



# The neutrality debate, explained

BY JOSIE REICH  
STAFF REPORTER

Earlier this month, University President Maurie McInnis convened a committee of seven professors to consider the extent to which Yale as an institution should comment on current events.

The announcement came on the heels of a flurry of related news at peer universities. The University of Pennsylvania's interim president announced a move toward institutional neutrality just hours before McInnis' email, and Columbia, the University of Michigan and the University of Connecticut have begun consideration in the weeks since. Barnard and the University of Virginia, among other schools, have adopted neutrality policies this month.

A far-from-settled debate has unfolded on Yale's campus since McInnis' announcement. Between the committee's listening sessions, a faculty panel discussion and

opinion pieces in the News, community members have weighed in on what institutional neutrality would mean for Yale.

The News breaks down lingering questions about the policy and its effects.

## What is institutional voice and neutrality?

Institutional neutrality is the prevailing label for the policy of some institutions to refrain from taking stances on current events unrelated to their work.

Yale's committee is officially titled "the Committee on Institutional Voice," and the word "neutrality" is absent from McInnis' initial email to the Yale community announcing her consideration of the policy. Rather, McInnis wrote that her mandate for the group of professors was to consider "when Yale, as an institution, speaks on issues of the day."

SEE NEUTRALITY PAGE 4



As a faculty committee considers whether Yale should take positions on issues of public importance. / YuLin Zhen, Photography Editor

# Man killed in police shooting

BY ARIELA LOPEZ  
STAFF REPORTER

Two New Haven officers and one state police officer opened fire on and killed a man at a gas station on Route 1 just outside of New Haven city limits on Thursday evening.

Jebrell Conley, 36, was being followed by three officers who were part of an eleven-member contingent of the New Haven Violent Crimes Task Force. The task force was dispatched to follow Conley after they were notified of an outstanding warrant for his arrest under federal armed robbery charges, according to the preliminary status report released on Monday by the Connecticut Office of the Inspector General. Body camera footage shows that after determining Conley to be armed, the officers fired at least 16 shots at



The mayor, chief of police believe that NHPD officers used "appropriate force" in the fatal police shooting. / Ariela Lopez, Contributing Photographer

Conley, who was transported to Yale-New Haven Hospital and pronounced dead.

At a Monday press conference after the preliminary status report was published, New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker and New Haven Police Department Chief Karl Jacobson both stated that they believed the two NHPD offi-

cers who shot Conley acted with "appropriate force."

"I'm not an expert, I'm not a police officer," Elicker said at the press conference, "but it appears to me that Mr. Conley fired first. It appears that the officers' lives were in danger. No officer wants this to happen."

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# Human rights program uncertain

BY YOLANDA WANG  
STAFF REPORTER

The Multidisciplinary Academic Program in Human Rights Studies, which stopped accepting applications in the fall 2023, may be reinstated as a certificate program in the Jackson School of Global Affairs, though the timeframe and offerings of the program remain unclear.

Prior to the program's suspension, it admitted a cohort of 15 sophomores each spring. The program required six courses, including Human Rights 100, "Theories, Practices, and Politics of Human

Rights;" four elective courses related to human rights and Human Rights 400, "Advanced Human Rights Colloquium," a senior colloquium in which students would complete capstone projects.

"The program was a dream of mine and a real work of love for me," Professor Emeritus James Silk, founder and director of the program, told the News. "I did it in addition to all my other work, because I wanted to do it and I cared about it."

A lack of funding and low administrative capacity at the Schell Center for International Human Rights, which previously hosted the pro-

gram, posed difficulties to maintaining the program.

According to Silk, much of the program's teaching and administrative work came as "in-kind contributions" from him and his colleagues.

"We had hoped that we would be able to involve some other people willing to do some of this work, but there was no one in a position to take that on, more or less on their own time, the way I have done it for these ten years," Silk told the News. "We were trying to develop a kind of a new model, and we realized that to do this in a sus-

SEE RIGHTS PAGE 4

# Facilities fail at public school

BY ZACHARY SURI AND TINA LI  
STAFF REPORTER AND CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Mold has shuttered the library, the music room and the swimming pool. Teachers arrived for the first day of school last month to find dead rodents and cockroaches. Classrooms are routinely flooded.

Such are the conditions at Wilbur Cross High School — the city's largest comprehensive high school — as described by over a dozen parents, teachers, staff and students in an hour of public comment at a New Haven Board of Education meeting on Monday.

Local leaders agreed the situation was dire, but traded blame for decades of deferred maintenance.

"Here's the truth of it, this is a crisis. Our school is rotting from the inside," Jake Halpern, president of the Wilbur Cross Parent Teacher Association, said before the Board.

## Teachers and students speak out

Mia Comulada Bruler, a school counselor and a member of the New Haven Federation of Teachers (NHFT) executive board, told the News that conditions at the high school have reached a breaking point.

In a photo shared with the News, Comulada Bruler captured the flooding on the school's third floor during the first week of school.

"Wilbur Cross is over-populated, understaffed, underfunded and overburdened," Comulada Bruler said. "We cannot stand complacent as a survival skill any longer. Our patience, resilience and sense of dignity have worn thin."



Teachers and students flooded the Board of Education meeting to talk about increasingly dire conditions, while local leaders trade blame. / Courtesy of Mia Comulada Bruler

John Carlos Musser, a student representative on the Board of Education, told the News after the meeting that facilities issues have been detrimental to student morale.

Students are constantly distracted by the pervasive poor conditions at Wilbur Cross, he said. Just trying to find a bathroom has been a struggle. There are about a dozen working toilets in the school for 1800 students, Musser said. Over 400 more students are enrolled at Wilbur Cross than the building was designed for, according to the New Haven Independent.

Two Wilbur Cross teachers reported having to deal with safety issues themselves whenever they arise.

History teacher Brian Grinrod returned from winter break in 2023 to find his classroom flooded, with textbooks and computers ruined. Though the ceiling tiles were patched, the room flooded again when the next rainstorm came.

Justin Harmon, director of communications for NHPS, wrote to the News on Tuesday that NHPS believes that the current roof can last another five years, and they will continue patching it in the meantime.

Akimi Nelken, who has taught at Wilbur Cross for 15 years, complained about numerous instances of having to clean up after a custodial worker failed to fully clean

SEE SCHOOL PAGE 5

# Yale Republicans organize on campus

BY NORA MOSES AND CHRIS TILLEN  
STAFF REPORTERS

Yale College Republicans, a newly revived undergraduate group, is committed to representing the Republican Party on campus. Founded by Manu Anpalagan '26 in January 2024, the group plans to host watch parties for debates and run discussion tables promoting campus political dialogue.

Anpalagan said his main goal for the club is to show that conservatives have common ground and can engage in open dialogue with people across the political spectrum.

"I really want people — especially those who are not conservative — to know that we don't want confrontation. I know that in the media right now and in real-world politics it's very heated," Anpalagan said. "But, that's not who we are. We just want to be able to have a conversation that includes viewpoints that are different from the vast majority of campus."

The Yale College Republicans Constitution, written by Anpalagan, outlines its purposes, procedures and membership requirements of the organization. It begins with the preamble, "Recognizing that an organization is needed to represent and promote the Republican Party at Yale University."

The constitution further recognizes the affiliation of Yale College Republicans to both the Republican National Committee and the College Republicans of America.

In its mission statement, Yale College Republicans state three primary goals: to recruit and train young conservatives, to work to get Republicans elected and to mobilize young people in defense of conservative values.

But, Anpalagan said, this election season, the Yale Republicans have no plans to campaign or canvass for local or national elections.

"It's partly because there's not really much we can get done in the state of Connecticut or in like neighboring states, but that also takes a lot of money, which we obviously don't currently have," he said. "So those are things that we're definitely interested in doing in the future, but this election cycle, we're not planning on doing any specific work for a particular candidate, whether it's local or national level."

Instead, the group is focused on growing membership and campus presence. Anpalagan told the News that currently about 10 members regularly attend the group's bi-weekly meetings and the email list includes about 100 people.

Anpalagan said the club is also trying to ramp up fundraising efforts among private and individual donors for future initiatives and events.

He explained that Yale College Republicans is "struggling a little bit with donations" as a less established club. Current funding for the Yale College Republicans comes from Yale College and the

SEE REPUBLICANS PAGE 5

## CROSS CAMPUS

THIS DAY IN YALE HISTORY, 1937. Baird Markham Jr. '39 is kidnapped by three escaped convicts from a prison farm in Huntsville, Texas. While driving on a small country road near Ada, Oklahoma, Markham was surrounded by three armed men.

## INSIDE THE NEWS

Drake's clothing brand, October's Very Own, is selling Yale apparel at the Bookstore. NEWS 10



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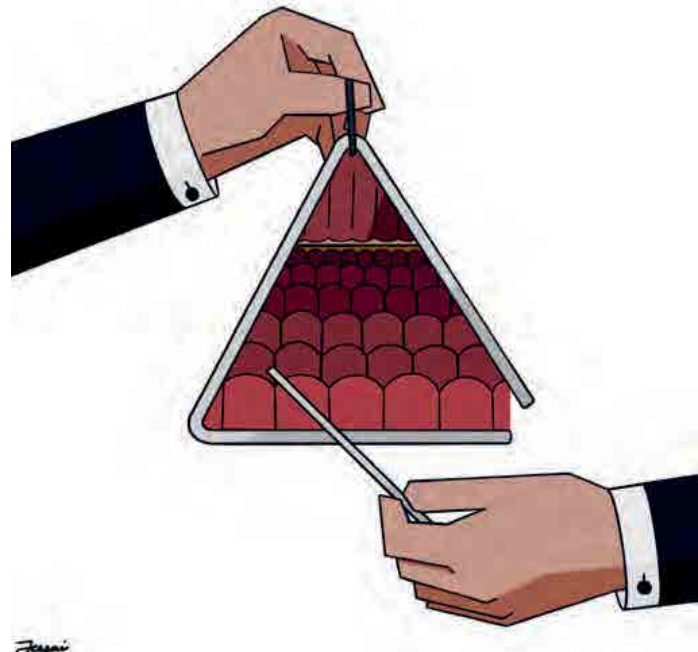
FOOTBALL Yale Football wins their first game of the year, taking down Holy Cross with a 38-31 win. PAGE 14 SPORTS

CUSTODIANS NHPS, unions call for a return to in-house custodial work to address decades of deferred maintenance in New Haven high schools. PAGE 10 NEWS

# BULLETIN



SOPHIE HENRY '23



Jessie



MELANY PEREZ '26

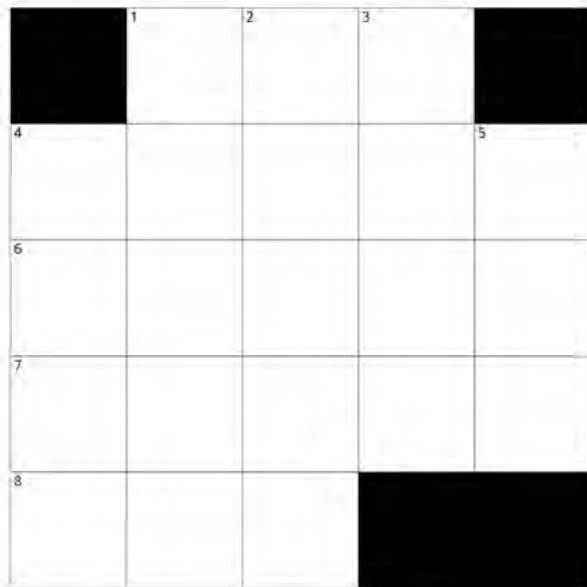
WILL GONZALEZ '24



CLARISSA TAN '26

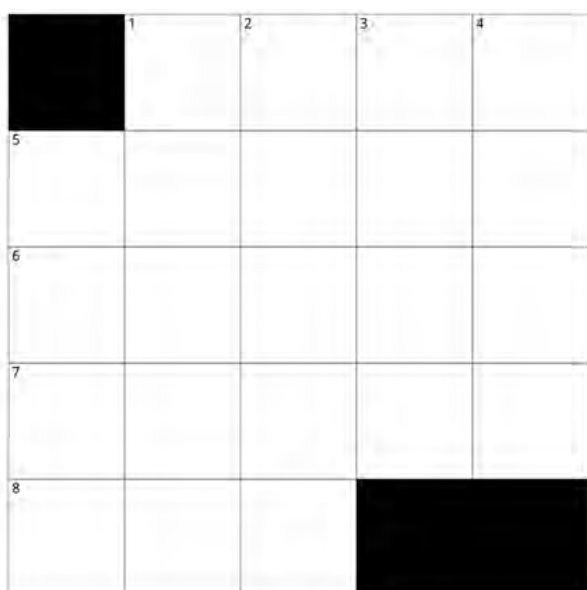
Puzzle by Ariana Borut '27

- ACROSS**  
 1 So-so  
 4 Sent a document by phone line  
 6 Hit on Charli XCX's album "Brat"  
 7 Alpaca kin  
 8 Tennis do-over



- DOWN**  
 1 Word before "leaf" or "syrup"  
 2 Person living abroad, informally  
 3 Captain's post  
 4 Cider season  
 5 Org. in "Breaking Bad"

- ACROSS**  
 1 Frequent assignment for a STEM major  
 5 Order at Sally's or Pepe's  
 6 Continental currency  
 7 007, for one  
 8 Nine-digit ID



- DOWN**  
 1 Promotes  
 2 Wail of an ambulance  
 3 Most popular Yale major, Abbr.  
 4 Midterm or final  
 5 Salty septet

THE FRANKE PROGRAM IN SCIENCE AND THE HUMANITIES,  
 WHITNEY HUMANITIES CENTER, AND YALE MACMILLAN  
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A Leena Manimekalai Film

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# FROM THE FRONT

*"Do you remember the 21st night of September? Love was changin' the minds of pretenders while chasin' the clouds away."* EARTH, WIND & FIRE AMERICAN BAND

## What would institutional neutrality mean for Yale?

### NEUTRALITY FROM PAGE 1

At listening sessions with the Yale community, committee members have also noted that Yale is not using the word neutrality to frame the issue and that they are instead opting to analyze the institution's "voice."

The committee co-chairs have noted that the word "neutrality" can be polarizing because some disagree with the notion that institutions of higher education, which make investments and note humanitarian values in their mission statements, can be neutral.

"It's not possible for an institution that has this much power and money ... to not take political positions," co-Chair Cristina Rodríguez '95 LAW '00 said to students at a listening session.

The concept of institutional neutrality started in a 1967 Kalven Report, drafted by a faculty committee at the University of Chicago, which argues that "neutrality as an institution has its complement in the fullest freedom for its faculty and students as individuals to participate in political action and social protest."

As institutional neutrality policy has spread, universities have adopted varying versions of the idea. Some schools, including Vanderbilt University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, use the direct language of institutional neutrality as derived from the Kalven Report. Others, including Harvard University, announced their new policies under the same "institutional voice" phrasing as Yale is using.

Sterling Professor of Philosophy Michael Della Rocca, the other committee co-chair, said at a listening session for students that the committee's recommendations will be independent and original of other institutions' decisions.

"We're not going to be following what other schools do," Della Rocca said. "The president will do what's best for Yale."

### Arguments for and against

Across the listening sessions, faculty panel discussion and in interviews with the News, Yale community members have expressed a wide range of reasons why they support or oppose neutrality.

Proponents argue that the policy creates an open-minded atmosphere on campus that promotes the exchange of diverse opinions. Some say that issuing statements gives the University president and senior leadership an outsized megaphone to express their beliefs.

Another common argument is that the University's taking stances can isolate community members who disagree with the statements. Others note that it is impossible to release statements on every important issue locally and globally and that without action following the statements, words are empty.

On the other hand, adversaries argue that Yale has a duty to defend humanitarian values, and some say that they would feel more supported in their identities if the University addresses contentious topics.

Others have noted that some Yale statements have indeed been followed by new policy initiatives, such as the re-examination of the Yale Police Department after the killing of George Floyd in 2020 and the new diversity efforts after

the Supreme Court overturned affirmative action.

Yet both students and committee members have questioned how to determine what current events relate to Yale.

Some statements tread a careful line, such as the one that was issued in June 2020 by former University President Peter Salovey after the Supreme Court blocked the Trump administration's attempt to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. Salovey wrote that he was "relieved" on behalf of "Yale students and graduates covered under DACA." But he also wrote, more broadly, that "we still need legislation that provides a pathway to legal status."

Other instances are clearer. Under institutional neutrality, Yale would likely still have made statements on Title IX regulations and affirmative action, for example.

But the policy would complicate the issuing of statements on important news that does not directly concern universities, such as the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, the invasion of Ukraine, the Israel-Hamas war and the killing of George Floyd.

### What the committee is considering

The exact bounds of what the committee will address in their recommendations are unclear.

At listening sessions, students asked whether a policy of neutrality would only apply to the president or whether other administrators such as deans, departmental chairs and heads of college would be affected as well. The co-chairs said that this is one aspect of the recommendations that they are considering.

The co-chairs stated at sessions that they are not making any decisions regarding Yale's investment policies. McInnis' initial email also emphasized that the committee is not re-examining Yale's free expression policies for individuals.

"The objective is to try to complete the work by October or November," Rodríguez said about a timeline for providing the recommendations.

The committee's listening sessions will continue through Oct. 2.

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## Mayor, NHPD chief defend conduct in officer-involved shooting

### POLICE FROM PAGE 1

According to Jacobson, Conley's killing marks the NHPD's first officer-involved shooting resulting in a civilian death since November 2004.

After tracking Conley's car, the eleven task force officers — seven NHPD officers, two state police officers and two officers from neighboring towns' police departments — approached Conley at the Splash Car Wash as he was refilling his gas tank, leading Conley to get in his car.

"Conley entered the vehicle while officers were ordering him out of the car at gunpoint," Jacobson said. "He put his vehicle in reverse and struck a police car which was directly behind him."

In the body camera footage, officers are heard yelling at Conley to "get out of the car;" "let me see your hands" and "don't you fucking move."

Jacobson said that Conley then pointed a gun at the officers.

The published preliminary status report does not mention that Conley hit a police vehicle or that he pointed a weapon at officers.

The footage shows the glass of the driver's seat window shattering. The status report states that Conley "appeared to fire one round" at the glass. Conley's weapon is visible in three still shots from Officer Paul Vakos' body camera footage, which are included in the report.

In the ensuing shootout, NHPD Sergeant Francisco Sanchez, Officer Michael Valente and Connecticut State Police Sergeant Colin Richter opened fire on Conley. Body camera footage from Valente, Sanchez and Richter records at least sixteen shots fired toward Conley.

NHPD's Jacobson emphasized at the press conference that the body

camera footage shows that Conley fired first.

Conley received medical attention on scene before being transported by the New Haven Fire Department to Yale-New Haven Hospital, where a medical examiner determined that he was killed by gunshot wounds to his torso and "upper right extremity."

According to Jacobson, Conley was a "known member" of the Grape Street Crips, the New Haven-based imitation of a Los Angeles gang. He was previously sentenced to five years in federal prison in 2016. Following the shooting, the NHPD heard of threats of gang retaliation against officers, leading the department to patrol in pairs as a precautionary measure.

"We have since come to the conclusion that this may have only been rhetoric," Jacobson said. "We don't have anything to back it up."

After Monday night, the department will revert to single-officer cars. Jacobson said that he spoke with Conley's mother and brother, who assured him that there was "no message" to hurt officers.

Sanchez and Valente, the two NHPD officers, were placed on paid administrative leave, Jacobson said.

Christian Bruckhart, the NHPD's public information officer, told the News that the department expects to receive a preliminary investigation report from the inspector general's office in around one month. Depending on the contents of the investigation in progress, Jacobson may then decide to reinstate the officers.

However, if the investigation finds that there are grounds to further penalize the officers, that will not happen until after the investigation is completed. Jacobson estimated that the probe could take nine months to a year.

Angel Hubbard, the newly sworn-in alder for the Hill North neighborhood, knows Conley's family and told the News that Conley — though not a resident of her district — had roots in the Hill.

"It's a tragic situation for both parties," Hubbard told the News after her swearing-in ceremony at City Hall, hours before the status report was released. "He lost his life," she said, while also noting that the officers were "trying to do their job."

The inspector general's preliminary status report published body camera footage from five officers, as well as a vertical video shot by a civilian sitting in a car near Conley's.

Splash Car Wash is located at 2 Boston Post Rd.

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## Undergraduate human rights program may be reinstated

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tainable way would require us to get some funding."

According to law professor Claudia Flores, a new faculty director at the Schell Center, the limited funding contributed to the program's hiatus. Flores told the News that the program was "very resource intensive" and that the Schell Center is dealing with limited resources.

According to Silk, the current plan for a more "sustainable program" is to hire a full-time director who would administer the program and teach the senior colloquium. The "vast majority" of the program's funding would go toward compensating the director, whereas other funding allocations would go to student summer internships, capstone project production costs and program events.

