

Yale Daily News

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Yale community mourns on Oct. 7

BY KARLA CORTES AND YOLANDA WANG
STAFF REPORTERS

On Oct. 7, Yale and New Haven community members gathered across campus to mourn the thousands of deaths since Hamas' attack on Israel last year and Israel's retaliatory war in the ensuing months.

Hundreds congregated on Sunday and Monday to hold vigils for the deceased. Some also expressed grief through prayers, art and community discussions.

On Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas launched an attack on Israel, killing about 1,200 Israelis and taking at least 240 more as hostages. About 100 of the hostages are still

held captive in Gaza, including the bodies of at least 34.

In retaliation, Israel has launched a year-long military offensive in Gaza, which has killed more than 41,500 Palestinians. Over 2,000 individuals have been killed in Lebanon since Oct. 7 as well, in Israeli fire exchanges with Hezbollah, a U.S.-designated terrorist group.

On the year mark since the Hamas attack, the Yale community mobilized to mourn civilian deaths on and after Oct. 7. Some demanded the release of the hostages and others called for a cease-fire in Gaza.



A year after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel and the war in Gaza started, Yale community members gathered to mourn lives lost. / Ariela Lopez, Contributing Photographer

SEE VIGIL PAGE 4

Yale sued for fin. aid pricing

BY HAILEY TALBERT
STAFF REPORTER

On Monday night, Yale, along with dozens of other private universities and the College Board, was hit with a proposed class action lawsuit for an alleged pricing conspiracy.

The law firm Hagens Berman is investigating Yale, dozens of other private universities and the College Board for colluding to artificially lower financial aid for college students with noncustodial parents, which is any parent whose child does not live with them the majority of the time. Other institutions implicated in the price-fixing lawsuit include peer universities such as Harvard, Columbia, Brown, Cornell and Stanford.

The firm's investigation claims to have found evidence that the College Board, an organization that administers college aptitude testing and a financial aid application form, may implement unjust guidelines for students with noncustodial parents. This alleged anticompetitive conduct may have decreased students' chances of qualifying for additional need-based financial aid from colleges and universities.

The lawsuit alleges that the price-fixing strategy among the implicated institutions raised

SEE LAWSUIT PAGE 4

New tool may explain racial demographics

BY HAILEY TALBERT
STAFF REPORTER

Yale College's class of 2028, the first admitted post-affirmative action, saw stable racial demographics, deviating from many predictions on the effects of the Supreme Court's decision and raising questions.

In 2022, Yale argued in a joint amicus brief to the Supreme Court that "no race-neutral alternative presently can fully replace race-conscious individualized and holistic review to obtain the diverse student body Amici have found essential to fulfilling their missions."

However, the class of 2028 saw stable Black and Latine enrollment while the share of Asian American students slightly decreased and white students slightly increased.

This differed from peer institutions such as MIT, Columbia, Brown and Cornell, which all saw decreases in Black and Latine enrollment.

After the Court struck down the use of race-conscious admissions, Yale's admissions office implemented several changes to its admissions policies to comply with the Court's decision. One newly used tool stood out as a possible explanation for the class of 2028 demographics — the Opportunity Atlas.

The News examined the Opportunity Atlas, how it has influenced Yale's admissions process in the last cycle and whether its use complies with the Supreme Court's decision banning the use of race in admissions.

What is the Opportunity Atlas?

The Opportunity Atlas is a comprehensive dataset of children's

outcomes in adulthood using data covering nearly the entire U.S. population. The tool was created by Opportunity Insights, a team of researchers and policy analysts based at Harvard University, funded by foundations such as the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The Opportunity Atlas estimates children's adult outcomes, such as average earnings and incarceration rates, by parental income, race and gender, based on census data.

The tool uses anonymized data from the 2000 and 2010 censuses linked to data from Federal income tax returns and the 2005-2015 American Community Surveys to obtain the necessary information. The data covers 20 million children, approximately 94 percent of all children born during the time period analyzed.

"My colleagues and I created the Opportunity Atlas to help policymakers of all sorts understand how children's pathways out of poverty vary from one neighborhood to the next and ultimately be able to target their efforts to more effectively create equality of opportunity," John Friedman, co-director of Opportunity Insights, wrote.

Yale introduced the Opportunity Atlas as a new tool the admissions office would use after the Supreme Court struck down affirmative action. Then, Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis and Dean of Undergraduate Admission and Financial Aid Jeremiah Quinlan outlined that admissions officers would "incorporate new place-based data" from the Opportunity

SEE ADMISSIONS PAGE 4

How Oct. 7 changed Jewish life at Yale

BY ARIELA LOPEZ AND NORA MOSES
STAFF REPORTERS

Hannah Saraf '27 was spending Family Weekend on campus with her parents on Oct. 7, 2023, when she learned about a massive attack in southern Israel that day. Saraf, whose father is Israeli, anxiously contacted a childhood friend whom she knew was in Israel. Her panic increased when she learned that her childhood friend had gone to visit her family in the South for a holiday that weekend.

"She said 'I am here right now and there are people outside of our house.' She didn't even live there. She just went to go visit her family," Saraf said. "That was really scary, when I didn't hear from her. I was really, really anxious about the people I knew, but after that cleared I was just sad and honestly, I was immediately really worried about the toll this was going to take on Palestinians."

When Hamas terrorists entered Israel in the early hours of Saturday, Oct. 7 — around 11:30 p.m. EST on Oct. 6 — Jewish students were celebrating the holiday of Sukkot, many at Yale's Joseph Slifka Center for Jewish Life with relatives visiting for Yale's annual Family Weekend. Some learned of the unfolding terror attacks from social media or Israeli news outlets on Friday night. Others, who did not use technology on the holiday due to their religious observance, heard only fragments of information throughout Saturday and Sunday, the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah.

In the ensuing days and weeks, news outlets reported the deaths of over 1,200 Israelis in the attacks,



Yale's Jewish students recount a year of grief, confusion and resilience. / Ellie Park, Multimedia Managing Editor

including 364 individuals killed while attending the Nova open-air music festival near Kibbutz Re'im in southern Israel. Video footage and subsequent reporting confirmed reports of sexual violence and mutilation. Over 240 individuals were taken captive by Hamas. 97 hostages are still being held in Gaza — at least 34 of whom Israel has concluded are no longer alive.

At Yale, the Oct. 7 attacks set in motion a year of large campus protests responding to Israel's retaliatory war in Gaza, which has killed at least 41,500 Palestinians. Over 2,000 individuals have been killed in Lebanon since Oct. 7 as well, in Israeli fire exchanges with Hezbollah, a U.S.-designated terrorist group.

The News spoke to 16 Jewish students from across Yale College and three graduate programs who described how Oct. 7 and its aftermath changed their lives, the Jewish community and Yale.

"Walking in a nightmare"

Sabrina Zbar '26, a member of Yale's small Orthodox community, studied for a year in Israel and has many close family and friends who live there. She remembers "every detail" of how she spent Oct. 9, 2023, her first day back on campus after spending the holiday weekend in South Carolina with friends. Zbar described that Monday as "one of the worst days" she has ever experienced.

"Being on campus that first week back just felt like I was walking in a nightmare that I couldn't really wake up from," Zbar said. "I just felt so helpless on campus and so sad and alone in my sadness."

Like most observant Jews, Zbar learned about Hamas's attacks "in stages," as she did not turn on her phone to check the news until after Simchat Torah ended on Sunday night.

On campus, similar scenes of confusion and grief played out over the weekend. Nava Feder '27, who is observant, described knowing throughout the weekend that an attack had happened, but not being aware of the scale. Yossi Moff '27 recalled that Rabbi Jason Rubenstein, then the University's Jew-

ish Chaplain, made an announcement in the middle of the morning services about an attack on Israel, killing hundreds. When services ended and students arrived at Slifka for Shabbat lunch, information began spreading.

Sophie Schonberger '26 learned about the attack before she went to sleep on Oct. 6. The next day, she was reluctant to go to Slifka, where she had intended to take her visiting family, because she did not want to "ruin" the festivities for students who had not checked their phones.

"I have these vivid memories of sitting at breakfast feeling frozen because I was just trying not to break down," Schonberger said, recounting the morning of Oct. 7. "I'd seen that there was a big attack, and I knew that a lot of people had been killed and kidnapped."

Schonberger had a close friend attending the Nova music festival. She later learned that her friend survived; hundreds of other attendees did not.

For Simchat Torah, the annual Jewish festivity to celebrate finishing reading through the entire Hebrew bible, the Slifka Center had organized a "Torah Run" — dancing and singing around campus with the Torah. But as news trickled in of the ongoing attacks, Slifka's student board decided to cancel the event, instead hosting a singing circle and a "space for discussion," according to an email sent on Oct. 7 to Slifka's mailing list.

Moff described the singing circle as emotionally difficult, especially because some of the partici-

SEE JEWISH LIFE PAGE 5

CROSS CAMPUS

THIS DAY IN YALE HISTORY, 1977. With snow falling, heat was turned on in University buildings. Energy conservation manager Burgess Matthews said that they couldn't afford to wait when "dealing with people who can't operate that way."

INSIDE THE NEWS

Pro-Palestinian protesters campaigned against Harris at a local rally on the Green.
NEWS 7



PAGE 3 OPINION

PAGE 6 NEWS

PAGE 8 ARTS

PAGE 12 WKND

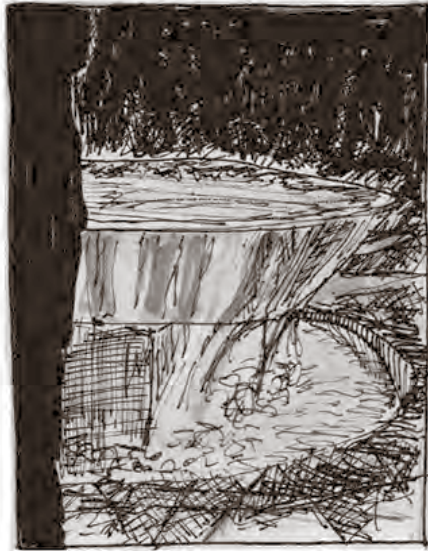
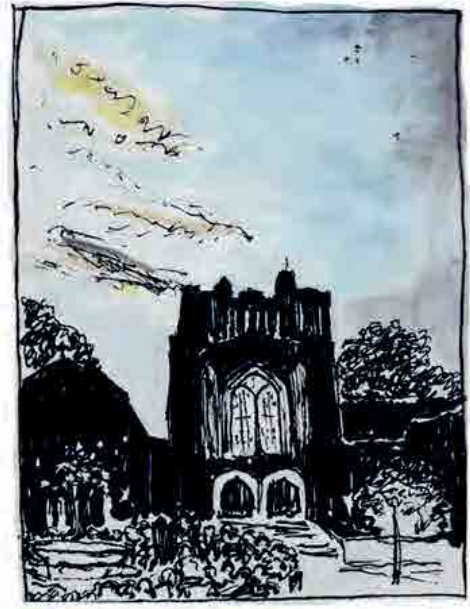
PAGE 14 SPORTS

MATCHA A first year opens a Japanese-inspired matcha business in his dorm for students seeking a caffeinated reprieve.
PAGE 6 NEWS

FACULTY In the lead-up to the November election, Yale faculty have overwhelmingly donated to Harris and democrats.
PAGE 10 NEWS

BULLETIN

10 / 7



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OPINION

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SEEKING CHILD PSYCHOLOGY & PSYCHIATRY STUDENTS & PROFESSIONALS

To research the current trends in these fields at Yale in 1951. The materials will be used to write a sexual comedy set at Yale in that period.

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GUEST COLUMNIST
SHAMS AREFIN

Bangladesh's democracy is fragile

On July 18, 2024, internet connection between Bangladesh and the rest of the world was abruptly shut down, leaving the country and the world in the dark on what transpired. The next few weeks were a striking lesson on the fragile, so-called governance, the likes of which Bangladesh had not seen since its deadly 1971 Bangladesh War of Independence.

Earlier in June 2024, protests began when the Bangladeshi High Court decided to reinstate a 30 percent quota for government jobs reserved for veterans of the War of Independence. This began a series of peaceful protests across universities that demanded more opportunities for meritorious students. By the second week of July, senior government leaders made incendiary comments, one of them labeling the protestors as “razakars” a term reserved for the anti-liberation movement from 1971. This resulted in clashes between the supporters of the government and protestors and culminated in the death of an unarmed student Abu Sayed.

The government imposed a curfew and within a week, the Supreme Court revised the quota system for government jobs to 93 percent merit and the rest between freedom fighters, for disabled, third genders and for Indigenous people. However, amongst other demands the students made, it was too little, too late; hundreds of protestors' lives were already lost in the extreme violence. The carnage fiercely spiraled across the country — from the burning of the national television studio, the death of hundreds of innocent civilians and policemen. It was later learned that the Prime Minister refused to leave and in an unthinkable instance wanted single-handedly to meet head-on with the incoming mob of thousands of students and supporters barreling towards her residence. Overwhelmed by the sheer collective force of the movement, dramatically ended the nearly two-decade rule by the Awami League government — leaving 170 million people to fend for themselves without any law and order.

In an unprecedented event, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus — who was given an honorary doctorate from Yale in 1998 — took the reins of an ailing country after students in Bangladesh made their very public and urgent plea. Professor Yunus has extensive developmental expertise and international connections attached to both national and international accolades

that gave the students confidence in his capacity to bring change. This was not the first time that Professor Yunus had been approached to take center stage — it happened once before in 2007 in yet another country-wide shake-up. However, this time, the extreme tribulations came from all corners of the nation and there was no turning back.

Bangladesh since its independence suffered through corruption, unreliable and coerced sociodemographic documentation and pervasive misinformation propelled cascading impacts on people's lives and the economy. Regardless, significant progress in both infrastructure and the general framework of society cannot be suppressed, so much so that the Human Development Index of Bangladesh is higher than India's. There has not been a famine in nearly 50 years; the drive of the farmers and policy fed the massive population, from a land mass the size of New York State. Bangladesh has become the second largest garments exporter in the world, a new state-of-the-art airport terminal, extensive bridges and modern highways connecting remote towns and a substantial metro rail system — all geared towards bolstering the economy. Unfortunately, the sudden dark period that fell over Bangladesh has egregiously stained the progress made.

The looming question is once Bangladesh reels through this turbulent period, will the country collectively with Yunus at its helm be able to rebuild, or will it stumble again? 170 million people are at the heels of a barely functioning police force, there is deadly fear amongst the general population of continued mob violence, potential foreign interference and growing financial instability. There are no easy solutions; complex and intricate relationships among students, supporters of the former government, and the sensitive geopolitical relations with India — as it is now an interim home to former prime minister Sheikh Hasina — makes it even more challenging for Yunus.

It is important to not forget during the abrupt Bangladesh regime change, that the political chapters of Bangladesh are cyclical to a burden — the deep roots of the two primary powers of Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Awami League are strong and ossified into the very fabric of the nation. So, when one party weakens after an election, the winning party quickly fills the shoes in key departments, for better or for worse, and the cycle continues.

While not particularly unique to Bangladesh, political friction has either been extremely eruptive or slow trickling. The entire history is repeated intergenerationally, in an identifiable pattern, oscillating between the two key parties and military regimes depending on the social milieu. To not repeat the violence that ensued, Bangladesh needs urgent and solid reform in its interim governing laws. This must be achieved through progressive strengthening of its founding pillars and secularism — Bangladesh is home to Christians, Hindus and Muslims — for a functional democracy. The founding father of Bangladesh Mujibur Rahman once said “If you declare that your country is an Islamic republic ... at once minorities become second class citizens ... and my conscience tells me it is against the fundamentals of Islam!”

Furthermore, state institutions must be geared independently from the oscillating powers. This must be achieved first by ensuring deep reform of the police, public service, judiciary and election commission that has independent members without any financial or personal ties to either political party or internationally. The pillars should be people oriented, focused on public welfare and support, through a multiparty democracy that demands peaceful transfer of power that is timely, regular and fair through participatory national elections.

However, it must be said that the state is a reflection of the nuances of its people, where we, as individuals, have an innate responsibility to ensure the collective wellbeing of society. When a member of society takes part in mob “justice,” which has become common in Bangladesh, they attack the state and its reason for being.

If not cautious in approach, starting with the redesigning of the existential need of the nation's broken law and enforcement systems, the demons of a sullied past can resurface at a moment's notice. And just as quickly as the former government fell, nefarious actors can rise from the hostile nodes that remain in ways that are least expected. All the regime changes in the world cannot predict the trajectory of a country and one regime change can harken the beginnings of another in an endless cycle that could end in the failing of any state.

SHAMS-IL AREFIN ISLAM is an Associate Fellow at Berkeley College.

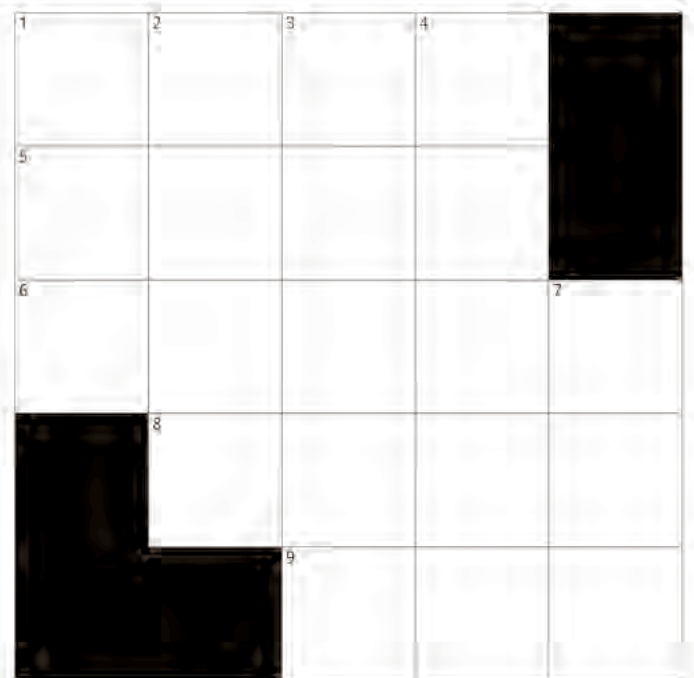
Puzzle by Ariana Borut '27

ACROSS

- 1 Canyon effect
- 5 Cries of discovery
- 6 Coffee order that might be
- 8-Across or 9-Across
- 8 Decorated, as a cake
- 9 Scorching

DOWN

- 1 Suffix with ether
- 2 Spiced tea
- 3 "Down the ___!" ("Bottoms up!")
- 4 Bone: Prefix
- 7 N.Y.C. summer hrs.

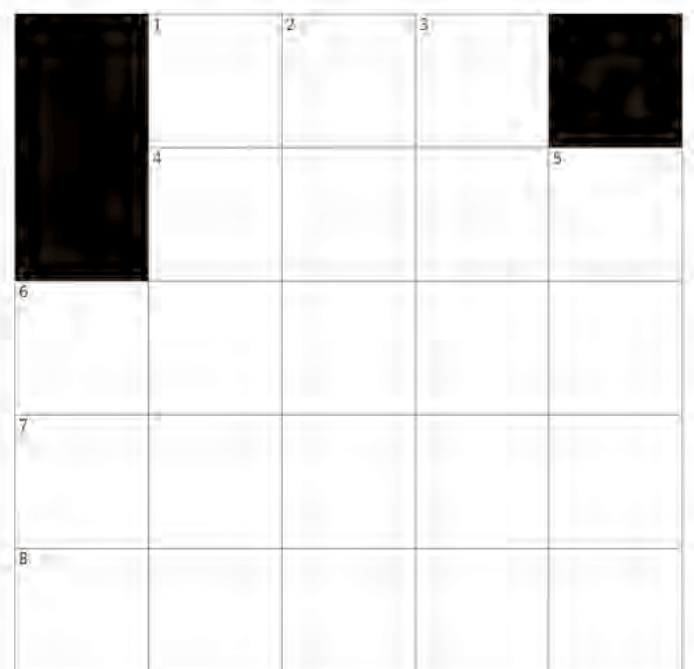


ACROSS

- 1 "Me day" destination
- 4 Arm or leg
- 6 Dilation target
- 7 College sports channel
- 8 Color often seen with 5-Down

DOWN

- 1 Snowy street remnants
- 2 Long stocking with two braids
- 3 Make ___ (get rich)
- 5 Yale color
- 6 Church bench



FROM THE FRONT

"They are afraid of us because we are not afraid of them."
BERTA CÁCERES HONDURAN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST

Jewish students recount grief, confusion, resilience post-Oct. 7

JEWISH LIFE FROM PAGE 1

pants already knew the magnitude of the unfolding attacks, while others did not. The next day, Sunday, took "forever to go by," he said. Finally, after Simchat Torah ended on Sunday night, Feder, Moff and other observant students powered on their phones to check the news and reach out to family and friends.

"All of this is in perspective," Moff said. "I had privilege in watching it from thousands of miles away. I wasn't in Israel with constant sirens."

Like Schonberger and Moff, several of the students interviewed have close friends and relatives who live in Israel. Even for those who did not, news of the attack brought grief and horror.

Sammy Rosenberg '26 described the attack as a tragedy that "transcended any personal connection" to those who were killed, kidnapped or injured. He recounted explaining to friends the devastation that the attack brought on his community, which he attributed to "a very strong sense of peoplehood" in the Jewish faith.

