union members and activists gathered outside the office of Ocean Management with a petition alleging landlord neglect. PAGE 7 **NEWS**
- Y POP-UP** Yale's undergraduate cooking club hosted a South Asian cuisine dinner in the Davenport buttry Friday night. PAGE 12 **NEWS**

THROUGH THE LENS



STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS DISRUPTED BY PRO-PALESTINE PROTESTS



Photos by Yurii Stasiuk and Nydia Del Carmen.



Check out the YTV video [here](#):



OPINION

Why are you afraid?

Yalie small talk seems to follow trends depending on where we are in the school year. The current default question is “What did you do over break?” The more I listen to people’s responses, the more my suspicions are confirmed: we didn’t actually take a break. I know I didn’t. Such is the life of a Yalie.

I used to be able to relax, back when I was lucky enough to live in a tiny town in the middle of nowhere. An opportunity desert is the ideal habitat for a high school try-hard to grow up in; at some point, there is nothing left you can possibly do. There are no missed chances left to worry about.

Yet this time, the enduring arms of the Rocky Mountain range couldn’t protect me from fears of falling behind. In Yale’s world, I fill up my Google Calendar with extra-curriculars and jobs I got from cold emails, build immaculate spread-sheets containing hundreds of assignments, and sleep only six hours for maximum efficiency. A taste of life in Yale’s bustling hive has made me an opportunity glutton. So when I looked out at the majestic sagebrush-spotted plains, I could no longer find tranquility. I saw nothing but a barren Wyoming desert, starving for productivity.

While my friends and family slept, I stayed up late, applying for summer programs and working on internships. When I wasn’t working, I felt guilty. I assigned myself readings, cleaned and reorganized everything, and devised methodical plans to maximize time with loved ones. I was restless.

This anxious pattern persisted up until the last night of break. I was staying with my friend Jess, who’s obsessed with travel and utilitarianism. We gathered with our friends around the old piano in her living room and listened to Elijah enthusiastically play and sing Billy Joel songs. While everyone else laughed and talked, I was nervously checking flights and road closures from the wintry nightmare brewing outside. What if I miss my classes? How do I carry three bags and a cat through the New York Subway System? Why did my seminar professor already send out readings?

I was totally lost in the worries swirling around in my head, when a whimsical piano riff pulled me back into the warm house, safe from the storm. I looked up from my emails to see Jess’s smile as Elijah sang the opening line of “Vienna”: I never understood why it was her favorite. But sitting inches away from people I loved, hours before I had to journey 1,400 miles away,, listening to Elijah scream the lyrics about what little time is left in youth, the song finally made sense. Tomorrow, I would return to the Yale world, where I wouldn’t be able to “afford to lose a day or two.” But not tonight.

Part of me is still frozen in that moment. Stuck picturing the steadfast river that flows through my hometown. Stuck missing my family and friends and thinking about

the life I could have had if things had gone differently. Stuck listening to that wretched song, hoping to find the part of me I lost between Wyoming and New Haven.

I’VE LEARNED MORE ABOUT OPPORTUNITY COST IN THE MELANCHOLY HOURS SPENT CRYING TO “VIENNA” THAN IN THE MONTHS INVESTED IN ECON 115. I’M HERE, I’VE GOTTEN EVERYTHING I THOUGHT I WANTED, BUT I’M STILL AFRAID. I’M AFRAID OF LOSING MYSELF.

I’ve learned more about opportunity cost in the melancholy hours spent crying to “Vienna” than in the months invested in Econ 115. I’m here, I’ve gotten everything I thought I wanted, but I’m still afraid. I’m afraid of losing myself. I’m afraid of losing the people I care about. I’m afraid I’m going to wake up one day and realize I’ve become nothing but a wrinkly flesh bag of knowledge, achievements and emptiness that never went away.

We’re so worried about getting into the Yaw School, landing that consulting job, or whatever our future holds that we forget we have free will. You “can’t” sit with a stranger in the dining hall because it would be weird. You “can’t” play that instrument because it’s been a while. You “can’t” hop on a bus to some random New England town because exploring won’t get you an A on that p-set. So we work, even when it feels more draining than fulfilling, without stopping to ask ourselves if our big Yale dreams are going to be enough.

So instead of spending break working two jobs, getting ahead on readings for the semester, and being afraid we aren’t doing enough, we should learn how to take a break.

This Spring, I’m going to Vienna to sleep in hostels and eat sourdough with Jess. How about you?

FAITH DUNCAN is a first-year in Saybrook College. Her fortnightly column, “Reframing,” emphasizes looking into the frameworks of norms, institutions, and mindsets that shape life at Yale. Contact her at faith.duncan@yale.edu.

GUEST COLUMNISTS
BELIZ BAYULGEN AND
JULIAN DANIEL

For the Ancient Eight and beyond, diversity means survival

On one of our first dates together, the two of us walked past Skull & Bones and, full of curiosity, tried to sneak a peek inside. We gasped in unison when we glimpsed a shadowy figure through the tomb’s basement window before realizing it was one of their private chefs. In a long discussion spanning movies based on Skull & Bones, the 2004 presidential election, and the Apache leader Geronimo, one thing was clear: as uninterested as we both claimed to be, we both knew a lot about secret societies at Yale – and we were both eager to learn more.

This fascination isn’t unique to us: The Atlantic recently published an article focusing on the Ancient Eight secret societies, the oldest and wealthiest societies and those most exemplifying Yale’s elitist traditions. According to Rose Horowitz, a Yale graduate and former Editor in Chief of the News, these societies have in recent years made a shocking turn away from their traditional preference for the blue-blooded and instead welcomed students of color and FGLI students.

Ancient Eight societies, like every other privileged organization in the country, didn’t suddenly enter their “DEI era” after going through an earnest social justice awakening. Rather, they did it to survive and perpetuate themselves in a changing environment. This is why it’s imperative that FGLI students and students of color make note of how their participation sustains an Ancient Eight society. The relationship is always mutualistic, as easy as it is to believe that you’re taking more from the society than the society takes from you. By tapping members who better reflect an increasingly diverse campus makeup, these societies have avoided a terminal drift into irrelevance.

Similarly to how higher education institutions pride themselves on diversity metrics, the half-true embrace of the principle of equal opportunity and the fetishization of glossy-brochure diversity has reached even our least meritocratic institutions. Going through

a DEI era does more than just grant societies relevance; it also allows for them to effectively sustain the illusion of meritocracy that fuels your participation. While it was once feasible to pretend that the best and brightest a generation had to offer ‘just so happened’ to be white and affluent, that’s no longer the case. The integration of formerly all-white spaces is certainly a good thing. We also don’t mean to suggest that fostering diversity and meritocracy are in a zero-sum relationship, nor do we believe that marginalized people are being tapped for societies primarily on the basis of their identities. Yet this change in societies’ membership serves to strengthen these institutions, as well as expand their grip over communities they’ve formerly excluded.

The illusion of meritocracy fostered in secret societies certainly makes it easier for tapped students, particularly those whose politics are averse towards elitism and class privilege, to push down any qualms they may have had about their participation. Benefiting from a network of insider connections feels a lot less guilt-inducing if it feels truly earned. Yet, it’s an undeniable truth that benefitting from these connections bypasses the principle of meritocracy in favor of the insider networks that prevail in all aspects of society.

What’s more, the increasingly-diverse makeup of these societies has secondary effects on the dynamics of campus life for students from marginalized backgrounds. In the days when the Ancient Eight societies drew their membership exclusively from the Brooks Brothers-clad Berkshires set, being tapped for these societies as an FGLI student or student of color occupied no more mental space than the thought of enlisting in the Yale Political Union’s Party of the Right.

But now, we are heartbroken to read Isabella Zou’s deft, emotional account last year about exclusion from the secret society network, about how the intentional exclusivity of these organizations breeds a

culture of stress and insecurity for her and numerous other students we know. It’s a truism on campus that Yale has a million ways to make you feel less than. The feeling of not being good enough that comes with rejection from a secret society cuts all the deeper when the society portrays itself as a meritocratic incubator for those most likely to succeed in life.

This is where it’s most important to reiterate what secret societies truly are: fraternities with fewer windows. Fancy architecture and a veneer of secrecy are all that separate Skull & Bones from Sigma & Chi.

We don’t blame Ancient Eight society members of marginalized backgrounds for choosing to take part. After three long years of feeling out of place at Yale, it’s hard to turn down an offer of status and acceptance. Frankly, curiosity alone may be reason enough. But for students of marginalized backgrounds, it’s also important to be critical about why your presence is desired and what your presence does. You may be using societies, but these organizations are also using and exploiting you. Your participation means that the relevance and credibility that is the lifeblood of these organizations endures for another year.

Whether the institution in question is a finance firm, a grad school, or even a secret society, we have to recognize that their disingenuous efforts at diversity are driven by their need for survival. These institutions adapt because their old models of hoarding wealth and opportunity have led to a state of crisis of their own making. They are in a sinking ship, and we shouldn’t rely on their survival to guarantee our futures.

Though this may be easier said than done for anyone who walks past a society tomb and wonders what it looks like on the inside, the best thing you can do to abolish these institutions is simply stop caring.

BELIZ BAYULGEN is a Connecticut native and political organizer. She can be reached at bayulgenbeliz@gmail.com.

JULIAN DANIEL is a senior in Saybrook College and a contributor to the News’ Opinion desk. He can be reached at julian.daniel@yale.edu.

Why I’m voting for Joe Biden

The short answer is because I’m a Democrat. But why am I a Democrat? I can boil it down to a single sentence: utility is the natural log of income. What does that mean? Let me explain.

One of the things you learn in ECON 115 is how to think on the margin. For any good or service – a Granny Smith apple, let’s say – the value of the first one is greater than the value of the second, which is greater than the value of the third and so on. That first apple is great; the second is nice; and by the third, you’re feeling a bit full. Each subsequent apple matters less and less to you. And the same goes for money.

In “Utilitarianism,” the English philosopher John Stuart Mill argues for “the Greatest Happiness Principle,” the idea that we should aim to maximize happiness and minimize pain when making moral decisions. When it comes to big-picture politics, I’ve considered myself a utilitarian since I was first introduced to the concept in middle-school debate. To me, it’s common sense. It is simply not right for some people to be spending \$120,000 per year on college admissions consultants while there are people sleeping on the New Haven Green.

If we assume that utility is the natural log of income – which is to say that it diminishes on the margin – we can mathematically prove that up to a certain point, redistribution is a positive sum for aggregate utility. The first \$1,000 you transfer from Steve Schwarzman to a poor person increases the latter’s utility by far more than it lowers the former’s. The next transfer hurts Schwarzman a little bit more and benefits the poor person a little less than the first one. Up to a certain point, before perfect mate-

rial equality, the marginal cost to Schwarzman equals the marginal benefit to the poor person, and any further redistribution would reduce overall utility.

SO, TO THE READER: IF YOU ARE REGISTERED TO VOTE IN A SWING STATE, YOU HAVE A CONSTITUTIONAL DUTY TO VOTE FOR JOE BIDEN.

That was a very long-winded way of saying I favor higher taxes on the wealthy and more economic redistribution than we currently have in the United States. Joe Biden’s policies have and would continue to make the economy more egalitarian. Donald Trump’s agenda would lead to higher prices, higher interest rates and higher debt.

Without getting into the weeds of monetary and fiscal policy, suffice it to say that while the labor market remains hot and inflation has come down part way, higher rates are putting strain on the banking system, increasing mortgage costs and making government borrowing more expensive. These are real, tricky problems, and Biden’s plans aren’t perfect. But he has an actual proposal to reduce the deficit by \$3 trillion over the next decade – including \$400 billion in 2025 –

which would ease price pressures and give the Federal Reserve more room to lower rates. That’s at least a solid start.

Trump’s plan, on the other hand, is to cut corporate taxes, blow up the deficit, partially fill the hole by slapping a 10% tariff on all imports and force Jay Powell to raise rates. That’s not going to lower the cost of living – it’s going to make the problem worse.

There is more to life than dollars and cents. Take bodily autonomy. “I did it, and I’m proud to have done it,” is what Trump has said about his role in overturning Roe v. Wade. The official GOP platform calls for a constitutional amendment banning abortion, and top Republicans are calling for federal regulators to pull the abortion pill from the market. Joe Biden has promised to codify the Roe standard into federal law if he’s re-elected with a House and Senate majority.

That’s the mainstream liberal case for Biden: if you think there should be fewer restrictions on abortions, more restrictions on guns and higher taxes on the wealthy and corporations, then you should vote for him. But even if you lean right on those issues, I think you should still vote for Biden because Donald Trump is not a normal Republican. He attempted to overturn the results of a free and fair election. That sort of thing is deadly serious. Either country comes before party, or we have no country at all.

Read more at [yaledailynews.com](https://www.yaledailynews.com)

MILAN SINGH is a sophomore in Pierson College. His fortnightly column, “All politics is national” discusses national politics: how it affects the reader’s life, and why they should care about it. He can be reached at milan.singh@yale.edu.

Yale Daily News
YALE DAILY NEWS PUBLISHING CO., INC. 202 York Street, New Haven, CT 06511 (203) 432-2400
Editorial: (203) 432-2418 editor@yaledailynews.com Business: (203) 432-2424 business@yaledailynews.com

EDITOR IN CHIEF & PRESIDENT
Anika Seth

UNIVERSITY EDITORS
Sarah Cook
Miranda Wollen

OPINION EDITORS
Michael Ndubisi
Isa Dominguez

PRODUCTION & DESIGN EDITORS
Richard Chen
Evelyn Jiang

ILLUSTRATIONS EDITOR
Michelle Foley

MANAGING EDITORS
Evan Gorelick
Collyn Robinson
Sophie Sonnenfeld

CITY EDITORS
Khuan-Yu Hall
Nathaniel Rosenberg

WKND EDITORS
Abby Asmuth
Lizzie Conklin
Zoe Halaban

PODCASTS EDITORS
Mia Osuna
Suraj Singareddy
Nick Vilay

PUBLISHER
Sophie Wang

ARTS EDITORS
Paloma Vigil
Brian Zhang

MAGAZINE EDITORS IN CHIEF
Gavin Guerette
Audrey Kolker

YTV EDITORS
Olivia Cevalco
Nydia del Carmen
Max Sternlicht

DIRECTORS OF TECHNOLOGY
Joshua Chang
Tiger Wang

PUBLIC EDITOR
Dante Motley

INVESTIGATIONS EDITORS
Sadie Bogard
Ines Chomnalez

EDITORIAL COLUMN EDITOR
Pradz Sapre

COPY EDITORS
Laila Delpuppo Messari
Maria Giacomani
Lozano

DATA DIRECTOR
Owen Tucker-Smith

DIRECTOR OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
Abigail Sylvor
Greenberg

SPORTS EDITORS
Betsy Good
Spencer King

PHOTOGRAPHY EDITORS
Chloe Edwards
Samad Hakani
Christina Lee

AUDIENCE EDITORS
Janslie Cobb
Ellie Park
Molly Reinmann

CHIEF OF OPERATIONS
Charlotte Hughes

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY EDITORS
Adam McPhail
Giri Viswanathan

EDITORIALS & ADS
The Editorial Board represents the opinion of 12-15 members of the Yale community. Other content on this page with bylines represents the opinions of those authors and not necessarily those of the Managing Board. Opinions set forth in ads do not necessarily reflect the views of the Managing Board. We reserve the right to refuse any ad for any reason and to delete or change any copy we consider objectionable, false or in poor taste. We do not verify the contents of any ad. The Yale Daily News Publishing Co., Inc. and its officers, employees and agents disclaim any responsibility for all liabilities, injuries or damages arising from any ad. The Yale Daily

New Publishing Co. ISSN 0890-2240

SUBMISSIONS
All letters submitted for publication must include the author’s name, phone number and description of Yale University affiliation. Please limit letters to 250 words and guest columns to 750. The Yale Daily News reserves the right to edit letters and columns before publication. E-mail is the preferred method of submission.

ISSUES PRINTED BY
Valley Publishing Co. Derby, CT
ONLINE ARCHIVES
OurSchoolNewspaper.com/Yale

ADVERTISEMENT
(203) 432-2424 (before 5 p.m.)
business@yaledailynews.com

Direct all letters, columns, artwork and inquiries to:
Contact the Opinion Editors at opinion@yaledailynews.com

Direct all comments regarding the fairness or accuracy of stories to:
Anika Seth
Editor in Chief & President
editor@yaledailynews.com

FROM THE FRONT

“Paint my nails cherry red, match the roses that you left.”
MILEY CYRUS AMERICAN SINGER

No evidence to support plagiarism allegations against computer science course

PLAGIARISM FROM PAGE 1

course. The assignment contains three parts, the first two of which are distinct from any material in the Stanford course. The third part, which asks students to reimplement a word2vec algorithm — a natural language processing technique published in 2013 that involves obtaining vector representations of words — is similar to the process required in Stanford’s second assignment.

But Manning said he is “not fussed” by any similarities in homework.

“There is some overlap in the assignment, which may be what they’re picking up on,” he wrote. “Part 3 has people implementing word2vec, which is what we have students do in assignment 2.” He explained, however, that both courses are asking students to reimplement the same word2vec algorithm from 2013, so neither was “original.”

Cohan said that the implementation of word2vec is a precursor to understanding neural networks, and is standard for instruction of the subject.

The three suggested readings for Cohan’s class are also listed in the Stanford syllabus as suggested reference text. One of them, “Speech and Language Processing,” is co-written by a Stanford professor. At least two of the three readings are also suggested in the syllabus for natural language processing courses offered at Princeton and Berkeley.

A separate post claimed that Yale’s website for the course was a copy of Stanford’s. Each website includes a homepage and sections for the course schedule and assignments. But both the Princeton and Berkeley course sites included a similar structure.

Another user claimed they had written to their dean about the matter and encouraged other

users to do so. Cohan said that the News’s inquiry was the first he had heard of the allegations, and that he was “shocked and surprised” when he heard of the Fizz posts.

Yilun Zhao GRD ’29, a teaching assistant in Cohan’s course, said that he could not identify any significant content overlap between Arman’s course and Stanford’s version after two hours of review.

“While there are some shared topics, such as discussions on neural networks, I believe this overlap is to be expected in NLP courses, which often cover a core curriculum recognized across the field,” Zhao said.

Zhao noted that if anything, Cohan’s slides bear more resemblance to those of former Yale professor Dragomir Radev, who taught the course from 2017 to 2023. But, he said that this “seems reasonable,” as it is common for different faculty members to use similar

course material when teaching the same courses in different terms.

Kejian Shi GRD ’24, another teaching assistant for the course, said that Cohan and his teaching assistants spent “days in preparing their first homework assignment,” and that the course was specifically designed for Yale students. He also noted that natural language processing, like Physics or Biology, has a common sequence of introductory topics that are likely to be taught in any course.

Cohan also highlighted some key differences between his course and Stanford’s CS224N’s. His course includes topics in the field such as the impact of pretraining data, details of evaluation, retrieval-based language models, self-alignment and interpretability, none of which are covered in Stanford’s version.

