



Yale pledges \$10 million for HBCU partnership, faces NAACP criticism

BY BENJAMIN HERNANDEZ
STAFF REPORTER

Yale has pledged \$10 million toward an initiative that will strengthen its relationship with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, according to a Tuesday email to faculty.

Over the next five years, Yale will commit \$2 million annually to establish the Alliance for Scholarship, Collaboration, Engagement, Networking and Development, or ASCEND. The initiative will support research partnerships between faculty at Yale and at historically Black colleges and universities — or

HBCUs — and seek to expand the presence of HBCU graduates in the University's existing programs.

Tuesday's announcement comes two weeks after University President Peter Salovey and Senior Trustee of the Yale Corporation Joshua Bekenstein '80 issued a formal apology for Yale's ties to slavery. The University concurrently released findings from the Yale and Slavery Research Project and announced a plan to expand research fellowships with historically Black colleges and universities, noting that unspecified "significant" new investments would be announced in the following weeks.

But Tuesday's announcement also comes after the NAACP Connecticut State Conference volleyed criticism against the University's Feb. 16 apology.

In a Feb. 29 statement to the News, Connecticut NAACP President Scot X. Esdaile largely took aim at Yale's copyright ownership over David Blight's book "Yale and Slavery: A History," which was published alongside Yale's apology announcement. Esdaile further criticized Blight's book for not including information about Yale's historical ties to eugenics.

"This is a whitewashed version of the story, and I think that Black

historians, Black civil rights activists, Black leaders and Black educators need to come together and tell the real story," Esdaile told the News in an interview on Tuesday. "I'm not trying to disrespect, but I think that the constructive criticism should be there ... by putting in \$10 million for students to come back to Yale, how does that help our community?"

The newly-announced ASCEND initiative will support faculty collaboration grants and teaching fellowships for Yale and HBCU faculty who create a "collaborative teaching arrangement"

SEE HBCU PAGE 4

305 Crown St. to house new MENA cultural space



Administrators confirmed that the new "cultural suite" will be located on the first floor of a building on Crown Street. / **Collyn Robinson, Multimedia Managing Editor**

BY TRISTAN HERNANDEZ
STAFF REPORTER

The new cultural space for Middle Eastern and North African, or MENA, students will be located at 305 Crown St., Dean of Yale College Pericles Lewis confirmed to the News.

Director of the Asian American Cultural Center Joliana Yee wrote that she and assistant director Sheraz Iqbal toured 305 Crown St. earlier this semester, along with the lead architect, to see the future home of the newly-announced MENA space. The "cultural suite" will be built over the summer on half of the first floor, according to Yee, who added that she arranged for a workshop on Friday, March 1 to solicit input from MENA students.

SEE MENA PAGE 4

Swae Lee headliner for Spring Fling 2024



Swae Lee, Dayglow and Coco & Breezy will perform at this year's Spring Fling, which is scheduled for April 27 on Old Campus. / **Courtesy of Karela Palazio**

BY KAITLYN POHLY
STAFF REPORTER

Swae Lee first rose to fame in the 2010s as one half of hip hop duo Rae Sremmurd. Since then, he has largely shifted focus to his solo career, having featured on tracks as wildly popular as Travis Scott's "Sicko Mode." Now, Swae Lee is set to perform at Yale as the headliner for this year's Spring Fling.

Before Swae Lee takes the stage, twin sisters Coco & Breezy will open the April 27 festival with a joint DJ set, followed by indie pop band Dayglow.

The Spring Fling committee announced the lineup in a video shown on Wednesday night during Woads, the weekly Yale-only dance party at Toad's Place. Although weather conditions pushed last year's Spring Fling indoors to College Street Music Hall at the last minute, this year's event is set to return to its traditional location on Old Campus.

"It's such a dynamic lineup bringing in a ton of high energy and nostalgia," Spring Fling Hospitality Chair Olivia Telemaque '26 told the News. "The headliner, Swae Lee, is such a force. He brings in so much hype, with easily recognizable songs in his huge discography."

The process of curating the lineup of musical acts for the annual festival begins over the summer, when Spring Fling leadership meets to decide their joint vision: genres to explore, goals to accomplish and elements to improve from the following year. The search for artists then begins as soon as members of the committee step foot on campus.

This year's committee — led by Telemaque alongside Talent Chair Luis Halvorssen '25, Production

Chair Nour Tantush '26 and Marketing Chair Karela Palazio '25 — crafted a student-facing survey intended to gauge interest in different musical genres and festival styles.

Many college music festivals in the United States take place at similar times in the late spring, Halvorssen said, which can make it challenging to secure the artists before other colleges book them.

"One surprise about this experience is how dynamic the music industry is," Halvorssen told the News. "One week we'll be discussing a potential artist and by the next week, they'll be booked by a different event. It makes for a thrilling process and results in so much celebration when an artist is finally booked."

This year's three acts represent a wide variety of musical genres, performance styles and backgrounds.

Identical twins and DJ duo Coco & Breezy, specializing in Afro-Latina-infused dance and house music, will open up this year's festival.

"They are a hugely talented duo, representing Afro-Latina influences as they challenge the bounds of electronic and dance music," Telemaque told the News. "They infuse so many genres into their craft. As a Black woman myself, it's so inspiring to see up-and-coming artists reclaiming genres, and breathing so much life, love, and healing into their music. They're producers, musicians, style icons, and just such a vibe."

Tantush matched Telemaque's excitement, citing that the pair "encompass[es] a lot of what we were looking for." She noted that electronic dance music was one of the most requested genres in the

SEE SPRING FLING PAGE 4

City leaders react to Elicker's budget proposal

BY MIA CORTÉS CASTRO AND YURII STASIUK
STAFF REPORTERS

New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker submitted his proposed budget Last Friday, kicking off the three-month-long budget adoption process. Reacting to the budget, three city leaders said they approved of the budget, while top alders vowed to be careful with accepting full-time positions the Mayor proposed.

The budget proposal includes increased funding for education and housing and adds 31 new full-time positions to the city staff, including five housing inspectors. If approved, the budget will also reorganize New Haven housing programs and create a separate Parks Department.

"He got it right this time ... I like it," Tom Goldenberg, a former mayoral challenger who had previously criticized Elicker's fiscal year 2023-24 budget proposal, told the News.

Goldenberg said that he supported the creation of a separate parks department, new housing inspection positions at the Livable City Initiative and a tax increase that is lower than last year's, which is "encouraging."

"We are pleased to see the increased investment in housing quality by adding needed positions at LCI," Karen DuBois-Wal-

ton '89, executive director of the New Haven Housing Authority, who challenged Elicker in the 2021 Democratic mayoral primary, wrote to the News. "Everyday we see the challenges families face seeking quality housing in the private market."

DuBois-Walton wrote that the decision to shift LCI's focus away from housing development and toward inspections is a smart one. She also applauded the additional \$300,000 allocated for the services for the unhoused.

Leslie Blatteau, president of the New Haven Federation of Teachers, said that increased salaries, which account for a large part of the increased educational budget, allowed many teachers to stay teaching in New Haven Public Schools. She said that this has made them feel that they are "being compensated fairly."

Per the teachers union contract negotiated last year, the salaries of public school teachers are rising gradually over the three years following the contract. Blatteau said that the increases are especially significant for mid-career educators.

"We have to continue to make sure that as many dollars as possible are making it directly to the

SEE BUDGET PAGE 5



New Haveners who spoke with the News generally approved of the proposed changes, including expanded housing funding, while top alders expressed hesitation about adding over 30 new jobs. / **Nat Kerman, Contributing Photographer**

Students share mixed reactions to 'test-flexible' admissions

BY MOLLY REINMANN
STAFF REPORTER

Starting this fall, Yale will adopt a new test-flexible policy, wherein applicants will once again be required to submit test scores. Now, however, the list of permissible tests includes International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement exams in addition to the traditional SAT and ACT, and students are required to submit just one score from any of those options.

The policy change, announced last month, comes after four years of a test-optional policy first adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Earlier this year, the News found that students from low-income backgrounds were more likely to omit scores from their Yale applications under test-optional policies. Additionally, international students have long expressed difficulties access-

SEE TESTING PAGE 6

CROSS CAMPUS

THIS DAY IN YALE HISTORY, 1962. Yale Professor Norman H. Pearson denounces a court decision labeling Henry Miller's "Tropic of Cancer" obscene. Pearson had previously aided the defense of a Hartford bookseller who was found guilty of the state's obscenity laws.

INSIDE THE NEWS

Administrators from eight universities opposed a bill seeking to ban legacy preference in admissions. **NEWS 6**

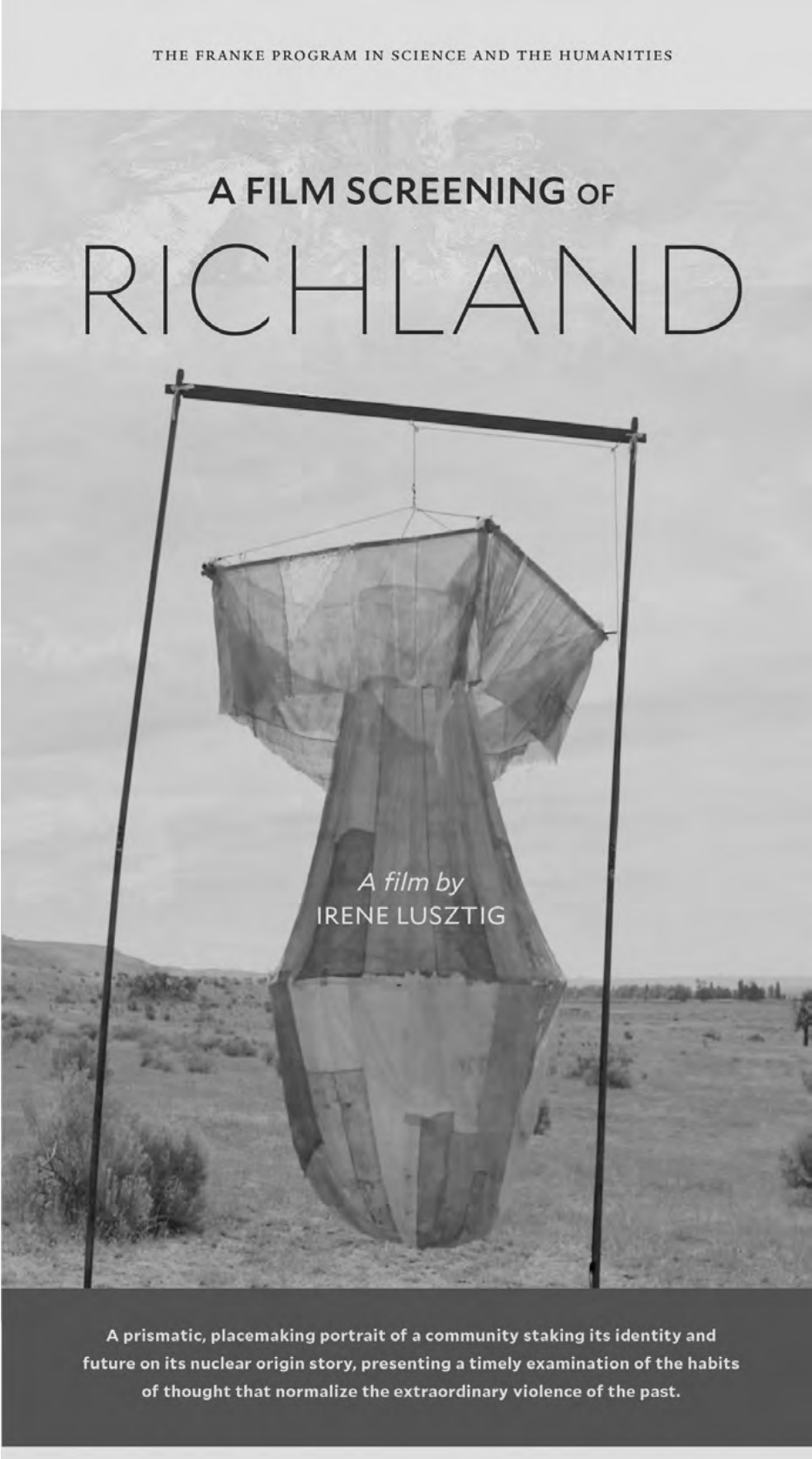


- PAGE 3 **OPINION**
- PAGE 6 **NEWS**
- PAGE 7 **ARTS**
- PAGE 10 **SPORTS**
- PAGE B1 **WKND**

FUN HOME The musical adaptation of Alison Bechdel's graphic memoir ran Thursday through Saturday. **PAGE 7 NEWS**

INCLUSIVE GROWTH Three years after the Center was announced, Dawn Leaks Ragsdale was announced as executive director. **PAGE 13 NEWS**

BULLETIN



Puzzle by Ariana Borut '27

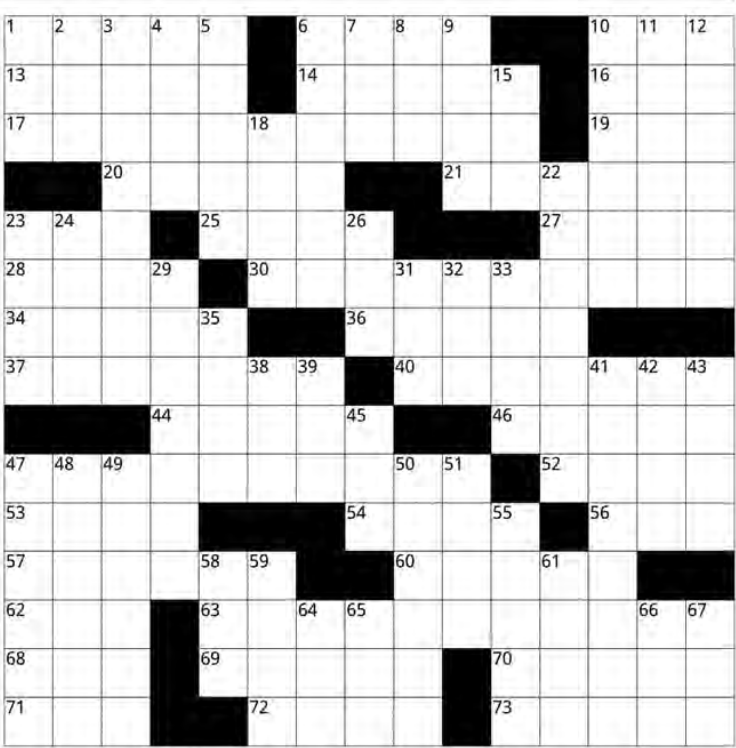
ACROSS

- 1 "Saturday Night Fever" music genre
- 6 Potato, informally
- 10 Based ___ true story
- 13 Fancy tie
- 14 Had a base, as a runner in baseball
- 16 Place for an orchestra
- 17 *One celebrating their turn in age
- 19 Self-image
- 20 "Save me ___" (latecomer's request)
- 21 Prune again
- 23 Envy or lust, e.g.
- 25 Puerto ___
- 27 Indian dress
- 28 URL start
- 30 *Note paper?
- 34 W.W. II sub
- 36 Out of bed
- 37 Stress
- 40 In need of repair
- 44 More devious
- 46 Atlanta university
- 47 *"Ice Ice Baby" rapper
- 52 Tennis's Nastase
- 53 "Am ___ late?"
- 54 "That hurt!"
- 56 Gave a meal to
- 57 Zinger response
- 60 Hitchhiker's digit
- 62 Island chain?

- 63 Easy...or what the starts of 17-, 30-, and 47-Across are types of
- 68 Opposite of WSW
- 69 Presley or Costello
- 70 ___ mignon
- 71 Paving goo
- 72 For fear that
- 73 Window ledges

DOWN

- 1 Dollop
- 2 "It ___" (reply to "Who's there?")
- 3 "The Office" city
- 4 Foldable beds
- 5 Catchall category
- 6 Fabric sample
- 7 Settle a debt
- 8 Kind of computer port
- 9 Entryway
- 10 Puccini and Verdi works
- 11 Unrolled sushi offering
- 12 Kind of bomb or clock
- 15 Bill ___, the Science Guy
- 18 Speaker's platform
- 22 Result of a seaquake, perhaps
- 23 Closed
- 24 The Beatles' "Let ___"
- 26 "___ the land of the free ..."
- 29 Word before fruit or project



- 31 Festival following Ramadan, informally
- 32 Airport screening grp.
- 33 Viral social media post
- 35 Cash register drawer
- 38 Popeye's Olive ___
- 39 Teachers' org.
- 41 One propped on a tee
- 42 One of the Great Lakes
- 43 Like Easter eggs
- 45 ___ de Janiero
- 47 Part of ROY G. BIV
- 48 Greek goddess of wisdom

- 49 More prone to prying
- 50 Most adorable
- 51 Call back?
- 55 ___ and puffs
- 58 King Kong, for one
- 59 It might be hard to swallow
- 61 Early 12th-century year
- 64 Night before
- 65 Prefix with gender
- 66 Nickelodeon's "Kenan & ___"
- 67 U.F.O. fliers

Answers to previous puzzle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13					
M	E	E	P		N	E	E	D	S		S	P	A	S			
14	A	L	T	O		15	I	S	A	A	C		16	E	A	C	H
17	D	I	C	E		18	C	A	R	T	A		19	T	R	U	E
					20	21	H	A	K	U	N	A	M	A	T	A	T
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OPINION

STAFF COLUMNIST
ISAAC AMEND

The Queen’s Gambit

I founded a chess club in Fairfax, Virginia. My grandfather taught me how to play chess from the age of eight, and the game has stuck with me ever since. My father’s father, a former Lutheran pastor and professor of literature in Iowa, rooted his family in the corn fields and soybean pastures of the Midwest. But chess to him was a game of universal proportions that extended beyond the middle America he knew so well. Chess players have to study an array of openings to win. Popular ones include the Sicilian, the Caro-Kann and the Reti. But there is one opening that stands out to me like none other: the Queen’s Gambit.

The Queen’s Gambit can only be used against beginner and intermediate players since most advanced players know how to defend it right away. Here’s how it goes: white moves their pawn to d4, black moves their pawn to d5 and then white moves a second pawn to c4. In doing so, white is offering up a pawn that can be captured with no collateral in return. When black accepts the Queen’s Gambit, they capture white’s pawn and automatically edge one point up in the game.

When really digging into the opening, though, the Queen’s Gambit is a sacrifice that white makes to better their chances down the line. It’s a purposeful sacrifice; an intentional, thought-out one. It’s not a mistake to move that second pawn to d4. It’s a smart offering that allows for better positioning. All sorts of items will fall into place because of the sacrifice: white’s bishop diagonals become more successful and their attack on black’s kingside flank is improved.

Success, to me, is a lot like the Queen’s Gambit. Yalies are ambitious. Half want to be president of the United States one day and the other half want to either run a private equity firm or be some laureate in physics and math in 20 years. But if you want to accomplish any of those things, you have to play life like you would the Queen’s Gambit. You have to make sacrifices.

The biggest sacrifice successful people make is misery. Success takes hard work, and much hard work is incredibly, twistedly miserable.

I got into Yale because I was a track star in high school. Then female, I was training for the women’s indoor two-mile, and my coaches made me do a painful workout: mile repeats. Mile repeats include five or six miles run only one minute apart from each other, and each mile should be run approximately one minute slower than your target mile race time. It was rainy and wet and miserable, and I ran the first

repeat in six minutes. The second was at 5:55, then 5:50, 5:50, 5:45 and the last was 5:40. My coaches were yelling down my throat, and I threw up after. But I did at least 30 other workouts in that year that were just as brutal.

Weeks later I clocked a 10:49 two-mile on an indoor track and became the third fastest two-mile runner in the state of Virginia. I graced Yale’s heavenly, Ivy-clad gates because of that time. Here’s the thing: misery — and I mean horrible, grand, sweeping misery — pays off in the long run. Misery is what builds success. Happiness doesn’t. But misery is an emotional sacrifice, just like the Queen’s Gambit.

Scientists have long studied the dynamic between short-term and long-term rewards. The 1972 Stanford marshmallow experiment showed that children who were able to wait 15 minutes for a second marshmallow without eating the first ended up with higher SAT scores in later years. In 2011, researchers in the British Journal of Psychology found that a subject’s willingness to postpone receiving an immediate reward in exchange for future benefits was closely linked to their “health, wealth, and happiness.” Delayed gratification is so profound and well received that it has seeped into popular culture where self-help gurus like Tony Robbins push its philosophy onto audiences.