In line with the College's push for multidisciplinary programs to shift toward certificate models, there are currently talks to reinstate the program as a certificate program on human rights.

In its new form, the program would likely entail a list of courses that students can take to count toward a certificate at graduation. Silk expressed disappointment at the idea, instead emphasizing the key qualities of the original human rights program model.

"I think what we all cherish about the [multidisciplinary academic programs] was their intensive nature, admitting a cohort of, in our case, about 15 students, having them form what becomes a very close learning community and doing a capstone semester and project together," Silk told the News. "A

certificate is mostly an administrative program."

In contrast with the selectivity of the original program, the new program would likely be uncapped in number, according to Silk.

Silk supported the idea of making the human rights curriculum more accessible but wished the University would offer both the certificate and more intensive program models.

"It has always been a very competitive program, which I don't know how I feel about," Esha Akhtar '25, a senior in the human rights program, told the News. "I'm quite excited to hear that there's a new offering in the works that's much more accessible. I think it's much more true to the spirit of human rights."

If the program were to be reinstated as a certificate program, Silk says it would likely be hosted through the Jackson School of Global Affairs, which currently also hosts the Global Health Scholars multidisciplinary academic program.

Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis told the News that the University is "not 100 percent" sure whether the continuation of the program will be administered by Yale College staff or Jackson School staff.

In contrast with Yale Law School, which "does not do undergraduate teaching," the Jackson School's undergraduate offerings would be advantageous to hosting an undergraduate certificate program, Silk said.

"[The human rights program is] an undergraduate program, so it should be sitting somewhere within the undergraduate part of the university so that they can properly administer it," Flores said.

According to Lewis, the changes to the program format should not detract from students' ability to learn about human rights.

However, Silk and other students disagree. Silk pointed to the lack of courses at Yale College that directly relate to human rights law, language, ideas or methods — themes that he says are key to a human rights program.

HMRT 100, which was previously open to students outside of the human rights program, is not confirmed to be offered in spring 2025, and Kristine Beckerle, who previously taught the course, no longer teaches at Yale.

"I would always love to see more human rights related courses at Yale College, but I do think that this program could still work as a certificate," Hana Karanja '24, a graduate of the human rights program, wrote to the News. "Mostly, I would be sad to see some of the program's community-building elements and law school involvement scaled back."

The Yale College Council has created a policy proposal to hire more faculty with human rights expertise, expand human rights course offerings, appoint a "Human Rights Certificate Director" and reintroduce a senior capstone project to the certificate.

The proposal also calls for "a dedicated space for human rights programming," which could be housed in new Jackson School buildings such as T.M. Evans Hall and Steinbach Halls.

"The discontinuation of the Human Rights Scholars Program for the class of 2026 was a significant loss for many students, particularly those for whom a factor in choosing Yale was the program's reputation," Benjamin Sanchez Pla



Human Rights Studies, which suspended applications in fall 2023, may be reinstated as a certificate program through either Yale College or the Jackson School. **Christina Lee**, Head Photography Editor

'26, the YCC senator who authored the proposal, wrote to the News.

Akhtar pointed to mentorship among students in different years of the human rights program being central to the program experience.

With the seniors in the program graduating this spring, she worries that there may be no current students to mentor future generations of human rights scholars when the program is reinstated.

"I think mentorship is a pretty big part of the program," Akhtar

told the News. "I remember being a sophomore and having a lineage of a junior and a senior that I was connected with in the program. That hasn't been the case since we were the last cohort."

Harvard University's Human Rights program has been active since 1984.

Nora Moses contributed reporting.

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## FROM THE FRONT

*"I have good days and bad days."*

ABBY LEE MILLER AMERICAN DANCE TEACHER AND CHOREOGRAPHER

## Teachers and student call for improved school facilities

SCHOOL FROM PAGE 1

or fix the roof. Jobs half done have left behind pink, sticky liquid and blankets of mold and debris.

Nelken has seen the Wilbur Cross principal standing with a mop and vacuum, trying to dry classrooms with two inches of standing water. Teachers reported concerns that these maintenance issues will lead to health risks.

Many teachers at the Board meeting blamed the privatization of custodial services beginning in 2011. Private companies often do not follow through, multiple teachers complained, and outsourced custodial workers do not take pride in maintaining their schools like in-house ones do.

As Wilbur Cross facilities languish in disrepair, teachers described the burden of explaining the inequities they face to their students.

Ashley Stockton, parent of a Wilbur Cross senior, spoke out against the unsafe condition of Cross athletics. She pointed out that the building has no working ice machines. Every game, coaches have to pay out of their own pockets to provide ice for their players.

The conditions are "embarrassing" when Wilbur Cross athletes face off against other schools, Stockton said. According to Musser, a soccer and lacrosse player, students refer to Wilbur Cross' soccer field as the "rice fields" because it doesn't drain when it rains.

"Why was the school clear to open, given the current state of facilities? How did summer come and go? How did millions and millions in ARPA funds come and go? How were repairs and rou-

tine maintenance ignored?" Leslie Blatteau, teacher and president of the NHFT, said, demanding more accountability from the board.

Musser criticized how the state is focused on banning phones in the classroom instead of upkeeping facilities and filling teacher vacancies. "We don't have the luxury of phones being our biggest problem."

While most students hold the Board of Education responsible for their facilities' deterioration, Musser blames the state. His goal, shared by many teachers, is to advocate for more funding at the state level. NHPS received \$11.8 million less from the city this year than requested.

Harmon, NHPS communications director, wrote that the NHPS operations lead has been working closely with the Wilbur Cross principal to identify repairs. Sources of mold spores in the library and music room have already been remediated, and custodians and carpenters have been fixing floor and ceiling tiles.

Future plans include upgrading the chillers and installing a new cooling tower — renovations that are projected to cost \$548,000. They are also bringing in an architect to address flooding issues and a pest management contractor to address reports of mice and cockroaches. Future plans include replacing the library carpet with tile and installing insulation to prevent mildew growth, as well as other small repairs around the school.

**City and state leaders trade blame**

Leslie Blatteau, president of NHFT, the city's main teachers

union, blames the state's funding model for the crisis. Mayor Justin Elicker, State Senator Martin Looney and Board of Education Vice President Matt Wilcox all expressed concern about Wilbur Cross facilities.

She lambasted the state government for failing to address lasting inequalities in the state's education funding model and called on Yale to contribute more to NHPS. Blatteau also acknowledged the city's lack of funds to address the facilities crisis but insisted that the city and Board of Education must do more to find the necessary funds and speed critical repairs.

"This is what happens when a state government divests from public education," Blatteau said. "This is about systems that are rooted in racist and classist ways."

Looney, who represents New Haven and serves as Senate President Pro Tem, largely dismissed concerns about inequalities in state education funding, blaming local property values.

Connecticut is unique in taking on the full burden of all teachers' pensions statewide — especially in wealthy suburbs with smaller teacher-student ratios — a contribution that often goes unacknowledged, Looney argued.

Looney expressed concern that state investments in NHPS facilities were being squandered by the district's failure to complete routine maintenance.

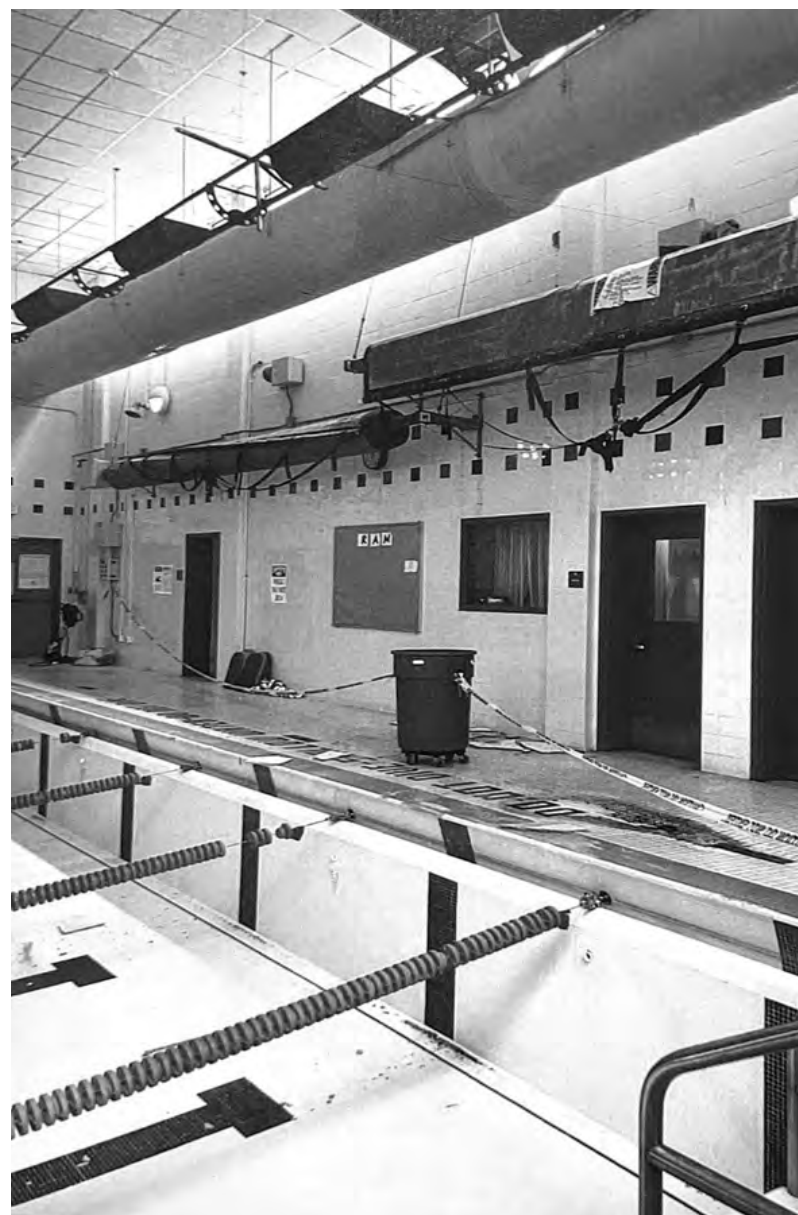
He holds the Board of Education primarily responsible for failing to complete basic maintenance, but praised Superintendent Negrón for beginning to address long-standing maintenance failures.

"They always claim that the amount of money that they receive from the state is not adequate, but the amount they receive from the state is certainly highly significant, and the damage that's done when maintenance is not properly taken care of...[results in] a much greater expense," Looney told the News.

Unlike Looney, Mayor Justin Elicker placed most of the blame for the lack of funding at the state capitol and identified the legislative session beginning in 2025 as a critical target for New Haven education advocates seeking a larger state contribution. Elicker is a member of the Board of Education and appoints four of the Board's seven members.

Elicker emphasized the dangers of excessive borrowing and the lingering effects of decades of irresponsible fiscal policy at City Hall. The challenges at Wilbur Cross are widespread across the district's schools, but the city and district simply have no funds to support long-overdue maintenance, he said.

"We need to find pathways to identify more funding to fix our schools, and the main pathway is



Courtesy of Mia Comulada Breuler

through the State of Connecticut," Elicker said.

The city allocated around \$9 million for maintenance and renovations at NHPS as a part of its latest capital budget, but Superintendent Negrón, not the city, decides how those funds are spent, Elicker told the News.

Elicker called for the state to make more funds available for routine maintenance in schools.

According to the mayor, any additional city funding for NHPS would have to be accompanied by an increase in property taxes.

"People often point fingers at the city and say it's not giving enough money. But I rarely hear people say, 'Raise my taxes to pay for it,'" Elicker said.

The only other solutions would be further support from the state or from Yale, Elicker told the News. All three funding sources — higher property taxes, state support and university investment — need to be explored, he said.

Wilcox, who sits on the Board's Citywide School Building and Stewardship Committee, attributed widespread delay of critical maintenance to lack of funding. The committee's latest monthly report listed dozens of critical maintenance projects "delayed" due to funding issues.

Delayed repairs later balloon into major crises if left unaddressed, Wilcox said.

He emphasized the importance of the district documenting long-standing maintenance issues, so they can be included in the city's next capital budget cycle.

Wilcox echoed Elicker's call for more state support, criticizing the inequalities in funding levels for wealthy suburban schools and urban districts like NHPS which face a number of additional challenges.

After a round of cuts to the facilities budget last year, the district was forced to cut it by around \$620,000 again in June to fill a \$2.3 million budget deficit, according to Wilcox. He placed blame for these cuts and the shortage of tradespeople in NHPS squarely on the state.

For the teachers and students at Wilbur Cross, the issue remains immediate, despite the funding difficulties.

Elicker praised the teachers, students and parents who shared their experiences on Monday.

Wilbur Cross High School is located next to East Rock Park.

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Courtesy of Mia Comulada Breuler

## Republicans on campus plan upcoming year

REPUBLICANS FROM PAGE 1

Yale College Council, with imminent funding from College Republicans of America expected.

Anpalagan was the only member of Yale College Republicans who identifies as a Republican who agreed to speak on the record about the club. Two other board members contacted by the News declined to comment.

During the 2016 election, a former group named Yale College Republicans endorsed former President Donald Trump, leading to division within the organization. The News was unable to confirm when the original Yale College Republicans disaffiliated.

Anpalagan also mentioned that the group serves as an accepting space for students in support of Trump and the current GOP, who, he says, can feel ostracized in other conservative groups on campus, such as the Buckley institute.

"We love Buckley, but Buckley's more concentrated among the pre-2016 Republican Party than us," Anpalagan said. "We're welcoming of them, but we're also welcoming of those who support former President Trump and the current state of the Republican Party, and a lot of folks at Buckley have an issue with that."

Buckley Institute President Trevor MacKay '25 wrote to the News that Buckley has hosted many speakers who support Trump, including his cabinet members.

MacKay also added that, last week, Anpalagan confirmed to the Buckley Institute that he will represent the Trump side in a presidential debate that the institute's podcast plans to host in October.

"Yes, Buckley has hosted many 'traditional' conservatives ... but the record is clear that the Buckley Institute has done more to bring conservative voices to Yale's campus — both from within President Trump's orbit and without — than any other group throughout the history of President Trump's political career," MacKay wrote.

Anpalagan added that anyone is welcome to come to the Yale Republicans meeting and speak their mind, even the most staunch liberals.

He said that some liberal-leaning students, and even members of the Yale Democrats, have expressed interest in participating in club events in support of open dialogue between those with different political views.

Although a member of Yale College Republicans, Cleber Redondo '26 does not identify as a Republican.

"It's fun being at the ground level of something new, and I joined to meet people whose values happen to be most similar to my own, even if I don't subscribe to their labels or GOP talking points," Redondo wrote to the News.

In a statement, Yale Dems wrote to the News that they believe "everyone deserves a space to express their opinions."

However, they also emphasized their disapproval of Trump and their frustration that Yale College Republicans have yet to denounce the former president.

Yale Dems also wrote that they have no plans to collaborate with Yale Republicans in the near future as they are currently occupied with their own canvassing and election-related initiatives.

"This election isn't about Donald Trump. It's not about Kamala Harris. It's about lifting up the American people and putting them first," Anpalagan wrote in response. "The days of playing nice and bowing to the political overlords are over. We are fiercely and unapologetically opposed to the bipartisan establishment that has failed Americans for decades."

Anpalagan explained that within Yale College Republicans, members have a "diverse set of viewpoints" on many pol-

ity issues, mostly between who he calls supporters of the current state of the Republican party and those who favor the older Republican viewpoints of the 80s and the 90s.

Even on the issue of the upcoming presidential election, Anpalagan said that some members had been more closely aligned with other Republican candidates besides former President Donald Trump.

Anpalagan explained that although he feels comfortable speaking out about the club and his political alignments he understands why other members of Yale

College Republicans might not want to.

"Obviously we do see a bit of self censoring and a little bit of hesitancy to admit where you stand politically as a conservative," Anpalagan said. "But I do feel that currently we are seeing people be more open on both sides of the aisle about their beliefs. And I do think people are more willing to have conversations."

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 5.

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Yale Republicans President Manu Anpalagan said the club doesn't plan to campaign or canvass for the upcoming election. **Tim Tai, Senior Photographer**

*"We are all winners here."*

ALFONSO RIBEIRO AMERICAN ACTOR AND COMEDIAN

## Yale Planetary Solutions hosts climate summit in NYC

BY CELIA HERNANDEZ AND JOSIE REICH  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER & STAFF REPORTER

The Yale Planetary Solutions program is hosting a four-day summit as part of Climate Week NYC, showcasing an array of speakers, performances and workshops.

In collaboration with the Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, Yale @ Climate Week NYC is taking place at the Yale Club of NYC. The summit is part of the larger Climate Week NYC, an international conference to drive climate action that began in 2009.

Julie Zimmerman, Yale's inaugural vice provost for Planetary Solutions, wrote to the News that the events will bring together multidisciplinary knowledge from across the University.

"Based on the first couple of days, we are hearing clear and consistent messages that the climate crisis is an existential threat – and that we must act with urgency to meet this challenge – and that we CAN do what needs to be done to manage the unavoidable consequences and avoid the unmanageable consequences," Zimmerman wrote.

Yale Planetary Solutions, founded in 2020, facilitates climate and biodiversity work at the University.

University President Maurice McInnis and Provost Scott Strobel delivered opening remarks at the event.

McInnis spoke about the climate solutions Yale is pursuing on campus such as renovating buildings and investing in geothermal energy systems.

"In my first weeks as Yale's president, one of the first things I did was put on a hard hat and begin touring the facilities that are currently under construction," she said. "It became clear to me during these visits that while we were enhancing our physical footprint in New Haven, we were doing so with a commitment to reducing our carbon footprint."

McInnis said that she hopes Yale can serve as a "test bed" for climate strategies that then translate into global action.



WILL LANGHORNE / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

For the first time, Yale Planetary Solutions is hosting four days of events as part of Climate Week NYC.

Strobel wrote to the News that one goal of Yale Planetary Solutions is to foster partnerships between higher education and industries, the government and NGOs.

"Our approach is to harness and convene expertise from all disciplines and all fields across the university to transform knowledge into action," Strobel wrote. "We don't have time to waste, and we must catalyze all the energy and knowhow we can to drive rapid change. Yale has a long legacy of educating leaders and conducting research that translates into impact."

Roger Cohn, founder and editor of environmental magazine Yale Environment 360, conducted an onstage interview

event with activist Bill McKibben at the summit.

He said that the summit has been helpful to learn more about the climate work at Yale that his magazine covers – from climate attribution science to nature-based carbon solutions.

"All these facets are in different parts of the University, and those parts are now coming together," Cohn said. "I think this was an opportunity to really let people in the public and in the broader Yale community get a sense of that."

Cohn said that he plans to reconnect with some scientists and researchers he has met at the summit to explore their research for Yale Environment 360.

Robert Durbow, Professor Emeritus and Founding Faculty

Director of the Yale Center on Climate Change and Health, said that attendees include Yale students and faculty, international NGO representatives and journalists.

Dubrow said that before Yale Planetary Solutions announced the summit, YCCC had discussed a Climate Week NYC project but worried about the expenses and planning involved.

Dubrow added that Yale is elevating Yale Planetary Solutions as a part of the University's work, and is focused on making Yale's presence visible at NYC Climate Week.

Daina Bray, a clinical lecturer at Yale Law School who litigates the greenhouse gas emissions of livestock corporations, said that the summit has helped her to place her

work in the larger context of climate change initiatives at Yale.

"The thing that stands out for me about this conference is the opportunity not only to tap into the Yale climate network, but also to all of the external partners who are working with folks at Yale on these issues," Bray said. "It's a really large and powerful group, but this conference feels more intimate because we're all benefiting from the Yale connection."

The Yale Club of New York is located at 50 Vanderbilt Ave, New York City.

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## Yale's sustainability plan is coming to an end. What's next?

BY EMILY KHYM  
STAFF REPORTER

The Yale Sustainability Plan outlines nine goals for the University to achieve by 2025. With the plan nearing its end, students hope for a greater voice as the administration sets new goals.

The Yale Sustainability Plan 2025 consists of objectives in nine categories – leadership, health & wellbeing, climate action, stewardship, built environment, mobility, materials, technology and empowerment – that were intended to be completed by 2025. The Yale Office of Sustainability had published this plan in 2016, with continual updates on progress toward these ambitions.

As the plan comes to a close, some students are wondering how Yale can learn from past developments to become more sustainable. The Office of Sustainability has yet to publish progress on whether the nine ambitions have been met.

Though Yale Hospitality, the Yale College Council, Yale Office of Sustainability have been working on sustainability on campus, YCC Sustainability Policy Director Carrie Lange '27 reiterated the need to define the term "sustainability" and for Yale to be more clear about its initiatives and how students can be involved.

"Defining the specific initiatives Yale is undertaking will go a long way toward getting students involved and building awareness for sustainability goals as a campus, especially if there is more clarity and transparency about the reasoning behind specific sustainability efforts," Lange said.