School resumed on Monday, Oct. 9. While Zbar attended classes, she was unable to focus. She described feeling helpless, and crying when professors mentioned the attack or expressed sympathy with those impacted, even though she appreciated their acknowledgment. She also remembers feeling a sense of foreboding.

"I had a sense that people aren't going to speak out against Israel today, because citizens of Israel were just massacred, but in a few weeks when Israel retaliates, no one's gonna be quiet about it," Zbar said.

Feder and Saraf also recalled feeling immediately worried about Israel's retaliation to the attacks, and the toll that it could take on Palestinians, including innocent civilians.

Jewish community — "resilient in its pluralism"

The majority of Jewish students who spoke to the News said they turned to the Yale Jewish community for support in the days following Oct. 7 and felt it unify under the tragic circumstances.

"Whenever I wasn't in class, or sleeping, I was basically in Slifka," Moff said. "It was a place where I could be with people who cared about what was happening, understood what was happening, were thinking about what was happening."

Zbar added that Slifka then could often feel overwhelming.

"The Jewish community did come together, but I didn't even feel like Slifka was a place I wanted to be, because it felt like walking into a funeral home," Zbar said.

But, students explained, as much as the Jewish community united over the tragedy of the terrorist attacks, internal divisions and disagreements grew as the war in Gaza escalated.

Saraf described this change by comparing Slifka gatherings to a "high school cafeteria." She explained that although the community comes together for services and events, students often end up congregating in politically like-minded groups "without much movement across."

Rosenberg described Slifka as having a dual purpose, which at times can cause conflict. On the one hand, Slifka is an organization meant to support Jewish students — regardless of their political views regarding Israel. On the other hand, Slifka is affiliated with Hillel International, an organization that has chapters at campuses across the world and is explicitly pro-Israel.

"It's complicated to try to be a Zionist organization, and also support your students who don't hold that position," Rosenberg said.

Elijah Bacal '27, a student involved with both Yale Jews for Ceasefire and the Slifka Center, said that although he has felt accepted at Slifka, some left-leaning Jewish students have felt ostracized in mainstream Jewish spaces on campus.

"In my experience, Slifka has been very resilient in its pluralism, in its acceptance of everyone," said Bacal. "But there are definitely Jews on the left who feel like they can't be fully respected in the Jewish community at Yale."

Jews for Ceasefire is run by Jewish students active in the larger pro-Palestinian movement on

campus. Unlike Yale Friends of Israel or Yale's chapter of J Street U, Jews for Ceasefire is not an official affiliate of the Slifka Center.

In the aftermath of Oct. 7, Feder — who has Israeli relatives and describes herself as "pretty left-wing on Israel" — found herself looking for a space with like-minded peers. After speaking with other left-wing Jewish students, she helped found Jews for Ceasefire in November.

The following week of Oct. 9, Yale's campus saw a series of rallies, vigils and a petition to oust a pro-Palestine professor.

On Oct. 13, Israel began its ground invasion into the Gaza Strip.

"Unsettled, but not unsafe"

Students at Yale began mobilizing in support of Palestinians just a few days after the Oct. 7 attacks and Israel's immediate retaliation. In the first two months, 15,000 Gazans were killed. Throughout October and November, student groups held rallies and events demanding a ceasefire in Gaza.

In April, protests intensified. Students, drawing on the war in Gaza, rallied for the University to divest from weapons manufacturers and set up two encampments on Beinecke Plaza and Cross Campus, respectively. While clearing the first encampment, the Yale Police Department arrested 48 student protesters for trespassing.

Mika Bardin '26, who describes herself as a left-leaning Israeli, felt that the campus political climate last spring became increasingly unrelated to the war and removed from the nuances of the issues.

"It came to the point where it was, are you going to wear a keffiyeh to class, or are you going to wear a yellow ribbon?" Bardin said, referencing symbols of solidarity with Palestinians and Israeli hostages, respectively. "It's this thing that is so unrelated to the war, just so oversimplified."

Six students told the News that the divestment encampments did at times make them feel unwelcome, but not physically threatened.

"I am grateful that I never felt physically unsafe," Zbar said, "but being unsettled for nine months definitely takes a toll."

Zbar and other students cited protests at Columbia University as comparatively more threatening for Jews on campus than those held at Yale. At Yale, Moff said, protests "didn't get to the point where [he] felt unsafe walking around them," but he still didn't "feel welcome or at home."

None of the students interviewed by the News felt that they had experienced explicit antisemitism at the pro-Palestinian protests. Some students, however, pointed to specific protest chants, like those that called for "intifada" — the Arabic word for "uprising" associated with periods of popular violent resistance against Israel — as particularly alarming.

Moff and Esther Levy DIV '24 both separately recounted a disturbing experience at the second encampment, which stood on Cross Campus from April 28 to 30 when it was cleared by the Yale and New Haven police departments.

Levy recalled that she and a group of Jewish students — some of whom were wearing kippot — were trying to pass through the encampment. They were asked to agree to a set of community guidelines, including "being committed to Palestinian liberation and fighting for freedom for all oppressed people," that the protest marshals had declared a condition for walking through Cross Campus. Then, Levy recounted, the marshal speaking with the group asked them to remove their shoes — a condition that Levy and



Collynn Robinson / Senior Photographer

Moff did not think was asked of any other individual.

"It felt like there was something that was charged about the fact that we were very visibly Jewish," Levy said. "We didn't take our shoes off. That was ridiculous."

Moff said that he felt the request was "like a power trip."

Two encampment organizers, who requested anonymity due to doxxing concerns, denied that this incident had happened, and told the News that antisemitism was not tolerated in the encampment.

For Levy, her encounter with the marshal shaped her perception of the protest. She said that she believed — and "to a certain extent" still believes — that student encampments were protests for peace, not antithetical to her own beliefs.

"Meeting people at the encampment, trying to engage in a conversation, made it very clear to me that maybe at the core of the protest, we do share beliefs that are very similar and very aligned. But the ways that things were going down were wildly different," Levy said.

Feder, who participated in some campus protests through Jews for Ceasefire, told the News that members of Jews for Ceasefire had "a lot of conversations" about engaging with the larger protest movement at Yale.

Bacal explained that he and other Jewish protesters raised concerns about the language used at protests — specifically, "intifada revolution" and "from the river to the sea" — and that encampment leaders were "very receptive" to their concerns.

But, Bacal said, "policing language" at the encampments had a limit, considering how high the stakes were for so many protesters.

"Just as the Jewish community has people serving in the IDF, families in Israel and relatives who died on Oct. 7, there are people with families in Gaza right now. There are people with families in the West Bank right now, families in Lebanon right now," he said. "We're gonna tell this person whose family is trying to flee for their life from this bombing exactly what language they can and cannot use? That's a really fucked up thing to do."

As the encampments across the country ramped up last spring, the protests at Yale often made headlines in national papers.

Some students interviewed by the News said that these articles about antisemitism at Yale were dangerously misleading — giving their relatives at home a false perception of what life is like for Jews on campus.

"Even now, during Rosh Hashanah, I was at a temple with my family in New York. There, they were all talking about getting donations to prepare lawsuits [and

have committees] to help make sure Jewish students feel safe," said Saraf. "I was there thinking, I'm very openly Jewish. I've never been discreet about that, and I never felt physically unsafe."

Losing "ideological safety"

Multiple students interviewed by the News described a shift in campus rhetoric, in which Zionism became a popular topic of discussion and one that many felt was misunderstood.

Maurice Samuels, a professor in Yale's French department and the head of the Yale Program for the Study of Antisemitism, explained that for many Jews, Zionism means merely the right of the Jewish people to a country as a form of national self-determination.

After Oct. 7, however, conceptions of Zionism in the broader public have shifted. Now, Samuels said, the word is associated with "the most extreme forms of Israeli aggression," or even an idea of Jewish supremacy in Israel.

"I don't think for many Jews, that is what it means at all," Samuels said. "For many Jews, it's possible to consider yourself a Zionist because you support the right of Israel to exist, and be completely opposed to [Israeli Prime Minister] Netanyahu or even this war."

The morning that Yale's first encampment was cleared, protesters chanted "Free our prisoners, free them all, Zionism must fall." Later that day, at a protest "seder" — a Passover traditional meal — hosted by Jews for Ceasefire, several attendees named Zionism as something "plaguing" Yale.

Schonberger, who identifies as a Zionist, emphasized that support of Israel is, for her, a personal choice instead of an ideological one.

"Being Jewish and being a Zionist, for me, was never supposed to be political," Schonberger said. "Obviously, yes, there is political Zionism, but to me, it was always about 'this is who I am.'"

For Rosenberg, the dramatic shift in public perception of Zionism was frightening. He described feeling like Zionism became a "dirty word." Though he did not fear for his physical safety, he described a loss of "ideological safety."

Rosenberg recalled feeling concerned that an echo chamber had been created throughout campus, in which being a Zionist was unequivocally "immoral."

"I'm a Zionist because I believe in the importance and necessity of homeland for the Jewish people, a sovereign state in the land of Israel," Rosenberg said. "Nothing inherent to my Zionism necessitates or at all indicates that one supports genocide, and that was a terrifying thing I felt being lobbied against me."

Most Jews in the United States identify with Zionism and believe American support for Israel is critical. But the question of whether Zionism is an inherent part of the Jewish identity is difficult to answer, Samuels said.

Connection to the land of Israel is embedded in the Jewish faith — prayers said during the holiday of Passover end with a hope that next year, the holiday will be celebrated in Jerusalem. Some religious Jews opposed the creation of Israel as they believed the return to Israel should only happen in a messianic age, but most prominent Jewish organizations in the United States now consider support for Israel as a central concern for the American Jewish community.

"A lot of American Jews grew up with a strong identification with Israel as a country and a pride in what Israel has achieved," Samuels said. "I think that it's very painful for a lot of Jews to confront the instances where Israel doesn't live up to what they consider Jewish values."

That pain has led many Jews to "separate themselves from Israel," Samuels said, and similarly, separate the State of Israel from Jewish identity.

Samuels believes that the past year has been especially difficult for Jews who consider themselves "in the middle."

"For Jews who feel invested in a Jewish state, but also want a Jewish state alongside a Palestinian state, that hope has been really receding, and I think that's very painful," Samuels said.

"Calmer on both sides"

Some students interviewed by the News said that Oct. 7 and its aftermath has changed their relationships at Yale, but believe that this semester the campus political climate will continue to settle down.

"My Yale definitely did shrink a lot," Schonberger said.

Bardin said that she has difficulty finding space on campus to speak about her dissatisfaction with the Israeli government, as a citizen of the country. Because of her nationality, she said, people "wanted to put [her] into a box," only caring about "which one of the two sides [she] fell on for one of the most nuanced conflicts."

All of the students interviewed expressed that the environment has been more relaxed since the 2024-25 academic year began.

"It's been a lot calmer on both sides," Rosenberg said, speculating that students involved in activism relating to the war might be experiencing fatigue.

On Sept. 24, four faculty members — including Samuels — gathered to discuss antisemitism, anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia on a panel moderated by University Chaplain Maytal Saltiel. The event, though open to any community member wishing to attend, was advertised as being neither recorded nor filmed.

At the panel, the faculty members discussed their personal encounters with prejudice on campus in the past year. They also talked about the support they felt from their colleagues and the Yale community at difficult moments.

Saltiel told the News that the panel was intended to be "the first in a series" of events organized jointly by a faculty advisory committee for Jewish student life and a faculty advisory committee for Muslim and Arab student life — both of which she chairs.

Samuels believes that the panel was organized in part due to a sentiment that the University did not do enough to address its topic last year.

"I definitely heard several times, 'Oh, this situation is just too hot right now, it's too tense, people aren't ready for that kind of dialogue,'" he said. "I'm not sure if that's really true. Maybe we should have done it anyway. Maybe that's precisely when it was most needed."

The Slifka Center held a vigil on the anniversary at 7 p.m.

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Samad Hakani / Photography Editor

NEWS

"The Latina in me is an ember that blazes forever."

SONIA SOTOMAYOR SUPREME COURT JUSTICE

Slifka Center searching for next Jewish Chaplain

ADA PERLMAN
STAFF REPORTER

The Slifka Center at Yale is currently searching to fill the role of Howard M. Holtzmann Jewish Chaplain.

In an email to the Slifka community last semester, Rabbi Jason Rubenstein announced his decision to leave Yale after six years as Jewish chaplain. Rubenstein, an alumnus of Harvard, emphasized his desire to rejoin the Harvard Jewish community as the Executive Director of Harvard Hillel in the months after Oct. 7, 2023.

"I have felt compelled to (re) join Harvard's Jews because of, and not despite, the urgency of this moment, and their widely publicized travails — first and foremost for the welfare of Harvard's Jews and Jewish community, and also because of what a flourishing Jewish community (or, God forbid, lack thereof) there means for the Jewish people at large," Rubenstein wrote in an email to the Slifka community last semester.

According to the job description obtained by the News, the Howard M. Holtzmann Chaplain serves as a senior rabbi to the Yale community, combining teaching, community leadership, pastoral care and day-to-day work with students and faculty. They engage students in building a rich and pluralistic com-



YALE DAILY NEWS

munity through serving as a senior leader, scholar and teacher. They also represent the Slifka Center to the Yale Religious Ministries and the University Chaplain's Office and serve as a key interlocutor for the diverse religious and spiritual communities around Yale.

Since his decision to leave, Slifka has set up a search committee led by Yishai Schwartz '13. Although the committee had hoped to fill the

position for the fall, they decided that none of the candidates were the "correct fit for the role we had envisioned, and recommended that Slifka not fill the Holtzmann Chaplain position at this time," according to a July email from Uri Cohen, executive director of Slifka.

In the meantime, leadership of student life is being led by Associate Chaplain Rachel Leiken and Rabbi Alex Ozar GRD

'22. Ozar has been at Slifka since 2018 as co-director of the Orthodox Union's Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus at Yale and added an expanded pan-communal role with the title Campus Rabbi. Both will continue to provide pastoral care and leadership to the community at large.

Cohen emphasized his faith in the current leadership despite the lack of a designated chaplain.

"Our Student Life Team is in great hands, and we look forward to strengthening the team further in the months ahead. We have had an extraordinary start to the semester, seeing record-breaking attendance at our Shabbat dinners and other programs," Cohen wrote to the News.

According to Lia Solomon '24, a member of the search committee and former co-president of the Hillel Student Board, the committee does not have an exact timeline to fill the position. She feels that it is important to take time to find the right person to lead in the role.

"The right person for the Slifka community is someone who is deeply committed to pluralism and to creating relationships with all Jews on Yale's campus. As an alumna of such a vibrant pluralistic community, I am excited about finding that," Solomon wrote to the News.

Cohen echoed Solomon's sentiments, writing that "the goal of the whole process is to find the right combination of candidates and skills."

The inaugural Howard M. Holtzmann Chaplain was Rabbi James Ponet '68, who returned to Yale for the role in 1981.

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Matcha dreams: a first year brewing success

BAALA SHAKYA
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

For most students, a craving for matcha means a trek to Atticus or the Elm. But for those living on Old Campus, a new matcha shop founded by a Yale first year is now open for business just seconds away in LDub.

Ukiyo, founded by Aaron Combs '28, is situated inside his fifth-floor dorm in Lanman-Wright Hall, the residence hall for all first years in Pierson and Berkeley colleges.

The shop held its grand opening on Friday, welcoming customers lucky enough to have booked one of the few 15-minute slots available that day through Calendly. The shop went viral on the anonymous social media app Fizz and also gained traction on Instagram.

"This is a space where I hope others, like myself, can feel at peace and live in the moment. That's why it's called 'Ukiyo,' which is 'living in the moment' in Japanese," said Combs. "It's really just a space where we can come together and enjoy a cup of matcha."

When crafting his business plan, Combs told the News that he envisioned the shop as an aesthetic space that brings people together.

Tochukwu Njoku '28, Combs' roommate, said that he thought the matcha shop was a great idea when Combs first pitched the idea to him. He believes the venture would be an excellent way for the both of them to meet new people.

With furnishings and decor thrifted from local establishments in New Haven or selected from Ikea, Combs aspired for Ukiyo to provide a relaxing and calming atmosphere to students often bogged down by classes and extra-curricular commitments.



BAALA SHAKYA, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

"With Ukiyo, I asked myself, 'What makes a good dorm room?'" Combs said. "You're not usually in the dorm throughout the day, right? You're out, you're about, you're meeting people, you're engaging in life."

When designing his dorm space, Combs told the News that those were the ground-

ing emotions and ideas he took most into account.

The ambiance established in Ukiyo notably envelopes customers as soon as they walk through the door, making them feel at home. A carefully curated playlist featuring Frank Ocean plays in the background, and a barrage of lamps glow amidst the darkened dorm, setting a "Zen" mood.

"A lot of people's first impressions when they walk in here is just how cohesive the overall visuals look, even though the decor was not bought at the same time or planned at all," Combs explained. "The thing about learning design is that if you can understand how design works, you don't have to select the exact items to purchase. You can select pieces that follow your overall design ethos."

Beyond the curated visuals and aesthetics of the dorm, Combs also took careful consideration in selecting the ingredients and offerings for Ukiyo.

Wanting to create a business that prides itself on sustainability, Combs decided to produce matcha instead of the traditional coffee, which "generates a lot of water and a lot of waste."

"If I were to produce coffee here too, I'd have to waste the leftover coffee grounds. Espresso machines are also very expensive, as are grinders, so I just had

to go with matcha — something that's more accessible, more environmentally friendly, and has zero waste," Combs said.

The matcha used in all Ukiyo drinks is ceremonial-grade tea imported from Japan, which Combs said he buys directly from a warehouse in the U.S. via Amazon.

"When I was in Japan this summer, I got to go to this specific matcha farm in Japan, and that's the tea I use," said Combs. "It's a brilliant fresh green matcha. One of the easiest ways to tell high-quality matcha from low-quality, whether it's culinary or ceremonial, is the color."

Ethan Kan '28, who worked as a food writer for Tatler magazine in Singapore before attending Yale, described his visit to Ukiyo on opening day as a "very intimate experience" with how much attention Aaron provides to the customer as opposed to a traditional cafe. He particularly enjoyed how the experience could be tailored to the customer's wants, with music and taste preferences factored into the visit.

Combs said that he also founded Ukiyo to defray some of the costs attached to attending Yale.

"Yale is not cheap, and so, one of the biggest motivating factors to found Ukiyo for me was to be able to afford flights back home and to be able to see my family," Combs told the News. "I really wanted

to open the shop so I could stop depending on my parents and be less of a burden. I just wanted to be more financially independent."

It costs \$10 per person for unlimited matcha over a span of 15 minutes at Ukiyo. At Atticus, a small matcha latte is \$4.85 and at Starbucks, a grande is \$5.25.

Combs explained to the News that he is "very conscious" about charging such prices and that the costs of high-quality matcha, locally sourced ingredients like honey, and the time invested accumulate rapidly.

Ukiyo, Combs said, is more than just a labor of love. The cafe also harbors a special connection.

"I love working in cafes. I honestly wrote my entire Yale application in a cafe. I think many of us did, and I wanted to recreate that true coffeehouse experience here. Instead of a normal coffee shop, where it's like in and out, and you just order, and you're out of the door ... I wanted to return back to the old coffee shops, where people can sit down and have a good conversation, discuss topics that are interesting to them, and just really create good memories."

Reservations for Ukiyo can be made through the Calendly link in the bio of the shop's Instagram: @matchaatukeyio.

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"When opportunity presents itself, grab it. Hold on tight and don't let go." CELIA CRUZ CUBAN SINGER

Local pro-Palestinian activists campaign against Harris



LILY BELLE POLING / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

At a protest organized by Connecticut's Palestine Solidarity Coalition, locals rallied against Israel's war in Gaza and Lebanon, with some encouraging voters to cast their ballots for third-party candidates in November.

BY ARIELA LOPEZ & LILY BELLE POLING
STAFF REPORTERS

Exactly one month before Election Day, the Connecticut Palestine Solidarity Coalition rallied on the New Haven Green to call for a "free Palestine" and vent frustration against Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic presidential nominee.

Saturday's rally was attended by a collective of pro-Palestinian groups ranging from religious Muslim community groups to socialist political parties. Some staffed tables with promotional materials, while other groups and attendees drew signs and posters before the rally began.

Protesters chanted "Killer Kamala, what do you say, how many kids did you kill today?" with emphasis on the second syllable of "Kamala," a mispronunciation of the vice president's name popularized by former President Donald Trump in 2020.

Connecticut residents have organized protests against Israel's war in Gaza since Israel launched a retaliatory attack following Hamas' deadly Oct. 7 terror attack on southern Israel. The war in Gaza — which many protesters and advocates have described

as a genocide — has killed at least 41,500 Palestinians. Over 2,000 people have been killed in Lebanon since Oct. 7 as well, in escalating Israeli fire exchanges with Hezbollah, a U.S.-designated terrorist group.

Long-shot presidential campaigns

The Party of Socialism and Liberation — a member of the CT Palestine Solidarity Coalition — was tabling at the rally for socialist presidential candidates Claudia De la Cruz and Karina Garcia. According to Kaitlyn Modzelewski, who was providing information at the PSL table, the largest group of PSL members in Connecticut is located in New Haven.

While De la Cruz and Garcia are on the ballot in some states, in Connecticut, they must be written in as candidates. They have been disqualified in other states, including Georgia and Pennsylvania.

