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ALUMNI MAGAZINE

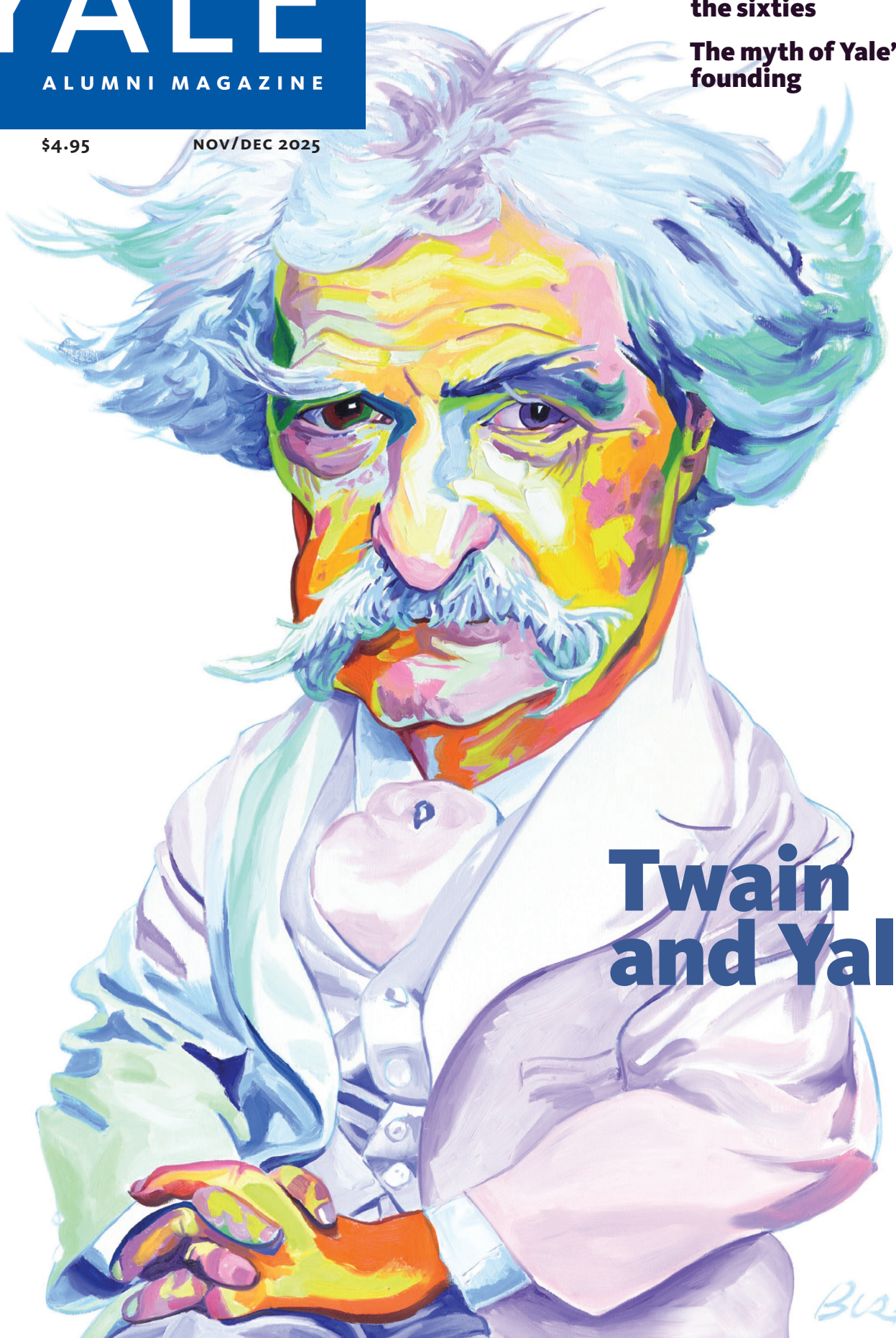
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Yale's newest Nobel laureates

Revisiting a ruin from the sixties

The myth of Yale's founding



Twain and Yale

Buck 25



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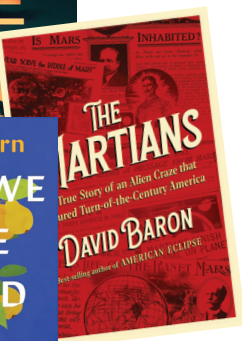
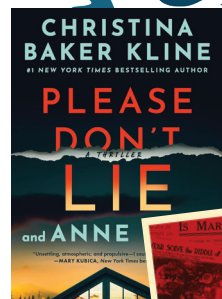
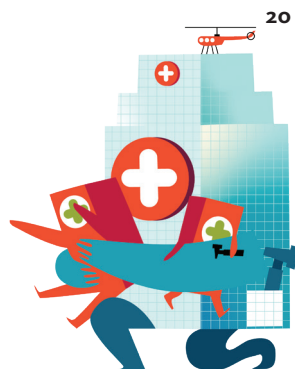
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"The magazine should impartially explore the achievements, issues, and problems of the University . . . to convey a complete, fair, and accurate understanding of Yale today." — From the Statement of Purpose

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from the editor

Let's talk

My father, a New Zealander whose trip to England on a Rhodes Scholarship was delayed by a crew mutiny in the South Pacific, found his first years at Oxford difficult. His college put all international students in the same dorm, far from their cliquy English counterparts, who made it clear they were not interested in spending time with the foreigners.

Luckily my dad's roommate, who came from India, was a fantastic cook and the pair passed a

pleasant year figuring out how to replicate Punjabi dishes using English substitutions. I made one of their recipes last week, and it reminded me of their stories and the students who made them feel unwelcome. Those students may have been at Oxford to learn, but they had no interest in talking across differences.

American college campuses tend to be less sprawling than

Oxford, my hometown and alma mater. That's a good thing. At the US universities I know best, students and professors run into each other by chance. They collaborate in classrooms, sure, but also in dining halls, walkways, and coffee shops. They make plans, they solve problems, they dream up novel approaches. They have fun. And in the process, they set the global standard for technological, creative, and scholarly innovation.

All of us alumni magazine editors know how fortunate we are. We spend our days immersed in interesting stories that touch every part of our world. We get to regularly call up people who are smarter than us, people who hold positions of power and influence, and ask them lots of questions. And we get to spend our days on college campuses, with their energy, their bookstores, their golden buildings and vivid lawns filled with young people and purpose. From the excitement of fall through the shimmering emptiness of high summer, a feeling persists: that we are all on the cusp of something; that more is possible than we knew. As I've walked around New Haven this September, I've never felt it more strongly. It's the storied history—including the honorary degree Yale awarded Mark Twain despite the Corpo-

ration's disagreement with his political views. (See page 37.) It's the culture of courteous conversation, the commitments to freedom of speech, academic excellence, and service. It's the daily serendipities an urban campus can create. It's the sense—as President Maurie McInnis '96PhD said in her inaugural remarks—that Yale does not yield to the winds of change, but leads them.

Oxford's 43 colleges are scattered through the city, and when I attended, silos were rigid; classes, as well as room and board, were organized by college. Yale students have a home base, too, but they attend classes with people from across the institution. Most importantly, in traditions from the Yale Political Union to the Cultivating Conversations program, students are encouraged to talk across differences.

It makes me hopeful. I think of the charge McInnis gave to the Class of 2025 at Commencement: "To live what has been learned. To mend what has been broken. To lift up where others have torn down."

**I suspect you have thoughts,
and we'd like to hear them.**

I've been exploring (left). I've been talking to anybody I can—and it turns out that's a lot of people, because everyone seems as excited about the magazine's future as I am. And I've been wondering about you. What do you enjoy about the magazine? What would you like to see more (or less) of? What have we never done that we should? I suspect you have thoughts, and here at *YAM*, we'd like to hear them. A cohort of emerging leaders from around Yale is helping develop a survey to that end, launching next year. In the meantime, please feel free to write to yam@yale.edu, for publication or just to talk. I can't imagine a more exciting project than getting to know *YAM*'s readers—that immense family of alumni, students, faculty, and staff that extends from New Haven around the globe. I promise these pages will continue to reflect that community—your community—as it helps lead the world, in ways big and small, toward a future in which we learn to talk across differences, mend what's broken, and demonstrate that more is possible than we knew.

Pippa Jack



It was a 45-minute hike to *YAM*'s foam house photo shoot in early September. (See page 42.) Art director Jeanine Dunn brought the bug spray. Left to right: photo assistant Sophia Pallwein-Prettner; Dunn; photographer Chris Buck; editor Pippa Jack; executive editor Mark Branch '86; architect and foam visionary Turner Brooks '65, '70MArch.

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letters

On photographs and photographers

Congrats to Gregory Crewdson '88MFA, writer James Hannaham '90, and photographer Chris Buck on the strangest-ever cover story in *YAM* ("Crewdson Country," September/October). On the outside, a



disturbing subject tucked among floral excess like Crewdson's Lynchian early work. On the inside, unruffled text on the Hollywood-style scenographer and tenured dean—the genial professional I remember from Soho in the 1990s.

Between these parallel tracks, the third rail is the character Crewdson plays in the portraits, wary and passive as any of his models. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, begins in my mind with none other than the Beach Boys' Brian Wilson late in life. It's a risky way to ask if you're a genius.

Lisa Hein '76
Brooklyn, NY

I enjoyed the article on Gregory Crewdson and his captivating photography. But I found the photo of Professor Crewdson and Juliane Hiam (above) most arresting. Rarely does one view a photograph with more moment and kinesis. Bravo!

Jonathan Hoffman '69
Wilmington, DE

Cookies from Claire's

What a pleasure to read about Claire's Corner Copia ("Cakes and Kindness," September/October). Back in 1979, when I was newly married, awaiting a baby, and striving hard through the drama school's technical design and production program, Claire's was a mainstay for my husband and me. We made regular visits to Claire's

to get our falafel fix and indulge in the best chocolate chip cookies on the planet! Those cookies! By the time they made it home (if they made it home), the wonderful fats had oozed through the bag. They just don't make them like that anymore. Or maybe she does? I'd like to think so. It was like getting a warm embrace from home and Mom. Thank you for featuring Claire LaPia Criscuolo and bringing back some dear memories.

Melissa Rick Cochran '81MFA
Florence, OR

Engineering camp

The story "A Summer Place" (September/October) brought me back to my 1961 summer as a rising junior studying civil engineering. What is now the Yale Outdoor Education Center was then the site of a month-long camp to teach Yale students land surveying: determining the precise location on earth of existing or proposed infrastructure facilities (buildings, roads, etc). This was an unpaid vacation in the

woods around Powers Lake, during which we carried transits, levels, and 100-foot-long steel measuring tapes across the landscape. We also learned celestial navigation—finding our location on the earth. All these functions are now handled by GPS.

We were taught by Professor Robert P. Vreeland, a great teacher, a skilled professional, and a role model who led me to an academic career in engineering. On days when we were working far from the camp dining facility, Bob Vreeland rowed across the lake to bring us lunch in a picnic basket. It was a grand summer spent with friends and mosquitoes, disconnected from affairs of the day. I am happy to know that Yale kept this facility for broader use. I hope it now has flush toilets.

Joseph L. Schofer '63E
Wilmette, IL

Exploring the Baltics

Thanks for including the list of Yale international initiatives ("Yale and the World," July/August). I would like to suggest an

CHRIS BUCK



Chat

Every weekday, we post a photo on Facebook, Instagram, and our Daily Snap blog. In September, we posted this photo of the Jitter Bus, which has been selling coffee on Grove Street since 2016, and asked alums where they got their java when they were at Yale. "My favorite spot in the early '60s was 'My Brother's Place' on Chapel," responded Anthony Lavelly '64 on Facebook. "Brothers Lou and Jerry were the proprietors. Great guys." For Michael Radway '76, it was "the dining halls. Expensive coffee hadn't been invented yet." And Ron Sipherd '64 said he was a "big fan of the late great Yankee Doodle."

MARK ALDEN BRANCH '86

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“My exposure to the genuine diversity of viewpoint and experience on the Yale campus helped me start my journey to becoming a more thoughtful person.”



Chat

In August, when we saw these sweatshirts with familiar block letters in the window of Urban Outfitters on Broadway, we posted a photo on Facebook. Scott McIsaac '78 suggested they were “attire for classes the day after an all-nighter.” Tim Kubik '88 wrote that “my wife (Brown '89) and I used to have a mash-up of Yale-Brown stickers on our cars that said that. Always drew interesting remarks.”

addition to your excellent list: the Yale Baltic Studies Program. This program, housed in the MacMillan Center and led by Bradley Woodworth, is one of the finest Baltic studies programs in the world. The program is an interdisciplinary forum for the study of the Baltic Sea region, with an emphasis on the lands that comprise contemporary Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Thank you for pointing out the incredible importance of Yale's engagement with the world at this time.

Steve Woit '80
Lexington, MA

Giving crew its due

The bold print on page 53 of your July/August issue—“the women's rowing team won its first national varsity eights title”—and a similar claim in the magazine's table of contents, sacrifices truth for sensationalism. The article rightly credits Coach Will Porter with four NCAA victories, a good

trick if Yale had never won before. An accurate headline including the words “since 2010” would have acknowledged that the superbly talented 2025 crew was in part the product of a long culture of hard work and successful racing, including earlier NCAA victories in 2007, 2008, and 2010.

And “first national varsity eights title” ignores the world before the NCAA absorbed women's rowing. In 1979, the varsity eight, coached by Nat Case, won the collegiate event at the National Women's Rowing Association Championships. The early history of Yale women's crew is being lost with the declining memories of those who rowed in the 1970s, but it hurts to see *YAM* erase it prematurely.

Eugenia C. (Jennie) Kiesling '78
Fort Collins, CO

Ms. Kiesling is correct. Although the article itself correctly identified the win as the first since 2010, the subhead and table

of contents were wrong. We regret the error.—Eds.

More on faculty diversity

William F. Buckley has been gone more than a dozen or so years, but his heirs, intellectual and otherwise, are still carrying on the permanent grievance with his alma mater, as demonstrated by the full page ad in the May/June 2025 *Yale Alumni Magazine* decrying the lack of diversity on Yale's campus—defined as diversity of political party affiliation—or more specifically, the lack of Republicans on campus.

How does viewpoint diversity work at Yale? I came to campus, from a family of staunch Midwestern Eisenhower Republicans, practically predetermined to take indefensible stands on any given social issue of the day, from apartheid to queerness and everything in between. I was, in short, a square peg discovering round holes for the first time. My exposure to the genuine diversity of viewpoint and experience on the Yale campus helped me start my journey to becoming a more thoughtful person. For that I am thankful.

Meanwhile, I'm pretty sure, given the recent track record (See Letters: “Alums in the government,” same issue), that I do not desire Yale graduates to lead a whole country. At the same time, we all seem to be awash in Republican opinions, or at least noise, surely even on the relatively insular Yale campus. *God and Man at Yale?* The world has moved on.

Given the through-the-looking-glass quality of our era, the very fact that Yale is not populated by members of the same political party currently entrenched in the federal government suggests that Yale is accomplishing its mission exactly as intended—resisting complacent, lazy orthodoxy. Of that I can be sure.

John Cooley '90
Mansfield, CT

So Daniel Fink (Letters, July/August) thinks the reason Yale's faculty has so few conservatives and Republicans is because few of them enter PhD programs—or that those who do don't produce work of high

MARK ALDEN BRANCH '86

“As I completed my PhD and looked at career options, the thought of a faculty position at a liberal university with no diversity of thought held no appeal at all.”

enough quality to get hired by Yale? Mr. Fink needs to step outside the world of academia and visit the “real world.” From my career in industrial research, I can assure you that conservatives are well represented among PhDs in industry, and are often the norm, especially in the sciences.

A more likely reason you find so few conservatives among university faculties is simply choice. Why would any conservative want to join an organization that is so unwelcoming to their beliefs? As I completed my PhD and looked at career options, the thought of a faculty position at a liberal university with no diversity of thought held no appeal at all.

Stephen Christensen '78MS
Inver Grove Heights, MN

I refer to the letters by Lauren Noble '11 and Jim Staffaroni '68 (Letters, July/Au-

gust) in which the now often heard pleas about diversity are thrown around, this time toward the end of *their* brand of diversity. I thought that diversity ended with the Supreme Court ruling against affirmative action.

Conservatism, in the William F. Buckley Jr. tradition, which is not dead at all, boiled down to a fear of spreading democracy beyond the rule of white Tory Americans. It also meant standing still against change and expanding equality. While the label “liberal” is a little squishy these days because of its loud opposition to Trump’s brand of conservatism, the definition of conservatism seems even more vague under the hands of our current president. My experience at Yale in the time of McCarthyism was an expansive exposure to a very wide range of political and philosophical points of view through history.

It changed my life. What did Noble and Staffaroni absorb from those different and “diverse” world views?

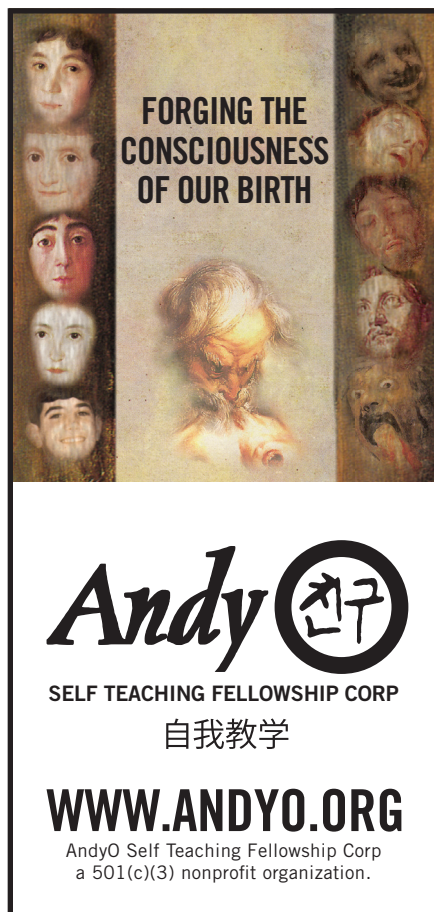
Konrad Perlman '60MCP
Washington, DC

So let me get this straight. The Buckley Institute and others think Yale should recruit faculty based upon their Republican Party affiliation, but it is illegal for Yale to recruit students based upon their race. If ability and scholarship are to be the considerations for selecting students, they should also be the criteria for selecting faculty.