Lange explained that the Yale administration is necessarily focusing on long term goals in accordance with the institutional sustainability plan. Lange hopes that her YCC team

can advocate for the student experience as the university develops existing and new sustainability policies.

Maria Gutiérrez, sustainability engagement manager at the Office of Sustainability, wrote to the News that the office is "proud of Yale Hospitality's accomplishments and efforts" in recent years. In terms of student engagement, Gutiérrez said that the office will have "Sustainability Peer Educators" work with Yale Hospitality.

"Waste reduction and diversion are a high priority for the Office of Sustainability," Gutiérrez wrote. "The input we received from students as part of our last sustainability survey indicated that this is also a high priority among community members. We are focused on improving waste collection and advancing campus sustainability."

Initiatives to better sustainability on campus require collaboration from both students and administration, Lange said.

"Unfortunately, I think any sustainability-focused efforts will require us to consciously adapt our living habits to the extent that it is reasonable," Lange said. "Obviously, we can't sacrifice the quality of Yale campus life, but I do think if we're going to commit to a greener and more sustainable future we need to be willing to realize those goals in action as well."

The Yale Office of Sustainability has been spearheading the goals of this plan by rolling out recycling signage to better differentiate between food waste, single-stream recycling, electronic recycling and lab recycling.

Additionally, in light of the goals such as technology and materials, Yale Hospitality has introduced a pilot AI system that aims to minimize waste in dining halls.

"Yale University announced an investment to Explore AI tools and learning opportunities," Yale



YULIN ZHEN / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Students hope a new sustainability plan can better involve student opinion and provide clarity on institutional ambitions.

Hospitality Senior Marketing and Communications Manager Alexa Gotthardt wrote. "So, we'll likely see more of it. Right now, it's pretty new for Yale Hospitality."

Currently, this AI system is being piloted in the Timothy Dwight College dining hall. Students throw out their waste and can see a weighing scale as well as an estimate of how the weekly waste average has changed.

Some students have become more conscious about how much they are wasting. Others have expressed their indifference to the system.

"Because of the just open bucket of food waste standing in the dining hall, there can be flies in that area and it's not the best to be around," TD resident Jisu Oh '27 said. "It doesn't bother me, I guess – I don't think about it too much and it's not tedious for me."

Students only realize that this system is tracking waste after they have collected their food and eaten. Oh added that she can see the intention of the system to discourage students from leaving too much food waste.

The YCC Sustainability Policy Committee has been an advocate for student sustainability concerns, meeting with administrators in Yale Hospitality and Yale Sustainability to "understand their perspective and open discussions on student concerns," according to YCC Sustainability Deputy Policy Director Jalen Bradley '27.

The YCC recently conducted a to-go box survey that intends to start a to-go program similar to the Dartmouth Green-to-Go program. Initiatives also include more water stations in residential college entryways, dual-flush toilets and napkins back on dining hall tables.

After Yale Hospitality introduced changes such as removing all napkin holders from tables, students have expressed concern that they have been taking more napkins than necessary.

"Napkins not being on tables makes students want to grab more napkins to accommodate for themselves or even friends," Bradley said. "You can walk around any dining hall and see large wads of napkins at each table...Sustainability in the dining hall is a top concern for our team as well, but there are other methods to achieving it such as standardizing composting practices across dining halls and reducing food waste."

Yale Hospitality has set a goal to cut food waste by 20 percent this year.

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## NEWS

*"I think it's important, as a human being, to help others."*

JASON DERULO AMERICAN SINGER-SONGWRITER AND DANCER

## Tenants unions to bargain with mega-landlord



MARIA AROZAME / ILLUSTRATIONS EDITOR

Tenants unions from Ocean Management properties have collective bargaining meetings with Ocean head Mr. Aizenberg.

BY LILY BELLE POLING  
STAFF REPORTER

The Lenox Street, Quinnipiac Avenue and State Street tenants unions all have bargaining meetings with Ocean head Shmulik Aizenberg scheduled for this week.

On Sept. 11, Ocean Management agreed to meet and bargain with tenants unions from three of its properties just minutes before they were set to begin protesting at the landlord's office. In the same agreement, Ocean tenants won just cause eviction protection, which will prevent Ocean Management from evicting occupants without citing a reason.

For the State Street Tenants Union, this is the first time Ocean has agreed to negotiate with them. Lenox Street and Quinnipiac Avenue unions will meet Ocean only for the second time.

Tenants unions from Ocean's properties have been fighting for collective bargaining rights with their landlord for more than two years and have a history of

securing their goals through union advocacy.

"The leaders and members who fought to win this agreement are proving that, through our union, we have the power to change our own material conditions," CT Tenants Union president Hannah Srajer told the News. "While we're continuing our push for Just Cause legislation, we're not waiting around for policymakers. Tenants deserve and demand better, now: peace and stability, rents we can afford, healthy living environments and real power and respect in our homes."

Ocean Management did not reply to request for comment.

In April 2022, the first tenants union in Connecticut was formed at Ocean's 311 Blake St. property. It was later officially recognized by the city in November. Mayor Justin Elicker signed an ordinance recognizing tenants' rights to unionize in September 2022.

According to Luke Melonakos-Harrison, vice president of CT Tenants Union, the Blake Street

union was formed in the wake of Ocean Management's purchase of the property in late 2021. Having not been able to communicate with Ocean during all of 2022, the tenants decided to unionize, fearing being kicked out of their apartments without warning.

At this point, tenants were paying month-to-month rent, nobody was able to renew their lease, and conditions at the apartment complex were beginning to worsen, Melonakos-Harrison said. He added that nobody was able to get in touch with Ocean Management.

After another half year of silence from their landlord, tenants at Blake Street began receiving phone calls from Ocean Managements' office informing them that their rent was going to increase by 30 to 40 percent and asking them to sign a new lease agreeing to these terms.

"It was the moment that everybody had been bracing themselves for from when [Ocean] first got there. A year and a half later, it finally happened," Melonakos-Harrison

said. "We really think that it was the fact that the union had gone public in April and then filed with the city in November that stalled those rent increases from happening sooner."

He speculated that Ocean waited until June to raise rents because a Connecticut state statute deems landlords raising rent within six months of the formation of a tenants union an act of retaliation.

However, the union ensured that all members responded to this call by saying they would only agree to negotiate as a group — not individually. After a number of tenants said this, Ocean stopped calling.

Meanwhile, tenants unions around the state were beginning to form, and in July 2023, CT Tenants Union officially came together as a coalition of tenants unions around Connecticut.

After two meetings for negotiations between the Blake Street union and Ocean about rent rates and tangible issues with the property, 16 tenants came home on Aug. 19 to notices to quit due to lapse of time, meaning they were being evicted simply because their leases were up.

Hundreds of protestors gathered at City Hall and marched to Ocean's offices, demanding the landlord end "union-busting evictions." Senator Richard Blumenthal LAW '73 and other city and state legislators joined the protestors.

The very same day, tenants at Ocean's Quinnipiac Avenue property officially filed their union with the city, having organized in response to Ocean's failure to address complaints regarding their building's physical condition.

Two days later, Ocean agreed to a three-month cooling-off period with the Blake Street union, which entailed not evicting anyone for three months.

In November 2023, the Lenox Street complex's union was officially recognized by the city as well. Lenox tenants were frustrated by poor living conditions that weren't being addressed by

Ocean, such as mold, leaks and broken fixtures.

Months of negotiations later, tenants from Blake Street and Ocean Management finally signed a deal in February 2024 agreeing to a rent increase of about 10 percent for leases that will last until 2026.

After unionizing in April 2022, Blake Street tenants were able to keep their rent frozen for two years. According to Melonakos-Harrison, rent in New Haven went up 30 percent overall in that time period.

Unionizing also allowed them to negotiate for a much smaller rent raise than Ocean originally proposed. Lease agreements that extend to 2026 secured rent predictability for two years.

In April, Ocean saw the formation of a fourth tenants union at its State Street property, for similar reasons as the unions from the other properties.

Lenox had a bargaining meeting in May but didn't secure an agreement. Since, the union did not have more meetings with Ocean. Quinnipiac Avenue had a similar situation in August, and two of its tenants had been issued notices to quit for lapse of time at the end of July.

It was this failure to secure follow-up meetings to continue bargaining that sparked the plan for a protest on Sept. 11, which subsequently brought Ocean back to the table.

Despite the fact that the Blake Street Tenants Union successfully signed an agreement with Ocean back in February, they still face issues with their facilities and struggle to get in contact with their landlord.

"I can't even do basic necessities sometimes at home because it'll just break down and there's nobody to call," Garrett Kimball, a tenant at Blake Street said. "I haven't done laundry at home in two months now."

Ocean's office is located at 101 Whitney Ave.

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## Incarcerated hunger strikers call for Connecticut prison reform

BY MAIA NEHME  
STAFF REPORTER

Two incarcerated men have participated in a hunger strike for better conditions in Connecticut prisons for the past eight days.

Jacky Robinson Jr. and Cornel Myers — both incarcerated at MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution in Suffield, Conn. — have refused food since Sept. 16. The men's demands include improved medical treatment and mental health services for prisoners, fewer prison lockdowns and shakedowns, and increased communication between prisoners and the outside world. Robinson plans to continue the strike until state Department of Correction Commissioner Angel Quiros provides him with a written agreement to his demands.

"If I don't continue, things will just go back to how they were," Robinson said. "That's what continues to keep me moving forward... Even though we're in here for crimes we committed, [we're] still human. We don't deserve to be mistreated."

Quiros did not respond to the News' request for comment about a potential written agreement to the hunger strikers' demands.

Six men participated in the hunger strike last Monday, with a seventh man joining them on the second day. But Robinson said five of the men ended their strikes prematurely because the state Department of Correction threatened to move them to different units. He noted that the men were worried the DOC would eventually place them on medical suicide watch, cutting off their communication with the outside world.

DOC officials distributed copies of the hunger strike policy to the strikers, Robinson said. The policy states that if multiple prisoners participate in a hunger strike, they must be separated, according to Robinson. The DOC did not respond to a request for clarification about its hunger strike policy.

By Friday, Robinson and Myers



ZACHARY SURI / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Two prisoners at MacDougall-Walker have refused to eat since Sept. 16, citing flawed mental health treatment and excessive lockdowns at the facility.

segregation, he elected for the latter, Robinson said. Since Robinson was the sole striker left in his unit, he was allowed to remain there.

Robinson underscored the physical toll the hunger strike has taken on him and Myers. In the first six days of the hunger strike, Robinson's weight dropped from 248 to 233.8 pounds. He has also experienced muscle cramps and fatigue, according to a TikTok video he uploaded about the strike.

Myers was recently hospitalized because of low blood sugar levels, according to Robinson. Since the men have not been able to communicate with each other, Robinson does not know if Myers was required to end his hunger strike.

In the 2009 Lantz v. Coleman case, the Connecticut Superior Court ruled that it is constitutional for the DOC to force-feed prisoners on hunger strikes.

**Hunger strikers outline demands for improved conditions**

One of the strike's main demands is fewer prison lock-

down each week, in which prisoners are confined to their cells and have limited contact with the outside world while DOC officials undergo training, according to Robinson.

Criminal justice advocate Barbara Fair said MacDougall-Walker's frequent lockdowns may violate the PROTECT Act, which was signed into law in 2022. The law prohibits the DOC from imposing lockdowns for more than a cumulative 24 hours each month, and it mandates four hours of recreational time for prisoners per day.

"They're just flagrantly disobeying the law, but no one holds them accountable," Fair said. "It's never going to be enforced from the top, so [the DOC] is just violating the PROTECT Act in so many ways. And so I guess guys are just getting tired and fed up."

The DOC did not respond to the News' request for comment about the frequency of lockdowns at MacDougall-Walker.

The hunger strike was

fell backwards during a basketball game. After the prisoner died, DOC officials locked down the facility for the rest of the evening and the following day. Officials also "shook down" all prisoners, a term that refers to thorough searches of prisoners' cells.

Frustrated about the facility's frequent lockdowns and shakedowns, Robinson and five companions decided to launch the hunger strike the next day, on Sept. 16.

The hunger strikers are also calling for improved medical care and, in particular, better mental health treatment for prisoners.

Robinson said DOC officials tend to focus on prisoners with preexisting mental health conditions and do not provide necessary treatment for people who develop mental health conditions while they are imprisoned.

He emphasized that the facility's frequent lockdowns negatively impact prisoners' mental health. People in solitary confinement are more likely to develop anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts and psychosis.

"My heart really aches, because they are supposed to give us better treatment than this," Robinson said. "[DOC officials] are responsible for our overall mental health and medical care."

The hunger strikers are also urging the DOC to facilitate prisoners' communication with the outside world.

Prisoners are permitted to send ten electronic messages and complete six 15-minute phone calls each day. However, weak WiFi connections and frequent tablet glitches mean that prisoners' messages and calls often fail.

The demand for tablets far exceeds supply, so prisoners with broken or malfunctioning devices often wait up to two months for a replacement, according to Robinson.

The hunger strikers' communication-related demands include an increased daily allowance of electronic messages and phone calls, quicker fixes for broken devices and the elimination of solitary confinement.

quantity and quality of food for incarcerated people, an end to DOC retaliation against prisoners who speak out about poor prison conditions, and the elimination of over-sentencing and over-charging practices in Connecticut.

Attorney DeVaughn Ward — who has secured multiple settlements in legal battles with the DOC on behalf of people who received inadequate medical care in prison — was recently nominated as Connecticut's interim ombudsman. He assumed the role Monday and has begun providing the state's first independent prison oversight in over a decade.

One of Ward's top priorities in his first week as ombudsman is meeting with the hunger strikers, CT Insider reported. Ward declined to comment on his plan for addressing the hunger strike.

Robinson participated in another hunger strike from June 7 to 20, alongside James Davenport, who is also incarcerated at MacDougall-Walker. The men ended their strike after Robinson met with a DOC representative who promised to implement their demands, including a mentorship program for younger prisoners.

In the weeks after the June strike ended, Robinson said, prisoners began receiving increased medical and mental health check-ups and were served more nutritious food. But he said after a few weeks, the DOC reverted back to its status quo.

Robinson hopes that by securing a written agreement from Quiros, he'll prevent the DOC from backtracking on its promises again.

The DOC did not respond to a request for comment about Robinson's claim that the agency failed to meet his demands from the June hunger strike.

Last Tuesday, Quiros told CT Insider he is committed to all prisoners' wellbeing.

"If these individuals need help, I will ensure that they receive it," he said.

MacDougall-Walker currently houses 1,407 incarcerated people.

## ARTS

# Music groups, including YSO and Glee Club, become classes

BY ORION KIM  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

For the first time in Yale's history, undergraduate music ensembles — the Yale Symphony Orchestra, Glee Club, Concert Band and Jazz Ensemble — have attained co-curricular status.

Students must still audition for these groups, but these musical commitments will appear on their transcripts as zero-credit, pass-fail classes.

This change was the result of a determined effort led by the directors of the respective ensembles, Associate Dean of the Arts Kate Krier, Dean of Music José García León and many others. According to Director of University Bands Thomas Duffy, this shift has been discussed for nearly fifteen years and has been implemented at peer institutions such as Cornell, Brown and UPenn.

"Our rehearsals and our concerts were being trumped by curricular classes," said Duffy. "I've worked for this for years to try to get some status other than extra-curricular for these ensembles."

Director of YSO William Boughton echoed Duffy's frustration with music groups' lack of curricular status and pointed to the hourly commitment.

According to Boughton, rehearsals can take 28 to 30 hours a month, and student musicians spend many hours outside of this allotted time practicing alone.

"It's probably a greater commitment than almost any class," said Boughton.

Yale Concert Band President Ana Rodrigues '25 recalled instances in which academic commitments and musical engagements clashed.

Some members had to miss entire concerts due to midterms or class-related conflicts. Additionally, some students were ineligible to receive make-up exams because Yale's academic regulations do not excuse absences that aren't related to an athletic competition or a medically incapacitated circumstance.

Until last year, undergraduate music directors demanded that musicians receive the same protections as college athletes — the ability to reschedule exams in the case of an ensemble conflict.

When Duffy mentioned these frustrations and concerns to Dean of Yale College Pericles Lewis, the Dean's office proposed granting music groups co-curricular status.

According to Krier, the new system not only prevents scheduling conflicts with rehearsals and concerts but also allows students to receive recognition on their transcripts for these musical involvements.

Wayne Escoffery, the director of the Jazz Ensemble, added that the change reinforces students' commitment to their ensemble responsibilities. In some instances, attendance is weighed more heavily after this change. YSO members now have to swipe in before every rehearsal, whereas before a student manager recorded attendance.

"It sends a strong message that performance ensembles ... are a vital and legitimate component of the learning experience at Yale," Escoffery said.

Boughton said the transcript recognition will benefit students in various ways. Now that these commitments are visible on students' transcripts, it is easier for music directors to write recommendations for future scholarships and fellowships.

YSO President Keeley Brooks '25 added that recommendation letters will carry more weight since ensemble directors are officially recognized as professors of the course.

Some students told the News that little has changed in terms of their music experience, but others have expressed concerns about attendance and expectations.

While Brooks said that the attitude towards attendance has gotten "stricter," she clarified that the attendance policy remains unchanged. Students are allowed two unexcused absences and may be excused for a variety of reasons.

Section cellist Christian Phanthourath '28 expressed



JACOB LIAO / CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Starting this academic year, participation in these music groups will count as a zero-credit class.

concern about his YSO attendance due to a class that ends at the same time YSO begins. Although he stated that he would demonstrate the same level of commitment regardless of class status, he said he is worried now that the possibility of being late to rehearsal can potentially affect his grade.

Duffy said that this change emphasizes the importance of communication, as well as reinforces existing expectations.

"The immediate reaction last year before people understood [the change] was, 'So now we have to come to all the band rehearsals?'" said Duffy. "You always had to come to all the band rehearsals."

Rodrigues pointed out that, from a musician's perspective, the level of dedication remains the same. "In many of our eyes, band has always been something a little more than extracurricular," she said.

Additionally, members expressed concern about how this shift would affect the stu-

dent culture of ensembles. While YCB and YGC member Alliese Bonner '27 acknowledged these concerns, she said that this shift was "more of a change on paper" and anticipates for traditions, such as tap nights and group meals, to continue.

Some students have faced inconveniences with the new co-curricular arrangement, particularly when registering for these classes.

Aaron Parr '28, a first-chair trombonist in the Jazz Ensemble, said that he encountered issues with course registration. He wasn't officially added until after the add-drop deadline, which caused him stress.

"It seems like people are still getting acquainted with [the new structure]," Parr said.

Though adapting to the shift might take time, students agreed that the new status will leave a positive impact on music at Yale. Many students are drawn to Yale for its exceptional music scene, and the directors hope that

this change will lead to greater awareness and participation in music groups.

Jared Wyetzner '27, a physics major and a trumpet player in both band ensembles, was as attracted to Yale's robust music offerings as he was to its physics department.

"I appreciate the movement for [co-curricular classes] because it really emphasizes that music isn't just a hobby; it's a discipline just as much as any other taught here," Wyetzner said.

While Bonner pursues music as a major, she too finds importance in Yale's liberal arts approach to musical offerings. She added that the university's connection to the School of Music drew her in as an applicant.

These ensembles are offered alongside Yale's performance courses for credit, which include chamber music and musical theater classes.

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# Tian Hsu '26 reinvents the ruins of antiquity

BY KAMINI PURUSHOTHAMAN  
STAFF REPORTER

On Saturday, Sept. 20, guests filled The Table and Gallery, sipping on signature cocktails and tasting hors d'oeuvres while admiring the black-and-white depictions of ancient ruins that surrounded them.

The opening reception came alive with visuals created by Tian Hsu '26. Evoking various stages of antiquity, the exhibition included elements of Pompeii and the Agora of Athens, Christian iconography and other classical motifs.

The works were inspirations spurred from a summer trip to Greece, said Hsu. The exhibition has been up since Sept. 16.

"I was very taken aback by all the classical architecture — namely the ruins," said Hsu. "There's a sort of fascination and perverse pleasure tourists take in ruins, and I was very intrigued about what the role of classical architecture is today."

Hsu's art encompasses sculpture, graphic design and videography among other mediums. A mechanical engineering and architecture double major, Hsu infuses her work across the artistic disciplines with pragmatism and exactness.

Through her study of architecture, Hsu was left wondering about her own standing in the architectural timeline. What resulted was a series of traditional charcoal sketches, contemporary digital renderings and even a projection of classical ruins.

Taking inspiration from Chinese mountain ink brush paintings, Hsu looked to capture artistic elements such as the foreground, background, shade and value.

In "Veil of Vestiges" — which gave the exhibition its name — Hsu used charcoal to depict the ruins. In the background, the viewer finds hands pulling back a veil to reveal these ancient structures.