De la Cruz, a South Bronx native, is a social activist who has worked on campaigns for the freedom of Palestine and against police violence. Garcia, her running mate, is a socialist organizer, who is involved with the Chicana Movement and founded the Justice Center en El Barrio, an East Harlem

organization dedicated to community activism. The Claudia & Karina 2024 platform seeks to "end capitalism before it ends us."

According to Modzelewski, some of their top demands include securing a free Palestine and seizing the assets of the 100 largest corporations. The pair's campaign materials also promise to lock up "the corrupt elite," cut the military budget by 90 percent while ending all aid to Israel and seeking peace with China and Russia, end the "war on Black America" and defend women's rights and equality for LGBTQ people.

One Claudia & Karina 2024 leaflet addresses concerns about Trump and "[answers] the 'lesser of two evils' argument," which encourages voters who may dislike both the Republican and Democratic candidates to choose whichever one will be least damaging to the country. According to the leaflet, the campaign opposes this mindset, arguing that Democrats aren't "really that different" from Trump.

"Voting for Harris does nothing to defeat the enemies of democracy, shifts the entire political spectrum further rightwards, and in most cases won't even result in different policies than if Trump were in office," the campaign leaflet reads. "There

is nothing strategically or tactically smart about it."

A similar mindset was promoted in the 2016 election by the Green Party, whose candidate, Jill Stein, drew enough Democratic-leaning voters away from Clinton that Trump pulled out the majority in battleground states like Wisconsin and Michigan. A new Gallup poll shows that 53 percent of Democrats desire a third major political party in 2024. The same poll showed that 48 percent of Republicans desire a third party.

Saturday's protesters carried both PSL and Green Party signs promoting Stein, who is running for president again this year.

"It's important for Americans to know that there's a strong contingent of people — larger than they may think — who do support this idea of socialism in the United States," Modzelewski, who was campaigning for De la Cruz, said. "There's a lot of intricacies about the presidential election here that I feel like are kind of fundamentally undemocratic anyway, and it's important that we have someone on the ballot that actually is a working-class mother, comes from an immigrant family and has been an organizer all her life."

Hasan Saleh, a resident of East Hartford who was born in the West Bank before fleeing to Jordan with his family in 1967, told the News at the protest that he has been a Democratic donor in past election cycles. While he plans to vote for Connecticut Senator Chris Murphy in November, Saleh told the News he will vote for Green Party's Stein over Harris.

Justin Paglino, the Green candidate running for the senate against Murphy, serves as the national field director for Stein. He also attended the rally, hoping to raise support for the Green candidates.

"Uncommitted" coalition

During Connecticut's Democratic presidential primary in April — before President Joe Biden dropped out of the race — a statewide coalition, Uncommitted CT, rallied progressive Democrats to vote for the "Uncommitted" option on the ballot to protest Biden's

policies on the war in Gaza. At 21 percent, New Haven saw a greater percentage of uncommitted votes than any other town or city in the state, which organizers of the campaign celebrated as a victory.

Abdul Osmanu, a member of the Hamden Legislative Council who was active in the Vote Uncommitted campaign in April, said that Connecticut's Palestine Solidarity Coalition, while disappointed by Harris' policies, is not currently mobilizing voters for a specific third-party candidate or ballot option. Instead, the coalition is encouraging voters to pledge not to vote for a candidate who hasn't promised to bring forth "meaningful policy change in regard to genocide and the increased militarization in southern Lebanon."

Osmanu clarified that this description would preclude voters from committing to vote for either Harris or Trump.

"The [Coalition's] line really is not quite like advocating for folks to vote for a third-party candidate or stay at home at all," Osmanu said, acknowledging that some members of the Palestine solidarity movement — like the PSL — do have designated third-party candidates they are backing.

Osmanu has not decided how he will vote in November. If he were to vote today, however, he told the News he would not be voting for either of the major party candidates.

Jewish Voice for Peace Action, an active member of Uncommitted CT, is not involved in any electoral organizing in Connecticut right now, according to Miranda Rector, who helped JVP organize for the Uncommitted vote in April.

JVP also did not formally attend the rally on the Green. A spokesperson for the New Haven chapter told News 8 that the group did not participate out of observance for the Jewish High Holidays.

In 2020, Biden won the presidential election in Connecticut with 59.3 percent of the vote. Howie Hawkins, the Green Party candidate, won 0.4 percent of the vote statewide.

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Ben Shapiro talks campus protests at Oct. 7 Buckley event

BY NORA MOSES
STAFF REPORTER

As groups across campus mourned the anniversary of the Oct. 7 terrorist attacks, Ben Shapiro spoke Monday night about campus reactions to the ongoing Israel-Hamas war at a Buckley Institute event.

The event, titled "How October 7 Broke America's College Campuses," was organized by the Buckley Institute, an organization that touts the advancement of "intellectual diversity and free speech at Yale." The format of the event was a conversation between Shapiro and Buckley President Trevor MacKay '25, followed by a Q&A with the audience.

Shapiro mainly spoke about the Israel-Hamas war at the event. Other topics discussed included abortion, racial politics and the war in Ukraine.

"I've been writing about this for a very long time, but the extent of the rot at the core of American education, I think, has been truly revealed over the course of last year," Shapiro said.

Monday's event was popular. Attendees filled the seats of SSS 114, a lecture hall which fits approximately 400 people. Even when the event reached capacity, around 1,000 people were still lined up outside Hillhouse Avenue and were unable to get seats. Some people stayed for around 10 to 20 minutes after the doors closed and watched the event's livestream on their phones.

The event had heavy security. The News counted at least three police cars stationed outside and attendees were not able to bring bags and had to be cleared by a metal detector stick to enter the event. Shapiro himself entered the stage accompanied by multiple security guards.

Shapiro is known for his sharp responses to challenging questions from audience members at his speaker events, but was only confronted once during the Q&A period.

Zach Pan '27 asked Shapiro about the choice of date, as Pan said he views scheduling the event at the same time as a vigil mourning those killed on Oct. 7 as "wrong."

"As we stand here and talk today, students are holding a vigil to commemorate the people who died on Oct.

7 and this event is counterprogramming to that vigil. In fact, multiple student organizations wrote these letters asking you to hold this event at a different time," Pan said. "Pirkei Avot tells us that you can serve God or you can serve yourself. You are being paid thousands of dollars to counterprogram a vigil for victims of Oct. 7. So my question to you is, how are you not serving yourself with this event?"

Pan referenced the portion of the Mishnah which discusses moral and ethical teachings of Judaism and the vigil co-hosted by the Joseph Slifka Center for Jewish Life and Chabad at Yale, which was occurring at the Women's Table at the same time as Shapiro's talk.

In response, Shapiro emphasized the independence of the different events.

"I don't think that I'm serving myself, per se. I also don't think that I need money," Shapiro quipped. "So my suggestion would be that there are many ways to commemorate what happened. I don't think that the folks who wish to hold different events have a veto on my event, and I certainly don't have a veto on theirs."

Shapiro also said that he had been invited to an event at Yale Chabad earlier in the evening so the idea that he was "ignoring the wishes of the entire Jewish community" was "insipid."

"His response did not address the substance of the question. He's quick on his feet, but he never answered why he's counter-programming the vigil and dividing our campus on this day," Pan told the News after the event.

In the first part of the event, two of MacKay's questions focused on the mentality of Yale students protesting Israel's actions in the Israel-Hamas war. Specifically, MacKay asked why students "want to blame Oct. 7 on Israel" and why they "go beyond normal rallies" to build living encampments.

To the first question, Shapiro said he feels there are "a few different groups that are complicit in this particular message" — one is "radical Muslims who believe that Israel ought to be wiped off." The other, he said, is "American leftist college students" who believe "that success is inherently connected with exploitation."



SAMAD HAKANI / PHOTOGRAPHER EDITOR

Shapiro, a conservative political commentator known for expressing controversial views, was hosted by the Buckley Institute to speak at an event titled "How October 7 Broke America's College Campuses."

"The victim-victimizer narrative is the ugliest narrative in politics," Shapiro further explained. "Because Israel is disproportionately powerful, because Israel is disproportionately successful, because Israel has actually built itself into a thriving democratic country, because of that, that anyone in the region is suffering, that must be a byproduct. It's zero-sum thinking, and it isn't true at all."

Students at Yale began mobilizing in support of Palestinians just a few days after the Oct. 7 attacks and Israel's immediate retaliation. Throughout October and November, student groups held rallies and events demanding a ceasefire in Gaza.

In the spring 2024 semester, protests intensified. Students, drawing on the war in Gaza, rallied for the University to divest from weapons manufacturers and set up two encampments on Beinecke Plaza and Cross Campus.

"I'm not a psychologist, you'd need a psychologist to examine

why people would want to live in their own feces," Shapiro said to audience laughter. "But, I think the sort of general, I think, push for it is presumably that you more dissociate from the civilization, that you are the beneficiary of, the more holy you are, the more virtuous you are."

Students in the Yale encampments told the News last spring that they went into dorms and buildings to use the bathroom and shower.

An organizer of the protests last spring, who was granted anonymity out of safety concerns and fears of doxxing, wrote to the News that Shapiro's characterization of the protests as "psychologically rooted" is "dishonest," but "unsurprising" from Shapiro.

"The protests last spring were calling for an end to violence," she wrote. "Everyone involved worked very hard to ensure that free expression remained peaceful and grounded in mutual concern

for each others' safety and of course for the safety of Palestinians living under daily bombardment."

After the event, Pan noted that priority for tickets for the event went to Buckley fellows, which he felt meant the event "skewed conservative."

MacKay wrote to the News that as with all of Buckley's events, "the crowd more accurately reflected the political distribution of the United States" and was "a stark contrast with the strongly progressive culture on campus."

Shapiro's visit to Yale is part of a wider speaking tour with the Young America's Foundation. After the Buckley event, he is scheduled to speak at the University of California, Los Angeles, Cornell University and Vanderbilt University.

The Buckley Institute was established as the William F. Buckley, Jr. Program in 2011.

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ARTS

“We have to be visible. We are not ashamed of who we are.”

SYLVIA RIVERA AMERICAN ACTIVIST

“Ain’t No Mo’”: A bold satire on Black identity in America

OLIVIA CYRUS

CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

An avid churchgoer from his youth, Lawrence Henry DRA '25 became well-versed in imitating how clergymen and churchgoers walked, talked and held their fans.

It was this lifelong infatuation with mimicking strangers and exploring the stories laden in others' mannerisms that led him to an acclaimed career in acting and a role in the upcoming play, “Ain’t No Mo’” at Yale’s David Geffen School of Drama. Written by playwright Jordan Cooper in 2019, the play is set in an alternate reality where the government grants every African-American a one-way ticket to Africa.

“Ain’t No Mo’ is a satire that makes a comment on the Black body in America,” Henry said. “And what we have created and what we’ve offered this country even when we’re treated like we mean nothing. So it’s hilarious, and it’s heartbreaking.”

The play is composed of several different comedy-style vignettes that attempt to speak to the complexities and various facets of Black life — police brutality, embracing Blackness, Black queer culture and assimilating in white spaces.

In it, Henry plays five different roles. Among them are a television show host, a prison guard and a man named Damien who appears as a ghost after being killed in an act of police brutality.

In preparation for each role, Henry allowed himself to “fall into” the stories each character tells about the Black community at large.

“The people, they speak to me,” he said. “I know that sounds crazy ... But it’s about opening yourself up to something. It doesn’t just all come together at once. You’ve got to be patient as an artist. It’s also about being willing to fail to find it.”

According to Henry, aspects of each character are influenced from moments of his childhood.

Growing up, his mother worked as a hairstylist and would have him reenact movies, such as “What’s Love Got to Do With It” and “The Color Purple” from top to bottom for her clients’ entertainment.

“I just used to like imitating people,” he said. “I’m always interested in what story is lying in the person that I’m playing or watching.”

Before the opportunity to be in Ain’t No Mo’ presented itself, Henry had experienced a long career on the stage. At Wright State University, he received an acting scholarship from Wright State University, which included mentorship from actor Tom Hanks.

After taking on gigs on Broadway, for the plays “Waitress: The Musical” and “Girl from the North Country,” Henry pivoted to graduate school to further hone his craft. Both Juilliard and Yale admitted him; he ended up choosing Yale.

Throughout his time at Yale, Henry has taken a vow to only tell stories that “heal his Black body and the Black bodies of other people.” In working with Kemar Jewel DRA '25, the director of the play, Henry believes he is doing just that.

“I see [Jewel] as a sort of Kenny Leon” he said. “[Jewel] understands story through pictures. He is extremely creative, vulnerable, and also willing to stop and say, ‘Hey, I don’t know what this moment is. I’m stumped. What do y’all think?’ I like to work with the actor’s director, and I think that’s what Kemar is.”

Jewel completed his undergraduate degree at Temple University and garnered online fame after creating a viral music video titled “Voguing Train,” where, as the title suggests, Jewel and a crew of dancers vogue in the subway.

This rolled out the red carpet for his career in directing and choreographing a series of shows across the country.

Even with years of experience under his belt, though, Jewel admits he is both nervous and

excited to present this six-time Tony nominated show to attendees on premiere night.

“To be honest, I’ve been, and I still am scared to present this show,” he said. “It digs into parts of my own life and traumas that are hard to grapple with. But I know that doing this show will make me a better director and a better person overall because I believe this show will help me to heal.”

Having heard a rumor that Cooper, the show’s original director, may be in attendance during the show’s running, he hopes to do the show justice. According to Jewel, the show involves staff from every program at the School of Drama, from marketing teams to dramaturgs to lighting designers — a boastful feat that is also overwhelming at times, he said.

Additionally, Jewel believes that it is important for Yale to sponsor plays like Ain’t No Mo that reflect the current state of the world.

“The reality is, the world is changing, and the art that is produced needs to reflect that,” he said. “We need more shows that center women, Black people, queer people, trans people, disabled people, immigrants, and all of the areas they intersect with.”

Juice Mackins '26, who plays Peaches, a drag queen and flight attendant who ushers all of the Black people to Africa, shared a similar opinion.

He also believes that Ain’t No Mo’ is an exploration of a personal culture, debunking the belief that the Black and other marginalized communities are merely monoliths. The play, according to Mackins, not only highlights existing stereotypes, but works to “expand” and “emphasize” them.

The play does so with a comedic bite and drama, said Mackins.

“That’s where I believe stereotypes have a demonstrative effect and can come from a true place. It doesn’t mean that they represent every single person, but rather sin-



OLIVIA CYRUS / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Directed by Kemar Jewel DRA '25, the provocative play explores the complexities of Black life through comedy and tragedy. The show will be staged by students at the David Geffen School of Drama and will run from Oct. 19 to 25. Watch parties across campus.

gular droplets in a greater waterfall.”

Before coming, Henry, Jewel and Mackins said audience members should be prepared for the plethora of emotions, high and low, the play evokes. They hope that the play educates, entertains and compels audience members to leave a different person than who they were upon arrival.

“They can look forward to being uncomfortable,” Henry said. “They can look forward to laugh-

ing so hard. They can look forward to forgetting that it’s a play because it is irreverent. Watching theater, you have to be a part of it; you’re following the story in real time. You’re breathing the same air, and you are in the experience of being provoked to change.”

Ain’t No Mo runs from Oct. 19 to 25.

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“Stupid Fucking Bird” to premiere on Oct. 10

BY SASHA HUROWITZ

CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

“Stupid Fucking Bird,” written by Aaron Posner, is a sharp and humorous adaption of Anton Chekhov’s 1896 “The Seagull.” Blending modern wit with classic themes and featuring original songs by James Sugg, Posner’s script follows a struggling playwright, his girlfriend, his mother and four other characters as they wrestle with the age-old question: what does it mean to create art?

The Yale Dramatic Association is set to premiere its own rendition of the satirical play for its Fall Ex show on Oct. 10 to a sold-out

audience at the Iseman Theater. The Dramat puts on “experimental” student directed, produced and performed productions.

“The actors and the characters are not so separated. There’s a lot of intermingling. There’s times when you don’t know which is which. There’s times when they break the fourth wall and they talk straight at the audience,” said Millie Liao '27, co-director of the play. “There’s so much to look forward to, it’s unconventional and breaks theater traditions.”

Evie Kissinger '27, who also directs the play, and Liao both took a course on Chekhov’s plays last year.

They discovered a shared appreciation for Posner’s adaptation — Liao had read it in high school and Kissinger in another theater course.

They pitched it to the Dramat board, and the play was approved as the Fall Ex production. Over the summer, the two, both first time directors from Los Angeles, collaborated and pre-blocked the show.

The play’s style, described as “meta” by the production team, inspired Kissinger and Liao to set the stage in the round, with the audience seated in a circle and no defined front or back.

“We wanted to set it in a sort of open space so that it didn’t feel

super grounded in a specific reality, because it breaks in and out of the story so much,” Kissinger said.

According to lighting designer Allison Calkins '27, she experimented with lights of different visibilities to reflect shifts in reality throughout the play. Calkins used white sheet fabric and Chroma-Q LED lights to emphasize moments of “theatricality” or intimate monologues.

Setting the stage in the round posed a unique challenge for not only direction and acting, but also for stage design, according to Calkins.

“[Setting ‘Stupid Fucking Bird’ in the round] really was rather difficult, because every single side is a front light for someone,” Calkins said. “It is a struggle between trying to maintain visibility, but also the traditional tenants that you’re taught in lighting.”

The production team was in a race against time and faced scheduling conflicts — difficulties not unknown to student productions at Yale. Yet, the Fall Ex show is known to give shows a shorter rehearsal period before showtime.

Actors are casted in the early fall, giving them five to six weeks to prepare for their roles. According to stage manager Alex Shadman '27, this puts the Fall Ex show team into a time crunch.

While scheduling was an immediate concern, said Shadman, the production remained on track due to the engagement and enthusiasm of the cast.

“It’s been really beautiful to see how many people have really committed themselves and their time to this project,” Kissinger said, “I think the best thing about the whole project, though, has been seeing the cast become friends. They are all best friends now, and it’s really adorable.”

Liao and Kissinger shared that while they have very different directing styles, it has proven to be complementary to one another. Griffin Santopietro '28, who plays the role of Con — a struggling playwright — shared that he has found the rehearsal

process to be very collaborative.

According to Santopietro, even though he felt like his plate was full with this production, he enjoyed the creative and exploratory process of working with the co-directors.

While the cast might be small, the production team is composed of a large number of people who helped make the show possible, such as assistant directors, assistant producers, and set and costume designers.

“I am most excited for [audience members to see] just how beautiful the show looks. I think all of the designers have done such an amazing job with their departments, lighting sets, props, costumes, sound, everything,” said Dhruv Bhalla '27, who is the producer of the show. “And I think that same energy in the rehearsal room really does translate on stage to the actors.”

The cast and crew hope that audience members continue to think about the themes and questions posed by the production even after the show ends.

“Stupid Fucking Bird” is a play that discusses how theater is created and perceived, said Liao. She hopes that this introspective piece will encourage artists to think about their own creative processes, especially “at a place like Yale, where so much art is being made.”

Santopietro also encouraged viewers to leave the show thinking about new forms and meanings of theater.

“Talking about art, why we create it, what it’s supposed to do and its significance in the world and being a part of change, is something that this play talks about endlessly,” Liao said, “So we hope that people leave thinking about the process of creation and how we occupy the artistic space of Yale more.”

“Stupid Fucking Bird” will run from Oct. 10 to 12 at 8 p.m., with an additional matinee show at 2 p.m. on Oct. 12.

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COURTESY OF KATIE ORTIZ

From Oct. 10-12, Aaron Posner’s adaptation of Anton Chekhov’s “The Seagull” will run at the Iseman Theater.

SCI-TECH

"I am the one thing in life I can control. I am inimitable – I am an original."

LIN MANUEL-MIRANDA AMERICAN SONGWRITER AND ACTOR

Yale Hospitality digitizes nutrition labels in dining halls

BY MICHELLE SO
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Nutritional fact labels are included into many aspects of dietary lives — from caffeinated beverages ahead of midterm prep to the granola bars between classes.

However, for the 2024-25 school year, nutrition labels containing caloric and dietary information disappeared from residential college dining halls.

"When my stomach is growling louder than I can think, choosing between foods is often decided by just a quick glance at the label," Thai Sapenter '26 told the News. "In years prior, vital nutrition information like calories, protein and iron were shown with every meal, allowing even this quick glance to be an informed one, but this year that's not the case."

Sapenter added that he relies on visible nutritional information when trying to maintain certain goals, such as keeping iron up for blood donation or calories down to monitor weight.

The removal was part of Yale Hospitality's transition from printed nutrition labels to a digital interface. Nutrition labels went from being displayed physically above dishes to Yale Hospitality's website, where anyone can check and access the nutritive values.

According to Yale Hospitality Dietician Sarah Kiel, there were also other reasons behind the change.

"As a Registered Dietitian, I typically don't recommend calorie counting unless it's medically necessary," Kiel wrote.

Students who struggle with disordered eating may find it stressful and overwhelming to fill their plates when they know the numbers behind what they consume. A study found that when restaurants included caloric information on their menus, customers struggling with anorexia and bulimia ordered less food while those with binge-eating disorder ordered more.

Eating disorders are classified as mental illnesses and are predicted to affect around 9 percent of



YULIN ZHEN / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Since nutritional labels were removed from Yale dining halls, accessing dietary facts has not been easy.

Americans within their lifetime. Common eating disorders include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder.

Initial plans to digitize the nutritional information involved creating unique meal tags with QR codes that could be scanned by dining hall patrons. However, because of technical issues, the associated QR codes have not been up and running, leading to some student frustration.