His course also focuses on prior methods of natural lan-

guage processing, such as Naive Bayes classification methods, whereas the Stanford course only focuses on methods involving neural networks.

“Many courses in our curriculum are standard, introductory offerings, widely available throughout the university landscape,” Jeffrey Brock, the Dean of Yale’s School of Engineering and Applied Science wrote. “Professor Cohan is a recognized world expert in the area of Natural Language Processing and I am confident that he has chosen carefully the materials for this introductory course, which sits squarely within his field of research expertise.”

The Yale Department of Computer Science was founded in 1969.

Contact
BEN RAAB at
ben.raab@yale.edu .

Lamont kicks off state legislative session with State of the State

STATE OF STATE FROM PAGE 1

In the chamber, many legislators, predominantly women, were wearing pink attire. Representative Mary Welander explained that this choice of color palette was a deliberate symbol of solidarity with all of the women serving in the legislature.

“We have so many women who have demonstrated such an immense level of personal strength and resilience over this last year, and we just wanted to salute you by wearing that color pink,” Welander said.

Lamont delivers State of the State address

The first day of the legislative session culminated in a joint session of the Connecticut General Assembly, where Gov. Ned Lamont delivered his annual State of the State address.

Lamont began his speech by reminding everyone about the recent successes of the Assembly. He proudly emphasized that Connecticut is different from peer states in that the budget, passed last year on a bipartisan basis, is leading to a surplus for the state.

“People are noticing. Unlike our neighboring states which are losing population, Connecticut has gained population over the last few years,” Lamont said.

The governor went on to detail the state’s appealing attributes,

from a business-friendly environment to supportive conditions for labor unions, that residents have come to appreciate.

Lamont’s speech, however, was interrupted by a group of pro-Palestine protests. Around the time when Lamont began his speech, a group of protestors gathered in the hall outside of the House of Representatives Chamber and could be heard inside the chamber.

Then, a group of people sitting in the gallery started chanting “Ceasefire Now,” forcing Lamont to stop his speech. The protestors were quickly escorted from the building by the Capitol police.

“On a personal note, I’ve been to a few anti-war demonstrations as well in my day and whatever the justice of your cause I think you do a disservice when you are rude and disrespectful,” Lamont said of the demonstration before continuing his speech.

The first session of the Connecticut General Assembly was held around the time when the Senate in Washington, D.C. was voting on legislation that would send \$17.6 billion in military aid to Israel.

Healthcare

Lamont referred to his plans to cancel \$650 million worth of medical debt for an estimated 250,000 eligible Connecticut residents.

The governor also emphasized that the budget provides the biggest commitment to child care in “Connecticut history” — an additional \$90 million next year alone, providing additional pay for early childhood educators and higher reimbursements for care centers and family care homes.

Housing

According to Lamont, the biennial budget doubles investment in housing — workforce housing, affordable housing, supportive housing, elder housing and downtown apartments. This is supposed to allow people to move to the state, where he said an estimated 90,000 jobs are open.

Local governance

Governor Lamont addressed the high costs associated with Connecticut’s local governance structure, which sprawls across 169 towns and 200 school districts.

Lamont made a proposal to enhance the operational flexibility of Councils of Governments, regional planning organizations that serve as centers of regional collaboration. This plan would allow COGs to employ tax assessors, building inspectors, purchasing agents and IT specialists on an as-needed contractual basis rather than towns bearing the cost of full-time salaries.

Climate change

The governor brought up the impact of climate change across the U.S., citing examples such as wildfires in Florida and extreme weather conditions in Connecticut.

“The cost of dealing with climate change is expensive, the cost of doing nothing is immeasurable,” Lamont warned.

He highlighted that Connecticut recently doubled down on the percentage of energy that is produced by wind, solar and hydropower. Now, according to the governor, he is working with neighboring governors to develop a new generation of clean energy with an emphasis on affordability, though he did not provide further details.

Technology

Lamont praised advancements in technology, highlighting the collaboration between the University of Connecticut and Yale on using a federal grant to create quantum computing jobs. He emphasized how quantum technologies could enhance biotech sector capabilities, enabling more efficient, comprehensive clinical trials.

“Now, we can accelerate the growth in life sciences, starting with funding for a world-class biotech hub in New Haven,” Lamont said.

Lamont emphasized that quantum technologies could enhance biotech sector capabilities, enabling more efficient, comprehensive clinical trials.

Education

Among other ideas, Lamont proposed addressing teacher shortages by expanding the state’s Ed Rising program, where high school-age students help out in elementary classrooms, and increasing grants for state colleges and UConn.

Several proposals anticipated for discussion in the General Assembly were notably absent in Lamont’s address, including a bill to eliminate legacy admissions.

While the governor made numerous proposals for his spending package, the Connecticut House and Senate will have 13 weeks to review the proposals and make amendments to the legislation.

“We are obviously going to be very respectful of his proposals. But they are proposals. We write the law,” said Patricia Dillon, a state representative from the 92nd district, which encompasses part of western New Haven.

The 2024 legislative session will adjourn on May 8.

Contact
OLHA YARYNICH at
olha.yarynych@yale.edu .



Governor Ned Lamont discussed his budget proposals including for housing, education and making New Haven a biotech hub./ Olha Yarynych, Contributing Photographer

Pro-Palestine protests disrupt State of the City address

PROTESTORS FROM PAGE 1

phone from the dais. “We continue doing our business, and then I will be around at the end of the meeting to talk with anybody that would like to talk. That’s it.” A cacophony of shouts from protesters followed.

The result was a remarkable scene of bedlam in City Hall, where protesters enraged by the war in Gaza overtook a legally mandated update on local affairs — in the most intense clash yet between pro-Palestine activists and New Haven officials who have not embraced calls for a ceasefire.

Protesters assemble at City Hall

By 6:30 p.m., around 20 protesters wearing shirts saying “Jews Say Ceasefire Now” on the back and “Not in Our Name” on the front gathered at the entrance to the Aldermanic Chambers, where they sang slogans denouncing the Israeli military campaign.

Another group of protesters, wearing keffiyehs and holding signs, convened at the entrance to City Hall. The News identified some in the crowd as members of the Connecticut Democratic Socialists of America, several of whom participated in disrupting the Board of Alders meeting in January.

Since Hamas killed 1,200 people and took over 250 people as hostages during a surprise attack on Israel on Oct. 7, Israel has retaliated with a full military invasion of Gaza, killing more than 27,000 people as of Feb. 1.

Pro-Palestine organizers submitted a ceasefire resolution to the Board of Alders on Nov. 28. The resolution calls for an “immediate and permanent ceasefire, the release of all hostages including Palestinians arbitrarily detained by Israel, the unrestricted entry of humanitarian assistance into Gaza” and other demands.

In the past two months, a loosely defined coalition of pro-Palestine activists from Yale and New Haven organizations have worked to lobby alders with phone calls, templated emails and private meetings at City Hall. Alders have refrained from taking public stances on the resolution, deferring to Walker-Myers to set the legislative process in motion.

At the speech, the Aldermanic Chambers was unusually full, with around 100 protesters in the back. Walker-Myers had to ask protesters to make room for Elicker to enter. As the mayor walked to the podium, protesters sang chants like “Free Palestine”

and “Let Gaza live” until Walker-Myers asked them to stop.

For the next 23 minutes, Elicker talked about housing...

read more online:



FROM THE FRONT

“Those who have forsaken their humanity, they’re trying to patch their life with morality.”
SZA AMERICAN SINGER

Four key takeaways from Elicker's annual address

TAKEAWAYS FROM PAGE 1

ects like Elm City Communities were listed, among others.

With 70 percent of New Haven residents being renters, the mayor emphasized not only the need for more affordable and deeply-affordable housing, but also the need for more flexible housing options and more market-rate housing to keep supply high and housing costs down. Among these, Accessory Dwelling Units, which allows homeowners at select properties around the city to add an additional residential unit to their property, including alternative housing options such as tiny homes.

He also mentioned the rise in landlord and tenant issues in New Haven, with three new legally recognized tenants unions, and the city's commitment to bringing justice to residents. Elicker commended the Liveable Cities Initiative and the Fair Rent Commission, whose housing inspection cases have quadrupled in recent years, for their work in protecting residents.

NHPS applauded for education initiatives

Elicker applauded New Haven Public Schools superintendent

Madeline Negrón, who began working for NHPS in July, for “hitting the ground running” on improving student attendance, school culture and literacy levels.

He specifically stressed the city's improving chronic absenteeism levels, which peaked at 60 percent among NHPS students during the pandemic. Chronic absenteeism — when a student misses 10 percent or more of school days — is currently at 33 percent citywide, the mayor noted.

“My cell phone voicemail box is full and has run out of memory several times from all the reminder calls I and my fellow parents get from Dr. Negrón, Danny Diaz and New Haven Public Schools staff to make sure my daughters are in school,” Elicker quipped.

Elicker highlighted new career exploration initiatives that NHPS is undertaking with partners such as Gateway Community College, Southern Connecticut State University and other nonprofit and private sector organizations. Although several such initiatives involve Yale, Elicker did not mention the University during his speech.

The mayor also shouted out the schools' new literacy curriculum, which was implemented

this year, and the New Haven Tutoring Initiative.

Reducing gun violence and enhancing crisis response

After discussing education, Elicker's focus moved swiftly to public safety.

With violent crime down 5.8 percent since last year, Elicker attributed improvements to new additions to public safety infrastructure, violence prevention programs and strategic community policing approaches.

“Our streets are not only safer, but we're actually connecting individuals who are at the greatest risk of committing or being a victim of an act of gun violence with the support they need to stay safe, alive, out of jail and successfully reintegrate into the community,” Elicker said in his speech.

One of the initiatives Elicker listed was P.R.E.S.S. — Program for Reintegration, Engagement, Safety, and Support — which aims to provide supportive case management for individuals returning from incarceration with a current or prior conviction of a firearm-related offense, as well as for gang or group members who are identified to be at higher risk of involvement with firearms.

Elicker also mentioned Elm City COMPASS, a collaborative crisis-response team, which has just celebrated its first anniversary. Elicker committed to expanding and continuing the development of both programs.

Sustainability takes a backseat as Mayor recovers from interruption

As the mayor began to describe the city's growing commitment to parks, green spaces and the climate, he was interrupted by a protester from the crowd that lined the chamber. The protesters began to sing and chant in support of the Gaza cease-fire resolution proposed to the Board of Alders. The interruption continued for 20 minutes, until New Haven Police Chief Karl Jacobson threatened to clear out “anyone who is interrupting city business.”

When the Mayor continued his speech, he jumped to his conclusion, skipping over a prepared section describing ongoing sustainability initiatives.

In the section, which is included in the copy of the mayor's comments provided at the meeting, Elicker highlights the city's Long Wharf Responsible Growth Plan, an initiative with nearly \$200 million in funding to begin construc-

tion on the 18-acre Long Wharf Park and Waterfront.

“A decade from now, in 2034, the Long Wharf and Gateway districts will in many ways be unrecognizable from what it looks like today,” Elicker wrote.

The mayor also promised to develop an Urban Forest Management Plan, double the amount of trees planted in the next five years and “accelerate” the city's transition to electric vehicles and solar power sources.

After a 20-minute interruption by protesters, Elicker concluded that the state of the city is “strong.”

Ward 27 Alder Richard Furlow told the News that he found Elicker's speech to be “well-phrased.”

“In these meetings, the business of our city takes precedence for us and our residents,” Furlow said.

Other attendees echoed Furlow's statement, disappointed that the protest overshadowed Elicker's address.

City Hall is located at 165 Church St.

Contact
MIA CORTÉS CASTRO at
mia.cortescastro@yale.edu and
contact **ARIELA LOPEZ** at
ariela.lopez@yale.edu .



Amid a chaotic Board of Alders meeting, Elicker highlighted housing and growth as key priorities in his annual State of the City address./ Nydia del Carmen, YTV Editor

Boss-landlord attempts to evict migrant workers, court blocks

EVICTIION FROM PAGE 1

MDF and Mark DeFrancesco's attorney did not respond to multiple requests to comment.

In September, Becerra said he fell head-first from a second-floor window while working; MDF again allegedly ignored his injury and told him to return to work.

At the trial, Becerra claimed that MDF did not provide safety equipment, such as helmets, gloves or cable, to its workers, according to the New Haven Independent.

The documents introduced by Becerra's attorney claim that on Sep. 26, Becerra, “unable to manage the pain,” was admitted to Yale New Haven Hospital and diagnosed with a lower spine and hip injury. The next day, MDF allegedly told Becerra they would fire him and send him back to Guatemala if he did not return to work. When he did not return to work, Becerra was fired.

On Sep. 30, Lisa Hollingsworth, DeFrancesco's sister and a principle of MDF, texted Becerra telling him DeFrancesco had bought plane tickets for him back to Guatemala the following day.

“Great news. Mark approved to pay for your flight,” the text read, instructing Becerra to “pack and have your things ready,” according to the court decision. The next day, Hollingsworth texted Becerra the

flight confirmation code. Becerra did not board the flight.

Becerra alleges that in October, MDF changed the lock code to the Peck Street residence. Unable to access the house, Becerra and Araña slept outside for two days before contacting New Haven Police, who ordered MDF to allow Becerra and Araña back into the house. During the trial, DeFrancesco claimed that the lockout was purely accidental, according to the New Haven Independent.

Becerra filed a report of injury with the Connecticut Workers' Compensation Commission on Oct. 23; his workers' compensation case is still pending. Around this time, Becerra was hospitalized for over a week for work-related injuries.

On Nov. 6, MDF served Becerra and Araña an eviction notice, ordering the men to leave 200 Peck St. within the week. In late November, DeFrancesco and his attorney Joshua Brown filed an eviction complaint against Becerra and Araña in court, officially beginning the legal dispute that culminated in Monday's decision.

Housing court denies eviction, for now

The eviction dispute was heard first on Jan. 11 and again on Jan. 16. DeFrancesco claimed that both tenants were bound by weekly, oral lease agreements.

On Monday, Judge Walter Spader issued a decision siding with Becerra and Araña, ruling that MDF had not proved the existence and terms of a week-to-week oral lease.

However, the decision noted that Becerra and Araña have not paid DeFrancesco for the continued residence in the house, leaving open the opportunity for MDF to file another eviction claim under “right or privilege terminated.”

A footnote in the decision stated that there was nothing to suggest that MDF's eviction case was retaliation against Becerra's workers' compensation claim — a major part of Becerra's defense.

“Did this decision inch us toward justice? I would say yes,” said Ford, Becerra's attorney at New Haven Legal Assistance Association. “Did it do enough? No. But it did provide us with more time and opportunity to seek justice.”

Becerra's case example of limited migrant protections

According to Glenn Formica, the attorney representing Becerra in his workers' compensation case, workers' compensation can be one of the most expensive components of a construction job, and construction companies often use undocumented migrant workers to skirt those costs. Formica said he has encountered many undocumented workers

who fear deportation if they file a workers' compensation complaint against their employer.

While Becerra came to New Haven on an H-2B visa, Formica estimated that around two-thirds of the workers he represents are undocumented. Becerra stands out from other cases of migrant workers injured on the job because he has gone public with his case and is pursuing legal compensation, Formica said.

Professor Sheila Hayre, who teaches immigration law and serves as the faculty advisor for the Human Trafficking Prevention Project at Quinnipiac University School of Law, said that the protections for undocumented workers compared to those with temporary working status are like “night and day.”

However, she emphasized that workers with legal working permission still face hurdles in reporting workplace injuries, and often-times, return back to their own countries to receive care before receiving compensation.

“You can imagine yourself [suffering a workplace injury on a temporary working visa], and just feeling like I just want to go home,” Hayre said. “Situations like that, where you feel like the employer has provided housing and a job and everything else, the logistics of ‘how do I even survive while I'm fighting this case?’ I think it is a really huge issue.”

Hayre noted that difficulty in switching employers, who sponsor the visa, can prevent migrant workers from leaving exploitative or problematic employers. She also said that employers can “black-list” workers from future work visas in the U.S., enabling employers to hang this potential ban over workers' heads. As a result, many workers “put up” with unfair working conditions because they feel like they lack other options, according to Hayre.

A lack of awareness among migrant workers of their labor rights additionally reduces reporting and obscures the extent of migrants working in unsafe conditions on a national scale, according to Hayre.

“What I'm proud of Edgar about as a client, is that he's standing up and saying, ‘hey, I'm every bit as human as the next guy. I'm injured, and I'm taking advantage of it,’” Formica said. “I think in a general sense, Edgar is just trying to stand up and assert his own humanity. By example, he's trying to assert the humanity of all foreign workers.”

Becerra's workers compensation case hearing is scheduled for next Thursday, Feb. 15.

Contact
MAGGIE GRETHER at
maggie.grether@yale.edu,
contact **LAURA OSPINA** at
laura.ospina@yale .

“Do you see us getting scraped up off the pavement?”
BOYGENIUS, SUPERGROUP

Woodbridge Hall: the President’s office?

BENJAMIN HERNANDEZ
STAFF REPORTER

Woodbridge Hall will remain vacant for the foreseeable future, according to University administrators who cited internal accessibility issues for the building’s continued disuse.

The three-story building was constructed for Yale’s bicentennial celebration in 1901 and was intended to house the University’s administration — most recently, the Offices of the President and of the Secretary and Vice President for University Life. It also served as the meeting space for the Yale Corporation, the University’s 16-member board of trustees, which convenes on campus at least five times a year. In August 2018, however — just before major construction began on the Schwarzman Center, directly adjacent to Woodbridge Hall — administrative offices moved to the first floor of Sheffield-Sterling-Strathcona Hall, or SSS.

“I’m going to leave it to the next president to decide if they want to move the Office back to Woodbridge,” University President Peter Salovey told the News. “Woodbridge Hall is a beautiful, historic building, but Woodbridge has a big challenge and that challenge is it’s not an accessible building.”

Senior Vice President for Operations Jack Callahan ’80 told the News that the 2018 relocation was necessitated by the construction of a dining and entertainment space beneath Schwarzman Center, known as The Underground.

Construction for this space was “disruptive,” Callahan said, because it necessitated the dis-

assembly of Beinecke Plaza. He added that the move to SSS was a “pragmatic choice” for the relocation of Yale’s administration because it remained close to the center of campus and required little renovation.

“It was necessary to move all of the occupants of Woodbridge Hall somewhere else,” Callahan said. “It took us a while to land on what was the right place, but we liked SSS because it was still pretty centrally located on campus and didn’t require that much renovation.”

Callahan further added that Woodbridge’s design is not “the most efficient,” citing the need to fit an elevator in such a “confined space” and the inability of hosting modern-day meetings that might necessitate digital presentations in the second-floor room where Yale’s trustees formerly met. He also said that the working space in the basement was apt to get crammed and that “accessibility” across Woodbridge’s three floors was a concern for continued use of the building.

According to Salovey, Woodbridge Hall has three major issues, namely that it remains internally inaccessible, has poor ventilation and has an inefficient layout to adequately incorporate staff who support both the University President and Secretary.