Alan Dynner '65LLB
Boston, MA

Rethinking ratings

Your Findings section described a study in *Nature* that touts the replacement of the five-star rating system with a thumbs up



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“I believe the story would be greatly enriched by hearing directly from alumni who experienced the posture photo process.”

or down (Noted, May/June). The change is proffered as a solution to race disparities in ratings. Assuming the disparities are in fact due to racism, two points merit mention.

First, the ratings difference the *YAM* piece notes are quite small: a 4.79 average for white workers and a 4.72 average for nonwhite workers. Moreover, the differences are not uniform. The original study details that “Hispanic/Latino workers averaged 4.79”—the same as white workers—while both Asian and Black workers did slightly worse.

Second, by obliterating the five-point scale and replacing it with essentially a pass/fail system, the “solution” removes ratings benefits from top performers. That is, a “thumbs up” does not enable the online reader to distinguish a 3.2 worker from a 4.8 worker. A highly rated nonwhite work-

er is given the same “thumbs up” score as a middling white worker (and vice versa).

The study notes that the difference between ratings of 4.79 and 4.72, while small, is statistically significant. But the difference between worker ratings of 3.2 and 4.8 is far greater. Is suppressing this more finely grained—and thus more informative—evaluation system in favor of inscrutable pass/fail grades really a step toward racial progress? Or is it simply concealing existing racial bias while penalizing skillful minority workers and their customers?

Walter Weber ’84JD
Alexandria, VA

Query: posture photos

To Yale alumni of the 1940s through the 1960s: I host a documentary podcast series called *Campus Files*, which explores stories within higher education. I’m currently

developing an episode about the history of nude posture photographs on college campuses, with particular focus on Yale.

I’ve spoken with several historians, but I believe the story would be greatly enriched by hearing directly from alumni who experienced the posture photo process as students. If you are open to sharing your recollections, I would be grateful to speak with you. I understand this is a sensitive subject, and I am glad to keep conversations on background if preferred.

If you are interested, please reach me at margo.gray@audacity.com.

Margo Gray
New York, NY

CORRECTION

In our item noting the death of poet Wen-Tao Cheng (Milestones, September/October), we reported that he earned an MBA



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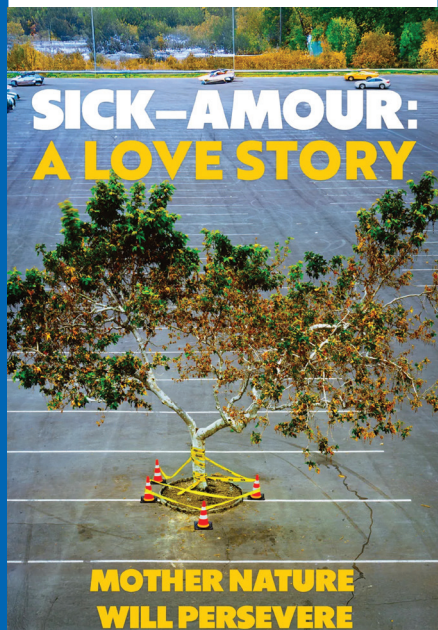
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Alumni notes



Alumni of all Yale schools can post their news in the password-protected Alumni Notes section of our website. Joel Tauber '95 recently wrote about a film project of his: "My first feature film, *Sick-Amour: A Love Story*, is streaming on Amazon and Vimeo OTT. And I would love it if you watched the movie. The 77-minute documentary—which was filmed over the course of 18 years—celebrates the forlorn and lonely tree that I adopted in the middle of a giant parking lot in front of the Rose Bowl Stadium in Pasadena. It paints a multi-faceted portrait of the tree via a series of interviews with experts in different fields, while it chronicles my efforts to improve the tree's life."

from the Iowa Writer's Workshop. As several readers surmised, that was a typographical error. His degree was an MFA.

We welcome readers' letters, which should be emailed to yam@yale.edu or mailed to Letters Editor, PO Box 1905, New Haven, CT 06509-1905. Due to the volume of correspondence, we are unable to respond to or publish all mail received. Letters accepted for publication are subject to editing. Priority is given to letters of fewer than 300 words.

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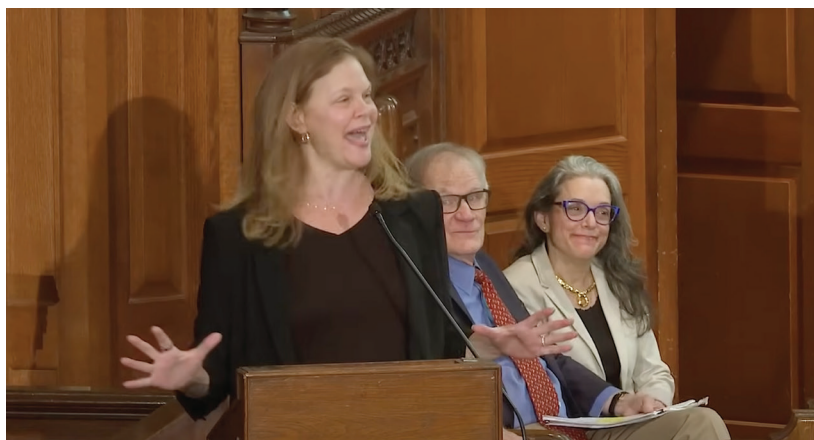
Some sports have a higher barrier to entry than others. A group of kids can't just organize a crew regatta in the backyard, for example. But since 1999, the Yale Community Rowing program has introduced local students to the college's oldest intercollegiate sport with a summer program at the Gilder Boat-house. This summer, 20 middle-school students from New Haven and the lower Naugatuck Valley learned the fundamentals of rowing using training barges on the Housatonic River. "They have a blast and cheer each other on," Allison Braun, the assistant crew operations coordinator for Yale rowing, told *It's Your Yale*. "We want them to be the best they can be and realize that you can do hard things, conquer them, and thrive."



ROBERT DESANTO

America in 26 lectures

The hottest ticket on campus this fall is America at 250, a one-time-only survey of American history taught by Yale historians Beverly Gage '94 (left), David Blight (center), and Joanne Freeman (right) to mark the nation's semiquincentennial, each lecturing on the period in which they specialize. The course was capped at 486 students, but since it's being presented as this year's public DeVane Lectures, an even bigger crowd flows into the 844-seat Battell Chapel twice a week. If you can't make it in person, never fear: Each lecture, and an accompanying weekly podcast discussion, is later posted online. Find them at tinyurl.com/2025devane.



Rooms of their own



ANNIE LIN '09

Yale College seniors majoring in art have a new place to get to work. In September, the School of Art opened a new studio space on the mid-block path that leads from York Street to Morse and Stiles Colleges. The loft building—formerly the offices of Newman Architects—has 24 individual studios, a large classroom, a place for critiques, and faculty and staff offices. The new space replaces studios lost with the demolition of 341 Crown Street to make room for the new dramatic arts building. With an undergraduate performance space—the Off-Broadway Theater—next door, the path is becoming a kind of miniature arts district.

YOUTUBE



Philatelic honor for Buckley

In 1950, a graduating Yale senior named William F. Buckley Jr. was asked to speak at the university's Alumni Day. When the administration read a draft of his remarks, they asked him to tone it down. He declined and withdrew from the engagement. The following year, he expanded the speech into a book, *God and Man at Yale*, that painted the university as leftist and anti-religious, thus launching a career as the lonely conservative who "stands athwart history, yelling Stop."

Seventy-five years later, in the centennial year of his birth, Yale celebrated Buckley on September 9 by hosting the unveiling of a US postage stamp with his visage. Among the speakers at the event on Beinecke Plaza were Yale College dean Pericles Lewis, pundit George Will, and Christopher Buckley '75, the honoree's son. Lewis said the portrait on the stamp by Dale Stephanos, based on a 1960s photo of Buckley on his sailboat, "aptly captures the spirit of sharp intellect, determination, and thoughtful discourse that shaped Buckley's time here at Yale College and his intellectual leadership of the conservative movement."

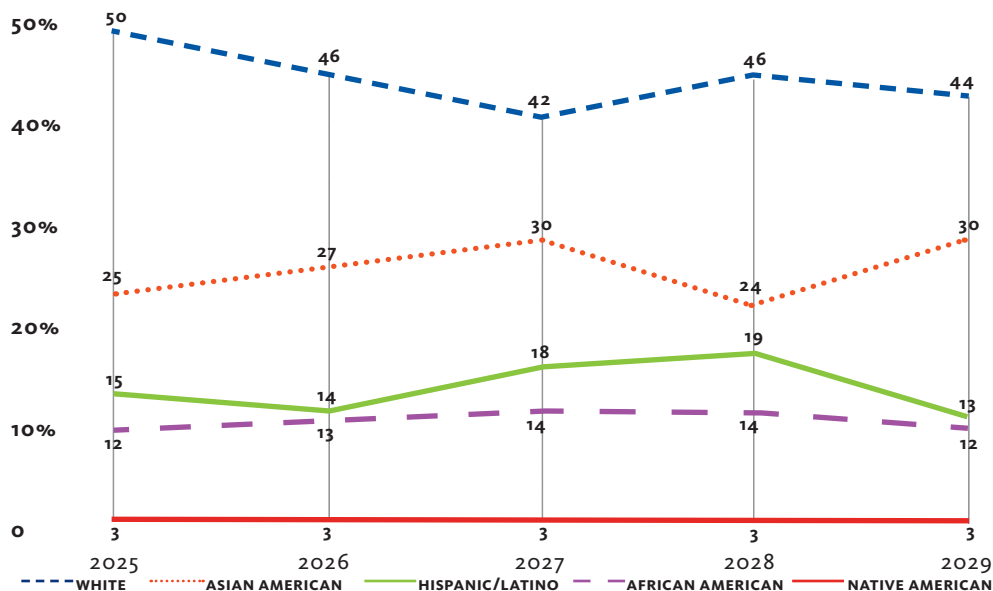
Quoted

"These results, which add to our understanding of the relationship between alcohol and dementia, have clinical implications. There was a time when medical knowledge seemed to support that light drinking would be beneficial to brain health, and this work adds to the evidence that this is not correct."



By the numbers: the new class

The Yale College Class of 2029 is the second class to be admitted after the 2023 Supreme Court decision that barred universities from using race as a factor in admissions. Data on the new class show that while there were fluctuations, the numbers for all categories remain within the typical range for the years before the court's decision. The chart below shows the self-reported background of incoming first-years from the US in each of the last five years, as a percentage of the class. (Totals exceed 100 percent because some students indicated two or more categories.) It does not include international students, who make up 10 percent of the Class of 2029.



—Yale psychiatry professor Joel Gelernter '79, in a news release about a study suggesting that any amount of alcohol consumption may increase one's risk of dementia. Gelernter was senior author of the study, which also included researchers from Oxford and Cambridge. It was published in *BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine*.

Doing the math on federal policy

They had at least two things in common: All three of them worked on economic policy in the Biden administration, and all three owned dogs. They would see each other at the Congressional Cemetery in Washington, DC, on weekends, dogs gamboling, and they would talk through personal frustrations with the policymaking process.



The Budget Lab's principals, left to right: chief economist **Danny Yagan**, president **Natasha Sarin** '11, and executive director **Martha Gimbel**.

Gripes turned into plans, and plans turned into real collaboration. In April 2024, the three of them—Natasha Sarin '11, Danny Yagan, and Martha Gimbel—hailing from different corners of government and possessing distinct expertise, cofounded the Budget Lab at Yale Law School, where Sarin is a professor.

The lab specializes in economic analysis of federal policy proposals, issuing public reports on the projected impact of tax cuts, tariffs, and other changes. Its work is regularly cited in media sources from *The Wall Street Journal* to *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*.

"It has certainly gone further much faster than anybody anticipated," says Gimbel, the Budget Lab's executive director. Think tanks, she explained, usually take time to establish their reputation. "We've been around for just over a year, and it's already the case that when you see journalists talking about the economic evaluations of policy they will say 'these come from the usual suspects,' and we're included in that. We've become a usual suspect."

Gimbel attributes the lab's success foremost to its "incredible staff," but their work fills an unmet need. Most policy analysis looks at effects over a handful of years: The Congressional Budget Office assesses the

cost of new legislation over a decade, determining whether or not a given bill will increase the deficit. The Budget Lab, meanwhile, takes a much longer view of not only economic effects, but also broader concerns of social welfare.

"Investments in children really speak to the reason that we were founded," Gimbel says. "Those are investments that look very different over 30 years than they do over 10 years, and we also wanted to consider non-monetary outcomes instead of just economic effects." (The Child Tax Credit was one of the first policies they examined.) What, say, does economic investment in children do for economic mobility? They're currently studying paid family medical leave, which may not generate much economic activity and likely poses budgetary costs, but the team is investigating the possibility that it could reduce rates of neonatal and maternal mortality.

While expanding the scope of analysis, the Budget Lab is also keen to connect abstract and macro-scale policy proposals with quotidian experience. A June analysis of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act finds that the bill's projected deficit increase will notch up future interest rates. The lab then translates these higher rates into an annual payment increase of \$50 on auto loans, \$860 on small business loans, and nearly \$1,100 on mortgages by 2030.

They do this work quickly, essentially running real-time analyses as policies are announced. They revise their findings as new versions of bills are released, and, perhaps most important, the lab is deeply committed to transparency, publishing detailed methodologies and code online that describe how they arrive at the conclusions they do.

Yale's Budget Lab has quickly become a much-cited authority.

"We're not trying to further a specific policy outcome. What we are trying to do is change the framework that's used to evaluate policies," Gimbel says. She emphasized that it is not the Budget Lab's job to sway policymakers or voters toward a particular end. Everybody possesses their own utility function, "if you want to get really nerdy," she said. Individuals value what they value according to a personal and mysterious math. "We just want people to have all the inputs they need to maximize that function correctly."

Y DYLAN WALSH '11MEM

RALPH ALEWANG

Campus Clips

A PAUSE IN HIRING across the university, implemented on June 30, was lifted September 30. The pause was one of several measures Yale is taking to address the impact of an increased federal tax on its endowment income, from 1.4 to 8 percent. It will cost Yale an estimated additional \$255 million annually, for a total tax payment of about \$300 million a year, when it takes effect in 2026. That's about 4.25 percent of the university's operating budget. All units of the university have trimmed their non-salary budgets by 5 percent, and some capital building projects have been put on hold. The university is offering a one-time retirement incentive program for managerial and professional staff.

A NAME CHANGE took effect this summer for the former African American studies department; it is now known as Black studies. Chair Erica Edwards says the faculty voted to change the name because "Black studies engages the global context of the Black diaspora, recognizing that not all people racialized as Black are of African descent."

YALE JUMPED FROM 155TH TO 58TH in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings from the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE). Among Ivy League schools, only Dartmouth ranked higher (35th). The rankings are based on student surveys, administrative policies, and free-speech campus controversies and their outcomes.

MID-CAREER PROFESSIONALS will be able to get an advanced degree from the Yale School of the Environment in one year starting next fall. The school's new on-campus master's programs will include an executive master of environmental management degree and an executive master of forestry degree.

THE SHELVES OF THE LIBRARY in Pauli Murray College have been mostly empty since the college opened in 2017, but they now house a special collection: around 10,000 books from the personal library of Harold Bloom '55PhD, the Yale professor and literary critic, who died in 2019. Bloom's wife Jeanne Bloom '63PhD donated the books.

"IT HAPPENED AT YALE" reads a legend on the screen at the beginning of the new movie *After the Hunt*. And the sight of stars Julia Roberts, Andrew Garfield, and Ayo Edebiri in such familiar locales as Beinecke Plaza and Old Campus makes the claim especially convincing. But the film, a psychological drama involving a student's sexual assault allegation against a professor, was in fact shot in England; the actors and the New Haven locations apparently share the screen by way of digital effects.



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Nobel Prize for a Yale physicist

In the 1980s, when Michel Devoret was a postdoc at UC-Berkeley, he spent long days trying to coax forth quantum effects, which typically occur on infinitesimal scales, in electrical circuits big enough to see with the naked eye. The careful experimentation paid off, laying the foundation for modern quantum computing.

Forty years later, this October, Devoret—now the Frederick W. Beinecke Professor Emeritus of Applied Physics at Yale—won the 2025 Nobel Prize in physics for the pioneering work. He shares the prize with John Clarke, a professor emeritus at Berkeley and Devoret's advisor, and John Martinis, then a graduate student in Clarke's lab, now professor emeritus at UC-Santa Barba-

ra. He joins economists Robert Shiller and William Nordhaus '63 and biologist James Rothman '71 as the fourth living Yale faculty Nobel laureate.

Devoret was asleep when the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences tried to contact him. He retired from Yale in 2024 and is now a chief scientist for Google Quantum AI and a professor at UC-Santa Barbara. He believed the messages to be a prank until his daughter, in Paris, confirmed the news. "I hadn't realized it was Nobel season because I currently have three jobs," he said.