Indeed, sacrificing short term happiness for longer term gains is what makes people successful.

This might seem intuitively obvious to most readers. But this isn’t apparent in post graduate life: tales of mid-tier managers running amok on strip club benders and stories of bosses succumbing to pyramid schemes abound.

My addition to the delayed gratification field of academia is that misery — and I mean the pure, unadulterated, uninhibited kind — is actually beneficial over the course of many years and produces ecstatic, happy emotions once done in repeat.

Accomplishments don’t come from happy times or joyful memories. They come from desolate work sessions and strategic planning, just like the kind you find in chess.

So, next time you think about achieving a goal, remember the Queen’s Gambit. Move your pawn to c4. You won’t regret it.

ISAAC AMEND graduated in 2017 from Timothy Dwight College. He is a transgender man and was featured in National Geographic’s “Gender Revolution” documentary. In his free time, he is a columnist for the Washington Blade. Contact him at isaac.amend35@gmail.com.

LETTER 3.07: Pan pleads guilty

Since the murder of Mr. Jiang was first reported over three years ago, the press, including the News, has been reticent to disclose Mr. Pan’s motivation. The only express statement that Mr. Pan was motivated by jealous rage relating to Ms. Perry appears to be an obscure “Newsweek” article published in December 2022. All the other articles I could find online hint at, but do not expressly assert any motive. Neither the Defendant nor the criminal prosecutors have disclosed any motive.

What is the reason that the press has tiptoed around the

motivation issue — except for Newsweek — I note that Ms. Perry voluntarily gave an interview to the “New Haven Register” shortly after the murder on the topic of her relationship with Mr. Jiang, so there is no privacy claim to shield

her from press attention as to Mr. Pan’s motivation.

Based on the facts I’ve been able to find, it seems to me that the causal and motivational details surrounding this murder are extremely relevant in today’s culture of violence and racial tensions. The underlying facts of this case are practically sui generis, yet as it has been reported, it’s just another mindless homicide. Your readers should be given the entire story.

JAMES LUCE is a member of the Yale College class of 1966. Contact him at jaume@sbcglobal.net.

STAFF COLUMNIST
SEBASTIAN WARD

A Lesson in Austerity Measures

Students and faculty a few blocks away from Yale are being unjustly punished. Because of the corruption of a bankrupt system run by inept individuals, the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities — CSCU — system is facing a “fiscal cliff.” The federal aid provided to alleviate the effects of COVID-19 will expire in September 2024, meaning there will be a \$140 million education budget deficit. But this insurmountable obstacle is just one piece of the picture.

AUSTERITY MEASURES CREATE A VICIOUS CYCLE OF POVERTY FOR THE WORKING CLASS.

Funding for CSCU per student has decreased 21 percent since 2008, leaving schools that have been severely underfunded for longer than a decade. In order to prevent two community colleges from being shut down, the Connecticut Board of Regents (BOR) decided to merge all the individual colleges into one mega-institution, despite a opposition petition signed by 1,400 members of the CSCU community and joint opposition statements from all five unions under the CSCU umbrella.

The members of the BOR — former CEOs, venture capitalists and union-busting lawyers with no backgrounds in education — are running the CSCU system like a failing business, and it is no surprise that students and teachers are being punished the most. Tuition for students will be raised thousands of dollars, and more than 650 full-time educators along with 3,500 part-time employees will lose their jobs. The ramifications of this will mean great increases in class sizes and the cutting of special education and mental health programs, along with extreme burdens placed on professors who won’t be compensated for their increased responsibilities.

Meanwhile, Connecticut lawmakers are planning to swell the state’s “rainy day fund” from \$3.3 billion to \$4 billion by 2025 — apparently bailing out the state’s failing education system is not worthy of emergency funding.

Austerity measures are taken periodically, because the contradictions of capitalism inevitably lead to underpaid workers, those who produce the commodities, not being able to afford the excessive amount of products and services they collectively create. This is called

underconsumption, which induces a period of economic decline, and austerity measures are taken by governments at all levels. They raise taxes and cut government spending to balance a budget deficit. They create a vicious cycle of poverty for the working class. As the most vulnerable members of our society, austerity measures deny public goods which should be free or affordable to poor citizens, worsening their financial insecurity.

Another example of austerity measures burdening the working class is after the 2008 recession in the United States. Forty-three states cut higher education spending, 31 states cut health care services and 44 states cut employee compensation. According to a 2020 study from the Center of Law and Social Policy, quite a few states used the budget crisis and lack of federal aid to underfund social security nets and “actively implement anti-worker policies.” The study highlights the Florida unemployment insurance system, which “was essentially designed to limit benefits and deny claims.” It continues, “Nine other states cut the duration of unemployment insurance benefits after 2011, leaving their systems woefully underfunded and unprepared in today’s crisis.” The report goes on to emphasize that the states with the worst unemployment services had the highest concentrations of Black and Latinx workers in low-paying jobs. Austerity measures are one of the primary factors that maintain institutional racism.

AUSTERITY MEASURES ARE TAKEN BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT IS AN ORGAN OF CLASS CONTROL: IT IS RUN BY CAPITALISTS TO SERVE THEIR INTERESTS AGAINST THE INTEREST OF THE WORKERS. SUCH IS THE NATURE OF THE STATE UNDER CAPITALISM.

In the case of CSCU schools, rising cost of living and stagnant wages make it difficult for

students of working class families to pursue public higher education as tuition increases. With college enrollment declining, the schools run deficits to cover the cost of under-enrollment and pass these costs back on to the working class by cutting education spending and raising tuition. These measures inevitably force more students out of the public higher education pool and perpetuates the cycle. Even worse, the CSCU spending cuts are not unique to Connecticut public universities. There is a nationwide trend of slashing budgets for higher education.

A SYSTEM THAT IS INCAPABLE OF EDUCATING ITS POPULACE OR INCREASING THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING IS NOT FIT TO CONTINUE.

Although it is very unlikely that the ruling elite who control the BOR have a shred of sympathy for anyone outside their wealthy clique, these austerity measures are not taken because of their disdain for the students and teachers being affected by their policies. They are taken because the government is an organ of class control: it is run by capitalists to serve their interests against the interest of the workers. Such is the nature of the state under capitalism. While thousands of students and teachers have been kicked to the curb, Connecticut saw its defense spending increase by \$3 billion in 2022 per the orders of the White House, so more weapons can be sent to fund imperialist wars and genocides.

A system that is incapable of educating its populace or increasing their standard of living is not fit to continue. Let’s be clear: the resources are available to cover this \$140 million deficit. Simply pulling a fraction out of the “rainy day fund” or public expenditure on defense could cover the deficit easily. It is time to stop begging the capitalists for piecemeal reforms to problems they can easily solve. Instead, we ought to consider who decides where state funds are disubstituted: the capitalists or the people who have to foot the bill for the problems their system created?

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FROM THE FRONT

“I love those tiny little onions in the spring that are so small they’re almost like a little chive.”

ALICE WATERS AMERICAN CHEF AND RESTAURANTEUR

University pledges \$10 million in partnership with HBCUs, faces NAACP criticism

HBCU FROM PAGE 1

or “joint course experiences.” The initiative will also sponsor faculty research fellowships for HBCU faculty members who wish to pursue research opportunities at Yale.

Additionally, the University is looking to expand its Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship program, an eight-week program designed for undergraduate students from HBCUs to learn more about pursuing a Ph.D. According to the announcement, Yale will also increase the number of HBCU graduates participating in the University’s post-baccalaureate programs.

When asked about Yale’s pledge announcement on Tuesday, Esdaile referred to the failed

attempt in 1831 by New Haveners to establish what would have been America’s first Black college.

“We were supposed to have our own HBCU that benefited Black people... making Yale a more powerful institution doesn’t help our community,” Esdaile said. “This is a step in the right direction, but I think that [Yale] has so much more that it needs to do.”

Esdaile further said that by maintaining copyright ownership over Blight’s book, the University is “executing a power dynamic that benefits the institution at the expense of marginalized communities.”

When asked about Esdaile’s concerns about the “motives and intentions” of Yale’s copyright ownership the University spokesperson responded that pro-

ceeds from the book will go toward funding future projects at the Yale Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition. The spokesperson added that the book is available online for free and that the University has also donated copies of the book to local libraries.

Esdaile also raised concerns about the book’s lack of mention of Yale’s historical connections to eugenics. The American Eugenics Society was founded on Yale’s campus at 185 Church St. in 1926 by economics professor Irving Fisher and was run largely by Yale faculty.

By not including this history, Esdaile wrote in his Feb. 29 statement that the book “undermines any real efforts toward reconciliation and real justice.”

Blight previously told the News that he decided to conclude the book in 1915 at the unveiling of the Civil War Memorial because the monument marks “the end of the concern over slavery directly.” The memorial, located between the Schwarzman Center and Woolsey Hall, honors the lives of soldiers on both sides of the Civil War but makes no mention of slavery.

Blight added that the Yale and Slavery Working Group had “great plans” to continue the narrative until the 1930s but that “the book got too long.”

Esdaile told the News that Blight, on the day of the book’s release, told him that the reason eugenics was excluded from the book was because his colleague “was sick.”

In an email to the News on Tuesday, Blight wrote that he told Esdaile the initial plan was to continue the book until the 1930s and “therefore cover the eugenics story fully” but that the leading researcher on that project “had an illness and we ran into fierce deadlines.” Blight added that, if written, a second volume might “indeed” cover eugenics.

The University currently holds partnerships with five HBCUs, including Claflin University, Hampton University, Morgan State University, North Carolina A&T State University and Tuskegee University.

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The University released a report last month acknowledging and apologizing for its ties to slavery, coupled with a set of proposed actions. / **Christina Lee, Photography Editor**

Yale to create new Middle Eastern and North African cultural space

MENA FROM PAGE 1

The lack of a MENA cultural center has long been a source of student frustration, with the new space coming after nearly six years of student organizing. The Asian American Cultural Center currently has a dedicated room for MENA students on its third floor, and, this year, the AACC sponsored the University’s first AACC-MENA peer liaisons.

“It is my goal to remain in communication with the architect and design team to ensure that the renovated space meets the needs and expectations of the MENA community within the parameters that have been approved by the University,” wrote Yee, who also an assistant dean of the College.

The latest development comes after University President Peter

Salovey promised the creation of a “more plentiful and fully dedicated space” for MENA students in December. Salovey’s commitment was part of a larger message on the University’s actions to “enhance support” for students in the wake of Israel’s war against Hamas in Gaza, including permanent security at the Joseph Slifka Center for Jewish Life at Yale and the hiring of a second Muslim chaplain.

“In recent years, university leaders have discussed with MENA students their requests for additional space and recognition, and we are committed to work with them and to provide resources and guidance,” Salovey wrote in his “Against Hatred” message.

In January, administrators told the News that the new MENA

center would have its own dedicated peer liaisons, assistant director and physical space — distinct from the AACC — by the fall 2024 semester.

Yale added a job posting on LinkedIn for assistant director of the “MENA Cultural Community” on Jan. 18. Responsibilities include liaising with facilities staff to maintain the current MENA space in the AACC and “provide guidance throughout the build out of the new space in 305 Crown,” and to work with the AACC director in “strategic planning, financial management, program assessment, and departmental reporting.”

Lewis told the News in February that the MENA space will have a separate budget from the AACC with “substantial funding.” He

said that the YCDO will use a survey to find out how many students would be engaged with the MENA center because the U.S. Census Bureau, which the Common Application uses, does not include a category for Middle Eastern and North African identity.

“In the case of some races, we get [racial demographic] information after students have been admitted from the Common App, but I think with MENA, because it’s a complex category and not exactly one of the categories in the census, we have to just ask people,” Lewis said.

Although the Supreme Court struck down affirmative action last summer, the University can still use self-reported racial identity data gathered after the application process.

Last April, University administration ordered student groups to vacate their previously assigned spaces at 305 Crown St. by the end of the year, citing “inequities” with the building hosting only 15 student groups out of hundreds on campus. At the time, Dean of Student Affairs Hannah Peck wrote to the groups that instead, each would receive a shelf in the 305 Crown storage room.

This year, the Yale Herald and the Yale Record both have offices on the third floor of the building, and First Year Outdoor Orientation Trips — one of the Camp Yale orientation programs — also uses rooms on the first and second floors for storage.

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Swae Lee, Dayglow and Coco & Breezy to perform at Spring Fling

SPRING FLING FROM PAGE 1

survey sent out to students this year, which makes inviting this artist to campus especially exciting.

Besides DJing, Coco & Breezy are also known for their “cool-girl aesthetic” and “eponymous sunglass brand.” Palazio noted that she’s been incorporating the artist’s album covers into her color inspiration for the “entire festival identity.”

Following Coco & Breezy, the “fun and vibrant” Dayglow, as Halvorsen described the indie pop band, will take the Spring Fling stage.

Led by lead singer Sloan Struble, audience members can expect to hopefully hear some of the group’s top hits like “Hot Rod” and “Can I Call You Tonight?”

Telemaque said that she has had the songs on repeat for weeks.

“Their music to me represents the epitome of band music and is very reminiscent of the spring,” Tantush added. “I spent a lot of time over this New Haven winter listening to Dayglow, and I think they have such a youthful and summery sound.”

That sound aesthetic has influenced the design of the festival’s merchandise, Palazio said, which will be available for purchase prior to the festival.

Finally, headliner Swae Lee will close out the night. Swae Lee, who acts as one half of the hip-hop duo Rae Sremmurd with his brother Slim Jxmmi, has a long history of iconic performances at major festivals including Coachella, Governors Ball and Rolling Loud.

“He’s everywhere,” Telemaque said.

All four Spring Fling chairs described a continuous thread of “nostalgia” in this year’s artist lineup; Swae Lee’s headlining performance is perhaps the most emblematic of that theme.

“We’ve been listening to his music for years and growing up with the challenges that he’s [experienced] too,” Telemaque told the News.

In 2016, when the viral “Mannequin Challenge” hit its peak, Rae Sremmurd’s hit song “Black Beatles” became the unofficial anthem of the video trend.

As part of the committee’s efforts to incorporate an air of nostalgia in all parts of the festival, Wednesday’s announcement video — produced by videographer Reese Weiden ’27 — brought the audience back in time. Just as the internet trend in 2016 had people across the country posing as frozen mannequins, the Spring Fling committee did the same, announcing to cheers from the crowd at Toad’s that Swae Lee would headline the festival.

Besides partnering with Slim Jxmmi, Swae Lee has collaborated with a variety of other artists in a plethora of different musical genres throughout his career, which allows him to appeal to a variety of students, Halvorsen said. In addition to working with world-famous rappers Travis Scott and Drake on 2018’s “Sicko Mode,” Swae Lee collaborated with Post Malone on hit song “Sunflower” from the film “Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse,” also in 2018. He also co-wrote Beyoncé’s hit single “Formation” — just three of Swae Lee’s big-ticket collaborations.

“Swae’s collaboration with so many different artists is what makes him an excellent choice for headlining Spring Fling,” Halvorsen told the News. “If you put his complete collection on shuffle you’ll hear Rap/Hip-Hop, Pop, R&B, EDM, Reggaeton, and even Country. With Swae having such a wide reach, he’ll be a great fit for all music fans.”

While the committee does not control the specific set lists of the artists they book to perform at the festival, per Tantush, they do extensive research on each artist’s past performances and how their sets will complement one another.

For Swae Lee, audiences may expect to hear some of his biggest songs, including “Sunflower,” “No Type,” “Unforgettable” and even some songs from his previous work under Rae Sremmurd, like “Come Get Her” and “Black Beatles.”

In addition to the booked professional artists, Yale students will also have the opportunity to be a part of this year’s festival lineup. The committee will hold

both a “Battle of the Bands” and “The Dock” competition to select student bands and DJs to begin the day’s musical festivities.

“I think the thing I am the most excited and proud of as Production Chair is facilitating a festival which will showcase both the artists we have chosen and also the student talent on campus,” Tantush told the News. “What makes Spring Fling so unique is our ability to combine mainstream acts with Yale’s very own talented musicians.”

Last year, the committee hosted “Battle of the Bands” at the Yale Farm. The three winners — DJ Leon Thotsky, PJ Frantz ’23 and Tired of Tuesdays — opened for Ravyn Lenae, Dombresky and Pusha T at College Street Music Hall.

The Dock, however, is a new creation this year, which Halvorsen spearheaded to reflect the growing presence of student DJs on campus.

Both student-artist events will take place after spring break.

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FROM THE FRONT

“Nostalgia in reverse, the longing for yet another strange land, grew especially strong in spring.”
VLADIMIR NABOKOV RUSSIAN-AMERICAN NOVELIST AND POET

'He got it right this time': Elicker commended for budget proposal

BUDGET FROM PAGE 1

classroom,” Blatteau said. “That means making sure that we’re paying for highly qualified professionals to support our students and making sure that the resources are in place so that we can do our jobs.”

In Elicker’s budget proposal, an additional \$5 million is allocated for the Board of Education. According to Elicker, the city is also hoping to get almost \$4 million more from the state for schools. This funding goes to the city’s Board of Education,

which then decides how to use it, Elicker said.

Chris Schweitzer, the head of the New Haven Climate Movement, wrote to the News that he would love to hear more from the city about its environmental investments to reach the Climate Emergency Resolution goals.

“Later is too late for climate change action,” Schweitzer wrote.

The Mayor’s budget proposal has to be approved by the Board of Alders, who will likely amend the proposal.

Upon seeing the creation of over 30 new city employment

positions allocated across various departments, Ward 25 Alder Adam Marchand told the News he will pay attention to the costs that are going to be used for the new workers’ salaries.

“At this point, I don’t have a strong feeling one way or the other,” Marchand said. “I’ve done this long enough that I take my time with it. I generally form my opinions slowly over the course of the workshops when I get a better understanding from the department heads about what it is they’re proposing and why they want to do it.”

The Board of Alders will be holding three hearings and six workshops on the budget over the next six weeks to solicit community input.

Marchand commended the Mayor for allocating more funds to the Parks Department and for giving a lot of thought to the housing scarcity around New Haven.

Ward 27 Alder and majority leader Richard Furlow echoed Marchand’s statement, saying that though he’s only looked at the highlights of the budget proposal so far, he will pay close attention to the new positions created.

“Thirty-one new positions, that’s a lot,” Furlow said. “But the budget process will be for each department to explain why they’re needed, and then we’ll decide what do we believe in.”

Last year, the Board rejected 25 out of the 34 positions Elicker created.

Fiscal year 2024-25 will start on July 1.

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Students split on merits of new 'test-flexible' admissions policy

TESTING FROM PAGE 1

ing SAT and ACT test centers in their home countries.

Yale’s Office of Undergraduate Admissions has maintained that test scores are only one part of a student’s application. They have also emphasized that scores can help contextualize other parts of Yale’s holistic review process, which considers students’ high school GPAs, recommendation letters and extracurriculars, among other factors — which, research suggests, may mean that test scores could prove more advantageous to low-income applicants than often thought.

Several students expressed generally positive reactions to the new test-flexible policy; however, they also expressed hopes that the University will double down on its commitment to inclusive messaging and to eliminating barriers to testing access.

“I’m really happy with this change and I think this should be the model that other Ivies follow,” said Annalie Diaz ’27, a Quest-Bridge match scholar who submitted her scores when applying to Yale. “They also should continue to push those explicit words, saying ‘we will take your score into context, we will be aware of the context of your school.’”

Reactions to and hopes for test-flexibility

In a statement posted on its website, the admissions office notes that test scores are considered in relation to others from an applicant’s high school.

“No exam can demonstrate every student’s college readiness or perfectly predict future performance,” the statement reads. “Tests can highlight an applicant’s areas of academic strength, reinforce high school grades, fill in gaps in a transcript stemming from extenuating circumstances, and — most importantly — identify students whose performance stands out in their high school context.”

For Diaz, the coupling of the new test-flexible policy with messaging that explicitly details how scores will be used and considered has alleviated many of the concerns she previously had about standardized testing.

Coming from an under-resourced high school, Diaz said that her score — which was below Yale’s average but well above her high school’s — was necessary in contextualizing other parts of her application.

Since announcing its test-flexible policy, the admissions office has expanded the range of scores published on its standardized testing page. Previously, Yale published scores from its 25th to 75th percentiles. Now, however, it lists the range of ACT and SAT scores from the 10th to 90th percentile.

Diaz said the decision to expand the published range is “great.”