“We’ve looked at various plans for elevators, and it’s turning out to be quite expensive,” Salovey told the News in October. “If the President is going to move back into Woodbridge, [the] building has to be accessible and right now it’s not ... we haven’t found the right elevator solution just yet.”

During the construction at Schwarzman, a wheelchair ramp was built at the entrance to Woodbridge Hall.

According to Salovey, though, other issues remain for the building.

“While a wheelchair ramp has been constructed outside the building, once you’re in, if your meeting was on the second floor, you can’t get up there, and it’s a pretty long climb up a big flight of stairs, kind of a double flight of stairs,” Salovey said.

Prior to this move, the University President had never resided outside of the building for longer than a year since its construction.

In 2004, former University President Richard Levin made the move to Betts House — a Yale-owned mansion at the top of Science Hill — for under a year due to renovations on Woodbridge Hall. Levin wrote to the News that his administration moved back to Beinecke Plaza once renovations were completed, but that he maintained his space in Betts House.

“I kept an office in Betts House as a getaway, when I needed quiet work time,” Levin wrote. “But all my meetings and appointments were at Woodbridge Hall.”

Both Salovey and Callahan noted the historical significance of Woodbridge Hall, where Yale’s administration has resided for much of the 20th and early 21st century. Before 1901, the Office of the President was located in the Treasury Building, demolished the same year Woodbridge Hall was erected.

However, it remains unclear whether Woodbridge Hall will ever again house the University’s top administrators. Callahan suspects



ELLIE PARK / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

The Offices of the President have been situated on the first floor of Sheffield-Sterling-Strathcona Hall since construction at the Schwarzman Center prompted relocation.

that, in the short-term, Woodbridge Hall will be used as “swing space” to again house the President’s Office when necessary renovations are made to SSS.

Callahan added that it is possible that the space Salovey currently occupies will be turned into classroom space as part of the University’s plan to renovate lower Hillhouse Avenue, but that the next president will have a hand in what ultimately pans out in the long term.

Obviously, we don’t like to have beautiful spaces, even if they’re in need of some renovation, lay fallow for very long,” Salovey said. “With the completion of [Schwarzman], we now are free to use it, we just have to make it usable and renovate it for whatever the future purpose of it is”

Woodbridge Hall is located at 1 Prospect St., in a corner overlooking Beinecke Plaza.

Contact **BENJAMIN HERNANDEZ** at benjamin.hernandez@yale.edu.

Local leaders react to governor’s proposal set to cut K-12 education funds for more early childhood care funding

BY ZACHARY SURI
STAFF REPORTER

A new legislative session began on Wednesday in Hartford with the state in a historically strong financial position after five straight years of budget surplus. But tensions are high in the Capitol after Gov. Ned Lamont proposed cuts to K-12 education funding to support early childhood care last week.

The Connecticut General Assembly passed a biennial budget last session to be adjusted this session for fiscal year 2025, a budget which included over \$150 million in additional funds for education this coming year. Lamont, however, is determined to stay within the bounds of the state’s spending cap, passed in 1991 and accompanying the introduction of the state’s first income tax. He has proposed cutting education funds allocated last session for education to afford new investments in early childhood care. Local and state officials have expressed outrage at the proposal.

The budget lawmakers passed last session allocated \$150 million in additional funding to public education statewide for the coming fiscal year — including \$52 million to magnet and charter programs — and \$50 million to early childhood care. The governor’s proposed changes would use some of the \$52 million allocated to magnet and charter programs to help fund a supplementary \$40 million for childcare.

Rep. Jeff Currey, co-chair of the Education Committee, voiced his frustration with the governor’s approach in an interview with the CT Mirror soon after the Governor announced the proposal.

“Unfortunately, the governor has not kept his word,” Currey told the Mirror. “The only thing you bring with you into the legislature is your word.”

Connecticut is facing a crisis of declining educational outcomes, both in terms of statewide graduation rates and core subject performance metrics. According to a new report from the Dalio Foundation, 119,000 youths in Connecticut, or 19 percent of those 14 to 26 years old, qualify as “disconnected youth,” which includes those lacking educational opportunities and employment.

New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker joined the chorus of politicians and

advocates sharing concerns with Lamont’s proposal.

“Early childhood education is hugely important, and absolutely should get more funding, but not by robbing Peter to pay Paul,” Elicker said.

New labor contracts have included pay raises, a development Elicker welcomes, but New Haven Public Schools must now face increased staffing costs and tighter budgets, all at a time when pandemic-era grant funding is drying up. Elicker said that he worries about the impact of the Governor’s proposal on schools in need of state funds.

“At a time when we need more educational funding across the system, it’s not time to be cutting those funds,” Elicker told the News.

Leslie Batteau, president of the New Haven Federation of Teachers, also criticized Lamont’s proposal, emphasizing the need for increased K-12 education funding in New Haven and statewide. Batteau insisted that funds allocated last session to support public schools must be protected, if not expanded, this session.

“Our teachers need more support for classrooms and school projects and supplies to ensure that they can bring to life hands-on, meaningful experiences for our students,” Batteau said.

Hyclis Williams, president of AFSCME Local 3429 — which represents over 400 paraprofessional educators in New Haven schools — also told the News that she is opposed to the governor’s approach.

Williams wrote in an email to the News that she would like to see increased state funding for childcare, but not at the cost of much needed funding for Connecticut public schools. Instead, Williams advocated for raising taxes on wealthy Connecticut residents to pay for investments in education.

“It’s more than possible for us to support our workforce and provide our students with appropriate care and a proper education without creating an either-or approach,” Williams wrote.

In his State of the State Address Tuesday afternoon, Lamont touted “our state’s largest ever commitment to childcare, K-12 education, our universities, workforce training and not-for-prof-



OLHA YARYNICH / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Lamont has proposed shifting money for magnet and charter programs from last session’s budget to go to early childcare programs.

its” in the biennial budget along with its increased funding for the state’s Education Cost Sharing program — the central state funding source for Connecticut public schools. In addition, Lamont noted \$400 million in federal pandemic relief funds made available for Connecticut schools.

Nevertheless, Joe DeLong, executive director and CEO of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, said that he is concerned about the proposed cuts in the context of significant statewide declines in educational outcomes. He warned that poor performance in educational metrics has a concrete impact on property values and even the state’s overall “economic viability.”

“Now’s not the time to be cutting investments to education,” DeLong said.

Unlike many states, Connecticut schools are funded at a hyperlocal level, mostly through property taxes. According to DeLong, this exacerbates educational inequity, especially in cities like New Haven with large tax exempt landholders like Yale. In the midst of a cost of living crisis, however, municipal property taxes already represent a substantial burden on Connecticut residents, who pay the third highest property taxes in the nation.

DeLong said that he is concerned that Lamont’s failure to adhere to promises made during budget negotiations last session could hinder effective policy making and bipartisanship in Hartford. Lamont’s proposal, DeLong said he believes, is the result of “self-imposed constraints” which artificially limit the state’s ability to invest in public education and early childhood care.

DeLong said that he remains confident that the governor and General Assembly can come to a consensus which will provide the necessary funding for both services, but DeLong is adamant that the state’s spending cap should not unduly limit education funding this session.

“The spending cap was never designed to keep us from investing in our kids,” he told the News.

In a conversation with the CT Mirror, Lamont’s chief budget official, Jeffrey Beckham, indicated that funds would mostly be diverted from the \$52 million dollars allocated for magnet and charter schools statewide for the next fiscal year.

While her union opposes increased funding for charter schools, Batteau said that she worries about the impact of funding cuts on teachers and students in

the several magnet schools overseen by the New Haven Board of Education, whose teachers she represents. In particular, Batteau said she believes cuts to magnet programs could have an impact on attendance, a chief concern for the State Department of Education.

Batteau added that she would like to see increased funding for both K-12 and early childhood education, but that she resents Lamont’s attempt “to pit these two interests” against each other in the interests of “human-created fiscal guardrails,” a tactic she called “really problematic.” She said that she would like to see Lamont support an increase in taxes on the wealthy to support both public schools and early childhood care.

Despite Lamont’s proposal, Batteau said she thinks that the General Assembly will increase support for teachers and students statewide in the 2024 session.

“We really want to look bigger than what we did last year, and certainly we can accept nothing less than what was approved last year,” Batteau said.

The General Assembly will adjourn on May 8.

Contact **ZACHARY SURI** at zachary.suri@yale.edu.

“Maybe you’re worth it all to me, baby, Maybe, maybe, just maybe.”
COCO JONES “ICU”

Lenox Street Tenants Union demands landlord enter negotiations

BY NATASHA KHAZZAM AND
MAGGIE GRETHER
STAFF REPORTERS

New Haven’s newest tenant union gathered outside Ocean Management’s Whitney Avenue office Tuesday afternoon, demanding that the mega-landlord engage in collective bargaining negotiations over living conditions and union protections.

Residents of the Lenox Street Tenant Union, leaders of the Connecticut Tenants Union and Mayor Justin Elicker spoke about the importance of tenants unions in checking landlord power. Organizers then stuck a printed petition to Ocean’s window after borrowing tape from the thrift shop next door, Witch Bitch Thrift.

“We want Ocean Management to be able to sit down with us and have a real conversation so that we can have real things happen,” said Alisha Moore, an organizer of the newly formed union.

The Lenox Street Tenants Union, the city’s fourth tenants union, formed in November at 195 and 199 Lenox St. in the Fair Haven Heights neighborhood. Residents organized after discovering that Ocean Management was looking to sell the two properties and that the majority of residents were on month-to-month leases. Fearing eviction or significant rent increases if the building changed ownership, residents from all 11 units voted to unionize.

The petition alleged that Ocean has not addressed mold and water damage, failed to perform regular maintenance and did not regularly collect garbage.

Hannah Srajer GRD ’25, president of the CT Tenants Union, said that Lenox Street Tenants Union members had spent hundreds of dollars of their own money on maintenance after Ocean failed to respond to multiple calls and emails. Srajer said that one union member had been

injured after a porch collapsed beneath her.

“Do we need members of our community to break their bones and pay for lawyers for the landlords of the city of New Haven to follow our housing laws?” Srajer said.



NATASHA KHAZZAM/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Union members and activists gathered outside the office of Ocean Management with a petition alleging landlord neglect.

Last September, the Blake Street Tenants Union — the city’s first tenants union — made history as the first tenants union in Connecticut to enter collective bargaining negotiations with their landlord, Ocean Management.

Srajer expressed a desire to

engage in similar negotiations between Ocean and the union at Lenox Street. She explained that future negotiations with Ocean will ultimately look to secure leases that provide tenants with safe conditions, stable rent, lease with terms and conditions that they negotiate based on what they know they need and deserve.”

Union leaders demanded that Ocean respond to the petition within one week, asking for a reply before Tuesday, Feb. 13. Srajer noted that establishing this deadline will help keep Ocean accountable and establish a timeline for negotiations to begin. She also noted that if Ocean does not respond to the petition, representatives of the union will continue to push for negotiations.

improved communication with Ocean and protection from retaliation against union members.

“The families at the Lenox Street Tenants Union don’t just deserve an actual lease — which many of them don’t have,” Srajer said. “They deserve a multi-year

New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker shared that he “stand[s] in solidarity” with Lenox Street Tenants Union, noting the influence of 2022 legislation that enabled the formation of tenants unions in the city.

“Ocean Management is not keeping these properties at a level that is healthy and safe and humane for the tenants, and whether it’s flooding or mold, rodents or just general maintenance,” Elicker said. “The expectation and the requirement of landlords is to keep their properties at that level so that tenants have a good place to live.”

Elicker also noted that the Liveable City Initiative, a government agency that enforces housing codes across the city, currently has two open cases at the 195 and 199 Lenox St. properties.

Other tenants affiliated with the union also spoke about their past experiences with Ocean Management.

Ocean Management did not respond to a request for comment.

Cruz Vasquez said that in her four years living at the Lenox Street property, Ocean Management never removed snow from the ground or salted the road outside her home, which made for “very dangerous winters.” According to Vasquez, Ocean’s responses to tenant inquiries have either been ignored or delayed.

Another tenant, Claudia Figueroa, said that rainfall often floods her first-floor apartment, and that Ocean has failed to answer her maintenance requests.

“That’s why we’re asking that someone from management is there to pick up the phone when we call,” Vasquez said in Spanish.

All four of New Haven’s tenants unions formed at Ocean-owned properties.

Contact **NATASHA KHAZZAM** at natasha.khazzam@yale.edu and **MAGGIE GRETHER** at maggie.grether@yale.edu.

Law School clinic sues Department of Veteran Affairs over gender-affirming surgery policy

BY ADAM WALKER
STAFF REPORTER

Yale Law School’s Veterans Legal Services clinic filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of the Transgender American Veterans Association, or TAVA, against the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, or VA, on Jan. 25 over the VA’s policy on gender-affirming surgery.

In 2016, TAVA submitted a rulemaking petition urging the VA to include gender-affirming surgery in its medical coverage. In 2021, Secretary of Veteran Affairs Denis McDonough announced the rule would change to include gender-affirming surgery. But the VA never formally responded to TAVA’s petition. The lawsuit seeks to order the VA to respond to the 2016 rulemaking petition, alleging that the delay violates the Administrative Procedure Act, a law that mandates agencies to make decisions on presented matters within a reasonable timeframe.

The Jerome N. Legal Services Organization, a program at the Law School that offers legal representation to those unable to afford private attorneys and also houses the Veterans Legal Services, or VLS, clinic, is representing the petitioners in this case.

“The VA has been in public to the media in press conferences, repeatedly saying, we recognize that gender confirmation surgery is lifesaving and necessary medical care, we plan to provide it, but they have not formally committed to do so and they have not formally responded to the petition,” Sonora Taffa LAW ’24, a VLS clinic member involved in the case, told the News. “We don’t know why they’re delaying so much ... but we do know that they have a legal obligation to respond one way or the other.”

Taffa told the News that the main point of the lawsuit is to ensure accountability from the VA and the government. Though the lawsuit focuses on hearing a response from TAVA, Taffa said the VLS hopes the response is positive.

Taffa also highlighted the two members of TAVA who submit-

ted declarations in the petition for writ of mandamus, which is a court order instructing a government official to either perform or refrain from a specific action. She noted that their testimonies in the lawsuit were “really powerful.”

“Everyday that the VA delays its response, transgender veterans are just left in the dark, and they’re left in limbo,” Taffa told the News. “They’re starting to feel hopeless, understandably.”

In an email to the News, Jack Baisley LAW ’25, who is also a member of the VLS clinic, wrote that it is the VA’s job to protect transgender veterans. Baisley said that the VA’s silence on the matter “ignore[s] the cries of the transgender veterans they seek to serve.”

When reached by the News, Gary Kunich, a public affairs specialist for the VA, declined to comment on the lawsuit as he said that the VA “doesn’t comment on potential and pending litigation.”

In a June 2021 speech, Secretary McDonough said that the department was taking “the first necessary steps” to expand the VA’s care to include gender confirmation surgery.

“There are several steps to take, which will take time,” McDonough said in his 2021 speech. “But we are moving ahead, methodically, because we want this important change in policy to be implemented in a manner that has been thoroughly considered to ensure that the services made available to veterans meet VA’s rigorous standards for quality health care.”

Taffa said that despite promises made by McDonough promising to provide these surgeries, the lack of a response to TAVA’s petition has left many veterans unable to access the surgery.

Alex Johnson LAW ’24, who is involved in the VLS clinic on this case, spoke with the News about the importance of bringing this case forward for all members of the veteran community.

“If you’re in the veteran community that should be concerning, because you should be able to rely on Secretary McDonough because,



TIM TAI/SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

Yale Law School’s Veterans Legal Services filed suit after a petition to include gender-affirming surgery in its medical coverage.

you know, you’re supposed to be able to rely on the VA,” Johnson said. “That’s the whole point of the VA is that they’re supposed to take care of you when you return from your service.”

Johnson also highlighted the importance of the lawsuit for the transgender veteran community specifically. She noted that gender confirmation surgery can often be lifesaving care for these veterans and that denying transgender veterans access to gender confirmation surgery can pose a significant risk to their mental health.

Johnson emphasized that veterans and transgender individuals are at a uniquely high risk of suicidal ideation and self-harm, and

that the intersection of these identities further raises the danger of such mental health struggles.

“Without access to this care, you are essentially consigning these veterans to you know, a higher risk of suicide and potentially death,” Johnson told the News.

Johnson also mentioned the financial burden such surgery can cause for veterans. Johnson noted that the VA provides full financial coverage for the procedures they cover. But, she said, if a veteran seeks gender confirmation surgery through a private doctor or an insurance plan, the insurance company may or may not cover it, ultimately leaving the financial burden on the patient.

She noted that even transgender veterans with private insurance may encounter prohibitive copays or limited coverage, especially if they reside in states where legislative restrictions limit access to gender-affirming care. Such issues can make the VA their sole option for essential procedures.

“You’re basically just cutting off opportunities for transgender veterans to receive essential care at all ends, which is just absolutely devastating,” said Johnson.

Yale Law School is located at 127 Wall St.

Contact **ADAM WALKER** at adam.walker@yale.edu.

SCITECH

“Those who have forsaken their humanity, they’re trying to patch their life with morality.”
SZA AND PHOEBE BRIDGERS AMERICAN SINGER-SONGWRITERS

Yale scientists uncover link between impaired sleep and indications of poor brain health

BY JOHNNY YUE
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

A Yale-led study, published in late December, found a strong association between poor sleep habits and worse brain health in middle-aged adults.

Led by Santiago Clocchiatii-Tuozzo, a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Neurology at the School of Medicine, the researchers gathered self-reported sleep data from the past nine years and neuroimaging scans from almost 40,000 middle-aged adults. Defining suboptimal sleep durations as less than seven hours and more than nine hours per night, the researchers found a link between those with poor sleep durations and neuroimaging profiles often associated with worsened brain health that precedes issues such as strokes and dementia.

“We found a significant correlation between suboptimal sleep durations and poor brain health, even after accounting for variables such as nicotine and diabetes,” Clocchiatii-Tuozzo told the News.

The researchers analyzed the presence and volume of white matter hyperintensities — subcortical brain lesions that often reveal themselves on MRI scans and are strong indicators of brain aging and reduced blood flow. They also found the average of 48 white matter tracts to create a fractional anisotropy, a statistic that indicates the brain’s overall connectivity and white matter integrity.

“We focused our attention on these neuroimaging metrics [because they] are known to precede stroke and dementia,” Clocchiatii-Tuozzo said.

According to Clocchiatii-Tuozzo, middle age is a crucial time to improve sleep duration.

He likened sleep to cardiovascular health in how it can affect one’s health in a slow-onset manner. For him, poor cardiovascular health during one’s middle ages can slowly impact different parts of their physiology.

“Likewise, suboptimal sleep during the middle ages of life could potentially affect some aspects of our physiology that lead to poor health outcomes later in life,” Clocchiatii-Tuozzo said.