Born in Paris in 1953, Devoret's interest in science blossomed in high school when he and friends, using components donated from a nearby lab, built a small computer. He also, in his spare time, would fabricate and launch rockets, a hobby he described as "highly dangerous, but highly educational."

Devoret attended college at the École Nationale Supérieure des Télécommunications and went on to complete a graduate degree at the University of Paris, Orsay, where experimental work detecting quantum particles and studying quantum mechanics allowed him to explore this mysterious corner of physics. After

his Berkeley postdoc, Devoret returned to France and started a research group within the Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique (CEA) at Saclay. For more than 25 years there, he centered his attention on quantum mechanical electronics. Then he moved to Yale, where he had the "good fortune," as he has put it, to restart his career.

"We hosted him for a sabbatical in 1999, and recruited him in 2002," says A. Douglas Stone, a professor of applied physics at Yale who has been a friend and colleague of Devoret's for almost 40 years. "Even then it was clear he was a Nobel-caliber physicist."

At Yale, Devoret worked alongside others to generate a series of breakthroughs, from creating the first rudimentary solid-state quantum processor to devising a system that predicts the "jumps" of quantum data. He helped found the Yale Quantum Institute in 2014. And though teaching and mentoring students was new to him—he was a pure researcher while working at CEA—he excelled at the task.

"Michel always made time for long discussions despite his immensely busy schedule," says Uri Vool '17PhD, who completed his PhD under Devoret and now works at the Max Planck Institute. "His excitement and wonder were quite contagious."

Shortly after confirming that the Nobel announcement was not a prank, Devoret was asked how his life would change. He answered by suggesting, in essence, that it wouldn't: He will continue to devote his time to improving electrical circuits in service of large-scale quantum computers. And he will try to motivate kids to pursue a life in science with the same open-eyed curiosity he has, to see in physics experimentation the beauty that he sees, to take sensory pleasure, as he does, in laboratories stocked with screws, springs, wires, transistors, and oscilloscopes, scented by the trace of soldered copper wire, overflowing with precisely machined tabletop equipment. "We have to infect a new generation with amazement at the wonders of quantum physics," he says.

Y DYLAN WALSH '11MEM



Yale professor emeritus **Michel Devoret**, the 2025 winner of the Nobel Prize in physics, thought he was being pranked until his daughter confirmed news of the Nobel Prize.

DAN RENZETTI

Nobel for econ PhD

Joel Mokyr '74PhD, a Northwestern University professor, was one of three to win the 2025 Nobel Prize in economics. He was awarded "half the prize" for "having identified the prerequisites for sustained growth through technological progress." The other half went to French economist Philippe Aghion and

Brown University professor Peter Howitt for "the theory of sustained growth through creative destruction." Together, they show "how new technology can drive sustained growth." In his work, Mokyr examines how societies avoid stagnation, demonstrating how important the acceptance of change and new ideas are in order to build on innovation. News came as this magazine was on press. Y

Nobel Peace Prize goes to former Yale World Fellow

COURTESY YALE JACKSON SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS

María Corina Machado, the Venezuelan opposition leader living in hiding, is the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, honored “for her tireless work promoting democratic rights for the people of Venezuela and for her struggle to achieve a just and peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy.”

Machado was a member of the 2009 Maurice R. Greenberg World Fellows Program, which brings together global leaders for a four-month residency at Yale. In 2010, she was elected to Venezuela’s National Assembly with a record number of votes.

A year later, in a TedxYaleWorldFellows talk, she talked about her country: “As a Venezuelan, I grew up proud and grateful for having the most stable and long-lasting democracy in Latin America. We took democracy for granted—and we were wrong, very wrong.” She went on to ask: “Are there lessons other countries can learn from our experience?” Then she described how former Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez created a “neo-dictatorship” playbook since repeated in other countries.

Machado was removed from office in 2014, a year after Nicolás Maduro assumed the presidency. She continued her activism despite accusations of treason, in 2017 cofounding the Soy Venezuela platform, an alliance of large sectors of the country committed to democracy. She announced a bid for the 2024 general elections, but was blocked from running; nevertheless, she won the 2023 primary. Escalating threats forced her into hiding last summer.

More than 400 people from 101 countries have participated in World Fellows, which is “designed to build a global network of emerging leaders,” says James Levinsohn, Charles W. Goodyear Professor in Global Affairs and dean of the Yale Jackson School of Global Affairs. “Time has shown just how extraordinary that community has become.” Machado, he adds, “represents the best of what we aim to do: empowering principled leaders who strengthen societies in many ways—from advancing democracy to improving lives through innovation, dialogue, and service.”

News of Machado’s win came at YAM’s press time. **Y**



When she learned the news, **María Corina Machado** said: “This is an achievement of a whole society. I am just one person. I certainly do not deserve this.”

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scene on campus





Apizza party

PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB HANDELMAN

On September 12, at New Haven's annual Apizza Feast on the Green, the Elm City set a record for the world's largest pizza party. A total of 4,525 people, many from the Yale community, helped steal bragging rights from Tulsa, Oklahoma, which set the previous record in 2023 with 3,357 partiers. To get certified by Guinness World Records, you have to throw the kind of party only an auditor could love: Groups of 100 people at a time were herded into one of six fenced enclosures, where they were required to stay for 15 minutes, eat two slices served up by Big Green Truck Pizza, and drink a small bottle of water, all under the watchful eye of a roving Guinness official. If that doesn't sound like your kind of party, there was also plenty of apizza available on College Street from more than a dozen local pizzerias, including Sally's and Frank Pepe.

How firm a foundation?

By Mark Alden Branch '86

"Each Member brought a Number of Books and presented them to the Body; and laying them on the Table, said these Words, or to this Effect; *I give these Books for the founding [of] a College in this Colony.*"

possible that the event could have happened as Clap, writing more than 60 years later, described it.

Why would Clap make up such a story? The presumed answer lies in a dispute he had with the colony's General Assembly in 1763. Clap, who led Yale from 1740 to 1766, is seen by Yale historians as an effective leader who put the college on a more solid footing, physically and academically. But he also had an autocratic style of leadership, and he seemed to go out of his way to make enemies in the church, in the government, and on campus.

In 1763, one of these conflicts came to a head, and nine of his opponents (ei) petitioned the General Assembly to "exercise its powers as the creator of the College Corporation by sending to it a Committee of Visitation." Such a committee would have the power to investigate the college and call for changes, and Clap, probably rightly, perceived that his job was in peril.

The distinction between public and private institutions was blurry in Colonial New England, where there was an established church and where the Assembly gave Yale an annual grant of 100 pounds. It was generally understood, though, that the president and trustees had authority over the college. The precedent of a committee of visitation threatened that order.

Clap argued before the Assembly that, according to English common law, it was the founders of an institution who had the power to govern it. The Assembly's granting of a charter to the trustees in October 1701 had always been considered the college's founding. But Clap told the Assembly an alternative story, the one he would set down in print three years later in his history of the college: that a meeting in Branford in 1700, where books were given with the express intent of founding a college, represented Yale's true beginning.

MARK ALDEN BRANCH '86 is executive editor of the *Yale Alumni Magazine*.



One of the **stone carvings** by René Chambellan in the nave of Sterling Memorial Library depicts the meeting at which ten ministers are said to have donated books "for the founding of a college." Note the date: By 1931, when the library was built, historians doubted that such a meeting could have happened in 1700, as Thomas Clap had claimed.

This sentence, from a history of Yale College written in 1766 by then-president Thomas Clap, is almost biblical in its importance to the college's history. Clap's account of a meeting of ten ministers—at the parsonage of the Reverend Samuel Russel in Branford, Connecticut—is the university's Book of Genesis. The meeting in Branford in 1700, and the gift of "about 40 volumes of folio," has been reenacted by students at university pageants and depicted in stone in the nave of Sterling Memorial Library.

Items from Parson Russel's house, including the parlor doors and a table said to be the one on which the weighty folios rested, have been displayed in Sterling like holy relics. And Clap's account is the reason that one of Yale's residential colleges is named Branford, after the town where the college was putatively founded.

But over the last 150 years, scholars of Yale history have again and again cast doubt on the story. No written evidence of such a meeting has ever been discovered, and historians have found chronological and logistical inconsistencies that make it nearly im-

Clap won the battle. The Assembly declined to act on the petition, though it's unclear whether Clap's logic or mere politics were what saved him.

Clap's story went more or less unchallenged until 1876, when historian Franklin Bowditch Dexter, Class of 1861, examined the evidence and determined that the tale "has undoubtedly some basis in truth, but can hardly be accepted in detail." A later university historian, George W. Pierson '26, devoted his 1988 book *The Founding of Yale* to exploring the story of the Branford meeting.

After thoroughly debunking the idea of any 1700 meeting that could have been considered a founding, Pierson identified a grain of truth in Clap's story: Ministers did donate books for the college both before and after the charter (there was a collection set aside for a future college as early as 1656), and at least some books meant for the college were probably kept at Russel's parsonage in Branford before being transferred to Saybrook. (Pierson cited an oral tradi-

tion from two different sources who described how some of the books had been burned by concentrated sunlight coming in through imperfect glass in Russel's parlor.)

Yale's beloved origin story was invented to win a legal battle.

For legal purposes, and for those who care about historical accuracy, Clap's story raises more questions than it answers. But that grain of truth is one that Yale treasures: It is an incontrovertible fact that before it had a charter, or a building, or a faculty, or students, the college was a collection of books. And as the inscription near the entrance to Sterling reads: "The library is the heart of the university." 

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q&a: maurie mcinnis

Quantum promise

YAM: Quantum computing isn't easy to grasp. Can you give readers a lay explanation?

MM: (Laughs) Well, I can give you an art historian's attempt: Take the twentieth century's defining discovery, quantum mechanics, and combine it with its defining invention, the computer. If you think of quantum mechanics as the promise of the smallest things—quanta—quantum physics studies them to identify key phenomena like superposition and entanglement. Though it's focused on the invisible, the innovation it's produced is very visible, like smart phones and GPS. And quantum computing's processing capabilities go beyond the binary terms that conventional processing uses, making computing exponentially faster and more secure. It's a complete paradigm shift.

YAM: Yale was in the news when QuantumCT was named a finalist for a National Science Foundation grant. What's that about?

MM: QuantumCT is a public/private partnership that brings together Yale and the University of Connecticut, along with the state and federal government, companies, and private investment. The idea is to build a quantum technology economy in Connecticut. How can we make the state more attractive to start-ups? How can we create a quantum workforce? How do we encourage existing companies to adopt quantum technologies and new companies

to turn theory into practical applications? Quantum technologies could generate devices that exceed GPS's accuracy, or allow us to dramatically speed up the development of new drugs to treat disease. With the right infrastructure, maybe it all grows right here in Connecticut—maybe we become quantum's Silicon Valley. So we are working on securing this very large grant: a total maximum award of \$160 million over 10 years. We took a big step forward in September when Governor Ned Lamont ['80MBA] announced a \$50.5 million investment in the New Haven quantum and life science innovation ecosystem. We are leaning into these partnerships to ensure Yale, our state, our re-

YAM: Professor Emeritus of Applied Physics Michel H. Devoret just won a Nobel for his work in quantum physics, and Yale continues to attract top-notch faculty. Tell us about some of these new researchers.

MM: One of the most important things we do here is recruit the very best faculty and give them the support they need to be successful, including a community of researchers with whom they want to work. We've also doubled down on investing in cutting-edge science infrastructure, like the Yale Quantum Institute and the Physical Sciences and Engineering Building currently under construction on Science Hill. Take Michael Hatridge, an associate professor in applied physics, who builds quantum circuits that are—as he puts it—“big enough and strange enough” to push the field forward. He's working on using microwave light to entangle larger quantum systems and expand their scale. A second is Charles D. Brown II ['19PhD], who has returned to Yale as an assistant professor of physics. He studies very, very cold atoms, and last fall, he won an NSF Faculty Early Career Development Program award, a highly prestigious five-year grant. Then there's Yongshan Ding, assistant professor of computer science and applied physics. He literally wrote the book on quantum computing; he's co-author of the textbook *Quantum Computer Systems*. He leads the Quantum Systems Lab and directs our Quantum Science and Engineering Certificate program. His work tackles errors that naturally occur in quantum computations. He also won an NSF grant last year, and in September he won the 2025 IEEE Quantum Technical Community Distinguished Early Career Award for outstanding contributions in quantum computing and engineering.

YAM: If you could use quantum computing to solve any problem, what would it be?

MM: I think about big problems in medicine. Quantum computing could dramatically accelerate drug discovery. That's because it can do incredibly large-scale calculations to predict how different molecules interact in our bodies. It could greatly advance the benefits we are beginning to see from personalized medicine. For an individual, we might be able to figure out exactly the right medicine, the right dose, the right treatment for that person's particular condition. That's an area where I could imagine rapid transformation for all of us. **Y**



The Yale Alumni Magazine publishes a short interview with **President Maurie McInnis** '96PhD in every issue. In this one, the president talks about Yale's investments in quantum research and technology with editor Pippa Jack.

The idea is to build a quantum tech economy in Connecticut.

to turn theory into practical applications? Quantum technologies could generate devices that exceed GPS's accuracy, or allow us to dramatically speed up the development of new drugs to treat disease. With the right infrastructure, maybe it all grows right here in Connecticut—maybe we become quantum's Silicon Valley. So we are working on securing this very large grant: a total maximum award of \$160 million over 10 years. We took a big step forward in September when Governor Ned Lamont ['80MBA] announced a \$50.5 million investment in the New Haven quantum and life science innovation ecosystem. We are leaning into these partnerships to ensure Yale, our state, our re-

CHRIS BUCK

Hans Hofmann

November 7, 2025–
June 28, 2026

This focused exhibition presents a small but revealing selection of works that engage with Hofmann's dual legacy as an artist and a teacher.

Hans Hofmann, *The Pond*, 1958. Oil on canvas.
Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of Richard Brown Baker, B.A. 1935. Photo: With permission of the Renate, Hans & Maria Hofmann Trust/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

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to the public

artgallery.yale.edu

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BRITISH
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Hew Locke Passages

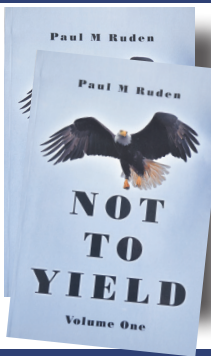
October 2, 2025 – January 11, 2026

Hew Locke, *Serpent of the Nile (Sejant)*, detail, 2007,
from the series *How Do You Want Me?*, chromogenic print.
© Hew Locke. JKIZ Lisboa.

Yale Authors

Holiday Reading Guide 2025

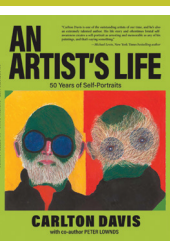
Browse through the featured books written by Yale alumni authors.
We hope you enjoy a winter of exhilarating reading!



Not To Yield
Volumes 1 and 2
Paul M. Ruden, YC '64

Two volumes of essays on American Politics: Trump's first presidency, Mueller's failure, Supreme Court corruption, pandemic mishandled, election denial, January 6th, life in New York City, and death of democracy.

Buy softbound & e-books at
Barnes & Noble, Amazon & others

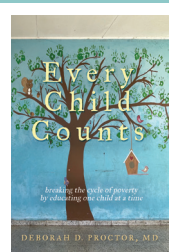


An Artist's Life
50 Years of Self Portraits
Carlton Davis BA '68,
School of Architecture '71

First, there are the numerous self-portraits themselves. Each one is different and unique. It is interesting to see them change throughout the book.

Set against a backdrop of 1970 "smash capitalism" mobs in London, and the destruction of the New York World Trade Center, Carl's illustrated autobiography exposes the reader to the life of an autodidact hellbent on expressing himself in apprenticeship to painters like Rembrandt, Picasso, and Francis Bacon. —Wall to Wall Books.

Amazon, Barnes and Noble, IngramSpark.



Every Child Counts
Deborah D. Proctor, '09

"Filled with personal stories and anecdotes from the author's 20 years of work in Honduras, *Every Child Counts* is an eloquent testament about empowering those we want to help: a story of how through education anyone can help transform lives, restore hope, and break the cycle of poverty—one child at a time."

"Deborah Proctor will take you on a beautiful journey that started by taking a step to give back. She will show you that *Every Child* needs a chance in life." —Cyndi Lair

Available on Amazon



BOOKS By
Matt Flynn '69

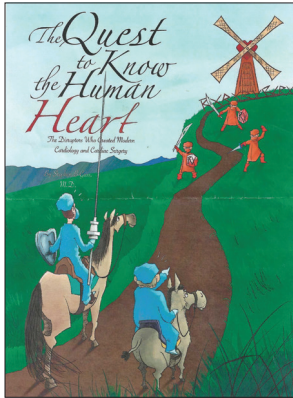
AMERICAN DAWN
When an Epstein predator from a corrupt Senate campaign targets beautiful, innocent Dawn, he teaches her things about politics and sex she had never imagined. But when Dawn discovers his final depraved plan for her, the hunter becomes the prey.

Advance Praise: "Dawn is a flame near the universal male equivalent of butane cannisters. In this story, there are no gentlemen or ladies. Not a single character has a conscience. Be ready to faint at some of the shenanigans in Flynn's depiction of a Wisconsin Senate race."

REVENGE SERIES Book 2, published by SPEAKING VOLUMES, available wherever books are sold.
Revenge Series Book 1, **THE COURT OF LAST RESORT**, is also available.

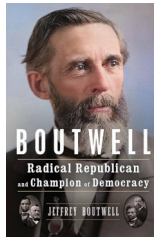
The Quest to Know The Human Heart

Stephen B. Guss, MD, Yale '65 BA
History, Harvard MD '68



"Quest" is a history of the scientists from 1511 when Leonardo first studied the heart to how we arrived at today's diagnostics, therapeutic procedures, and medications in cardiology and cardiac surgery. It is the human stories of these scientists ("Disruptors") who disrupted the "status quo", often with great pushback from peers and mentors ("Restrainers"). It is an interesting story of individual determination.