Without information physically inside the dining halls or QR codes, students have to navigate the Yale Hospitality website to find nutritive information.

"I don't know the details behind this decision, but in my view, any action taken that prevents consumers from understanding the nutritional value of the foods they are being served is likely to contribute to less healthy eating habits," Rafael Pérez-Escamilla, professor of public health at the School of Public Health, said.

While labels may have the capacity to negatively impact people with eating disorders, student opinion has historically leaned in favor of the labels.

Psychology researchers surveyed 487 Yale students in the 2009-10 academic year on perceptions and use of nutrition labels in university's dining halls. They found that 98 percent were in favor of making the information publicly accessible, whereas only 4 percent of respondents preferred "Online Only" labels — the style Yale Hospitality is currently employing.

"It is key to pay attention to portion size and corresponding content of calories, added sugars, sodium, saturated fat, and trans fats," Pérez-Escamilla wrote to the News. "Excessive consumption of each and all of these can lead to serious health conditions such as hypertension, cardiovascular

disease, type 2 diabetes, and different types of cancers."

Kiel emphasized that despite the change, Yale Hospitality is still an accessible resource for students with special dietary restrictions, eating disorders or who simply want to be informed about their food.

"I'd also like to acknowledge that with the wide array of choices available at Yale, it's easy to feel overwhelmed or fall into a routine. Safety and dietary needs remain a top priority. We provide support for individuals with special dietary restrictions and allergies," Kiel wrote to the News. "Please contact us in advance so we can make sure we're ready to serve you safely."

According to Kiel, concerned dining hall patrons are encouraged to maintain a healthy diet with several simple guidelines to follow — ones that don't involve calorie counting.

Kiel recommends that people concerned about their diet "focus

on whole grains and lean protein options, particularly plant-based and low-saturated fat meats, if you eat meat." She added, "Aim to fill half your plate with fruits and/or vegetables, include a source of protein and carbohydrates at most meals and snacks, and enjoy a variety of foods."

However, for students like Sapenter, until Yale Hospitality restores its nutrient label accessibility, the absence of nutrition information will remain a concern.

"Every meal is more of a guess than a choice," Sapenter said. "The seemingly intentional removal of the labels has made any maintenance of health significantly harder."

2,000 calories a day is the general guide the FDA advises, but calorie needs vary based on age, sex, height, weight and physical activity.

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Yale Astronomical and Space Student Society turns students starry-eyed for Saturn

BY EMILIE MA
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Last Saturday at 8 p.m., the Yale Astronomical and Space Student Society, or YASSS, hosted stargazing on Beinecke Plaza. Over 75 curious passersby and club members looked at a tiny image of Saturn, complete with its rings, through two computerized telescopes.

The planet, visible to the naked eye as a bright speck, is especially apparent during this time of the month because of its high altitude in the sky early in the evening.

"Seeing Saturn for the first time was really interesting because you usually don't get to see planets so easily," Yale Public Safety Officer Darryl Gaetano told the News. "It's very nice to get the experience."

For many like Gaetano, it was their first time stargazing.

Many viewers mentioned various barriers to astronomical observation at their homes — light pollution or lack of equipment — that had kept them from stargazing until now.

"In the rural area of the Philippines where I come from, there aren't many opportunities for stargazing at my school," Matt Sareno '28 added.

Some viewers were surprised at how different Saturn's image they saw was from familiar textbook depictions. Vaishnavi Gade GRD '24 likened it to a "little glow-in-the-dark sticker."

Initially, there were some issues with training one of the two telescopes on Saturn. The event organizers were required to manually find the planet. However, once Saturn was found, a small crowd quickly formed.

Lucas Zimmerman '27, the club treasurer, said after he found Saturn through trial and error he had about 30 people line up almost immediately.

"It's always my favorite moment when people see planets for the first time because they don't expect it," he said.



EMILIE MA / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

The Yale Astronomical and Space Student Society organized a stargazing event for students and New Haven residents last Saturday.

"You can see Saturn very easily through the telescope, and you can see it in the sky, so there's a connection that happens there."

Julia Levy '25, the founder and president of YASSS and a staff reporter at the News, said that the organization is committed to making stargazing accessible to all.

She explained the society grew from an earlier iteration, the Yale Astronomy Society, to expand outreach to the greater Yale and New Haven communities in 2023.

"It's a culmination of four years of work," Levy said. "We

finally brought stargazing with professional observational equipment for the public to enjoy as we do at the Leitner Observatory."

Levy told the News that the two telescopes used at the event were owned by her and another board member.

She hopes to find funding for the society to buy its own telescopes and continue making sessions like Saturday's stargazing event accessible for all.

"It's especially cool to see the club be born from essentially out of nothing," Elijah Bakaleynik

'25, who had previously worked for an astrophysics program at Yale, said. "Two years ago, there was no undergraduate organization around astronomy, and now there is."

Prior to the stargazing events held through YASSS, the sole place at Yale for stargazing was the Leitner Family Observatory and Planetarium, available for the public only on clear Tuesday nights. Distance to the observatory is a common detractor for students, so YASSS sought to bring public stargazing closer to campus.

As the night drew to a close and there were fewer passersby, the organizers carefully packed the telescopes up in protective cases.

"I think Yale doesn't have enough nerds, and it's great that there are students who can set something up on a Saturday evening during the midterm season for everyone to enjoy," Bakaleynik noted while reflecting on the event.

Beinecke Plaza is located at 165 Grove St.

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"If you have an opportunity to make things better and you don't, then you are wasting your time on Earth."
ROBERTO CLEMENTE PUERTO RICAN BASEBALL RIGHT FIELDER

Yale employees pour over \$750k into 2024 elections

ASHER BOISKIN
STAFF REPORTER

Yale University employees have contributed more than \$750,000 to political campaigns and organizations in 2024, marking a significant surge in donations compared to previous years.

An analysis of more than 7,000 Federal Elections Committee filings conducted by the News highlights a clear political lean — 97.26 percent of donations from Yale affiliates went to Democrats, while only 2.74 percent were given to Republicans.

Approximately 2,100 filings came from current Yale professors, assistant professors and associate professors, who collectively donated around \$413,000. This figure represents more than three times the amount donated last year.

The surge in donations puts Yale in the top 2 percent of organizations in terms of total employee political contributions, according to OpenSecrets, a nonprofit that tracks campaign contributions and lobbying.

Federal campaigns receive most donations

Filings indicate that roughly \$260,000 of donations went to Vice President Kamala Harris' campaign, including funds transferred to the Harris campaign from the Joe Biden campaign. Former President Donald Trump saw significantly less financial support, collecting just under \$5,500 from Yale affiliates.

Other Republican presidential hopefuls, such as Ambassador Nikki Haley, Gov. Chris Christie and Vivek Ramaswamy LAW '13, received even fewer Yale-affiliated donations totaling \$4,700, \$360 and slightly over \$300, respectively, before dropping out of the race.

In the 2024 election cycle, 163 Democratic candidates for the House of Representatives received donations from Yale affiliates, compared to only nine House Republican candidates.

Similarly, 43 Democratic Senate candidates received financial support, compared to four Republican and two independent candidates.

Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy, who faces reelection this year, received \$70,000, nearly matching the \$80,000 contributors donated to him between 2013 and 2020, according to a 2020 News analysis.

Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, who represents the New Haven area and is also up for reelection this year, received \$36,000 in contributions.

OpenSecrets estimates that 75 percent of donations from Yale employees to congressional candidates supported incumbents. In total, 172 House and 49 Senate campaigns benefited from Yale-affiliated contributions.

ActBlue, a fundraising platform dedicated to supporting left-leaning and Democratic politicians and campaigns, saw a surge in contributions this year from Yale affiliates, receiving 5,844 unique donations com-

pared to 724 last year. In contrast, WinRed, the fundraising counterpart for Republicans, reported 140 contributions, a significant increase from the mere three it received last year.

Yale's largest political donor

Barry Nalebuff, a School of Management professor, continues to rank among Yale's top political donors. Last year, he contributed \$25,000 to the Biden Victory Fund. This year, he has already donated \$34,700 to the Democratic National Convention and more than \$35,000 to different Harris campaign funds.

"I cheat a little bit and just give to the DNC. I figure that they know better than I do," Nalebuff said. "It saves me from doing a lot of homework, and it may be better for specific, needy cases, but it sort of requires a lot of work to do that, and I let the DNC do that."

Although he attended several fundraising events throughout the 2024 election cycle, Nalebuff wished candidates for office would spend more time on governance instead of soliciting donations.

Nalebuff believes that the only "redeeming" aspect of fundraisers, however, is that one can learn more about candidates and their accomplishments and "get more excited and share that enthusiasm with other voters."

"I went to an LGBTQ+ fundraiser for [the] Biden [reelection campaign] in New York City and it really is remarkable what he has

done. He's been a fantastic ally," Nalebuff said.

Nalebuff also views donations as a tool for political influence.

After watching the Biden-Trump presidential debate this past summer, Nalebuff did not feel entirely certain about Biden's reelection campaign. He called former DNC Treasurer Andy Tobias and shared his thoughts about the future.

"Why did I end up donating so much? It wasn't necessarily my intention," Nalebuff said. "After the debate, I [felt that it was] not a happy situation, and I called [Andy Tobias] ... and said that I would double my donation if Biden dropped out."

In July, President Biden announced his withdrawal from the 2024 presidential election, paving the way for Harris' candidacy, for which Nalebuff jokingly takes partial credit.

Other Yale Political Giving Trends

According to a report from the Yale Office of Institutional Research, Yale University currently employs 11,590 staff members and 5,499 faculty members — a total of 17,089 employees. Of these, 1,234, or 7.2 percent of Yale's workforce, were unique contributors in this past year.

When asked about Yale's employee donation statistics, Shiro Kuriwaki, an assistant professor in the department of political science, expressed uncertainty.

He noted that some political donations go undisclosed, meaning that the publicly available figures

from the FEC might not capture the full extent of political contributions from Yale affiliates.

According to OpenSecrets, groups have spent roughly \$1 billion in dark money — political spending from undisclosed sources — to influence elections since 2010. This surge followed the Supreme Court's decision in Citizens United v. FEC, which allowed nonprofits to contribute to election campaigns without disclosing their donors.

Under current federal law, individuals may donate up to \$3,300 per election to a candidate's campaign committee. Additionally, individuals may donate up to \$5,000 to a political action committee and \$41,300 to a national party committee. Some individuals bypass these limits by donating to Super PACs, which can raise and spend unlimited amounts of money, as long as they operate independently from the candidates they support.

"American politics is increasingly reliant on donations to fund campaigns," Kuriwaki said. "If one side gets more donations to compete [with] ... the other party has an incentive to get donations."

Americans will cast their ballots for the next U.S. president on Nov. 5.

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Criminal justice organization spotlights deaths in state DOC custody

BY MAIA NEHME & KALINA BROKFIELD
STAFF REPORTER & CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Abolitionist Frederick Douglass' famous remark, "Power Concedes Nothing Without Demand," served as a backdrop for a criminal justice organization's meeting about deaths in the state Department of Correction's custody.

Barbara Fair — an organizer for Stop Solitary CT, which aims to eliminate solitary confinement and improve conditions in prisons — led the meeting on Friday. Fair underscored a lack of accountability for the DOC and urged community members to join in her fight for criminal justice reform.

During the meeting, Fair projected a CT Insider article about J'Allen Jones, an incarcerated man who died at a Newtown, Connecticut, prison in 2018. After Jones refused to comply with a strip search, multiple correctional officers pepper-sprayed him, punched him and forced him onto a bed over a nearly half-hour period, according to a DOC report. The state Office of the Chief Medical Examiner classified Jones' death as a homicide.

"What is it going to take to make the state of Connecticut accountable for the barbaric things that they do to our people?" Fair asked the meeting attendees with tears in her eyes. "It's going to take every single one of us to fight. And don't wait to fight when it's your child. Fight because it's anybody's child ... We have got

to stop turning a blind eye to what's going on."

The DOC did not immediately respond to the News' request for comment.

The panel featured Inspector General Robert Devlin Jr., attorney DeVaughn Ward — Connecticut's recently-appointed interim ombudsman, a role that provides independent oversight of the DOC — and state legislators Sen. Gary Winfield and Rep. Robyn Porter, who both represent New Haven. Fair also invited Pablo Correa, a former correctional officer, to speak at the end of the meeting.

Devlin fielded questions from Fair and attendees about his responsibilities as inspector general. Connecticut's Office of Inspector General, established in 2021, is tasked with prosecuting cases where a law enforcement officer used unjustifiable force or failed to intervene in such an incident.

Devlin said the office focuses on police-involved shooting deaths and deaths in police or DOC custody. The state DOC reported 37 in-custody deaths in 2023, according to the office's most recent annual report.

Ward emphasized that even if the inspector general's office ruled that an in-custody death did not involve any criminal offenses, family members of the victim can still file civil lawsuits against the DOC. Before he was appointed as interim ombudsman, Ward secured multiple settlements in legal battles with the DOC

on behalf of people who received inadequate medical care in prison.

"Just because the Inspector General's office says that no criminality occurred does not mean that there was not negligence or malfeasance," Ward said. "Those are very important distinctions."

The speakers debated the effectiveness of body cameras worn by correctional officers in deterring violence towards prisoners. Ward said that, across many of the cases he prosecuted, video evidence was often the most transformative in winning settlements.

Devlin mentioned that body cameras are required for police officers, and recordings must be disclosed within 96 hours of receiving a request. Attendees asked panelists why body cameras for correctional officers had not yet been instituted in a similar way. Winfield and Porter responded by describing the political obstacles in the state legislature blocking the path to mandated body cameras.

Fair expressed concern that a mandate requiring correctional officers to wear body cameras would not end up increasing accountability. She noted that, despite an ongoing lawsuit brought by Jones' family, the footage of Jones' death had not been released, much less used to hold the correctional officers involved accountable.

"My concern is, even if you're wearing a camera, who's going to do anything about it?" Fair asked.



MAIA NEHME / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

A panel of legislators, the state inspector general and Connecticut's first independent prison watchdog discussed the deaths of incarcerated people at Stop Solitary CT's meeting on Friday.

Correa said purchasing body cameras for correctional officers is a "waste of taxpayers' money," citing the proliferation of stationary cameras in Connecticut prisons and his concern that officers would turn their body cameras off.

The roughly 30 attendees frequently interjected with personal questions about seeking legal action, based on their own experiences with incarceration or their family members' experiences. Fair asked attendees several times to save their questions until the end of the meeting.

When the interruptions continued, Fair called for a five-minute break midway through the meeting. Her family then surprised her with two cakes and a rendition of Stevie Wonder's "Happy Birthday" to celebrate her 76th birthday. Some attendees joined in the song.

Maggie Goodwin, an attendee from West Haven, has witnessed in her time as a social worker how taxing the prison system is on families. She is heavily involved in advo-

cacy, working with Clean Slate Connecticut — a program that erases old and low-level crimes from criminal records — as well as other faith-based social justice groups.

Dyanna Hines attended the meeting to learn more about the systemic issues that lead to racial inequity and unfair treatment of individuals before they even reach the prison system.

When Fair asked Correa why he had worked in the DOC's "toxic" environment for 22 years, he emphasized his desire to help incarcerated people. Correa said multiple incarcerated people he oversaw in the past still reach out to him for advice.

"If I can change the life of one inmate, and be an inspiration to this one inmate, then I have done my job as a correctional officer," Correa said. "Our job is not to make their incarceration [harder]."

Friday's meeting was held in Hamden at 1253 Whitney Ave.

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New Haven's representatives mark Oct. 7, from Jerusalem to City Hall

BY ETHAN WOLIN
STAFF REPORTER

Connecticut Sen. Richard Blumenthal traveled to Israel to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the one-year anniversary of the Hamas-led Oct. 7 attacks, as New Haven leaders took a subtler approach to commemorating the start of a war that has spurred grief, protests and tensions in the Elm City.

At City Hall on Monday evening, the anniversary went unmentioned until the final minutes of the regular Board of Alders meeting. Ward 14 Alder Sarah Miller, who represents part of Fair Haven, used the forum to make a personal remark about the Middle East war, following a colleague who promoted an upcoming party.

"On a more somber note," Miller said, "I'd like to ask for a moment of silence in recognition of the horrific and heartbreaking loss of innocent life in Israel, Palestine and Leb-

anon since this date last year, as well as the deep and ongoing impact of the conflict on residents of our city, state, country and world."

The alders in attendance stood silently, most looking downwards, for 10 seconds.

Mayoral spokesperson Lenny Speller told the News that Mayor Justin Elicker did not participate in any commemoration of the Oct. 7 anniversary. The mayor released a statement on Oct. 12 last year, condemning "the horrific and barbaric terrorist attacks that have been perpetrated by Hamas in Israel" and expressing solidarity with the local Jewish community.

Hamas militants who invaded Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killed 1,200 people and took about 250 hostages, about 100 of whom remain in Gaza, either living or dead. Israel's ensuing war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, in which Israel has killed over 41,500 Palestinians in total to date, almost immediately

sparked pro-Palestine protests in New Haven that have continued intermittently for the past year.

Beginning last November, a coalition of groups spanning Yale students and local activists advocated for months — in public and behind the scenes — for the Board of Alders to adopt a resolution calling for a ceasefire in the war. In February, activists filled the Aldermanic Chambers and disrupted Elicker's State of the City address.

Five months after activists originally submitted it to the board, the alders held a special virtual hearing in May to hear testimony about the resolution. The resolution's proponents invoked a moral duty to speak out against the U.S.-aided assault on Gaza, as other progressive American cities had done, while its opponents called the proposed text one-sided and said the board should not take stances on foreign policy.

Five days later, the alders voted nearly unanimously to set aside the

resolution without adopting or formally rejecting it. The move drew criticism from pro-Palestinian activists and praise from Gayle Slossberg, the CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven, which had urged alders not to pass the resolution.

"We made the right call with the resolution, and I think it's also important that we acknowledge everything that we've been through in the past year," Miller told the News on Monday, explaining her decision to draw attention to the one-year-old war in the Middle East. "There's been deep impact on our community."

Rep. Rosa DeLauro, whose district centers on New Haven, released a statement on Monday that recognized the anniversary of the Oct. 7 attack while reaffirming her support for Israel's "right to defend itself from threats" and for a two-state solution for Israelis and Palestinians.

Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy — who, like DeLauro, is running for reelection in next month's elec-

tions — published his own statement expressing similar sentiments.

In Jerusalem on Monday as part of a bipartisan congressional delegation, Blumenthal met with Netanyahu, along with Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina.

"We appreciate your giving us this opportunity to speak with you on this really agonizingly difficult day for your country and the people of Israel and all of us in the United States who feel so deeply that it was an absolutely abhorrent inhumane attack on the Jewish people," Blumenthal told Netanyahu, according to a press release by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "We're here to say we have Israel's back and Israel has the right to defend itself."

The Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem is approximately 5,627 miles, as the crow flies, from New Haven's City Hall.

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THROUGH THE LENS



**STUDENTS
CELEBRATE
FALL!**

*Photos by Baala Shakya,
Contributing Photographer*



WEEKEND *FOOD*

HEAVEN ON MUTE

// BY AMADIE GAJANAIKE

“මැණි ශ්‍රී ලංකා (1), can you hear me?”
 Every other day, precisely at 11:11, I play the regular charade of being a superstitious agnostic. God may be a Sumerian folktale, the final boss in our desire for an authoritarian system greater than our own, or my sister’s mother in the room next door. He knows I don’t respect him beyond the tell-tale bounds of “maybe if I pray, it’ll come true” and “I’ll just do it for the pirth noola (2).” He knows I’m using faith as my backup hard drive — a contingency I conveniently seem to keep forgetting.
 None of this matters because in the same hypocritical fashion that I drink French toast lattes amidst an ill-reported ethnic cleansing, I ponder the scientific fidelity of an omniscient being in a cesspool of “for Christ’s sake can you bloody focus on what is happening right in front of you?” Is God on sabbatical? Is he even a “he?” Who are his unpaid interns — corrupt monks like Gnanasara or the Catholic ajumma (3) that paid for my samgyetang? (4)

Whether I’m dealing with demons, saints or the classless in-between, the real God in my life doesn’t settle for coincidences. For Lord-knows-what reasons, Ammi (5) still blesses me with ඉඹි (6) every morning at 7am. I love my mother more than myself, but I doubt she’d love me very much if I wasn’t her daughter. Thaththi (7) disagrees, although he’s a bit biased himself.
 Lankans are a funny breed; we are patriotic in all the useless ways — elections, cricket matches, Nicki Minaj lyrics — only to immigrate to the colonizer’s lands we gossiped about at tea-time. Who can blame us? Our presidents keep ditching us for dead and I’m sick of getting catcalled by the Mozart-wailing bread van man. Dear Anura Kumara, let’s just say I don’t have the same faith in you as my parents do.
 Back home, it’s easy to brush off God. He’s so everywhere that he becomes the backdrop and the faceless context within it all: I see him in my late grandmother’s araliya flower offerings, the moth-eaten New Year lanterns down the street, and the poorly designed maze of temples we like to call “Colombo” — our infamous cap-

ital-city-that’s-not-really-the-capital-city. I’ve watched my mother get scammed by puny soothsayers time and time again and passed by limbless children upon summer pavements. Does God not care for them? Who is worthy of his refuge and why must I seek it?
 Sometimes I think that if God exists, then maybe he’s not so great after all. But I also think I have a self-diagnosed tendency to look at things the wrong way: half-memorized prayers, questions before conviction, twice the cynic, and none the wiser.
 He has many names and doesn’t seem to love publicity. Classic avoidant-disorganized attachment style. I like to picture him as an overworked security guard peering into the monitors of 8 billion cameras — but this merely sends me into another cerebral spiral as I begin to wonder who on Earth (and beyond) gives this poor man his wages (surely no one is working that hard for free). Every theory, no matter how theoretical or lack-there-of, trumps me. God forbid any of it makes sense!
 The good thing is that I’m equidistant from being your token Gen Z atheist and a

Yale Divinity School applicant. God’s conceptualization inhabits a cobwebbed attic in my brain, one that I always lose the keys to and exclusively enter through a broken window. Is this too many metaphors? Have I lost my message? Did I ever have one to begin with?
 God, if you’re out there, please leave this on read. Thanks.