Another piece shows Hsu sketching plaster cast recreations of the original Parthenon sculptures — whose real counterparts are now housed in the British Museum. This technique of representation within representation, called *mise en abyme*, adds another degree of separation — a veil — between the viewer and the sculptures.



KAMINI PURUSHOTHAMAN / CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Hsu's exhibition, which features recreations and reimaginings of ruins she saw on a summer trip to Greece, opened on Sept. 16 and was followed by an opening reception on Sept. 20.

The Table and Gallery is owned and run by Sonal Soveni, who opened it in August 2023. As its name indicates, the space is not only a restaurant, but also functions as a local artspace and cafe. When working with artists, Soveni said that she works with artists to tell a story through food and space.

Throughout the summer, Soveni communicated with Hsu to bring the story of the ruins to life. As Hsu created pieces, the two considered how best to display them in the gallery

space. Most of the pieces hang on the walls of the gallery, but one rests on an easel and another was projected onto the wall during the opening.

"It's not just showcasing the work, but it's showcasing what influenced them [the artists], what inspired them, what motivated them," said Soveni. "Then we merge that with food, which is a universal love language," she added, gesturing to a large table in the gallery.

Indeed, Hsu's opening reception served beverages customized to

reflect her artistic vision. The event had two signature drinks, aptly named "Vestige" and "Mirage."

The former was a gin-based cocktail-mocktail that featured dried fig, honey-ginger, elderflower and tonic. The latter was a spiced apple martini with earl gray. Soveni said she chose the ingredients carefully, noting that "Mirage" is a delicate purple drink incongruous with the sharp kick provided by the ginger.

Hsu added that the drinks' ingredients reflect elements of both her

British nationality and Chinese heritage. In addition to the beverages, Hsu worked with Soveni to design a custom tasting menu based on her background.

"Sunal [Soveni] and I care a lot about the culture and meaning of different places that have shaped us," said Hsu. So the menu represents the merging of the many different places that we've been touched by."

Going forward, Soveni said she hopes to connect New Haven and Yale talent so that both the space and artists can collaborate to grow and expand their careers.

Irene Kim '26, one of the exhibition's attendees and a friend of Hsu, said that her favorite piece was "Internal Conflict," a print of a sketch Hsu drew on her iPad during a trip from New York to London.

The work shows a layered cityscape with structures like columns and pediments reminiscent of Greco-Roman architecture. Surrounding this classical scene appears a construction site with a tipper truck holding a Christian cross, alluding to the ever-present potential of losing the ancient in our historical memory.

"I was just feverishly scribbling away, and it took me the whole flight plus the immigration to finish," said Hsu.

She estimated that the intricate piece took 10 hours to create. Beneath it is a caption listing all of the architectural references, from the Parthenon to Big Ben, that inspired her to create reinventions of these ruins.

Kim lauded Hsu's attention-to-detail, mentioning the artist's conceptual creativity and technical skill.

"Tian (Hsu) spends a lot of time thinking about the historical architecture of the place she's at in any given moment — whether it's Yale or her hometown," said Kim. "It was so cool to see snapshots of her [Hsu's] reflections from her travels come to life through her exhibition!"

Hsu's exhibition runs through Dec. 16 at The Table & Gallery, which is located at 1209 Chapel St.

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# SCI-TECH

*"Fiction is the truth inside the lie."*  
STEPHEN KING AMERICAN AUTHOR

## CT Board of Ed. recommends cell phone restrictions in public schools

BY FAREED SALMON & SABRINA THALER  
STAFF REPORTER & CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

As public school students return to school in New Haven, they will be met with some new rules around their cell phone use.

On Aug. 21, the Connecticut State Board of Education approved a new recommendation for Connecticut public schools: cell phones should not be used at all during the school day of elementary and middle school students, while cell phone use in high schools should be limited.

However, as students begin to get used to the new normal in schools, the opinions of students, educators, parents and medical professionals highlight just how complex reactions are to the cell phone ban.

"I think to me as a parent and an educator, the recommendation sounds like it is aligned developmentally and it encourages social interaction, while also giving some flexibility at older ages," Mira Debs GRD '16, lecturer in the sociology department and director of undergraduate studies of the Education Studies Program, said. "However, I can't speak for all parents or students, for there are various experiences that provide a different perspective to this recommendation."

### The scientific basis for the cell-phone ban recommendation

According to Xi Chen, professor of health

policy at the School of Public Health, cell phones have led to reduced cognitive capacity, as students are now more likely to just use a readily available information source without relying on their cognitive abilities. Cell phones have also led to sleep deprivation as blue light from phones disrupts the normal circadian cycle, and social media has its litany of mental health consequences, from intense feelings of isolation and stress to self-harm.

However, when it comes to students, the dangers of cell phones listed above are only exacerbated and can impair the learning experience in the classroom. And even if they are not actively using it but can see their phone, they can still get distracted, according to Ada Fenick, professor of pediatrics at the School of Medicine.

"So if you're feeling like you're constantly having to look at your phone, your attention span for your schoolwork is definitely lowered because you're constantly going back to check," Fenick told the News.

Cell phones have also been shown to increase cyberbullying in school, which is associated with feelings of depression and self-harm, according to Fenick. This is especially true when cyberbullying can now be done at a distance by anyone and posts on social media can be permanent.

Additionally, outside the classroom, cell phones have been shown to reduce the social-emotional

skills of students. According to Chen, students are more likely to develop social isolation as they spend more time on the screen and do not learn how to talk to their peers, which has a variety of negative effects.

"We know that face-to-face communication between children is best because human society is built on face-to-face interaction," Chen said. "But cell phones and online communication crowd out their valuable time to engage with their peer students. There's even some evidence that brain development can be affected as the important skills of communication and creativity aren't engaged."

According to Debs, the COVID-19 pandemic provided the opportunity for students to have unlimited access to their cell phones because they were home all the time. Coming back to school made the issues of cell phones in the classroom that much clearer to educators.

Bullying, lack of communication skills and reduced attention span are not anything new in schools, but cell phones exacerbate these issues. According to some teachers, the lack of cell phones has created great changes in the classroom.

"The reports that have come out from schools that have implemented a ban is that it makes teachers' work so much easier. They feel like they have more positive interactions with students, creating a very positive impact on the school climate overall," Debs told the News.

### Community reactions for and against phone restrictions

Some New Haven students, however, are skeptical about how cell phone restrictions would be effectively implemented and wonder how restrictions could still prioritize students' rights.

Jonaily Colón, a junior at New Haven's High School in the Community, or HSC, serves as a student representative on the New Haven Board of Education. She says she is comfortable with cell phones being restricted, agreeing they can stifle engagement in the classroom, but feels students should be able to access them when they need to, especially to

communicate with family or manage emergency situations.

"In case of a Code Red or anything like that, say we have our phone in a Yondr pouch, you can't text anyone," she said.

In August, the New Haven Independent reported that Barnard Environmental Magnet School and Troup School are spearheading the use of Yondr pouches, magnetic lockboxes that prevent cell phone usage inside a designated "phone-free space."

Colón hasn't yet witnessed any effort to restrict cell phone use in HSC, but her peers have heard about the Yondr pouches from students at other schools. Colón understands that a teacher's reprimand is often not enough to discourage students from using phones, but her peers have objections to forcible restriction. She imagines that an enforced cell phone regulation would provoke major complaints about students' right to their own property.

"A lot of people are like, 'They're not taking my phone away from me,'" Colón recalled. "I bought it and I'm going to use it!"

According to Seth Zimmerman, a member of the Connecticut Board of Education and professor at the School of Management, the issue of parent-student communication during school is a salient one.

He believes that as schools and districts implement cell phone restrictions, they also have a role to play in addressing parents' concerns about how to reach their children.

"District leaders who have successfully implemented these policies talk about how it was important to be sure that parents knew how to get in touch with their kids without calling or texting their cell phones, usually by calling the school office," Zimmerman wrote in an email to the News. "It's of course also important for schools to make sure they have procedures in place that work. When a parent calls the school office, someone has to pick up the phone."

### Cell phone ban may miss bigger issues

Other New Haven Public Schools students believe that cell phone usage is just one of a host

of problems that interfere with student engagement.

John Carlos Musser, a senior at Wilbur Cross High School and another student representative on the New Haven Board of Education, explained that infrastructure, mental health and staffing issues are part of the reason students are so inclined to turn to distractions. He thinks policymakers should focus on addressing those issues while they discourage cell phone use.

According to Musser, the library and music wing at Wilbur Cross have been shut down due to mold, and the ceiling of a classroom caved in during his sophomore year. Over the course of his first three years of high school, six of his teachers have gone on leave or formally left the school, leaving substitute teachers to lead classrooms.

"I feel like there's a constant theme where we put a lot of blame on students," Musser said. "We blame students for lack of engagement by going on their phones. But I think there's other things institutionally that need to be faced and money needs to be spent on, rather than pouches."

Musser agreed that a cell phone ban would be appropriate for elementary and middle school students, but highlighted the ways technology can also benefit students' learning, especially in high school settings.

He noted that, because of dwindling support from the COVID-era Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, some students are losing access to school-provided computers.

"The way our assignments are given now, a lot of it is dependent on technology," Musser said. "And for some kids, the only form of technology they have, because COVID relief money is no longer coming around and they're not receiving computers, is their phone."

Connecticut is among 14 states that have recommended or enforced cell phone bans in their public schools.

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ERIKA HENRIQUEZ

The board's recommendation of limited cell phone use in schools have sparked conversations about how to best support student learning.

## Welcome to the club: the psychology behind initiation rituals

BY CHRYSIE ALEXIOU & ZOE BEKETOVA  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTERS

You may have seen groups in the past few days leap-frogging over each other, being led blindfolded around campus or running up the Lanman-Wright stairs chanting someone's name. The question arises: why? Why do students do these rituals at all, let alone in public?

The psychology behind such initiations has been thoroughly researched, with these rituals acting as an official acceptance into a group that humans naturally desire.

"It's not enough just to be here [at Yale] with everybody else," John Bargh, Yale professor of psychology and cognitive science, said. "You also have to have something that separates you and makes you a little unique and different, too. And I think that's the lure."

People naturally desire to be included in a group. Bargh's Introduction to Social Psychology class teaches this as social identity theory, which aims to understand why individuals are interested in group identities and the meaning of groups to humans.

Social identity theory explains that group belonging provides a unique feeling that can be described as "exclusive inclusion" — inclusion in something special.

According to Bargh, this is founded on the "twin pressures of sharing an identity, and at the same time, we want to be a little different and a little unique."

Social identity theory therefore explains that the shared identity of 'Yalie' is too broad — everyone on campus shares this label. The sense of belonging to Yale isn't as strong on campus as it would be if three Yalies met at a bar in Alaska. There, being a Yalie would be a unique group identity compared to everyone else.

Being part of a group that has some degree of exclusivity makes people feel both included and special. Therefore, students join societies, sports groups and Greek

Life — these provide a group identity while remaining exclusive.

Initiations deepen loyalty and commitment to the group. This is due to cognitive dissonance — the focus of much of Bargh's work — the phenomenon of behaving in ways that don't align with your beliefs.

However, some students told the News they found rushing and initiation processes overwhelming and felt guilt-tripped.

To reconcile such contradicting attitudes to initiation practices, individuals often magnify their desire to be a part of a certain group to justify the tasks they are doing. In this way, loyalty and commitment to the group is enhanced.

"If you put up with whatever it was and now you're on the other side of it, well, then you really must have wanted to be a member of this group," Bargh explained. "Why else would you have gone through this initiation?"

Initiations used to focus on humiliation to deepen loyalty and commitment — think hazing — where going through embarrassing or painful tasks deepened a student's commitment to the group. Bargh explained that psychologically, the more extreme the initiation, the more the individual will believe that they want to be part of the group.

Yale has a difficult history with these extreme initiation rituals. Yet, not all initiations push Yale's hazing and initiation rules of no humiliation or alcohol.

The students the News spoke to seem to enjoy their initiations and wish to remain a part of the group for fun rather than because they feel forced.

"Tap night was very fun, they had first sent me a very cryptic email," Sam Vargas '28, a member of the Mixed Company Of Yale a cappella group, said. "They handed me a huge trophy-looking thing filled with a mystery liquid, and then I had to spin it on my head."

Vargas said that the mystery liquid was, in fact, Gatorade. Another a cappella member confirmed that it was announced that

everyone had to be 21 or over to drink alcohol.

Bargh believes that severe initiations are not necessary for people to bond in student groups "when they want to be in them anyway."

He told the News that when positive experiences are shared amongst peers, the good feelings are felt more intensely.

Students initiated into a cappella groups agreed with this, and told the News that they could see

how easily societies become family-like in their closeness. This is partly thanks to all the time they spend together, with events such as out-of-state retreats.

"It was special and cool to be finally introduced to a big group," Nate Stein '28, member of Yale Glee Club and The Spizzwinks, said.

His initiation involved a similar situation to Vargas — a chalice full of Sprite, singing and pizza in the Branford College courtyard.

Some initiation rituals have now become a social experience, helping Yalies form close friendships rather than scarring students or subjecting them to humiliating drinking challenges.

The legal drinking age in Connecticut is 21.

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JESSAI FLORES

Initiation season, and the screaming frosh that come with it, have started. The News dived into the psychology behind it.

*"For aspiring actors out there, I would say stay focused and don't let anyone pull you away from your goals. Shoot for the stars so that if you ever fall short you can land on the clouds."*

RYAN GUZMAN AMERICAN ACTOR

## Drake's "OVO" clothing brand launches Yale merchandise



SAMAD HAKANI / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

The Yale Bookstore and October's Very Own are selling Yale-licensed apparel.

BY LILY BELLE POLING  
STAFF REPORTER

Drake's clothing brand, October's Very Own, recently launched a Yale-themed collection, which is available for purchase in-store at the Yale Bookstore and online at the October's Very Own website.

Of the four items in the collection, the "Campus Varsity Jacket" is the most expensive, retailing for \$678. A "Campus T-shirt" and "Campus Sportcap" go for \$68 each — the least expensive of the OVO pieces.

"Drake is all about hip-hop, and the kids love hip-hop, so it's really catering to the aesthetic that the kids are looking for: oversized, urban flair, eye-catching," Deron Michael, general merchandising manager at the Yale Bookstore, said.

Michael said the collaboration was facilitated by Barnes and Noble College, a company that operates campus bookstores nationwide, including Yale's bookstore. Although the OVO collection is not available for purchase on the bookstore's website, which is also operated by Barnes and Noble, it has

been advertised online, as well as on the bookstore's Instagram page.

Despite the price, Michael said the collection has been "very popular" and is "definitely catching on." He said the bookstore has sold one jacket, "some" hoodies and "a couple of" shirts, since it launched the OVO pieces on Sept. 20.

"Like any other other expensive brands we have as well, nothing goes off the shelves, but it's catching eyes, and the pieces that he created are eye-catching and really nice," Michael said. "There's one letter jacket, which is really cool because we've always wanted a var-

sity jacket, so it's nice that he put one together."

Neither October's Very Own nor Barnes and Noble College could be reached for comment.

Earlier this year, the Canadian rapper and singer got into an internet rap beef with the acclaimed American artist Kendrick Lamar. Both artists released diss tracks directed against the other, including Drake's "Family Matters" and Lamar's "Not Like Us."

Drake has previously referenced Yale in his 2011 track, "Make Me Proud," which features Nicki Minaj. Other rappers, such as Kanye West and Ken Carson, have also mentioned

Yale in their songs. Yale is the only Ivy League school with October's Very Own merchandise.

Paul Murawski, director of Yale's department of marketing and trademark licensing, confirmed that his office authorized October's Very Own to use the Yale logo for its products.

Matt Letourneau '27, who is a campus manager for the merchandise company Fresh Prints, expects the OVO collection to appeal more to alumni than to students. He was not sure he would purchase any of the items given the high price point.

"I think that it's good for Yale's brand to appeal to pop culture like that," Letourneau said. "I think it's a smart step for Yale because it offers a reputable designer that they know people are going to like here at school!"

October's Very Own launched similar collections for Stanford University, the University of Cambridge, the University of Toronto and the University of Western Ontario. However, none of these other schools have Barnes and Noble bookstores, according to the Barnes and Noble College website.

While the Yale bookstore received OVO merchandise to sell on the floor, other schools have received licensed apparel from Travis Scott's clothing brand.

In April, Scott released the "Jack Goes Back to College" collection for 28 college campuses. Scott's collection features a wider range of options than Drake's, including T-shirts, crewnecks, hoodies, shorts, sweatpants, backpacks and hats, priced from \$68 to \$160.

Like the OVO apparel, Scott's collection was available at Barnes and Noble locations at the participating colleges' campuses. It is also for sale on the Travis Scott website.

Scott's brand did not create apparel for any Ivy League Schools.

The "Campus Varsity Jacket" and the "Campus Fleece Hoodie" in the OVO University of Western Ontario collection are sold out online.

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## NHPS, unions call for return to in-house custodial work

BY ZACHARY SURI  
STAFF REPORTER

When Alder Frank Redente Jr. was growing up in New Haven in the 1980s, he said there were four practical career paths for New Haven Public Schools graduates without a college degree — police department, fire department, public works and school custodians.

"Systematically, over the last 25 years, we've destroyed all these good union jobs," Redente told the News.

The future of custodian jobs in the school system was the subject of a recent Board of Alders Education Committee meeting at city hall.

At the contentious hearing on Wednesday evening, Madeline Negron, superintendent of the school system, presented the district's plan to address decades of deferred maintenance, which includes rehiring in-house union trades positions privatized in 2009.

Representatives from the custodial workers union and teachers union, along with parents, teachers and custodians themselves, echoed these calls and demanded an end to the privatization of custodial management altogether.

Tom DeLucia, president of Local 287 — the union representing the custodial workers who remained after the 2009 privatization — told the committee that privatization is responsible for the lack of action on many maintenance issues.

The vast majority of the district's 58 buildings are well past their industry-standard expected lifespan, Negron told the committee. The cost of emergency repairs for deferred maintenance has become so high that preventative maintenance is "nearly impossible" with current funding and staffing levels, Michael Carter, interim chief operating officer of New Haven Public Schools, said.

Over 4,000 work orders were entered between March 1, 2023, and Sept. 19, 2024, according to the district's presentation at the hearing. The highest demand categories are HVAC repairs, carpentry, electrical work and plumbing.

In the last school year, New Haven Public Schools spent a total of \$58,500 on mold testing and remediation. One month into the new school year, the district has already spent \$164,000 on remediation and testing.

Redente, who also serves as a youth development coordinator at Fair

Haven School, described teachers at the school having to cut rulers to create makeshift locks for broken bathroom stall doors.

In 2009, amidst budget shortfalls, the district cut the number of custodians and tradespeople from 154 to 100, hiring a series of outside contractors to manage custodial work and repairs.

The district would like to hire 33 additional trades positions, but NHPS does not have the funds, Carter told the committee. That would more than quadruple the number of currently available trades positions.

Negron also raised the possibility of school consolidation and closure. She requested additional funds from the city to support repairs and hiring.

"We must adapt to the needs of the community in order to deliver the education we know all of our students deserve," Negron said. "Substantial new investment will be required."

Negron advocated a new capital projects plan similar to the billion-dollar state-city bond project in the late 1990s. This time though, Negron emphasized the importance of including funds for preventative maintenance.

She placed most of the responsibility for the maintenance crisis on past district leadership and lack of funding. The district is facing a "fiscal cliff" as no additional funding seems to be forthcoming from the city, state or federal government, she said.

"Nobody at this table is responsible for this situation," she told the committee.

Salvatore Punzo, committee chairman and former New Haven Public Schools principal, praised the system before the positions were privatized and advocated for returning custodial and trades positions in-house.

DeLucia praised the district's plan but took issue with their description of the staffing crisis. The district has been short more than a dozen custodial workers for years, he told the committee. Currently, 17 positions are vacant.

DeLucia blamed privatization, specifically ABM, the custodial management company that the school system contracts to manage the district's facilities. The union placed flyers in the chambers condemning ABM as "Awfully Bad Management" and calling for the district to end its contract with ABM and return the positions to Local 287.

"Private companies have destroyed New Haven," he told the



ZACHARY SURI / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

New Haven Public Schools officials called for the city to invest in in-house tradespeople. Union representatives, custodians and teachers demand an end to privatization altogether.

committee. "They have destroyed good jobs."

DeLucia told the committee that temporary ABM employees do not take "pride" in their work and do not "care" about New Haven Public Schools students the way his members do. ABM consistently fails to fulfill supply orders from building managers, leaving schools with little toilet paper, paper towels and cleaning supplies, he said.

Some work orders have languished in the system for seven to eight years, Dennis Darnell, vice president of Local 287, told the committee.

"At some point before something seriously goes wrong, these things need to get fixed," he said.

Jamar Alleyne, director of facilities for ABM, defended the company's work to the committee, blaming supply issues on city contracting delays and the lack of a district warehouse.