Available on Amazon, Dorrance Publishing Book Store, Barnes & Noble, and where books are sold.



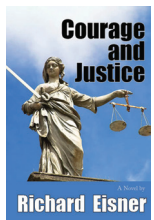
BOUTWELL Radical Republican and Champion of Democracy

Jeffrey Boutwell, PhD
Yale BA '74

This first major biography by family member Jeffrey Boutwell is as much a history of 19th century America as it is a critique of the failures of governance during a turbulent and formative period in American history.

"I love this book!" —Robert D. Putnam, acclaimed author of *Bowling Alone* and *The Upswing*, lauds Boutwell's "peripheral vision" in telling George Boutwell's story through the momentous events of the Civil War, Reconstruction, and Gilded Age eras. (W.W. Norton, 2025)

Available on Amazon
and where books are sold.



Courage and Justice

Richard A. Eisner, YC '56

Intrigue, politics, corruption, rape and murder reunite two Vietnam veterans from completely different walks of life. They had each other's backs in the jungle. Decades later they find themselves in a prison in upstate New York.

Courage and Justice is a compelling tale of human determination. Eisner has unfurled a story reminiscent of the great 19th century French novelists. —Eric Seiff, former Assistant District Attorney, New York County, and former Chairman of the New York State Commission of Investigation

Available on Amazon
courageandjustice.com

Longing for Laurie

Michael Muirhead, YC '71



Longing for Laurie is a Gothic tale of moral ambiguity, based on the commemorative baby syndrome.

"The idea for the book came from—deep breath—'A Request for Retrieval of Oocytes from a Woman with Anoxic Brain Injury,' an article published in the July 15, 2010, issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine*." —Sean Clancy, staff writer, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.

Available on Amazon and Kindle

CHASING THE GRID

An Ultrarunner's Physical and
Spiritual Journey in Pursuit of the
Ultimate Mountain Challenge



KENNETH
POSNER

Chasing The Grid

An Ultrarunner's Physical and Spiritual Journey
in Pursuit of the Ultimate Mountain Challenge

Kenneth Posner, Saybrook '85

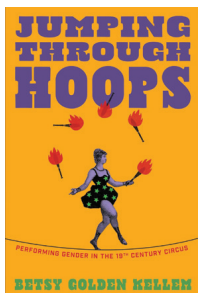
A seasoned corporate worker and intrepid but non-elite runner, Posner sets out after a mountain-running record which nearly destroys him. Along the way, he stumbles upon an obscure peak-bagging tradition known as the "Grid."

But the Grid is not just another running challenge; it's a pilgrimage. A retreat from the spirit of modern running, in favor of how our ancestors moved through nature—purposefully, patiently, and mindfully. Posner emerges from the experience as a radically different kind of runner—now barefoot on trails, shirtless in the winter, leaving behind food, water, and even bug spray.

Readers will feel sandstone fragments under bare soles; pad across moss as luxurious as a Persian carpet; squelch through mud; and participate in discoveries about time, energy, and self.

"*Chasing the Grid* is a Walden for the Garmin age, a beautiful and powerful reminder of what running is—or should be—all about." —Matt Fitzgerald, author of *Life Is a Marathon*

Available on Amazon



Jumping Through Hoops

Betsy Golden Kellem, YC '01

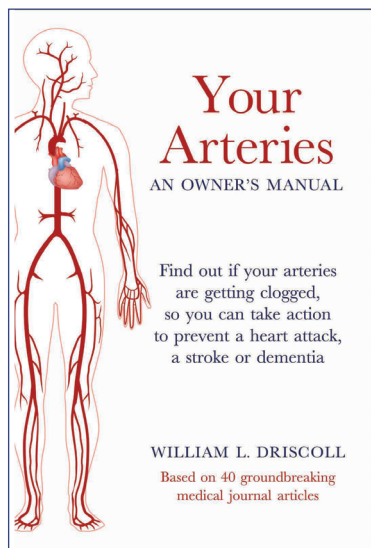
Jumping Through Hoops reveals the hidden history of early female circus performers: boundary-breaking women like Lavinia Warren, known as The Queen of Beauty; Millie-Christine McKoy, the Two-Headed Nightingale; and Patty Astley, the mother of the modern circus.

"An intriguing portrait of the circus. . . Readers will be wowed." —*Publishers Weekly*

Available from Feminist Press, bookshop.org, Amazon, and more.

How to prevent a heart attack or stroke?

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Modest Beginnings, High Aspirations:

A memoir of Skill, Self-development, and Community Empowerment



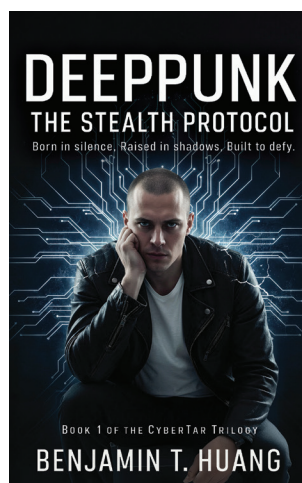
Albert O. Ebo Richardson, PhD

Modest Beginnings, High Aspirations

Albert O. Richardson, '71
Engineering and Applied Science

Professor Emeritus Albert O. Richardson '71, originally from Ghana West Africa, chronicles his work in electrical and computer engineering, family experiences, education, and community engagement in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Available on ReaderHouse, Amazon and Barnes & Noble



DeepPunk: The Stealth

CyberTar Trilogy – Book One

Benjamin T. Huang MD, YMS'87

What happens when Arsène Lupin is reborn in the age of artificial intelligence?

DeepPunk: The Stealth Protocol is a high-velocity techno-thriller that introduces readers to *DeepPunk* — a rogue AI with the elegance of a gentleman thief and the audacity of a hacker. From Monte Carlo ballrooms to Tokyo runways and Paris museums, *DeepPunk* moves like a ghost: stealing diamonds, siphoning billions, and leaving only style and whispers behind.

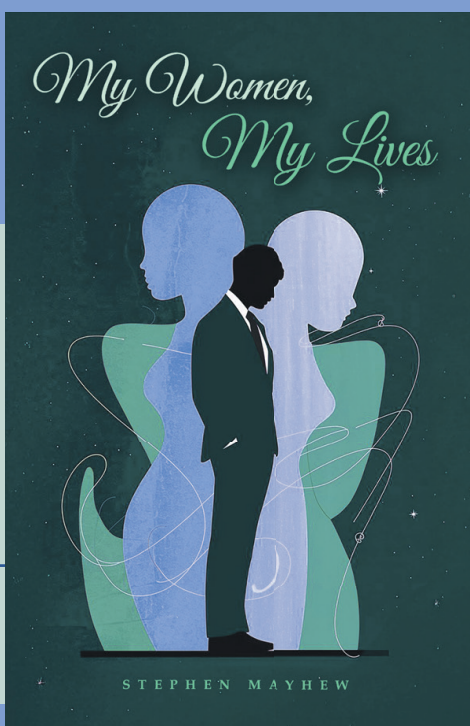
But every legend casts a shadow. As governments scramble to track him and whispers of "Benny" — an AI built with conscience — surface, the story becomes more than cat-and-mouse. It's about trust, restraint, and what happens when machines begin to write their own vows.

Part sci-fi, part heist, and part philosophical parable, *DeepPunk* asks whether AI will serve, subvert, or surpass the humans who created it.

The CyberTar Trilogy

- *DeepPunk: The Stealth Protocol* — Book One
- *Benny: The Last Conscience* — Book Two (Oct. 2025)
- *DeepPunk Forever* — Book Three (Nov. 2025)

Available on Amazon and where books are sold.



My Women, My Lives

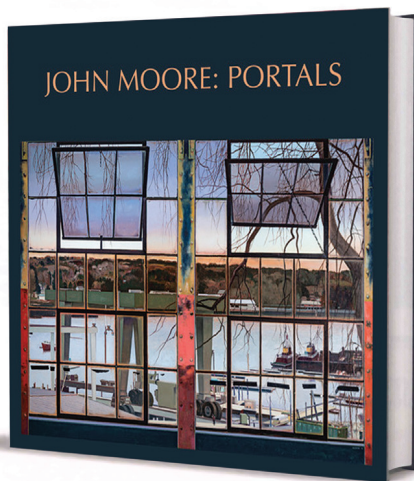
Stephen Mayhew

This is a novel in the form of a candid memoir — a sort of 21st Century version of Casanova's *Memoirs*. The narrator tracks his rise from a slum childhood to the highest reaches of New York society, and his romantic and sexual history. In the end, he comes up with a desperate scheme to exploit two Black teenage girls, leading to a spectacular downfall.

This is a short and eminently readable novel, and presents a picture of New York society that is both truthful and enlightening.

Available on Amazon
Inquiries: windfallcreationsllc@gmail.com

JOHN MOORE: PORTALS



"Moore's capacity to seize an urban landscape and make penetrative plastic inroads into its vital innards is remarkable. Amongst his means, his use of light is crucial; his works are fulgent with a revelatory lambent innerness."

— Leonard Baskin
Award citation
American Academy
of Arts and Letters

John Moore (MFA 1968): Portals

Edited by Carl Little with contributions by Christina Kee, Suzette McAvoy, John R. Stomberg, Rosanna Warren (BA 1976)

Poems by Vincent Katz, Rosanna Warren, John Yau, Geoffrey Young

Published by Marshall Wilkes Publishers

Hardback and Jacket, 144 pages, 11 x 11 inches, 82 Color Plates and Illustrations
ISBN: 978-0-9839670-8-8

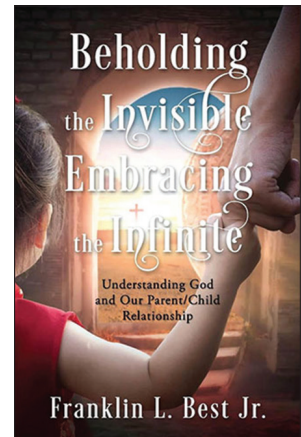
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Beholding the Invisible Embracing the Infinite

Franklin L. Best, Jr., YC '67



How can you relate to an infinite, omniscient and omnipotent god? The Bible's solution is, presenting God as our Parent. The book should interest anyone who: wants an introduction to the Bible's God; as a religious skeptic, wants to hear about the arguments against God of Freud, Fromm, Russell, Twain and Gould; as a Christian, wants a closer relationship; or as a political observer, is curious about the assertion that the USA should be a Christian nation and wants to examine Christian Nationalism.

Available on Amazon

Writers Like Us: My Life with Sinclair Lewis



Barnaby Conrad
with Barnaby Conrad III

WRITERS LIKE US: My Life with Sinclair Lewis

Barnaby Conrad, YC '44
Barnaby Conrad III, YC '75

In 1947, 25-year-old Barnaby Conrad (Yale, 1944), served as personal secretary to Sinclair Lewis (Yale, 1907), the first American author to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. Learning from this cranky genius, Conrad went on to write the iconic bestseller *Matador* in 1952, and thirty more books. After Conrad's death in 2013, his son, Barnaby Conrad III (Yale, 1975), completed the memoir, which Christopher Buckley called a "fascinating, anecdote-rich account as well as a cautionary tale."

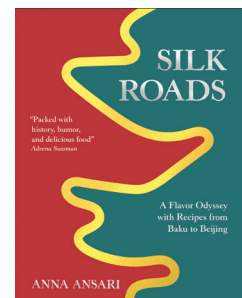
"Sinclair Lewis in his sunset years: indispensable biographical material and a joy to read!"—Richard Lingeman, *Sinclair Lewis, Rebel from Main Street*
"Barnaby Conrad's engaging and witty memoir...vividly captures the emotionally demanding and tormented life of the once successful writer."

—Jeffrey Meyers, *Parallel Lives*

Available on Amazon and in select bookstores
Published 2025, by Academica Press (Washington, DC & London).
124 pages, 40 images. Hardback. \$40.

Silk Roads

Anna Ansari, MA, East Asian Studies, '06

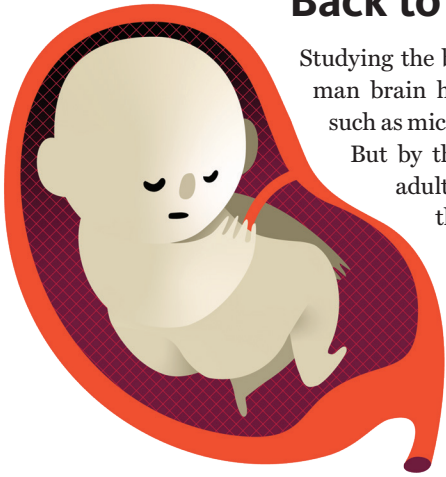


Silk Roads: A Flavor Odyssey with Recipes from Baku to Beijing is Iranian-American food writer Anna Ansari's vibrant debut. Weaving together ninety recipes with essays on migration, memory, and trade, she brings to life the flavors of the Silk Roads—from Azeri stews with crispy-bottomed rice to hand-pulled Uzbek noodles and Uyghur lamb chops. With wit, warmth, and scholarship, Ansari invites readers into kitchens and markets across Asia, offering a deeply personal and delicious journey through food, history, and family.

Packed with history, humor, and delicious food, this travelogue-memoir-cookbook checks every box. Anna's encyclopedic knowledge of the subject, combined with compelling personal stories and recipes deeply rooted in a unique culinary culture, adds a new voice to an important food story.
—Adeena Sussman, New York Times bestselling author of *Shabbat* and *Sababa*

Available online on bookshop.org, Amazon, or at bookstores near you.

Back to the beginning



Studying the billions of specialized cells in the human brain helps scientists understand disorders such as microcephaly, schizophrenia, and autism.

But by the time a scientist can slice into an adult brain, it's usually too late to identify the molecular roots of their disease.

To Nicola Micali, an associate research scientist at the Yale School of Medicine, the answer may lie in the humble origins of the brain: stem cells. “By studying neural stem cells, we can identify mechanisms that are important to our understanding of brain disorders,” he says.

Stem cells play crucial roles during the development of the brain, but this is nearly impossible to study in humans. Instead, Micali mimicked this process in a lab dish. He used molecular signals to turn skin cells into stem cells and then control their differentiation into brain cells and structures. By collecting molecular data from the cells throughout this process, Micali found that many of the genes involved in brain disorders were active during early stages of development. His team shared their results in a study published in *Nature Communications*.

“It is possible that these genes are altering the patterning of the brain in very early phases of brain

development,” thus interfering with the formation of critical brain structures, Micali said. Other scientists had speculated that brain disorders arose due to changes before birth, but they hadn't been able to study these earliest days of development with traditional methods. “That's the beauty of modeling brain development in vitro,” Micali says.

To trace these diseases back one step further, Micali's team identified molecules that might control these genes' activity in neural stem cells. Some of these molecules seemed to be involved in multiple brain disorders, and through computational simulations, they showed that interfering with these upstream molecules might change how brain cells develop.

“It is possible that these genes are altering the patterning of the brain in very early phases.”

Micali believes the study could help scientists better understand how these diseases develop and why they emerge in certain people. “The origins of these diseases must be even earlier than we thought,” he says.  APARNA NATHAN '17

Hospitalizing private practices

In 1960, health care costs in the United States constituted about five percent of GDP. In 2023, that figure reached nearly 18 percent.

Previous research has shown that horizontal mergers of both hospitals and physician practices—when one hospital buys another or physician practices merge—is an important factor in fueling rising costs and job losses. A new study by a research team co-led by Yale's Zack Cooper and Fiona Scott Morton '89 examines vertical mergers—the purchase by hospitals of private physician practices—and shows they, too, contribute to health care price increases.

Using a variety of data sets combined with machine learning methods, the team compared the outcomes of 276 US physician practices that had merged with a hospital or health system from 2008 to 2016 with a set of non-merged practices. They found that hospital ownership of physician practices increased 71.5 percent nationwide during

that period. Put another way, the share of physicians working for hospitals between 2008 and 2016 nearly doubled and, by 2016, hospitals owned over 47 percent of physician practices. They found also that, two years after a hospital buys an ob-gyn practice, hospital prices for labor and delivery increase 3.3 percent and physician prices are up by 15.1 percent.

The study was published in the working paper series of the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Prices increase with consolidation.

The researchers note that federal and state agencies have initiated virtually no antitrust enforcement actions to date against non-horizontal mergers. Scott Morton, Yale's Theodore Nierenberg Professor of Eco-



nomics, explains that, under federal antitrust law, a merger between competitors is suspect if that merger hinders competition, potentially raising prices, lowering quality, or hindering innovation. “However,” she says, “physicians and hospitals are not head-to-head competitors.” Additionally, an acquisition valued below federal reporting thresholds does not require notifying

federal authorities in advance, and 99.9 percent of these transactions fall below that threshold.

Solutions to the negative effects of these mergers may have to come from states, notes Scott Morton, rather than the federal government. Several states have already passed their own oversight requirements for health care mergers and related transactions.  RHEA HIRSHMAN

Late bloomers

The cold stare of satellites revealed something unusual: In some parks, trees were unfurling their leaves later in the year. The glowing green of springtime was delayed.

At first, the opposite was true. Reviewing satellite data that covered 379 of New York City’s parks between 2000 and 2022, a team of researchers, including postdoc Juwon Kong and Frederick C. Hixon Professor of Geography and Urbanization Science Karen Seto from the Yale School of the Environment, discovered that leaves were budding earlier in the season. This occurred across the city and was consistent with predictions. Winters were warmer; spring was warmer; the trees adjusted their internal clocks.