Contact **AMADIE GAJANAIKE** at amadie.gajanaike@yale.edu.

1. Female guardian deity [*maniyo*, Sinhala]
2. Blessed string to protect from bad luck [ඉඹි, Sinhala]
3. Married or middle-aged woman [아줌마, Korean]
4. Korean traditional ginseng chicken soup [삼계탕, Korean]
5. Mummy [අමම, Sinhala]
6. Good karma or virtue [*pin*, Sinhala]
7. Daddy [පාපි, Sinhala]

WELCOME TO AMERICA... FACE THE FRESHMAN 15!

// BY MARIA GONÇALVES, LAURA BINENBOJM, INEZ CHUIDIAN, AND MINA ASHABOGLU

From leaving behind friends and family, to adjusting to new classes and cultures, arriving in the United States for college brings a whirlwind of changes. Amidst these major life changes, one wouldn’t expect our greatest adjustment to be food. But coming from cultures known for endless numbers of dishes and flavors, American college cuisine was a real shock.

The surprise began when we first heard the phrase “Freshman 15.” How could a country be known for its college students gaining weight in their first semester? It didn’t make sense. But then, we came and saw the bagels every morning, the bottomless bowls of pasta and the countless cookies after every meal. And while the enticing options of American cuisine appealed to us, we found ourselves longing for the familiar tastes of home.

This is a reflection from us, four international students — Laura from Brazil, Maria from Portugal, Inez from the Philippines and Mina from Turkey — on how we navigate the differences in food culture and the American dining hall experience on campus.

Emotional Ties

The memories I hold dearest surround food. Even considering the laid-back lifestyle of Lisbon, it is difficult to find times compatible with everyone’s overflowing schedules; meals are, hence, a sacred time of conviviality.

I crave the “paella mista” my dad masters, even though the Spanish blood only officially runs through my mom, my brother and me. My parents have friends over and we all gather in our garden, patiently waiting for “the chef” — as my dad is called during these gatherings — to bring out the food. I miss the “tortilla de patata,” or potato omelet, my mom makes for me when I get home late and famished. I long for the Sunday family lunches at the traditional “A Mesa,” where “língua de vaca,” cow’s tongue, is a staple, or at “Pina,” where the fish is always fresh and grilled just perfectly. I miss the sudden decision to go to “Marítima do Restelo,” close to home and with unparalleled seafood. And, most importantly, I miss “Nanarrela’s” mango and “nata” ice cream on sunny and rainy days alike.

I will always remember the daily lunch school breaks at “A Tasca do João,” reviewing for the exam that would begin in 30 minutes while we sip a “curto” coffee. I think about the incomparable “brigadeiros” of “Alta Spot” — a bit of heaven made of chocolate — or Isa’s “melhor pastel de nata do mundo” — the best Portuguese pastry ever created — that gave us the sugar intake needed for afternoon classes. I look forward to October recess and the revival of the girls’ night out dinners: 9:30 p.m. get-togethers at “Casa Nostra,” “Casanova” or “Nómada.”

I impatiently expect the moment I am back in Miranda do Douro, the second capital of Portugal. My grandma never disappoints with her “fritas,” “pastés de bacalhau,” “polvo com batatas e couve” and “costeletas de cordeiro” — to name a few of her traditional specialties. I am always

excited for the opportunity to be her sous chef and learn the generational secrets behind seemingly simple recipes.

The food at Yale is not like the food at home; not in regards to taste or appearance, but because it still doesn’t carry the emotional ties that food at home does. I am sure that will change with time: in a matter of months, matcha at Atticus, the dining hall pizza and Sunday brunches at Slifka will form memories I forever hold dear.

— Maria Gonçalves, Lisbon, Portugal

Meal Grabbing Culture

Back home in the Philippines, meals are late and long. Our breakfast “silogs,” at 11 in the morning, consist of fried eggs on top of garlic rice with chorizo. We sit and eat these meals slowly, delaying the start of our days through ambitious conversations of what we must accomplish by the time night falls. We linger at the table and bask in the presence of good company and great food. Even on school days, I was never one to skip breakfast back home.

Here at Yale, breakfasts are brief — that is, if I even make it to breakfast. I take my Saybrook eggs and swallow them with a gulp of Sumatra dining hall coffee. In this rush to make my nine o’clock on Science Hill, I only have time to give my friends a quick “good morning” with an eye-rolling groan that is meant to convey just how tired I am.

My lunchboxes back home often housed “arroz a la cubana” — fried caramelized bananas over rice — and “adobo” — soy sauce-marinated chicken. These meals were packed into Tupperwares with love. My school allotted an hour and 15 minutes for lunch everyday, so my friends and I would savor our meals and gossip in between bites.

At college, my friends and I find ourselves only eating to get the act out of the way. Sometimes, the dining hours don’t fit our schedules, or we need the rest of the day to study — so we run to the nearest dining hall and pile pasta, salad and pizza onto our plates. Our brief meals are composed of short conversations that highlight only what needs to be said, and nothing more. When someone I haven’t seen in a while asks me to “grab lunch,” I know the drill. I have grown accustomed to a detailed ten-minute catch-up conversation while waiting in line for food, followed by a lunch of Bow Wow Sushi that takes just as long to eat as it did to stand in line. Time at Yale seems far too valuable to sit idly for longer than this! When I miss home, I miss sitting at the school or lunch tables after eating, without a rush to be anywhere else.

Though my Filipino definition of a meal has yet to adjust to American college standards, I don’t think I’ll ever change. I refuse to accept “lunch” as a 15-minute ordeal where we finish Commons dumpings whilst trying to hold a conversation. Instead, I will always smile to myself as my friends and I excessively talk at dinner and close out the dining halls. I will always smile to myself as we linger at the dining table.

— Inez Chuidian, Manila, Philippines

Always More Than a Meal

When I think of Turkish food, it’s not just the meal itself that comes to mind,

but the environment it’s enjoyed in. I picture the Turkish eggs, “menemen,” as I watch the sunrise over the mesmerizing Bosphorus strait. I feel the sea breeze as I walk through the park, eating a warm “simit.” Then there’s the Turkish breakfast platter: a seemingly endless array of choices, enjoyed best with my extended family gathered around the table. It’s not just the food, but the ritual — rounds of tea served in perfectly crafted Turkish tea glasses, cousins and grandparents reminiscing as we eagerly await the second plate of “sucuk.” In Turkey, breakfast is not just a meal, it’s an event. Long and leisurely, always with more tea than you think you’ll drink, and just when you think you’re full, there’s the promise of Turkish coffee, accompanied by a mouthwatering piece of “lokum” — Turkish delight.

Turkish cuisine, to me, is a perfect reflection of our culture. Being at the crossroads of two continents — Europe and Asia — we have an incredible variety of flavors and dishes. In fact, we have over 150 different ways to prepare eggplants alone! But beyond the diversity of dishes, there’s a deeper cultural connection: a sense of community. Meals in Turkey are built around sharing. Whether you’re at a seafood restaurant or a kebab steakhouse, most dinners begin with a selection of appetizers, or as we call them, “mezes.” A waiter presents a massive tray of cold appetizers, each one more tempting than the next. And once you’ve made your difficult selections, the warm appetizers follow, leading up to classic Turkish dishes like “doner,” “pide,” “lahmacun” and more.

But no meal is complete without dessert. From sticky-sweet “baklava” to creamy “sutlac” or caramelized “kazan-dibi,” the choices are endless. And even when you think you can’t eat another bite, there’s always time for another cup of Turkish tea, because in Turkey, no meal is truly finished without it.

For me, Turkish food will always feel like comfort food. Whether it’s my mom making “manti” to cheer me up as a kid or treating myself to a chocolate-covered pistachio “lokum” while studying, there’s no mood that a little taste of home can’t fix.

— Mina Ashaboglu, Istanbul, Turkey

I don’t just need food for living — I need it for loving!

Food is one of my love languages. When I think about the people and places I hold dear, there’s always a meal tied to the memory. Growing up in Rio, whether it was a casual bite at the beach or a family meal at home, those familiar flavors hold a special place in my heart.

When I moved to the U.S., I was nervous about losing those comforts. Gone were the familiar Brazilian meals, and in their place were dining halls, coffee shops and what felt like an overwhelming number of New Haven pizza options. The change was drastic, but I soon realized it was the start of a new adventure. It wasn’t just about trying out popular TikTok-worthy spots like Crumbl Cookies or Raising Cane’s. It was about forming new bonds with people through shared meals, just like I had in Rio.

At home, every meal began with “arroz e feijão” — rice and beans — an essen-



tial dish in every Brazilian household. Whether paired with grilled meat, fish or chicken, it was always on the table, and for good reason: it’s simple, healthy and comforting. Every evening, we’d gather around the table, sharing stories and laughs. It always felt like dinner brought my family together.

But in college, pizza seems to be the staple for every meal. While I give into it now and then, I try to balance it out by heading to the salad bar — where I’ve developed an unexpected obsession with edamame seeds. No matter what I’m eating, I somehow find myself sprinkling them on top. And dinner here is so early! By the time 8 p.m. rolls around, I’m already hungry again and heading out to grab a snack.

Rio’s weekends meant beach days with friends, eating “milho,” or grilled corn, or sipping “matte” — Brazilian iced tea — while buying “biscoito globo” from our favorite vendors. Evenings often ended with “caipirinhas” in “botecos” — the Rio de Janeiro “pubs” — where light conversation and hearty laughter flowed as easily as the drinks.

At Yale, the culture is different but just as meaningful: the ultimate bonding moment is grabbing coffee. Here, even though there may not be the warmth of the sun, there is warmth in deep conversations with friends, and it makes me feel just as connected to the people I’m with.
 I’m still finding my way when it comes to managing my diet in the U.S., and I definitely hesitate when the urge for ice cream strikes after every meal. As I navigate my first year, I hope I can avoid the infamous freshman 15, but what’s more important to me is continuing to share the experience of food with the people I care about. That connection — whether over a familiar dish or something new — is what keeps food meaningful for me, no matter where I am.

— Laura Binenbojm, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

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WKND Recommends

“The Girl from Ipanema” by Frank Sinatra and Antonio Carlos Jobim

ENIGMA: WHO ARE YALE'S INFLUENCERS BEHIND THE SCREEN?

// BY ELIZA JOSEPHSON

Yale is a mysterious place. From whispers of society parties to screams from the Bass Naked Run, there always seems to be some campus tradition that's equal parts confusing and intriguing.

Hi! My name is Eliza, and I'm a junior in Pierson College studying comparative literature. I'm one of many Yale students with puzzling backgrounds. I'm trained as a butcher, and I love tofu. I'm Jewish, and my mom's last name is Church. I'm American, and I went to an international school for 10 years. I quote Proust just as much as I quote Season 8 of Love Island.

I know all too well that there's a lot more to people, places and things than meets the eye. And that's why I love Yale. You can never fully understand everything going on here, but you can try! And that's what Enigma, this column, is all about — digging deeper into these pressing questions and providing much needed answers.

Greetings, wanderers from the WKND newsletter. And of course, hello to any loyal readers of this column. I'm back and better than ever.

This summer, I did my best to recharge my batteries and shelve my desire to explore campus curiosities. But before I could even enter the Pierson gates as a junior, I was already in the thick of college.

How is this possible? TikTok. For those of you who have decided you're above the app — are you enjoying little sneak peeks at Instagram Reels and/or YouTube shorts? Both TikTok and those copycat offshoots have something called a For You Page. The FYP algorithm analyzes user behavior, creating personalized recommendations to satiate your content cravings.

Picture me, scrolling through the TikTok feed made just for Me, trying to engage in some unhealthy escapist doom-scrolling. Only, barely 10 videos in, I get jumpscared by multiple Ivy League fall “aesthetic” edits that move at warp speed through snapshots of Yale life.

The glossy acceptance folder accompanied by a congratulatory letter. The gothic facades. The glowing Beinecke archives. The “Y” waffle maker. The woman with a bouncy blowout buried in books in the Law School Library. The Yale Bookstore interior, filled with navy and cream campus apparel.

In fact, if you search for “Yale University” on the TikTok app, a customized AI description appears, alongside more specific tabs for researching — not just Yale's aesthetic, but also the dorms, food reviews, vlogs, campus tours, academic stats and outfit inspo. Clearly, the algorithm has recognized Yale as too complex to fit into a single category.

In an effort to distract myself from school, I accidentally got sucked into a Yale wormhole (and dragged you down here with me). Sorry! Yale's digital space is omnipresent and inescapable.

Be careful, there are cameras everywhere! Don't get too comfortable picnicking on Cross Campus — for all you know, you could be the next person to have their unexpected “main character” moment on Yale's official Instagram page.

But what about the people who contribute to the vibrant, Yale-specific, virtual realm? Who are Yale's influencers behind the screen?

To pull back the pixelated curtain and tell you more, I must get a fresh influencer perspective.

Over the course of a week and a half, I connected with four Yale TikTokers who boast one million combined followers.

Let's make the digital physical and put the reach of one million people into perspective. Assuming an average wingspan of five feet, if one million people held hands, they'd cover roughly 947 miles. That's equivalent to the distance between New York and Chicago!

Hand-holding tangent aside, each of these influencers posts a unique category of content: lifestyle, food, college advice and comedy. Before we hear them answer the questions we've all been waiting for, let's get to know them.

Hudson Warm '27, posts lifestyle content with a bookish twist; we chatted over turkey sausage and cantaloupe in the Morse dining hall. Hudson, who is also a staff reporter for the News, shares classic college videos such as “first week @ yale fits” and “things in my sophomore dorm that just make sense” to keep her over 1,500 followers engaged.

“I feel like Yale is this very mythic institution,” she shared. “A lot of people are interested in seeing what's really going on, and so I think that's probably why that sort of content attracts so much viewership.”

A standout in Hudson's Yale-specific content is the Day in the Life format. “I haven't done one in a while, but last year, when I did a couple ... like, they're honest, but I'm choosing a good day to do it,” she said with a smile.

“I know that on this day, I'm going to be doing a lot of things. That's not what everyday looks like.” Hudson ensures the parts of her life she shares with her audience highlight the excitement, whether she's completing a journalism internship

in Pittsburgh or writing a fantasy novel in the rain.

Her most viral videos were posted last year, since she has been prioritizing her coursework over the TikTok grind. Hudson sighed. “I don't really think of myself as an influencer, I just post when I have something to say,” she added. “I think [TikTok] is really fun and I wish I could do it more.” Even if she shifts her focus away from social media, Hudson can take great satisfaction in having accumulated more than 157,000 total likes.

Sanaa Williams '25, or @cooking_mama2, is known for her detailed and candid food reviews. She takes viewers along for the ride, so they too can explore every option Yale dining has to offer. She was also in my Spanish class last semester, which is how I ended up following her on TikTok.

In September of this year, Sanaa was a senior with a lighter course load. She and her roommate started cooking up ways to entertain themselves. “We thought it would be funny to go to the dining hall and pretend we were food critics and take one bite out of everything that they offered and say our opinion.”

it!” Sanaa laughed. “It's not an experience that a lot of people have, to go here, so I think a lot of people on the internet would be interested to see what it's like here.”

Grant Tucker '27 runs a self-described “college advising” account. His first ever video, an Ivy Day decision reaction, garnered 15.1 million views and 2.1 million likes. He harnessed that viral momentum and has continued to post college advice, mainly Common App essay guidance and SAT tips. We sat down on a wooden bench in the Silliman courtyard and got to talking.

Grant told me he was inspired by other high school seniors who had filmed their own college acceptances. While setting up his camera in the spring of 2023, Grant could have never anticipated that it would capture him being accepted to all but one Ivy League institution (he was waitlisted at Dartmouth).

While relaxing on the beach in his hometown of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Grant shared the edited final product with his friends. In a moment of “very impulsive” excitement, he decided to hit “post.” In an instant, 15 million people shared, liked and commented, turning

Occasionally, he sprinkles in travel vlogs and fitness challenges (like 75 Hard), but those videos don't tend to perform as well as his Yale-focused content. Unfortunately, the algorithm desires to overshadow Grant's personal identity.

“Because of my content style, and the things that work for my account, a lot of it is about college admissions and how to get in, and just about college in general. But that's not me!” Social media is just one more item in the list of his varied extracurriculars, which include surfing, water polo, playing three instruments and studying Portuguese.

Grant's parting advice? “There's only one time in your life where you're going to be an undergrad at Yale University with these incredible people, and the ability to recount this experience to the rest of the world. I'd rather look back and say, ‘I posted that,’ even if it only got 50 likes, than regret not sharing my experiences at Yale. At least I tried. So, make the video, write the song, paint the painting, do what it is that you have been waiting to do.”

Crawford Arnow '27 has one goal on TikTok, which he describes in his bio: “Just trying to make people smile!” With daily posts and 58.2

million cumulative likes, it's safe to say that he has achieved that milestone times a million. He greeted me with a smile of his own while we settled into the Stiles common room armchairs.

Crawford's comedic and chatty content rose to popularity when he was in high school. The pandemic and online school put theater on pause, so posting on TikTok became his main creative outlet. In his first viral videos, he dressed up like his Italian Pixar doppelganger, Luca. “I went from 13K to 500K that summer.”

“I went from posting once a day to four times a day. I was going live for eight hours. It was crazy.” Meanwhile, Crawford was only sixteen, living the theater kid dream of widespread fame. “I feel like for me, social media was such a big part of coming into my identity,” he told me.

“While social media gets such a bad rep for destroying people's mental health, for me, ironically, it was quite the opposite. I gained so much confidence and made so many new friends through it.” He continued, “It was like another facet of performing. Theater is so big in my life, so it was like this other way of performing and connecting with other people.”

As a theater and psychology double major, Crawford's coursework informs his unique approach to content creation. Once he hears a trending audio, he'll look for the “big, emotional beats” in it, just like he might in a scene in a play. “From that, I'll decipher the emotion, and how I've felt that in my life in a relatable way.”

Two more tips from Crawford: “What I found is that if you change the clip in the first 1-2 seconds, it captures [audience] attention because it changes the angle, so their eye is more stimulated. Also, I always make content with ‘you’ pronouns rather than ‘I’ pronouns because then it makes the audience feel like they're actually a part of it, because I want to make people feel seen.”

Crawford posts between classes and in free time. “I really make it my goal to post at least once a day. I feel like it keeps on track, and tethered ... If I ever feel overwhelmed, I'll either not post that day, or do a repost of something, or something I had in drafts earlier.” For him, balance is not an issue. He treats TikTok as a fun destresser that remains mostly unaffiliated from his Yale life.

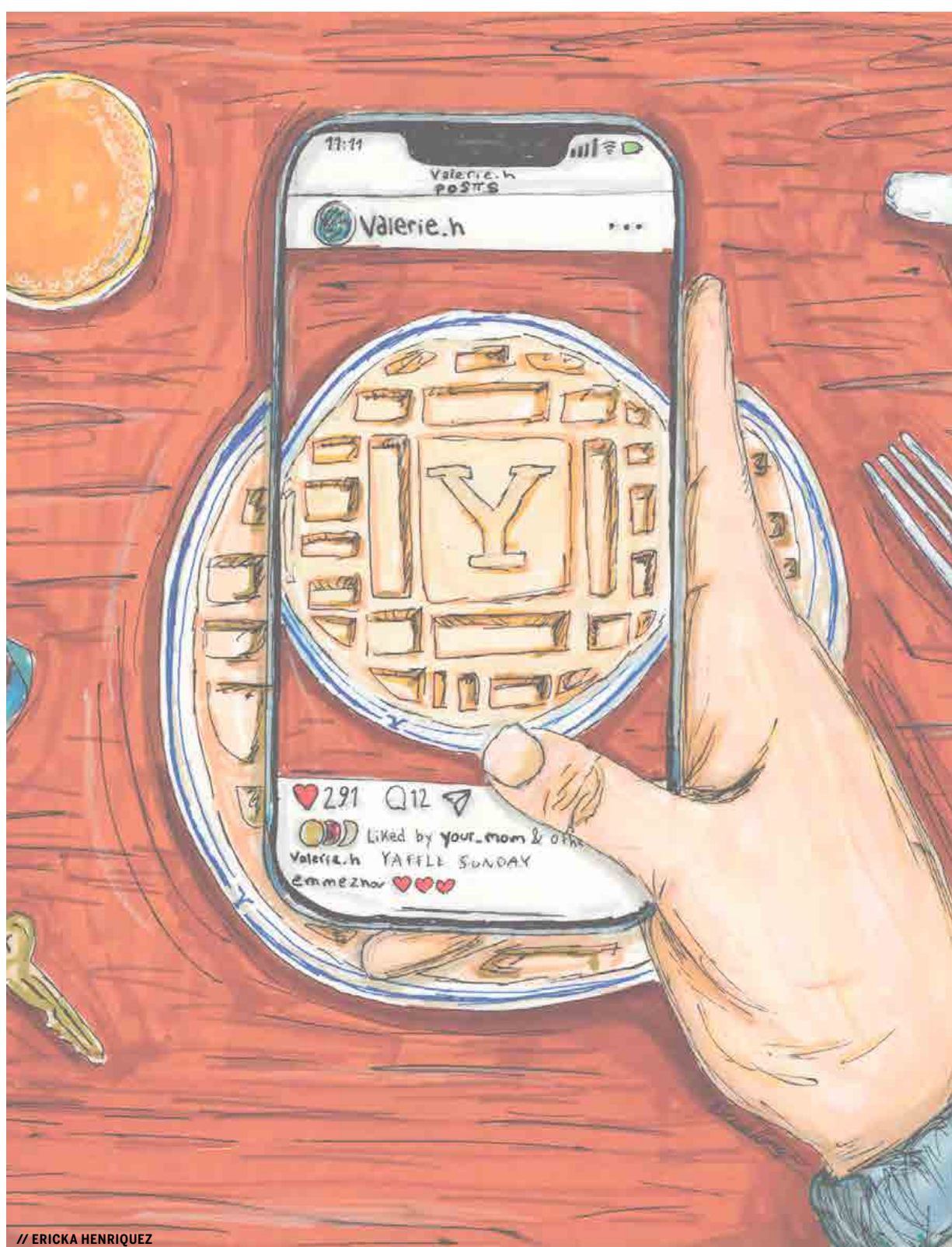
Different from the other three content creators, Crawford shared, “I actually try not to associate too much with the Yale brand because I feel like there's an air of mystery around Yale. My content is more focused on, rather than being super intriguing, just being relatable and comedic, and to give people levity in their life.”