Faced with a lack of funds, the company is forced to concentrate on maintenance emergencies that directly threaten student health and safety, he said. Alleyne also promised to work

closely with Local 287 to address communications issues between the union and ABM management.

DeLucia told the committee that privatization prevents his members from being able to work their way into higher-paid management positions, which are held by ABM employees.

At least three other custodians reiterated these concerns about ABM management. Teachers from across the district, including Leslie Blatteau '97 GRD '07, president of the New Haven Federation of Teachers, also spoke in support of their custodians.

Privatization, DeLucia said, had not only failed to provide the necessary maintenance but had failed to save the district money.

"I remember the days where we had our own in-house based guys ... they fixed that thing the same day, no work orders, no complicated calls outside the building," Redente, who has worked within the public school system for over 30 years, said. "So to bring in a private company from another town or another state and put them in

charge of a building just doesn't make sense to me."

Alder Sarah Miller '03 expressed frustration that the district's plan is dependent on funding that can only be raised in a year with the upcoming state legislative session. The district's presentation constituted "pieces of a plan," she said.

While she expressed general support for the union and district's proposal to reverse privatization, she expressed concern that the district did not have a plan to address immediate health and safety concerns.

"I'm ... not satisfied that we have a humane strategy that any kid, that any family would be comfortable with," she said. "I didn't really hear a plan for making sure that everybody has toilet paper."

The Board of Alders Education Committee meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.

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## Yale-NUS community reacts to school closure

ALYSSA JHINGREE  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

As the Yale-NUS community grapples with the closure of the college at the end of this academic year, administrators and alumni paint a picture of loss, reflection and its enduring legacy.

Yale-NUS opened in 2013 as a partnership between Yale and the National University of Singapore. In July 2021, NUS President Tan Eng Chye GRD '89 announced that Yale-NUS College would merge with the NUS University Scholars Programme, an existing interdisciplinary initiative, and be renamed "New College." Yale's name will be removed from the institution.

President of Yale-NUS Joanne Roberts acknowledged the significance of this decision, reflecting on the impact Yale-NUS has had on the academic landscape. Alumni like April Hu '84 and Kyle Kegang Wang '85, who have been actively involved in discussions surrounding the closure, are navigating the emotions tied to the end of an institution that has played a pivotal role in their educational journeys.

"Why did the closure of Yale-NUS college happen?" Hu said. "It could be a breakdown of communication of shared vision or something else, but instead of looking backwards, I think we should move forward and sincerely support more global collaborations between the world's finest academic institutions."

The original affiliation between Yale and NUS allowed either party to withdraw from the collaboration in 2025. The school also frequently came under scrutiny for issues of free expression since its creation.

Roberts, the Yale-NUS president, reflected on the impact and legacy of Yale-NUS, highlighting the college's achievements since welcoming its first class in 2013.

She emphasized the college's significant contributions to the academic landscape, noting that Yale-NUS graduates have excelled in diverse fields such as astronomy, international policy, technology and public health, among others.

Roberts also underscored the efforts to share Yale-NUS' educational model globally, including organizing a symposium in January 2024 and participating in international conferences.

She pointed out that the new NUS College, or NUSC, formed in part through the contributions of Yale-NUS leadership and community members, draws heavily on the curriculum and experiences developed at Yale-NUS.

"There is great interest in strengthening and deepening liberal arts and sciences education in Singapore, and this interest will undoubtedly continue in the years to come," she said.

Wang said that the initial agreement between Yale and the Singaporean government involved significant financial commitments from the Singaporean government, who primarily funded the institution, without clear long-term benefits to the local economy. He pointed out that Yale-NUS' model of admitting a large number of international students who often left after graduation did not align with the goal of contributing to Singapore's workforce.

"Every cost had to be paid by Singaporeans, locals and the Singaporean government," Wang said. "Then they had the quota to educate students from outside, then after those students are educated, they leave. This didn't help benefit or contribute to the Singaporean economy in terms of workforce."

Wang added that although the college faced challenges, it remained a valuable educational experiment that showcased Yale's commitment to high standards and cultural exchange.

Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis, who is also Yale-NUS' founding president, voiced his disappointment over Yale-NUS' closure and emphasized Yale's commitment to the school.

"Yale was fully committed to the partnership and was happy to keep doing it for five, 10 more years," Lewis said. "I worked very hard to try and negotiate a continuation. It was a unilateral decision on

the part of NUS ... We were disappointed because we were hoping to continue the partnership."

Lewis did not support the dissolution of the school when it was announced in 2021. Regarding why Yale-NUS closed, Lewis told the News that NUS and "maybe Singapore in general" wanted more direct control of the program.

On adapting to the end of the partnership, Lewis explained that Yale is actively working to increase its options.

"We are trying to expand our study abroad programs for our undergraduates," Lewis said. "It's become much harder to create a bricks-and-mortar campus, so we now rely a lot more on partnerships where our students will travel to another university, but we won't be involved in the governance in the same way."

Reflecting on the college's legacy, Roberts mentioned several community-led projects, such as

the Yale-NUS Legacy website and upcoming commemorative events, which aim to celebrate and document the college's history.

She expressed pride in the enduring network of Yale-NUS alumni, who continue to build lasting bonds and keep the spirit of the college alive through the newly formed Yale-NUS Club, an official society registered in Singapore.

In recognition of the closing of Yale-NUS, a public reception will be held in partnership with the Yale International Alliance and the Yale Alumni Association, providing an opportunity to commemorate the legacy of the institution alongside Yale alumni and Yale-NUS leadership.

The reception will be on Nov. 28 in Singapore.

Karla Cortes contributed reporting.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF YALE-NUS

After opening in 2013, the collaborative effort between Yale and the National University of Singapore will shed Yale's name after the last class graduates in 2025.

## J Street U hosts Palestinian American peace activist at Slifka

BY SABRINA THALER  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Last Thursday, Rawan Odeh, an activist for dialogue and joint advocacy between Israelis and Palestinians, visited students at the Joseph Slifka Center for Jewish Life at Yale.

Odeh is a board member and former executive director of New Story Leadership, an organization that trains Israeli and Palestinian leaders in joint political advocacy in pursuit of peace and justice in the region. At the Slifka Center library, Odeh shared her experiences as a Palestinian American and highlighted the role of personal relationships in mobilizing for peace.

The national J Street U organization, which advocates against the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory in the West Bank through the lens of Jewish values, planned the event as part of their "Voices Paving the Path to Peace" speaker tour, which took place across five universities in the Northeast.

At the beginning of the talk, Odeh detailed her upbringing as a Muslim in Brooklyn, New York, and her time living in Huwara, a town in the West Bank that is fully occupied by the Israeli army. She described complete segregation and hostility between Palestinians and Israelis in Huwara.

"To survive, if you see an Israeli soldier in the streets, you put your head down and you pray," Odeh said. "If you see an Israeli settler, you run for your life. We do not meet in the West Bank or in Israel other than in circumstances of violence."

Odeh described her first meeting with an Israeli woman on a bus, a meeting which led to a friendship and an invitation to spend Passover with the woman's family in Haifa, Israel. However, in trying to get to

Haifa, Odeh discovered that there was no way to cross from Palestinian territory into Israeli territory exclusively for a social purpose.

Motivated by this friendship and the barriers that exist between Israelis and Palestinians, she became involved in policy advocacy in Congress. She became the executive director of New Story Leadership at age 22, coordinating Israeli and Palestinian delegates to meet with legislators.

As part of her work, Odeh attended a 2017 Congressional Hearing for the Taylor Force Act, a bill to cut U.S. funding to the Palestinian Authority, which controls Palestinians' access to food and education. She noticed that none of the panelists at the hearing were Palestinians themselves.

"A lot of people are talking about us without us," Odeh said. "My story and Palestinian stories just aren't really heard."

By bringing these underrepresented stories into policy forums, Odeh hopes that long-term justice is possible. Amid the ongoing Israel-Hamas war, she has encouraged legislators to focus on long-term goals once a ceasefire has been reached.

New Story Leadership is advocating for the Phoenix Plan, a policy agenda that focuses on stabilizing Gaza, strengthening Israeli and Palestinian leadership and effectively engaging the international community to achieve long-term peace.

"To me, liberation means a Palestinian state living side by side with an Israeli state," Odeh said. "I think the loudest voices want to do away with it all. But I think the majority of Israelis don't want to see Palestinians dead."

When a student asked about how to be an effective ally to Palestinians, Odeh emphasized the value of recognizing nuanced

opinions and the overlapping goals of most people in both Israeli and Palestinian communities.

Odeh encouraged student attendees to prioritize transparent storytelling, empathy and inclusion as they approach advocacy.

"Acknowledgement means a lot," Odeh said. "There's something about the defense of a human that allows them to hear you if you acknowledge them. I see you as my ally, but you have to bring me in to facilitate those conversations."

Student attendees were interested in Odeh's account of her own life and saw the event as a rare opportunity to hear from a Palestinian voice in a Jewish space.

Maya Viswanathan '28 said she came to the event because she is curious about the work of organizations like New Story Leadership, which are focused on facilitating conversations between Israelis and Palestinians as a tool for peace.

"In general, the news is detached from personal stories," Viswanathan said. "But really, it's about people, and if you simplify things into statistics or black-and-white, you don't get the full understanding."

Samuel Ostrove '25 felt that conversations like these in the United States and on college campuses can be meaningful forums to bridge ideological gaps and prevent the formation of a "bubble."

For Ostrove, the event left him wondering how Palestinians and Israelis can form meaningful relationships when social interaction is so policed in the region itself.

"The whole thing is about human stories and human connections," Ostrove said. "But there's no line on the form for 'I'm going to visit my friend in Haifa.' Maybe in certain ways today that's possible, but if it's even possible, it's very difficult."

Ostrove feels that, in the wake of student protests for a ceasefire and divestment, there has not been enough interaction between people with diverse lived experiences.

Ostrove added that more students should strive to connect with people who have different views on contentious issues.

"It's important for Jewish spaces, spaces that affiliate with Israel, to invite Palestinians in the same way that I think it's very important for pro-Palestinian spaces to invite in Jewish Israelis," Ostrove said. "There needs to be respectful presence of people whose views differ from the normative views in spaces on campus."

The Joseph Slifka Center for Jewish Life is located at 80 Wall St.

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SABRINA THALER, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Rawan Odeh met with students to discuss her work toward justice and dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians.

## NEWS

*"Music is always a creative process that comes from the heart. It's a feeling, a vibration, that we ride on."*

MAURICE WHITE AMERICAN MUSICIAN

# School of Art, NYU Abu Dhabi bridge cultures in new residency program

BY OLIVIA CYRUS

CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

When Chinaedu Nwadiabia ART '22 left New Haven for Abu Dhabi, the first thing she noticed was the heat; conversely, as Majd Alloush NYUAD MFA '23 made the journey from Abu Dhabi to New Haven, he immediately noticed its absence.

Nwadiabia and Alloush were selected to engage in the pilot of the Post-MFA Residency Exchange Program between the Yale School of Art and NYU Abu Dhabi, also known as NYUAD. In the program, one recent graduate from each institution spends one academic semester on campus at the exchange university and is provided accommodations such as studio space and housing to further explore their craft.

Yale had previously announced a similar project in 2008, but it was later scrapped due to "irreconcilable differences," as the News reported that year.

When asked what has occurred in the past 16 years for the project to finally come to fruition, Anoka Faruqee '94, associate dean and professor of painting and printmaking at the Yale School of Art, said she cannot speak to the development of the past programming but describes the current opportunity as a unique outlet for cultural exchange.

The effort was resurrected following a trip Faruqee took to the United Arab Emirates with Kymberly Pinder GRD '95, dean of the School of Art, and Nicole Freeman, director of development and alumni relations.

While there, Faruqee visited Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah, and toured performing arts facilities at NYU Abu Dhabi. After returning to New Haven, she and her peers discussed launching a pilot exchange program for recent alums.

"The art world that we are exposing our students to on a regular basis

is sometimes limited to geography," said Faruqee. "And the School of Art has been interested in travel and residency opportunities that are outside of a European context."

Once each respective program commences, the artists have access to various shops, labs, lectures and programming and are expected to present a project exhibition.

Nwadiabia, one of the first program participants, is a Nigerian and African American sculptor and photographer, fond of injecting elements of her background into her work to illuminate the rich histories related to the African diaspora.

Upon arriving in Abu Dhabi just a few days ago, she embraced the change in culture, resources and weather with excitement.

"I'm interested in immersing myself in the libraries and archives available to me at NYUAD, being open to the ways in which new discoveries invite themselves into my practice," Nwadiabia said. "Conversely, I hope to leave a bit of Nigerian/Black Americana here to be contemplated, respected and resonated with."

Nwadiabia said she feels honored to have been selected for this venture and eagerly awaits future opportunities to share her experiences as the legacy of the program solidifies.

The other program participant, Alloush, is a printmaker and photographer. He shared a similar sentiment regarding his selection for the program.

"I can't really describe the feeling, because it's something that I've always wanted to do," Alloush said. "It's a very small world in the United Arab Emirates, and I've always been involved in every event that happens around the idea of print and printmaking. It just feels really good to be able to teach and share my experience."



COURTESY OF CHINEADU NWADIBIA

A new post-MFA program aims to expand artistic global perspective and practices across two distinct cultural landscapes.

Alloush began his career at NYUAD as a chemical engineering major but quickly garnered an ardor for printmaking due to its foundation in chemical processes. He graduated in 2018 and, following graduation, worked at the American University of Sharjah as a laboratory specialist managing art facilities. However, he has always sought to pursue a career in academia and now works part-time as an adjunct faculty instructor at the university.

He dubs his participation in the post-MFA program as "very experimental" and is eager to merge his abstract "backwards" approach with New Haven's distinct environment.

"I don't really stick with the rules of printmaking," said Alloush. "But sometimes you have to, so I gain my inspiration from collaborating with

the environment that I am in and my documentation of space."

Faruqee hopes that this opportunity will allow artists to be inspired and influenced by the artists, issues and ideas around them. She believes it is crucial for institutions such as Yale to invest in internationalization efforts.

"This is the first time [Yale] has had a program, as far as I can remember, where somebody has had a studio space on campus that isn't a student," she said. "So the fact that [Alloush] is an international fellow is important because it brings other perspectives and viewpoints to broaden our idea of what art is and who are the visible artists."

She believes that most people, including herself, would be more impacted by art if they saw images firsthand as opposed to via social media and the internet.

She believes that when art's primary form of consummation is through mediated technology, it is much more disembodied.

"I realized that my frame of reference for artists can be quite narrow, and so doing these trips and learning about other artists is really important for me as a teacher. And so we wanted to bring a smaller version of that experience to a couple of recent alums to continue that type of work."

Faruqee said she anticipates the post-MFA program becoming a long-term collaboration. She hopes the School of Art can offer a fellowship that expands students' frame of reference and knowledge.

The Yale School of Art was founded in 1869.

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# Alison Bechdel discusses career and queer identity



COURTESY OF ALISON BECHDEL

The namesake of the renowned "Bechdel Test" talks about what it means to be a lesbian cartoonist.

BY ANGEL HU

STAFF REPORTER

Alison Bechdel talked about how she "became a lesbian cartoonist" in a lecture this past Wednesday.

Bechdel is a prominent cartoonist, famous for creating the "Bechdel Test" — a gauge of female representation in films based on the criteria that two women must have a conversation about a topic other than men. This semester, she teaches three classes at Yale as a 2024 Chubb Fellow.

"Writers with subjugated identities don't just have to use their imaginations in the usual way all writers do," she said. "You have to reimagine. You have to undo and think past the ways they've been taught to use themselves."

In her comics, Bechdel por-

trays queer life and politics in her works, most notably in her comic strip "Dykes to Watch Out For," which gave rise to the "Bechdel Test."

In her lecture, Bechdel discussed her coming to terms with her sexuality as a 19-year-old junior who just transferred to Oberlin College. She recounted her days browsing the campus bookstore and stumbling across a book about homosexuals — their lives and how they realized they were gay.

Showing the audience a comic strip that depicted this moment, Bechdel said, "I was a homosexual, too. It was an actual realization that just suddenly fell into place."

Bechdel wrote her first autobiographical comic in her 30s, but it took her until she was

almost 40 to grapple with the weight of coming out.

Bechdel revealed that her coming out to her parents coincided with her discovery that her father was gay too. Bechdel brought up her graphic memoir, "Fun Home," where she recalled the story of her father's suicide — one she referred to as a "political story."

"[My father] was gay, and I was gay, and he killed himself, and I became a lesbian cartoonist," she said. "It was so clear that his death was a direct result of the sexual shame and secrecy he had to live with."

For Bechdel, her sexuality and personal struggles surrounding it are very much political because of how much "certain identities are criminalized and pathologized," she said.

Her comic strip, "Dykes to Watch Out For," intertwined lesbian culture and daily life with political commentary.

"Getting out of bed as a lesbian was a political, radical act," Bechdel said. "I wasn't addressing the people who thought we didn't exist or shouldn't exist, just for us to see ourselves. I wanted to tell the truth about my life."

Bechdel showed a variety of comic panels on the projector where she touched on political themes in bits of dialogue from her works. Some of the topics included the electoral college, book bannings, assimilation into heteronormative society and conservative lesbians.

By creating one of the first representations of lesbians in popular culture, Bechdel was

able to bring queer culture and politics into everyday life.

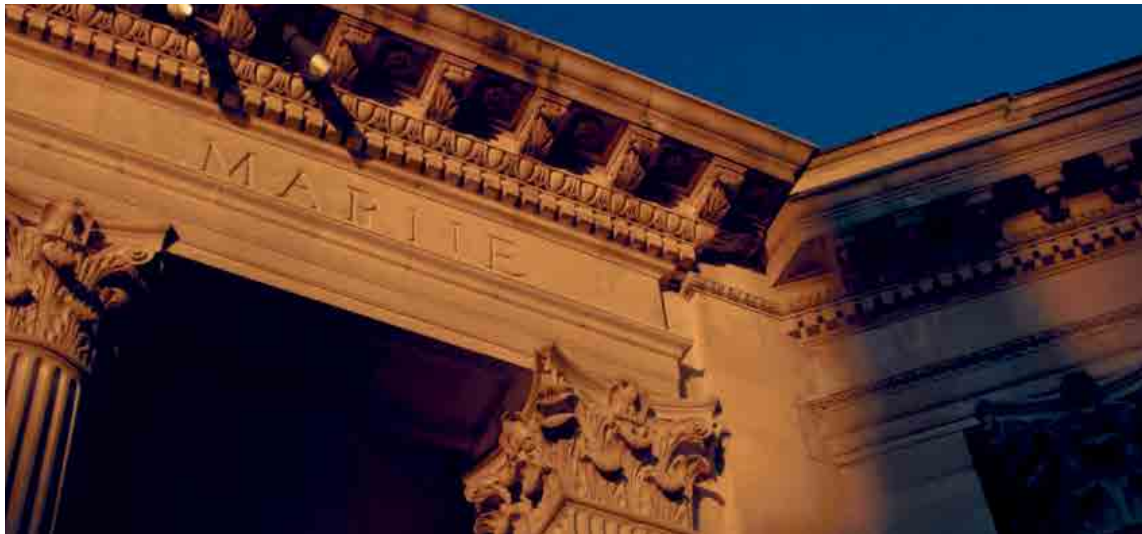
"I myself discovered Alison's work at a painful time in my own life, and I know that I am not the only person in this room to have found solace in her remarkable combination of wisdom and wit," said head of Timothy Dwight College Michal Beth Dinkler.

Dorothy Ha '28, an attendee of the lecture, praised Bechdel's lecture, saying that she "liked how conversationally Bechdel was speaking and how she interacted with the audience." This made Bechdel's lecture "more engaging," she said.