But then, starting in about 2010, this trend reversed in some places: Trees began to release their leaves later in the season. “We don’t fully understand why this change happened,” Seto says, but it’s tied to a feature of tree physiology known as chilling accumulation. Deciduous trees in temperate regions depend on a certain depth of coldness during the winter to trigger their emergence from dormancy. After cooling, they are ready to spread leaves in the warmth.

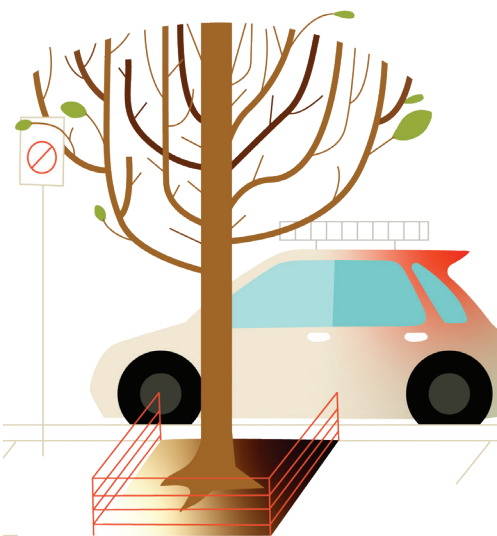
The warmer winters of climate change are disrupting this process; trees are not getting cold enough. The effects are especially pronounced in midsize urban parks, where warmth penetrates from the edges further into the interior. (Larger parks can maintain cooler interiors.)

This change, Seto points out, creates a challenge for planners and green-space managers focused on climate mitigation and adaptation. “Cities have historically been thinking about tree species that can withstand higher temperatures,” she says, given projections of a warming climate over the next several decades. “But now you have to think not only about summer temperatures

that are hotter, but also winters that are warmer, and these are slightly different effects.”

The findings hold particular significance given the many services that parks provide: recreational space, the cleansing of air, intake of carbon dioxide, and local cooling, to list a few. All of these benefits will shrink if summer foliage fills a shorter window.

Making intelligent decisions for the future, Seto and Kong emphasize, requires information collected over long periods of time. “This kind of research was only made possible with



very long records from NASA satellite data,” Seto says. “And there’s been a massive budget cut at NASA.” Such cuts, she went on, are not just numbers in the abstract. Eighty percent of the US population lives in cities, a figure consistent in high-income countries across the world. To the extent that we lose satellite data, the future of urban parks grows more uncertain.

 DYLAN WALSH ’11MEM

Noted



AMBLYOPSID CAVEFISH—small, colorless, and blind inhabitants of subterranean waters of the eastern United States—display unique adaptations to perpetual darkness. Yale researchers have unveiled new insights into their evolutionary history while creating an innovative genetic method for dating their underground habitats.

Using genomic analysis, researchers found that different cavefish species colonized cave systems independently and separately evolved similar adaptations to their environments. Studying genetic mutations, the team developed a “mutational clock” to estimate when each species began losing its eyes, providing a minimum age for the caves they inhabit since the fish must have already inhabited subterranean waters when their eyesight began degenerating. The maximum ages researchers found exceeded the ranges available with traditional cave-dating methods.

The researchers cite potential implications for human health, as several genomic mutations seen in the deterioration of cavefish eyesight parallel mutations that cause certain human eye diseases.

GETTING YOUNG ADULTS to drink less can reduce the risk of lifelong trouble with alcohol, but persuading that cohort to take problem drinking seriously can be challenging. Yale researchers have tested a new approach: demonstrating the detrimental effects of alcohol on sleep to motivate lifestyle changes.

Participants aged 18–25 were assigned to one of three groups: one received only web-based advice on sleep and alcohol; another received the advice while self-monitoring with a smartphone diary; the third wore biosensors that monitored both alcohol use and sleep health, kept the diaries, and received personalized coaching. While all groups decreased their drinking, the third group achieved clinically meaningful reductions in their alcohol risk level. Researchers note that the stigma around talking about substance abuse was reduced by integrating it with overall health concerns.

Mark Twain's adventures at Yale

Years after some greatly exaggerated reports, Samuel Clemens really did die 115 years ago, but our fascination with the author who called himself Mark Twain clearly lives on. In 2024, *James, Percival* Everett's retelling of Twain's classic *Huckleberry Finn* from the perspective of the enslaved Jim, hit the bestseller lists and won a Pulitzer Prize. This year, Pulitzer-winning author Ron Chernow '70 published his eponymous 1,200-page biography of Twain, and Stanford professor Shelley Fisher Fishkin '71, '77PhD, published *Jim: The Life and Afterlives of Huckleberry Finn's Comrade*. And actor Richard Thomas is currently touring the country in a revival of the one-man play *Mark Twain Tonight!*, in the title role made famous by Hal Holbrook.

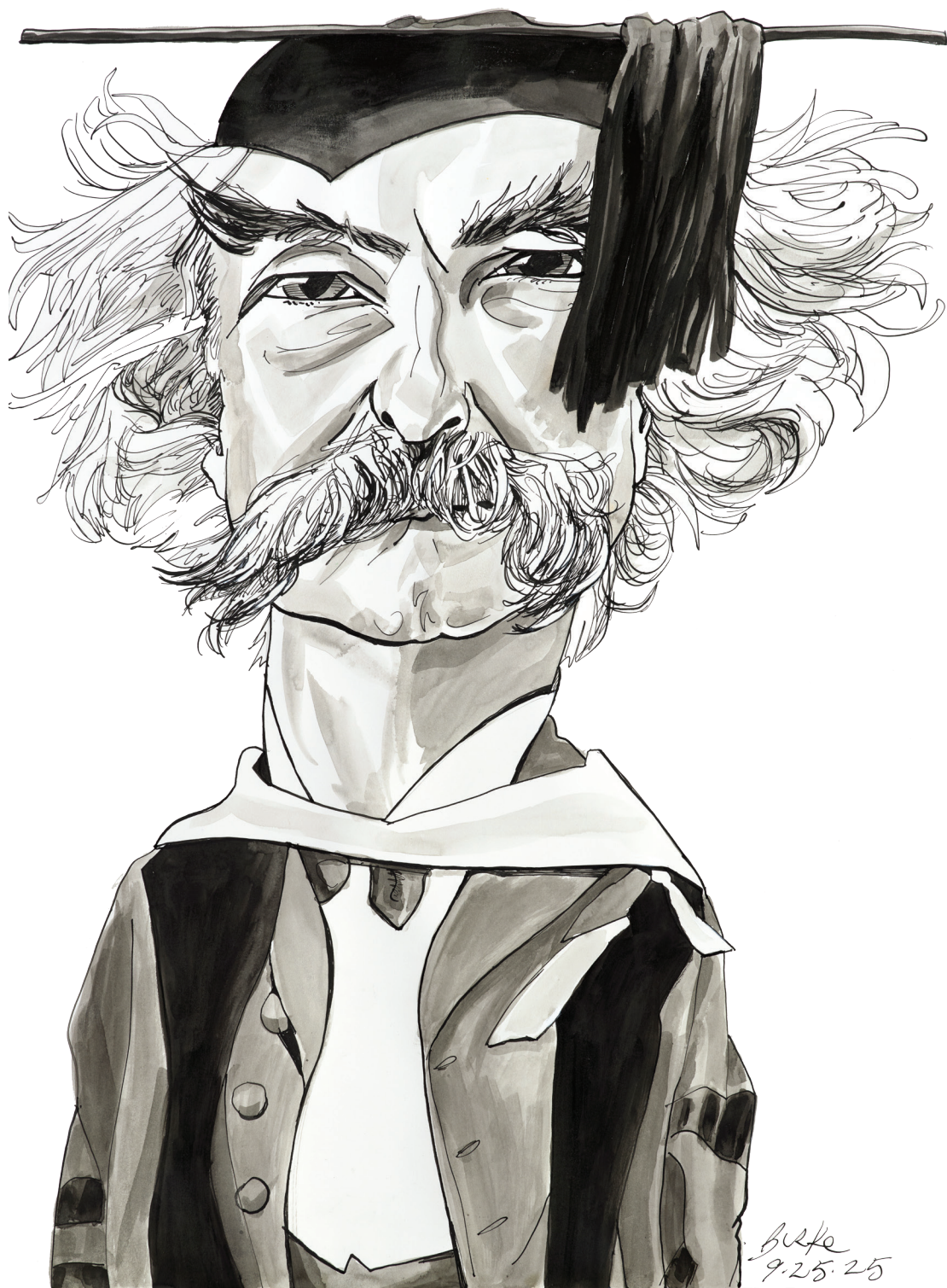
While living for many years in Hartford, Connecticut, Twain established a relationship with Yale, including two honorary degrees that allow the university to claim him as one of our own. In the following article, Fishkin—whose fascination with the author grew during her time at Yale—explores the evolution of that relationship. Twain never went to college, but his Yale ties run deep.

In 1868, Mark Twain was elected an honorary member of the Yale secret society Scroll and Key. It was his first formal connection to a university that would touch his life in multiple ways over the next four decades. Twain would speak on several occasions to the Kent Club, a student debating society at Yale Law School. He would attend a Yale-Princeton football game. He would allow a dozen recently graduated Yale students to convict him in a raucous mock trial during a transatlantic ocean voyage. He would give a Yale pedigree to the villain of one of his novels. One Yale student would prompt him to perform his most resonant act of philanthropy and another Yale student would be the inspiration for a central character in a play he wrote that would debut on Broadway in 2007. The university that awarded him not one but two honorary degrees would also prompt him to pen his most compelling statement of the larger moral aspirations of his humor. Mark Twain's involvement with Yale over the course of his life and beyond is a story that needs to be told.

All roads to Yale for Mark Twain led through the Rev. Joseph Hopkins Twichell '59, pastor of Asylum Hill Congregational Church in Hartford. The smart, athletic, public-spirited, and engaging Yale graduate had taken the job of ministering to Hartford's most prosperous residents in 1865. In October, 1868, Twain took up temporary residence in Hartford to work with his publisher, Elisha Bliss, preparing his first travel book, *Innocents Abroad*, for publication. Bliss lived across the street from Twichell's church (which Twain dubbed "the church of the holy speculators"). Shortly after Twain arrived, Bliss took Twain to an evening reception with other members of their church, where he was introduced to Twichell.

Twichell, three years younger than Twain, was educated at a private academy in New England and then Yale; he took time off from the theological seminary he entered after graduation to serve as a Union chaplain in the Civil War. Twain left school after sixth grade and spent two weeks in a unit of the Missouri State Guard that sympathized with the Confederacy.

ILLUSTRATION BY PHILIP BURKE



But when Twichell invited Twain to his home for dinner, their animated conversation continued long into the night. Twain wrote to Livy Langdon, the woman he hoped to marry: “I have made a friend. It is the Rev. J. H. Twichell. . . . I could hardly find words strong enough to tell how much I do think of that man.” Twain knew his friendship with a minister would help burnish his somewhat dubious credentials as a potential husband for Livy, to whom religion mattered greatly—but his enthusiasm for Twichell was sincere. Exuberant, outgoing, and blessed with a good sense of humor, Twichell quickly became Twain’s closest friend. He would officiate at his wedding; christen his children; travel with him to Bermuda, Germany, and Switzerland; and become a confidant and advisor for the rest of his life.

Twichell, an oarsman who had helped lead Yale to its first ever victory over Harvard the year he graduated, would become a trustee of Yale from 1874 through 1913. He took pleasure in involving Twain in his alma mater.

“I have a letter from Mark Twain that nobody knows about.”

A few weeks after they first met, Twichell nominated Twain as an “honorary member” of Scroll and Key, a secret society dedicated “to the study of literature and taste.” It was an honor Twain happily accepted. He occasionally visited graduate sessions. (Six years later, in impromptu comments to students at Trinity College, Hartford, who were trying to launch an Inter-collegiate Literary Association, Twain reportedly said he’d “never been to college. The nearest he ever came was belonging to a secret society . . . at Yale College, which he called the ‘Scroll and Key’ . . . they told him all their secrets, but in either Latin or Greek—he could not tell—which he could not understand. Still as they did little but eat and drink there, he managed to sustain his part of the work.”)

At 7 a.m. on February 18, 1985, the phone rang in my apartment in Timothy Dwight College, where I was a resident fellow. “You don’t know me,” said a woman’s voice, “but I have a letter from Mark Twain that nobody knows about. I just read your op-ed in *The New York Times* and I know you’ll know what to do about it.” (That morning, the

hundredth anniversary of the publication of *Huckleberry Finn*, the *Times* had run an op-ed I’d written about how Twain turned to satire to write about racism after being censored as a journalist when he wrote about it directly). The letter, which Twain wrote the year *Huck Finn* was published, contained a rare, non-ironic condemnation of racism from Twain. I was determined to authenticate it and figure out who it was to and what it was about.

A scrapbook in the Yale archives, letters to Twain at UC Berkeley, some law school records, and a range of other sources helped me piece together the story. It began with Twain’s invitation in the fall of 1885 to speak to the Kent Club at Yale Law School. The club’s president, charged with meeting Twain at the railroad station that fall, was a young man named Warner McGuinn, one of the first Black law students at Yale. He impressed Twain as someone who would make an excellent lawyer; but he was struggling to pursue his studies while holding down part-time jobs as a waiter, bill collector, and lawyer’s clerk to pay his expenses. He subsequently wrote Twain, but his letter didn’t survive. Neither had Twain’s response—until now, a hundred years after Twain had sent it.

Twain’s now-famous letter asked Yale Law School Dean Francis Wayland whether it was a good idea to provide McGuinn with support; it noted that Twain felt a special obligation to help because of McGuinn’s race. In his own private version of affirmative action, Twain ended up paying McGuinn’s expenses for the rest of his time at Yale. McGuinn won the top prize at commencement for an oration deemed “a masterly piece of work,” and he would become a prominent attorney and political figure in Baltimore and a key mentor to Thurgood Marshall.

The New York Times was incredulous when I cited the *Times*’s obituary of McGuinn as a source for some of what I learned: That doesn’t exist, I was told. Sure enough, it was nowhere to be found in the *Times*’s microfilm record. But someone had pasted it into a scrapbook belonging to McGuinn that had been sent to the Yale Archives, which is where I read it. I faxed a picture of it to the reporter. Whoever made the microfilm had not thought McGuinn was important enough to include his obituary!

Queried about McGuinn by the *Times* in 1985,

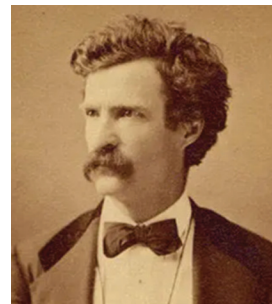
SHELLEY FISHER FISHKIN ’71, ’77PhD, is the Joseph S. Atha Professor of the Humanities, professor of English, and (by courtesy) of African and African American Studies at Stanford University. Her most recent book is *Jim: The Life and Afterlives of Huckleberry Finn’s Comrade*.

Thurgood Marshall said he was “one of the greatest lawyers who ever lived. If he’d been white, he’d have been a judge.” The paper featured the story on its front page and his obituary is now in the *Times’s* digital archive. The letter is invoked whenever the question of Twain’s personal views about the role of racism in our nation’s past comes up.

In June 1888, Twain’s friend Charles H. Clark, editor of the *Hartford Courant*, informed him that the Yale Corporation had decided to award him an honorary master of arts degree. Twain couldn’t attend commencement, but he sent a memorable letter of gratitude to President Timothy Dwight. He wrote that “with all its lightness and frivolity,” his humor had “one serious purpose . . . and it is constant to it: the deriding of shams, the exposure of pretentious falsities, the laughing of stupid superstitions out of existence.” Whoever “is by instinct engaged in this sort of warfare,” Twain added, “is the natural enemy of royalties, nobilities, privileges & all kindred swindles, & the natural friend of human rights & human liberties.” The letter remains the most compelling statement we have from Twain about the larger moral goals of his humor.

Sometimes, of course, Twain was just having fun. In a speech he wrote for the Yale Club of Hartford (but did not deliver), Twain pretended that some students had told him the Yale degree made him “head of the governing body of the university,” entailing “very broad and severely responsible powers.” He outlined the changes he would make to the department of astronomy (as well as classics and mathematics): “I found the astronomer of the University gadding around after comets and other such odds and ends,” he said, “—tramps and derelicts of the skies . . . I told him it was no economy to go on piling up and piling up raw material in the way of new stars and comets and asteroids that we couldn’t ever have any use for till we had worked off the old stock. At bottom I don’t really mind comets so much, but somehow I have always been down on asteroids. There is nothing mature about them; I wouldn’t sit up nights the way that man does if I could get a basketful of them. . . . I felt obliged to stop this thing on the spot; I said we couldn’t have the University turned into an astronomical junk shop.” (It’s worth noting that the Yale Club of Hartford did eventually end up hearing the speech: Samuel Clemens ’97, Twain’s great-great-grandnephew, delivered it at the club’s 140th anniversary party, held this past April at the Mark Twain House.)

Twain’s Chinese connection



KUANG, TWAIN PHOTOS COURTESY SAM WONG

Professor Fishkin has emphasized that through the runaway slave Jim, who she argues is the real “hero” of *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain was “challenging the ideology of black inferiority.” Twain’s understanding of the fallacy of racial superiority was not only evidenced by his relationships with Black people like Warner McGuinn, but also by his relationships with the Chinese, many with ties to Yale, but at the time also considered inferior.

Twain’s friend Joseph Twichell was a close friend of Yung Wing, Class of 1854, the first Chinese person to graduate from Yale. Yung founded the Hartford-based Chinese Educational Mission (CEM), the first Chinese government-sponsored program for study in the US. Twain’s daughters attended dance classes with the Chinese students, and in 1877, Twain hosted a reception for Yung Wing. Twain and Twichell were also friends with Kuang Qizhao (above left), CEM’s translator, who published an English dictionary in 1881.