He cherishes the moments when he learns that his videos have brightened someone's day or helped them through a tough time. “I feel like a lot of time when I post, I'm just doing this because it's a little fun thing. And then, you get a comment like that, and it's like ...” Crawford paused. “... Wow. I've made a change in at least one person's life.”

Crawford closed our conversation with this thought: “If I had any message, it would be, anything you really love, keep on doing it!” He certainly lives by this philosophy: on top of his course load and daily posting, Crawford is involved in four Yale theater productions.

I hope you enjoyed meeting these Yale social media personalities as much as I did. Now, go follow @liluhduyyy2.0, @cooking_mama2, @grantucker and @crawfordarnow on TikTok. I invite you to follow their journeys and witness firsthand how they're redefining what it means to be a Yale student in the digital age, one post at a time.

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// ERICKA HENRIQUEZ

That review of the Pauli Murray dining hall amassed nearly 440,000 views and 61.7K likes. “I was honestly so shocked by it because I also didn't and still don't have a lot of followers. I was just making a joke out of trying the food,” she confessed. Sanaa decided to lean into the pseudo food critic niche, and her follow-up videos also performed well.

“There's two ways to get TikTok famous,” Sanaa says you can get audiences invested by either oversharing or catering to a niche. “I never wanted to take the oversharer route just because I feel like that comes with a lot of consequences when random people feel that they know a lot about your life,” she told me. “Also being on a college campus, even just people in my classes knowing random personal details, I was just like mm, maybe not.”

Sanaa's online audience might not know much about her, but they still interact. She gets a lot of supportive comments encouraging her to continue, but that's not always the case; “If I'm eating something and I say I don't like it, people say things like ‘You're spoiled!’ or ‘District 1!’” She shrugged. “I think it is a fine line to walk, because I want to say my piece and my honest opinion, but I also don't want to come off sounding spoiled or not appreciative.”

What keeps her going? It's simple: Sanaa loves eating. “If I could have a dream job, being a food critic, or owning a restaurant would definitely be something up there, so I was like, why not give my opinion? Because for some reason, people listen to that.”

With 1,800 followers and counting, Sanaa's page continues to attract a growing audience of Yale-interested foodies. “If anyone wants to make Yale TikToks, do

his spontaneous decision into a viral sensation.

He attributes his big break to good fortune. “I'm just another dude who got lucky with a video that got a couple views. That's really all it is, and I don't act like I know everything,” he said. Despite an initially limited social media background, Grant is a model and did some acting growing up. “I've always been behind the camera,” he stated.

And behind the camera he has been. Since that first post, Grant has attracted over 82,200 followers and gained 3.2 million cumulative likes. People on campus dubbed him “The TikTok guy.” He reflected on how, on the day of our interview, a girl recognized him in Commons. She thanked him for his videos, which helped her get into Yale and Harvard, and also influenced her choice to attend the superior institution.

“It just reminds me why I do what I do, because people literally come up to me very frequently to say you had an impact on my life and that means a lot to me. And all I really have to do is share some of the knowledge that works and worked for me,” said Grant. “That's what keeps me going. That is what motivates me to keep posting videos despite what some people might say.”

When it comes to content creation, Grant is sentimental, but also strategic. “I'm a firm believer that people will watch your videos if one, they want something [you have] that they don't have, or two, they want to know how they can be like you.” Grant looked out onto Silliman's green courtyard and winding stone paths. “I've found that leaning into Yale and the old money, Ivy league likeness, works.”

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"We are trying to get ourselves better all the time, trying to improve everyday, working hard, getting ready."

HEAD VOLLEYBALL COACH ERIN APPLEMAN TOLD THE NEWS

VOLLEYBALL: Elis soar with victories against UPenn and Princeton

BY KATE ESTEVEZ
STAFF REPORTER

This past weekend, the Yale Volleyball team earned two hard-fought 3-1 victories against Ivy League rivals the UPenn Quakers and Princeton Tigers.

In the match against UPenn, the Bulldogs displayed their tenacity and skill. Although they dropped the first set 23-25, the Elis quickly regrouped to win the next three consecutive sets 25-21, 25-14 and 25-15 to deliver a crushing blow to the Quakers.

In Philly, a handful of Bulldogs achieved personal records. Outside hitter Payton Bryan '27 had a record-high feat of 15 kills. Setter Carly Diehl '25 added another 54 assists to her ongoing record and surpassed the 3,000 assist mark for her Yale career. Right-side hitter Betsy Goodenow '27 had a match-high 16 kills and ten digs for her sixth double-double for the season.

"It's been really nice to settle back into conference play this year," said setter Halle Sherlock '26. "Starting off 3-0 in conference play is definitely a great feeling. Penn and Princeton are both talented teams, so we were happy to come out with two wins this weekend."

The following day, the Elis left Philadelphia and traveled to New Jersey to face the Tigers on their home court. The team started strong with a 25-22 win in their first set but lost their momentum in the second set falling to Princeton 19-25. The Bulldogs barked back and clinched the next two sets, delivering another 3-1 loss to an Ivy rival.

Bryan broke the record she set just a day before and had a career-high 19 kills. The fourth set, where the Bulldogs won 28-26, featured seven ties before Yale prevailed with two

consecutive points — a kill from middle blocker Lauree Abraham '27 and an attack error on the Tiger's side.

"Winning against Penn and Princeton was a big boost for us, and we're feeling pumped for the rest of the season," said Abraham.

As they celebrate this weekend's successes, the Bulldogs are also looking to refine their strategies for upcoming matches this month in the Ivy League Conference.

Head Coach Erin Appleman emphasized the importance of remaining disciplined amid the long season.

"We have only played 3 Ivys, we still have 4 more to go just for the first round," said Appleman. "We are trying to get ourselves better all the time, trying to improve everyday, working hard, getting ready. Payton Byron was Ivy Player of the week, our third sophomore in a row which



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Yale's Volleyball team showcased determination and teamwork over the weekend, clinching impressive 3-1 victories against the University of Pennsylvania and Princeton.

was very exciting. I feel like we have a really good balanced attack."

The Bulldogs will continue their Ivy League campaign this weekend at home against

the Cornell Big Red and the Columbia Tigers.

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The man behind the mustache: Yale Football's Dean Shaffer

BY MEREDITH HENDERSON
STAFF REPORTER

In a long list of 118 players on the Yale Football roster, one linebacker stands out for his grimacing glare and furrowed brow; the picture almost reminiscent of a mugshot.

This is Team 151's Captain, Dean Shaffer '25.

20 years ago, a little boy stood in front of the television, watching Donovan McNabb secure the Eagles a spot in the NFL playoffs. He ran around as cheers echoed throughout the warm family house. His mom prayed he didn't break the nice china.

Dean first began his athletic career at four years old, when his mom enrolled him in soccer. He began to tackle kids on the field for the ball. His parents realized his skills and size might be better suited elsewhere.

"It's time to play football," he remembers his mom telling him.

The sport was love at first sight, Dean recalls. What began as a way to bond with his dad soon became an all-consuming passion.

While other kids' parents stood on the sidelines, screaming at the coaches and keeping a close eye on their kids, Dean's father focused instead on keeping the video camera charged and focused, documenting every play.

"My dad introduced me to [football], but never forced it on me, coached me, nothing. I was always the one who went to him saying 'Hey, I want to do more! I am very thankful for that. He did a great job at letting me do my own thing with football,'" he told the News.

His home of Smithtown, New York, is located right in the middle of Long Island and, as Dean admits, is not necessarily known for its stellar football. Smithtown High School's football roster had approximately 40 players. Dean played two positions — running back and linebacker — and excelled at both. His sophomore year, he focused on college recruiting.

After attending a few camps, the father of one of Dean's teammates gave him advice that would change his future: ditch the running and stick with linebacker. Immediately, Division 1 schools started calling.

An Ivy League opportunity is rare in Smithtown. While Dean could've stayed close to home, he heeded his parents' advice: "Never sacrifice your education just to play football."

Thus, Dean turned the ringer on for calls from the Ivy League, which he described as "the best of both worlds: Division 1 football and the best schools in the country."

Coming up on his commitment decision, the University of Pennsylvania seemed like an obvious choice. Both of Dean's parents had

been born and raised in Pennsylvania, and encouraged Dean to attend Penn. Dean decided to be a Quaker after they brought his family on an official visit.

All that was left were the courtesy calls to the other Ivy League schools, and then Dean could officially tell the coaches at Penn that he was ready to bleed Red and Blue. The call to Yale's defensive coordinator, Coach Sean McGowan, made him reconsider.

When Dean called and said he was going to commit to Penn, McGowan said: "No, you're not. Come to campus tomorrow. Don't call Penn after this phone call. Give us another

football was hard—the speed of the game, the talent — and school, too."

The real work began in fall 2021 when Ivy League sports resumed.

Dean says practices led by Head Coach Tony Reno are "intentionally difficult," meant to maintain intensity so that when games roll around, they feel slow and easy.

Football practices, he said, are broken up into periods: the first is skill-based, working positional skills. This is followed by group teaching, where the defense works with the defense and the offense works with the offense. Lastly, there are competitive periods, where the offense and defense play one another.

On Nov. 19, 2023, Dean was elected captain by his teammates.

Upon this announcement, Reno told Yale Athletics that "there isn't a better person than Dean to bring Team 151 together. I'm excited to see his growth as captain."

Dean said he never sought out this captaincy, though it is "the best honor of [his] life." Leadership, ever since he was young, has come naturally to him.

This is something his teammates recognize. Quarterback Grant Jordan '25 wrote to the News about Dean's impact on the team and on him, stating that he is grateful to God for "intertwining their fates."



YALE ATHLETICS

Dean Shaffer's leadership as Team 151's captain is exemplified by his story and the way he speaks about his team.

chance," Dean recalled.

The visit changed Dean's mind immediately. Everything about Yale exceeded expectations — the food, the architecture, the people. Ignore proximity to home; Yale was as much destined for Dean as he was for Yale. He committed to being a Bulldog.

Due to COVID-19, Dean took the spring 2021 semester off.

"It was hard, I mean just being a freshman in college is hard. You're such a young, immature person. You change so much in your time at college, especially at Yale. Adjusting to

Now that the team is in season, scout teams made up of younger players looking to help the team, will mimic opponents' plays so that the offense and defense can practice combating them. This is relatively standard with most football programs, but Dean says, "the biggest thing that makes us different is how intense practices are. How difficult, how physical. I think a lot of schools make practice easy so guys can feel good for the game, but I think we do it the other way around so games feel easier."

Grant and Dean were randomly assigned as roommates their first year.

"As a teammate, he's dealt with injury, adversity, and all things necessary to shape himself into a tremendous leader and player on the field," Grant wrote to the News. "More importantly, Dean's leadership off the field is what makes him special ... I can't imagine Yale Football without Dean Shaffer as I think he embodies the definition of what it means to be a Yale Football Player."

Grant described Dean as a "fox-hole" guy—someone who will be there no matter the circumstance.

Defensive lineman Mitchell Tyler '25 echoed Grant's words.

"[Dean] loves being a leader," Mitchell wrote to the News. "He loves relationships and believes that a group that is tight-knit plays best together. I haven't been around anyone who leads that way ... I don't know if we would be as tight-knit as a group without him."

Halfway through Dean's final year playing football, he says he has "no individual goals. Zero."

Instead, he sees himself as someone who can guide the team toward "the vision," an overarching goal emphasizing "the hay in the barn," as Dean puts it — the work, not the result.

"For the team, we don't think about outcomes," he said. "I could say 10-0 and a championship, but that's really not the goal. The goal is: tomorrow, can we have the best practice, the best lift, the best meetings that we've ever had? And just do that every day. If today was the only day we ever had, how great can we make it? My goal for the team is to continue to attack things day by day, moment by moment."

Every day, Dean and his senior class mirror a philosophy that Reno has espoused since the beginning of his time at Yale: "Plant seeds to trees you'll never see grow."

To Dean, when the seniors show up, planting seeds means exuding positivity and bringing energy to practices. It matters to Dean that the younger players on the team understand their importance and feel valued.

"I have no doubt that the program will flourish as long as Reno's at the helm," he said. "In terms of my legacy, I just hope people are proud that we're on the same team."

When asked who his success should be credited to, Dean wasn't sure he deserved to be credited for success yet. He said he and his team still have a lot to prove. However, he emphasized, if anyone deserved credit for his success, it was his teammates.

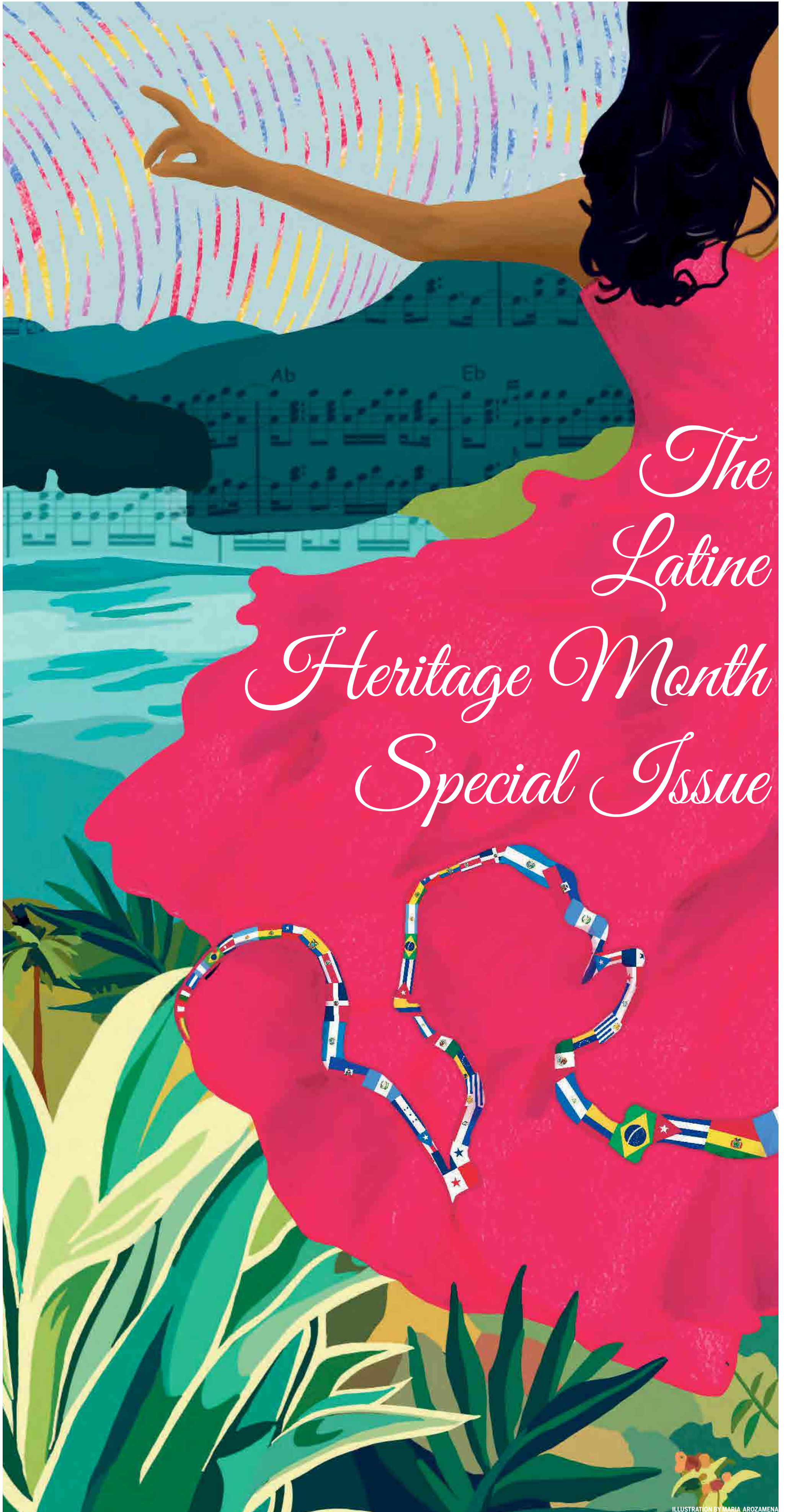
"I would trade all the wins, all the trophies, if that meant having the relationships I do now," he said. "I love football, but the relationships are the greatest part of the sport ... The dudes that are going to be standing at my wedding are on this football team, the same dudes at my funeral. That's just how it's going to be."

Dean has seven more games left in his collegiate career.

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

STAT OF THE WEEK

THE YALE WOMEN'S TENNIS TEAM CLINCHED TWO CHAMPIONSHIPS IN SINGLES PLAY AT THE FORDHAM INVITATIONAL.



*The
Latine
Heritage Month
Special Issue*

LATINE HERITAGE MONTH

Welcome to the News' Latine Heritage Month special issue!

Bienvenidos, bem-vindo and welcome to the News' Latine Heritage special issue! In honor of Latine Heritage Month, which comes to a close on Oct. 15, we've put together a collection of stories spotlighting Yale's Latine community.

Amid the chaos of the first post-affirmative action application cycle, we saw an increase in the number of Latine or Hispanic students to a record-high 19 percent of the class of 2028. These students are faced with a decades-old question: how can we make sense of our Latinidad at an institution that, for centuries, was bent on keeping us out?

The challenge of finding our footing as Latine Yalies is an ongoing one. But over the past month, students focused on an equally important endeavor: celebrating the talents and accomplishments of our community.

Afro-Brazilian philosopher Djamila Ribeiro and journalist Alana Casanova-Burgess, who has Dominican and Puerto Rican roots, shared insights with students at campus events. La Casa Cultural and the Yale University Art Gallery guided visitors through a collection of Mexican photography.

Efforts to uplift Latine voices aren't limited to the ivory tower, however. From a joint boycott by Mecha de Yale and Unidad Latina en Acción, to a collaborative event between Yale Lawtinas and Mexican indigenous activist — and New Havener — Denisse Cruz-Contreras, students are set on bridging the gap between themselves and New Haven's Latine community.

We're so grateful for our hardworking staff reporters and writers who contributed to this spissue. But most of all, thank you to our readers for helping us amplify Latine voices at Yale.

Con todo nuestro cariño,
Maia Nehme '27 and Tristan Hernandez '26

MAIA NEHME is an editor for the Latine Heritage Month Spissue. She reports on Cops and Courts and Latine communities in New Haven for the News.

TRISTAN HERNANDEZ is an editor for the Latine Heritage Month Spissue. He is the 147th Editor in Chief and President of the News.



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LATINE HERITAGE

"It is through art that we will prevail and we will endure. It lives on after us and defines us as people."

RITA MORENO AMERICAN ACTRESS AND DANCER

Yale sets second consecutive record of Latine enrollment share

BY JAEHA JANG
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

When Natalia Armas Perez '28 first arrived on campus, she was caught off guard by the number of Latine students in her class.

Armas Perez comes from a rural, majority-Latine town in California where she said many parts of the community are influenced by Latine culture, and was initially worried about feeling "like a fish out of water."

"Coming here, I realized that I shouldn't have been worried because there is a community here, and it's a consoling fact that my ethnic group is getting greater representation over time," she said.

According to the first-year class profile released by the admissions office, 19 percent of the class of 2028 identifies as Hispanic or Latino, a one-percentage point increase from the class of 2027 and the largest share of Latine students in Yale's history.

This increase — followed the first admissions cycle after the end of affirmation action. For the first time, the share of Latine students in a first-year class matches the national U.S. share of the Latine population.