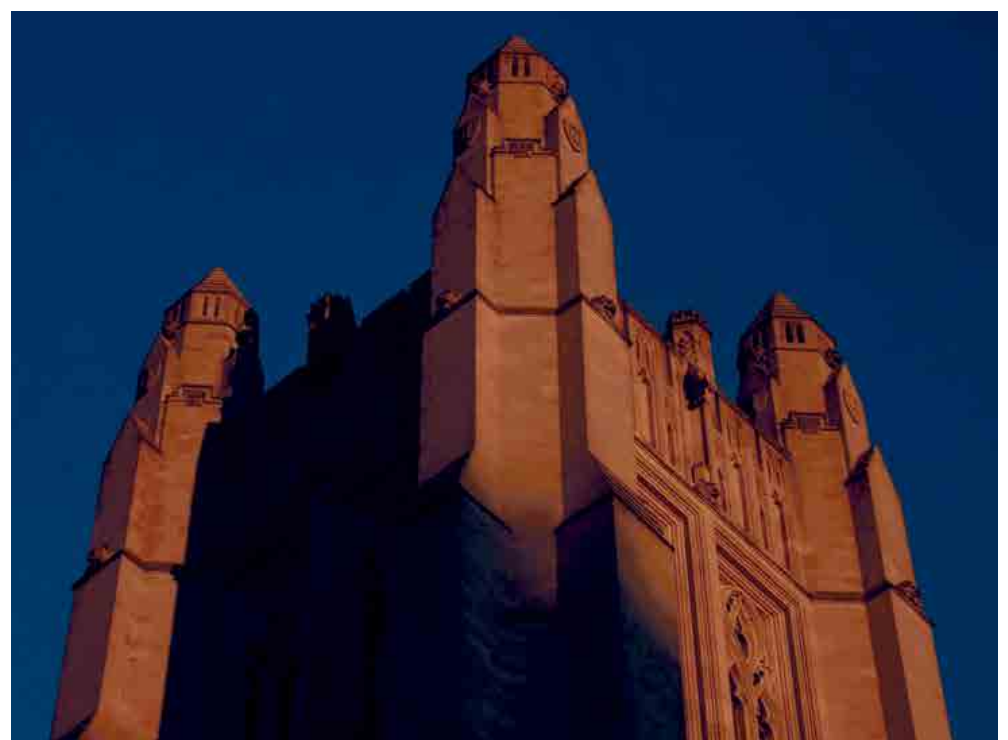
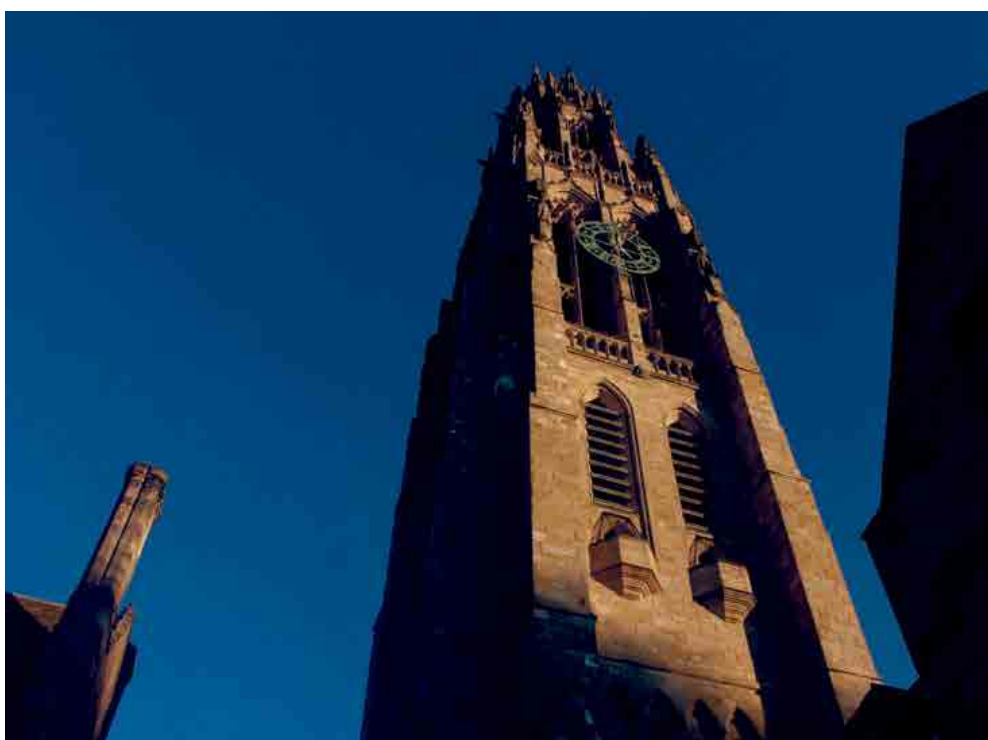
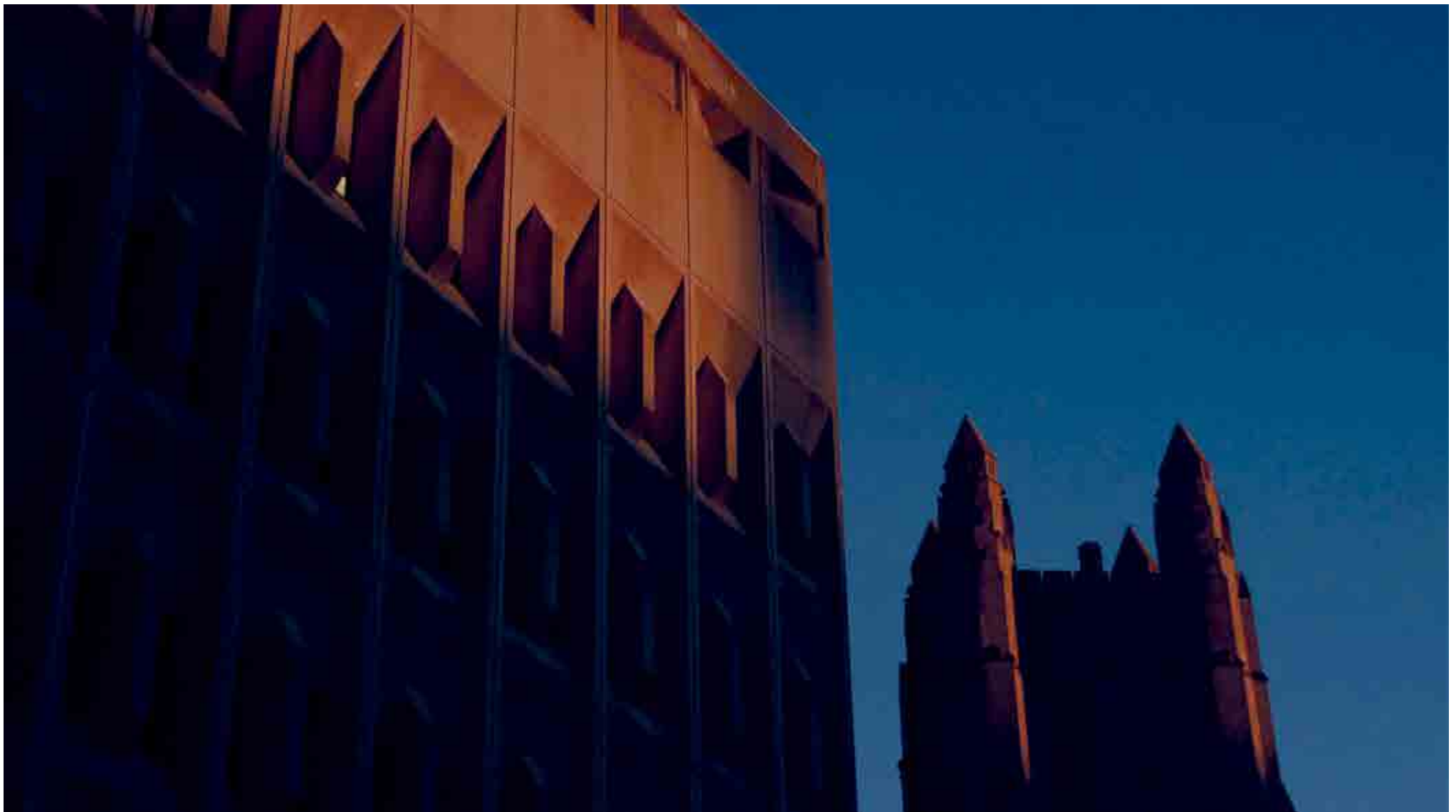
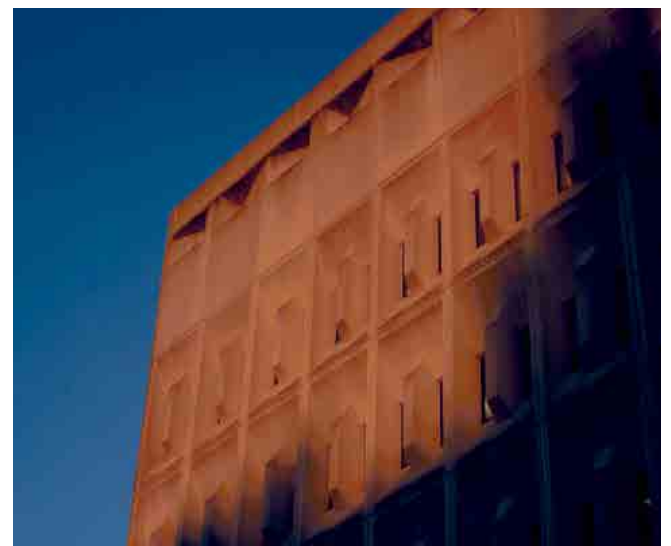
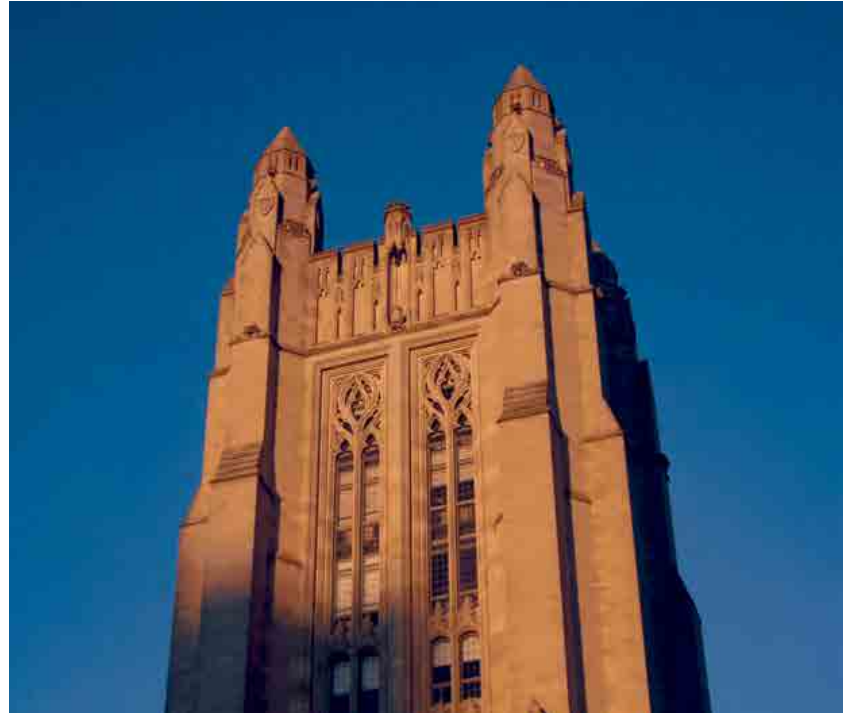
The Chubb Fellowship was established in 1949.

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# THROUGH THE LENS



## SUNLIT ARCHITECTURE



*Photos by Chloe Edwards, Photography Editor*

# SPORTS

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*"We've learned that no game will be handed to us, regardless of the opponent. It takes hard work, and every match is physical. The team understands that if we mentally prepare and give our all for 90 minutes, we'll be ready for our Ivy opener against Cornell at home,"*

**ALEX UMANA '26, A MEN'S SOCCER PLAYER, TOLD THE NEWS.**

## FOOTBALL: Bulldogs down Crusaders in dramatic season opener

BY SPENCER KING & SIENNA TEJPAUL  
STAFF REPORTER & CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The quarterback competition for Yale was a tight one all spring and summer in anticipation of the season opener against Holy Cross this past Saturday, Sept. 21. At kickoff, it was settled. Grant Jordan '25, a senior with great command of the offense and a strong arm, was the man for the job.

After the opening kickoff, Jordan led the Bulldogs on a stellar drive down the field, picking up back-to-back first downs and showing his ability to affect the game as both a passer and a runner. Then, after keeping the ball on a read option play, Jordan scampered for another first down

but took a shot from a Holy Cross defender just after reaching the line to gain.

The Yale starting quarterback was pulled from the field with an injury on the first drive of the Bulldogs season, and on came the Bulldogs' backup Brogan McCaughey '26. No team wants to start its season losing its preferred starting quarterback, but here the Bulldogs were, with the job firmly McCaughey's.

The issue for Holy Cross was that the Bulldogs' so-called "backup" could not have played like less of a backup. McCaughey dazzled on the field, going 18-32 for 217 yards and a touchdown while also showing an ability to run when needed.

The first quarter ended with the Bulldogs up 14-7 with

touchdowns by McCaughey and Wilhelm Daal '26 followed by Nick Conforti '26 securing the extra point.

At the start of the second quarter, the Crusaders came out hot with a new sense of determination which translated into a touchdown by Jayden Cleveaux in the first 5 minutes. Battling it out, both teams scored field goals later in the quarter, and were tied 17-17 going into the second half.

The Bulldogs dug in and made some big stops in the third quarter. The first stop came on a massive strip sack fumble forced by Breytan Thompson '28 that stopped a Crusader drive that had made it all the way to the Yale 14-yard line.

This stellar defense paired with a fierce offense led to a scoreless

quarter for Crusaders and a touchdown in the 7th minute for the Bulldogs by David Pantelis '25. Pantelis caught a 24-yard pass from McCaughey and secured the Bulldogs lead once again.

The fourth quarter was packed with action, and both teams did everything in their power to secure the win. The quarter started out with a touchdown from the Crusader's Cleveaux within the first minute of the game, putting the pressure on the Bulldogs to come up with a big play.

It proved to be a big day for Yale backups on offense. Just as McCaughey was put to the test, another backup put the Bulldogs over the top and into the win column for the day with just 12 seconds remaining in the game.

When Nathan Denney '25 powered through the Holy Cross defense into the endzone on a three-yard run with the game on the line, few would have predicted it would be him to do it.

However, with star running back Josh Pitsenberger '26 scratched from the lineup just before kickoff, the lead back position was given over to Denney, a senior with just 33 carries in his career before Saturday. Denney made the most of the opportunity, bruising Crusaders defenders all afternoon with 29 carries for 80 yards and two touchdowns.

Denney once again came in clutch and launched himself into the end zone on a 5-yard run making the score 31-24. Denney showed up for the team today after an unexpected start and not only scored one touchdown in the fourth quarter but two, carrying the Bulldogs to victory.

The Crusaders tied the game in the last five minutes with another touchdown by Cleveaux, making the score 31-31. In the final minute of the game, after a 3:18 minute-long drive by the Bulldogs, every fan was biting their nails in anticipation. With 12 seconds to go, Denney was handed the ball by McCaughey and ran 3 yards into the endzone to cement the Bulldogs' victory.

"During the last minute, I had complete confidence in our offensive unit that we were going to get the job done to seal the win," Denney told the News. "Then I really just took a second to appreciate the moment, as those are the type of games that us players dream about playing in as kids. Executing the final offensive play was simply a product of our preparation for the week."

When asked what this win means to the team, Denney responded, "All that the win does is make us 1-0. We have to use the experiences we had from this week to carry on throughout the season, taking it one game at a time. The celebration from the game ended on Saturday night, now it is time to prepare for Cornell."

For the first time in five years, the Bulldogs took down the Crusaders with an unexpected line-up full of spirit.

Coming up this Saturday, the Bulldogs will face their first Ivy League opponent of the season at 2 p.m. at Cornell.

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YALE ATHLETICS

Nathan Denney '25 scored the winning touchdown for the Bulldogs with 12 seconds left to lift Yale to a 38-31 win in their first game of the 2024 season.

## VOLLEYBALL: A weekend of triumph and challenge for the Bulldogs

BY KATE ESTEVEZ  
STAFF REPORTER

This past weekend, the Yale volleyball team took to the court at the Penn State Classic, clinching a commanding 3-0 victory against James Madison University before facing off and losing 1-3 against the formidable Penn State Nittany Lions.

In the match against JMU, the Bulldogs demonstrated their prowess, winning each set decisively. The team's strong offensive strategy, marked by powerful spikes and strategic placements, overwhelmed the

Dukes. Rightside Betsy Goodenow '27 led the Bulldogs with 11 kills and eight digs just after earning the Yale Invitational MVP last weekend.

She was named Ivy League player of the week for her performance at the invitational.

"I can't wait to show what we can do in the Ivy League this year," said Goodenow. "The competition is always tough and we look forward to each game."

However, the next day brought a challenging opponent for the Bulldogs as they faced off against the host team, Penn

State, ranked among the top programs in the nation.

Last year, the Bulldogs faced the Nittany Lions in the first round of the NCAA tournament and fell 3-1. The Bulldogs were eager to battle against the Lions once more and put up a spirited fight, but they struggled to maintain their rhythm against the aggressive Penn State defense. Despite taking the third set 25-23, Yale dropped the next two sets 18-25, 16-25, and the last set 13-25.

"Penn State had a great energy in their gym," Volleyball Head Coach Erin Appleman said to the News, reflecting on the weekend. "Our team going into the match was very excited to face them again. They were the number three team in the country, so there were obviously some nerves about playing them but once we started ... playing, we settled in. JMU was a great win for us. They are a very well coached team (with) good athletes."

Appleman added that the tournament allowed the team to play on the court and see where they need to improve before Ivy League matches begin. As they regroup after the weekend, the Bulldogs are looking ahead with optimism. The team is building on its performance and refining its strategies as it prepares for its upcoming matches.

"We have a lot to take from this weekend," Jaidynn Perkins-Martin '27 added. "We're determined to keep improving and bring that same energy into our next games."

The Elis will be back on the court on Sept. 28 when they take on their first Ivy League opponents: the Brown University Bears.

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MUSCOSPORTSPHOTOS.COM

Yale's volleyball team showcased resilience and skill at the Penn State Classic, highlighted by a strong victory against James Madison University and a tough matchup against Penn State, a top-ranked opponent.

## MEN'S SOCCER: Bulldogs triumph over Bobcats

BY LILY BELLE POLING  
STAFF REPORTER

In a local showdown, the Men's Soccer team took down Quinnipiac 2-1 thanks to a thrilling late-game header from captain TJ Presthus '25.

The 2-1 win was the Bulldog's second win of the season, immediately following their 4-1 victory against Sacred Heart over the weekend. This was their first time facing QU since 2016.

The game got off to a slow start, with neither team finding the back of the net in the first half.

"This was a really tough game and we were far from our best, and especially in the first half, but I'm proud of the guys to find a way to get our first road win," Coach Kylie Stannard said to Yale Athletics. "We took far too long to get into the game but our guys that started the second half gave us a good spark of effort to get us into the game."

In the 26th minute, forward and midfielder Aydin Jay '26 had a promising opportunity but could not seize it due to a strong Quinnipiac defense. A minute later, seasoned goalkeeper Chris Edwards '25 made a key save, diving to keep a shot from Bobcat forward Drew Seguro out of the net.

Fifteen minutes into the second half, Edwards made another clutch save, preventing Quinnipiac from getting on the board.

At the 73rd minute, things started to heat up. Nick Miller '27 opened the scoring with his first collegiate goal. Off of a throw-in into the box, Miller slotted the ball past Quinnipiac's keeper, securing the Bulldogs' initial lead.

Four minutes later, QU answered Miller's goal with a

free kick from right outside the 18 by midfielder Filip Kanganman. Kanganman's goal was his third of the season.

In a race to secure a win, the Bulldogs brought it home in the 83rd minute with a header into the back of the net from Presthus, a defender. Presthus' goal came off a corner kick into the box from midfielder Jonathan Seidman '25.

"[It was] great to see Nick score his first career goal, and TJ has stepped up his leadership to another level to help elevate the group," Stannard said.

Presthus' goal was his third of the season, which is tied for the team lead.

Although the Bulldogs' start to the game was slow, they are proud of their performance against an in-state rival. Now, they look towards Ivy League play.

"We've had a very difficult out-of-conference schedule, so to get these wins before the Ivy's are a boost to our confidence and a result of our progress," Seidman wrote to the News. "Now we can use this momentum, as the Ivy's are our main focus which start this weekend versus Cornell."

Presthus added that while he is proud of the group's effort to respond to a difficult start and build forward momentum, he stressed the importance of the team not getting too comfortable and taking its "foot off the gas now."

He said the team hopes to continue their winning streak as they begin conference play.

Yale will open Ivy play at Reese Stadium this Saturday, Sept. 28.

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STAT OF THE WEEK

38

THE MOST POINTS YALE FOOTBALL HAS SCORED IN A GAME AGAINST HOLY CROSS SINCE 2007.

# WEEKEND

// BY ELLA PIPER CLAFFY

George Grube '27 is full of stories. Asking a simple question might yield a response that starts with “back when I was a competitive glass-blower” or “during my hitchhiking trip across New Zealand.” As for life goals, George hopes to be a professional Greek Orthodox Monk. Now call me jaded, but I have become less generous with my astonishment since starting at Yale; almost everyone I meet here has crazy stories to tell. So, even though the glass and the trips and the monk stuff all caught my attention, what really shocked me about George is the fact that he doesn't own a phone.

I met George the day before we embarked on our First-Year Outdoor Orientation Trip together. George is actually not a first-year, but a transfer junior fresh off a gap year. He walked up to the tarp in a wide-brimmed straw hat and neon orange hokas. When our FOOT leaders tried to make a group chat, he explained his circumstances.