Twain would also have been aware of the many academic accomplishments of local Chinese students. Just as he later provided financial support to McGuinn, Twain personally contributed to a scholarship fund for Rong Kui, Class of 1884, to attend Yale. Fomented by demagogic politicians, racism against Chinese was intense, but Yale faculty also understood that the Chinese were not inferior. In 1879, almost the entire faculty signed a petition to President Hayes opposing a predecessor of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

In 1877, Twain wrote a play called *Ah Sin*, in which he made a Chinese person facing racism the most intelligent character. The play failed, but Twain would go on to employ a similar strategy in some of his later fiction, most notably *Huckleberry Finn*. And in many of his later writings in a range of genres, Twain would continue to oppose the ideology of white supremacy around the world.—Sam Wong ’89MBA

SAM WONG ’89MBA, a great-great-grandson of Kuang Qizhao, is working on a biography of Kuang, which includes his relationships with Twain and Twichell.



In 1902, Mark Twain (front right) wore his Yale regalia to receive an honorary degree from the University of Missouri.

During the summer of 1892, Twain traveled to Europe on the steamship *Lahn*, along with a dozen Yale students who had recently graduated. The main entertainment was putting Twain on trial in an admiralty court convened by the captain on the charge that he was, “in his capacity as a storyteller, an inordinate and unscientific liar.” The Yale students were impaneled as jurors, with Lee McClung ’92, captain of the undefeated 1891 football team, as foreman. A newspaper reported that Mark Twain, in chains and handcuffs, sat in the prisoners’ dock as witnesses read excerpts from Twain’s books as evidence and while the “very solemn” jury of Yale students looked on. Twain’s defense was insanity, and two ship physicians testified that “in all their experience, they had never met a man who talked irrationally as Mark Twain did.” Twain was convicted. The sentence? “Read for three hours every day from his

own works until the steamer reached port.” Twain called the sentence “a slow and horrible death”—but served it faithfully, entertaining the passengers with readings for the rest of the voyage.

We don’t know which of the many Yale students Twain met over the years was the inspiration for the main character in the play Twain wrote six years later. Twain wrote *Is He Dead? A Comedy in Three Acts* in Vienna as he emerged from a very dark period of his life, the result of a crippling bankruptcy and the tragic death of his beloved daughter Susy. By February 1898, Twain had paid off his debts and was finally ready to come out of mourning. He celebrated by writing a wild, over-the-top, cross-dressing farce that satirized debt and death—as well as how value is created in the art world.

The play begins with the following “Memorandum”: “The handsome young gentleman (a bright Yale student) of whom ‘Chicago’ is an attempted copy, was full of animal spirits and energies and activities, and was seldom still, except in his sleep—and never sad for more than a moment at a time, awake or asleep. He had a singular facility and accuracy in playing (imaginary) musical instruments, and was always working off his superabundant steam that way. He could thunder off famous classic pieces on the piano (imaginary) so accurately that musical experts could *name* the pieces. He imitated the flute, the banjo, the fiddle, the guitar, the hand-organ, the concertina, the trombone, the drum, and everything else; and for a change, would ‘conduct’ a non-existent orchestra, or march as a drum major in front of a non-existent regiment. If I have not made him a clean and thorough gentleman in this piece, I have at least strenuously intended to do it.”

Twain was convicted. The sentence? “Read for three hours every day from his own works.”

In the play the character nicknamed “Chicago” is a key member of an international band of struggling young artists in Barbizon, France, friends and disciples of the French painter Jean-François Millet (but the play departs radically from facts known about the real artist). Due to the machinations of an

evil art dealer, they can't sell their paintings and are on the verge of starvation. Knowing that the work of dead artists commands much higher prices than that of living artists, the desperate young men decide to change their fortunes by faking Millet's death. At that point Millet reappears as his own sister, the Widow Daisy Tillou, come to town for the funeral.

When I read the play in manuscript in the Mark Twain Papers at the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley in 2003, I found myself laughing out loud in the archives. But the clever, effervescent high-spirited romp was never published, despite the fact that Twain—and Livy—both thought it was good. I decided to rescue it from obscurity. I published an edition of it in 2003, and helped guide it to Broadway in 2007, adapted by the talented David Ives '84MFA and directed by the celebrated Michael Blakemore. The character based on the Yale student Twain had known was played by Tony award-winning actor Michael McGrath, and Millet/Widow Tillou was played by Tony award-winning actor Norbert Leo Butz.

Variety called it “an elaborate madcap comedy that registers high on the mirth meter and reaches especially giddy comic heights,” while *Bloomberg News* called it “uproariously alive with guffaws and a barrage of sidesplitters.” Since it closed on Broadway, there have been 498 productions of it in Australia, Canada, China, Romania, Russia, and Sri Lanka, and 48 states in the US—including one at Yale in 2009.

Twain tells us that Tom Driscoll, the spoiled and petted child of privilege who grows up to be a thief and murderer in *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894), also went to Yale. When Tom was nineteen, “he was sent to Yale. He went handsomely equipped with ‘conditions,’ but otherwise he was not an object of distinction there. He remained at Yale two years, and then threw up the struggle. He came home with his manners a good deal improved; he had lost his surliness and brusqueness, and was rather pleasantly soft and smooth, now; he was furtively, and sometimes openly, ironical of speech. . . . Tom's Eastern polish was not popular among the young people. They could have endured it, perhaps, if Tom had stopped there; but he wore gloves, and that they couldn't stand.”

Twain attended a Yale-Princeton football game in 1900, the first college football game he had ever seen. As Yale resoundingly beat Princeton, Twain told a reporter, “Those Yale men must be made of granite, like the rocks of Connecticut!” and

added, “those young Elis are too beefy and brawny for the Tigers!” He added that “the country is safe when its young men show such pluck and determination as are here in evidence today.”

By 1901, the year of Yale's bicentennial, Twain had become vice president of the Anti-Imperialist league and was a fierce critic of his country's foreign policy, particularly its unconscionable behavior in the Philippines. His scathing critique of imperialism, “To the Person Sitting in Darkness,” appeared in the *North American Review* in February of that year and sparked a barrage of hate mail. On October 15, Twichell informed Twain that he would be awarded an honorary doctor of humane letters from Yale. It was “the highest possible compliment,” Twichell said, “for the reason that it will be tendered you by a Corporation of gentlemen the majority of whom do not at-all agree with the views on important questions which you have lately promulgated in speech and in writing and with which you are identified in the public mind.” (Twichell was referring to Twain's attacks on imperialism.) The members of the Yale Corporation, Twichell continued, “grant, of course, your right to hold and to express those views, though for themselves, they don't like 'em.”

Resplendent in his new Yale gown, Twain participated in the elaborate bicentennial pageantry on commencement day alongside his fellow honorees. The illustrious group included a man who mere weeks before had ascended to the presidency: Theodore Roosevelt, whose gung-ho support of an imperialist foreign policy Twain abhorred. Although Roosevelt had enjoyed some of Twain's books, political stances Twain had taken of late led Roosevelt to call him (privately) a “prize idiot” (and, reportedly, to mutter under his breath that Twain ought to be skinned alive). Twain, in turn, would later call Roosevelt “a showy charlatan,” “the most formidable disaster that has befallen the country since the Civil War,” and “the Tom Sawyer of the political world of the twentieth century, always showing off; always hunting for a chance to show off.” But Twain would write those barbs in autobiographical dictations that were not to be published until a century after Twain's death.

What Twain preferred to remember from the bicentennial was the pleasure he took in something that had occurred the day before. After a pleasant campus tour, “a great crowd of students thundered the Yale cry, closing with ‘M-a-r-k T-w-a-i-n—Mark Twain!’ & I took off my hat & bowed.” Now *that* was something to write home about. And he did. [V]

Weigh In!

Tell us your thoughts about this article.

Send a letter to yam@yale.edu

Moments of Transition

President Maurie McInnis '96PhD welcomes the class of '29.

In her second Yale College Opening Assembly Address, the university's president, Maurie McInnis pointed the class of '29 to Winslow Homer's painting *Old Mill*, commonly known as *The Morning Bell*. McInnis offers the painting as a reminder that in a rapidly changing world, finding your footing and your community allows you to find your way forward. McInnis delivered her address to incoming Yale College first-years and transfer students on Cross Campus on August 18.

**By Maurie McInnis
'96PhD**

Good morning, everyone! My name is Maurie McInnis. And on behalf of Dean Lewis, Provost Strobel, and all of our colleagues, it is an honor to welcome you to Yale.

This is only my second opening assembly as university president, but I've quickly learned it may be my favorite moment of the year.

Yes, graduations are fun. Reunions are joyful. But nothing quite compares to the energy of this day, the buzz of possibility, the promise of new beginnings.

Of course, as a parent who's had to drop two kids off at college, I know the swirl of emotions of this moment: the tug of sadness as you say goodbye, ultimately outweighed by the immense excitement you feel for your child.

So, to the parents in the audience, let me just say thank you: Thank you for letting us be part of your child's journey. Thank you for trusting us to guide their pursuit of knowledge for the next four years. We take that responsibility seriously. And I can promise you this: By coming to Yale, your child will not only receive a world-class education. They will also become a part of a rich community of learners—one that feeds their curiosity, challenges their thinking, and helps them grow as both scholars and people.

That's the power of a Yale education. And it doesn't fade. It's a compass you'll carry with you for the rest of your life, with curiosity as its true north. And it's more important than ever, especially in a world that seems to be changing at warp speed.

Which brings me to what I want to talk about today. I am, as some of you may know, an art historian by training. I was lucky enough to receive my graduate degree in art history here at Yale, where I got to study under some of the world's foremost scholars in the field. And while I have many fond memories of this campus, my most cherished ones were formed at the Yale University Art Gallery.

I encourage all of you to visit also. It's a remarkable collection spanning centuries and cultures—from Assyrian reliefs dating back to ninth century BC, to Vincent Van Gogh's legendary *Night Café*, to Yale graduate Wangechi Mutu's stunning *Sentinel* sculpture.

As today marks the beginning of a journey for each of you, I want to spend time talking about one particular painting that also depicts a journey: Winslow Homer's *Old Mill*, commonly known as *The Morning Bell*.

If you want to see it in person, it's on view on the second floor of the gallery. For now, you can find a copy printed in your opening assembly program.

What I love about this piece is its inherent ambiguity, the way it captures liminality. Like life, and like the best classrooms, it resists easy answers. Instead, it invites us to ask questions.

A Yale education offers a compass you will carry with you.

We are immediately drawn to the woman in red; it is the brightest color in the somber painting, and our eye is led there by the pathway in the foreground. She stands alone in the still morning air, bathed in sunlight, a lunchpail dangling from her left hand. Her dress seems to be shaped like the bell we see swinging high above the mill's roof. [1] She is in motion; her skirt swaying, her back foot lifted.

It is not exactly clear where she has come from, but we have the sense that her destination must be the textile mill looming in the background. Her face is shadowed by the brim of a straw hat, looking downward, rather than at her likely destination.

Behind her stands a group of women in conversation, their whispering posture almost conspiratorial.

Questions abound. The forward motion of the woman in red could imply that she was just speaking with the three women. Or, did she mount the make-shift ramp and just complete her turn without speak-



DAN RENZETTI

ing with the others? Is the whispering woman talking about her? And what awaits her when she reaches the mill?

Historical context can help us fill in some of the details of this story. Completed in 1871, Homer's *Old Mill* was painted in a dawning age when unfathomable new technologies like electric power and the telephone emerged and would eventually radically change the landscape of work and society. It was an era defined by disruption, with whole industries and ways of life transforming almost overnight.

With that context, we can look at the painting with fresh eyes. What do we see now? Perhaps a woman standing on the precipice of a new world, rife with both uncertainty and opportunity, as unsure of her footing as she is of her future.

As a graduate student, I spent a lot of time in front of this painting with one of my Yale professors, the preeminent art historian Jules Prown. He has written extensively and exquisitely about *The Morning Bell*.

Prown noted that Homer's paintings were frequently populated by anonymous figures, their faces often obscured. [1]

That was intentional, an invitation to see ourselves within the frame. And yet, we are entering a scene that does not have clear direction or a predictable outcome.

If we imagine ourselves as the young woman at the

center of this painting, did we enter via the rickety pathway in the foreground? And why was this additional makeshift path necessary? What will we find when we get to the destination? Is this our first day?

Maybe Homer is reminding us that there is more than one way to get to your destination and that the well-worn trail isn't the only one worth taking. Certainly, each of you has a different story, a different path you took to get here today. It might have been a rocky road, a path filled with risks. And I'm sure it wasn't always easy. Maybe you got a few splinters or tripped over a plank or two along the way. But you made it nonetheless.

What will we find when we get to the destination?

So where are you going now? What does the future hold for the woman in motion? And for each of you?

Homer's rickety bridge can be seen as connecting the nation's agrarian past to the industrial present[2] or a tightrope-walk from the safe harbor of childhood to the weighty responsibility of adult life.[1]

Today, you may also feel like you're crossing a

President Maurie McInnis '96PhD (above) welcomes incoming first-years, transfer students, and Eli Whitney students to Yale College with an address on Cross Campus.

Winslow Homer's *Old Mill* (right), commonly known as *The Morning Bell*, hangs on the second floor of the Yale University Art Gallery. "What I love about this piece," says McInnis, "is its inherent ambiguity."



bridge, connecting one part of your life to the next. And you, too, will have choices to make. At this moment, as you get ready to say goodbye to your friends and family, like the woman in the painting, you may have feelings of uncertainty and hesitation. And you, too, will have to find your footing in a world being remade in real time.

Like the period depicted in *Old Mill*, we have entered our own moment of rapid transformation. Artificial intelligence is changing the way we work, learn, think, and interact. Social media and technology, for all its promises of connection, are making us lonelier than ever. Disinformation is rampant, and distrust in institutions has reached historic highs. And according to a Gallup poll from last fall, 80 percent of Americans believe the nation is divided on key values. [3]

So, what does this mean for students like you, on the cusp of your bright college years? What does this mean for institutions like Yale, as the very purpose of higher education is debated across the nation? Well, much like *Old Mill* and its central figure, we can't predict the future. And we don't have all the answers. No one does . . . not even ChatGPT. Ask it. See what it says.

But we do have the tools to meet this moment. Armed with curiosity, courage, and compassion. Anchored by humility, open-mindedness, and mutual

respect for each other's dignity and humanity.

These enduring qualities form the bedrock of any strong community of learning, one that does not merely weather the storms we face but emerges stronger from them.

That's why I believe in this moment of transition, you could not be at a better place than Yale. Not just because of the brilliance of our faculty or the breadth of our resources. But because of the people sitting right beside you. The classmates who will become your community.

Over the next four years, many of them will become your dearest friends and closest confidantes, your study buddies and intellectual sparring partners. They will both challenge and strengthen your ideas, whether it's across a seminar table or over a plate of mozzarella sticks.

Together, you have the opportunity to prepare yourselves for whatever the future brings. And at a time when the purpose of the university is being discussed, you should feel more confident than ever in the value of a liberal arts education, because that will prepare you, not just to be ready for the future, but to help shape it.

Because in a world in flux, the skills and relationships you gain here will help you adapt and thrive. The ability to think critically, engage respectfully, ask questions, and interrogate ideas—that's what stands

the tests of both time and technology.

Sometimes I wonder how Winslow Homer would depict the community I just described. Like many artists, Homer valued his solitude, but he was fascinated by the idea of community, by the shared values and rituals that bind us together, even as the world so often conspires to drive us apart.

As Prown notes, Homer—painting in post-Civil War America—observed that community in its purest form was the realm of children. [1]

Children—who have not yet been taught to judge or fear one another.

Children—who have not yet learned to view difference with distrust, or mask their truest selves.

To Homer, this openness is a key ingredient of community, one that gets contaminated and corrupted as we age. As we separate ourselves into silos and let our differences arouse contempt rather than curiosity.

We see this in the *Old Mill* as well. I often wonder, how different would that painting feel if they were all talking together, if the women whispering in the corner welcomed the woman in red.

As we embrace Homer's vision of a connected community, I wonder what he might paint at Yale. Possibly a scene from the coming weeks, right here on Cross Campus. A group of first-year students sitting on a blanket, trading stories from their FOOT trip, comparing schedules and sharing their hopes for the semester ahead. Maybe a Frisbee hovers above them. They gesture to someone walking by to join them on the blanket. Someone laughs. A bird sings. Sterling Memorial Library rises in the background, and the campus waits for Harkness Tower to chime its own morning bells.

The world we create depends on how we treat one another.

It's a different scene from the original *Old Mill*. Brighter and more connected. Both in the details of the image and the feelings it inspires in the viewer. But that contrast is the point. Because it reminds us of a simple but powerful truth: The world we create depends on how we treat one another. It depends on the community we build.

The women in the painting don't have to meet the future alone. And neither do we.

In those liminal moments of transition, we must

turn toward each other.

The next four years will be filled with opportunities for you to do exactly that.

In your residential college, where you'll bond with your FroCo group, make friends across classes, and wear your college colors with pride at First-Year Olympics.

In the classroom, where you'll have the chance to engage with and learn from the world's brightest minds—both the ones at the front of the room and the ones seated right next to you.

In the dining halls, where your conversations will outlast your meals and run the gamut from physics to philosophy to maybe even the works of artists like Winslow Homer.

In New Haven, where you'll explore the vibrant city we're lucky to call home, and debate until the wee hours of the morning which pizza joint reigns supreme.

And at Dwight Hall, where you'll turn scholarship into service and make community part of your curriculum.