"This is an important interruption and it creates an opportunity for Yale to continue educating Latine leaders who will then return to their communities and, in turn, further share the impact of a Yale education broadly," said Eileen Galvez, the director of La Casa Cultural.

Over the past year, Galvez led multi-faceted efforts to attract Latine enrollment to Yale, such as exposing prospective students to the "vibrant and lively" community at La Casa, reaching out to majority-Latine high schools across the nation and highlighting identity-based student organizations.

Galvez thinks La Casa's focus on Spanish-language programming for families and caregivers of admitted students made a tangible difference in Latine enrollment. Since about a third of all FGLI students are Latine, she said there is a "direct responsibility" to connect with families and think about what their socioeconomic background means holistically.

"Sharing with [families] what their children will have access to at Yale, but more importantly, how they will have people on campus looking out for them in a language they are most comfortable with — these are quite special opportunities of building trust with families," she said. "Ultimately, when we admit and enroll a student, it is not just the student we welcome to Yale, but entire family units as well."

Armas Perez said that she knew her culture would be "represented and cared for" at Yale after seeing the representation of Latine students during Bulldog Days.

Other Latine students, like Alexander Dircio '28, chose Yale because they knew Yale could assist them financially.

"When I was looking at colleges during the application cycle, I really

wanted to apply to Yale because it felt less exclusive to those who have money," he said.

Dircio added that after the end of affirmative action, fewer of his Latine peers applied to out-of-state schools thinking "they couldn't get in," as well as due to the lower costs of in-state schools. He did not expect an increase in Latine enrollment at a private school like Yale.

Ximena López Carrillo, an ethnicity, migration and race professor, said she and her colleagues were also pessimistic about the share of minority students in the class of 2028 and expected to see a drop in numbers.

"It was very surprising, in a good way, to see that it actually didn't happen," she said. "I think that just shows that students that come from minority groups are here not just because they are recipients of affirmative action. That shows that people who arrive to these places are right here because they have the excellence."

An increased presence of Latine students on campus means different things for students and faculty.

Armas Perez emphasized the importance of representation, adding that one of her biggest motivations is to inspire other Latinas. She added that she is trying to convince more Latine students from her high school to apply to Ivy League and private schools.

López Carrillo agrees that a more diverse population at Yale, rather than a stereotypical monolith, encourages people from less advantaged back-

grounds to apply and "not be discouraged by fear."

She added that diversity is necessary in research for scholars to reflect on their privileges in an elitist institution, how they produce knowledge, how that knowledge is used and what they should do to create positive change. Diversity in academia, she said, also improves the quality of research.

"What makes universities special is the exchange of ideas from different backgrounds," she said. "The greater presence of Latinos contributes to that exchange of experiences, of perspectives. It not only benefits Latinos or the university itself, but it benefits everyone."

She cited the explosion of new ideas and critical research about class, racial relations, ethnicity and community organization that followed the increased diversity in higher education in the 1960s and 1970s.

According to Maryam Parhizkar, the interim associate director of La Casa, an increased number of Latine students on campus also means more intersectionality and diversity among Latine students — such as more Latine students who also identify as Black, Asian or Native American. She emphasized that the Latine community is not a homogenous community, and hopes that more people will understand this complexity as Latine presence increases on campus.

Parhizkar added that outside of ethnicity and race, more Latine students

on campus means more Latine students from diverse geographical and socioeconomic backgrounds.

According to Galvez, the number of Dominican, Venezuelan, Salvadoran and Guatemalan students has been rising during the past few years, and she believes that South American representation will increase in the coming years. She also said that increased diversity among Latine students creates more opportunities for cross-cultural learning and solidarity building.

Armas Perez experienced this solidarity when she met a student from the same region of Mexico as her at the extracurricular bazaar during Bulldog Days.

"It's like, not a build-in best friend, but a built-in cultural connection," she said.

With more students identifying as Latine, Galvez also highlighted the demand for more resources for student activities and organizations. La Casa had to cancel their annual "Latinexcellence" showcase this year due to a lack of staffing, and Galvez said it's difficult for the staff to serve students to the best of their ability when they are reaching critical points of burnout.

Regardless, she believes that this is "such an exciting time to be a Latine student at Yale."

La Casa is located at 301 Crown St.

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Funding for cultural centers shifts with Yale's changing diversity

BY KARLA CORTES
STAFF REPORTER

As Yale becomes more diverse, funding for Yale's cultural centers and spaces is changing.

Yale's racial diversity has been steadily rising for the past few admissions cycles. Even after the end of affirmative action, the enrollment share of Black and Latine students remained steady, while the share of Asian American students slightly decreased in the latest admitted class. Changes in demographics, current and anticipated, prompted the University to revise its funding allocations for each center.

"As Yale has become increasingly diverse, we have seen increases among all populations — especially as we have had larger yields in the admissions process. This is a very happy challenge for us to manage," Burgwell Howard, associate vice president for student life and dean of student engagement, wrote to the News.

Howard wrote that each year, the administration balances the concepts

of "needs versus wants" and "equality and equity" when making budgetary decisions.

He wrote that the needs of Yale's cultural centers and spaces, which support growing broad populations, shift accordingly. The University, according to Howard, has opted to add and adjust resources for students based on the makeup of each incoming class and the overall campus population.

Each year, Howard's office works with the centers' directors to understand the "needs and pressures" they may be dealing with that year and assess how they can best help them.

"In some cases we have distributed these resources equally, but in most cases, we have taken into account the population variances between communities (e.g. the difference in size between the Asian and Native/Indigenous communities on campus, or the number of student organizations that may be affiliated with those spaces)," Howard wrote. Most recently, the number of stu-

dents who identify as Latine rose to 19 percent, in comparison to 15 percent for the class of 2025.

Karla Perdomo Nuñez '25, La Casa Cultural's co-head peer liaison, wrote to the News, that their programming has "definitely expanded this year" as they continue to serve a growing population and try to reach all students. She also highlighted the cross-cultural programming initiatives La Casa has hosted to reach the greatest number of students and those who may identify with more than one center.

Nicole Manning '27, a peer liaison for the Afro-American Cultural Center, wrote that, to her, "PLs and FroCos are such a necessary part of helping students acclimate to campus" and that she applauds the support Yale provides and the "autonomy" of how students can utilize that support in their chosen cultural centers.

Manning highlighted efforts to promote cross-cultural programming to students as Yale's demographic composition shifts, but noted that, at the beginning of the year, some of her



KAREN LIN / SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

The University adjusts funding allocation for cultural centers to meet their changing needs.

PLees felt a stronger connection to one cultural center and chose to identify solely with that center.

"Latinidad comes in so many forms, and many times the initiatives and collaborations we have are to emphasize just that, that we welcome anyone as they are, whatever relationship they have with their Latine identity is welcome," Perdomo Nuñez wrote.

However, Perdomo Nuñez wrote, "funding absolutely needs to increase,"

as it currently does not cover the costs of programming consistently throughout the year. If the budget allowed for it, she added, the center would be able to program more events "to cater to more students and more intersectional identities."

La Casa Cultural at Yale was founded in 1977.

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Latine athletes at Yale: Finding community on the field

BY MEREDITH HENDERSON
STAFF REPORTER

"Good luck finding any!" This was the overwhelming sentiment expressed to me by my peers as I searched for Latine student-athletes to interview.

And this is not totally incorrect; despite growth in recent years, Hispanic students are still one of the smallest demographics represented on campus, according to the 2023-24 Yale Fact Sheet.

Last year, the News found that a "disproportionate number of student-athletes are white." Of the athletes who responded to last year's survey, more than 55 percent identified as white. In comparison, white students make up approximately 33 percent of Yale College overall.

Nonetheless, the athletes who represent their Latine culture stand proud. Marco Borrego '26 is a goalkeeper on the Yale Men's Soccer team. He is also a proud Latino, with family roots in Mexico and Colombia.

"I grew up in the rich culture and values from both countries," he wrote to the News. "It's a big part of who I am, has shaped my identity and worldview ... To me, being Latino means being a part of a vibrant and truly resilient community."

He described his Latino heritage as a big reason as to why he began playing soccer. It led him to Yale, which he describes as "an incredible honor."

He expressed adamantly to the News that he believes diversity in athletics is crucial and everyone, regard-

less of heritage, deserves to play at "the highest levels of competition."

Because staying connected to his "culture at Yale can be challenging," Borrego takes advantage of the opportunities to connect with other Latine students on campus. He is involved in cultural events at La Casa, the Hispanic and Latine cultural house.

Borrego wrote that there are certainly "times when it's hard, because the environment is different," but he believes that Yale Athletics has made strides to foster unity.

"In athletics, I've seen support for diversity through social media campaigns, initiatives like 'The Long Talk,' and events to promote inclusion," he wrote.

A Long Talk was started to "eradicate racism and dismantle systemic oppression in America," according to its website. The goal is to help organizations engage "in an ongoing conversation focused on truth, understanding, and problem solving, leading to individual and cooperative activism."

Another Latine student-athlete at Yale is Natalie Dominguez '28, a catcher on the Yale Softball team.

Dominguez's great-grandparents and grandfather fled Fidel Castro's Cuba in the 1960s, and she describes herself as someone "honored to be the granddaughter of people who took risks with the hope of having a better life in the United States."

She finds beauty in seeing her family celebrate certain aspects of their culture here in the United States that they previously could not under Castro's regime.

Here at Yale, things are not much different from home for Dominguez. On campus, she has yet to celebrate any major holidays, which she says are her main ties to her culture. However, she wrote, being apart from her dad, who speaks Spanish, listens to Cuban music, and makes her favorite dishes — empanadas and picadillo — are certainly parts of home she cannot get anywhere else.

Like Borrego, Dominguez believes Yale Athletics strives for inclusion.

"I think Yale is very diverse, and I think the Athletics program does a pretty good job at celebrating diversity. I participated in Yale Athletics' Hispanic Heritage Month media day, and thought there were some insightful questions that were proposed to each athlete, which were then broadcasted at sporting events."

Pablo Rodriguez '27 is a Mexican-American baseball player for Yale. His family began their move with his two paternal great-grandfathers, who used U.S. temporary work visas to fill shortages caused by World War II. His father grew up in San Luis, A.Z. and his mother in Zacatecas, Mexico. He recalled their journey of finding stability in the United States as "backbreaking, as [his grandparents would] spend half or more of the day working field jobs to sustain my parents and their siblings."

Rodriguez describes his connection to his heritage as an important part of who he is. From seeing

his cousins in Mexico, to listening to Mana and Vicente Fernandez, to eating traditional Mexican food like carne asada and ceviche, he says it's "important to keep in touch with my family's culture to honor the hard work of the generations before me."

He gives no credit to his success to himself; instead, he thanks the hard work of his parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, who put him in a position to focus on something bigger than "picking strawberries" like they used to do in California.

Rodriguez wrote that he hopes his impact will go beyond just himself.

"I hope that, as a Latino Yale student-athlete, I can set an example for other kids like me back home. I hope to teach them that, whether you're coming from a public school like I was or a prestigious private school, whether you're the child of immigrants, a first-generation immigrant yourself, or your family has lived in the U.S. for six generations, you can be successful by working hard and making the most of your opportunities."

Sumarha Tariq '27 is half-Peruvian and half-Pakistani. She is also a cheerleader for Yale. Reflecting on her heritage, she spoke about the broader context her culture is connected with.

"It's really difficult to go into a space and know that you're looked down upon because of the way you look. It's historical, it's foundational in the world we live in; it's implemented into our systems, and it permeates through the lives of

marginalized communities everyday — explicit or not."

She knows that there is room for more than just representation at Yale and that Latine athletes "deserve to be in these spaces," she said.

Tariq's sport is unique from the three athletes mentioned before: cheerleading is predominantly White. However, Yale Cheerleading, she says, has been a diverse, inclusive community for her on campus.

"It's very refreshing being able to go on a team within a [Predominantly White Institution] where there are so many amazing athletes of color who are intelligent, amazing in all aspects, such beautiful people inside and out," she told the News. "For me, that held such an important factor in my integration to this school because it became a place of home. Having my identity acknowledged in a very positive way and connecting with other people who I can relate to has been amazing."

The Yale Cheer team "has been such a refreshing experience and has come to feel like home" for Tariq. It gives her a place to feel comfortable.

Latine athletes continue to promote inclusion at Yale, while also celebrating their identities and cultural connections.

Hispanic Heritage Month ends on October 15.

Megan Kernis contributed reporting.

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LATINE HERITAGE

"Your great strength is knowing who you are."

OSCAR DE LA RENTA DOMINICAN FASHION DESIGNER

New Haven Museum to welcome author of "Men of the 65th"

BY ALEX GELDZAHLER
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

On Thursday, Oct. 3, author Talia Aikens-Núñez spoke at the New Haven Museum about the history of the 65th Infantry Regiment, also known as the Borinqueneers, comprised of Puerto Rican soldiers.

Based on Aikens-Núñez's book, "Men of the 65th," the lecture provides insight into the unit's history and struggles in the Korean War and at home, where they faced discrimination. The event, titled "Men of the 65th: Honoring Puerto Rican Borinqueneers at the New Haven Museum," was at 6 p.m.

"I wanted to get a more hands-on feel for what happened many, many decades ago," said Aikens-Núñez about the book.

She told the News how her story began 10 years ago at a Christmas dinner, "My husband's grandfather was there ... and he said he was part of the famed 65th." She explained how, despite studying history in college, she felt "pretty ashamed" at having "never heard of this unit."

Inspired by Toni Morrison's advice, "If there's a book you really

want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it," Aikens-Núñez embarked on an intensive research journey, including work at the National Archives and interviews with veterans, to record the story of the Borinqueneers.

She aims to share more pieces of history that receive less attention and hopes others "go digging like I did to find out more."

Her focus on the 65th Infantry Regiment explores a fascinating aspect, though underreported, of the Korean War.

Professor Harry Franqui-Rivera at Montclair State University, who studies and writes about the Borinqueneers, explained that "coming back from WWII, the soldiers received a hero's welcome parading through the streets of San Juan."

The book and much of the press surrounding the 65th, however, relates to their involvement in the Korean War, which "gave them national iconic status for both the people of the island and the growing Puerto Rican communities on the U.S. Eastern Seaboard," said Franqui-Rivera.

Despite being known for their exemplary abilities in training and on the battlefield, the reg-

iment was subjected to dangerous assignments in Korea and continual discrimination within the military.

One notable instance, which Aikens-Núñez highlights, was the court-martial of roughly 90 soldiers — the largest court martial of the Korean War — in the 65th for cowardice after being assigned a nearly impossible task on the front lines. Despite other white units similarly refusing combat, only the Borinqueneers faced legal repercussions.

Through their battles both abroad and against prejudice within the military, the unit eventually gained clemency and, after time, notoriety. Franqui-Rivera explained that "it took the effort of private individuals, scholars, community leaders and activists to recover their history, make it public and initiate a campaign to restore their stained record." This resulted in the regiment being awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 2014.

Aikens-Núñez's lecture is also a part of the New Haven Museum's NH250 programming, a series developed by the museum

to complement the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

"As we get closer to the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, we wanted to take local, lesser known, inclusive stories and put those kinds of stories into our programming," said Cynthia Riccio, the director of programs and planning for the New Haven Museum.

Riccio highlighted that Aikens-Núñez's talk was particularly attractive in being selected as part of the NH250 program because it was a "lesser-known story."

With October commemorating Hispanic Heritage Month, the story of the 65th regiment was also deemed especially important by the New Haven Museum as it highlighted the rather unknown contributions of Latine Americans to the U.S. war effort.

Aileen Santiago '28, a member of La Casa Cultural, told the News that she was pleasantly surprised at how the New Haven Museum was taking the stride to host an event that uplifts the voices of Puerto Ricans.

Although she had never heard of the 65th regiment before the

announcement of the event, she found the nuanced story of the soldiers intriguing as the focus was on Puerto Ricans who were fighting for the very country that had imperialized their home.

With "Men of the 65th" richly detailing the Korean War and its aftermath, Aikens-Núñez is also expected to draw a large audience of veterans from the New Haven military community.

Riccio told the News that the museum aims for the event to warmly welcome those who served and to highlight their contributions to their country and the major events of history.

"These veterans are getting older as well," said Riccio. "It is important that we get their oral histories, talk to them and really capture that while we can."

The event will be preceded by a reception, where attendees will have the opportunity to interact with the book and the New Haven Museum.

The New Haven Museum is located at 114 Whitney Ave.

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Brazilian philosopher discusses U.S. launch of her book

BY LAURA BINENBOJM
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

When Djamila Ribeiro was growing up in Santos, Brazil, she was surrounded by political activism.

Her father was an activist and one of the founders of the communist movement in Santos, which focused on racial justice in her hometown. As a teenager, her involvement in a Black feminist organization gave her access to women authors for the first time, opening her eyes to female voices. Although her university education was dominated by European male thinkers, Ribeiro remained dedicated to studying women's perspectives. With the help of her mentors, Ribeiro said she deepened her exploration of feminist theory and influential thinkers like Simone de Beauvoir.

Ribeiro's background and her passion for studying women in activism would ultimately lead her to write her book, "Where We Stand," which focuses on themes of race, gender and power in Brazil and around the world.

On Thursday evening, Ribeiro came to Yale to discuss the U.S. release of the book, which was published by Yale University Press this year.

"Racism and sexism are global struggles, and our fight must be transnational," she told the News in Portuguese.

The book was originally published in Portuguese in 2017 under the title "Lugar de Fala." Ribeiro joined Yale faculty Giseli Tordin, Gana Ndiaye and Alicia Schmidt Camacho to discuss the U.S. launch of the book.

The book introduces the concept of "place of speech," exploring how race, gender and power shape who is able to speak and how their words are received. The panel was an important moment for Ribeiro, who reflected on how this work — already a bestseller in Brazil — fits into the U.S. discourse on social justice.

"In 2016, there were many debates on social media, and people were using the concept of 'place of speech' incorrectly," Ribeiro said. "Since I had already explored this concept during my master's thesis, I wrote the book to deepen and qualify the debate, to create a genealogy and systematize the concept."

The discussion also touched on the challenges of translating the term "lugar de fala" for the U.S. audience. Ribeiro said "place of

speech" isn't a widely recognized concept in the United States. At first, Ribeiro and the Yale University Press considered using "Speaking Place" as a title for the translation, but she said "Where We Stand" really resonated with her because "it highlights the personal position or locus we occupy in society."

She praised the Yale University Press for their attention to detail in maintaining the integrity of her work.

"With the Yale University Press, I felt a level of respect and collaboration I'm not always used to," she told the News in Portuguese.

Ribeiro's work draws from Black feminist thought, connecting thinkers such as Simone de Beauvoir, Lélia Gonzalez and Audre Lorde to examine how Black women have been silenced or punished for speaking out.

For many students in attendance, Ribeiro's presence at Yale held personal significance. Vitória Bezerra Nunes '28, expressed her pride.

"It was an honor to welcome Ribeiro to Yale," Nunes said. "As a Black woman from the periphery of Rio de Janeiro, it was incredibly empowering to see some-

one who represents me in such an important space."

Another student, Larissa Garcez '28, was inspired by Ribeiro's focus on how to bring marginalized people into prestigious institutions.

Garcez said that one of the most important things she'll take away from the panel is "Ribeiro's insight on helping marginalized people access spaces like Yale."

"Coming from a small town in Brazil, this resonated with me. I'm motivated to help others from my community reach universities like this one," Garcez said.

As her work gains recognition in the United States, Ribeiro said she is optimistic about its global impact.

"We've already impacted the curriculum in public schools and universities [in Brazil]. It was important to break this invisibility," she said. "I feel the impact because the books have become bestsellers, reaching a broader audience, the people — I've always wanted to break out of the academic bubble."

As the conversation around race and gender continues to evolve, Ribeiro encourages readers to engage with the ideas presented in "Where We Stand." Reflecting on

the difficulties of internationalizing her work, Ribeiro acknowledged the challenges in the U.S. market.

"Only about three percent of books here are translated each year," Ribeiro said at the event. "I'd love to see more international diversity of authors here. My collection has been published in Argentina and France, but the U.S. market is much harder ... despite 'Where We Stand' being published in Brazil in 2017 it only now reached U.S. audiences ... how did it take so long?"

Despite these challenges, Ribeiro remains hopeful that the U.S. release of "Where We Stand" will contribute to the growing global conversation on race, gender and power.

She added that she hopes the dialogue, critique and debate will flourish and she encourages everyone to read her book, as these exchanges are crucial to moving forward.

Ribeiro is currently a professor at New York University, where she teaches the graduate seminar "Feminisms from the South."

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Activist supports survivors of patriarchal violence

BY OLIVIA WOO
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Indigenous activist Denisse Cruz-Contreras visited campus on Friday to discuss her work helping survivors of patriarchal violence.

The event was co-organized by the Yale Lawtinas, the Central Americans for Empowerment at Yale and ¡Oye! Spoken Word. Cruz-Contreras, who is originally from Oaxaca, Mexico, and is of indigenous Binnizá ancestry, co-founded the Network Without Borders for Survivors of Violence, or "Red Sin Fronteras para sobrevivientes de violencia," a non-profit organization that aims to promote healing for survivors of patriarchal violence while also providing economic support for women in Oaxaca.

"The Network Without Borders was born from personal experiences as a survivor of violence," Cruz-Contreras said in Spanish during the event, as translated by the News. "This led me to have the desire to one day be able to support other women who have experienced the same thing."