I, for one, was shocked. My high school and my social life revolved around technology and social media. Despite my own long-held misgivings about the superficial life technology promotes, I had always put that issue in the category of things far out of my control, and I've spent a good portion of my life mourning the agency I could have if I wasn't compelled to distract myself with my phone. So, to meet someone who refused to engage with the modern times was revolutionary and a little disquieting.

The FOOT environment wasn't anything new for George. Last year, he hiked 30 miles a day in the Alps. I, on the other hand, spent the humid days of summer in my air-conditioned living room rewatching “Gilmore Girls,” scrolling through the Yale class of '28 Instagram page and putting off my summer reading — so for me, FOOT was transformative.

After the first four days of college, which were jam-packed with recitations of the same surface-level facts — “I'm from Houston,” “planning on majoring in English and Philosophy, you?” “I'm in Silliman, aka the best residential college” — the harsh authenticity of hiking the New Hampshire mountains was terrifying. I had been pulling out my phone in any and every awkward moment of silence; all of the sudden my safety blanket had been snatched away, replaced by hours of tough hiking and, in my case, even tougher falling. Waking up after my first night outdoors, I legitimately did not believe I would be able to keep going.

But, when we got home, I cried. I felt that on FOOT I had zeroed in on the purest form of living, and that any return to my prior phone-centric haze marked a willing abdication of my humanity. It didn't help that I now felt my tech dependency was a product of my own spinelessness. After all, if George could find a way to give up his phone and take back his life, why couldn't I?

\*\*\*

For George, the decision to distance himself from technology and reject modernity is connected to his spirituality. From a young age, he has felt called to lead a deeply religious life.

“I think on a certain level, I was always willing to make certain sacrifices in order to live what I considered the right kind of life,” George told me over dinner.

But it wasn't until the summer before ninth grade that George connected technology to this mission, when he discovered Neil Postman's book “Amusing Ourselves to Death” in a stack of disregarded tomes in his grandparents' library. It was the cover that first caught his eye: an illustration of two people with televisions where their heads were meant to be. Postman's historical narrative, which George described as an “immediately exhilarating read,” argues generally that freedom has fallen by the wayside in a culture that instead promotes mindless entertainment. Postman's main point was that the medium of television had cheapened Ameri-

ca's interactions with politics and the news.

“It's a very damning rebuke of hedonism,” George said of the book, and reading it sent him down an anthropological and self-interrogative rabbit hole. He started to explore the idea that frequent and voluntary exposure to television had the capacity to send his life in a direction completely opposite of his theological principles.

I've never been very religious, but when I asked George what these principles included, he listed one that struck a chord with me: empathy. He told me he believes that television, and the forms of digital media that have emerged in its wake, all present a sincere obstacle to mutual human understanding.

“There is something particularly serious about the extent to which television commodified the news and turned it into something watchable,” George said. “Even if it wasn't fun to look at, it still elicited viewership.”

This overarching search for the entertaining within the human as opposed to the human within the entertaining is something that George is very wary of, and something for which he blames modern technology and capitalism, almost exclusively. He pointed out the innate contradiction of a culture that is based on freedom, putting people in a position where they feel that they have to engage in a digital existence. To George, this is a very scary thing.

More than just ideologically, though, George thinks that a phoneless existence has materially bettered his day-to-day life. He gives credit to the inaccessibility of texting and other instant methods of communication for his willingness to just knock on a random door or strike up a conversation with a stranger.

“Waiting in line in the dining hall, I don't have the option of hopping on my screen and isolating. I've given myself no choice but to start talking to someone. I'd like to think that I can talk to anyone.”

\*\*\*

On our trip, George mentioned how he had founded the Ivy League's first Neo-Amish Society. He's already launched a new chapter at Yale, the inaugural meeting of which took place the first Friday in September. In a show of fellow FOOT loyalty — and a genuine interest in reprising my phonelessness — I spread the word about the meeting and arrived promptly at 8:00.

George's invitations to the Neo-Amish Fête, as he marketed it, were regrettably via email. He tried to gain access to the undergrad printing press to make paper invitations, but his request didn't go through in time. In the email, he specified that cellular devices would be confiscated upon entry, but I just left my phone in the dorm.

When I arrived, George ushered me into the JE Junior Common Room, which he had supplied with a smorgasbord of grapes, bananas and bottles of milk ready to be churned into butter. Intrigue doesn't begin to describe my immediate reaction.

One thing about George: he commands quite the turnout. Over the course of the two-hour event, almost 50 neo-mennonites filtered in and out. I asked most of them the same question — “What brings you to the Neo-Amish Society?” — and almost all of them in one way or another attributed their attendance to George. I wasn't very surprised by that answer. After all, as I have learned over the past month, it's impossible to have a conversation with George that doesn't leave you with 10 more questions you want to ask him.

But I wondered if, more than George himself, the attendees of the fête weren't drawn to a part of themselves they saw reflected in him. That part that was not content with complacency, with the artificial varnish that technology applied to their lives. I knew that at least I was hoping to find in myself that which had been so easy to identify in George: the courage to go against the grain.

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## REJECTING COMPLACENCY AT YALE'S NEO-AMISH SOCIETY

// MARIA AROZAMENA

WEEKEND *MOTHERHOOD*

## Where you lead, I will follow: An Ode to Motherhood and Gilmore Girls

// BY ALEXIS LAM

My mum is my rock, my inspiration and the person who made me who I am.

She is the reason for my name and my go to fun fact during group icebreakers.

My mum had watched the fall classic show, *Gilmore Girls*, when it first aired on the CW, which was then the WB. It was the start of 2005, and she found out that she was having a baby girl. She had adored Rory Gilmore — everything from her joy of reading to her intelligence and close relationship with her mom — and she wanted her daughter to be similar. (She didn't watch past season 3...)

And so I was named after Rory Gilmore. Well technically, her actress: Alexis Bledel. Ironically, my life followed a somewhat similar storyline to that of Rory's. I grew up with a single mother, ended up getting into Yale and Harvard, and then chose to attend Yale.

But if it's one thing I can truly relate to Rory on, it's the close relationship with my mum.

She is my best friend.

When I was a small child with fucked up bangs and a bowl cut, our relationship was more similar to that of sisters rather than of mother and daughter. We would get our nails done together, go shopping, watch movies and eat any spicy chips we could get our hands on at Trader Joes.

One of my favorite memories growing up was going to Fashion Island in Newport Beach, modeling sunglasses at the Sunglass Hut and grabbing strawberry gelato after wandering around the various luxury shops for hours until our feet ached.

Much like Lorelai, my mother is a beautiful, fiercely independent woman. She is stubborn and doesn't easily take help from anybody. And yet she is kind and cares too much about people for her own good. I adore my mother. She is fashionable and owns copious piles of Harper's Bazaar and Vogue magazines that live in our bathroom reading baskets. She puts in the time to create the kind of beauty that looks effortless to the rest of the world.

But that's where the parallels between the fictional lives of Rory and Lorelai and the real ones of my mum and I end.

I didn't grow up in an idyllic small Connecticut town, nor did I have rich grandparents to propagate my

private school education for high school and university.

I grew up in the suburbs of Los Angeles. I attended a public high school that had over 2000 students in the lower income neighborhoods of my hometown. I'm a first generation low income student.

Since my grandparents passed away in 2021 and 2022, it really has been just my mum and I against the world. We have nobody but ourselves to support each other. I started to feel the weight of being responsible for our future socioeconomic status. The once-lighthearted fantasies

She was born in Northern Vietnam in the middle of the war — August 1965 — and raised in Saigon, South Vietnam. She grew up with 2 brothers and 4 sisters, one of whom died when she was a child because my family couldn't afford to take her to a doctor. They all came to this country

tutors — anything that would help me succeed. It comes from a place of love. She wants me to live a happy and prosperous life, one that she didn't get to live.

And so it really does feel like everything is riding on me being able to succeed at Yale. I am obligated to pay back her sacrifice by securing a future for us.

There's never a moment where I'm not worried about her.

I worry about how my mum is doing with her only daughter across the country. There's a part of me that feels guilty for moving away. 2503 miles. 6 hours by plane, 5 days by train if I was crazy enough. A big part of me wanted to stay close to home, in California. But it wouldn't have made me happy.

I know that my choices force my life to lead one way over another. I worry about how I'm going to get into law school. I worry about how I'm supposed to earn enough to be able to support the both of us.

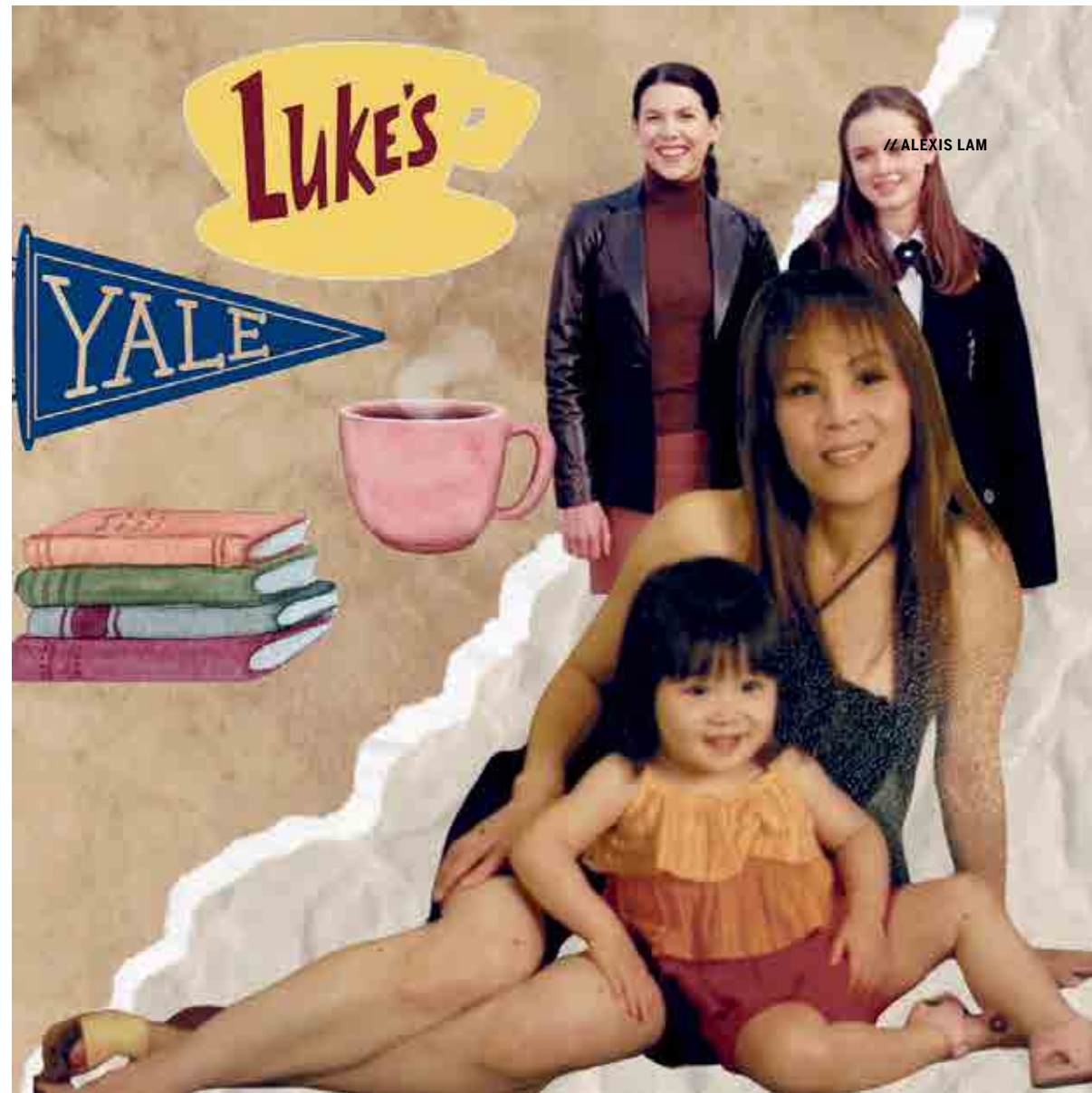
But maybe I'm worrying too much. I'm not sure.

Yale was my dream. It represented everything I ever wanted. It was my foot in the door to achieving the dreams of my mother that eventually became my own. But sometimes, when I look back at pictures from my life at home or pictures of my mum's haircuts and new outfits, I'm not sure if I made the right choice.

It's been a month into my sophomore year and those feelings of guilt are still present. But with family weekend coming up, what I'm really looking forward to is for my mum to arrive in New Haven. I can't wait to tell her about all the new adventures I have embarked on — that I'll be going to Geneva in March or how much I'm dreading my upcoming philosophy paper.

To be honest, I really hope I don't end up like Rory Gilmore. She dropped out of Yale, lived in her grandparents' pool house, and had everything handed to her without much effort. I want to grow beyond my seemingly predestined fate and forge a path of my own. One that doesn't involve dropping out but instead filled with cups of black coffee, white chunky knit sweaters and late night studying.

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Many Asian American children of immigrant parents are expected to work hard and study well in school, attend a good university, and work a traditional high-salary job like being a lawyer or a doctor. I internalized this, worked hard in school and it somehow all worked out in the end. So far at least. The self-imposed pressure back then didn't feel so bad.

This changed when I moved away and started my first year at Yale.

of success that I so envied in *Gilmore Girls* became much more serious, even prescriptive. Achieving academic perfection and fulfilling a career as a lawyer became a decision of real life consequences.

I understand that the distinction between my mother and Lorelai Gilmore causes the differences between my pressures and those of Rory's. My mother didn't grow up in the wealthy suburbs of Hartford like Lorelai did

with nothing but the few possessions they still had after the war.

My mother worked extremely hard to learn English at 26 years old, put herself through college and assimilate into American society. It is because of her difficult childhood that she tells me to be grateful and make the most of the opportunities that have been bestowed upon me. She worked tirelessly long hours to put me in violin and dance lessons, get me private

## PRAYER BEADS

// BY JULIAN RAYMOND

At five years old, I decided to preserve my mother.

Biting my nails beneath the covers as she tucked me in, brow furrowed in angst, I asked her to tell me everything. What was she like as a kid? What were the names of her elementary school teachers? What kind of bubblegum did she chew? I had to capture every detail, afraid that parts of her would vanish if I didn't.

Her father died on September 27th, 2011: a cardiovascular surgeon dead from a heart attack. With his death came my formal introduction to fear. My mother's father was gone — dead and never coming back — which I quickly learned was the eventual fate of all mothers and fathers. That day, my aunt Delilah had called my mother, luring her out the front door, phone clutched to her soft cheek. I couldn't hear what my aunt said to her; I couldn't see my mother's face from my hiding place below the kitchen window. But I heard her cry.



She'd never made a sound like that, nothing like that wail rattling out from beneath her ribs. I didn't know what to do, didn't know what to say. I crept out of the house with my Dracula PEZ dispenser, an early Halloween purchase, and followed the sound of her stifled sobs.

She was folded in half at the bottom of the stairs. I hovered behind her for a moment, tracing the arches and bumps of her curved spine with one hand, my fingers opening and closing Dracula's hinged neck with the other. I tapped her on her shaking shoulder and I held out my PEZ dispenser. Dracula leered at her, clenched tightly in my small, grubby fists, waiting for her to look up from her phone. Tears blurred her face, her eyes rimmed with red, and she smiled when she saw Dracula's head pop open. In a garbled, tear-choked voice, she told me: "Grandpa's still with us, as long as we remember him."

From that moment on, memories of my mother's life became my scripture. She answered any question I dared to ask. I needed to know everything: the first time she rode a bike, the first time she'd felt alone, the first time she'd learned that one day, her mother would leave her too. I listened to each account with reverence, furiously memorizing every detail like a balding monk in burlap robes, transcribing biblical texts before the raiders of time came and burned her memories to ash. So long as I could remember her life, she'd stay with me. That childhood fear remained, clinging to my backpack as I hiked through high school and crawling into my suitcases as I packed for college.

Life here has made my memory hazy. College has dragged me leagues and miles from that porch and PEZ dispenser, filling my head with more Directed Studies readings than a human should ever attempt to comprehend. The clutter of college has washed over my tiny room: crumpled copies of the Yale Daily News splay out over my desk, shifting beneath my laptop as I write. Plato's Five Dialogues hides beneath my bed while Homer's paperback epics lurk on the floor beside my dresser, spines broken and cracked open. Traces of my mother are few and far between.

The details of my mother's life have started to blur and smudge, nearing illegibility in my memory; but lately, I've been reminded of a story she once told me.

The summer Van Halen released their second album, my mother had her first kiss. She didn't remember the year, not exactly, but she remembered the music blasting from her football player boyfriend's Plymouth Barracuda. That night, she'd crept from her first-floor bedroom window, leaving behind her flowered wallpaper and plastic horses for the smothering heat of a Texas summer night. She was fifteen then, so much younger than I am now. Her bedroom was peppered with *Horse Illustrated* and *Western Horseman* magazines, pages splayed open on her floral sheets, the dog-eared pages left stained and greasy. I try so hard to remember those details, thumbing the necklace she gave me. It's chainlinks like prayer beads: Van Halen, first kiss, Barracuda, fifteen, floral sheets, magazines.



At nineteen years old, my life does not resemble my mother's. I've never kissed a boy — never slipped from my bedroom into that hot, sweltering night. I haven't lived the life she lived, but I feel her echoing in me. When my headphones slip from my ears — playing Van Halen in their tinny, electronic tone — I can hear my mother's voice, laughing in the backseat of a football player's car. When I glance over my dorm room, messy and spattered with tangled copies of campus publications, I glimpse an alternate version of my mother's childhood.

I feel guilty for forgetting so much, for letting the memories slip through my hands, but I feel her footsteps in mine. The details may fade, dissolving into my unconscious, but I live with her guidance. When I leave my dorm, slipping out to study with a boy I like, I feel the courage I think my mother must have felt as she clamored over the windowsill.

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## WEEKEND CONVERSATIONS

## WHAT GOES UNSAID AT FAMILY WEEKEND

// BY DANIKLEIN

**Please Note: The events, characters and references depicted in this article are fictional. Any similarity to actual students, parents or true events is purely coincidental.**

**Mom:** It's so nice to see you, honey. You look great! Is that sweater new? I've never seen it before.

**Me:** It's great to see you guys, too. Yeah, I just bought this sweater. Isn't it crazy that it's already getting cold here?

*What I didn't say: I missed you guys so much. And yes, this sweater is new — I actually have a lot of new clothes, because all I do in my Econ 115 lecture is shop online.*

**Me:** How's Bailey? How was his surgery?

**Mom:** He's great! He misses you. Sometimes he sleeps on your bed — I think it's because it smells like you. It must be nice to not have his fur all over your clothes anymore!

*What Mom didn't say: I'm afraid that he genuinely forgot that you exist. He's completely senile. I'm glad you don't have to see him like this, walking into glass doors and such. His days are definitely numbered.*

**Me:** Oh, great. I was so worried about him.

**Dad:** So, how are you doing? How are your classes?

**Me:** They're pretty good, really interesting. And I like most of my professors. It's pretty crazy to get from LC to Science Hill in 15 minutes three times a week, though.

*What I didn't say: It's pretty much impossible, actually. I've been on time to Econ probably twice so far. And this Math 120 p-set is going to kill me, and I'm pretty sure my seminar professor doesn't give any grades above a B because it's "character building."*

**Dad:** That sounds intense. Have you been leaving enough time for your social life?

*What Dad didn't say: Do you remember that I have your location, and therefore can see you meandering home from lord knows where at 3 a.m.?*

**Me:** Oh well, you know, lots of dinners, game nights, club socials.

*What I didn't say: Every night, I either take six melatonin gummies at 9 p.m. or I*

*get hammered and make bad decisions at LEO. I'm getting really good at noticing when someone's about to projectile vomit.*

**Mom:** Have you made any new friends?

**Me:** Yeah, I'm meeting lots of new people! And I'm close with my suitemates, too. And my Froco group, of course.

*What I didn't say: I don't like anyone here nearly as much as I like my friends from home. So far, everyone here is either too weird or too normal. I'm scared I'm never going to find my people here. And I think my Froco might be hooking up with the first-year who lives across the hall from me.*

**Mom:** Did you apply to any extracurricular activities? I forwarded you those emails about Mock Trial, right? My friend Christine's son did Mock Trial, and he just got into Harvard Law.

*What Mom didn't say: If we're paying hundreds of thousands of dollars for you to go here, you better give me something to brag about to my book club.*

**Me:** I'm still hearing back from some clubs I applied for, but I'm really busy with classes, so I might not be doing too many clubs this semester. And Mock Trial is a really big time commitment, but I'll try out next year!