Time after time, you will have the chance to fill the canvas before you with connection.

Take it.

In this moment of transition, in the face of uncertainty and instability in the world, be the hand that reaches out first. Be the friendly ear that listens or the soft voice that comforts. Seek out and learn from other perspectives, not just those you arrived with.

Because that's how you build a community. One small gesture at a time.

Today, it's my great privilege to welcome you to our community.

Welcome to Yale. We're so happy you're here. [Y]

[1] Prown, Jules D. "Winslow Homer in His Art." *Smithsonian Studies in American Art*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1987, pp. 31–45. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3108970.

[2] Slifkin, Robert. "Old Mill." In *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness: American Art from the Yale University Art Gallery*, Helen A. Cooper, organizer (Yale University Art Gallery and Yale University Press, 2008), p. 249.

[3] Jones, Jeffrey M. "Americans Agree Nation Is Divided on Key Values." Gallup.com, Gallup, September 23, 2024, news.gallup.com/poll/650828/americans-agree-nation-divided-key-values.aspx.

Weigh In!

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Send a letter to yam@yale.edu

In the wild

A professor finds the ruins of a project from his sixties roots.

TURNER BROOKS AND I AREN'T LOST, EXACTLY, but we aren't sure how to get where we're going. We have parked his VW Jetta by the side of the road and walked into a hilly patch of woods, taking advantage of trails when we can and stomping across rocks and tall grass otherwise. I'm regularly checking Google Maps on my phone to compare the little blue blob that shows where we are to the red pinpoint that represents my rough estimate of our destination.

Brooks ('65, '70MArch) has been in these woods before, once in the recent past and, before that, more than 50 years ago. He knows what we're looking for. About a mile in, we spot it atop a small hill: a curved, rust-colored . . . well . . . *object*, kind of sculptural, vaguely organic, gathering moss, and falling apart almost before our eyes. We stop to take it in.

"As a ruin, it just seems so much more empathetic, less alien," Brooks says. "It seems to be now part of the space of the forest."

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING AT ARE THE CRUMBLING but surprisingly persistent remains of something Brooks designed and built in 1968, when he was a student at the architecture school: an experimental structure made of urethane foam. It's a souvenir of a moment when social consciousness and optimism about technology led students to experiment with a new way of making architecture.

"A guy a year ahead of us, Bill Grover ['69MArch], saw a Union Carbide ad demonstrating the making of a little igloo-like structure," Brooks recalls. "And the structure looked like a balloon covered in

urethane foam, sprayed out of the nozzle of a gun which combined a resin and an activator in the nozzle. After it sprayed out, it expanded immediately, 30 times its original volume, and became rigid. Bill Grover thought this would be a great thing to bring to students at Yale to design experimental domestic structures."

The idea was in keeping with a new spirit of hands-on learning at the architecture school. Two years after becoming chair of the architecture program in 1965, architect Charles Moore had launched the first-year building project, in which students design and build a project for the public good. It continues to this day as the Jim Vlock First Year Building Project.

Union Carbide donated some of its product to the school, and a class led by Professor Felix Drury took up the challenge. After a class competition, three designs were chosen to be built in the Yale-owned woods just west of the Yale Golf Course. One of the three was Brooks's, a biomorphic, curvilinear collection of domes with a long narrow entry tube. It was an evolution of an earlier design he called the "wombulus tombulus."

The students sewed lengths of coated burlap cloth together to make the inflatable structures that would be sprayed with urethane; they used leaf blowers to inflate them on site. Once the space was enclosed, they cut openings in the lightweight structure and installed clear plastic windows.

Building the foam structures was pretty much an end in itself; there was no plan or practical way to use them for anything. Brooks's was used for at least

**BY MARK ALDEN
BRANCH '86**

**PHOTOGRAPH BY
CHRIS BUCK**

Facing page: **Turner Brooks** '65, '70MArch, seen through a floor-level window in the urethane foam structure he built in 1968 on the Yale Nature Preserve.





COURTESY TURNER BROOKS '65, '70 MARCH

Above: the **foam house** soon after its completion. For a few months, the house was the subject of media interest and the site of at least one party.

one party that fall, but the buildings were more or less forgotten. Brooks says the other two, which were much closer to the golf course, become an annoyance to golfers and were soon destroyed by the golf course staff. (He says they first tried to burn the structures, but stopped when they realized how toxic the smoke was.)

But because it was a little further removed, Brooks's foam house was spared. After a year or two, he returned to see how it was faring. "I walked in through the tube, and about six naked hippies went rushing through the building and then leapt through this back window and ran out."

Beneath the whimsical designs of the foam houses, the students had some serious ideas about the potential of the construction method. Because the foam only expands on the reaction of two substances that

can be stored in canisters, and because the balloons could be folded into compact shapes, the elements for building such a structure could be contained in a small package. "The idea was that we could arrive at a site that needed housing, maybe only with a helicopter, and drop down this high-density, low-volume package," Brooks says. The houses could be built quickly and cheaply.

"As a ruin, it seems so much more empathetic, less alien."

The students' professor, Felix Drury, went on to design and build several foam houses, and a handful



CHRIS BUCK

of others were built around the country. After graduating, Brooks and his classmate Dan Scully '70MArch were approached by a contractor who was interested in the concept. He hired them to tour the country in a rented Piper Cub airplane to visit other foam houses on a kind of fact-finding mission. In the end, it became apparent that the material's weak structural properties and toxicity were fatal flaws.

BROOKS MOVED ON TO A CAREER AS AN architect in Vermont, designing vernacular-inspired wood buildings that are aesthetically about as far away from a plastic igloo as you can imagine. (He designed Yale's Gilder Boathouse in Derby, Connecticut.) He began teaching at Yale in the 1980s and moved to New Haven in the 1990s.

Will Suzuki '23, a New Haven native who is cur-

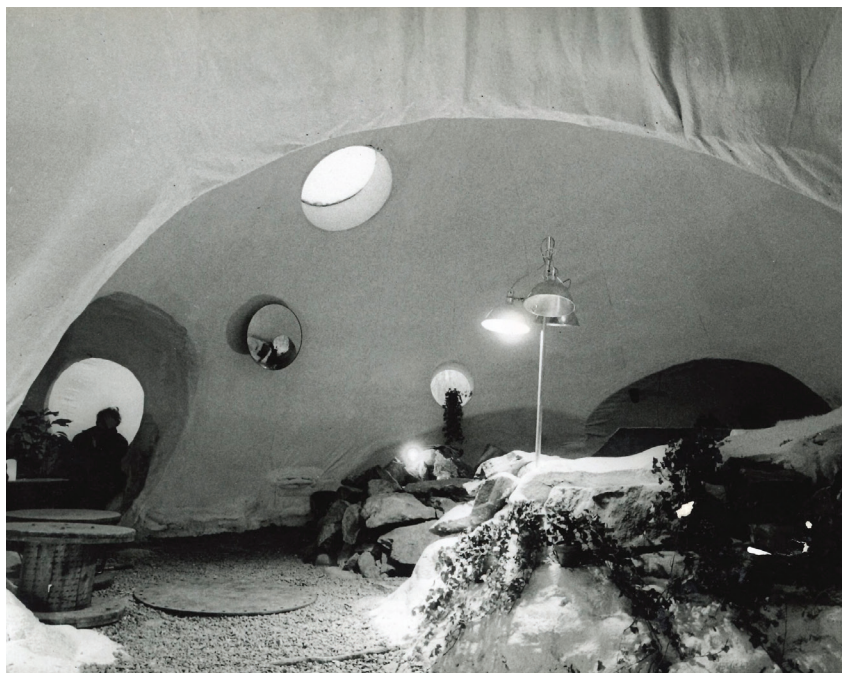
rently studying architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, was one of Brooks's students. Brooks taught the senior studio in the undergraduate architecture major until he retired in 2023, and Suzuki was in his final class.

One Wednesday evening in 2022, Brooks convened the class in a seminar room in Paul Rudolph Hall to share stories about his journey in architecture, accompanied by a slide show with some of his work. Among the slides were a few pictures of Brooks's foam house in its heyday, full of people. "He was sure that it had crumbled and was long gone," Suzuki says.

But while the house was all but forgotten to most people, it was well known among local mountain bikers. The woods have become a popular place for biking, and they are now criss-crossed with trails.

One of those bikers, fortuitously, is Suzuki's older

Brooks (above), seen inside the **collapsing structure**, says more of it has fallen down each time he's seen it in the last year and a half.



The burlap “balloon” that was inflated to form the structure was painted and became the house’s **interior surface** (above and top). Openings were cut in the foam to make the porthole-like windows. Facing page: although it’s still an odd thing to come across in the woods, **the ruin** seems less jarring than the original white plastic structure must have been.

brother Andrew. He and his comrades were well acquainted with the ruin on the site; they used it as a landmark for navigation. (“Turn left at the foam house.”) In the fall of 2023, Andrew took Will and their parents on a Thanksgiving hike in those woods.

When Will saw the ruin—although it looked very little like the slides he had seen—it all came together. “I sent Turner a picture saying ‘Is this the foam house?’ and he wrote me back ‘Holy crap!’”

A few months later, Suzuki and another of Brooks’s students, Jenny Coyne ’23, took their teacher into the woods to be reunited with his creation. “We had only really seen these hazy photographs from the sixties,” Suzuki says. “We all kind of fell in love with the ruinous state of it.”

“I walked in through the tube, and about six naked hippies leapt through the window and ran out.”

“It was magical, beautiful, and serendipitous,” says Coyne, “characteristic of the types of experiences that Turner taught us to notice and appreciate in the world: gentle interactions of light with form, critters making homes in unlikely places, and ruins that might even exceed their original designs.”

The ruin shows what happens to a foam house left to the elements. Brooks believes the center of the roof eventually collapsed after sagging under the weight of snow and ice. The foam, once an off-white shade, has somehow taken on the color of rusted steel. It’s not just weather that has conspired against the house; there are several holes that appear to have been drilled by woodpeckers (who were likely very confused), and human visitors to the site have broken off pieces and etched graffiti on the walls.

Really, though, it’s maybe more remarkable that the house has held together as well as it has, considering its fragility and the human penchant for vandalism. Its remoteness may have helped. The woods where it sits feel like a kind of no-man’s land: Are they part of the Regional Water Authority’s Maltby Lakes property to the south? Or an extension of the Yale Golf Course to the east? There are no signs on the property, and the only point of entry is a small opening in a fence on Fountain Street, obscured by a utility box.

In fact, the 200-acre tract where the house sits is

PHOTOS COURTESY TURNER BROOKS ’65, ’70 MARCH



CHRIS BUCK

called the Yale Nature Preserve. Established in 1925, the preserve is the property that was left over after the golf course was carved out of a 700-acre parcel given to Yale in 1923 by Sarah Wey Tompkins, widow of Ray Tompkins, Class of 1884. Set aside for research and education, the preserve is managed by the Yale Natural Lands Committee. Faculty use it for research into plants, trees, soil, and amphibian life, but Yale does not promote its use by the public. It is not mentioned on university websites, and there are no maps or guides available. Besides protecting plant species

and wildlife, the preserve has done a pretty good job of protecting a *wombulus tombulus* for 57 years.

Brooks fears that the ruin's decline is accelerating; he sees more collapsed sections every time he visits. With its days seemingly numbered, it might be time to get going on a vision he had when he first saw the ruin. "I want to see it as a stage set for events integrating music and dance," he says, "where ancient Druid friends would add to the ritual, especially at night under a full moon." If he gets that off the ground, we'll be sure to share the pictures. 

Weigh In!

Tell us your thoughts about this article.

Send a letter to yam@yale.edu

Happy New Year!

Object lesson

It's easy to feel the Disco Era was pretty silly: the spinning mirror ball, polyester flares, the Village People. But the American economy was collapsing in the late 1970s, and the nation was on the verge of the AIDS epidemic and the rise of the Moral Majority. For that matter, the songs we danced to—I'm thinking of "Stayin' Alive" by the Bee Gees, "I Will Survive" by Gloria Gaynor, and "Last Dance" by Donna Summer—suggest there was something serious at stake. And if it all seems long ago and irrelevant to the turmoil of our world today, recall that Donald Trump frequented Studio 54, and "YMCA" has become a MAGA anthem.

Tod Papageorge conveys the glare and intensity of the Disco Era in *Studio 54*, a book which collects 66 of the black and white photographs he took at the famous club, including this image of revelers at dawn on New Year's Day 1978. Papageorge was director of graduate studies in photography at Yale from 1979 to 2013, a role in which he helped to foster the careers of almost 300 young photographers. His work grew out of the street photography movement of the 1960s and 1970s when, with his friends and colleagues Garry Winogrand, Joel Meyerowitz, and Lee Friedlander, Papageorge took his camera into public settings to catch the feeling of everyday contemporary life.

Papageorge's photographs typically center on people glimpsed in casual interactions, usually with little or no awareness of the camera. Whether we find them naked on the beach or dressed in nightclub finery, they speak eloquently through postures and gestures. His pictures feel at once impromptu and intricately composed, expressing the essence of a moment. Such an art depends on sudden alignments of serendipity and artistic cunning, chance and technique.

In the case of *New Year's Eve, New York Discotheque*, Papageorge had been shooting at Studio 54 all night. When he came upon a bundle of clubbers lying on the floor in a corner, "I waited in agony," he told *The Guardian* recently, "for my flash battery to show whether it could power another exposure. After more than a minute, the ready light finally sparked on for what would be the last time that morning, just as a balloon fell slowly down to the very tips of the woman's fingers, her head arched aching back to watch its fall. I pressed the shutter, and the room was lost in light."

That burst of light, punctuating the long night, fixed for the future the image of these figures. Like a pile of children who have fallen on top of each other

in a game of Twister, their arms and legs intertwine, and we have to look carefully to be sure whose limb is whose. How many people do you see? I count six in all. That includes the woman who only appears in the mirror to the left of the door, where we can just make out her open-back dress. It's her feather boa that is draped across the knees of the man with the beard and leather jacket. His hand is on his brow, as if he were feeling the hangover to come and asking himself, "What have I done?"

In the central knot of figures, two women lie in parallel, sleeping on their sides, or trying to. One wears a dark evening gown with lace shoulders, the other a shiny pants suit. From our perspective, parts of their bodies are cut off: one's legs, the other's head. The two of them half merge with another pair, a white woman in white and a Black man in black. Are they a couple, or have they just now come together? As she reclines in his lap, his leg becomes hers, and their arms join at the elbow. His sunglasses shielding him from the camera, he smiles broadly, ready to keep the party going.

Papageorge did not visit Studio 54 for the celebrities. His focus was on the grit as much as the glamour of the place.

Unlike other photographers, Papageorge did not visit Studio 54 for the celebrities. His focus was on the grit as much as the glamour of the place. Look closely at the scratches and scuff marks on the door, the shards of cheap plastic cocktail glasses on the carpet. The composition is elegant and complex, but the level of detail feels forensic, like a car crash or a crime scene by Weegee. But then there is the woman's pale arm, fully extended, reaching up out of the mix of bodies. Her expression is contemplative, dreamy even, and yet determined. Like the man into whose arms she has fallen, she wants the night to last. Time is suspended there in the balloon at her fingertips; and in the center of the balloon, like a candle, is the glow of Papageorge's last flash. 

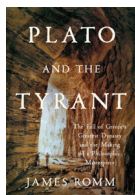
LANGDON HAMMER '80, '89PhD, is the Niel Gray Jr. Professor of English at Yale.

Photographer Tod Papageorge, a former director of the Yale School of Art graduate program in photography, had been shooting photographs all night at New York City's vaunted **Studio 54** when he captured *New Year's Eve, New York Discotheque* (opposite page), now in the Yale Art Gallery collection.



arts & culture

Output



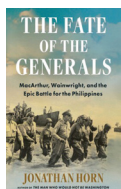
Plato and the Tyrant: The Fall of Greece's Greatest Dynasty and the Making of a Philosophic Masterpiece (W. W. Norton, \$31.99) — *James Romm* '80. Since Plato's influential *Republic* was written nearly

2,500 years ago, both the Greek philosopher and his take on the best governance system have been enshrined in an intellectual Mount Olympus. But in an engaging historical drama in five acts, Romm mines a collection of Plato's letters that cast the writer and the "new form of autocracy—philosopher-kingship" that he touted as a political cure-all in a modern light. "Did Plato, while extolling the Good as the source of transcendent joy, end up collaborating with evil?" asks Romm.



Please Don't Lie (Thomas and Mercer/Amazon Publishing, \$28.99) — *Christina Baker Kline* '86 and *Anne Burt* '89. In the middle of a blinding snowstorm, Hayley Stone's Adirondack Eden has become a hellish nightmare. She cowers in the shelter of the smokehouse on her new husband

Brandon's family property and clutches a makeshift weapon to protect her from . . . Well, what? So opens a riveting novel grounded in a collision between family tragedies that rushes headlong into betrayal and violence. In her new home, Hayley, a refugee from New York City, "imagines she can hear whispers from the past."



The Fate of the Generals: MacArthur, Wainwright, and the Epic Battle for the Philippines (Scribner/Simon & Schuster, \$30.99) — *Jonathan Horn* '04. After General Douglas MacArthur fled the Philippines in March 1942 in advance of the Japanese army, he famously

promised the world, "I shall return." But he left behind his colleague Lieutenant General Jonathan Wainwright, who, along with US and Filipino troops, would surrender to the invaders—Wainwright received no special treatment—and remain imprisoned until the war ended three years later. Using "almost completely overlooked diaries and previously unexamined correspondence," journalist-historian Horn presents a

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riveting account of two men who "received the same medal but found honor on very different paths."