Christine Won, the medical director of the Yale Center of Sleep Medicine, specializes in disordered breathing and sleep impairments in women. In an interview with the News, Won noted that sleep disorders, especially sleep apnea, become more common for women as they age because “there are so many hormonal changes that occur throughout a woman’s life span.”

More broadly, Won said that the study highlights the importance of sufficient sleep to increase healthy longevity.

“I think a lot of times people want to give up sleep for work, school, and social commitments, for example,” Won said. “This study emphasizes that we have to prioritize sleep. It’s just as important as a proper diet and exercise for longevity health.”



LAURIE WANG

The research team found that poor sleep shows strong correlations with common markers of stroke and dementia.

Andrey Zinchuk, a physician specializing in sleep medicine and critical care medicine, pointed to how other chronic health conditions can impact the quality of sleep and how sleep can shape the effect of these diseases. He emphasized that disturbed sleep and sleep apnea are associated with risks of future stroke, heart failure, and cognitive decline.

Zinchuk said that local and state-level policy changes could help people get more sleep.

“We need to devote more attention to modifiable factors that affect sleep, and work that into primary care clinics and the way we write laws and run our workplaces,” Zinchuk said. “For example, laws that address early start times in high

school can be effective methods for young adolescents to obtain enough sleep each night.”

According to the CDC, 34.6 percent of adults in Connecticut reported shorter sleep durations in 2020.

Contact **JOHNNY YUE** at johnny.yue@yale.edu.

Why state healthcare saw record levels of enrollment this year

BY ERIN HU
STAFF REPORTER

Record numbers of Connecticut residents are seeking health insurance for 2024 through the state’s health insurance marketplace.

During this year’s Open Enrollment period, which began on Nov. 1, 2023 and ended on Jan. 15, 2024, the number of people who enrolled in qualified health plans through Access Health CT, the state’s official healthcare exchange, increased by nearly 20 percent to 129,000, according to Access Health CT. It’s the highest level of enrollment since the state marketplace opened in 2013.

Among the new enrollees are over 27,000 residents enrolled through the Covered CT program, which provides no-cost coverage to eligible Connecticut residents since the state pays consumer premiums and other costs, according to a news release from Access Health CT. Compared to the prior enrollment period, with a little over 15,400 Covered CT beneficiaries, the new enrollment numbers represent over a 75 percent increase.

Over 14,000 are also enrolled in dental coverage through Access Health CT.

Several state officials told the News that the marketplace has become more popular due to Medicaid unwinding, a process in which continuous eligibility provisions in the state’s Medicaid program, previously expanded during the pandemic by federal provisions, are set to expire.

“During the public health emergency, there was the continuous coverage provision, meaning anybody who became eligible for Medicaid maintained their coverage, even if they no longer qualified,” Caroline Ruwet, director of marketing for Access Health CT, told the News.

Creating Access Health CT

The passage of the Affordable Care Act spurred the creation of healthcare marketplaces — or exchanges — of federally-approved health insurance plans that insurance companies are incentivized to offer. In response, Connecticut created Access Health CT a few years later, offering people access to a variety of subsidized health insurance plans.

The legislation also required insurance companies to adopt an “open enrollment” period during which people can apply for different health insurance plans on the exchanges. Access Health CT, Connecticut’s version of the ACA exchange, directly compares health insurance plans for eligible Con-

necticut residents. The platform also helps qualified residents to apply for HUSKY, Connecticut’s Medicaid program.

“[The marketplace] allows folks who don’t qualify for Medicaid but are still in need of reduced cost health care to get a plan on Access Health,” said Connecticut State Rep. Jillian Gilchrest.

According to Howard Forman, professor of economics and public health, marketplaces like Access Health CT play a key role in the American health insurance landscape. The marketplaces provide a bridge for individuals who do not have employer-sponsored health insurance or cannot afford health insurance but still don’t meet the eligibility requirements for Medicaid.

Ruwet said the Access Health CT application requires individuals to indicate their income, the number of people in their home and their address to confirm they are a Connecticut state resident.

Based on the application, the system then offers subsidies to people depending on their need. If applicants are in greater need, the Connecticut state government will offer more financial assistance, including via the Covered CT program.

The government subsidizes health insurance plans depending on how far above the poverty line the household is. The marketplace provides a sliding scale subsidy from 125 percent of the federal poverty level up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level, said Forman.

According to Ruwet, over 80 percent of Connecticut state residents receive some form of financial help for their health insurance.

“When we think about what can you do for this group of people — who don’t work for a large employer or who might be an entrepreneur or who might work a retail bakery or own their own business — [these people] should be able to have access to health insurance,” Forman said. “And this is one more way for it.”

Medicaid unwinding and increased enrollment

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act in 2020, which required that states keep Medicaid beneficiaries continuously enrolled through the end of the federal public health emergency so that states were prohibited from regularly reevaluating individuals’ eligibility.

In return, states received enhanced matching funds for their Medicaid programs. Indi-

viduals could remain enrolled in Medicaid programs even if their standard Medicaid eligibility fluctuated due to changing income or other life circumstances.

However, in April 2023, continuous coverage policies expired as the federal government announced the end of the public health emergency the fol-

lowing month. The announcement halted the federal policy that allowed people to stay on Medicaid, even if they were no longer qualified.

Now, Connecticut is in its 12-month unwinding process, disenrolling people from Medicaid who lost eligibility during the pandemic. In turn, many are looking for other health insurance options, such as the Access Health CT exchange.

“In the environment where Medicaid disenrollment is happening right now, there’s a heightened awareness of how to make sure that people who may have been disenrolled from Medicaid appropriately find themselves on the exchanges now,” Forman said.

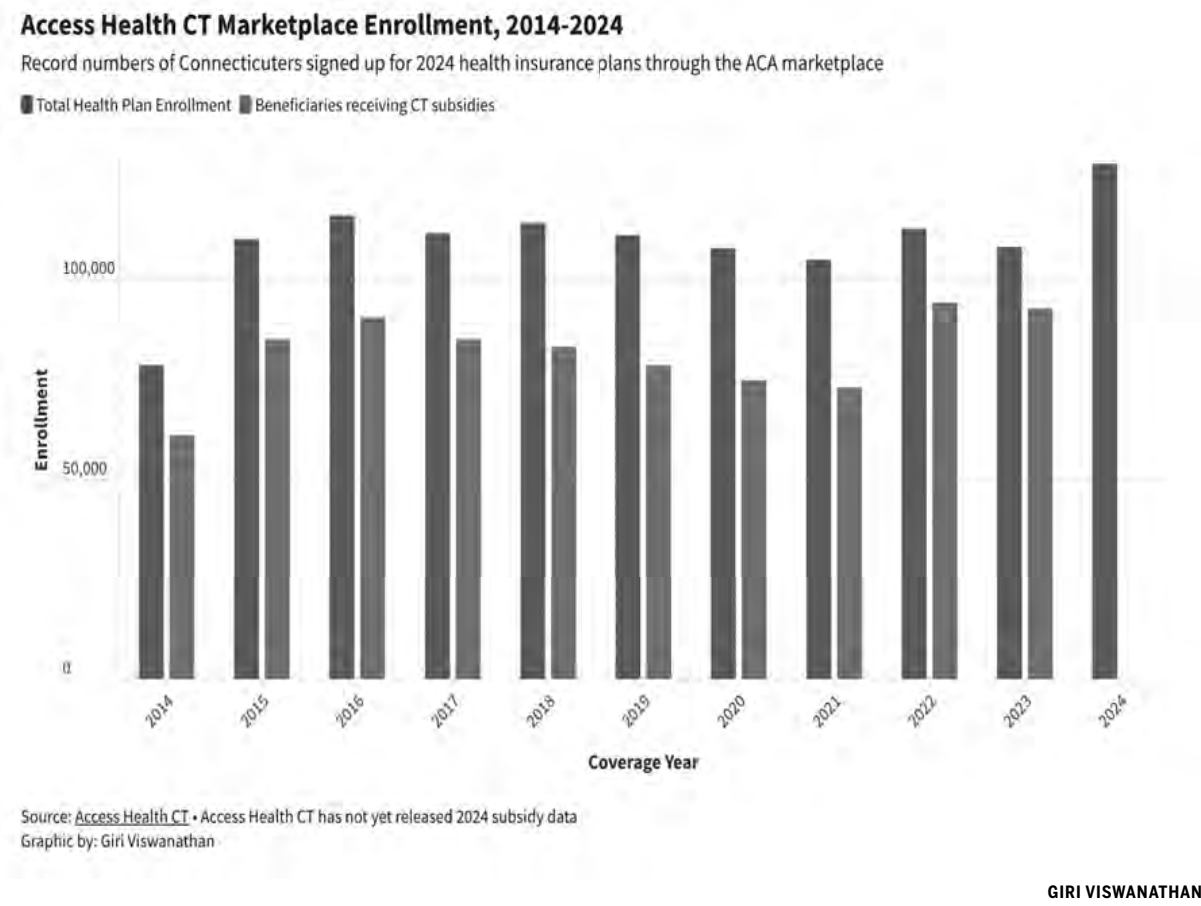
According to Ruwet, the marketplace supports these transfers in coverage. The unwinding of pandemic-era policies likely contributed to higher enrollment for Access Health CT, as state health insurance marketplaces filled the gap for individuals looking for subsidized health insurance.

Spreading the word

Every year during the Open Enrollment period, the state orga-

team also specifically targets underserved communities, Ruwen said.

According to Ruwen, many of the communities that Access Health CT targets have historically lacked access to affordable healthcare. The team works to reduce racial health disparities by promoting the marketplace in these communities and offering them



GIRI VISWANATHAN

After federal pandemic-era healthcare provisions, record numbers of residents are turning to Access Health CT for health insurance.

lowing month. The announcement halted the federal policy that allowed people to stay on Medicaid, even if they were no longer qualified.

Now, Connecticut is in its 12-month unwinding process, disenrolling people from Medicaid who lost eligibility during the pandemic. In turn, many are looking for other health insurance options, such as the Access Health CT exchange.

“In the environment where Medicaid disenrollment is happening right now, there’s a heightened awareness of how to make sure that people who may have been disenrolled from Medicaid appropriately find themselves on the exchanges now,” Forman said.

According to Ruwet, the marketplace supports these transfers in coverage. The unwinding of pandemic-era policies likely contributed to higher enrollment for Access Health CT, as state health insurance marketplaces filled the gap for individuals looking for subsidized health insurance.

nizes a large marketing and outreach campaign to encourage insurance applications.

Beginning in the spring of 2023 and through the Open Enrollment period, Access Health CT has hosted daylong outreach and enrollment fairs to offer free, in-person enrollment help for individuals at risk of losing coverage during Medicaid unwinding.

The organization also says that it has trained and licensed over 50 new health insurance brokers through its “Broker Academy,” a program in which the state provides free training and covers licensing exam costs for prospective health insurance brokers. The brokers work statewide to help insurance applicants compare insurance plans and navigate the application process, including at outreach events, Access Health CT wrote in a news release.

The organization attributes increased enrollment, in part, to these targeted advertising and recruitment efforts. Access Health CT’s Health Equity and Outreach

the tools for enrollment, she said.

“We partner with over 2,000 community partners throughout the entire year,” Ruwen said. “We work with a lot of nonprofits that are already in communities that people already go to and kind of trust.”

These organizations include local community health centers and other nonprofits that provide assistance services. Ruwen noted Access Health CT trains workers at these organizations not only to spread awareness about the marketplace but also to help people directly enroll in health care coverage.

“It takes the dedication and hard work of many to achieve these enrollment numbers,” said James Michel, the CEO of Access Health CT, in a news release. “I am proud to work with people who believe in our mission and understand the importance of health insurance coverage for everyone in Connecticut.”

The Affordable Care Act was passed in 2010.

Contact **ERIN HU** at erin.hu@yale.edu.

ARTS

“I used to float, now I just fall down, I used to know but I’m not sure now.”
BILLIE EILISH, “WHAT I WAS MADE FOR”

Sondheim’s COMPANY flips the conversation on marriage and independence

BY BROOKE WHITLING
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Playing at the Shubert Theater from Jan. 31 to Feb. 4, the national tour of COMPANY performed a reframing of Stephen Sondheim’s 1970 musical. Sondheim, whose prolific career earned eight Tony Awards, an Academy Award, eight Grammy Awards, an Olivier Award and the Pulitzer Prize, has seen a resurgence on Broadway after his death in 2021.

Lights fade in the theater and, from offstage, a Manhattan cacophony begins: police sirens, a ringing landline, and a jangling ring of keys. It is Bobbie’s birthday, and with balloons in each hand spelling the number “35,” she must celebrate by considering what it means to be happy in life and marriage, accompanied by the reminder of passing time.

The revival retains the musical and narrative integrity of the original composition, but rewrites the central character for a female performer, interweaving sentiments of independence and domestic choices into a gendered conversation.

“It is a story about life. She is trying to find her way, and we know she will,” Barbara and Louis said, beaming from their mezzanine seats.

Through a series of vignettes, the musical follows Bobbie — played by Britney Coleman — an unmarried and childless woman celebrating her 35th birthday in the company of close friends. Married, engaged, divorcing or parenting, each character presents a path that Bobbie’s life has not yet taken. This deviation from a traditional plot structure invites audiences to experience the well-meant, albeit unsolicited offers of advice, alongside Bobbie.

The show’s complexity and demand of audience members to

reflect upon their own experiences, through the intersection of individual plotlines, is a trademark of Sondheim’s work.

Daniel Egan, the coordinator of the Shen Curriculum for Musical Theater at Yale and professor of American musical theater history, has focused on the works of Stephen Sondheim throughout his academic and professional careers. During his graduate studies at Yale, Egan developed the first seminar discussing Sondheim’s productions.

“The attraction for me has always been the combination of psychological acuity and compositional finesse. Like many people, I find the emotional truth and resonance of Sondheim’s characters to be clear, arresting and human,” Egan said.

For Coleman, who celebrated her 35th birthday one week before arriving to perform in New Haven, this resonance and relatability are at the forefront of the production’s impact.

Specifically speaking to the revival’s play with gender dynamics, Coleman reflected on the relationship between her character and her personal life.

“The gender swap calls to mind a lot of the double standards that we have about men being expected to settle down versus women being expected to settle down, especially at the age of 35, when there’s a biological factor in there,” Coleman said. “A woman who doesn’t have children turning 35 has some things going on in the back of her mind. Should I settle down?”

David Socolar, who plays Theo, one of Bobbie’s passing love interests, explained that the conversation sparked by the revival is not forced, however. He said that the show’s impact comes from its narrative’s existence, not a blatant effort to make a statement.



COURTESY OF SHUBERT THEATER

The gender-swapped 2018 revival of a classical Broadway musical performed in New Haven’s Shubert Theater during its national tour.

Whether the audience came as season ticket holders, Sondheim aficionados, holiday gifters or — for members Melanie and Bobby — to watch swing actor Elysia Jordan perform as Bobbie’s body double, each left feeling a connection to the characters.

This seemingly inherent trait of Sondheim compositions also brought COMPANY to Shubert’s stage. The process of selecting a season of productions is complex; board members at the Connecticut Association for the Performing Arts, or CAPA, must consider what shows are offered in a given period, when each show is visiting the region, whether competing venues have presented a show and if a show has been offered in the venue’s recent lineups.

CAPA, which both owns and manages the Shubert Theater, must also balance the preferences of current season ticket holders with opportunities to expand their subscriber base.

Anthony Lupinacci, the Director of Advertising and Community Relations of the Shubert Theater explains that COMPANY’s classic musical theater elements that lean into current social complexities navigate the space between veteran and prospective season ticket holders.

Professor Egan agreed, speaking to COMPANY’s timelessness.

“I might focus on the work’s risk-taking structure (for 1970, when it was written) and its continued resonance today. I would also

emphasize that these works -- like any good works of art -- are porous and open to investigation and interpretation across eras,” Egan wrote to the News. “A traditional production of a Sondheim show can move and enlighten us, but so can a reimagined production of a so-called classic, like Company.”

The national tour of COMPANY will travel to five cities before returning to New England, performing in Boston’s Citizens Bank Opera House from April 2 to April 14, 2024. The Citizens Bank Opera House is located at 539 Washington St., Boston, MA.

Contact **BROOKE WHITLING** at brooke.whitling@yale.edu.

Darshan Trio performs dynamic musical medley

BY LUCIANA VARKEVISSER
STAFF REPORTER

The Darshan Trio — two of whom are Yale graduates — performed on Saturday, Feb. 3 at the Schwarzman Center.

The group’s name is inspired by the Sanskrit word related to sight and the vision of beholding a sacred object. Two of the trio’s members, Vijay Gupta MUS ’07 and Dominic Cheli MUS ’16, are graduates of the Yale School of Music. During their performance, Gupta played the violin, Cheli the piano and Yoshika Masuda the cello. Their performance was a unique blend of contemporary and classical pieces.

“I thought it was really innovative compared to most classical music these days,” said attendee Alex Moore ’26. “I liked the presentation and the group had good chemistry.”

The Darshan Trio’s performance at the Schwarzman Center was split into four parts, each a unique blend of compositions. The show opened with a quote from “Book of Hours” by Rainer Maria Rilke, saying, “Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror. Just keep going. No feeling is final.”

The first movement was a blend of contemporary and classic pieces. The opening song was Saans — or “Breath” — by Reena Esmail. The composition, released in 2017, was delicate and emotional. It was accompanied by soft purple lighting, which matched the tone of the piece. This song then segued into “Piano Trio no.1,” first movement, by Felix Mendelssohn. The 1839 composition was energetic and full-bodied, with red, warm-toned lighting matching the song. If Saans was the wind of a breath, this piece was the wind of a storm.

The second part of the performance was a blend of three songs. The first was called Mozart-ada-gio, a 1997 composition by Arvo Pärt. This emotionally subdued piece was performed in complete darkness, the only lighting coming from the soft glow of the per-



LOTTA STUDIO/YALE SCHWARZMAN CENTER

The Darshan Trio had two performances in the Schwarzman Center’s Dorne on Saturday.

former’s tablets. The lighting then changed to soft warm tones for the 1811 Piano Trio “Archduke,” third movement, by Ludwig van Beethoven. This song was smooth and full of life. The last piece of the performance was “Buresca II”. The 1985 composition by P teris Vasks was energetic and lively, fittingly accompanied by magenta lighting.

“It was very touching,” said attendee Serena Cheng ’24. “Especially how each one was tied to a story.”

The final blend of songs included only two composers: Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms.

This medley included a distinct story-telling aspect, as dictated by the projected quotes from Brahms and the diaries of Schumann and his daughter Clara.

The third act opened with a quote by Schumann to his daughter from 1838 saying, “We will lead a life of poetry and blossom, and we will play and compose together like angels and bring gladness to mankind.” This quote introduced the first Schumann song — Kinderszenen, “Dreaming” — which then blended into another work in the same 1848 Kinderszenen series: “The Poet Speaks.”

These first two songs featured a lighter, gentler tone, which was appropriate considering the musician was inspired to compose them after watching his children play outside.

The last two pieces of the third act were both by Brahms. The trio played the third and fourth movements of the 1854 Piano Trio No. 1.