*What I didn't say: I got rejected from Mock Trial, but it's fine because I'd rather die than be a lawyer, which I've tried to tell you a million times. But in other news, I got laughed out of a YSIG interview, and I ate 30 rush meals with a cappella group members just to sit at home alone on Tap Night. At this point I might have to join the Tambourine Club or the Eggplant Society or something because apparently I don't have any other skills.*

**Dad:** Oh, okay. It's good that you're not feeling the career pressure of Yale yet!

**Me:** Yeah, it's still early.

*What I didn't say: I'm going to be a barista for the rest of my life. Sorry Mom*

*and Dad, please prepare the guest room in the basement for me.*

**Mom:** Did you grab coffee with my friend Linda's son Jake? You guys would get along great, and he's going to be a doctor, wink wink!

**Me:** Uh, no not yet, things have been pretty crazy. I'm sure we'll get a meal soon.

*What I didn't say: There is not a chance in a million years that I'll ever have a conversation with Jake. We've made eye contact three times at Shabbat dinner, and they were the three most awkward moments of my college experience.*

**Mom:** You certainly have a lot of great food options. I'm so jealous that you get to eat at all of these amazing dining halls.

**Me:** Yeah, it's great, there are so many options. We should go to Morse later; they have the best pizza on campus.

*What I didn't say: If I have to eat chicken and green beans for one more meal, I'm gonna need to be checked in to YC3.*

**Mom:** Well, if not Jake, have you met any other cute boys? You know your father and I met in our freshman year of college...

**Me:** Haha! Not yet, mom, I've been focused on getting settled. And I've been spending too many late nights at the library!

*What I didn't say: I think I'm in love with this guy I hooked up with at Bulldog Days, but he's left me on delivered since orientation.*

**Mom:** Does that mean you're walking home late at night? Have you been using that safe escort service?

**Me:** Uh, no, I usually just go with friends to be safe.

*What I didn't say: Actually, I just walk really fast and hold my keys between my fingers. If I'm going to keep doing that, I should probably at least not blast music in my AirPods while I'm walking.*

**Mom:** Oh wow, those bells are so nice!

**Dad:** I used to play the bells in college! That was quite fun.

**Me:** Yeah, they're really cool, aren't they?

*What I didn't say: Try hearing them for 25 minutes straight ten times a day, Dad. You'll lose whatever hearing you have left. Seriously, I'm thinking about transferring to Murray.*

**Mom:** Have you been hanging out with that girl from your high school? It must be nice to know someone from home.

*What Mom didn't say: Please say no. Her mom was on the board of your Model UN team, and she's a straight-up psychopath.*

**Me:** She's pretty shy, so we haven't really talked, but I think she has a lot of friends here already. I'm sure she's fine.

*What I didn't say: She's in a club that wants America to go back to the 1700s, and she wears dresses and heels to class. Honestly, she creeps me out.*

**Mom:** Wow, sweetie, these buildings are so beautiful. No wonder there are tours of Yale's campus just for the architecture!

**Me:** Yup, it's great. The campus never gets old.

*What I didn't say: See if you still think the campus is beautiful after you see Stiles. Also, last week I saw my TF drunkenly peeing on the side of the building you're looking at right now, and I had to meet with him one on one the next day.*

**Dad:** Do you miss us? Or are you having too much fun without us?

*What Dad didn't say: Please say you miss us. The house is so quiet without you, and it feels like just yesterday I dropped you off at kindergarten. No one ever tells you how hard it is to send off your last kid.*

**Me:** Yeah, I miss you guys. But don't worry about me. Enjoy your new freedom!

*What I didn't say: Yeah, I miss you guys. A lot.*

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## What My Dad Taught Me:

*The Case for Disappointment*

// BY GRACEMALKO

Growing up, some of my fondest memories were waking up to the smell of bacon and the distant drone of an English Premier League soccer game on TV. I would lazily drift down the hallway, half-awake, the din of my dad whisking pancake batter and the muffled British-accented commentary over the game acting as a sort of homing beacon. Ever since I can remember, my dad and I have watched Arsenal games together almost every weekend. Yes, it is a bit peculiar that we cheer for a soccer team from London that plays over 4,000 miles away from our home in Atlanta, but thanks to my dad's affinity for early 2000s Arsenal legend, Thierry Henry, we have been all in ever since.

There are various theories about sports as an outlet for rage or anger, but I think our outlet is something different: something at once more pure and much more dangerous. Our outlet is hope. My dad has taught me a lot of things in my life, but one of my favorite lessons has been to embrace disappointment.

"It's the hope that kills you." That is the phrase my dad has always used every time our team is doing too well and will inevitably come crashing back to reality soon. Arsenal has not won the Premier League in over 20 years, but the team has come tantalizingly, even miserably close the past two seasons. Part of the enjoyment comes from always being on the edge of our seats: we never know if we will experience "the depths of despair" or "the heights of ecstasy," as commentary legend Peter Drury would put it. Last year, in the depths of a terrible mono infec-

tion, I watched former Arsenal player Reiss Nelson score a winning goal in the sixth minute of added time to keep the team's title hopes alive. My dad and I made such a commotion that my mom came running into the room; she thought someone had gotten hurt. It is moments like those: jumping around the living room screaming, possessed by last minute goal joy, that I used to justify the sadness of witnessing our beloved team lose the league title at the end of the season. It felt like at least for every moment of sadness, there was a moment of exhilarating joy to look back upon and appreciate.

However, real life does not seem to bestow moments of joy and disappointment as equally. True disappointment is one of the hardest emotions to deal with, at least for me. When it is in response to something I really care about, it can become all-consuming. Sometimes, even the moments of joy are not enough to compensate for the feeling of loss. I feel like I need something more concrete to cling onto besides momentary glimpses of bliss. Every once in a while, something truly does disappoint me, and I ask myself "Why? What is so worth putting myself in this situation?" After a month of nights tossing and turning in a dorm that still feels lonely sometimes and gradually accepting a life devoid of weekly Arsenal games while preoccupied with Yale life, I think I have an answer.

The most important and longest-lasting moments of joy were the moments of connection along the way. I never regretted any of those early mornings spent watching soccer on the couch with my dad. Despite the

absurdity and irrationality of 11 men kicking an inflated leather casing dictating my mood for the day (or week... or month...), those mornings were when I felt the most at home. That was where I belonged. This team, and the relationship it fostered between me and my dad, is one of the best things that has ever happened to me.

Two seasons ago, the team adopted a new unofficial anthem, "North London Forever," that it started playing just before kickoff at home games. Every single home fan in the stadium knows the words. This year, I got to fulfill my dream of hearing the song live at a game with my dad. As the opening guitar chords of the chorus began to play over the loudspeakers and 50,000 people from every walk of life joined in song, I realized why it was so meaningful. This was a perfect example of a group of people who irrationally made themselves so vulnerable to disappointment by something they have absolutely no control over, but what it had created was an almost overwhelming sense of identity and belonging in the air that night, completely irrespective of the result on the field.

Getting your hopes up and embracing disappointment is about the things that happen along the way. We stumble and we fall flat on our faces, but that is what ultimately brings us together because we experience it together. The point is to feel something. The point is to be overjoyed when it goes how we thought it would and disappointed when it does not. The point is to be heartbroken over

and over, even if it is for something as silly as a soccer team, because along the way was where we found love and connection.

In large part thanks to this weekly ritual, I have become a person who easily gets her hopes up. It is still terrifying and devastating; at times I still question if the disappointment is worth it. I love the advice that the father in the movie "Call Me By Your

Name" gives to his son after he gets his heart broken: "Right now, there's sorrow, pain; don't kill it, and with it the joy you've felt." My dad's advice is wise in its own way. After a game loss, he would probably say something like, "Oh well, there's always next year. Time for a sad nap."

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## **YALE POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION**

The Yale Police Benevolent Association is an independent labor union representing all non-supervisory Police Officers and Detectives of the Yale University Police Department. Members of the Yale Police Benevolent Association comprise seventy-five percent of the Yale University Police Department.

The Yale Police Benevolent Association has been in contract negotiations with Yale University since June of 2023, but the parties have a month-to-month Extension Agreement in effect. While the parties have resolved many proposals, several important issues remain, such as fair wage increases targeted to inflation, improvements to Officer's Long-term disability plan, and procedural due process protections in disciplinary matters. Unfortunately, Yale is dragging its feet, while our members have not received a wage increase since July of 2022. With inflation hitting a 40 year high of 9.1% in 2022, Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation up 20.1% and food prices rising 28% over the last 5 years, Yale must provide fair wage increases which address the rising cost of living facing our members.

In addition, the YPBA is attempting to negotiate improvements to our Long-term disability plan; specifically, to convert the current taxable disability benefit to a tax-free benefit. Although Yale readily admits that doing so is not only possible, but also cheap (less than \$10,000 per annum), they refuse to do so because "it's too much administrative work."

Members of the Yale Police Benevolent Association solemnly uphold their duty and responsibility to protect Yale's students, faculty, staff and community. In that regard, the Yale Police Benevolent Association is proud to state that during our thirty year history, including collectively bargaining four labor contracts; our members have never initiated a labor strike, even though it was our prerogative to do so. Unlike municipal police departments, public safety employees of private employers are allowed to strike under federal law.

Our members realize that engaging in such labor actions against the University, while helpful in our pursuit of a fair labor contract, would surely jeopardize the safety; indeed the very lives, of Yale students. The Yale Police Benevolent Association's commitment to the protection and safety of the Yale community is inviolable.

The Yale Police Benevolent Association asks only for a fair and equitable successor collective bargaining agreement which respects our members and the extremely important and dangerous work they perform. Hopefully, the parties will soon achieve a just resolution of the issues.

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE YALE POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION IN CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH YALE UNIVERSITY**

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WEEKEND *ANGST*

## Un-Settling

// BY SABRINA THALER

"How is Yale?"

I'm asked frequently and casually enough that I can toy with the answer a bit each time. No one wants to hear that you "don't really know" how you feel about your first month at an elite university, so I've found that it's easiest to hone in on an aspect of my Yale experience I'm confident in. For example, my suitemates are wonderful. I like the content I'm learning in my classes. I've found some really nice study spots. These things feel on par, something like what people expect me to say.

Other first years seem to have a much easier time concisely describing their experience: "Fun." "I love it here." "I'm having the time of my life."

In my quest to become a more honest person in college, I've admitted to myself that I don't have answers like those. In fact, after a month at Yale, I have more questions than I began with. The uncertainty fuels hope — maybe by November, I'll have it down to a neat few words — but I also feel uncomfortable with the ambiguity.

As I reflect on a month at Yale, I find it impossible to distill my experience. Instead, I contemplate some of those questions, small to big, the ones that sit obtrusively in my chest, protesting, reminding me how frustratingly complicated it all has felt.

**Why do people stand on tables at frats?**

I went to a sports house party last night, mostly because a guy I thought was cute told me about it. When I came in, he was standing on a "stage," his silhouette towering over me in the crowded room. As anonymous bodies jostled me, I realized he couldn't have even noticed I was there. I must have looked ridiculous, staring up at someone so far away.

The thing is, he wasn't far. He was a few inches from me. He could have taken one step and been on the floor next to me, a fellow victim to the sloshing current of people.

At all the parties I've been to, there always seems to be some platform where people can stand to watch the crowd below. I feel fixedly unsuited to stand on those surfaces. Is it a

confidence issue? A question of experience? Why do I feel unqualified?

My working theory is that physical height is a proxy for social height. In getting up on those tables, people emerge from the crowd, becoming visible and dominant. They're who you're forced to look at when you enter a room — but they can choose whether to see you. They embed structure and hierarchy into wildly unstructured spaces.

If it's so easy for anyone to get up on that table, why do I feel so beneath them? I've found that at Yale, arbitrary social markers — height, membership on a sports team, or even the clothes you wear — make a difference. At least I feel like they do. I can know something is meaningless and still feel controlled by it.

**Why am I still in this dining hall?**

In all fairness, I live in Benjamin Franklin College. Even in the warm weather, I've spent most of my meals in my college dining hall, forgoing the walk to central campus where I could get dinner from 12 other places.

My own behavior might be the answer to this question. I've always been predisposed to predictability, inertia and routine. In general, I spend time in the same few spaces here, seeing the same people — some of them I know, others are nameless faces I've come to memorize.

Maybe it's a sign that Yale is starting to feel like home, but I've found myself longing for variation. I wonder about the conversation being had in Grace Hopper or Morse, the train I didn't take to New York, the hike I didn't make to East Rock this afternoon. I feel the weight of every missed opportunity on my back, reminding me that my time here is limited.

I am concerned that, after another eight of these one-month segments, I will find myself back in the Franklin dining hall — not to eat with my friends or FroCo group but because nothing compels me to go elsewhere.

**Who are "my people?"**

I'm really not lying when I tell people that I love my suitemates. Every day, I savor the



// ZAHRA VIRANI

moment when I can return to the common room to hear about the newest romantic prospect, unearth some deeply buried personal story or laugh about an absurd news headline. I do feel settled in my suite.

College is one of the rare places where many people, once entirely unconnected to one another, are suddenly living in close proximity. Our newness and fear might be the only thing we all have in common. Almost instantly, we tether ourselves to the people whom we first encounter — it's our primal instinct to insulate ourselves.

When I leave my room, and my suitemates leave to live their own lives, I often feel like I'm starting over socially. Whether it be at a party or studying at the library or on the way out of class, I watch friend groups and couples walk past me. These strangers exude permanence, stability — maybe feigned, maybe real but deeply felt on my part.

I cherish my time spent alone. But I haven't been able to shake the feeling that I haven't yet reached far enough, or that "my peo-

ple," the crowd with whom I could really connect, have already found each other.

It's comforting that it has only been a month. But I'm wondering when it will be too late to answer these questions — when party culture begins to feel suffocating, when I won't be able to break out of my routine, when it'll be too awkward to form new friendships.

I probably don't have much authority on these issues. Upperclassman friends have suggested to me that there isn't a "too late." They say my college life will constantly morph and is entirely within my control. I'll give them that — they've been here longer, and they know more than I do.

Right now, what I can be sure of is that I'm not exactly sure. I've settled with the fact that I'm not completely settled. My first-month retrospective is an essay, not a platitude.

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## Notes on Unrequited Love:

Trying to be Cool About It

// BY LIAM HUGHES

His eyes are different colors. One is brown, the other a mix of amber and turquoise. It's the thing everyone notices when they meet him. "Is he the one with the fancy eyes?" people would ask when I talked about my best friend. It was these impossible eyes that became the object of my obsession for two years. I could draw them down to the slightest line.

I hadn't noticed them when we first became friends, but one day in tenth grade, my attention shifted from whatever he was saying to his eyes. He suddenly became just as complicated as his eyes — confusing, conflicting, pretty. I tried not to think about this surprising new feeling, but over the next few weeks it began to consume me until I realized the precarious position I was in: I was in love with my best friend.

We'd been friends since ninth grade, brought together by several shared classes and interests. We both acted in the school plays and sat next to each other in any classes we had together. I was a quiet, bookish and creative student, he was similar but more extroverted. I think he delighted in our friendship because of all the things his other friends couldn't relate to. He enjoyed our conversations about niche historical figures or theater or indie songs he'd introduce me to. We shared in the quiet sensitivity with which we both approached the world, a vulnerability that not many others at our all-boys school displayed.

It was after one of our play rehearsals that I noticed his eyes and felt my first pang of infatuation. It was the first time I was able to identify my feelings of attraction for what they were. Until that point, I'd thought maybe I hadn't met the right girl or maybe having a crush wasn't as noticeable and normal as everyone made it seem. It was at that moment that I quietly, confidently confirmed my sexuality. Over the next few months, everything became much clearer. I came

out to my closest friends and learned a great deal about myself.

Casting a shadow over this self-discovery was the slow development of a consuming, impossible love. I knew he was straight. He told me all about the girls he liked but not the way most boys did at that age. Not with the typical macho objectification but rather in sweet and caring declarations of interest. As my feelings developed, these conversations soon became the most painful part of our friendship. I was able to practice my acting skills as I listened to his laments about another girl whom he was too shy to talk to, always listening with eager ears, pretending my heart wasn't breaking with each word. I searched for signs that maybe he could be into boys. My mind turned over every conversation, every movement, trying to find some hints of queerness. I knew deep down it was pointless.

He was the first boy I came out to. Sat criss-crossed under a desk so my family couldn't hear me, I Face-Timed him, and after some rambling, I declared that I liked guys. I told him it was a joke the next day, but we both knew it wasn't. Nothing changed. He knew this was something important to me, and he made it his goal to ensure I felt as comfortable as possible going forward. When our other friends made homophobic comments, he'd be quick to call them out. Whenever he worried someone upset me, he'd check in and right it. He also didn't fear physical intimacy with me, something I feared coming out would frighten him away from. I was never a very physical person, but he was, often throwing a casual arm over my shoulder or hugging me when it felt apt. These moments — once lovely displays of friendship — began to feed into my emotional turmoil.

I can vividly recall the night he taught me how to play guitar. We were having a sleepover after a party and sitting in his basement as the haze of alcohol wore off. It was the time of night when things begin to quiet

and everything feels a little too real. In that moment, sitting side by side with his arms around mine guiding my hands to the strings, him talking so passionately about the instrument he loved and hoping I could share in that love, I knew that what I felt was more than just a crush. When he turned the lights out and I settled into the guest bed, I stayed awake all night wondering and mourning, mourning the perfect relationship that we could've had in another life, mourning the perfect friendship that would have existed if I weren't the way I was.

I wanted to have an excuse to tell him, like getting drunk at a party one day and letting it all spill. The confession inside of me began to perpetually occupy my thoughts. At rehearsals, I'd cry hidden in the wings, and at school I found ways to avoid seeing him. I had so many things I wanted to say to him. I knew I'd be ruining everything we'd built as friends, and I knew he couldn't feel the same way. Nevertheless, I had a monologue prepared at all times, a confession, an apology, a plea. I went through so many different ways of telling him, and they all ended with an "I'm sorry I love you." Would it be selfish to tell him this? I felt the world was cruel. I felt he was cruel. How could he not know how I felt? How come he had to be so kind all the time?

We got into our first fight at the start of that summer, when everything was green and candlelit and slightly tainted by the smell of bug spray. We spent the evening enjoying games of pong and chandelier, the ten or so of us cultivating a joyfully intimate feeling. One that motivated him to scoop me up into his arms and carry me across the yard after I beat him in a round of flip cup. As soon as he put me down amidst everyone's laughter I found myself descending out of a joyful buzz and into a saddened stupor.

Eventually I slumped against the yard fence next to my girl best friend, I launched into a drunken diatribe about my situation. I went over the

instances that confused me, the things in my head that I clung onto thinking maybe he's not totally straight. All the while I watched him play soccer against the party host, a friend of mine who he was meeting for the first time. I could tell he was flirting with her: I could see the nerves, the stolen glances and the inexplicable energy that comes with an emerging interest. My thoughts evolved from self-pity to anger. I leapt up and joined their game. He was a pretty good soccer player, but the girl was far better. He wanted to impress her and I was determined to stop that. I aggressively checked him and stole the ball whenever I could. His flirtatious game was interrupted as I challenged him. When he fought back and tried to regain control of the ball, I'd jokingly say "fuck off" a phrase I repeated more and more throughout the game taking on a crueler tone each time. The girl, who was now an observer of our battle, laughed at his plight and the strange tension arising. As she wandered off he pulled me aside.

"You only want to play with her?" I asked with a scoff.

"Yes actually I do." We were silent. "So just stop whatever you're doing and leave me alone."

My apology text later that night was met with an "it's fine."

We didn't talk the next day at school. Or the rest of the week.

The worst part about unrequited love is the consuming shame. Here I was, adhering to the ignorant stereotype that gay guys would be attracted to their straight friends. When I caught myself getting lost in thought about him, I felt myself blanketed by guilt. For all the self-pity that comes with unrequited love, there too is a great deal of shame. Especially if it's your friend, a sense that you're violating their trust and the sanctity of your friendship.

I saw very little of him the rest of that summer. I went away for a



// GIOVANNA TRUONG

summer program, and by the time I returned, the space had righted our conflict. My feelings hadn't gone away, but as we both matured, they did slowly fade. Over the next year, I experienced all the same pangs of unrequited love, but with each week, they felt less and less like world-ending blows. By the time we reached grade 12, I returned to school, and realized I finally didn't feel anything.

I wish I could go back and tell my younger self that it would pass, that one day the feelings would fade into something quieter and bearable. He wouldn't understand, weighed down by the all-consuming weight of teenage desire. I've come to realize how special our friendship truly was — and still is. Unlike any of his other friends, I was a guy who he felt comfortable being fully present and sensitive with. Even though it wasn't in the way I wished for at the time, he did have a very evident care and love for me. The love of true friendship — as cheesy as that sounds.

Unrequited love doesn't have to destroy you. Any instance of love is beautiful on its own, even if it's never returned. It's a reflection of feelings far greater than anything we can control. I believe all love shapes us into the people we're meant to be. And I'm grateful for that. There's a little piece of me that will always be sixteen, sitting in that basement, knowing I'm in love with that boy and his mismatched eyes.

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## WKND Recommends

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