“By extending the range of published scores of students at Yale, students can see that people from similar backgrounds with similar scores have submitted those scores and gotten into Yale,” she said. “They will be comforted by the knowledge that they don’t have to do as well as the students going to private prep schools, they just have to be able to stand out within their own context.”

But Christopher Vera, a senior at Wilbur Cross High School who was recently admitted to Yale’s class of 2028, looked less favorably upon the new policy.

He said that standardized testing adds an extra stressor to high school seniors who are likely already stressed about college applications. Vera said that he does not think that expanding the types of accepted test scores — which now includes Advanced Placement, or AP, and International Baccalaureate, or IB, exams — will do much to alleviate this stress.

“Even though my school offers APs, I think that if this policy did affect me, I would still heavily prioritize the SAT,” Vera said. “Maybe I’d even prioritize it more than I did when Yale was test-optional. I feel like now that all students are required

to submit scores, they will pay more attention to them. Now that scores are such a hot topic, I feel like I’d feel pressure to just get as many on my application as I could.”

Diaz holds the opposite view, and is hopeful that the expanded list of permissible tests will make it easier for students to obtain and submit scores.

She thinks that all acceptable test scores are useful in leveling the playing field between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

“For me, what made me see the [tests] as this great equalizer between all students is that this is the one point in the admissions office in which all students can have at least somewhat similar grounding,” she said. “So for example, with extracurriculars, someone’s wealthy parents can get them an internship. For essays, students can hire private writing tutors. But everyone is taking the same [tests].”

Going forward, Diaz added that she said she would like to see the admissions office promote free resources to help students study for the tests from which they will now be requiring scores.

Reactions from international students

Last month, a News survey found that domestic respondents were 12 percentage points more likely to have taken a standardized test before college when compared to international respondents.

In line with the survey results, several international students described difficulty accessing standardized testing centers in their home countries, adding that tests are more accessible for wealthy international students.

Tajrian Khan ’27, who is Bangladeshi, described extensive financial barriers to taking SAT and ACT tests in Bangladesh. Unlike domestic high schools, which frequently distribute fee waivers, Khan said it was difficult to get financial help paying for

testing because few students from his school were applying to college in the United States.

Khan is from Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. Every testing center in the country is located either in Dhaka or in Chittagong, the country’s second-largest city, he said. Students from anywhere but those two cities have to travel long distances and find overnight accommodations in order to take SAT or ACT tests, Khan said.

“The new policy doesn’t really do anything at all in the context of problems for international students,” Khan said.

Jesse Okoche ’25, who is from Botswana and could not access a testing center when applying to Yale, shared similar concerns and called the new policy a “bummer.”

He said that his family has been scrambling to assemble the funds to send his little sister, who is currently applying to college, to Botswana’s only SAT testing center — five hours away from their home.

Adding APs and IBs to the list of accepted scores does little to alleviate international accessibility issues, Khan said. Even if a Bangladeshi student were able to access an AP or IB testing center, he said, they would have to self-study for the exam, putting them at a disadvantage to domestic students or students who are able to enroll in AP classes to prepare for the tests.

“No schools in Bangladesh offer AP classes,” Khan said. I know before this year, there were no AP testing centers in all of Bangladesh, so even if you wanted to take the test without a class, that wasn’t an option.”

Overall, though, Khan said he believes that test scores are an important measure and that he hopes to see Yale expand the list of acceptable scores in the future.

Okoche, however, was disappointed to see test scores become again required in any capacity, and agreed with Khan that the addition of AP and IB scores does little to improve international access.

Okoche said that, in addition to few SAT and ACT testing centers, IB curriculum is also rare in Botswana. He said there is only one private school in the capital city that offers IBs.

In the spring of 2023, a digital version of the SAT was offered internationally; the first digital version of the SAT will be administered in the United States later this month. Okoche said he is hopeful but not confident that a digitized SAT will improve international access.

“As an international student from a country that doesn’t send many students to Yale, I felt like, as one of the first to do something, I have this responsibility to open the door for the rest,” Okoche said. “And so this new policy is basically telling me that everything I’ve done has failed to open that door, failed to show Yale that [students who were unable to access tests] are capable, even though they don’t have that one metric Yale is looking for.”

But even though the new digital SAT and the new test-flexible policy don’t solve all of the access problems faced by international students, Okoche said he appreciates that the change is a “step in the right direction.”

Yale’s new policy makes it more accessible to low-income international students than policies recently adopted by other schools, Okoche said. As an example, he said that a student who could not apply to Dartmouth or MIT — two schools that recently reinstated a more stringent SAT or ACT score requirement — could perhaps still apply to Yale going forward.

“From all of this, my takeaway is hope,” Okoche said. “We’ve taken a step, and I’m hoping we can continue to take more steps.”

The first domestic digital administration of the SAT will take place on March 9.

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Last month, Yale College announced that it would resume requiring test scores for applicants to the class of 2029./ YuLin Zhen, Staff Photographer

“Hey, I’m a keep running ‘cause a winner don’t quit on themselves.”
“FREEDOM” BY BEYONCE AMERICAN SINGER-SONGWRITER AND BUSINESSWOMAN

Yale opposes state bill to ban legacy preference

BY JOSIE REICH & MOLLY REINMANN
STAFF REPORTERS

A bill seeking to ban legacy preference in university admissions at all Connecticut schools — both public and private — took center stage in the state legislature on Thursday. In a Feb. 29 public hearing, held by the legislature’s joint Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, Yale and seven other universities testified in opposition.

All other testimonies — which came from students, student collectives, college groups, a non-profit and the Yale College Council — supported the bill. One organization, the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges, did not fully support or oppose the bill.

If passed, the bill -- SB 203 -- would prohibit public and private institutions in the state from “inquir[ing] about or consider[ing] a prospective student’s familial relationship to a graduate of such institution” when making admissions decisions.

Committee co-chair Sen. Derek Slap, who has championed the bill, said that he was encouraged by the hearing, which he called “part of a national movement” in state governments to reevaluate legacy admissions.

Slap said that the hearing was “by far the most robust conversation about admissions, legacy, privilege and opportunity in higher education” in which he has participated while part of the General Assembly.

According to a study last year that drew on internal admissions data from several elite colleges, including Ivy League schools, legacy applicants are often “slightly more qualified yet are four times as likely” to be admitted to top schools.

Yale’s Dean of Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid, Jeremiah Quinlan, testified against the bill for more than an hour over Zoom. In his remarks, Quinlan said he does not believe the General Assembly has the right to interfere with the university admissions practices.

“Just as every Connecticut college or university teaches different classes in different ways in fulfillment of its educational mission, each institution should likewise be allowed to assemble a student body that promotes its educational goals,” Quinlan wrote in a statement that he read out at the hearing. “A university may make a voluntary decision to forgo consideration of legacy status in the application process, but a Connecticut state law dictating that decision for independent colleges and universities would be unprec-



OLHA YARYNICH / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

The bill faced its first test during a committee hearing on Thursday. While students and legislators broadly expressed support, administrators from eight universities dug in their heels in opposition.

edented and would invite future legislatures to impose their own views on who should be admitted in ways that threaten academic freedom.”

Quinlan further described progress that the University has made toward enrolling more first-generation and low-income students since he began his tenure as Yale College’s dean of admissions. He argued that banning legacy admissions would not be necessary or useful to the cause of recruiting diverse classes, given the work Yale has done to increase access.

Per his testimony, 22 percent of students in the Yale College class of 2027 are eligible for Pell Grants, 21 percent are first-generation college students and 59 percent are domestic students who identify as members of a minority racial or ethnic group. Over the past 10 years, he said, the number of Pell-eligible students has doubled, and the number of first-generation students has increased by more than 60 percent.

Instead of banning legacy admissions, Quinlan suggested that the state prioritize initiatives that directly help promote access for first-generation and low-income students, such as increased support for recruitment and outreach programs. He specifically noted increased support toward enrichment programs for less-ad-

vantaged high school students and increased funding of the Roberta Willis Scholarship Program, which offers need-based grants to Connecticut students enrolled at any of the 18 participating public and non-profit private colleges in the state.

State Rep. Gary Turco said that preference for applicants with legacy status creates an “uneven playing field” that he believes has contributed to a larger national trend of decreased trust in higher education. Citing nationwide declines in enrollment numbers, high student loan debt and admissions scandals, Turco said that the message the bill might send about fairness would be as important as any practical impact on the universities’ diversity.

Turco estimated that currently, around 40 or 50 legislators would be prepared to vote in favor of the bill, noting that most others have not yet made a decision and only a “handful” would likely vote against it, out of the total 151 legislators in the House. He hypothesized that those who would vote against the bill are likely to do so because they are concerned about overregulating private institutions, not necessarily because they are in favor of maintaining legacy preference in admissions.

Turco said that although he thinks the bill is likely to pass in committee, he suspects it will struggle in a broader vote in the legislature

because “private universities hold a lot of weight in the state.”

Rep. Dominique Johnson said that while they support the idea of a bill banning legacy preference, they are not satisfied with the current bill and would like to see it also ban schools from considering the donor status of an applicant’s family. Johnson is also advocating for the bill to clarify whether it applies to graduate and professional schools as well as undergraduate schools.

Birikti Kahsai ’27, who is a senator representing Branford College in the Yale College Council, testified at the hearing on behalf of the YCC. She told the News that the YCC has begun to advocate against legacy admissions as part of a broad collaboration between several student governments of Ivy League universities that have been adopting a unified stance against legacy admissions.

“We emphasize that the archaic practice of granting advantages in the application process on the basis of familial ties is antithetical to Yale’s commitment to meritocratic admissions,” the YCC testimony states. “Those historically granted the opportunity to form such connections were overwhelmingly White, wealthy and Protestant, due to the inaccessibility of higher education.”

Kahsai stressed that the goal of the YCC in opposing and testifying against the bill is not to attack indi-

vidual legacy students but rather to pressure the Yale administration about its use of legacy preference, which she said YCC views as “incompatible” with Yale’s other admissions policies.

The testimony from the YCC was undersigned by seven Yale cultural clubs as well as The Yale First-Generation and/or Low-Income Advocacy Movement.

Jim Zhou GRD ’24 also testified at the hearing. He explained that he relied on food stamps throughout his time at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he earned his undergraduate degree. He said that UCLA’s legacy-blind admissions approach has allowed the school to “excel with socioeconomic diversity” — and that Yale is lagging behind.

“I think that legacy admissions are perhaps one of the biggest barriers to achieving socio-economic diversity on campus because legacy applicants overwhelmingly come from backgrounds that have enormous amounts of privilege,” Zhou told the News.

New Haven civil rights attorney Alex Taubes LAW ’15 explained that the Connecticut legislature draws its authority to regulate private institutions, including universities, from an authority of state governments known as “police power.”

“This power allows the state to impose certain requirements on private institutions to ensure they contribute positively to the state’s goals for its education system and the overall well-being of its residents,” Taubes wrote in an email to the News. “When it comes to education, states have a particular interest in ensuring that institutions serve the public good, as education is closely linked to economic development, civic participation, and social equity.”

Taubes added that consumer protection law specifically could provide potential justification for a ban affecting private universities, with prospective students considered as consumers who ought to be protected from unfair or discriminatory practices.

Slap said that a vote on the bill in the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee will likely take place on either Tuesday or Thursday of next week; if passed, the bill will progress to the Senate floor of the larger legislature.

The bill, if enacted, would go into effect on July 1.

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Incumbent slate sweeps Democratic co-chair elections

BY ETHAN WOLIN
STAFF REPORTER

New Haven’s current Democratic leadership notched victories across the city on Tuesday, routing a challenger slate that forced uncommon elections for Democratic Town Committee co-chairs in eight wards but lost in every race.

The elections marked the third time in seven months that New Haven voters reaffirmed their support for a Democratic apparatus allied with Yale’s UNITE HERE unions. Roughly 1,200 New Haven Democrats cast ballots at polling places amid Tuesday’s rain, handing party-backed candidates four times the number of votes earned by opponents running with the insurgent group New Haven Agenda.

“The candidates that we supported all had decisive and convincing victories,” said Vincent Mauro Jr., the Democratic Town Committee chairman. “It speaks to the faith and stability that the party has shown, along with its partnerships with labor and the Board of Alders.”

New Haven Agenda represented the first coordinated effort since 2012 to replace Democratic ward co-chairs, who vote to endorse party nominees and organize voters in their wards. The bloc of 12 candidates focused on criticizing UNITE HERE’s dominance in city politics and a host of neighborhood concerns.

Jason Bartlett, a defeated Ward 6 co-chair candidate who chaired



ETHAN WOLIN / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

New Haven Democrats in eight wards delivered lopsided wins to party-backed Democratic co-chair candidates, defeating a rare challenger slate. Democratic co-chair candidates, defeating a rare challenger slate for Yale’s future president’s tenure.

the New Haven Agenda slate, acknowledged in an interview shortly before the polls closed that he and the other challengers faced tough prospects against an established party infrastructure spanning ward committees, City Hall and the State Capitol.

“You don’t have to win even one seat to start opening up the party to more people and putting your ideas on the table,” Bartlett said. “In terms of my personal objectives, part of it was just getting people to participate. That to me is a win.”

In recent weeks, candidates on both sides of the contest canvassed voters on the phone and in person, seeking support for elections that occur only infrequently, when more than two candidates qualify for the ballot. Elections took place in Wards 3, 4, 6, 7, 12, 18, 28 and 30, covering the Hill, parts of downtown and East Rock, Quinnipiac Meadows, East Shore, Beaver Hills and West Rock.

The incumbent co-chair slate, called Dems for Dems, cele-

brated its landslide wins at the AFL-CIO Central Labor Council building in Fair Haven with beers and cheers for co-chairs arriving from long days at their polling places. The gathering featured speeches by Mauro, Mayor Justin Elicker and Scott Marks, director of the union-affiliated organization New Haven Rising.

In his remarks, Mauro said complaints about undue influence wielded by UNITE HERE were “all horseshit” and touted the coalition — evident in the

jubilant crowd — that critics say amounts to a political machine.

Leslie Radcliffe, a voter in the Hill and member of the Ward 4 Democratic committee, said she was impressed by the turnout, given the low-profile nature of co-chair roles. Ward 4 had over half the turnout Tuesday as in the mayoral general election in November.

“For a little known topic, a little known position, it did stir up some good trouble,” she said. “It was good that there were challengers and that there was attention brought to it.”

Radcliffe voted for her incumbent co-chairs, Jennifer Chona and Howard Boyd, but said she wished candidates on both slates had spoken more with residents.

Clarence Cummings, who won reelection as a Ward 3 co-chair, told the News that he met his two opponents, Inez Alvarez and Martha Dilone, for the first time at the polling place. He said he hopes they attend ward committee meetings going forward — a message echoed by other supporters of the victorious slate.

“Typically, you don’t have a lot of contested elections for ward co-chair,” Elicker said in an interview. “Bringing attention to that position is also important.”

The top vote-getter from in-person machine ballots on Tuesday was Gary Hogan of Ward 28, which covers most of Beaver Hills; he earned 252 votes.

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ARTS

“It’s nice to be important, but it’s important to be nice.”
LUCY MAUD MONTGOMERY CANADIAN AUTHOR

‘Fun Home’ comes out to audiences with themes of queerness and family

BROOKE WHITLING
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Content warning: This article contains one mention of suicide.

From Feb. 29 to Mar. 2, the Off-Broadway Theater became a home for an undergraduate production of the 2015 Broadway musical “Fun Home.” The show adapts Alison Bechdel’s 2006 graphic novel memoir, documenting her relationship with her sexuality and her father through three stages of her life: childhood, her college years and finally, at 43 years old.

Audience chatters fell quiet in the Off-Broadway Theater as an upbeat piano melody bounced into the air. A spotlight landed on an upstage desk, complete with sketch pads, Micron pens and an adult Alison. Before her, a childhood memory with her father unfolded as her past was constructed through alternating memories.

In the play, it is revealed through non-linear vignettes that Alison’s father — a high school English teacher, funeral home director and closeted gay man — died by suicide in her freshman year of college, shortly after she came out as lesbian. Their psychologically complex and changing relationship, through her childhood and early adulthood, is examined as Alison turns 43 years old — the same age as her father when he died. Alison, never leaving the stage, becomes an audience to her life through lenses of grief and logic-seeking reflection.

Bechdel, the show’s subject and creator, is an acclaimed cartoon artist. Her comic-strip serial “Dykes to Watch Out For” was published for 25 years, illustrating a string of unrelated plotlines between a group of lesbian women. The Bechdel Test, a metric for sexism in the fictional portrayal of women, originated within the series. Though Bechdel originally wrote the concept as comedy, it has grown to widespread use in film and media critique since its 1985 publication.

Her creation of “Fun Home” brought her to literary notability as

the graphic memoir was a finalist for the 2006 National Book Critics Circle Award. It also won the GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Comic Book, the Stonewall Book Award for non-fiction, the Publishing Triangle-Judy Grahn Nonfiction Award and the Lambda Literary Award.

The memoir’s musical adaptation was equally recognized, winning five Tony Awards including Best Musical and Best Original Score. The musical adaption also received a nomination for the 2016 Grammy Award for Best Musical Theater Album and was a finalist for the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

Critics of “Fun Home,” in both its literary and theatrical forms, commented on the narrative’s poignant and vulnerable portrayal of the human experience. This trait was a focus of the undergraduate production’s direction.

Naomi Schwartzburt ’24, the director of “Fun Home,” spoke about her connection to the show and its essential emotive arc in an interview with the News.

“The structure of Fun Home is so unique and compelling because it’s nonlinear. We’re not necessarily seeing the story as it unfolded in real life, but we’re seeing the important emotional components come together and build,” Schwartzburt said. “This show just leaves you with so many feelings. Every single person has a different experience and identity and will connect to these characters in a very different way.”

Connection, a central element of the story, is what distinguishes the musical from other representations of similar themes. Bechdel’s memoir roots the queer experience in nuclear family dynamics, shifting the show’s statement from a general comment on the queer community to an exploration of its role in intimate, domestic settings.

Individual expression, combined with self-exploratory themes, was central to the show’s musical direction as well.

Violet Barnum ’25, the show’s musical director, wrote in an email to the News that “Fun Home”



BROOKE WHITLING / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

The musical adaptation of Alison Bechdel’s graphic memoir explores the intersection of queer experience and family dysfunction.

demand a stronger focus on musical interpretation and expression than on complex harmonies.

The solo and small group songs allowed her to “guide the actors on taking more time with a certain phrase” or to be “more intentional about dynamics,” she wrote. Barnum added that this role allowed her to appreciate the show from all its angles, drawing attention to the complex intersection of joy, sadness, queerness and family.

By nature of the novel’s form, the musical is also defined by its focus on artistry and expression through visual details. This element was preserved in the show through background graphic design, as actors were planted within the pages of Bechdel’s comic strips.

An intimacy of creation was continued in the show’s graphic design, as it was hand-drawn to resemble frames of Bechdel’s novel. Mia Kohn ’27 used ink and watercolor to emphasize the show’s emotional fluidity, as well as to visually convey themes presented in the narrative. This connection to

the form was also reinforced by the Off-Broadway Theater’s size, where a 130-person occupancy limit created a proximity with the set that neared audience involvement.

Sitting only feet away from the actors, audience members were asked to view the characters as individuals with deeply complex lives, not simply tools for a larger movement. This is a perspective that the music aspires to promote, creating a space where audiences can consider human connection.

This was emphasized by the musical’s co-producer, Marissa Blum ’24, who commented on the work’s significance.

“‘Fun Home’ really demonstrates the unique, intergenerational nature of the queer community. It captures both the nostalgia and the pain that older generations of queer people have felt through not being able to express their identity,” Blum said. “But it also shows how they’ve laid the groundwork for future ... queer people to live and be proud. It is an opportunity to remember the people who’ve come before.”

The complete slate of producers, actors and contributors for Yale’s adaptation of “Fun Home” can be found online.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a hotline for individuals in crisis or for those looking to help someone else. To speak with a certified listener, call 988.

Crisis Text Line is a texting service for emotional crisis support. To speak with a trained listener, text HELLO to 741741. It is free, available 24/7 and confidential.

To talk with a counselor from Yale Mental Health and Counseling, schedule a session here. On-call counselors are available at any time: call (203) 432-0290. Appointments with Yale College Community Care can be scheduled here.

Additional resources are available in a guide compiled by the Yale College Council here.