The third act started with delicate notes, then transitioned to a more somber tone — fitting with Clara’s mourning of her father — and ended with a piece that was a passionate celebration of life. The third act was the musical embodiment of the story of Schumann and Brahms. The two composers were good friends, Brahms being mentored by Schumann and — supposedly — falling in love with his daughter Clara.

The trio took time at the end of their performance to celebrate Clara Schumann, who was a skilled composer but unable to express her love for music due to societal norms. The fourth performance of Clara Schumann’s 1846 Piano Trio — the third movement — was accompa-

nied by a quote from Clara saying, “My imagination can picture fairer happiness than to continue living for art.”

“I loved their inclusion and celebration of Clara Schumann’s work,” said Alliese Bonner ’27 who attended the event. “She’s probably the most famous female composer.”

The fourth piece was loving but somber, much like the composer’s relationship with music.

The trio came back out on stage after a lengthy applause for an encore performance. The room was filled with bright pink lighting as they played the 2019 Piano Trio, Scherzo, by Reena Esmail. The energetic song was filled with staccato and falsetto notes, creating a fairy-like atmosphere that ended the trio’s performance on a joyful note.

The trio has only been playing as a group since the pandemic but each member of the trio also boasts individual claims to fame.

Cheli has performed nationally with orchestras including the San Diego Symphony, Colburn Orchestra and Adrian Symphony. He has played at the Mostly Mozart and Ravinia Festival and

is scheduled to make his fourth appearance at Carnegie Hall.

Masuda is an internationally renowned cellist and was awarded the YAMAHA Music Foundation of Europe String Award. He has worked with several celebrated composers and musicians, including Leonard Cohen and David Geringas. He was also newly appointed to the role of Assistant Professor of Cello and Director of String Studies at the Chapman University Hall-Musco Conservatory of Music.

Gupta played for the Los Angeles Philharmonic for 12 years as a member of the first violin section. He has worked with groups like the Kronos Quartet and the Philharmonia Orchestra of London.

Not only is each member of the trio an acclaimed musician, but all of them are also social justice advocates.

Gupta is the founder and Artistic Director of Street Symphony, which is an organization that provides musical experiences for people recovering from addiction, homelessness and incarceration in the Los Angeles area. Cheli curates programs for and performs at schools and retirement homes in his surrounding community. Masuda is dedicated to teaching music to the next generation of artists, as exemplified by his history as a professor at California Lutheran University and his current position at Chapman University.

For all of their pieces, the Darshan Trio performed with passion and vigor. Their energy was not only noticeable through the music they were playing, but also through their body language and facial expressions. Gupta played with so much liveliness that a few strings on his bow even snapped off during the performance.

Reena Esmail MUS ’11 MUS ’14 MUS ’18 — the composer of two of the Trio’s performances — is a graduate of the Yale School of Music.

Contact **LUCIANA VARKEVISSER** at luciana.varkevisser@yale.edu.

SPORTS

Elis gear up for upcoming Cornell game

M BASKETBALL FROM PAGE 14

second-half points. Wolf and Knowling led the scoring once again, finishing with 24 and 14 points, respectively.

Yale, undefeated in Ivy League play, has now won 10 of its last 11 games, the only loss coming in December against nationally ranked Kansas. The Elis now sit tied with Cornell (17–3, 6–0 Ivy) for the league’s top spot.

This time next week, only one team will remain undefeated in the Ancient Eight, as Cornell will visit New Haven this Saturday. **Defensive resurgence continues**

The Bulldogs have yet to allow an Ivy League opponent to score over 70 points this season, far below the league scoring average of approximately 74 points per game. Princeton’s 64 points on Friday night were the lowest they’ve scored all season.

Princeton shot 9/15 from three point range in the first half, a big reason for their five point lead heading into halftime.

But in the second half, Yale’s defense buckled down and held them to just 4/18 from deep.

Swing forward Casey Simmons ’25 played important defensive minutes off the bench, using his speed and length to chase Princeton’s shooters off the perimeter.

Mbeng, last year’s Ivy League Defensive Player of the Year, also was a key factor in the team’s defensive turnaround, guarding Princeton’s star guard Xavian Lee for most of the night.

“I wouldn’t want to dribble the ball around Bez, let’s just say that,” Jones said. “It was a tremendous effort by him and he changed the game in the second half.”

Strong weekend for Wolf

Yale’s offensive versatility is one of its biggest assets, but

much of their offensive production over the two-game stretch came from the 7-foot Wolf.

Wolf, with scoring performances of 21 and 24 points, boosted his season scoring average to 14.9 points. He also posted a double-double performance in each of the two games, bringing his total to nine double-doubles on the season.

Wolf credited the team’s coaching staff after the game.

“They did a great job of preparing us, helping to anticipate when they were gonna double me and when they weren’t,” he said.

Up next

Yale would put themselves in sole control of first place with a win against Cornell next weekend.

The game will tip off at 2 p.m. Saturday in Payne Whitney Gymnasium.

Contact **BEN RAAB** at ben.raab@yale.edu.



The game will tip off at 2 p.m. Saturday in Payne Whitney Gymnasium.

Yalies look to maintain strong performances

TRACK AND FIELD FROM PAGE 14

at home Saturday at the Giegen-gack Invitational and back at BU for the Valentine Invite.”

On the men’s team, a collection of strong performers were led by Nolan Recker ’26 and Winslow Atkeson ’25. At Harvard on Friday, Recker broke a 37-year school record in the weight throw with a hurl of 20.39m, earning him a second-place finish that was just 0.15m behind the gold medal winner from University of Connecticut. Alongside Recker at the Scarlet & White Invitational, Isiah Udofia ’26 also had himself a day with two personal records – a 7.27m long jump, which earned him fifth place, and a 7.04-second finish in the 60m dash.

On Saturday at Boston University, Atkeson had the showcase finish for the Bulldogs, breaking four minutes in the mile with a 3:59.39 finish, putting him third on Yale’s all-time list. Also setting PR’s for the Bulldogs, though, were Kit Colson ’25 with a 21.87 second finish in the 200m, Isiah Udofia with his third PR of the weekend in the form of a 22.13-second 200m, Andrew Farr ’26 with a 1:05 finish in the 500m, Owen Karas ’26 and Calvin Katz ’25 with 4:03 and 4:05 finishes in the mile, respectively, and Leo Brewer ’25 and Karas with 8:05 and 8:08

finishes in the 3k. Brewer and Karas’ finishes placed them sixth and ninth on Yale’s all-time lists.

“I think the team is starting to figure out who we are and we need to stay healthy and keep moving in the right direction,” men’s team captain Matt Appel ’24 wrote to the News. “About this point in the season is when we start honing in on HEPS making sure we’re in the position we need to be in to make our final preparations count.”

Meanwhile, the women’s team had similarly strong finishes across the two meets. At Harvard on Friday, Lucija Grd ’27 kicked things off in the 60m hurdles with an 8.57-second finish, just 0.01 seconds off of her PR, which happens to also be the school record. In the field events, Eileen Yang ’24 vaulted herself over a 3.62m-high bar, closing in on her PR of 3.85m, and Maria Leskovec ’24 closed in on her PR in the weight throw with a 17.39m toss.

Across the Charles on Saturday, Mira Thakur ’24 set a PR in the 400m with a 56.51-second finish, putting her fifth on Yale’s all-time list, and another in the 200m with a time of 24.98 seconds, putting her ninth on Yale’s all-time list. Women’s team captain Bella Bergloff ’24 specifically highlighted Thakur’s leadership thus far into the season. Right behind her was Sophie Spokes ’27 with her own PR of

25.68 seconds. In the slightly longer 500m, Bridget Vitu ’25 set a PR of 1:15.39, and Alexandra Bonn ’27 set one of her own in the triple jump with successive leaps accumulating 11.75m. As women’s coach Taryn Sheehan explained, these performances and many others combined for a number of cracks to the Yale all-time top-10 leaderboards.

“Our women’s side took some big leaps forward this past weekend,” Sheehan wrote to the News. “A number of women etched their names into the top 10 All Time lists, including: Dominique Romain in long jump, Juliette Kosmont in the 60m dash, Victoria Guerrier in the 500m run, Gloria Guerrier in the 400m, Alex Bonn in the triple jump, Bharathi Subbiah in the triple jump, Makayla Harris in the weight throw.”

On Saturday, Feb. 10, the teams will split up once more next weekend between Boston University’s David Hemery Valentine Invitational and Yale’s own home meet at Coxe Cage, the 17th Giegen-gack Invitational. These are their last two meets before Ivy League Heptagonal Indoor Track & Field Championships, which will be held the weekend of Feb. 24-25 in Cambridge, Mass. at Gordon Indoor Track.

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



On Saturday, Feb. 10, the teams will split up once more next weekend between Boston University’s David Hemery Valentine Invitational and Yale’s own home meet at Coxe Cage.

Breslow reflects on his atheltic career

BRESLOW PROFILE FROM PAGE 14

sulted with teammates and family members about his decision to continue playing baseball after Yale or pursue a career in medicine. Matt McCarthy ’02, a teammate at Yale, gave him lasting advice.

“I remember asking him, ‘How did you know you were done?’ and he said it was really easy,” Breslow recounted. “‘I could turn on a TV and be like, yeah, that was fun when I played, but if you ever turn on a TV and think that could be you out there, then you are not ready to give it up!’ And that really really hit me. I just felt like I could still contribute.”

Breslow made his decision. He headed to Milwaukee.

In 2002, Breslow was drafted by the Milwaukee Brewers and began his career in MLB. He would go on to pitch for 12 seasons with the San Diego Padres, Boston Red Sox, Cleveland Guardians, Minnesota Twins, Oakland Athletics, Arizona Diamondbacks and Miami Marlins. At one point while pitching in MLB, Breslow was the only Yale alum playing major-league baseball.

While pursuing his career as a professional athlete, Breslow started the Strike 3 Foundation in 2008 with the mission of raising money and awareness for pediatric cancer research and treatment, while also staying involved in the medical world, even though he decided to no longer pursue medicine as a career.

“I had always thought my impact on the medical community would be as a physician,” Breslow told the News. “But as my baseball career took hold and I realized that pursuing medical school and a career in the medical profession was getting pushed further out, I wanted to remain connected in some way.”

The Strike 3 Foundation’s primary fundraiser is a wiffle ball tournament at Little Fenway in Vermont, which they host each fall. Little Fenway is made up of replica Fenway, Wrigley and Field of Dreams wiffle ball stadiums.

In 2008, the Strike 3 Foundation also pledged to give \$500,000 over the span of five years to Yale New Haven Hospital, which, according to the website, was used to found a Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplantation Program, the first of its kind in Connecticut.

In 2009, in a Wall Street Journal article titled “Who Has the Brainiest Team in Baseball?” the

WSJ called Breslow the “smartest man in baseball, if not the entire world.” The article tried to understand if there was a correlation between education and victories by looking at players who went to four-year U.S. colleges or universities and seeing which of them graduated. Players who attended elite schools were ranked more heavily.

“In a field like professional sports where Ivy League grads are not commonplace, there is this stigma for better or for worse that attaches itself to you. Athletes get all kinds of nicknames and if ‘smartest man in baseball’ was the one that people wanted to come up for me, I could do far, far worse,” Breslow said. “I try to embrace it with all appropriate humility.”

After his playing career as a pitcher, Breslow shifted to the front office where he now works as the Chief Baseball Officer at the Red Sox. Chief Baseball Officer puts him in the position to direct all of Red Sox baseball operations. Breslow takes over for another Yale graduate, Chaim Bloom ’04, who held the position before him.

Breslow is familiar with the Red Sox organization, as he pitched for the Red Sox for four years in 2006 and again from 2012-15. He helped the team win the World Series in 2013.

Craig Breslow has had a very successful career with Major League Baseball on and off the field, giving some of the credit to his time at Yale.

“The network, community, and relationships I built at Yale, like Theo and others, as well as the diversity, world view and perspective you get at a place like Yale, drove me to be eminently curious and introspective,” Breslow said, speaking of former Red Sox general manager Theo Epstein ’95, when asked how his Yale experience has helped his work in the Red Sox front office.

The Red Sox will begin Spring Training this year in February at their spring training camp in Fort Myers, Florida. Opening Day will be held on April 9, 2024 against the Baltimore Orioles at home in Boston at Fenway Park.

Contact **BETSY GOOD** at betsy.good@yale.edu.

Bulldogs make recovery after Princeton loss



The Bulldogs continue their venture on the road with a game against Cornell (7–12, 1–6 Ivy) at 2 p.m. this Friday, Feb. 10.

W BASKETBALL FROM PAGE 14

Finally, at 1:21, Mackenzie Egger ’25 hit a jumper that catapulted the Bulldogs ahead, securing their lead until the end of the quarter, 49–47.

The fourth quarter, though the last of the regular game, marked itself as the beginning of the action. For most of the quarter, the Quakers maintained a steady 5-point lead. However, nearing the finale, a McGill lay-up brought Yale within three. Everyone at the Palestra arena held their breath as Clark barrelled down the court, guarded heavily by Penn defenders. With no time remaining, Clark passed to Klara Aastroem ’24, who hit the crucial three-pointer needed to cling onto the game. As the buzzer sounded, the Bulldog bench erupted, celebrating the chance to continue to victory.

Head coach Dalila Eshe told Yale Athletics that Aastroem was confident in her ability to execute.

“Jenna saw Klara wide open out of the corner of her eye, in her peripheral vision,” she said. “She told me she knew she was going to make it.”

At first, points in overtime did not favor the Bulldogs, with

two free throws putting the Blue and White in a two-point deficit. However, as soon as Clark hit her first jumper of the overtime, Yale held on to their lead the entire time. The game ended in fairy tale fashion, with McGill stealing the ball and holding onto it until time ran out, securing the win, 74–68. The Yale bench could not have been more ecstatic.

Coach Eshe told Yale Athletics that her team’s dogged persistence allowed them to succeed over Penn.

“The energy was incredible the entire game,” she said. “Our will to win and our desire to win was what won us this basketball game.”

Clark made 25 points, one point shy of her career-best. McDonald made 19 points, her season and career best, while McGill made 10 points. By most metrics, this was one of the Yale women’s basketball team’s best games.

The Bulldogs continue their venture on the road with a game against Cornell (7–12, 1–6 Ivy) at 2 p.m. this Friday, Feb. 10.

Contact **MEREDITH HENDERSON** at meredith.henderson@yale.edu.

NEWS

“How can I snooze and miss the moment? You just too important.”
SZA AMERICAN SINGER AND SONGWRITER

Students, administrators weigh merits of viewing admissions files

BY JOSIE REICH
STAFF REPORTER

All Yale College students are entitled by law to view their admissions files at any point during their enrollment. While many students view files to sate their curiosity about the inner workings of Yale’s admissions process, some representatives from the Office of Undergraduate Admissions voiced concerns that file-viewing can form and propagate false impressions of the process.

Hannah Mendlowitz, senior associate director of undergraduate admissions, who helps oversee the University’s response to file-viewing requests, described the admissions committee’s process of reviewing applications as “a group of people sitting around having a candid conversation,” which she argued means that the full picture of why a student was admitted may not be reflected in their file.

In an email to the News, Mendlowitz described the files that students can view as “an incomplete artifact of a much larger and more complex process.”

“I understand students’ desire to peek behind the curtain, but viewing the application you submitted as a high school senior alongside very short notes that summarize the contents of that application will not reveal why the admissions committee voted to admit you,” Mendlowitz explained.

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974,

which governs access to educational records, students have a right to review their admissions files within 45 days of requesting access.

Students submit a request to the admissions office, typically over email, to begin the process and receive a set of possible dates and times for viewing. All six students the News interviewed about viewing their admissions files said that it took almost the entire 45-day period to hear back from the office.

The viewing appointments take place over Zoom with a representative from the Registrar’s Office present to answer any questions. The student’s admission file is shared on the screen, and students are allowed to take notes but not pictures.

Grant Tucker ’27 agreed that viewing an admissions file is not akin to being in the room where the discussion happened but argued that it can still provide students with valuable insight.

“You don’t know what they were splitting hairs on,” he admitted. Nonetheless, he added that he sees the file as “an accurate representation” of why a student was ultimately admitted because it “makes clear to you what Yale sees in you as a future leader, what they want to see more of from you and how they see you fitting into the campus.”

Admissions files consist of a full copy of the student’s application alongside a set of comments from reviewers called a “workcard,” with notes and scores on essays and letters of recommendation. Students’ essays, recommendations, test

scores and grades are all assigned scores, which students can ask the Registrar’s Office representative to interpret for them. The paragraph that alumni interviewers submit is also included.

Aidan Pulmano ’26 told the News that because his workcard contained only comments about his character and none about his test scores or grades -- an experience shared by every student interviewed by the News -- he felt more at home at Yale after viewing his file.

“Afterwards, I felt more comfortable because it made me feel like I belonged at the school,” he said. “Not just on a competence basis, but on a personality basis, too.”

In January 2016, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid Jeremiah Quinlan announced that the admissions office would increase its emphasis on “authentic intellectual engagement” and “a concern for others and the common good” over quantifiable achievements. The updated process heeded recommendations from a report released by the Harvard Graduate School of Education on reforming college admissions.

On Jan. 31, Quinlan wrote to the News that he is not concerned about the effect of individual students viewing their files but does worry when students share the conclusions they draw from the experience widely with others.

Yale admissions files have become the subject of much fascination online, with dedicated



ELLIE PARK, PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Students have a right to view their admissions files under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. While many students who have viewed their files saw it as a valuable learning experience, the Admissions Office sees it as a potential source of misinformation about the application process.

Reddit threads, dozens of YouTube videos and a BuzzFeed article documenting their contents.

“When students attempt to turn that small slice of information into viral video content or the foundation of counseling for future applicants, those incorrect impressions can turn into bad advice disseminated to large audiences,” Quinlan wrote.

Of the six students the News interviewed, four said that they had given advice to prospective applicants. All of those four students said that the advice they provided was based on what they learned from viewing their files.

Mandy Buster ’25 said that she now tells applicants to focus

on their Common Application; Ken Huynh ’25 said that he now advises students to focus on a singular passion. Tucker emphasizes that Yale values students who are easy to have conversations with, and Pulmano encourages high schoolers to write in a personable style.

“I feel that I can give better advice to people applying to college because I saw what stood out in ways that I wouldn’t have known if I hadn’t looked at the file,” Buster said.

The registrar’s office is located at 246 Church St.

Contact **JOSIE REICH** at josie.reich@yale.edu.

New Haven Health Department tells community kitchen to pause operations

BY MAIA NEHME
STAFF REPORTER

On Monday, two hours before the fREsh-restaurant — Newhallville fREshSTARTs’ new community kitchen — was set to open its doors for the second time, the New Haven Health Department called fREshSTARTs’ Founder and President Marcus Harvin to inform him that the fREsh-restaurant couldn’t operate until it had obtained a food service license.