Cruz-Contreras has experience working with women's rights, specifically those of indigenous women, in Mexico. She emphasized that for victims of patriarchal violence, the process of moving to a new country often complicates and delays the healing process due to feelings of

isolation and being stripped of one's identity.

Upon moving to New Haven from Oaxaca in 2019, Cruz-Contreras herself found it difficult to find systems of support to combat her feelings of isolation, missing her family and struggling to support her children as a single mother. She was also a victim of sexual harassment while working long hours at a local restaurant, which further drained her "strength and courage."

After struggling to find a supportive and uplifting community in New Haven, Cruz-Contreras eventually found support through the non-profit organization Havenly, which welcomes women from many different countries.

Cruz-Contreras was inspired by Havenly's welcoming and respectful atmosphere. Through Red Sin Fronteras, she hopes to create a similarly safe space for women affected by violence. Recently, Havenly has also supported her in the process of registering as a non-profit organization.

Red Sin Fronteras hopes to open safe refuges for women in Oaxaca and Connecticut. These distinct spaces will be operationally linked since the Connecticut site will sell products created by women in Oaxaca to promote their economic empowerment.

"We want to sell clothing made by women in Oaxaca. We want to sell traditional medicine made by them: ointments, syrups, tea. In

Oaxaca there is a strong tradition of making art, so we want to bring both traditional medicine and handmade art," Cruz-Contreras said to the News.

In addition to selling goods from Oaxaca, Red Sin Fronteras plans for the Connecticut space to host workshops, training for volunteers and healing activities for survivors. The organization is looking for volunteers of all backgrounds and experiences to support its New Haven branch and the survivors of violence that it serves.

Volunteers will get training specifically focusing on avoiding re-victimization. Cruz-Contreras also hopes to use her professional background to make Red Sin Fronteras' volunteers forcefully aware of the risks of re-victimization and be able to support community members as holistically as possible.

"Sometimes women have to navigate the system and even though there are interpreters, even though they are the institutions that should be trained, they continue to re-victimiz[e] women," Cruz-Contreras said. "If you are a woman whose first language is not Spanish, [if] you speak an indigenous language and they are interpreting for you in Spanish, it is even more re-victimizing for women. That is why we want volunteers to have that support."

Samantha Suazo '26 and Charlyze León Mata '26, the co-presi-

dents and co-founders of the Yale Lawtinas, emphasized the importance of Red Sin Fronteras' work, both in supporting survivors of violence and in the realization of the real-world applications of Yale education.

Lawtinas' mission is to "empower pre-law Latine women at Yale," Suazo told the News.

"We saw a very good chance for us to go beyond the Yale community [...] not just learning at Yale, not just acquiring these skills, but also putting these skills to work within the communities that we want to represent," Suazo said.

Volunteers provide many forms of support, including accompanying someone to immigration

court, helping someone open a bank account, and working toward political change to support survivors in Connecticut and Mexico. Students can sign up to volunteer with Red Sin Fronteras through the Yale Lawtinas.

Yale Lawtinas and Red Sin Fronteras leaders hope that their shared interests will lead to strong relationships between organizations.

"It was a really insightful event," said Tzideny Romero '28. "The safe space that's being created, that's something that's so important."

The event was held at Benjamin Franklin College.

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OLIVIA WOO / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Denisse Cruz-Contreras, a founding member of the non-profit Red Sin Fronteras, spoke about the work students can do to support survivors of violence.

LATINE HERITAGE

"You are not lucky to be here. The world needs your perspective. They are lucky to have you."

ANTONIO TIJERINO: PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE HISPANIC HERITAGE FOUNDATION.

Local activists mobilize immigrant communities ahead of election

BY ERIC SONG
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

With election day less than a month away, advocacy groups in New Haven are determined to have their communities' voices heard.

The Asian Pacific American Coalition of Connecticut and Unidad Latina en Acción are both working to register voters and increase political engagement within their respective communities — APAC through a goal of registering over 1,000 new Asian American and Pacific Islander voters by election day and ULA by encouraging young Latino voters to become active in the political process.

According to Corona Zhang, APAC's Let's Vote Community Organizer, the AAPI community has some of the lowest voter participation rates in the nation. She cited lack of information about candidates, intensity of elections and poor accessibility to explain the disengagement.

"In order to strengthen our communities, we need to understand how important it is to get out there and vote," Zhang said.

Jennifer Heikkila Díaz, co-chair of APAC, said that to meet their 1,000 voter goal, the organization has been tabling all over Connecticut and participating in local community events. APAC has targeted naturalization ceremonies in Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport for several months, Díaz said. But the voter initiative is not

just limited to this election cycle. APAC plans to continue this initiative for future election cycles.

APAC has also championed the accessibility of voting resources for the AAPI community. This includes translating voter registration materials into the top 10 most frequently used Asian languages in Connecticut — from Vietnamese to Mandarin to Nepali.

John Jairo Lugo, community organizing director of ULA, wants to show politicians that the Latino community is ready to vote. By encouraging the Latino community to vote, politicians are more likely to support the interests of the community, Lugo said.

Lugo doesn't want ULA members to stop at voting, however. "We can't expect a winning politician to do the right thing for us," Lugo said. Forceful public activism also prompts politicians to start paying attention to issues important to marginalized communities, supplementing the power of the ballot box.

Díaz echoed the sentiment. As more people in the community become politically engaged, there is more representation of diverse communities in political discourse. They further criticized the harmful tendency to treat immigrant communities as a monolith.

"The more diversity of perspectives, the more we can ensure that no one is being marginalized or left out of the conversation," they said.

There was a consensus between the organizations that immigra-



COLLYN ROBINSON / SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

The Asian Pacific American Coalition of Connecticut and Unidad Latina en Acción are mobilizing members of their communities to vote this coming November — and extend their political engagement beyond the general election.

tion is one of the key issues this election cycle.

Lugo noted that the United States "has always been an immigrant country, and we [Latinos] are just a new wave of immigrants." He said he believes politicians are utilizing the current migrant wave to stir emotions among the electorate to their advantage, negatively skewing perception of the Latino community in the process.

For Zhang, the recent presidential elections have attempted to exacerbate racial divides. However, she said that members of the AAPI community have expressed to her that they would rather find a way forward — united — rather than participate in divisiveness.

Díaz said that with a growing population of multilingual and multicultural groups in Connecticut, the focus should

instead be on providing opportunities for these groups to allow them to thrive.

Regardless of partisan issues, both organizations remain committed to voting advocacy as a means to push political discourse to include the needs of immigrant communities.

Election day is Nov. 5, 2024.

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¡Fiesta Latina! promotes Peabody, community resources for Spanish speakers

BY MAIA NEHME AND
REMI CLARK-REDSTAR
STAFF REPORTER AND
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The lilting opening notes of the mariachi classic "México Lindo y Querido" welcomed community members to ¡Fiesta Latina!, a two-day celebration of Latino cultures this weekend.

The events — co-hosted by Latino advocacy nonprofit Junta for Progressive Action and the Yale Peabody Museum — featured Latino music, dance and food and highlighted the museum's Latin American artifacts, which include dinosaur bones discovered in South America. Guests enjoyed tours of the museum held in Spanish and meet-and-greets with Latino Yale faculty from the sciences. The event fell midway through Latino Heritage Month.

"What we want to let people know at this event is that the museum is open, it's free — and it will always be free — and that we are developing programs that serve Spanish-speaking audiences in new ways," Andrea Motto, the Peabody's director of education, told the News.

The organizations have held the celebration for the past two decades, initially hosting it at the

Peabody and moving it to Junta's home base during the museum's four-year renovation. After the Peabody reopened in March, the organizations elected to expand ¡Fiesta Latina! to a two-day event, with one day of programming at Junta's 169 Grand Ave. location and the next day's activities held at the museum.

¡Fiesta Latina! was organized by a planning committee with representatives from Junta, the Peabody, New Haven Pride Center, Arte Inc., the New Haven Free Public Library and Music Haven.

Junta kicked off ¡Fiesta Latina! with the tunes of local musicians and food trucks, as well over 20 information stations spotlighting community resources on Saturday afternoon. The stations included a voter registration table and information on legal aid, educational opportunities, medical assistance and other resources.

Kayla Natal, administrative assistant for community care provider Project Access New Haven, said her main goal was to spread the word about the organization's resources, such as upcoming mobile pharmacy and dental clinics. She estimated that 35 attendees stopped by the table.

Maritza Gant, who represents New Haven's Democratic Registrar

of Voters Shannel Evans, encouraged community members to sign up to vote early. Midway through Saturday's event, she had registered four people to vote and checked two people's registration status.

"Some people... don't want to be involved in politics — they're not interested," Gant said when asked about unregistered voters in the New Haven Latino community. "But I got a lot of comments like, 'This year, it's important to vote.'"

Fred DePourcq, Junta's managing director, said he was "pleasantly surprised" by the high turnout on Saturday. 200 people attended last year's event, Serrano said, and he estimated that across both days, they had well surpassed that number.

María Pérez, one of the attendees, told the News that while she was drawn to the event because of the mariachi performance, she took the opportunity to explore some of the community resources as well.

"[¡Fiesta Latina!] is for the community to reunite and converse with each other... and to learn about the services that are available to them," Pérez said in Spanish.

Julio Mendoza and Margarito Mello — two members of Mariachi Voces de Mi Tierra Connecticut, the group that performed



at the event — emphasized the importance of bringing together the Latino community, especially with the upcoming general election in November.

At the Peabody on Sunday, the Afro-Latino group Proyecto Cimarron opened the event with bomba music inspired by their Puerto Rican roots. They were followed by the Spanish Community of Wallingford Youth Mariachi Band and Dancer Troupe, who captivated museum-goers and staff alike with lively dance routines and dresses of bright reds, purples and blues.

Meanwhile, on the third floor, members of Yale's Muñoz lab participated in the meet-a-scientist event. Aided by their own specimens and tools, they shared with attendees their work on the evolution of reptiles and amphibians, as well as how their cultural heritage is at the heart of what they do.

"[¡Fiesta Latina!] had personal high significance; we are a majority Latino lab," Professor Martha Muñoz told the News. "The ability to bring trilingual engagement with the public — we speak Spanish, one of us speaks Portuguese, and we all speak English — show who we are as individuals in addition to the science we do, and celebrating this lab's scientific excellence was really exciting."

Occupying all floors of the Peabody, various artifacts from Latin America were on display throughout the museum. Be it the clay crafts of the Aztecs or the Inca or the bones of ancient dinosaur species that greeted visitors, the museum highlighted

the treasures found south of the U.S. border.

Rounding out Sunday's festivities were final performances by Tere Luna, a singer of Mexican descent who specializes in the musical style Bolero, and the Orquesta Afinke, a Latino salsa group based in Stratford, Conn.

"I think it is very important to show the bright side of every culture," Veronica Gonzalez, a dancer in the Spanish Community of Wallingford Youth Mariachi Band and Dancer Troupe said. "We get to show a very beautiful part of our culture and share it with everyone."

Latino Heritage Month is observed from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15.

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KRISTINE CLARK / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Hosted by Junta for Progressive Action and the Yale Peabody Museum, this year's event, unlike the celebrations of the last two decades, expanded to two days of programming.



LATINE HERITAGE

“Widen the path of opportunities and continue to leave a powerful and positive legacy in this world.”

LUIS FONSI PUERTO RICAN SINGER

An unorthodox tour of Mexican photography at the YUAG

BY KIVA BANK
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

On Sept. 27, in collaboration with the La Casa Cultural Center, the Yale University Art Gallery offered Yale students a guided tour of its collection of Mexican photography, which includes works from Manuel Álvarez Bravo, Graciela Iturbide and Ángeles Torrejón.

Since its opening in June, the current photography rotation has displayed 40 works from 11 different Mexican photographers. The hour-long tour was led by Marcia Brady Tucker curatorial fellow Daniel Menzo and was a part of La Casa’s programming for Latine Heritage Month this year.

“We’re always looking for programming that brings our students into other spaces on campus, and this seemed like a really opportune way to do that,” said Maryam Parhizkar, interim assistant director of La Casa Cultural.

According to Parhizkar, the tour with La Casa was initiated by Raymond Carlson, the manager of student engagement at the YUAG. The event gave students a chance to engage in conversation with the curator, Menzo.

This rotation marked Menzo’s first time curating a photography rotation at the YUAG, whose interest in Latin American photography guided his selection process. The black-and-white film negatives span the 20th and 21st centuries and depict a variety of subjects and regions.

“Once I noticed that we had quite a lot of Mexican photography and works from Mexican photographers, I leaned into that as an organizing principle,” he said.

Before he began the tour, Menzo encouraged participants to freely explore the room to gain a sense of the overall work.

As he guided the group of eight participants through the collection, his tour was led similarly to a seminar-style art class. Menzo asked participants to examine the composition of Álvarez Bravo’s “Retrato de lo eterno” (Portrait of the Eternal).

According to Menzo, Álvarez Bravo’s piece called attention



Curatorial fellow Daniel Menzo led an interactive tour of the YUAG Mexican Photography rotation in honor of Latine Heritage Month. KIVA BANK / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

to the modernist way a subject’s gaze commanded the story of the photograph. He also said that the Mexican movement of modern photography “[pointed] the camera to new ways of living” and focused on rural life in Mexico.

Often attributed as the originator of modernist Mexican photography, Álvarez Bravo’s legacy left an imprint on the next generation of Mexican photographers, as he even mentored some of the artists featured in the rotation.

The field of photography was typically male-dominated, said Menzo, which motivated him to highlight the work of women photographers in the rotation. Female artists, including Lola Álvarez Bravo and Graciela Iturbide, make up the majority of featured photographers.

Menzo particularly brought the tour’s attention to Nuestra Señora de las Iguanas (Our Lady of the Iguanas), photographed by Iturbide in 1979.

He asked the group to express one word that came to mind

when they looked at the image of a Zapotec woman photographed with several iguanas on her head.

“Crown,” “queen,” “strength,” “magical” and “indifference” were among the words shouted out.

According to Menzo, the image is one of Iturbide’s most iconic works and is a symbol of strength for the Zapotec region. When Menzo came across Iturbide’s contact sheet for her piece, he examined the 12 printed frames from her roll of film and noticed that the selected work stood out from the other exposures due to the tension between comfort and vulnerability shown on her face.

One participant, Andrik Garcia Higareda ’25, enjoyed the unique opportunity to engage with the curator and learn about the selection process of the artworks.

“I’ve been to many, many museum tours, and I feel like you don’t get that chance to intimately guide where the tour is going,” he said. “The size of the crowd was perfect, and people were very active and willing to jump on each other’s points.”

He appreciated Menzo’s curatorial guidance throughout the tour and found it helpful to have someone contextualize and interpret each piece. Garcia Higareda said that this made the tour more accessible to people who did not have a background in photography.

Garcia Higareda also said that the interactive experience provided deeper context on “what Hispanicity means.”

Menzo emphasized that the tour was a learning experience for everyone, including himself as a curator.

“Even while the rotation is up, it’s still an ongoing opportunity to learn with folks in the space,” Menzo said.

At one point in the tour, Menzo asked about everyone’s personal and academic interests, which ranged from anthropology to the history of the Mexican Revolution. Parhizkar said that she enjoyed learning about others’ disciplinary perspectives and how that affected their commentary on the work.

“I thought that the engagement was great. I think people were asking really interesting questions,” Parhizkar said. “I think you get those kinds of questions when you have a group that is encouraged to ask questions.”

Although he facilitated the tour, Menzo said that he let student inquiry truly guide the experience.

“It’s always good to have structure, but it’s always good to also respond to what’s happening in real-time,” Menzo said on his decision to create a conversational environment during the tour.

Towards the end of the exhibit, Menzo directed the tour to the works of Ángeles Torrejón, who gained special permission from the Zapatista Army of National Liberation to document its female soldiers.

In her piece Selva Lacandona (Lacandon Jungle), the camera focuses on the gaze of one woman who stares at the viewer with suspicion. Menzo drew attention to the blurred faces of anguish in the background and said that “captures [her] inviting but oppositional gaze.”

He believes that the surrounding context of the subject is crucial to how one perceives the photograph. Additionally, Menzo emphasized that photographers such as Torrejón built relationships with their communities, which allowed them to record moments of vulnerability and strength.

“Photography is so often ubiquitous. We all have cameras in our pockets. We all see gazillions of images every day,” Menzo commented. “But it’s really important to slow down your looking and really ask, like, how was this made? What, when? Why? What’s the context? I think that’s when things really start to unfold.”

Menzo hopes that YUAG and La Casa can collaborate through additional tours in the future.

Mexican Photography from the Gallery’s Collection is on display until mid-November in the James E. Duffy Gallery on the museum’s fourth floor.

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La Casa Cultural hosts journalist Alana Casanova-Burgess

BY LONDON BISHOP
STAFF REPORTER

On Sept. 30, La Casa Cultural hosted a keynote with award-winning journalist Alana Casanova-Burgess at Luce Hall.

Casanova-Burgess is the host of the bilingual podcast “La Brega”, which explores Puerto Rican culture, history and current issues. The podcast has received praise from the New Yorker, The New York Times and the Atlantic. The keynote was jointly organized by La Casa Cultural and Despierta Boricua, Yale’s Puerto Rican Student Association. The event was also sponsored by the Poynter Fellowship.

“The gathering was less a keynote address and more of a community gathering,” Carmen Lopez Villamil ’25, a panelist for the keynote, wrote the News. “As people filled the hall, we dragged around couches, sat on tables, and unstacked classroom chairs to expand the intimate circle into a fluid band. Within an hour, the room was full of students and Puerto Ricans of all ages from all over.”

Casanova-Burgess talked about her experiences in journalism, the role of the Puerto Rican community in the podcast’s creation and her own personal journey. During the event, Casanova-Burgess often redirected audience questions back to the audience, which shifted the talk from a “lecture-esque event” to an “expansive and flexible community,” per Villamil.

When asked what comes next for her after “La Brega” and plans for the following season, Casanova-Burgess told the audience that the team is currently experimenting with a lot of different ideas, from music to sports, but she also directed the question to the audience, interested in what they “wanted to hear, what is at the top of [their] minds, and what feels urgent.”



Curatorial fellow Daniel Menzo led an interactive tour of the YUAG Mexican Photography rotation in honor of Latine Heritage Month. KIVA BANK / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Audience members talked about subjects they would be interested in seeing, such as the history of student activism on campuses, citizenship experiences of Puerto Ricans in the United States and conversations about indigenous peoples.

“Sounds like we got a season” Casanova-Burgess laughed.

Casanova-Burgess talked to the audience about her past coming from public and live radio and how that shaped the way she approaches the production process of “La Brega.”

Compared to written publications, live shows are about building relationships and community.

“‘La Brega’ is journalism, but we’re always thinking deeply

about what one is going to perceive, how they are going to share and listen to it with someone else,” Casanova-Burgess said.

The conversation also touched on subjects of inspiring hope in listeners and how journalism can foster cross cultural understanding and solidarity.

Casanova-Burgess told the audience about the unexpected global reach of “La Brega.” She said the podcast received calls from listeners in India, Kenya, Nigeria and Israel.

“I think it shows how pivotal the diaspora is when talking about what is happening around the world,” Casanova-Burgess said. “I think

‘La Brega’ is an exercise in solidarity. We’re experimenting with having a conversation between our independent, mutual understandings.”

Jaden Gonzalez ’25, one of the co-chairs of Despierta Boricua, told the News that it was great to share community with Puerto Rican students, faculty and New Haven residents. He noted that the energy in the room was “empowering, enthusiastic and passionate” and encouraged all Latine, Caribbean and especially Puerto Rican communities on campus and in New Haven to seek out Despierta Boricua, the Puerto Rican student organization at Yale.

Amanda Rivera GRD ’26 researches Puerto Rican educational activism at Yale and in New Haven from the 1960s to present. She told the News that her favorite aspect of Casanova-Burgess’ work is her complete storytelling.

“She highlights our agency, and dares to tell our stories in all their nuances – the good, the bad, and the ugly – and in doing so, creates worlds in which we might dare to exist and dream of and enact new possibilities,” Rivera said.

“La Brega” can be listened to on WYNC, NPR and Apple Podcasts.

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Jonathan Edwards Head of College Tea



Dr. Babra Ontibile Bhebe



CIVIL SOCIETY, ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA: Navigating Africa's Challenging Journey to Democratic Elections A focus on Zimbabwe

Babra Ontibile Bhebe is an advocate for democracy, standing at the forefront of Africa's pursuit of free, fair, and credible elections. She is the Executive Director of the Election Resource Centre Africa, a thinktank which stands to promote electoral democracy in Africa. She holds a PhD in Law, a Masters in Global Development and International law and is currently a 2024 Yale World Fellow. With extensive experience in human rights and governance, she inspires civic action within Zimbabwe's challenging political landscape and has empowered over 40 civil society organizations to tackle systemic issues such as human rights abuses and governmental accountability. She has trained activists and civil society groups in electoral processes, community resilience, and the importance of holding authorities accountable, while also monitoring and supporting electoral processes in over six African countries, including Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa, Liberia, Senegal, and Nigeria. In this upcoming talk, she will share actionable strategies for promoting democratic elections, discussing progress and challenges within Zimbabwe's electoral processes, innovative stories of citizen empowerment and participation, and valuable lessons for reinforcing democracy across Africa.

Thursday, October 24
JE HoC House
4:00 pm Tea
4:30pm Conversation

LATINE HERITAGE



LA CASA

Photos by Samad Hakani, Photography Editor