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Hard truths in a cup of tea: Yale Rep’s ‘Escaped Alone’ to open on March 8

JANE PARK
STAFF REPORTER

In “Escaped Alone,” the Yale Repertory’s most recent production, four women in their seventies sit and talk in their backyard. But something darker is brewing amid the chatter. In the intimate conversations between friends, personal tragedies and universal catastrophes collide.

Written by Caryl Churchill and directed by Liz Diamond, “Escaped Alone” will premiere on March 8 and run until March 30 at the Yale Repertory Theater. According to Diamond, the play explores the complexities of female friendships, alongside the mundane truths that lurk in everyday conversations.

“I think that what’s so brilliant about this play is the way Churchill asks us or invites us to appreciate the way we function in simultaneous parallel universes of conversation with contemplation, subconscious yearnings, suppressed grief, fears that percolate up in us and apocalyptic visions,” Diamond said.

The play unravels in a backyard in suburban London, in which a trio of friends — Sally, Vi and Lena — is joined by Mrs. Jarrett, a less-acquainted individual, who appears at the door of the fence. As these four characters chat, the conversation is interrupted by Mrs. Jarrett’s startling monologues that deliver apocalyptic visions of the future.

Mrs. Jarrett’s rants are more than panic-inducing soliloquy;

Embedded within these words is a concerning, yet deeply necessary truth, said Diamond.

“She’s a kind of Cassandra figure,” she said. “During the monologues that are spoken by Mrs. Jarrett, she punches through the membrane of the universe within which the women live a kind of domestic, contemporary, middle class working class, English existence into another dimension to report back to us what happened to the world ... She’s not necessarily telling us what we want to hear. We might prefer to think, within her words, there is a kind of madness. We might want to console ourselves with that, but in fact, there’s a kind of terrible, terrible truth in her speeches.”

LaTonya Borsay, who plays Mrs. Jarrett in the play, described her character as not just a soothsayer but as someone whose prophetic visions seek to inspire action. For Borsay, the play is largely “preventative” in nature and provides clues to evade future catastrophe — before it is too late.

These clues lie in the power of community, according to Borsay.

“Even though we’re individuals, we’re not living completely isolated lives,” Borsay said. “We are on the planet existing, breathing the same air, seeing the same sun and watching the moon rise ... Getting people to act in whatever ways we can consciously act to keep everything sustainable for all life is her charge.”

Rita Wolf, who plays the role of ‘Lena,’ characterized the play’s commentary on the future as somewhat characteristic of Churchill’s other works.

Wolf pointed to “A Number,” a 2002 play that centered around the ethical questions raised by human cloning, particularly the concept of “nature versus nurture.” Her work “Far Away,” published in 2000, creates a world permeated by fear and authoritarianism.

“Caryl Churchill is a writer who is very prescient,” said Wolf. “If you know anything about the history of her writing, she’s always kind of one step ahead in terms of her concerns about the wider world ... particularly Western society. Certainly in her recent work, she’s looking into the crystal ball a little bit in terms of anticipating the next possible iteration of humanity.”

Diamond described Churchill’s writing as “a complicated geometry,” as the play’s dialogue is self-referential and self-interrupting. As a director of the play and resident director of the Yale Rep overall, Diamond said that she had long been attracted to plays with language that require the “unpacking” of the playwright’s “poetic strategies.”

She called the play’s writing “virtuosic,” similar to the ways a great contemporary jazz piece is interspersed with repetitions and revisions.

“One of the delicious opportunities of directing this play is

to, much the way, say, an orchestra conductor would be required to do, open up the score of the writing,” Diamond said. “The conversations are sort of interleaved. In the way that when you sit around with a big family or a bunch of old friends, and you know, nobody is playing the role of conversational referee. The conversations interleave break off, are picked up again later on.”

The Yale Rep’s production of “Escaped Alone” holds personal significance for Diamond, as the show marks her first show since the start of the pandemic. Diamond said that her return to the stage was a “marvelous” feeling.

Diamond described the process of working with stage and lighting designers as one full of “play.” After all, theater is all about grown-ups “playing make-believe,” she said. According to Diamond, the collaboration between sound, lighting and set design teams played an important role in bringing her conceptualization of the lush, verdant backyard to life.

“An image that came to me when I was thinking a lot about this was the image of terrariums,” Diamond said. “People create these strange little ideal worlds that exist within a much bigger and quite chaotic world, the world we live in ... This garden, it’s a refuge, as people’s private outdoor spaces are, but it sits in a rather vast and unaccommodating space. The universe, which is hurtling us toward we don’t know what, per-

haps the end or the apocalypse or the strange outcome that awaits us, is in no small measure, part of our own making.”

In a story that prophesies about the future, the central voices are the voices of women who are “at least seventy,” the script specifies. While she does not know the exact reasoning behind Churchill’s decision, this detail of the characters seems to be an intentional one, said Diamond.

Churchill herself is in her mid-eighties and continues to be an “absolute powerhouse,” she said. The older age of the characters is an attractive facet of the play, Diamond said, as it offers tremendous roles for women of a certain age and highlights the beauty and resilience within aging.

“These women who have lived so long contain universes of feeling, lived experience, unresolved conflicts, buried angers. They are great continents of lived experience and I think that they thus give Carol an opportunity to talk about our human condition and our relationship to mortality, to the world in which we live in and its mortality, and the role we seem to be playing in destroying life on Earth.”

“Escaped Alone” is Caryl Churchill’s 43rd play to be produced and was published 58 years after her first play — “Downstairs” — in 1958.

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YaleBleeds supports New Haven Public Schools providing free period products to meet state law requirement

BY BROOKLYN BRAUNER
STAFF REPORTER

YaleBleeds, a student organization dedicated to menstrual equity, is working with the New Haven Board of Education to ensure that schools in the city, ranging from grades 3-12, provide free period products in all women's and gender-neutral restrooms and in at least one men's restroom. This is to meet new requirements of Public Act No. 23-160 which the Connecticut General Assembly passed on July 1, 2023.

According to the Connecticut Department of Public Health, the law intends to address period poverty, as some students may struggle

to purchase period products due to lack of household income. However, despite the legislative mandate, many New Haven Public Schools still do not offer free menstrual products for their students.

“Our initial reaction to the lack of implementation was to emphasize advocacy for the importance of this policy; however, after we began discussing with individual districts, we realized that the rollout timeline of the policy had been pushed back,” said Rhea McTiernan Huge ’27, a New Haven resident and a YaleBleeds member working closely with New Haven Public Schools and the Board of Education.

The policy was originally designed to mandate compliance by Sept. 1, 2023. However, as a result of the slow and costly adoption of this updated policy, the date was recently extended to allow schools more time to adjust. Connecticut schools now have until Sept. 1, 2024 to provide free menstrual products for their students.

The extended timeline means that NHPS is not delinquent as a result of its widespread lack of implementation to date. Rather, YaleBleeds members said that local schools are struggling to comply because they lack adequate funding to do so.

“Funding and logistics have proven to be the main issues,” McTiernan Huge said. “The state of Connecticut

passed the law but proceeded to give no funding to local school boards. Our schools are already underfunded, so it's a big ask for the state to add this to the docket.”

The legislation provides no explicit mention of funding.

Following the passage of the legislation, the Connecticut Department of Public Health released a report to guide schools through the implementation process. The report does not mention any sources of funding for schools to draw from, although it does provide some guidance on the quantity of products that schools should purchase.

“As an organization, we want to get involved politically to search for adequate funding, potentially reaching out to the New Haven city council or campaigning a fundraiser,” Jessica Yu ’26 said. “Puberty is a hard time for students; it's hard to feel that you have no control over your body, especially for children, and having access to the appropriate resources and support is important to build healthier relationships with our bodies.”

According to McTiernan Huge and Yu, YaleBleeds first planned to advocate for a policy requiring free menstrual products in local schools, and only after investigating the state legislative record and “government-adjacent websites” did they find that such a policy already existed.

Although McTiernan Huge and Yu were unable to identify the exact

reason for why the legislative rollout date of this policy was pushed back, they both commented that the New Haven Board of Education remains committed to its timely and effective implementation.

Both students said they never felt as though the legislation was intentionally neglected, and said that they hope that increased visibility of period poverty and menstrual equity issues will expedite the implementation process.

“From the various conversations and meetings I have been a part of, I think district staff are supportive, understand the issue, and are working on the logistical issues connected to rolling this out to all 41 schools,” Matt Wilcox, the vice president of the New Haven Board of Education, wrote.

Wilcox also added that this issue is being handled centrally with a “district-wide” approach, not at the school level.

To conclude, Wilcox mentioned that the New Haven Board of Education will present a “restroom report” at an upcoming Finance and Operations meeting, where he will request that the topic of period poverty and free menstrual products be included to get more information about the rollout plans.

Yale Bleeds — formerly known as PERIOD@Yale — was formed in 2018.

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COURTESY OF JESSICA YU

The Yale student organization is continuing its work to make free menstrual products available to local students.

The East Rock Record: All the news that’s fit to print in elementary school

BY LIZZIE CONKLIN
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

In pursuit of authentic journalism in New Haven? Look no further than the East Rock Record.

The East Rock Record, a paper made by second through eighth-grade students at East Rock Community and Cultural Studies Magnet School, published its annual issue on Feb. 11. The organization meets once a week to craft a publication with article subjects ranging from the Beatles to the mayor. According to Laura Pappano, the head of the program, teachers and mentors empower students to both wax on what they think in opinion columns and cover pertinent issues in reported articles.

Garrett Griffin, who started teaching at East Rock six years ago, was frequently interviewed by the East Rock Record. This year, he became a faculty advisor for the paper, where he helps students find their voices through the paper.

“It’s a way for students to express their voices through their writing,” Griffin said. “They are focused. They enjoy taking the story from an idea to print.”

Students ranging from ages 8 to 13, work together with faculty advisors and mentors to write a paper that covers News, Arts, Tech and Opinion.

Students flex their unbridled imaginations to stick it to the man, as evidenced by their “Lunch at 10:40 AM?” piece in their most recent issue, which began, “Are you actually hungry for a burrito at 10:40 am? If the answer is ‘No!’ then you have a lot in common with many students at the East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School.”



COURTESY OF MARIA PARENTE

New Haven students published their annual paper for the tenth year in a row, featuring reporting, opinions and an ongoing video project.

Pappano credits the fun and expressiveness to the principal, Sabrina Breland, who trusts the students and faculty to produce an exhaustively truthful publication.

Breland, who attended East Rock in the first class of second graders in 1974, credited the newspaper's success to its tight-knit community and committed mentorship. Mentors — Yale student volunteers who often have backgrounds in journalism and advise the paper — show up and know students' names. Teachers run a well-oiled machine powered by visible, long-standing trust.

“I think [the East Rock Record] shows students what

they’re capable of,” Breland said. “It allows them to go outside of their wheelhouse because I think some students don’t realize how great they can be. And I think this is one of the clubs where students realize that their capacity to learn is limitless.”

In their 10 years of operation, the paper has interviewed Elicker and police captain Anthony Duff. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the program online, but leaders maintained the entire operation, publishing online and inviting speakers who otherwise would be too far to reach.

Pappano, who plans and leads meetings over Zoom, has been a journalist for more than 30 years. As a kid, she and her siblings produced a family magazine that propelled her from delivering newspapers at dawn to The Boston Globe, The New York Times and Vanity Fair. Now, she writes and volunteers for East Rock, copy-editing and fact-checking each issue before distribution.

“The point of [the East Rock Record] is really to broaden their horizons, and really reveal to them all kinds of possibilities that are out there,” Pappano said.

To follow up with their published newspaper, students are currently working on video journalism projects, where they expand work in the print newspaper through a visual narrative.

Han Pimentel-Hayes ’27 led one of the groups preparing for a video journalism project on The Beatles. She works with the East Rock Record every week to ensure that young students feel valued and empowered within the East Rock community.

“I love being part of the East Rock Record because I love to see

how creative students get with their ideas,” Pimentel-Hayes said. “I love to see their personalities shine, and all of their interesting experiences and opinions.”

The newspaper’s annual edition is available at the mayor’s office, New Haven Reads, IRIS, The Study, City Hall, The Children’s Room in the Ives branch of the New Haven Public Library and the North Haven office of the Diaper Bank of Connecticut.

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NEWS

“In the Spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours.”**MARK TWAIN** AMERICAN WRITER AND HUMORIST

New Haven to create new trail connecting Farmington Canal Line and East Coast Greenway

BY LILY BELLE POLING
STAFF REPORTER

On Thursday, Feb. 29, the city of New Haven presented its plans for the extension of the Shoreline Greenway Trail into New Haven, connecting to the Farmington Canal and East Coast Greenway.

The extension plans to connect the intersection of East Street and Water Street to the East Haven town line on South End Road. The project is also set to link East Shore neighborhoods to parks, amenities and the broader New Haven transportation infrastructure.

“You’ve got the Farmington Canal Line to the Shoreline Greenway connecting all the East Shore parks together, creating a really safe and enjoyable path for commuting for recreation, for health, for being a way to connect to your neighbors, to run into people from the neighborhood, and really enhance the sense of connection and community that a lot of paths and things like that really bring,” Giovanni Zinn, an engineer for the City of New Haven, said regarding the local and regional significance of the project.

“I think that’s something I certainly noticed, especially during the pandemic, that I got out of my house where I met all my neighbors, and it was a really simple way to build community in our neighborhoods.”

The city has received \$9.3 million in funding for the Shoreline Greenway project. Approximately \$7 million comes from the federal government, and over \$2 million comes from Connecticut’s bond funds.

Mayor Justin Elicker gave special thanks to the delegation that helped secure the federal funds, acknowledging Rep. Rosa DeLauro — who represents Connecticut’s third congressional district — and Connecticut senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy.

“Particular thanks to not just Rosa and Senator Blumenthal, but Chris Murphy was really key to us getting this \$7 million of funding,” Elicker said in the presentation.



TIM TAI / SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

On Thursday, Feb. 29, city officials presented their plans for the New Haven Shoreline Greenway Trail, which will connect the Farmington Canal Line to the East Coast Shoreline Greenway.

Elicker also mentioned that not only will the extension of the trail facilitate more bike and pedestrian travel, but also, in his most recent budget proposal, he requested funding for red light and speed cameras as another way to bolster bicycle and pedestrian transportation infrastructure.

In their presentation, city officials presented their plans for design to continue through 2024 and for construction to start in 2025.

“We’re really excited to bring these two awesome regional assets of the Farmington Canal Line and Shoreline Greenway with this connection in green, which we’re calling the New Haven Shoreline Green line,” Zinn said.

In creating this new trail, engineers are focusing on creating a path that is away from the street or protected by a curb or concrete barrier, provides enough adequate space

for both pedestrians and bikers, minimizes disruption of neighborhoods, is a low-stress environment, is suitable for all ages and connects neighborhoods with nature.

So far, the city has yet to accept and execute its grant agreements with its funding partners, complete traffic analysis design plans, apply for necessary permits, execute encroachment and land agreements with the state and complete its purchase of the necessary extra land for the path. Although officials said they hope to begin construction in 2025, Zinn warned that the necessary preparations that must precede construction are on an “aggressive schedule.”

Following his presentation of the city’s plans, Zinn asked for input from New Haven constituents.

“Wouldn’t it make more sense to go up Lighthouse [Road] and then go over to the right on Cove [Street] because Cove already has

one side street parking?” Gloria Bellacicco, a New Haven resident, asked the city engineers.

Bellacicco recommended the City consider avoiding placing the path on streets with two-way parking so that it does not interfere with residents who have to park their cars on the streets because their homes do not have driveways.

Aaron Goode of the New Haven Friends of the Farmington Canal Greenway suggested that the trail do more to showcase the shoreline near East Shore Park and Forbes Bluff. Goode predicted that a lot of walkers will not want to follow the currently proposed route because they may want to go up Forbes Bluff and along the seawall for more scenic views.

“I really think this is one of the signature sections of shoreline in New Haven. I think it’s the most signature shoreline in Connecticut to be quite frank,” he said. “I would be remiss not

to say we want to showcase that part of the park in that part of our shoreline because it’s so spectacular.”

Another New Haven resident — Chris Ozyck — voiced concern about making sure the trail is designed to feel like a “special place.”

“Part of that is trees. Part of that is architecture. Landscape architecture, resting spaces, things to say ‘here’s where you can find these amenities, where to get water!’ You know, any of these things that make the experience feel like you’re cared for as you go from A to B,” Ozyck said.

Ozyck also expressed his appreciation for the money and planning that is going into the creation of the trail.

The New Haven Shoreline Greenway will be approximately 4.4 miles long.

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East Haven and Save the Sound appeal FAA findings on Tweed’s environmental

BY AGOMONI SAHA & CHLOE EDWARDS
STAFF REPORTERS

On Dec. 21, the Federal Aviation Administration issued a Finding of No Significant Impact, or FONSI, regarding the Tweed New Haven Airport, leading the Town of East Haven and Save the Sound — an environmental advocacy group focused on Connecticut and the Long Island Sound — to file separate appeals challenging the FAA’s findings and Tweed’s expansion.

Roger Reynolds, the senior legal director at Save the Sound, explained that Tweed is in a small residential area that is in a flood zone, so thoroughly studying the environmental impacts of Tweed’s expansion on surrounding neighborhoods and the environment is essential.

“It was the FAA that ultimately concluded that there were no significant environmental impacts, again, despite the fact that this would increase emissions in the area, would have flooding consequences and would have water quality consequences,” Reynolds said.

According to Reynolds, Save the Sound is concerned that the FAA’s use of an Environmental Assessment, or EA, rather than the more rigorous Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS, may have overlooked some consequences of Tweed’s expansion.

Both East Haven and Save the Sound are seeking an EIS, specifically due to the EA’s neglect of how Tweed’s expansion could affect tidal wetlands, water quality and flood control in the East Haven area.

Typically, once an EA has been issued, this leads to either an EIS or a FONSI. An EIS is issued if there is evidence of significant environmental impact in the initial EA. In this case, the FAA did not identify the potential for significant environmental impact.

In the event that the appeals of the Town of East Haven and Save the Sound against the FAA’s FONSI are approved, they would move on to the Environmental Appeals Board for review.

Reynolds added that one of the



ELLIE PARK / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

East Haven and Save the Sound have raised concerns about the environmental impacts of the expansion of the Tweed New Haven Airport.

FAA’s conclusions was that increasing the size of the airport would result in reduced emissions under the assumption that the demand for flights would not be affected by the expansion, even though the expansion would increase the capacity of the airport and would allow for more flights and bigger planes, including additional freight flights.

Neelakshi Hudda, a professor at Tufts University who has studied the air quality impacts of Tweed’s current emissions, also questioned the assumption that the number of enplaned passengers would remain constant after the expansion.

“There’s no need for [an expan-

sion] if there isn’t a demand. How is this profitable if there’s no demand?” Hudda asked.

She noted that the building of new infrastructure would likely induce greater demand.

The Tweed New Haven Final EA document mentions that the estimated number of enplaning passengers in 2026 without and with the expansion is the same, so the number of enplaning passengers will increase over time but not as a direct result of the airport expansion.

The FAA’s environmental protection specialist assigned to review Tweed’s environmental impact was not immediately avail-

able for comment regarding how this assumption was made.

“I can say that all of us in our neighborhood deserve an Environmental Impact Statement. There is simply too much at stake to let this proposed expansion go through uncontested,” Lynne Bonnett, the New Haven representative on the Project Advisory Committee for the current Environmental Assessment, wrote.

Save the Sound has noted that the EA assumes that expanding the airport could potentially improve air quality.

This conclusion is a result of the FAA’s assumption that an expansion will not increase passenger

demand for flights and that the expansion will allow them to use larger, more efficient planes.

“The decision is neither fair, safe, nor equitable, offering no resolution to the multitude of issues posed by a project of this magnitude,” Mayor of East Haven Joseph Carfora wrote. “The appeal is our only recourse.”

The Tweed New Haven airport is located at 155 Burr St.

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SPORTS

Bulldogs begin their journey

W LAX FROM PAGE 10

dogs dominated the Tigers in the third quarter, outscoring them 3-0, which ultimately sealed the victory.

In the second quarter, Yale held Princeton scoreless for 29 minutes and 14 seconds, turning a 7-6 deficit into an 11-7 lead. Although the Tigers scored one goal with 4:49 left, the Bulldogs answered with a commanding 5-0 streak, securing their lead until the final whistle.

The game saw five goals and five draw controls from Collignon. Sky Carrasquillo '25 and Karina Herrera '27 both deserve honorable mentions for their two-goal contributions, along with goalkeeper Laura O'Connor '27, who made five crucial saves.