The fREsh-restaurant, which had its launch event last Friday, repurposes excess dining hall food from Southern Connecticut State University, the University of New Haven and Yale — delivered through the University’s partnership with New Haven food recovery nonprofit Haven’s Harvest — and serves it restaurant-style to Newhallville residents who are experiencing food insecurity. After the fREshSTARTs organizers were told that they couldn’t serve the food they had prepared for Monday night, they donated it to a homeless shelter and a warming center.

“I have been reaching out to everyone I know who knows anyone with the ability to rectify [this], and I believe we will expeditiously have a solution,” Harvin wrote to the News. “We will be serving our people within the next few days... in a manner that is dignified and legal.”

The process of obtaining a food service license can take between “a few days to a week or two,” depending on the necessary departments’ availability, according to the city health department’s Health Director Maritza Bond.

Food service operators must fill out an application for the license through CitySquared, the Health Department’s online portal. This notifies other City departments to conduct “inspections and approvals” of the restaurant or nonprofit. Afterward, the Health Department assigns each food service operator a sanitarian to assist them with the licensing steps, which include “reviewing” their floor plan and kitchen equipment.

“We appreciate all fREsh-restaurant is doing to offer hot meals to people in need in the community, and we look forward to supporting them in their food service license application process,” Bond wrote to the News.

Prior to receiving the Health Department’s notice, the fREsh-restaurant held a launch event

last Friday from 5 to 8 p.m. in the fellowship hall of Pitts Chapel Unified Free Will Baptist Church.

At this first event, fREsh-restaurant volunteers greeted diners at the door with socks, underwear, T-shirts, diapers and baby wipes, encouraging them to take any supplies they need. Diners then had the choice to be served their dinner or grab their meal to-go.

Those who opted to dine-in had limited time to finish their meal in order to “regulate flows when it starts to get packed,” per Harvin. Each table had a 20 minute timer set by the server once the diner sat down.

“You treat them like they have the most expensive bill at a restaurant you’ve ever seen,” Harvin said, recalling his advice to the volunteers prior to the event. “When someone spends their money, you’re going to respect them, right? So, their currency is the oxygen in their lungs ... You’ve got to treat people with dignity, you’ve got to treat them with honor.”

At last Friday’s event, there was a turnout of about a dozen diners, according to fREshSTARTs Vice President Adam Rawlings.

UNH’s Campus Executive Chef Peter Marrello, who brought 50 pounds of excess dining hall food to the event and led volunteers in reheating and preparing the food, said he had expected a greater number of diners because of Harvin’s strong presence in Newhallville. “[Harvin] has a very powerful speaking voice,” Marrello said. “People seem to listen when he talks.”

Despite the attendance being lower than Rawlings had hoped, he said it was a “really good opening night” and that he expects turnout to increase once the fREsh-restaurant secures a food service license.

Stephanie Harvin — the mother of Marcus Harvin and a member of the fREshSTARTs board — noted that eligible Connecticut residents receive their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, which were formerly known as food stamps, during the first three days of each month. Since the fREsh-restaurant launch event was held on Feb. 2, she said she anticipates that more community members will attend in the coming weeks.

Because of the lower than expected turnout, fREshSTARTs had some extra food at the end



COURTESY OF MARCUS HARVIN

Before its operations were suspended, Newhallville fREshSTARTs held the launch event for its fREsh-restaurant last Friday.

of their first event which they donated to a nearby warming center. Nonetheless, Harvin emphasized his sense of accomplishment regarding the event.

“If I helped one person along the way, my life wasn’t in vain,” Harvin said. “One person fed is a success. One person coming to help out is a success.”

In addition to diners and volunteers, representatives of clean energy company Avangrid, which recently partnered with fREshSTARTs, had a table set up at the event to teach community members how to lower their utility bills.

Other attendees included the Yale Prison Education Initiative Founding Director Zelda Roland ’08 GRD ’16, Ward 19 Alder Kimberly Edwards and Stephen Cremen-Endes, the director of community building and organizing at Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven. Currently, fREshSTARTs is only partnered with Avangrid, however, Harvin said he hopes to form collaborations with other local businesses in the future and expects “more people to want to join forces with us after this [event].”

Harvin, Rawlings and the fREshSTARTs organizers began planning the fREsh-restaurant’s launch event three weeks prior as soon as they solidified Feb. 2 as the date.

During the weeks leading up to the event, fREshSTARTs secured partnerships with UNH, SCSU and Haven’s Harvest, who will assist in food delivery.

Though the organization had been permitted to hold its launch event at Pitts Chapel, Harvin also had to request approval to host the fREsh-restaurant at that location on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 5 to 8 p.m. On Jan. 26, Harvin, who is a member of the church, presented his plan at Pitts Chapel’s semiannual meeting and received their formal approval to host the fREsh-restaurant there once they’ve obtained their food service license.

The nonprofit has raised about \$3,000 through grassroots fundraising, mainly from donations from members of Pitts Chapel, according to Harvin. Most of the funds were spent on stockpiling supplies for the launch event: both the essential ones which are offered to diners at the door and decorative items such as centerpieces, colorful tablecloths and electric candles, which add to the fREsh-restaurant’s restaurant atmosphere.

Leading up to their event, organizers at fREshSTARTs also tried to attract volunteers by reaching out to the Newhallville community. Over two dozen volunteers worked at Friday’s event.

“Right away, I wanted to get on board because I wanted to

volunteer to help those that are less fortunate than I am,” Elder Rachel Richardson, a member of the church and volunteer at Friday’s event, said. “This is what the Bible tells us anyway: we are to feed those that are in misfortune.”

As a server at the event, Richardson planned on having one-on-one conversations with the diners and letting them know about Pitts Chapel’s resources, such as spiritual counseling services.

Harvin has many long term goals for the fREsh-restaurant’s future, such as ultimately securing their own space. Despite the challenges that the nonprofit has faced so far, he is confident that it will be able to accomplish these goals.

“The hardest thing was getting out of prison,” Harvin, who is formerly incarcerated, said. “We got the hard part out of the way: that was those bars that were in front of us, that was those chains that were on our wrists [and] on our ankles. Now, it’s going to be smooth sailing, because I’m just literally putting it all in the provider’s hands.”

Pitts Chapel Unified Free Will Baptist Church is located at 64 Brewster St.

Contact **MAIA NEHME** at maia.nehme@yale.edu.

BY JOSIE REICH
STAFF REPORTER

A former Michelin-star restaurant hostess, a restaurant worker of five summers who once helped make Michelle Obama the “second-best” Cuban sandwich she said she had ever had and a Patisserie Diploma-wielding graduate of haute cuisine culinary school walked into the Davenport College buttery. It was a typical Friday, and Y Pop-Up was getting ready for an opening.

Alexis Ramirez-Hardy ’26, Hardy Eville ’26 and Phaedra Letrou ’25 are three members of the 41-person undergraduate cooking club that hosts bi-weekly restaurant-style meals. They spent the evening drizzling neat stripes of raita over aloo chaat potato patties and stylishly delivering flights of Malabar fish curry to expectant patrons assembled for the club’s “Masala Magic” South Asian dinner.

It was clear from the almost 100-item Thursday night shopping trip and the 12-hour, day-of cooking marathon that hosting these multi-act dinners is no small feat: “Let’s keep it simple this time and do only, like, five courses,” Eville said at the Sunday planning meeting. But as laughs reverberated around the buttery, any stress was hardly discernible.

Members being amicable and cooperative is key to the club’s productivity and success, explained Coby Wagonfeld ’26, one of the club’s head chefs.

“You need to be able to work as a team ... and to be able to stay somewhat calm in a pressured

situation,” he said. “There’s a euphoria to it at the end, and that community of accomplishment is a great feeling.”

Y Pop-Up-hopefuls “audition” for the club Chopped-style. Of the applicants who complete an initial 11-question form, a fraction are invited back to tackle a live cooking challenge. A table full of ingredients such as tofu, cup noodles, veggies, sauces and spices greets them, and a 30 minute clock starts ticking. There are no rules or limits on what they can make, and one of the head chefs helps out as sous-chef. The applicant’s ability to give them directions and banter with other club leadership in the room as they cook is taken into consideration, Wagonfeld said.

Applicants to the club’s business team fill out a 10-question form and then complete an interview to be considered.

The club then makes its selections. This past year, 21 percent were accepted, an unusually high rate according to club leadership. Others are sent an email thanking them for their time and lamenting that “unfortunately, there can only be so many cooks in the kitchen.”

Eville, this year’s other co-head chef, said that the competitiveness of the application process is necessary because of how demanding the club is for members.

“The scale of what we try to put on and the professionalism that we try to have requires that we have to be pretty strict about who we let into the club,” he said.

Despite Y Pop-Up’s competitiveness, members say its ethos remains one of trust and flexibility.

“I came in thinking I’d work under someone and do smaller tasks, but there’s an entirely flat structure to the community,” cook team member Taimur Moolji ’25 said. “They switch up the teams so we get to meet lots of new people.”

James Han ’24, a former head chef, said that the club’s simultaneous commitment to high standards of achievement and an attitude of open-mindedness is reflected in the quality and variety of food they produce.

Most Indian restaurants in America serve North Indian or Punjabi food. Friday’s opening intentionally took a different direction. The menu focused on food from South India, such as masala dosas and the Malabar fish curry, and even included bun kebabs, a dish from the neighboring country of Pakistan.

“There’s a world in which we could have cooked butter chicken and chana masala and naan and called it a day,” Han supposed. “And then there’s the version that we did, which was showing different kinds of India. I’m really happy there’s a culture of learning.”

Y Pop-Up was founded in its current form in 2013 by Lucas Sin ’15. He went on to open Junzi Kitchen, a Chinese restaurant, in New Haven in 2015, adding a New York location in 2017. In 2020, Sin was named one of Forbes’s 30 Under 30 for Food and Drink.



COURTESY OF KRISTOPHER AZIABOR

Yale’s undergraduate cooking club hosted a South Asian cuisine dinner in the Davenport buttery Friday night.

The club, which was much smaller at its founding, vastly expanded its business team in 2019 after holding a popular Harry Potter-themed dinner. In a decked-out Silliman buttery, guests were sorted into Hogwarts houses and handed admissions letters sealed with wax stamps. The success of the event grew into today’s 14-person business team, which now assists with finances, event coordination, table service, clean up, decorations and material transportation.

“Everyone has different skills that they contribute, which makes you feel like people are happy to have you there,” Ramirez-Hardy said of the relationship between the cooking and business teams.

On Friday night, 70 guests arrived at 16 different times between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to take their seats. Menu adjustments were planned for three vegetarians, a tree nut allergy and requests for no seafood, no gluten, no pork, no coconut, no dairy and no red meat. Birthday candles were added to two mango lassi panna cottas.

Openings are tall orders, but “you get dopamine hits the entire time,” Wagonfeld said. “It’s very satisfying to see a problem coming and then fix it live.”

Y Pop-Up’s next opening will take place on Feb. 16.

Contact **JOSIE REICH** at josie.reich@yale.edu.

Where to buy Valentine’s Day flowers in New Haven

BY PETER WILLIAMS
STAFF REPORTER

Next Wednesday is Valentine’s Day, which means lucky Yalies and New Haveners all across the city will be looking to buy flowers for their significant others.

From red roses to tulips, lilies to orchids and carnations to gerbera daisies, demand for local flowers will soar as Yalies and New Haven residents look to local florists to meet their needs. A few of these florists shared details about how they source and sell flowers during this peak season, and a local collective of flower farmers shared some insights as to how flower farming is nourished throughout the state.

BLOOM, a local multi-purpose retail space that participates in floristry, prioritizes supporting local farmers and sustainable agriculture in their business model. Focusing on the freshest and most vibrant flowers from local suppliers, BLOOM selects for quality, color and fragrance before arranging them into bouquets that are given as gifts throughout the city.

“BLOOM carefully selects the freshest and most vibrant flowers from trusted farmers and suppliers,” Alisha Crutchfield, owner of BLOOM, wrote to the News. “I believe in supporting local communities and sustainable agriculture.”

In addition to setting high standards for its flowers, BLOOM, which is located on Edgewood Ave. in Westville, prioritizes sustainability in its production process. According to Crutchfield, BLOOM strives to minimize waste and ensure eco-friendly practices are followed, including using biodegradable materials for packaging and sourcing flowers from sustainable farms.

Mae Flower and Gift Shop, another local florist situated in Dixwell, spoke more about the strategic aspects of meeting the high demand during the Valentine’s Day season.

“Mae Flower sources flowers for Valentine’s Day by collaborating with multiple suppliers, flower farms and distributors to meet the increased demand,” Nethia Joyner of Mae Flower wrote to the News. “We also engage in advance planning, secure contracts and maintain strategic partnerships to ensure an ample supply of fresh flowers during peak seasons.”

Winters in New Haven are bitter and dark, though, so flower farming isn’t easy in the months leading up to Valentine’s Day.

The CT Flower Collective, a group of flower farmers across the state established in 2019 to promote local sourcing, said that they do not grow flowers for much of the winter season.



COURTESY OF BLOOM

New Haven florists and farmers shared details about the flowers that people will be giving to their beloveds on Feb. 14.

“We are closed for the season from December-March, but offer dried flowers throughout the year which are usually popular to stock up on in the fall to use for the win-

ter season holidays,” Jill Shea, the manager of CT Flower Collective, or CTFC, wrote to the News. “Our earliest big flower holiday to provide local flowers for is Mother’s Day”

During the warmer months, the CTFC sells flowers to the public on Thursdays and Fridays and holds several community building and appreciation events through-

out the season. They also promote unity amongst their member farms through a community message board, social media and design tutorials.

Because it is difficult to meet the Valentine’s Day flower needs in New Haven with only local farmers, florists have to do what they can to ensure wider product access, Crutchfield of BLOOM said.

“In addition to local farms, I also partner with international suppliers who provide unique and exotic flowers that add a touch of extraordinary beauty to our arrangements,” Crutchfield wrote to the News. “I take pride in offering a wide variety of flowers, from classic favorites to rare and exotic blooms, ensuring that there is something special for every customer.”

Crutchfield also highlighted the personalized level of detail that goes into BLOOM’s bouquets, adding that BLOOM tailors flowers, colors and blends to fit each customer’s preferences.

Valentine’s Day is next Wednesday, Feb. 14.

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

CHASE COGGINS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP 2024

The Chase Coggins Memorial Fund is named for Chase Frederick Coggins ’79 Timothy Dwight College. The Scholarship is to assist undergraduates in

- 1) wilderness exploration with philosophical, artistic or scientific intent, and
- 2) traveling to rural areas or developing countries to study.

Examples of past recipient project areas include: “Bike approximately 1,000 km from Kristiansand to Kristiansund, Norway (Kristiansand → Setesdal → Hardanger → Kristiansund) documenting glacial observations, cultural adaptations to climate change, and the impact of the environmental features on Norway’s culture”; “A fleeting exploration of the Yukon-Kuskokwim River Delta, a landscape in transition”.

There is no application form, but proposals are expected to contain a brief summary of academic background, a statement of objectives, an itinerary and a budget.

Recommendations are welcome, and the selection committee may request an interview with the applicant.

You can visit the website at <https://saintanthonyhallsigma.org/chase-coggins-memorial-fund/>
Proposals can be emailed to miserendi@saintanthonyhallsigma.org
The deadline is March 15, 2024

Jonathan Edwards Head of College Tea



Christina Ferando Author of “Exhibiting Antonio Canova”

Exhibiting Antonio Canova: Display and the Transformation of Sculptural Theory argues that the display of Canova’s sculptures in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries shaped the legacy of important sculptural theories. Canova enshrined his marble figures alongside plaster casts of ancient works, bathed them in candlelight, stained and waxed their surfaces, and even set them in motion on rotating bases. These displays inspired discussions on topics as diverse as originality and artistic production, the association between the sculptural surface, flesh, and anatomy, the relationship between painting and sculpture, and the role of public museums. Beholders’ discussions created the lenses through which we experience and interpret works of art, establishing modern attitudes not just towards sculpture, but towards cultural patrimony in general.

Christina Ferando is currently the Dean of Jonathan Edwards College and Lecturer in the Department of History of Art at Yale University.

February 15
JE Head of College House
4:00 pm Tea
4:30pm Conversation

SPORTS

FOR MORE SPORTS CONTENT,
VISIT OUR WEB SITE
yaledailynews.com
Twitter: @YDNSports



YALE DAILY NEWS · FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2024 · yaledailynews.com

“The network, community, and relationships I built at Yale, like Theo and others, as well as the diversity, world view and perspective you get at a place like Yale, drove me to be eminently curious and introspective.”
FRAIG BRESLOW '02, SPEAKING OF FORMER RED SOX GENERAL MANAGER THEO EPSTEIN '95, WHEN ASKED HOW HIS YALE EXPERIENCE HAS HELPED HIS WORK IN THE RED SOX FRONT OFFICE.

M BASKETBALL: Elis extend winning streak over Princeton, Penn

BY BEN RAAB
STAFF REPORTER

Yale's men's basketball team, picked first in the Ivy League's pre-season media poll, is more than living up to expectations.

Yale (15-6, 6-0 Ivy) took down rival Princeton (16-3, 4-2 Ivy) in a 70-64 comeback victory Friday night and then overpowered Penn (9-12, 1-5 Ivy) 74-58 to remain undefeated in Ivy play and also extend their winning streak to eight games.

“Defensively we were really good,” head coach James Jones told the News. “Certainly, there were times tonight where you felt the crowd, you heard the crowd. It's hard to lose when you have that kind of environment at home.”

Against the Tigers, in front of a sold-out home crowd, the Bulldogs trailed for much of the first half, including a 35-26 deficit with 2:48 remaining. Down five at halftime, Yale fought to close

the gap, and guard Bez Mbeng '25 evened the score at 40 with a driving layup at the 15:42 mark.

Forward Danny Wolf '26 hit a three-pointer with 8:42 remaining to give the Elis a 52-50 lead, one which they never relinquished. Wolf and Mbeng hit seven free throws inside the final minutes to hold on to the win.

Mbeng said the game against Princeton had been marked on the calendar given last year's defeat in the Ivy tournament finals.

“I would want to treat it like another game, of course, but we definitely had a little extra motivation coming into this one,” he said.

Wolf led all scorers with 21 points and 12 rebounds, while forward Matt Knowling '24 added 12 points, eight rebounds and four assists.

Against Penn, the Bulldogs led 34-28 at the half but pulled away late, thanks to Wolf's 15

SEE M BASKETBALL PAGE 10



YALE ATHLETICS

The Bulldogs came back from a five-point deficit to earn a huge victory over Princeton, and followed it up with a strong performance against Penn.

‘Smartest Man in Baseball’ is a Yale alum and the new Chief Baseball Officer of the Red Sox



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Yale graduate Craig Breslow had an impressive college career before landing the front-office as Chief Baseball Officer.

BY BETSY GOOD
STAFF REPORTER

The Boston Red Sox announced in October of 2023 that Craig Breslow '02, Yale College alum, would be the new Chief Baseball Officer. Breslow graduated from Yale in 2002, having majored in molecular biophysics and biochemistry while also playing varsity baseball for the Bulldogs. After graduating, he pitched for seven different teams in Major League Baseball, and now works in the Red Sox's front office.