"We knew this game was going to be tough and we had to work together and rely on each other to get it done," Collignon wrote to the News. "This game emphasized how important the little things are like winning

draws, ground balls, clears, and finishing your shots."

Yale has moved to No. 18 in the National Poll after beating Princeton.

Looking ahead, the Bulldogs will take on the University of Connecticut at Reece Stadium on Saturday at 1 p.m., followed by a match against Central Connecticut State at 1 p.m. on Tuesday.

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the Bulldogs will take on the University of Connecticut at Reece Stadium on Saturday at 1 p.m.

Bulldogs go 1-1 on the weekend

W BASKETBALL FROM PAGE 10

added onto in the second by Kiley Capstraw '26 and Jenna Clark '24. By the end of the first half, the Bulldogs had posted 40 points to the Big Red's 34.

After the half, Cornell drew within one point, catching the breath of every Yale fan in John J. Lee Amphitheater. However, the Bulldogs pressed on, persevering through the pressure and continually driving to the basket. Yale never lost their hard-earned lead, thanks to timely baskets by Clark and McGill. The final score was 79-72, in favor of the Bulldogs.

Head Coach Dalila Eshe told Yale Athletics that the team knew the game would be difficult, but they were ready to compete.

"The Cornell game is always going to be a tough, physical game," she said. "When they got within one, we had to dial ourselves back in, and we did."

Along with the team scoring a season-best 79 points, McGill

and McDonald both had their own double-doubles, their fourth and third, respectively. In the fourth quarter, Yale shot .529 from the field. This is also the eighth game in a row won against Cornell.

With respect to McGill, Eshe told Yale Athletics that her defensive game impacted her offense.

"Nyla was a phenomenal rebounder today," she said. "When she is a monster on the boards, it translates to her offense. Cornell could not figure out a way to box her out."

After the Cornell game, the Bulldogs needed a huge win against the stampeding Columbia Lions to keep them in the race for the Ivy League tournament.

Saturday's game against the Lions celebrated seniors Clark, McDonald, Klara Aastroem '24 and Haley Sabol '24.

In the first quarter, the Lions jumped out quickly to a striking lead, one which the Bulldogs never quite seemed to catch up with. While Columbia reigned on offense, they also held the

Blue and White on defense, as only three Bulldogs were able to score in the first quarter: McGill, Astrom and Grace Thybulle '25. As the time melted into the second quarter, Yale cut the point deficit down to 15, going into halftime trailing, 44-29.

After the half, though the Bulldogs were able to sink more baskets than at the beginning of the game, it was not nearly enough to match the burning-hot Lions, who seemed unstoppable. Despite another double-double from McGill and 16 points from Clark, the Blue and White fell to Columbia, 76-50.

With this loss, Yale fell out of the race for the Ivy League tournament.

The Yale women's basketball team will travel to play their final game of the season in Providence against the Brown Bears (7-15, 1-9 Ivy) at 3 p.m. on March 9.

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The Bulldogs take on the Brown University Bears (9-1, 0-0 Ivy) to start Ivy League play this Friday, Sept. 22.

Yale has a chance at NCAA spot

M BASKETBALL FROM PAGE 10

Mbeng, the Ivy League's reigning Defensive Player of the Year, filled up the stat sheet once again against the Big Green with eight points, five assists and three steals.

With one game remaining in conference play, the field for Ivy Madness is set with Yale, Princeton, Cornell and Brown as the four qualifying teams. Yale and Princeton are both 11-2 in season play, but the Tigers will likely earn the first seed through a tiebreaker because they have a higher NET rating.

In the unlikely event that Princeton loses to Penn (11-17, 3-10 Ivy), the Bulldogs would gain the

first seed with a win of their own and play Brown in the tournament's opening round. Otherwise, they'll face the Big Red, who they beat at home but fell to on the road.

Still, the Elis have one more regular season game to play against Brown (11-17, 7-6 Ivy) on Saturday. The Bears got off to a slow start to the season but are better than their record indicates, having won their last five games in Ivy play, including an upset over Cornell in Ithaca. Yale beat them 80-70 in the Ivy League opener in January.

Saturday's game will tip off at noon in Payne Whitney Gymnasium.

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Saturday's game will tip off at noon in Payne Whitney Gymnasium.

Yale suffers first loss of season

M LAX FROM PAGE 10

Yale goal, assisted by Brandau, with just under two minutes left in the period.

The Nittany Lions started the second half of the game on a roll, with a five-point scoring streak over the course of six minutes. Malone scored the first two goals, and after that midfielder Ethan Long, midfielder Mac Costin and attackman Will Peden also scored.

Anderson broke this streak with an unassisted goal with 7:37 remaining in the period, which Penn State midfielder Matt Traynor answered less than a minute later with another goal. Yale then reaffirmed their lead with three more points, the first by Krevsky and the second two by Anderson, both assisted by Kuhl.

To close out the third quarter, Malone scored for Penn State, assisted by Long, and the Nittany Lions continued scoring into the final quarter. Costin tallied an unassisted goal 1:03 into the period, and 1:02 later, Long scored on a man-up.

Kuhl raised Yale's lead to 14-11 just over a minute later, but the Nittany Lions entered another scoring streak of three goals — by Malone, Traynor and Costin — to close out regulation in a 14-14 tie.

During the golden-goal overtime period, Yale led 5-1 in shots, including one by Brandau that hit the goal post and one that Penn State goalkeeper Jack Fracyon saved. With 59 sec-

onds remaining in the four-minute overtime period, Malone assisted Penn State attackman Jake Morin in sealing the win for the Nittany Lions.

While the Elis ultimately fell to Penn State by a mere point in overtime, each team's season records reflect something different. While the Nittany Lions fell 13-12 to Colgate in their season opener on Feb. 3, the Elis triumphed 21-11 over Colgate on Feb. 21.

Yale also saw strong offensive play in the contest. Anderson led the game with five goals, followed by Krevsky with four and Hackler with two. Brandau, Kuhl and Moynihan also each tallied one goal during the game.

The Elis led the game 56-44 in shots and 31-30 in shots on goal. Yale also led the game 20-13 in faceoffs, with Rodriguez and face-off man Nick Ramsey '24 winning 12-of-19 and 8-of-14 faceoffs, respectively.

Goalkeeper Jared Paquette '25 played the entire game in goal, making 15 saves over the course of the contest.

The Elis also led in turnovers, 16-13, and 42-21 in ground balls.

The Bulldogs hope to regain their momentum next week when they travel to Colorado for their next game.

Yale will face No. 10 Denver University (5-0, 0-0 Big East) in Denver, CO on Sunday, March 10 at 2 p.m. EST. The game will stream live on Altitude.

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Yale will face Denver University in Denver, CO on Sunday, March 10 at 2 p.m. EST.

NEWS

TRISTAN HERNANDEZ
STAFF REPORTER

Yale Hospitality will not have any residential college dining halls open over spring recess, a change from last year when four dining halls were open at no cost to students who stayed on campus. Dean of Yale College Pericles Lewis told the News that the change is due to the low number of students who tend to remain on campus over the break.

Yale Hospitality Senior Director Adam Millman wrote to the News that the University will be providing vouchers to low-income students who have a family share of up to \$10,000 and who live on campus. The vouchers are daily \$30 UberEats credits that are only eligible at establishments within a 15-mile radius of New Haven. They are non-transferable, and unused credits do not carry over to the next day.

Millman wrote, on behalf of the Yale College Dean's Office, that approximately 1,800 eligible students were notified of the voucher on Feb. 9.

During spring recess, select Yale Hospitality retail locations will still be open, including The Elm, Steep Cafe, Cafe Med, Health Center Cafe, West Campus Cafe and School of Management locations.

"There aren't enough students staying over spring break to make it feasible for the dining halls to stay open," Lewis said. "We added one day of opening on either end [of spring break], because based on last year's numbers that were like 700 students around, and we're going to continue to study whether we can have one dining hall open in the future."

Lewis explained that in the middle of spring break last year, only 200 to 300 students were eating in the dining halls, and the meal plan is not designed to support student

meals over spring recess.

Select dining halls will be open at the beginning and end of spring recess, when more students are back on campus — on March 9 and 10, and on March 22 and 23. All residential college dining halls will reopen on March 24 with brunch service.

Yale College Council, or YCC, dining policy team director Benjamin Gervin '26 wrote to the News that he has worked on crafting a survey to assess how many students plan to stay on campus over the break. After he receives these results, Gervin wrote, he intends to use them as quantitative evidence to explain to Yale Hospitality why they should leave some dining halls open over the break.

YCC deputy dining policy director Esha Garg '26 wrote that she and Mimi Papathanasopoulos '26, the YCC health and accessibility director, wrote an open letter to University administrators on the dining hall closures.

The letter stated that the lack of dining hall availability will "disproportionately affect international and low-income students who stay on campus," as well as student-athletes with mandatory team commitments. Garg and Papathanasopoulos also wrote that the \$30 UberEats credit is not enough to cover three meals for one day, especially with additional fees UberEats adds on orders.

Lewis said that while "\$30 is only \$30," the amount is "adequate" for students over the recess. He also mentioned that students can save money by ordering together or getting pickup versus delivery.

"The response back was positive and partially addressed our concerns: some dining halls will now be open until Sunday, March 10 and will reopen on Friday, March 22," Garg wrote to



TENZIN JORDEN / SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

All dining halls will close over spring recess. Low-income students are eligible for a daily \$30 UberEats credit if they remain on campus.

the News. "This means that dining halls will now be open for 2 additional days! Additionally, the YCDO team has extended the vouchers to more students on financial aid — this means that approximately 1800 students will be eligible for vouchers while in New Haven."

In addition, Garg said the YCC is working on providing grocery store stipends for international students, in collaboration with the Office of International Students and Scholars.

Last year, dining halls were initially planned to be open over spring recess for \$37.08 per day, totaling \$556.20 for the entire break. After students and the Yale College Council expressed concern over the price of meals, Hospitality informed students that four residential college dining halls — Branford, Saybrook, Grace Hopper and Jonathan Edwards colleges — were open at no cost to students through the break.

Last year, Lewis told the News that the Yale College Dean's Office was essentially subsidizing the price of spring recess dining, as the meal plan does not cover November recess, winter recess and spring recess. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, students were required to pay a fee for meals over the break.

Spring recess begins March 8 and classes resume on March 25.

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ANALYSIS: Mayor's proposed budget funds housing, parks

BY YURII STASIUK
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker submitted his budget proposal on Friday for fiscal year 2024-25, which includes new staff in parks and housing.

Elicker announced his budget proposal in City Hall flanked by Michael Gormany, the city's budget director, and other city officials. The budget proposal, which has to be approved by the Board of Alders, will restructure the Livable City Initiative, create a separate Parks Department and add 33 new city staff. The new expenditures will be mainly sponsored by increased property tax revenue.

"This year's budget is both responsible and responsive," Elicker said at the press conference. "It's responsible in that we continue to invest what we need to in pensions and debt ... It's responsive to calls from the community and the needs of a growing city."

Structural changes, new positions in housing and parks

In this year's budget, the biggest change Elicker proposed is changes to the Livable City Initiative, which has been criticized for its inability to protect tenants from negligent or predatory landlords.

"If anyone that lives in New Haven will walk around the city, [they] will understand that we have a serious housing challenge," Elicker said.

The proposed budget includes funding for five housing inspectors to join the current team of 13. It also provides funding for two additional LCI staff workers, including one housing attorney.

LCI will see structural changes as well, Elicker said.

"We need someone waking up every day that's focusing on what the original intent of LCI was — inspections, housing, rental housing safety, rental housing accountability," Elicker said of the change.

The program's housing development authority will be delegated to the Economic Development Administration, and LCI will instead fully focus on housing inspections and landlord accountability.

In the new budget, Elicker also proposes to separate the Parks Department from the current Parks and Public Works Department. The two were merged in 2020.

"We have heard a lot in these past several years from many community members ... about how our parks are one of the most important assets in our city," Elicker said. "The city needs to do better in ensuring that our parks are well maintained, there's more responsiveness to community needs [and] the athletics fields are better maintained."

The city will be divided into three park districts, with one manager assigned to each. These managers will be responsible for communicating with the residents on park-related concerns.

The new budget also includes four additional staff members in the reconstituted parks department, including a superintendent of fields, a parks foreperson and two technicians who will focus on maintaining the city's athletic fields.

Increased city expenditures

The FY25 proposed budget has over \$680 million in spending planned, approximately \$17.6 million more than last year's budget, for an increase of 2.66 percent.

The increased spending is mostly the result of inflation and increased fixed costs, according to Elicker. But there are some new expenditures in the budget.

In total, Elicker proposed adding 31 full-time and two part-time city positions. Besides new LCI and Parks Department positions, these include four sworn officer leadership positions in the Police Department and three captains in the Fire Department.

According to Elicker, all new positions will account for approximately \$2.97 million in spending — less than half a percent of FY25's budget.

Last year, Elicker proposed adding 34 new positions, of which alders approved only nine, citing concerns about the number of city government positions currently vacant. He said that the only overlap between last year's and this year's proposed posi-

tions is fire captains, which he is required to add by the memorandum of understanding with the fire department.

Educational expenses, which traditionally are the largest expenditure in New Haven, increased by \$5 million to around \$208 million for the fiscal year 2024-25, mostly as a result of increased teachers' salaries, per the city's contract with the teachers union.

Debt service payments and contributions to the city pensions fund will increase by over \$2.7 million in a new fiscal year, which Elicker attributed to the city's financial responsibility.

"We don't restructure our debt or do any fancy gimmicks to push costs into the future," Elicker said.

Financing expanded budget

Under the New Haven Charter, expenditures in the budget must be equal to the city income.

"One of the hardest parts of my job is balancing the strong demand for more city service and having a tax rate that is something that our residents have the ability to pay for," Elicker said. "In today's world, you can't even do the same without more [money] because of our increased fixed costs."

Increased tax revenue accounts for most of the city income rise in fiscal year 2024-25. This year, the city will increase its mill rate — the amount of tax paid for every \$1,000 in property value — by 3.98 percent, from 37.20 to 38.68. The city temporarily lowered the mill rate from 43.88 in the fiscal year

2021-22 to 37.20 last fiscal year to ease the transition after the reevaluation of the property values.

According to the budget proposal, the city also hopes to get \$2 more million in funding from the state compared to last fiscal year.

The Board of Alders' finance committee will hold several public hearings and workshops, and the full Board is expected to approve the budget in May. The Board can, and likely will, amend the budget. In the coming weeks, Elicker will also hold budget town halls to communicate his proposal to the community.

The fiscal year 2024-25 will start on July 1.

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YURII STASIUK / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

The budget, introduced by Mayor Justin Elicker on Friday will add 33 city positions if approved in its current form.

“Spring is the mischief in me.”
ROBERT FROST AMERICAN POET

Ukrainian church community in New Haven aids Ukraine

BY YURIJ STASIUK AND
ROMA MYKHAILEVYCH
STAFF AND
CONTRIBUTING REPORTERS

More than 100 community members gathered in St. Michael’s Ukrainian Catholic Church of New Haven on Saturday, Feb. 24 to commemorate the second anniversary of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Families gathered to remember and pray for those who suffered due to Russian aggression in Ukraine. Over its century-long history, and especially since 2014, St. Michael’s has become not only a spiritual center but a hub for local Ukrainian activists.

“I ask you to pray every day,” Father Iurii Godenciuc said during the memorial service.

But Godenciuc added that just praying is not enough and asked attendees to actively support Ukraine through their “deeds.”

The service was also attended by New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker and U.S. Representative Joe Courtney, who spoke in support of Ukraine.

St. Michael’s century-long history

In the late 19th century, the first wave of Ukrainian migrants arrived in New Haven. To navigate their social lives, newly-arrived immigrants formed their own societies. Among these is St. Michael’s Catholic Ukrainian Society, which — according to St. Michael’s book about its history — was established on Oct. 4, 1908 by Mary Burbela Hazzey, a late member of New Haven’s Ukrainian American community.

“Appreciation of the beauty and solemnity of the Ukrainian rite unites the members of the parish, and the ceremonies and traditions give structure to their spiritual lives,” Hazzey wrote.

In 1909, St. Michael’s Brotherhood bought the land on the corner of Mill and Chapel Streets and started the Church. With the expanded immigration quotas and more Ukrainians arriving, the group quickly outgrew the small building on Mill Street, and in 1911, the church moved to a larger

location on Park Street.

When the second church building was again filled to capacity, the community decided to build a new church, with an auditorium and classrooms, at 563 George St.

Christine Melnyk, a Ukrainian who arrived in New Haven in 1949 as a child, said that the church community was able to build its new building thanks to its cooperation with the former New Haven Mayor Richard Lee.

According to Melnyk, New Haven became the first city in the United States to fly the yellow and blue Ukrainian flag next to the American one over City Hall on Jan. 22, 1955. She said this was in commemoration of Ukraine’s brief independence from 1918 to 1921. Lee then also issued a proclamation declaring Jan. 22 as Ukrainian Independence Day in the city.

More than six decades later, after looking for resources to support Ukraine after the full-scale Russian invasion, Mayor Elicker connected with the church community. He said he also connected with the church community to “make sense of what was going on.”

Religious and community space

Since its inception, the Church has remained a focal point for Ukrainian Americans in New Haven.

Historically, many Ukrainian organizations in New Haven were built around the church community, including local chapters of the scouting organization Plast, the Ukrainian National Women’s League of North America and the local Ukrainian School.

“The church is the common place where people can gather,” Myron Melnyk, Christine Melnyk’s husband, said. It has facilities, he said, that are often used for concerts, dances and other social gatherings, even for people who do not attend Sunday mass.

Right next to the church, the community built the Ukrainian Heritage Center after the celebration of St. Michael’s 75th anniversary in 1984. Today, it has three exhibition rooms filled with Ukrainian art and literature.

There, the local Ukrainian

diaspora also keeps records and photo archives of its political and cultural events — graduation ceremonies of the Ukrainian School, cultural celebrations and rallies.

Ukrainian School now meets once a week in one of the church buildings. For decades, it helped the children of Ukrainian immigrants to learn about their heritage. Now, more than a dozen students from New Haven and across the state learn the Ukrainian language, history and culture at the Ukrainian School.

The school also organizes regular cultural celebrations for children, mainly around religious holidays, according to Halia Lodynsky, its director.

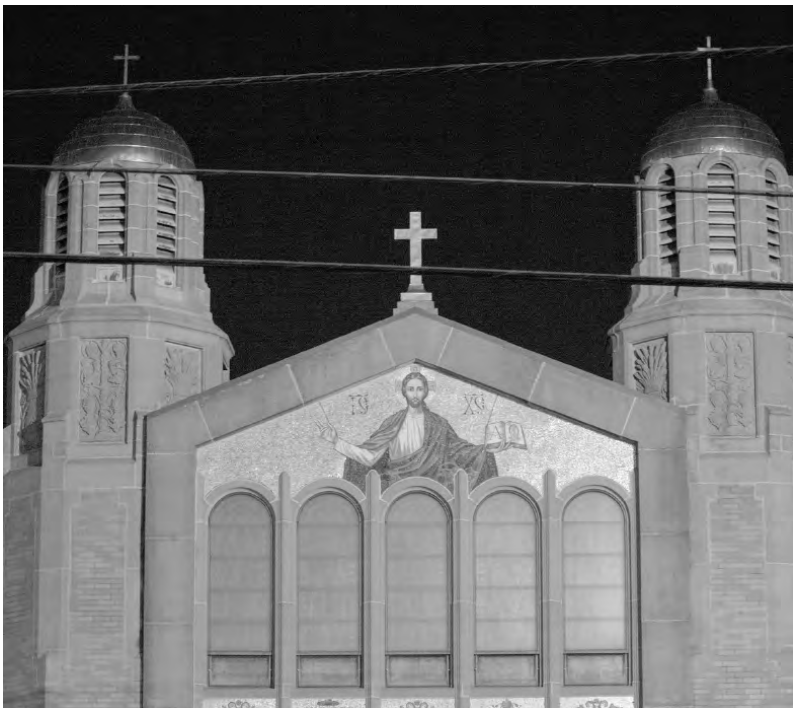
“The students really take honor in being Ukrainian. It’s about love for your country, for your heritage,” Lodynsky said. “For me, it’s passing on all the traditions I know to these students. Hopefully, when they get to be my age, they can pass on their traditions to their children.”

After Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a new wave of Ukrainian refugees arrived, church member Nadia Ivantsiv said, increasing the number of students in the school. To accommodate the increase, they now use one of the exhibition rooms as an additional classroom.

Supporting Ukraine from New Haven

Despite being far away from Ukraine, the church community members were active in advocating for the country even before it became independent. In 1986, the church responded to the Chernobyl nuclear accident by urging the United Nations to prod the Soviet authorities to disclose the circumstances of the nuclear explosion and for the Red Cross International to arrange the delivery of food, clothing, medical supplies and aid, Christine Melnyk said.

Christine Melnyk also traveled to Ukraine, first to deliver medical supplies to children and then to advocate for Ukraine’s indepen-



ROMA MYKHAILEVYCH/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

St. Michel’s Ukrainian Catholic Church became a hub for Ukrainian Americans and others to support the country during the war.

dence in 1991.

When Russia attacked Ukraine in 2014, the community stepped up again.

According to Myron Melnyk, Ukrainians in the community, especially those organized with the Ukrainian American Veterans of New Haven, regularly talk with Connecticut’s Congressional representatives and advocate for aid to Ukraine. Since 2014, the group has been particularly focused on lobbying Congress to bring Ukrainian veterans for medical treatment in the US.

Carl Harvey, a Navy veteran and a church member, is not Ukrainian but was introduced to the community through his late Ukrainian American wife. In the church, he said he found a lot of support and thus became actively involved in it. Now, together with Myron Melnyk, he works on delivering aid to Ukraine. Since Russia launched its full-scale invasion two years ago, the group has already sent 12 containers of medical supplies and equipment.

Church members raise money among their friends and partners, organize concerts and meet monthly

to cook and sell Ukrainian dumplings — called varenyky — to collect funds for their charitable activities. The group also partners with a priest on the ground in Ukraine, who delivers this aid to hospitals, soldiers and veterans in need, according to Melnyk.

Originally, the group used church buildings as their warehouse, but as they have collected and sent more aid, they have begun relying on a warehouse in New Haven, which they are allowed to use for free.

“The humanitarian aid continues,” Myron Melnyk said. “We are becoming more specialized.”

The two projects they are focusing on at the moment are buying 3D printers for the prosthetics lab in Ukraine and raising money for antibiotics for the Ukrainian hospitals, according to Melnyk.

The group also recently formed a non-profit called New Haven CT Ukrainian American Humanitarian Aid Fund to officialize their activity.

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Lamont nominates 22 jurists to CT Superior Court, includes three Yale grads

BY ADAM WALKER
STAFF REPORTER

On March 1, Gov. Ned Lamont nominated 22 jurists, individuals with expert knowledge of the law, to serve as judges on the Connecticut Superior Court.

Among Lamont’s list of nominees are three Yale College graduates: Nicole Anker ’04, Tamar Birkhead ’87, and Alayna Stone ’04. The nominees will sit for hearings before the legislature’s Judiciary Committee, with their nominations subject to a vote in both chambers of the Connecticut General Assembly. Lamont’s selection of candidates was confined to a pool of individuals who had been interviewed and approved by the Judicial Selection Commission.

The Connecticut Superior Court is a unified court system, comprising multiple sessions across the state’s 13 judicial districts, offering specialized courts for diverse cases such as major criminal, civil, family and juvenile matters, with each session having its own set of judges.

“One of the most notable honors of my responsibilities as governor is to fill vacancies in our court system with capable jurists whose qualifications meet the high standards that the people of Connecticut deserve on the bench,” Lamont said. “This group of nominees I am forwarding to the legislature today continues this administration’s effort to ensure that the people who are serving as judges in our state reflect the diversity, experience and understanding of the people who live here.”

Nicole Anker ’04

Anker, who received her bachelor’s degree in psychology from Yale College, currently serves as the legal director for the Connecticut Department of Correction. With seventeen years of legal practice, she has specialized in both constitutional and employment law within the department.

Before joining state service, Anker worked as a litigation and employment law associate at two prominent multinational law firms, namely Bingham McCutchen, LLP, and Brown, Raysman, Millstein, Felder, and Steiner, LLP.

Among the nominees to the Superior Court, Anker is one of 13 women and also one of two candidates from Glastonbury.

Anker received her law degree from the University of Connecticut School of Law in 1998.

Tamar Birkhead ’87

With 32 years of experience in law, Birkhead began her legal career as a public defender in Massachusetts before transitioning to academia at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Law. She served as a faculty member there, teaching law and directing clinical programs. Now operating as a solo practitioner at Birkhead Law LLC, she primarily represents indigent individuals in criminal and juvenile courts as appointed counsel.

In the 2016-17 academic year, Birkhead served as a visiting clinical professor of law at Yale Law School where she supervised students in delinquency defense in the juvenile court in New Haven and taught a companion course.

Like Anker, she is one of 13 women nominated to the Superior Court, and also stands as one of two nominees from Hartford.

Birkhead received her law degree from Harvard Law School in 1992.

Alayna Stone ’04

Stone holds a master’s degree from the Georgetown McCourt School of Public Policy and received her bachelor’s degree in psychology from Yale College. Currently serving as associate attorney general and chief of the Division of Civil Litigation at the Connecticut Office of the Attorney General, she oversees various sections including Employment, Workers’ Compensation and Labor, Health and Educa-



JESSIE CHEUNG/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Three Yale grads are among Lamont’s 22 nominees to serve as judges on the state’s Superior Court.

tion, Public Safety and General Litigation. Before this role, she spent eight years as an assistant attorney general in the Special Litigation section, representing all branches of state government.

Prior to joining the Attorney General’s Office, she clerked for two years at the Connecticut Superior Court, followed by one year each at the Connecticut Appellate Court under now-Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson and at the Connecticut Supreme Court under former Associate Justice Carmen E. Espinosa.

Similar to Anker and Birkhead, Stone is also one of the 13 women nominated and is one of two Black women among the nominees to the Superior Court. At 41, she also stands as one of the youngest nominees and is the only candidate from New Haven.

Stone received her law degree from the Georgetown University Law Center in 2010.

The significance of the court and its judges

According to New Haven civil rights attorney Alex Taubes LAW ’15, the Superior Court is a court of general jurisdiction, meaning that it hears almost every type of case in the state, highlighting the relevance of the court in Connecticut’s legal disputes.

“All cases pretty much first get heard in the Superior Court,” Taubes told the News. “Other cases, either get appealed to the Superior Court or can be appealed from the Superior Court.”

Grace Brunner, a student at the University of Connecticut School of Law and leader of its chapter of the legal advocacy group People’s Parity Project, emphasized to the News the importance of diversity in backgrounds among Governor Lamont’s judicial nominations.

She told the News that she thinks such selections bring “precisely the kind of experience” needed to positively impact Connecticut residents’ lives as the experiences of the judges can shape their decisions on the bench.

“I’m absolutely thrilled to hear that Governor Lamont has embraced the advocacy efforts of the CT Pro-People Judiciary Coalition, a group our chapter proudly stands behind,” Brunner wrote in a statement to the News. “The current makeup of the Connecticut bench favors former prosecutors and corporate lawyers, which overlooks the valuable perspectives of those with backgrounds in public defense, civil rights, and legal aid.”

The Superior Court bench currently has 35 vacancies.

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NEWS

“Winter lingered so long in the lap of Spring that it occasioned a great deal of talk.”
BILL NYE AMERICAN ENGINEER

New Haven and Yale announce executive director of Center for Inclusive Growth

BY MIA CORTÉS CASTRO
STAFF REPORTER

More than two years after creating the position, Yale and New Haven have announced Dawn Leaks Ragsdale, a local nonprofit leader, as the new executive director for the collaborative Center for Inclusive Growth.

Yale and New Haven announced the Center in November 2021 as part of an agreement to increase the University’s financial contribution to the city. The agreement also included an increase in Yale’s voluntary contribution by \$52 million over six years, the conversion of a portion of High Street into a pedestrian walkway and a commitment by Yale to partially offset city revenue lost on buildings taken off the tax roll.

New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker, University President Peter Salovey, School of Management Dean Kerwin Charles and Board of Alders President Tyisha Walker-Myers announced Leaks Ragsdale’s new position at a press conference on Tuesday, held at the Center’s new headquarters at 65 Audubon St.

Leaks Ragsdale, who started the position on March 4, will be tasked with directing the Center’s operations, designing programming and fostering connections with local organizations. The Center’s mission is to promote economic growth in the city.

“I am excited to be entrusted with this great responsibility,” Leaks Ragsdale said at Tuesday’s press conference. “This center has the potential to do so much good here in New Haven, and I’m ready to hit the ground running. My experiences as an entre-

preneur myself, and witnessing firsthand the challenges and the triumphs of people starting and scaling businesses, solidified my belief in the power of inclusive growth.”

The specific responsibilities of the executive director role are still unclear. While answering questions at the press release, Elicker emphasized the importance of collaborations with Yale but, when asked, did not tell attendees with what exactly the executive director will be charged. Neither Elicker nor Leaks Ragsdale provided a concrete answer about Leaks Ragsdale’s next steps in the position, though they both expressed excitement about developing new plans.

“I think the world is Dawn’s oyster and our oyster, and I am confident that we’re gonna find things that probably none of us in this room have imagined that will come out of the center,” Elicker said.

Before assuming her current role, Leaks Ragsdale was the executive director of Collab — a New Haven-based nonprofit that provides support to entrepreneurs so they can build their businesses. Collab primarily supports female, Latine and Black entrepreneurs, connecting them to a network of support and resources as part of their business accelerator.

Some of Collab’s past clients include Havenly, a cafe that has a job-training program for immigrant and refugee women, and Threads by Tea, which sells “wearable art.”

According to Leaks Ragsdale, her work at Collab will help inform her work at the Center, as she understands the struggles entrepreneurs

face. This knowledge will better help her forge connections between New Haven entrepreneurs and Yale that will benefit both parties and sustain economic growth.

Leaks Ragsdale cited the allocation of American Rescue Plan Act funds as well as Yale research funds as ways she’s considering supporting entrepreneurship around New Haven. In his speech at the press conference, Elicker mentioned Yale buying food from local producers and art from New Haven artists as two examples of possible collaborations.

The Center will also collaborate with the Yale School of Management and its students to expand entrepreneurial connections around New Haven. The School of Management, or SOM, is expected to contribute to the Center’s programming, and it launched an Inclusive Growth Fellowship program in January that will connect SOM students to various projects.

“We insisted upon values of a collaborative engagement, mutually beneficial engagement, and lastly, a deeply respectful one,” Charles, the SOM dean, said. “So that when Yale and its faculty and staff and students interacted with the city, we would be doing so not presuming that we had the answer to every question.”

Charles will be leading the board of directors that Leaks Ragsdale will be working directly under. The board is composed of the four people who spoke at the press conference — Charles, Salovey, Elicker and Walker-Myers.

Yale and New Haven launched their search campaign for the Exec-



YALE NEWS
Dawn Leaks Ragsdale was announced as executive director, though the role’s responsibilities remain unclear.

utive Director in April 2023, over a year after announcing the creation of the Center. On Tuesday, the lack of updates during the search raised questions about delaying the search, and how it would impact the Center once opened.

According to Walker-Myers, the position received many applications, and each candidate had to go through two thorough interviews, which extended the recruiting process. Walker-Myers said that finding someone whose goals aligned with the Center’s goals was time-consuming and that the board of directors took their time to make sure the candidate selected would be the right fit for the position.

“Dawn understands what it’s like to be an entrepreneur when you’re not getting the type of support that’s needed,” Walker-Myers told the News. “When you ask me what I think is going to come out of this Center the most exciting thing is that we will be able to move families out of poverty in this city. For me, it’s always important to have somebody that comes from that experience, from that struggle, to actually know how people are struggling in order to be able to help them.”

Currently, eight SOM students are working as Center fellows.

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State Housing Committee advances just cause eviction legislation

BY MAIA NEHME AND
ZACHARY SURI
STAFF REPORTERS

Backed by tenant advocates, the state legislature is looking to dramatically expand renter protections in Connecticut. Those efforts took a big step forward last week.

On Feb. 29, the joint Housing Committee approved legislation that would strengthen protections for renters facing eviction, prohibiting landlords from evicting their tenants without “just cause.” The bill, SB 143, would expand existing just cause protections, currently reserved for elderly and disabled tenants in buildings with five or more units, to almost all renters in the state. The fight for the bill has been spearheaded by Growing Together Connecticut, the Connecticut Tenants Union and Make the Road Connecticut, among other tenants’ rights and community organizations.

“Many people within our urban communities [including] New Haven cannot even afford to rent, so they’re moving out of our city,” Rep. Juan Candelaria, the Deputy Speaker of the House who represents portions of Fair Haven and the Hill, told the News. “We need to control this.”

Candelaria voiced his support for the bill, calling it “overdue.” He said that he sees SB 143 as a critical tool to address the affordable housing crisis and discriminatory housing practices in New Haven and around the state. In particular, Candelaria said he is concerned with protecting tenants from large “mega landlords” who often buy up rental properties from out-of-state. He told the News that he thinks evictions at the end of a lease without cause are far too frequent in Connecticut.

According to the Connecticut Fair Housing Center, landlords filed 2,224 no-cause eviction notices in 2023, around 11 percent of evictions statewide. In 2023, over 20,000 evictions were filed in the state, an approximately four percent increase from 2018. In New Haven alone, 1,769 evictions were filed in 2023, 240 without cause.

Candelaria said that his office has received several messages from New Haven residents in support of the bill, which he committed to do, calling it “the right measure.”

Sen. Rob Sampson, ranking member of the Housing Committee and himself a landlord, raised



TIM TAI / SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

The legislation is part of a multi-year battle to improve renter protections.

several objections. He accused the Democratic caucus of discriminating against landlords, at one point equating the bill to racial and gender discrimination.

“That’s all racism,” Sampson was quoted saying in the CT Mirror. “It’s been bad since the very first day that anyone judged anyone based on the color of their skin.”

A related bill that would have capped annual rent increases at four percent plus inflation failed to pass the General Assembly last session after opposition from members of the Housing Committee. This session, the Senate Democratic caucus has added SB 143 to their list of legislative priorities.

In conversation with the News, Candelaria pushed back on Sampson’s claims.

“If you’re going to increase rents, we’re not saying, ‘don’t increase them,’” he said. “Make sure those rents are fair and equitable so that we can manage the housing crisis in our cities. That’s all that we’re saying with this bill.”

Tenant advocates support bill for low-income renters

Luke Melonakos-Harrison DIV ’23, Vice-President of CTU, also disagreed with Sampson’s claims,

condemning the argument that landlords should face no regulation as ignoring the necessity of housing. He cited similar just cause legislation in several states and municipalities as evidence of its effectiveness and “positive impact” on housing stability and housing security.

“It’s a little bit hard to take seriously when you’re actually seeing what’s going on between tenants and landlords in real life and not in an abstract, theoretical debate,” he told the News.

Melonakos-Harrison did express concerns about the addition of a carve-out to the bill which exempts buildings with four units or less from the new regulations. The carve-out, he said, would reduce the bill’s effectiveness, confuse tenants about their eligibility, and play into the misconception that landlords of smaller buildings are less predatory. Instead, Melonakos-Harrison suggested, his organization might accept requirements based on the number of properties a landlord owns.

At the moment, CTU will continue advocating for the bill in Hartford.

“We’re focused on working with our members and our coalition partners across the state to reach out to their legislators and let them

know how they feel about this bill and the importance of Just Cause,” Melonakos-Harrison said.

Teresa Quintana is the housing equity organizer for Make the Road Connecticut, an organization dedicated to providing legal assistance and support services for immigrant communities.

Quintana said that immigrants, particularly those who are undocumented, are especially vulnerable to no-cause evictions.

“Many people in the undocumented community live that way because they trust,” she said. “They say, ‘Oh, they’re good landlords. We take care of the place,’ so they think [evictions are] never going to happen... to them. And then it happens.”

According to Quintana, Make the Road Connecticut has collaborated with CTU and other organizations to encourage community members to testify in support of the bill.

She noted that immigrants are often reluctant to share their personal experiences with no-cause evictions, necessitating visits to their communities.

“When you’re going to tell [your] story, you’re going to feel that your soul is opening, because there’s a big, big scar,” she said, recalling her frequent words of encouragement to immigrants.

“We’re going to expose how these people [are] taking advantage of you, your families.”

Melonakos-Harrison testified in support of the bill and helped organize members to do the same. He sees SB 143 as critical to preventing “gentrification” fueled by landlords evicting tenants to raise rents and preventing retaliatory eviction of “outspoken” tenants, especially tenant union supporters.

He said he is confident that the bill will help address the state’s affordable housing crisis by forcing landlords to negotiate with tenants, and limiting rent increases. SB 143 would provide tenants with “leverage” to negotiate a reasonable rent increase at the end of their lease, Melonakos-Harrison told the News.

“Lapse of time evictions are an easy tool for landlords who want to quell dissent, to kind of punish advocates and organizers and people who are even just requesting basic repairs,” Melonakos-Harrison said.

Landlords push back against proposed eviction protections

Rick Bush, a property manager and the treasurer of the Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners,

testified in opposition to the bill at a public hearing on Feb. 20.

Bush described lapse of time evictions as a “tool” for landlords, for example, if they need to remove a tenant to renovate their property.

“The idea that a tenant, once they take possession of a property, can stay in perpetuity is just completely ridiculous,” he told the News.

With the bill now moving on to the state assembly, Bush said he plans to keep lobbying against it and recruiting other members of the CCOPO to submit testimony in opposition.

CCOPO President John Souza is another landlord who testified against the bill.

Souza attributed tenants’ housing instability to the state affordable housing shortage, rather than lapse of time evictions. The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that there is a shortage of over 89,000 affordable rental homes for extremely low-income renters in Connecticut.

“Until they build a lot more housing, it’s really just musical chairs for everybody,” he said.

Currently, lapse of time evictions require landlords to provide tenants with a minimum of three days between receiving their eviction notice and vacating the property.

However, Souza pointed out that tenants can contest such evictions, prompting a court process that lasts a few months. Tenants can also petition the court for additional stay for up to six months, providing them with extra time to find new housing.

“I’m disappointed in the small-mindedness and short-sightedness of the legislators in Connecticut,” Bush said. “[Disappointed] that they... would fail to provide adequate housing for their constituents and that their vote is going to have the unintended consequence of making [renting property] more difficult, more expensive and less attractive to tenants. It’s going to be a disaster.”

The bill passed the Housing Committee along partisan lines. Candelaria said that he is optimistic that the bill will pass the legislature this session, most likely without any Republican support, but declined to speculate on whether Governor Ned Lamont would sign the bill into law.

Five states currently have some form of just cause eviction legislation.

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SPORTS

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“Nyla [McGill ’25] was a phenomenal rebounder today. When she is a monster on the boards, it translates to her offense. Cornell could not figure out a way to box her out.”

DALILA ESHE, YALE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL HEAD COACH

WLAX: No. 21 Yale defeats
No. 23 Princeton in Ivy

BY COLETTE STAADECKER
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The No. 21 Yale women's lacrosse team (4-0, 1-0 Ivy) earned a dominant 11-9 victory against Princeton University (3-2, 0-1 Ivy) on Saturday afternoon away at Sherrerd Field in Princeton, New Jersey.

This game marks the Bulldogs' third consecutive win against the Tigers and represents Yale's first victory at Princeton since 1988 when the Bulldogs secured a 10-9 win.

“Princeton has been a tough place for us to play on the road,” Taylor Lane '25 wrote to the News. “But we focus on the controllables, and our veteran squad this year is all business.”

The game showcased thrilling back-and-forth action, with both teams scoring four goals in the opening quarter.

Princeton gained a 6-4 lead early in the second quarter but a rapid pair of goals by Jenna Collignon '25 leveled the score at 7-7 by half-time.

“We knew Princeton was a gritty team that's been able to come back from large goal deficits this season,” Lane wrote to the News. “So, at halftime, we knew we had to stay focused, follow the adjustments our coaches made, and stick to our game plan.”

The halftime discussion proved to be pivotal, as the Bulldogs

SEE W LAX PAGE 14



YALE ATHLETICS

The women's lacrosse team emerged victorious against Princeton.

M BBALL: Yale beats Harvard and Dartmouth,
gaining momentum ahead of Ivy Tournament



YALE ATHLETICS

The Bulldogs can make the NCAA tournament by winning the Ivy League's four-team tournament later this month.

BY BEN RAAB
STAFF REPORTER

After back-to-back losses in February, the Bulldogs are regaining momentum heading into Ivy Madness.