In 2009, the Wall Street Journal wrote an article calling Breslow “the smartest man in baseball, if not the entire world.” Indeed, his accomplishments both on and off the field speak for themselves.

Craig Breslow was born at Yale New Haven Hospital and grew up in Trumbull, CT, less than a 30-minute drive from Yale's campus. Although

Yale was close to home, Breslow said that proximity was not why he decided to become a Bulldog.

“Yale was always this elite institution that I would never be able to go to,” Breslow told the News. “But my academic achievement merited consideration from Ivy league schools and pretty early on [Yale] became the most aggressive recruiters. Ultimately when it came time to make the decision it felt like it was important to use baseball to pursue the best education I could.”

Breslow arrived at Yale in 1998 as a student-athlete with the intent of studying medicine and continuing his baseball career. From the age of 11, Breslow knew that he wanted to study medicine — his sister, 13 at the time, had been diagnosed with pediatric thyroid cancer. The experience had a lasting impact and motivated him to

study molecular biophysics and biochemistry while at Yale, and ultimately to think about pursuing a professional career in medicine after graduation.

While an undergraduate at Yale, Breslow pitched for the Bulldogs on the men's baseball team. He had an impressive four-year run, and notably as a senior, had the lowest ERA in the Ivy League with a 2.56 Earned Run Average, or ERA.

Still interested in pursuing a career in medicine, Breslow applied to medical school and was accepted into New York University Medical School and planned to attend after graduation. His medical school plans were interrupted, though, by his dream of becoming a professional baseball player.

Breslow told the News he con-

SEE BRESLOW PROFILE PAGE 10

T&F: Yale continues to improve in anticipation of Heps



YALE ATHLETICS

Last week, the Yale track and field teams continued to set PRs and crack school all-time leaderboards.

BY PETER WILLIAMS
STAFF REPORTER

On Friday and Saturday, Yale's track and field teams headed back to Boston for the second weekend in a row as they looked to continue their upward trajectory this season.

The teams were split between two meets, with many of both the men's and women's teams' throwers at Harvard's Crimson Elite on Friday, Feb. 2, and most of the teams' runners right across the Charles River at Boston University's Bruce Lebane Scarlet and

White Invitational. With a number of personal records and top-10 all-time school finishes across both the men's and women's teams, the Bulldogs continued to steadily improve upon their performances in anticipation of the Ivy League Heptagonal Cross Country Championships, also known as Heps.

“Lots of progress across all event groups this past week,” Yale track and field coach David Shoehalter wrote to the News. “We look to continue that good work this weekend

SEE TRACK AND FIELD PAGE 10

W BASKETBALL: Bulldogs defeat Penn in overtime triumph

BY MEREDITH HENDERSON
STAFF REPORTER

The Yale women's basketball team (5-15, 2-5 Ivy) traveled to Philadelphia to continue conference play against the University of Pennsylvania (11-9, 3-4 Ivy).

Earlier in the week, the Bulldogs surrendered to Princeton (17-3, 7-0 Ivy), 59-79. Despite the loss, they looked to maintain their hopes at an Ivy tournament bid by defeating the Quakers. Penn, however, rolled into their home arena fresh off a decisive victory against Brown (13-7, 4-3 Ivy), 77-56. This game

saw the two teams meet for the first time this season.

The first quarter began with quick, easy points for Penn, which jumped out to a 7-point lead early. Baskets by Nyla McGill '25 and Grace Thybulle '25 kept Yale at the heels of the Quakers, but they were unable to close the lead. The first quarter ended with Penn leading by nine, 22-13.

The second quarter found the Bulldogs slowly gaining traction. More jumpers, free-throws and three-pointers from usual suspects Jenna Clark '24 and Kiley Capstraw '26 allowed Yale to more

than double their points from the first period. Most notably, Brenna McDonald '24 burned through the Penn defense, leading second-quarter scoring with nine points. By the end of the half, the Bulldogs barely trailed the Quakers, 35-33.

After the half, a jumper by Capstraw immediately tied the game at 35. Though Penn sunk necessary shots, Yale fought to inch right back up to them. In a push-pull for points, Clark made crucial baskets to keep her team in the game.

SEE W BASKETBALL PAGE 10



YALE ATHLETICS

The women's basketball team forced an overtime against the Penn Quakers 74-68.

WEEKEND

//MELANY PEREZ

Happy Valentine's Day
XOXO your WKND Editors,
Zoë, Abby and Lizzie

WEEKEND *PROPOSALS*

ON THE ROAD:

On the Way to Monterey

// BY ALEXANDER MEDEL

There is no sight more gratifying to me than the open road, for the open road allows the body to wander and the mind to wonder. It offers an escape for the imagination and a way of life governed by freedom and fueled by curiosity.

My name is Alexander, and I am a first year in Timothy Dwight College studying political science. Naturally, my day is complete with writing papers, reading research articles and attending lectures. And as much as I am a Yale student, I consider myself a student of the world with the open road as my classroom.

This travel column, On the Road, recounts several of my adventures on asphalt and all the lessons I have learned from the people, places and things I have encountered on all roads, from those well-traveled to those not taken.

Throughout my life, people have often asked me what I think love is like. I could offer philosophical ideas from the Greeks, countless songs from Frank Sinatra’s discography or the plot of “Casablanca.” I have always struggled to find the perfect response, until last summer when I stumbled upon my answer on one of my travels.

A few weeks after we graduated from high school, a group of friends and I decided to take a small road trip. June 2023 was full of energy and excitement — we had college to look forward to and a summer that offered, for once, the prospect of rest and relaxation. With that spirit, we hopped into our cars and drove south toward the Monterey Peninsula.

The Monterey Peninsula is roughly 120 miles south of San Francisco and situated on the southern end of Monterey Bay. Among its charming communities is Monterey, a coastal city of roughly 30,000 people steeped in history and culture. Perhaps its greatest claim to fame is the Monterey Bay Aquarium, one of the finest in the nation. I could easily recall the countless moments I spent as a young child gazing in awe at the canyons of water that would tower over me, complete with jellyfish sifting in the water through the glass. Monterey is also home to Cannery Row. Christened as such

by John Steinbeck, the street was previously home to sardine canneries for most of the twentieth century. Now, it is home to luxurious hotels, gift shops and restaurants. Beyond Cannery Row lies the Presidio and Old Fisherman’s Wharf, a beloved landmark where one can enjoy a hearty meal of California seafood. For our trip, we decided to pass through Monterey and take our time on the 17-Mile Drive.

The 17-Mile Drive is an auto route that takes travelers through some of the most beautiful sights of the Monterey Peninsula. Coming from the north, the drive starts in Pacific Grove, a city next to Monterey, and follows the western edge of the peninsula all the way to Pebble Beach. We began our day at Point Pinos. While climbing through a series of sea rocks, the morning sea breeze wrestling through our faces, we encountered a group of playful squirrels. Their heads would peek out of the rocks, and they would hop from rock to rock, slowly making their way to us. They took delight in the attention we gave them, while we took delight in their antics. After spending a considerable amount of time playing with them, we left and entered the 17-Mile Drive.

Making our way south, we passed by numerous beaches, with the sea audibly churning busily from the car window. The winds were fresh and strong. Taking note of this, and the fact that the car we were riding on had a sunroof, we took turns peering through it at moderate speed. I emerged through the sunroof and felt as if the wind was baptizing me. My face was buffeted into a reawakening. Before I peeked through, I sported a styled pompadour. After I peeked through, my hair sported a style akin to a Pollack masterpiece, but no matter.

Our next stop was Bird Rock. Here, we caught fair glimpses of the birds that called the California coast home. Some of them rested on rocks that extended out into the sea. Others bobbed like buoys on the water. In addition to the sight before us came nature’s symphony: waves crashing against the rocks, seafoam rolling on the beaches near us and the barking of seals in the ocean and sea lions sunbathing on Bird Rock. We tried our best to communicate with the seals and sea lions, trying

our best to emulate their vocabularies. Their languages, however, were complex, and we only succeeded in attracting the gaze of confused tourists.

After our attempts at verbal communication with seafaring mammals, we continued our drive and entered Crocker Grove where the road meandered through a forest of rare Monterey cypress trees. Their white trunks towered into the sky, while their dark green leaves swayed in the wind. Soon enough, we found ourselves gazing at an iconic sight: the Lone Cypress.

Standing atop a highland extending into the Pacific and overlooking Carmel Bay is a solitary Monterey cypress tree. Its soft green foliage danced freely with the ocean breeze, in contrast to the stolid and jagged gray rocks of the granite summit it calls home. Its leaves have basked in the glow of thousands of sunrises and sunsets. For more than two centuries, the Lone Cypress has survived storms and the sprays of the sea. It has stood tall and strong through the wind and rain. Throughout its life, it has enchanted artists and photographers and has captivated writers and travelers. It stares, now, at the Pacific with an air of humility and strength.

I have seen this tree many times throughout my life, and when I was a young kid, its existence always fascinated me. Returning as a young man, at least older and arguably wiser, I looked at the tree, squinting my eyes to trace the wrinkles on its trunk from a distance. It was there where I found my answer to the age-old question, what is love?

Love the Lone Cypress not because of its charm, but because of what it stands for. It is made all the more beautiful by the way it offered me a lesson on love. In the same way that the Lone Cypress has withstood history, love itself is something enriched by the passage of time. It is natural, indeed important, for our understanding of love to evolve and mature as we navigate our lives.

Life

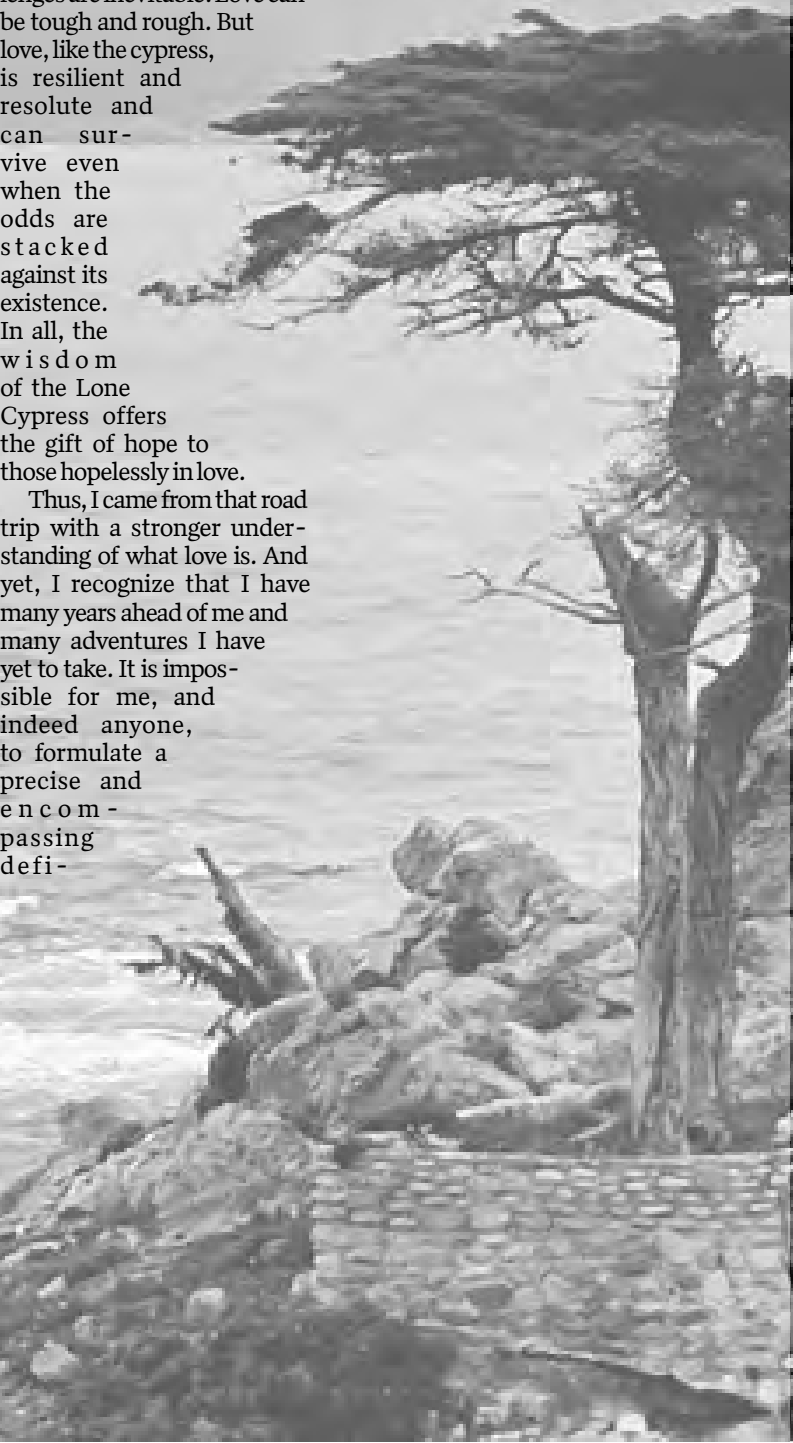
itself can be viewed as a journey made richer by pursuing the depths of love. And the only way we can try to understand a force as complicated and complex as love is to simply live our lives with a measure of patience, curiosity and determination.

Like the Lone Cypress, love is something that can be weathered by the winds of life or battered by the storms of existence, and yet remain. Falling in love or being in love is not easy. Problems are natural and challenges are inevitable. Love can be tough and rough. But love, like the cypress, is resilient and resolute and can survive even when the odds are stacked against its existence. In all, the wisdom of the Lone Cypress offers the gift of hope to those hopelessly in love.

Thus, I came from that road trip with a stronger understanding of what love is. And yet, I recognize that I have many years ahead of me and many adventures I have yet to take. It is impossible for me, and indeed anyone, to formulate a precise and encompassing definition

of what love is. The wisdom of the Lone Cypress is only one of countless perspectives on the subject of love. There exist many more in the world and in our lives, and it is up to us to discover them because, in the end, love is what we make of it.

Contact **ALEXANDER MEDEL** at alexanderyale.edu.



YOU WON'T BELIEVE HOW MY PARENTS GOT TOGETHER

// BY MERIDIAN MONTHY

As Valentine’s Day fast approaches, I am reminded of why my expectations for love are so high.

My parents met in the 7th grade, when two rural junior highs were combined into one. On the first day of English

class, they were called on to recite The Odyssey, my mom playing Penelope and my dad reading for the titular Odysseus. My mom remembers sheepishly shuffling to the front of the room and watching in admiration as my dad strode through the crowd like a ship parting the sea. My dad just remembers her eyes.

Fast friends, they spent their afternoons biking down dusty roads in the tough Texas sun. All the while, he pined after the sharp girl who cried tears of joy when she laughed.

As if following scripts in a rom-com, my mom became cheer captain and my dad became the formidable football player. But instead of ending up

as prom king and queen, they were salutatorian and valedictorian. “I always knew she was smarter than me,” he confessed years after his second place finish. “That’s why I love her.”

When exactly they fell in love is a mystery. They say it was like leather worn with time, no pivotal eye bat or declaration of love, just a mutual understanding formed from five years of friendship. Of course, the moment they let each other know, it was time to leave for college. But my dad was certain that nothing — not even what ended up becoming eight years of long distance love — would come between them.

He made her name the password to all his locks (this is true!), saved money from his three jobs to call her whenever possible (this is true!), and sent his Southern belle love letters every day with quotes from poets and playwrights and philosophers (this is perhaps apocryphal).

After school, to celebrate their continued love through years of changing landscapes, they set off to backpack the world, seeking more stories. They missed flights, slept on cobblestones, and were gassed and robbed on the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Their final destination was Fiji, its waters home to the 180th meridian line, also known as the International Date Line, where time zones reset and each new day begins. My dad secretly packed my mom her one nice dress, which she wore as they rowed out into the dark waters in a dinghy. He carried with him two things — a precise digital clock, which slowly ticked towards midnight on New Year’s Eve in 1999, and a small velvet box. When the clock struck twelve and the new year began, he proposed, becoming the first man in the millennium to do so. My mother’s shouts of “Yes!” were heard by no one, her face illuminated only by the moon.

And thus comes my name — Meridian, the destination of devotion, the birth of their new life together. My middle name is Barrett, after the poet my father quoted in every letter to my mother during their time apart. My name means love.

It’s hard to have realistic expectations for romance when I was raised in a Homeric epic poem. Except this tale is not fiction.

Contact **MERIDIAN MONTHY** at meridian.monthy@yale.edu.

WKND Recommends

Celebrating V-Day with all your loved ones, not just your romantic partners. How lucky we are to be loved in any way!

WEEKEND

MEET CUTE

Holy Guacamole: How I Rizzed Up a Priest

// BY MARIA AROZAMENA

The ticking of the clock beats alongside the rhythmic scrapes and brushes of chalk against chalkboard, drooping eyelids and weighted pulses like mercury dripping down the side of a thermometer. A dose of summer’s sunshine weeps through the window, stifling the air conditioner’s feeble attempts to chill the classroom and keep our bodies awake. Beside me, I watch Mila doodle her notes—a warm blend of series convergence theorems, worked-out examples, and worms wriggling through the paper’s edge.

“Hey guys,” a voice cut in: Parker Starket, fellow first-year and resident IM Secretary. “Do either of you want to play IM soccer today? We really need two more people, otherwise we’ll forfeit.”

To be clear, I had no business playing IM soccer. The last time I remembered playing was in middle school gym, spun head-to-toe in My Chemical Romance merch and totally, totally lame. But in a bout of innocent first-year spontaneity, Mila and I exchanged glances and before I was even conscious of them, the words slipped out of my mouth.

“We’ll do it.”

*
My limp limbs struggled to kick the ball even near the vicinity of my own team. My calves ached from running, and my skin stunk with sticky sweat from the blistering sun. That was when he walked in.

Well, he didn’t really walk—he leapt into the game, outfitted in a bulldog athletics shirt, aquamarine shorts, and neon cleats. I watched him maneuver the ball fiercely and wrap himself through the opposing team’s defense like a weaver’s needle pierces fabric with its thread. No part of me wanted to come in contact with that soccer ball, but I craved a closer look at the handsome figure scheming its movements. When the ref called time, I turned toward Mila with a gaping mouth and blazing cheeks, but I couldn’t blame my flush on the heat.

Two weeks later, when Alex pleaded for IM soccer players again, I did not hesitate. This time, though, I was alone, suffocating under the predominantly male atmosphere of the field. I looked around, not desperately (because desperate isn’t cool), but curiously, wondering if perhaps I might see the mystery man that nearly saved us last time. I tried to stay focused on my movements, ensuring that I would look cool in case, oh... I don’t know, in case a certain persona happened to hop on the field and strut my way and sway me in his strong, sweaty arms after our victory. Gross.

I was lost enough in my imagination to miss my shot to kick the ball (sorry, guys), but I wasn’t lost enough to not notice when the Trojan man bolted onto the field again, assuming the full confidence of an elite player. I watched him aggressively yet gracefully lead the offense and tangle his feet in a complex choreography toward the goal, claiming a win on the field and a throne in my heart. Well, maybe not a throne, but at least a spot on my radar of Saybrook Eye Candy & Dining Hall Delights.

I found shelter in the boisterous emotion following our first IM soccer victory, relishing in the thrill of the win to distract myself from the skipped beats within my chest everytime I glanced to my left, where he stood.

I remember, now, laying beside the small sidewalk in anticipation for the bus, the sinking sun in the distance a beautiful sight against the treacherous blasphemy reaching through my nostrils, the smells of sweaty armpits and worm cleats and dirt, gym shirts that hadn’t seen the laundry machine in days, at best. Maybe weeks. In a fit of courage, I turned to him.

“Hey, you were really good out there,” I squeaked. He smiled a boyish smile, straight out of those Disney Channel rom-coms with the fringy hair and pearly whites, a sweet gesture.

“Thanks! I’m glad you came out—what’s your name?”

We chatted politely onto the bus, plotting ourselves down beside one another, only a corridor’s length between our bodies. I laughed, I giga-

gled, I couldn’t help but stare at the caramel core of his eyes, his rich golden-brown hair and the way he so effortlessly exhibited charm. I wanted to ask him everything, to know his entire life story and laugh at silly baby photos with his mom and make him his favorite foods and love him forever and ever and ever again.

I was down bad.
“Hey, what year are you, by the way?” I asked. I haven’t seen him around, but maybe he’s a sophomore?

“Oh, I’m a junior. I’m double majoring in Poli Sci and Religious Studies,” he responded.

Yikes...a junior. He’d never go for a first-year.

“Wait, that’s so cool. Why are you majoring in Religious Studies though?”

“I want to be a priest.”
I had to admit, of the list of what I’d anticipated my college love life to be like, a Fleabag moment wasn’t really all that high on my list. Scratch that—a Catholic priest wasn’t in the memo at all. I was thankful for the bus driver’s abrupt stop and the scramble of students rushing toward the dining halls. Maybe I could save Saybrook for another night.

*
The Saybrook library (lovingly, our Saybrary) was more of my home than Vanderbilt Hall during my first semester. Cramming Directed Studies essays, laughing with friends into the midnight hours, snoozing on the couches, running my fingers along the edges of books charred with knowledge, etched with the care of generations long passed. I walked in unassumingly toward my favorite couch nook in the Japanese corner when sitting at the edge of the table to my left, I saw him.

He wore what I took to be PJs staring intensely at his laptop, the ridges of his brow forming gentle creases down his rounded nose. Walking over, I watched his chin tilt upwards and the corners of his cheeks bud into a warm smile.

“Hey, how’s it going?”
“Pretty good! I’m a little stressed because I have a pset due tonight, but otherwise okay,” I laughed to lighten the mood. “Is it cool if I sit with you?”
“Of course!” Bye, bye Japanese couch.

Shifting between my work and the far more interesting attraction beside me, I bid my time quoting Thucydides and stealing not-so-casual casual glances in his direction, drifting my corneas toward the nearest intellectual-looking item at the sign of any shift in his demeanor. I wasn’t so much fascinated by his beauty or anything of the sort at first, but I wondered to myself: huh, what was I going on about earlier? He’s not even that hot—I need to touch some grass.

A pause. Wait. He’s actually lowkey kind of ugly.
Ehhhhh....
No, he’s cute.

Nearing eleven, he began to pack up his items—a sole laptop and his water bottle—into his bag. The library was relatively empty besides the two of us, soon to be one.

“I love the saybrary,” I chirped, desperate for slight conversation besides our simple greetings. “It’s always so quiet, and I love getting to see everyone I know!”

“Yeah, I come here like every night,” he responded, casual in his demeanor. “I honestly don’t really leave Saybrook.” Good. To. Know.

The next day, I was back for round two (≠grindneverstops), locked and loaded and with maybe a little more mascara than the previous day. I stood a little taller, stepping into the silent room with a cool, calculated air, pretending to be surprised when I spoke, “No way you’re here again.”

“Always.”
I gave into a cycle, repeating these gestures on a day-to-day basis for weeks, opting for quiet remarks and dainty, dimpled smiles. I hadn’t exactly forgotten he wanted to be a priest, but I figured there was no shame in at least making a new friend—especially one as kind and funny and intelligent and gorgeous as him. Afternoons turned to evenings turned to Saturday nights at the Saybrary, sitting side by side and doodling away the time. I doodled notes, words of encouragement I ripped from my notebooks and passed to

him during particularly long intervals of staring at the screen. I built these puns and doodles from little facts I gathered about his life: “you don’t succ!” with a small cactus in a pot because he told me he grew succulents back home; a birthday card with flowering flora and fauna for his gardening aspirations; Handsome Dan meeting the Pope because... I think you can guess by now.

I became impatient. On an early Tuesday evening, again on a whim as he exited the Saybrary, I called out, “Wait! I have a question—can I get your number?” He turned around, and I continued, “I’m uh... actually really considering the Religious Studies major, and since you’re, uh, the first Religious Studies major I’ve met, I would love to ask you some questions.”

A blank stare covered his face, taking a moment’s notice to process what I’d just asked. In simple compliance, he replied, “Sure thing.” No endearing smile, no brightness in his eyes, there was no picture-perfect movie moment awaiting my courageous pursuit of his number. I was only greeted by the same casual countenance that graced the dining halls and basement pathways of the college. The disinterest radiated from his very bones, from his straightforward texts and simple replies. Delusional as I was, that didn’t stop me from trying.

If his texts were dry, though, his laughter was fertile throughout our conversations, feeding the seeds for my delusion. He laughed often and openly in harmony with my own bouts of giggles that filled the room on empty Saturdays and filled themselves in the crevices of the pauses of our speech. A stupid joke from him matched by my own subpar pun-making. At the fall formal, I found my rival partner in his ridiculous jigs that matched my godforsaken dancing.

When I saw avocados in the dining hall during a Latinx Heritage Month celebration, I gasped. I didn’t even like avocados, but I knew he loved them. I watched the guacamole station fiercely, wondering whether he’d seen the spectacle during his own dinner plans. Mila sat beside me, chewing.

“Mila,” I began, “what if I just... take those avocados?”

Her twinkling eyes betrayed her serious stare. “I mean, I don’t think they’ll care. Why?”

When I returned to the Saybrary that night, I held two large, wrinkled trophies. I held them behind my back steadily; the grin on my face revealed my excitement. His own eyes lit up as I had never seen them, and bringing the avocados towards his hands, he began to hold mine.

Just for a microcosm of a second, I felt this touch in all its weight and power—not in an electric shock, but in a distinct, nearly uncanny spectacle of feeling just... right. I felt the comfort I had only felt lying in bed, under sheets that caressed me and peluchitos that puckered kisses of love.

But wait, Maria! What about the whole—you know—“wanting to be a priest” thing? Isn’t that kind of important?

Yes, it was. Though I continued crushing on him, I had dug myself a purgatory between puppy love and blasphemy. Poli Sci and Religious Studies. Religious Studies, right—priest. Priest.

I didn’t presume I held the “rizz” necessary to convert him away from the Way of The Lord, nor did I wish to: I had met him as priest-wannabe, and I recognized that in no world was it my place to come between him and his religion. The sweet, silly Catholic boy who attended mass twice a week and prayed during every possible pause should be left on his own to assume the priesthood, if he so wished, to deepen his relationship to his God and spread His Gospel.

On the other hand: I felt undertones of flirtiness. And after a few weeks, I could no longer blame it on my delusion. My friends relished in my giddiness, interrupting my doubts with well-crafted evidences and instances, behaviors that proved he was, had to be, totally and completely in love with me.

The first time he studied in Sterling was by my side. Through our

conversations, I found out that he had never studied in many places besides the Saybrary; in my one semester in college, I had delved into more libraries and study corners than he even knew existed. So, of course, I just had to show him the stacks.

We had agreed to meet at 8:00 PM in front of Sterling. At 8:02, I stood expectantly on the steps, overlooking the mystic gothic landscape before me in search of him. 8:07, and he still hadn’t come. My gut sunk in disappointment, preparing to digest my feelings.

Why does this always happen? Is every guy truly the same? I swear you can never trust a nice man I mean what even is a nice man anyway—

The buzzing of my phone interrupted my grievances. Ah! “M— IM Soccer,” or so his contact name listed him, was calling.

“Hey, where are you?” he spoke in a whisper.

“I’m in front of Sterling. I’ve been waiting for you.”

“I don’t see you—I’m in front of Sterling, near the couches.”

“Wait, are you inside?”

My heart breathed a sigh of relief and somersaulted into feeling guilty for the way I’d assumed he hadn’t shown up. When I entered through the carved wooden doors and passed the security, I found him waiting patiently on an armchair to the right of the Alma Mater. His hair was slightly wet and combed, face freshly shaved and bright. When he caught my eye, he jogged over apologetically for the crime he didn’t even commit.

Nearing 11, we left our study post in pursuit of the stacks. Floor 6M. We rummaged through the books, impressively pointing and searching the titles before us, relishing in the simple distractions from the tension that consumed us both until we stood face-to-face, bodies aligned at the end of a corridor letting out to a window. I placed my hands carefully behind me, but I longed to connect with him again. Outside, students were lining up for Hallowoads.

From the way he’s staring at me right now, he either likes me or wants to kill me. Otherwise, he wouldn’t be looking into my eyes like that; I don’t think anyone has ever looked at me that way.

“Hey,” I emboldened. “Would you maybe want to come to a Halloween party with me?”

“I’ve never been to one. I don’t think I have a costume,” he sheepishly replied.

“Easy. What if we do a group costume: you be Shaggy and I’ll be Velma? It’ll be fun, and all you have to do is wear a simple outfit, and maybe just roughen up your hair a little more.” I rustled my fingers through his hair lightly, rushing a blush toward my cheeks that I was glad he couldn’t see in the darkness. He shifted toward me.

“That would be nice.”

*
I should be clear—a group costume is not a group costume with just two people. That is a couple’s costume. And I knew I had a perfectly fine Velma outfit sitting patiently in the back of my dresser. That night, when I met him outside his entryway, he looked like a vision in his worn green shirt and slightly-too-big khaki pants.

Inside the party, we danced with each other in a small corner, away from the fevered crowd and in our

own little vision of heaven where all we had was each other and the music coursing through our hearts, numbing the nervousness that nearly sickened us. I could hardly pay attention to his dancing for fear of getting the ick, but I gazed deeply into his eyes, dark under the red LEDs but sweetly crinkling at their edges, gentle betrayers of his secret smile.

“Hey, I have something for you. Do you think you’d want to maybe leave for a little bit with me?” he poised. The thump, thump of my pulse hid itself within the blaring music, and my nod signaled my agreement to his proposal.

He entered his room for less than two minutes when I heard him running down the stairs, exasperated but totally excited. He pulled out his arms from behind him, revealing a small potted plant. “I got you a succulent!”

I couldn’t hold back my excitement—I ran toward him and embraced him in a long, passionate kiss smack dab in the center of the Saybrook courtyard. A crowd gathered around us, he tilted my frame downwards, holding me like a tele-novela lover and the fireworks lit up onto the screen of my eyelids. Everything around me was light, even though my eyes were closed. A clanging interrupted our world, and an ominous voice dropped down from the heavens. You, traitors! You have violated the most Holy Priesthood! You are forever banned from entering a church EVER AGAIN!!!!

Okay, that didn’t actually happen. Our first kiss was actually quite quiet—the sweet, innocent gestures of a first kiss, our hands cupped around each other’s faces in the intimacy of my dorm room. We did break up after a day of “dating” because he had a religious crisis, but we have been together since.

I won’t say it’s been easy, despite his good-natured spirit and kind heart. I’m not openly religious in the way that he is, I never attended church before I went with him for the first time (boy, was it a culture shock). Still now, I struggle to understand his religious philosophy at times, and we bicker on subjects neither of us intend to change our opinions of—we’ve come to terms with compromise, with embracing the hot takes engraved onto our bones and hardened still within our hearts.

I still recall the nights I spent on Old Campus, pacing through the geometric sidewalks and debating with Mila on whether he liked me or not—“he was definitely flirting with you,” “no, he wants to be a priest,” “are you sure they can’t marry?” “they definitely can’t,” “I still think he was being sus.” I still harbor the doubt that one day he’ll wake up, realize he actually does want to pursue priesthood, and I’ll remain right where he left me.

But I’ve also learned to let myself fall face-first into love. I’ve learned to be honest, even when I’m afraid and vulnerable. I’ve learned to relish in the warmth of his embrace without letting it suffocate me; I’ve learned to listen to my self, my gut, my heart, and I’ve learned to speak the truth they tell me. Had I let myself remain silent, I never would have been able to know the love I feel today. And though I’m not well versed in religion, that is a blessing to me.

Contact **MARIA AROZAMENA** at maria.azozamena@yale.edu.



// MARIA AROZAMENA

Anyway - LOVE

// BY ANNA CALKINS

I'm not known as someone who tries — and let alone succeeds — to be mysterious or nonchalant. I think that if I tried to "play it cool," my friends would think I had recently suffered some serious trauma.

There is nothing secretive about me. I share with reckless abandon. The password to my phone is practically public knowledge — it's 0000 — and I have never delayed a response to someone's text in order to give the appearance of not caring. Sometimes I really don't care, but I wouldn't want to forget about the text.

I show love in many ways, often all at once or in a janky tandem. I tell my friends I love them before I hang up the phone, and I throw compliments with poor aim in just about every direction. I compliment strangers at inopportune moments, like while jaywalking in opposite directions, and ask nothing in response, only that we don't get hit by a car.

It took me a while to realize that I wanted to be someone who loves and likes as freely as I do now. In my first relationship, I told my boyfriend I would only say "I love you" when I felt it so strongly, I had no choice but to say it. I worried that saying it too much would cause the phrase to lose its significance.

When I was younger, I didn't tell my friends that I loved them because I worried they might take it the wrong way, or they might not reciprocate the expression. Somewhere between ages 12 and 14, "I love you" became a taboo: a phrase too charged with emotion to use with just anyone.

During junior year, I retired from shame. The pandemic kept me away from my friends, making me realize the importance of expressing love when I could. I didn't know when the next pandemic might take me away from them again. Now I hardly even feel embarrassed, save when I sneeze in the music library.

The choice to announce my feelings was practically an overnight switch. I wanted to start saying what I meant, so I did. I started with my friends, introducing small gestures and phrases to let them know I appreciate them. Now I say I love everything, including "Succession," which I've never seen.

This philosophy of caring generously all the time has been fun. I love so many movies, dishes and people, that just about everywhere I turn, there's something that brings me joy.

The only downside is that I have absolutely no game. I've become a bit too direct for flirting. I just jump straight to loving someone, which hasn't gone over hugely well at Sig Chi or Zeta.

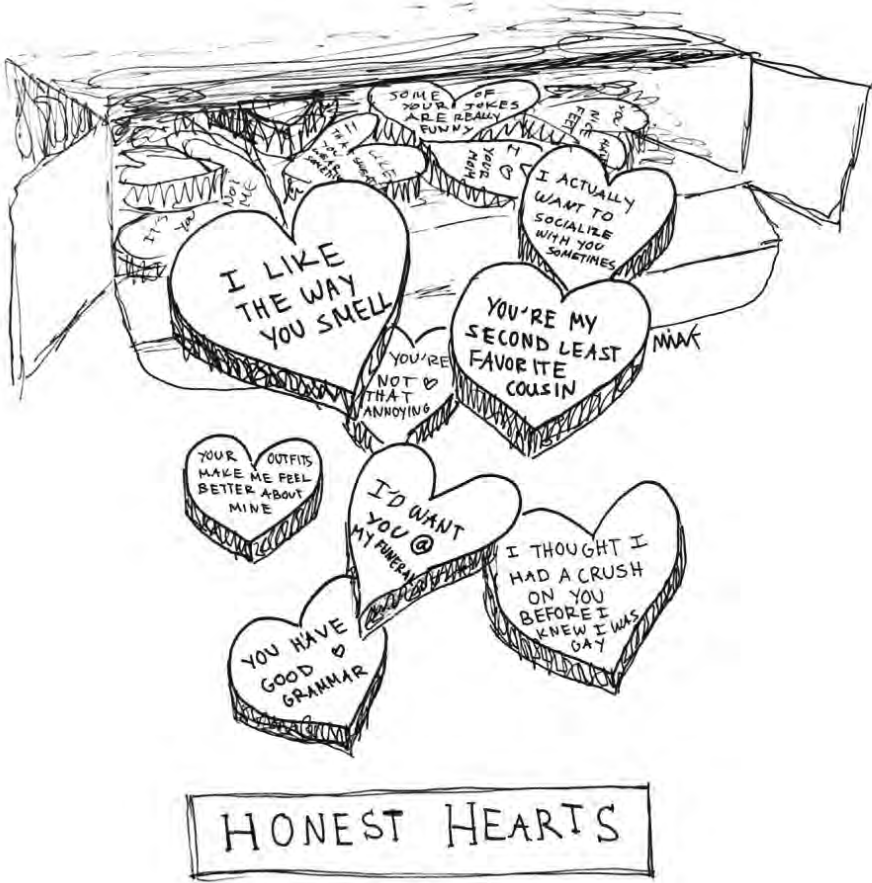
The ways that I show love are pretty widespread. It's not just a matter of saying it all the time. My love for the people and things around me manifests in many ways. I have learned from many years of youngest-sibling-service that one of the quietest but most direct ways to show love is through small favors. I grab an extra snack for a friend when I can, and I am always happy to accompany someone on an errand or lend a hand when it's needed.

I am a firm believer in the power of a handwritten card. I send letters to family members all the time and never let a birthday pass without a handmade card inscribed with well wishes.

I try to set aside at least an hour for meals with the people that I love, making space for conversation and quality time with each other. I listen closely, and I make mental — sometimes literal — notes of important details I learn about people.

I am not strategic or sly by any means, but I don't want to be. This year for Valentine's Day, you can catch me giving chocolates and notes to all my friends, and probably some strangers, too. As long as we're both jaywalking.

Contact ANNA CALKINS
at anna.calkins@yale.edu.




// MIA KOHN


YALE | THE 2024 FINZI-CONTINI LECTURE

FABULAR TURN
ON LOUISE GLÜCK'S
LAST THREE BOOKS

Teju Cole, a Nigerian American novelist, essayist, and photographer, teaches at Harvard University as the Gore Vidal Professor of the Practice of Creative Writing.

FEBRUARY 15, 2024 | 4:30 PM
HUMANITIES QUADRANGLE | HQ L02






WHITNEY
HUMANITIES
CENTER

The Finzi-Contini lectureship was endowed in 1990 by the Honorable Guido Calabresi, Judge in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, and Dr. Paul Calabresi, in memory of their mother, Bianca Maria Finzi-Contini Calabresi, a scholar of European literature and Professor of Italian at Albertus Magnus College.

The event is cosponsored by *The Yale Review*.



WKND Hot Take:

Walk of shames during the school week are okay <3