Yale (20-8, 11-2 Ivy) beat rival Harvard (14-12, 5-8 Ivy) 80-60 on Saturday night. A night earlier, they took care of business against Dartmouth (5-21, 1-12 Ivy). With the two victories, the Elis reached the 20-win mark for the fourth time in the last five seasons.

Star forward Danny Wolf '26 had an all-around performance

with 16 points, 10 rebounds and five assists. The statline marked his ninth double-double of the Ivy season, tying the all-time Ivy League record.

Guard Bez Mbeng '25 also had a double-double. The junior finished with 10 points and 10 assists — a career-high.

The Bulldogs have now scored over 80 points in each of their last three games. The team's kenpom.com ranking had shot up nine spots since a Feb. 23 loss to Cornell. Now at 82, the Elis are ranked higher than they've been all season.

Against Dartmouth on Friday, Yale shot 55 percent from

the field, 46 percent from three-point range and had 23 assists on their 33 field goals. Guard John Poulakidas '25 led the way with 16 points, while Matt Knowling '24 added 13 on 5-6 shooting and Wolf recorded another double-double.

Throughout the game, two sections of students held up flags reading “Cease Fire” and “Divest,” calling for a ceasefire in Israel's ongoing war against Hamas in Gaza, an end to what they called Israel's occupation of Palestine and that Yale divest from weapons manufacturing.

SEE M BASKETBALL PAGE 14

W BBALL: Bulldogs triumph
over Cornell, fall to Columbia



YALE ATHLETICS

The women's basketball team took one win and one loss over the weekend.

BY MEREDITH HENDERSON
STAFF REPORTER

For the second time during their 2023-24 season, the Yale women's basketball team (8-18, 5-8 Ivy) took on Cornell University (7-18, 1-12 Ivy) and Columbia University (21-5, 12-1 Ivy). Both games were held at home in New Haven this past weekend.

The Bulldogs looked to pull off their second win of the season against Cornell. The last showdown between the two teams went down in Ithaca, with Yale coming out on top, 66-59. The second match against Columbia, however, would prove to be

a much more difficult feat. The Lions, who earlier in the year took care of the Bulldogs handily, 52-88, currently sit atop the Ivy League rankings alongside Princeton University (22-4, 12-1 Ivy).

The first half against Cornell on Friday began with a quick gain in momentum for the Bulldogs, who immediately broke away with the lead. Nyla McGill '25 led the team's scoring force in the first quarter, followed by Brenna McDonald '24 and Mackenzie Egger '25. The Blue and White offense accounted for eighteen points in the first, which was

SEE W BASKETBALL PAGE 14

M LAX: Elis fall in overtime to Penn State

BY AMELIA LOWER
STAFF REPORTER

The Yale men's lacrosse team's two-game winning streak snapped this weekend in an overtime loss to Penn State.

The No. 11 Elis (2-1, 0-0 Ivy) started off their game against No. 6 Penn State (4-1, 0-0 Big Ten) strong last Saturday, finishing the first half with a 9-2 lead. The Nittany Lions, however, made a comeback to tie the Bulldogs 14-14 by the end of regulation play, leading to a four-minute overtime period during which Penn State tallied an additional goal to secure the win.

The Bulldogs started out the game with a 6-1 lead in the first

frame. Midfielder and team captain Patrick Hackler '24 started off the scoring just seven seconds into the game off an assist by face-off man Machado Rodriguez '25. Assisted by midfielder Carson Kuhl '25, attackman David Anderson '27 scored under three minutes later.

Hacker, assisted by attackman Matt Brandau '24, tallied another point to close out the first five minutes of the game at 3-0, and midfielder Max Krevsky '25 scored unassisted at 9:35. Nittany Lion attackman Jeb Brenfleck put Penn State on the board off an assist by attackman TJ Malone less than a minute later.

Anderson, assisted by midfielder Johnny Keib '25, resumed

Yale's offensive onslaught with another goal at 3:24 remaining in the first frame, and Krevsky scored once more to close out the quarter.

The Bulldogs also saw success in the second quarter, leading 3-1 and finishing the half with a seven-point lead. Krevsky opened the scoring 35 seconds into the frame, and Brandau tallied another goal five minutes later, assisted by Keib, to raise the score to 8-1.

Malone made an unassisted goal under four minutes later to decrease Yale's lead to six, but attackman Peter Moynihan '27 closed out the half with another

SEE M LAX PAGE 14



YALE ATHLETICS

The No. 11 Bulldogs fought to the very end in a 15-14 overtime loss to Penn State last Saturday afternoon.

STAT OF THE WEEK

9.8

REBOUNDS FOR YALE MEN'S BASKETBALL STAR DANNY WOLF '26, THE BEST IN THE IVY LEAGUE.

WEEKEND

ON THE ROAD

Cruising to Santa Cruz

// BY ALEXANDER MEDEL

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

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

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

The sea crinkles the sand as its waves edge closer to the shore. The sun radiates a warm glow from a cloudless afternoon sky. The breeze sifts through your hair to remind you that you are far from the embrace of the city and in the arms of nature. Laughter and screams emanate from the roller-coasters nearby. People of all ages and backgrounds dot the beach in their swimwear, featuring a palette diverse enough to represent the entire rainbow. This is Santa Cruz.

Santa Cruz, a coastal town roughly thirty miles south of San Jose and situated on the northern end of Monterey Bay, is, in many ways, the quintessential California town. A star in California’s constellation of world-renowned surf towns, it typifies the image of California you would imagine from a long lecture on a wintry day in New Haven or from a travel ad that disturbs your late-night binge on HBO Max. Stretches of stunning beaches. Sunbathers and swimmers enjoying the Pacific sun. Surfers as innumerable as the sands on the shore. Perpetual games of volleyball that last from dawn until dusk.

Besides being a surfing destination, Santa Cruz boasts another claim to fame: the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. The oldest surviving amusement park in California, it has entertained generations of locals for more than a century since its founding in 1907. Any

kid who has grown up in the Bay Area during the 2000s and 2010s can remember, just as well as I do, the various commercials advertising the Boardwalk that would interrupt afternoon cartoons. Screaming adults on roller coasters. Kids laughing on carousels. And, of course, a catchy jingle encouraging us to have some fun “in the warm California sun.” Absolute nostalgia accompanies any of my recollections of the times I spent on the Boardwalk as a young kid.

I recall, in particular, one weekend in middle school. My parents decided to drive to Santa Cruz on a whim and visit the Boardwalk. It was a warm April day. Passing through the entrance, I found myself in the shadow of the Giant Dipper. The youthful gleam of its paint belied its age; the Dipper celebrates its centennial this May. Draped in pristine white, its wooden beams shook. Coated in red, its tracks rattled. Joined by the screams of its riders, its cars roared past. I gazed in amazement and awe. I was never one for roller coasters. Thus, anyone who can muster the amount of courage and thrill needed to ride one has my respect and my admiration.

The Boardwalk boasts a thrilling array of rides, from carousels and bumper cars for the young to more advanced machinery for the old. There are the usual fair games that offer stuffed animals as prizes, as well as indoor activities and arcades. That day, I decided to stay grounded on terra firma and enjoy an amusement park staple — funnel cakes warmed and cooked to a golden crisp, topped with chocolate syrup, vanilla ice cream and a generous dose of powdered sugar — before eating lunch.

Canvassing our options, we decided to head to the Santa Cruz Wharf for lunch. After getting our fill of Italian cuisine at Gilda’s, we stepped out and onto the wharf. Walking back toward the city, I saw a sailboat pass by, its immaculate mainsail beating against the wind as its reflection wrinkled across the ocean surface. I stopped for a moment and decided to watch it as it sailed out of the harbor, into the bay and out into the open ocean.

The sea is very much like the road, offering freedom in its vastness, solace in the solitude of its far reaches and a multitude of avenues for adventure. Unlike the road, however, there are no paths to follow, trails to pursue, or highways to dictate the extent of your wanderings. The sea offers no direction except yours, for on the open ocean, you are, as Henley eloquently states, the captain of your soul. You follow no roads in the ocean; you make them. No confines. No constraints. The freedom offered by the sea diffuses into life on the shore and is capable of infecting the restless and the rested with unshakeable wanderlust.

Following our momentary day trip, my parents and I took another a few days later and drove south of Santa Cruz to its neighboring beach town of Capitola. To the outside visitor, at first glance, this small coastal town would seem to be misplaced; its visage resembles that of a Riviera hamlet. If all hints of its location were suddenly erased — from the California license plates on cars to the American units on street signs — one would think that this town was located on the shores of the Mediterranean and not those of the Pacific. The town is charming, unique and well worth a visit for anyone who happens to be fortunate enough to be nearby.

It was a cloudy day when we arrived in downtown Capitola, but the skies did not deter the families at the town beach from enjoying the weekend. Parents relaxed in lawn chairs, their kids building sand castles and chasing each other. We walked on a coastal promenade through the town when we found a strange, amorphous and translucent mass floating languidly in the air. It contorted with every gust of wind as it danced above



// ALEXANDER MEDEL

WEEKEND ADVENTURES

Cont. from page 1

us, and its movements revealed a membrane reflecting shades of blue, green and pink.

Giant bubbles, like the ones we would see on Cross Campus from time to time, hovered over me like dirigibles taking flight. Guided by the breeze, they were the product of a bearded man on the beach. He exhibited an expert command of his wands, deftly slicing the air with the gracefulness of an artist's brush-strokes and the precision of a conductor's waves. His countenance offered no smile but a present humility in the face of amazement and wonder from the crowd. Young children ran to pop each bubble he produced, trying to catch their breath after chasing his newest creations. The bearded man also succeeded in resurrecting the youth in the old, with parents rushing for bubbles with the same enthusiasm and excitement as their kids. Sinatra once sang that "it's worth every treasure on earth to be young at heart." In many respects, the bubble-maker of Capitola Beach did not offer an episode of fleeting amusement; he gave new memories for the young and an opportunity to smile for the young at heart. His talent, however humble, gave all on the beach and promenade that youthful, glee-driven "treasure on earth."

After watching the bubbles and popping some with my parents, we continued walking the promenade toward the Capitola Wharf, a local landmark. On the way there, we strolled through the beach alongside the Venetian Court, a set of Mission Revival apartments built during the 1920s. With its architecture and bright array of colors, it has served as an iconic sight in the region. On this particular day, the Court's Mediterranean pastel palette was juxtaposed with the dreariness produced by the gray skies above.

Soon enough, my parents and I made it to the wharf where we found a string of distanced fishermen. The wind formed wrinkles on their jackets that mirrored the wrinkles that crossed their worn and weary faces. Their eyes, squinting seaward, remained unfazed by the gusts of the sea breeze or the sprays that would swell from the waves that pounded

the wharf's posts beneath their feet. There was, in the air, a freshness both brought by the wind and the simplicity of life in Capitola. Time was fast in nearby Silicon Valley. Here, hours passed as hours, minutes passed as minutes and seconds passed as seconds. Time continued forward, and thus, my day in Capitola ended patiently and pleasantly.

For the outside observer, it is easy to see Santa Cruz and Capitola exemplifying the California Dream. For that stretch of coastline seems to be where beachgoing is the main profession, where the soundtrack of life plays to the Beach Boys, where the notion of tomorrow is a fantasy and where the experience of today lasts for eternity. But to idealize that paradisiacal world with ideas furnished by Hollywood and the marketing industry and to characterize it solely with such qualities is to ignore the great and underlying truth that realistically defines Santa Cruz and Capitola. Both are the quintessential California towns in the way that they both embody the California spirit of resolve.

During finals season last December, my study schedule was interrupted by news reports back home of storm events on the coast. California was hit by an atmospheric river that buffeted many coastal communities, among them Santa Cruz and Capitola, with harsh winds and pouring rain. These communities, the idyllic enclaves of fun and excitement for many, became the victims of the hostile whims of nature. Families evacuated their homes, forced to clean up the wreckage wrought by the storm upon their return. Streets of asphalt became rivers of mud-colored water. Stores were disemboweled, and their contents spilled onto the flooded streets. Santa Cruz Beach was covered with the remains of erstwhile trees. Capitola Wharf was split in two. The tide carried what debris it found into the bay, and with it, the memories of communities lost to the indifferent tide.

The accounts from the Santa Cruz Coast brought me undeniable sadness. And yet, despite this destruction and despair, there remained, beneath the rubble and the waves, hope. People from all backgrounds and all walks of life, with the sole similarity shared amongst all being their communities of residence, united as one and set out to rebuild their towns. They returned to their homes. They returned to their stores. Adults

went back to work. Children went back to school. The streets were cleaned, and the beaches were cleared. These communities turned heartbreak and loss into hope and renewal. Resilience, as they have shown, is not an abstract or lofty idea; it was one brought down to earth by the humble citizens of Santa Cruz and Capitola.

The California way of life, as the communities of Santa Cruz and Capitola profess and illustrate, is the ability to respond to hardships with hope, to crises with confidence and to trials with triumph. Under every smile of the locals of Santa Cruz and Capitola is a reserve of resolve, a subtle strength and a conviction directed with courage that, while hidden to a passerby, is evident in their manner and to those observant and watchful.

Over the course of my travels, I have discovered that you learn the most about places you see by learning from the people you meet there. Therefore, to say that Santa Cruz and Capitola are the quintessential California towns is to pierce through superficial and constructed images of popular culture and to recognize the authentic qualities of their inhabitants. In doing so, you would realize that their courage and resilience are not unique or distinct, but shared in a way that binds them with other communities. Many other places in California exhibit the strength exemplified by Santa Cruz and Capitola, from the mountain towns that brave blizzards, the valley cities that have survived countless wildfires and sister communities on the coast that have faced the torrents of a Pacific winter. In reflecting about Santa Cruz and Capitola, I have not only observed the profound depths of the human spirit, but have learned more about the place I call home and the people I call my neighbors. I came to understand that the collective elan of Californians is one not born out of unrealistic idealism, but of experience, maturity and accumulated wisdom. It is derived from a fortitude refined and matured into a heritage and an inheritance that inspires inspiration, admiration and even, in the humblest of ways, reverence.

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ENIGMA: Are viral Fizz sensations just like us?

// BY ELIZA JOSEPHSON

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

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

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

Social media. Let's dissect the term. Social, in that we as people desire companionship and community. Media, in that we communicate digitally. But what happens when an anonymous group of Yalies is the community?

Enter: Fizz. The mobile app was founded by two Stanford dropouts who wanted to build a college community amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. It provided an anonymous forum for campus discourse, where users with verified Stanford.edu emails could start, continue, upvote or downvote a conversation.

The app has since spread to over 80 institutions across the country, according to the Stanford Daily. And in August of 2022, Fizz came to Yale. Since then, it has blossomed into a vibrant platform that many students engage with regularly. Most Yalies find the highly specific content entertaining.

If you're wondering what kind of content goes viral on Fizz, I'll direct your attention to the "Top" tab on the home screen. Today, the first post I see is captioned, "In case you are having a hard time, here is a video of a squirrel to cheer you up!" This week's top post screams "PETITION FOR YALE DINING TO BRING BACK BREAKFAST PASTRIES!"

A particularly well-loved post is a photograph of someone on the Old Campus Spring Fling stage last year, before it got rained out. The anonymous caption boasts, "I got more stage time than pusha t" and the picture has 2,400 upvotes. The most popular post of all time depicts the winning Yale Football Team holding up a "For Sale: Harvard College" sign. Its caption reads, "This picture is honestly legendary" and more than 2,500 people agree.

But I've always wondered, who are the people behind the posts? What kind of Yale student goes viral on this platform?

I knew exactly where I needed to go to explore this enigma: the Fizz leaderboard. Every user has accumulated a certain amount of "Karma" while using Fizz. When a post is upvoted, a user's Karma increases. The leaderboard tracks these points, indicating who has had the most quantifiable virality.

Even though posting itself is anonymous, you can choose to identify yourself on the leaderboard by a name and a profile picture. So, I did some in-app research into the highest ranking Fizz celebrities who had somewhat identified themselves. Then, I directly messaged them through a feature in the app.

I wasn't sure whether or not I'd get any engagement from these anonymous, enigmatic Fizz celebrities at all. At a certain point, I thought this story would remain an unsolvable mystery. But within seven minutes of my initial messages, I got a response.

FizzGod is ranked second in the last 60 days and thirteenth overall, with 115,082 Karma points. That's extremely impressive. For reference, I've had about 3 relatively viral Fizz posts, and I'm sitting at 5,643 Karma points. That represents a mere twentieth of FizzGod's six figure total.

We corresponded over DMs for a bit, and I did my best to

feel out how comfortable they were sharing details with me. After about nine exchanges, I decided to shoot my shot. And FizzGod, surprisingly enough, agreed to meet with me in person.

In the blustery morning drizzle, standing underneath the Beinecke plaza arch with a green umbrella, I saw a figure rolling toward me at a steady pace. In our messages, FizzGod had mentioned that they'd be skateboarding to our interview, so I waved them over. Right away, I was starstruck.

Let's rewind. About a week ago, an anonymous account posted a photo of some guy mewing (if you haven't heard this term, look it up, because I'm not qualified to explain it). The caption reads "bronson is deadass my spirit animal [crying emoji, crying emoji, crying emoji]" and the post received 50 upvotes.

But a repost, which reads "I like how it's a known fact bronson posts himself on fizz [crying emoji, crying emoji]" has 1,900 upvotes. From there, the Fizz community began lots of Bronson-related discourse.

I wondered, are FizzGod and Bronson Hooper, Class of '27, one in the same?

"Yeah, that's me!" Bronson responded. He has been on Fizz since September of last year, when a friend recommended he join. He posted for the first time in October. As we've established, he's become known by Fizz-ers far and wide quite recently.

You might wonder, like I did, where does the name FizzGod come from? Why not just stick with Bronson? Here's the origin story from his perspective: "I was making a joke with my friend. He sent me a meme, or an IG reels or something, saying 'rizz god, rizz god'" and it clicked. FizzGod!"

Bronson opened the app to show me Fizz from his perspective. I peeked over his shoulder, incredulous. "Your DMs are kind of crazy," I remarked. He smiled. "Most of them are just from random posts." He scrolled past dozens of messages and navigated to the Fizzin' page, which acts as a trending tab for the app.

"I mean, it is crazy. Half the posts on Fizzin' are me sometimes." I asked him to show me. In a span of twenty posts, he claimed authorship of three. Even though none of these had the FizzGod handle, he confirmed each one in his personal profile of posts.

Another niche of Fizz content that I've yet to mention is questions about sexuality. I asked FizzGod what he thought about risqué topics in tandem with anonymity. "Most of the stuff I post on there I would say in real life," Bronson told me. "It's not like I'm hiding ... some people use it to hide, some people use it as a form of expression. I just find it funny."

Bronson is an interesting case of someone who has gone viral anonymously and as an identifiable campus figure. According to him, it was kind of an accident. "I was just messing around, posting one of my IG pictures," he said. "A lot of my viral Fizz posts are fake. Or fabricated, I'll say."

I found it interesting that parts of his non-anonymous success were, as he put it, fabricated. But some may say that Bronson is just playing the game. "If you ReFizz your own content, you get to promote the original post, and then you get upvotes on [the ReFizz] too," he added.

Here are Bronson's final words of Fizz advice. "I'd say, just have fun. Life is too short to try to be something you're not and to put yourself in a box." Later, he told me that he aspires to build a time machine, and to start an aerospace company. "I feel like if I can pursue my dreams confidently, I can inspire others to do the same."

Wise words from FizzGod. He has strong passions he wants to explore, plus an interesting assortment of experiences on campus. Bronson, who hopes to unravel the world's enigmas someday, is enigmatic himself. Readers, I encourage you to remember that behind the allure of viral Fizz celebrities, is inevitably another Yalie, and a potential friend.

I stopped recording our conversation, and Bronson skated

away into the fog lingering over Cross Campus. After he was no longer visible, I instinctively checked Fizz. In the span of two days, my direct messages had gone from response-less to completely full. I'd like to share a couple testimonials of other highly ranked Fizz-ers for a more wide-ranging perspective of the app.

Average Gatsby is third overall on the Karma Leaderboard, with 300,254 cumulative points. They explained that they were trying to take a break from Fizz, which is why it took them a while to get back to me. When I asked why, this is what they said:

"As someone who used to post a lot, I would often see how desperate people would get trying to farm likes and engagement with non-funny posts that sometimes devolved into racism or targeted harassment of student groups. It was just sad to look at because I thought Yale students were better than that, so I started using the platform less."

I would be remiss to not acknowledge this darker side to Fizz. Average Gatsby has a great point, anonymity can be a dangerous tool if placed into the wrong hands. They told me that they are a moderator on Fizz, and they are doing what they can to make sure every post adheres to Fizz's code of conduct.

I'm sure there's some sort of symbolic, high-school level green light metaphor I could insert here, but I'll refrain. All in all, it's nice to know that Average Gatsby is behind the scenes helping to make Fizz a safer app for student use.

I've saved my final DM correspondence for last, and you'll see why. I feel incredibly lucky that I got a response from Daniel el Guapo, who is by far the highest ranked user on Fizz, with 1,183,305 Karma points. They are ahead of Above Average Gatsby, second highest ranked user overall, by a staggering 800,000 points.

When I asked Daniel el Guapo how they'd categorize their content, they responded, "I don't have a focus, I just post whatever dumb thing occurs to me at the moment ... I've never actively tried to get likes, it just happened," they continued. "When I first downloaded Fizz, there was no leaderboard, then one day they added it and I was already on it... but I literally dgaf. I just post for fun and I actually spend very little time on here."

Daniel's approach almost feels too good to be true. It seems like the most successful users on the app try to be authentically funny, but they also have to play the game. About a week ago, the same Daniel el Guapo account reposted some Bronson discourse with the caption, "I'm Bronson" which I can neither confirm nor deny.

As the most popular user, numerically, Daniel el Guapo told me that they receive lots of questions from people who want their advice about how to increase upvotes. "I have none to offer," they wrote, "because it's not something I even think or care about. It's all just random, very stupid stuff. My posts vary so much in content that at this point I'm certain I've both offended and made the broad spectrum of people at this school laugh, but none of it is serious."

Here's what I'm taking away from this extensive investigation. The people behind the posts all seem to agree that their Fizz fame isn't everything. Bronson says to be authentic, but play the game. Average Gatsby is wary of anonymity's evils. Daniel el Guapo doesn't want to spend too much time dwelling on things.

Yale Fizz is uniquely powerful, because it has the ability to connect our campus community. But the app can't escape classic social media issues of performativity and harassment. At the end of the day, I think all three viral Fizz sensations would agree that the app is primarily about having fun. No matter how far down you doom scroll, remember that it's really not that deep.

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Listen to "Open Your Eyes (Interlude)" by Victoria Monét

WEEKEND

SOUNDTRACKS

Gelato is *cheaper* than coffee?!

A guide to every gelato flavor

// BY MADDIE BUTCHKO

I frequent the Elm Cafe, on the lower level of the Schwarzman Center, for my regular fix of a \$4.50 regular-sized mocha. But one day, as I casually perused the menu, my eyes darted to the gelato section. To my surprise, the prices were notably lower — just \$3.25 for a single scoop. It was a whole dollar cheaper than my beloved mocha and even less expensive than a latte, which is \$4! One scoop of gelato was all it took to convert me to the sweet side.

At the Elm, they offer both gelato and sorbet, offering a wide array of flavors. Determined not to miss out, I tried every one of them. So, here's the scoop on all the flavors available.

1. Olive Oil Gelato

Olive oil gelato has become my favorite flavor and is now what I typically order, although I'm not entirely sure if it's due to its exotic nature or simply because of its intriguing name. Surprisingly, it doesn't taste overwhelmingly of olive oil; instead, there's just a subtle hint of it in the aftertaste. What truly pulls me in is the gelato's smoothness — effortlessly scoops up and melts in your mouth, leaving a sensation that's reminiscent of an elevated, unique vanilla flavor, despite it not being vanilla in essence. Among all the flavors, I highly recommend trying this one for its novelty and, most importantly, because it does taste great!

2. Passion Fruit Sorbet

Among all the sorbet flavors, this one stands out as my favorite. The tartness of the passion fruit is wonderfully pronounced, making its flavors pop in your mouth. I particularly enjoyed the texture of this sorbet — it's not icy at all, but rather delightfully creamy while still maintaining its fruity essence as a sorbet. Scooping it up with my spoon was effortless and satisfying. The pasisonfruit's bright, vibrant golden-yellow appearance mirrors its equally vibrant taste. Overall, I highly recommend giving this sorbet a try! Its tropical, sweet and tart flavors are well-balanced.

3. Dark Chocolate Gelato

The chocolate gelato, although rich and unmistakably dark, didn't offer the distinctiveness I anticipated. While it has a deeper, less sweet flavor profile akin to dark chocolate, the difference wasn't significant enough to set it apart. Ultimately, I realized that if I craved chocolate, I could easily get it in the dining hall. While enjoyable, it lacked the uniqueness and memorability I had hoped for.

4. Cantaloupe Sorbet

This sorbet tastes exactly like cantaloupe, offering a refreshing burst of freshness akin to biting into the fruit itself. Its sweetness perfectly captured the authentic flavor profile of real cantaloupe, which is one of my favorite fruits. Despite being less creamy and more on the icier side, the sorbet still had a soft texture. Nevertheless, it remained delicious!

My favorite aspect was the accuracy of the flavor — it truly felt like a taste of summer with its vibrant flavors, freshness and sweetness.

5. Pear Sorbet

I thoroughly enjoyed the pear sorbet — it truly felt like I was taking a bite out of a sweet Asian pear. Despite its slightly icier texture, akin to shaved ice rather than a creamier consistency, it still dissolved effortlessly on my tongue. Interestingly, the pear, orange hibiscus and cantaloupe sorbets all shared a very similar texture. Overall, I highly recommend giving it a try! With its accurate sweet flavor being a highlight, it's definitely among my favorites.

6. Cucumber Sorbet

This sorbet brought to mind the rejuvenating experience of drinking cucumber water. While the fla-

vor might seem unusual at first, its refreshing and cooling essence surprisingly works incredibly well. This would be perfect for the summer or on any hot day.

7. Vanilla Gelato

This flavor was my least favorite due to its texture. Surprisingly, the vanilla gelato exhibited a similar gritty and grainy texture to the hazelnut variation. Unlike the smooth, creamy consistency typical of gelato, it still felt rough. Although the vanilla flavor was still present, the coarse texture was off-putting and I didn't love it.

8. Toasted Coconut Gelato

Despite my usual aversion to coconut, I was pleasantly surprised by how much I enjoyed this toasted coconut gelato. Unlike the soapy or strange taste I typically associate with

coconut, this gelato offered a genuinely good nutty flavor. The addition of toasted coconut flakes provided a delightful texture to the creamy consistency. Its flavor was sweet and toasted, striking a perfect balance without being overly sweet or overpowering in coconut essence.

9. Hazelnut Gelato

While I typically enjoy hazelnut flavors, I found myself somewhat disappointed with this gelato variation. Despite its accurate hazelnut flavor — a bit reminiscent of Nutella — the texture left much to be desired. Rather than smooth and creamy, it felt grainy, as if there were tiny particles present. I suspect this might be due to the inclusion of literal hazelnuts. Unfortunately, this texture issue detracted from what could have been a more satisfying experience. If you prioritize flavor over texture and really like hazelnuts, this gelato might still be worth trying.

10. Orange Hibiscus Sorbet

The sorbet had a delightful texture that was less creamy and more reminiscent of shaved ice. The orange flavor was incredibly vibrant and pronounced, offering a delightful balance of tartness and sweetness. I appreciated the slight sourness, which added depth to the overall experience. If you're a fan of orange and citrus-based flavors, this sorbet is worth trying.

Gelato can be enjoyed anytime and with anyone. Gelato is not just for Sundae's; it's for every day. Getting gelato can be a study break or a casual hangout. But why stop there? Gelato could be the sweet ticket to romance. Picture this: you, smooth as gelato, finally muster up the courage to ask out that cutie from linear algebra. If they say yes, sweet victory! And, if you can't get the cutie, you can still get the sweetie aka gelato. It's a win-win situation either way.

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The Music of the Movies:

Five Perfect Film Songs

// BY IDONE RHODES

When I think of certain movies, my mind jumps to a song, not an image or plot point. A good soundtrack makes a film; it guides the audience through shifts in feeling, builds out characters, and creates a palpable mood. Take the soundtrack out of an excellent movie, and you'll likely be left with a far less compelling film.

The songs below by no means comprise a definitive list of the "best" film soundtracks, but they do exemplify the power of a song to bring you into the atmosphere and emotional intensity of a film's world. When I hear these songs, I can vividly re-experience a film, as if it were playing right in front of me.

“Love Theme” by Ennio Morricone from “Cinema Paradiso”

This song, written by legendary Italian composer Ennio Morricone, beautifully captures the nostalgia and bittersweetness of young love. The theme, a recurring motif throughout the film, follows the protagonist Tito as he falls for Elena as a teenager, waits out-

side in the rain every night to win her over, and ultimately loses her. When the song plays at earlier moments in the film, its brightness and levity shine through; it is pure and innocent, almost uncomplicated. In the director's cut of the film, Tito and Elena reunite as adults after decades of life have passed them by. As “Love Theme” plays over a passionate scene of tangled gray hair, the song acquires a melancholy, almost fraudulent tone. The song reminds us of the tragedy of their love affair; they come back together on borrowed time and can never return to what they had as teenagers.

“Twin Peaks Theme” by Angelo Badalamenti from “Twin Peaks”

As soon as the first few notes of “Twin Peaks Theme” play, I am transported to a small, foggy lumber town in northern Washington. Angelo Badalamenti's original music for the television series and subsequent film, created in close collaboration with filmmaker David Lynch, is absolutely fundamental to creating the otherworldly aura of a world that is simultaneously cozy and uncanny, famil-

iar and strange, loving and violent. The mixture of synth and keys comes together to create a song laden with suspense, and, as the track crescendos, there is a sense of flight, of taking off into a new realm full of inexplicable mysteries.

“Kissing You” by Des'ree from “Romeo + Juliet”

Baz Luhrmann's “Romeo + Juliet” is chock full of excellent song choices that highlight the film's mid-90s origins, from Radiohead's “Talk Show Host” to The Wannadies “You & Me Song.” But perhaps no song from this film is quite so iconic as “Kissing You” by Des'ree. The British pop artist appears in the film to perform the track at the party where our star-crossed lovers first meet. The song begins as Romeo and Juliet, played by a baby-faced duo of Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes, lock eyes through a fish tank. As Des'ree's mournful voice serenades the young lovers, they look at each other longingly, even as Juliet dances with another man. “Pride can stand/ A thousand trials / The strong will never fall / But watching stars without you/ My soul cried,”

the singer wails, her mournful words foreshadowing the lovers' fate. The song beautifully encapsulates the melodrama and tragedy to come.

“Under Pressure Aftersun Version” by Oliver Coates from “Aftersun”

Oliver Coates' interpretation of Queen and David Bowie's “Under Pressure” adds an emotional force to the closing scenes of “Aftersun” that bring an already heartbroken viewer to their knees. Calum and Sophie, a young father and daughter, dance together at the end of their vacation in Turkey. As the song builds intensity, the unmarred innocence of their dance is shattered. Calum — stuck at the same age — meets Sophie, now an adult, in the flashing lights of a rave. The film's version of the song uses isolated vocals and a heightening of the strings to emphasize the jarring grief of revisiting a lost memory and a lost person. The exact implications of this scene and what happens to Calum, who we have witnessed struggle with his mental health throughout “Aftersun,” remains ambiguous. But, as the film flashes between a family vacation and a rave in a dark void, Queen and David Bowie implore us to remember, “This is our last dance.”

“Visions of Gideon” by Sufjan Stevens from “Call Me By Your Name”

This haunting song by Sufjan Stevens plays over the final scene of “Call Me By Your Name” as a young Elio stares into the fireplace of his childhood home, trying to reckon with his first love. Joy, sadness, anxiety, resignation, and, finally, resolution flit across Elio's face as he replays in his mind each moment of his relationship with Oliver. The hypnotizing repetition of lyrics and the song's obsession with time, vision, and loss lull the viewer into Elio's headspace, allowing us to identify with our protagonist's grief more acutely. We sit in this extended shot with

Elio for the entire length of the song; we notice each slight move of his lips or tear running down his cheek. As the song fades out, Elio, beautifully acted by Timothée Chalamet, is called back to reality by his

mother. He looks directly into the camera — at us — as the song poses its final question, “Is it a video?” Elio turns away, and the screen goes black, but we know this question will remain.

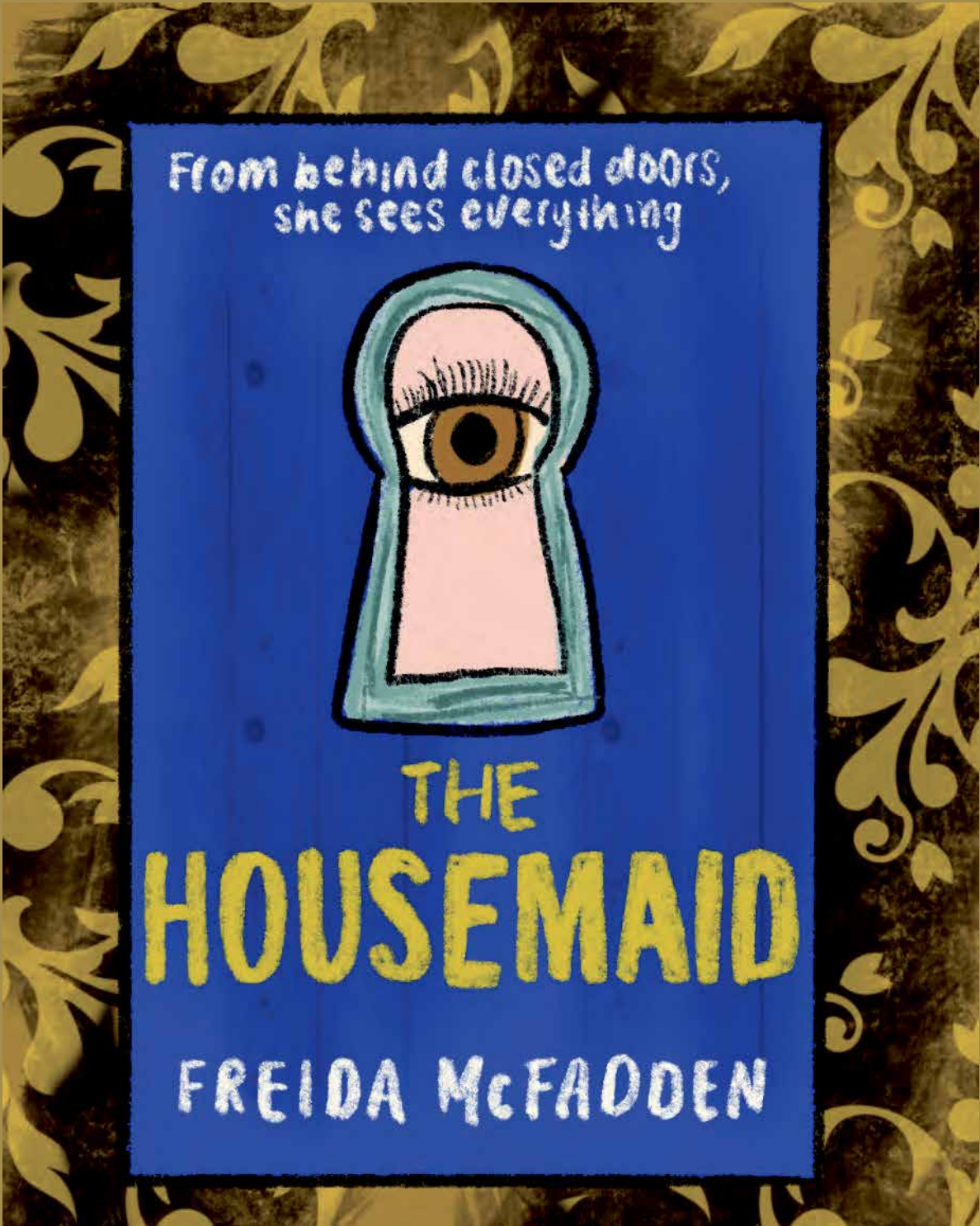
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Breaking up with Miami for Spring Break...

Thrills and Chills:

a book review for *The Housemaid Series*



// BY MADDIE BUTCHKO

Thrillers have always been my go-to genre whenever I fall into the dreaded reading slump. But once I immerse myself in gripping narratives, I know I won’t be able to stop reading. Good thrillers are addictive. Such was my experience with Freida McFadden’s widely popular series, “The Housemaid.” With three books slated for publication and the third one anticipated later this year, I eagerly dived into the first two installments, and here’s what I thought about them.

1. “The Housemaid”

This domestic thriller centers around Millie, the main character, who secures a job as a maid for the affluent Winchester family. Hired on the spot by Nina, the wife, Millie moves into their mansion, living in the attic bedroom. For Millie, who is homeless, this job signifies a fresh start. However, Millie harbors secrets of her own — secrets that the Winchesters are unaware of, including her recent release from jail. As tensions escalate and the family’s hidden truths emerge and no one is safe.

This was definitely my favorite of the two. What I loved most was the constant plot twists — there wasn’t just one at the end, but surprises scattered throughout the entire book. The little hints dropped along the way kept me guessing, always on my toes, trying to piece everything together. It felt like solving a puzzle, with everything clicking into place by the end. I appreciated how each character had a background story, and how everything eventually intertwined. Overall, definitely one of my favorite thrillers.

5 / 5

2. “The Housemaid’s Secret”

“The Housemaid’s Secret” still follows Millie, but she is now working for a new family, the Garricks. Millie begins her job, but when she sees Mrs. Garrick with spots of blood around her neck gown, Millie fears for the worse. Millie

begins to wonder what is really going on between Mr. Garrick and Mrs. Garrick and she begins to do her own digging.

This book features some of the same characters. It could be a standalone and the plot would still make sense, but to really get all of the details and connections I would highly recommend reading the first book.

I found the first part of this book to be a bit slow, with numerous events occurring without clear purpose. However, the pace significantly improved after the 50 percent mark, with the latter part of the book being a ton of fun and entertaining. While twists at the end were great, I felt that the conclusion was somewhat rushed and abrupt. Despite this, I still found myself unable to put the book down, and overall, I enjoyed the experience.

4.5 / 5

Overall thoughts:

Writing Style: 3.5 / 5

The biggest pro is that her straightforward and uncomplicated style makes for an accessible reading experience. I found myself flying through both novels, reading them both in just a few hours. With a clear and simpler writing style, don’t expect to be moved by deeply emotional prose. McFadden’s prose itself isn’t particularly captivating or poetic. Her writing fulfills the expectations of a thriller genre where the plot takes precedence over prose. Ultimately, while McFadden’s writing style is not a standout asset, it doesn’t detract from the overall mystery and suspense elements.

Characters: 3.8 / 5

The characters in McFadden’s series were enjoyable, although I didn’t form particularly strong attachments to them. While there were some minor annoyances, they didn’t detract from my engagement with the story. For instance, I felt that Enzo could have been more developed, and I wished for more depth to the main character, Millie, and her backstory. McFadden had the potential to delve deeper into these aspects. Most of the book is narrated from

Millie’s first-person perspective, which I found enjoyable. Additionally, occasional glimpses into other characters’ perspectives added depth and a twist on the perspectives. McFadden’s books prioritize plot over character development, with the characters primarily serving as vessels to propel the narrative forward, rather than possessing complexity or emotional depth.

Plot: 5 / 5

The core of McFadden’s books lies in their plot, which more than compensates for shortcomings in the writing and character development. Thriller novels, in my opinion, hinge on their plot above all else, and McFadden’s series certainly delivers in this regard. Her plots are layered with numerous twists and turns that keep readers guessing. What I appreciate most is that there are multiple twists and they build upon each other.

The characters’ unreliability heightens the suspense by presenting a series of contrasting perspectives alongside the sequence of events. When the perspectives shift, it offers a fresh lens through which to view familiar events, turning the narrative on its head. McFadden excels in leading readers down one path before completely subverting their expectations, and it’s this skillful manipulation of plot and perspective. If you’re seeking a book with a gripping and eventful plot filled with twists, I recommend diving into this series.

When picking up a book, I felt that I had to learn something from everything I read, making it a challenge to get into longer, more complex books. But reading doesn’t always have to be an intellectual pursuit — it can be for an escape or for entertainment. That’s why I love thrillers. Thrillers are not for deep reflection, but for enjoyment and entertainment. So, if you’re looking for a quick and enjoyable mystery, McFadden’s series is a great start.

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