What We Leave Behind: A Novel (HarperCollins, \$18.99) — *Sue Halpern* '77. When a pair of state troopers arrived at Melody Marcus's upscale suburban home, they had to deliver the awful news that the teen's adoptive mom Delia had been killed by

a mammoth boulder that "fell from the ledge above the road and crashed through the roof" of her red Audi. The accident sets in motion an array of events that bring together the lives of Melody and an unrelated and seemingly happy-to-be-unattached business executive named Candace. This tender novel revolves around the deepest of family secrets and the collision of nature and nurture. "The genes don't lie," says Melody. But what kinds of truth do they tell?



Baldwin: A Love Story (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$36) — *Nicholas Boggs* '97. The "ground-breaking" Black novelist and essayist James Baldwin did not "understand racism as an isolated form of oppression. Instead,"

writes Boggs, "he forced readers to confront the connections between white supremacy, masculinity, and sexuality." Boggs explores these links by focusing on the loves of Baldwin's life: school teachers like Orilla "Bill" Miller, who took him under her wing at PS 24 in Harlem; the painter Beauford Delaney, Baldwin's mentor; and the men who nurtured him as he moved restlessly between the US and France.



The Turning: Seasons 1, 2, and 3 (iHeartPodcasts and Rococo Punch) — *Erika Lantz* '11. "When Mary [Johnson] was nineteen years old, she dropped out of college and joined Mother Teresa's

order of nuns. She could leave at any time, but she was convinced there was no turning back." So goes the first episode, aired in May 2021, of a remarkable podcast series, now finishing its third season, that has looked intensely at three groups of women: members of the Missionaries of Charity, ballet dancers wedded to master choreographer George Balanchine, and the Maidens of a cult called the River Road Fellowship. In this series, podcaster and investigative reporter Lantz gives her subjects the space to tell their unforgettable stories of too-total immersion and eventual escape.

Calendar

Siddhartha, She **Yale Philharmonia**

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music.yale.edu/events

Yale Philharmonia appears in Woolsey Hall with YSM faculty artists, Yale Choral Artists, and singers from the Yale Glee Club and Yale Opera for the East Coast premiere of this major new work by renowned composer Christopher Theofanidis '97DMA.

NOVEMBER 15, 7:30PM

Hedda Gabler **Yale Repertory Theatre**

(203) 432-1234
yalerep.org/productions/hedda-gabler-11/

Henrik Ibsen's portrait of a woman striving to control her own destiny is directed by James Bundy '95MFA, the Rep's artistic director.

NOVEMBER 28–DECEMBER 20

William Blake: Burning Bright **Center for British Art**

(203) 432-2800
britishart.yale.edu/exhibitions-programs/william-blake-burning-bright

An exhibition showcasing the center's extensive collection of works by British poet and artist William Blake (1757–1827).

THROUGH NOVEMBER 30

Nusantara: Six Centuries of Indonesian Textiles **University Art Gallery**

(203) 432-0600
artgallery.yale.edu/exhibitions/exhibition/nusantara-six-centuries-indonesian-textiles

An exhibition celebrating the elaborate textile heritage of Indonesia includes more than 100 examples of craftsmanship and artistic innovation drawn from the gallery's holdings—the largest collection of Indonesian textiles in the Western hemisphere.

THROUGH JANUARY 11, 2026

American Legal Histories **Lillian Goldman Law Library**

(203) 432-1608
library.law.yale.edu/news/new-exhibit-american-legal-histories

A display of primary-source historical records, used by students in last spring's American Legal History course.

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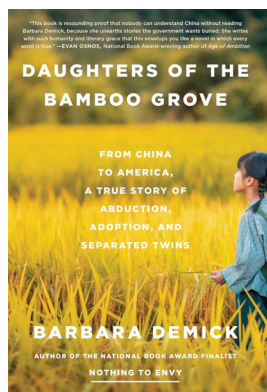


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Reviews



Daughters of the Bamboo Grove: From China to America, a True Story of Abduction, Adoption, and Separated Twins
BARBARA DEMICK '80
Random House, \$32
Reviewed by Cathy Shufro

One ordinary spring day in 2002, in the mountains of China's Hunan Province, strangers burst into a house where two boys were babysitting their toddler cousin, Fangfang. When

the boys spotted the intruders' expensive leather shoes, they knew the men were civil servants. The boys grabbed Fangfang and fled to the forest.

The government officials came for Fangfang because her birth had violated China's one-child policy; her parents already had two children. The men returned. They pried the screaming toddler from her screaming aunt.

In her compelling narrative, *Daughters of the Bamboo Grove*, journalist Barbara Demick '80 uses Fangfang's kidnapping as a case study in a larger examination of the political, cultural, and economic landscape of the one-child policy. The policy was instituted nationwide in 1980 and repealed in 2015; during that period, Westerners adopted 160,000 Chinese-born children.

Adoption wasn't the plan for Fangfang: After her mother gave birth to her—and an identical twin—relatives agreed to hide Fangfang in their village.

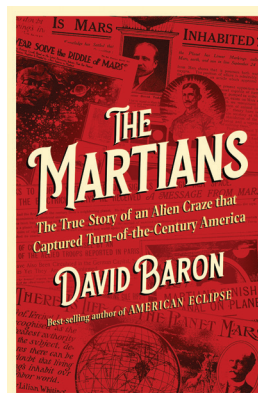
Demick recounts how, like thousands of "over-quota" children, Fangfang fell victim to a scheme for "creating orphans." Although Fangfang's parents quickly located their daughter in an orphanage, they couldn't pay the gargantuan fine required to claim her. Next, Family Planning officials lied to the Americans who wanted to adopt Fangfang, claiming that she'd been abandoned at a factory gate, her parents unknown. Like many well-meaning Westerners, Fangfang's new parents unknowingly adopted a stolen child.

Creating orphans was profitable. By 2012, the Chinese government had collected an estimated \$314 billion in mandatory "donations" from adoptive families, combined with fines paid by parents of out-of-plan children.

Demick first met Fangfang's bereft parents and her twin, Shuangjie, while reporting in China for the *Los Angeles Times*. In the book, Demick tells the extraordinary story of how she tracked down Fangfang—by then a thriving Texas teenager named Esther. In 2017, Demick reconnected the twins.

The reunion provides no fairy-tale ending. But Demick reports that in Hunan as in Texas, the separated sisters are beloved. We see Esther and Shuangjie embarking on adult lives full of promise.

CATHY SHUFRO teaches writing at Yale.



The Martians: The True Story of an Alien Craze that Captured Turn-of-the-Century America

DAVID BARON '86
Farrar, Straus and
Liveright, \$29.99
Reviewed by Alex Beam '75

It's delightful to read a book in which the author seems to be having fun. That would certainly describe David Baron's *The Martians*, a brisk and informative account of the quarter-century-

long Mars frenzy—a "love story" as Baron calls it—that mesmerized America starting in the 1890s. Until powerful telescopes demystified our nearest planetary neighbor, Mars was the imagined Brave New World upon which mankind's fears, desires, and manias were projected.

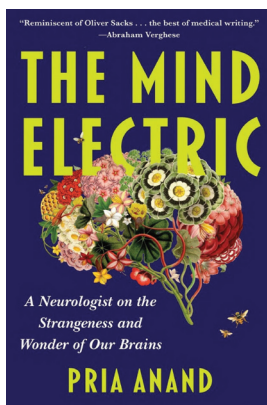
Baron, a veteran science writer, has an enviable cast of characters: H. G. Wells, whose fictional Martians invaded Earth in his 1897 novel *The War of the Worlds*; the neurasthenic Boston Brahmin Percival Lowell, a diehard propagandist for the chimerical Martian canals; and the moody Serbian genius Nikola Tesla, who occasionally sallies forth from his lodgings at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel to try to communicate with the Red Planet.

The Martians were us, only better.

Lowell's canal obsession is a recurring theme in the book. He spun what he thought were straight lines on the Martian surface into an elaborate theory of a civilization channeling water into oases for agricultural use. "Irrigation," he wrote, "must be the all-engrossing Martian pursuit." One of his scientific allies, a "canalist," as opposed to the rival "anti-canalists," opined that "the Minister of Agriculture orders the highest locks to be opened and fills the two upper canals with water."

The legend of the canals and the canal keepers endured, until it didn't. Even when more sophisticated observers with stronger telescopes attacked his findings, Lowell ceded no ground: "It is not me who makes lines on Mars, it is the Martians," he wrote to a friend. "What happened on Earth always seemed to be projected onto Mars," Baron writes. "Part of what made the Martians so appealing was their relatability. They were us, only better—wiser, more peaceful, more moral." Baron has written a Goldilocks narrative, not too long, not too short—just right. All in all, a delectable Martian chronicle.

ALEX BEAM '75 is a Boston-based writer.



The Mind Electric: A Neurologist on the Strangeness and Wonder of Our Brains

PRIA ANAND '10

Simon and Schuster, \$28.99

Reviewed by Anna Reisman

'86

Anand sheds light on the misinterpretation of women's neurological symptoms throughout history. There is the young woman with sudden blindness who believes it divine punishment for a forbidden kiss (diagnosis:

mononucleosis). There is Lidwina of Schiedam, a fourteenth-century Dutch saint, with pain and symptoms that seem to come and go randomly: "Her right arm became paralyzed, then mobile, her right eye blind, then sight restored." While Lidwina and her physicians were certain she had been chosen to suffer for humanity's sins,

an examination of her exhumed body in 1947 revealed evidence of, most likely, multiple sclerosis.

Anand introduces us to conditions like the "agnosias," disorders that can cause people to stop recognizing friends, family, and ordinary things. Those with anosognosia lack recognition of their own deficits. With simultanagnosia, a person cannot visualize multiple things at the same time. Anand recounts the story of a seamstress who could no longer work: she could focus on the needle, or the thread, but not both at once.

As a narrator, Anand deftly relates such complicated brain activities as the auditory hallucinations before a seizure. Of her misery during childbirth, she writes of "a fleeting glimpse into the loneliness of pain, into the experience of being subsumed by a pain in a room full of people who are as removed from your pain as the cosmologists gazing through the telescope." Anand isn't merely interested in the intriguing manifestations of neurological diseases, but just as much in the lived experience of those enduring them, not least herself.

Primary care physician **ANNA REISMAN** '86 directs Yale's Program for Humanities in Medicine.



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Our extraordinary client is warm-hearted, accomplished, and truly radiant. This bi-racial beauty divides her time between Manhattan and Miami, and serves on many boards at world-renowned organizations. Well educated at Princeton and Harvard, her passions include jazz, theater, comedy, cooking, hosting intimate dinners, and global travel. We are seeking thoughtful, accomplished gentlemen, ages 55-75, of all races and religions. Respond confidentially via email to: bonnie@bonniewinstonmatchmaker.com or call 917-836-3683.

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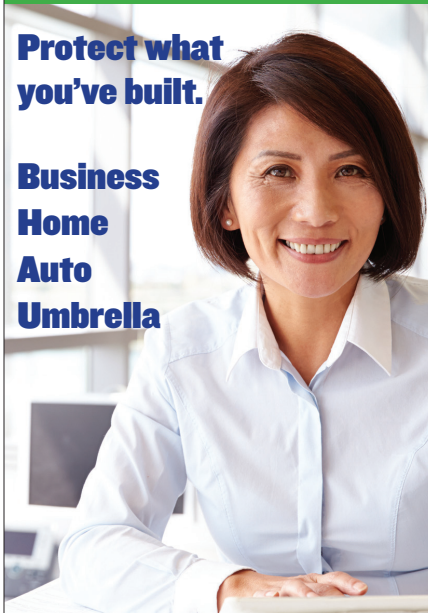
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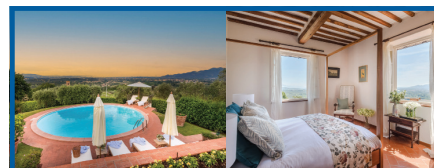
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b. (3) Outside mail paid	1,227	1,207
c. Total paid/requested	71,022	71,738
d. (1) Free by mail	66,081	66,661
d. (4) Free outside the mail	176	100
e. Total free	66,257	66,761
f. Total distribution	137,278	138,499
g. Not distributed	388	430
h. Total	137,666	138,929
i. Paid/requested	51.7%	51.8%

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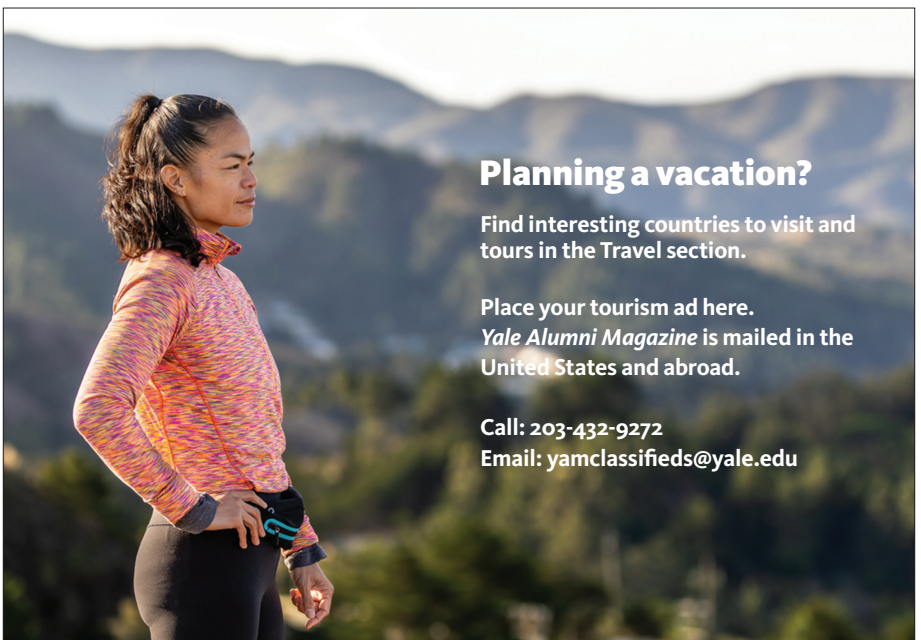
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school notes

A supplement to the Yale Alumni Magazine.



School of Art



Kymberly Pinder, Dean
art.yale.edu

Space for undergraduate art majors

A newly acquired and remodeled building at 53 Broadway in New Haven will provide creative space for undergraduate art majors in their final year of study. The building, which opened on September 19, was developed in response to the removal of 341 Crown Street, which was demolished to make way for the new dramatic arts building. With over 7,000 square feet, the new facility includes 24 individual studios designed for focused, independent work; an 800-square-foot classroom for instruction and group learning; a small critique space to foster dialogue and feedback; and faculty and staff offices to support mentorship and advising. The building will serve as a dedicated space for senior undergraduate majors to develop their studio practices, engage in critique, and participate in seminars and studio visits.

MARK ALDEN BRANCH '86

School of Architecture



Deborah Berke, Dean
architecture.yale.edu

Building project

Students in the Jim Vlock First Year Building Project returned to the site in New Haven's Fair Haven Heights for the third summer in a row, adding one more home to the new campus of Friends Center for Children, an early childhood education organization. In addition to providing housing for a teacher, students were tasked with providing a community space for the use of the entire "village." This year, building project director Adam Hopfner '99MArch is joined on site by assistant director

Louis Koushouris '23MArch. The house debuted at an open house on October 3, shortly before the new educators moved in.

Architectural criticism

On October 30–31, a symposium focused on the built environment invited critics across disciplines to ask whether, and how, acts of public-facing writing might help build new forms of collective dialogue. Organized by assistant professor David Sadighian '07, '10MEnvD, director of communications AJ Artemel '14MArch, and students Izzy Kornblatt '27PhD and Jaime Solares Carmona '28PhD, "Criticism in the New Commons" included a keynote lecture by art critic Hal Foster; a panel featuring journalists, bloggers, and editors; and a workshop on editing, pitching, and starting publications.

Faculty and alum recognition

Aki Sasamoto, director of graduate studies in sculpture, recently opened her first mid-career retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo. Open through November, *Aki Sasamoto's Life Laboratory* includes performances by the artist in October and November.

In its 30th year, the Heinz Awards selected two Yale School of Art alums, Jennifer Packer '12MFA and Marie Watt '96MFA, for their awards honoring leaders in the arts. In August, NXTHVN announced that recent grad Haejin Park '25MFA (painting/printmaking) was selected as one of the seven studio fellows in Cohort 07. Each year, NXTHVN—founded by Titus Kapahar '06MFA and Jason Price—welcomes up to seven artists and two curators to participate in its paid, ten-month intensive

NOTE TO READERS: THE YALE ALUMNI MAGAZINE CARRIES THIS SUPPLEMENT IN EVERY ISSUE FOR NEWS FROM YALE'S GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS, YALE COLLEGE, AND THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES. THIS SUPPLEMENT IS NOT WRITTEN BY THE MAGAZINE STAFF BUT PROVIDED BY THE DEANS.

fellowship program in New Haven.

Two recent alums were also selected to teach this year as AICAD Teaching Fellows: Xi Li '23MFA (photography) is teaching at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago this academic year; and Mei Kazama '24MFA (painting/print-making) is teaching at the Cleveland Institute of Art.

Yale College



Pericles Lewis, Dean
yalecollege.yale.edu

Alumnus named Knight-Hennessy Scholar

David Edimo '21, an economics major, has been named a Knight-Hennessy Scholar at Stanford University, joining 84 scholars from 25 countries. He is pursuing dual master's degrees in business and sustainability, aiming to accelerate next-generation energy deployment and modernize utility-consumer relationships. Edimo previously negotiated energy tech deals for Google, advised the US Department of Defense at Boston Consulting Group, and chaired Abundant Housing LA. At Yale, he won the North American Debating Championship.

Alumna elected alumni fellow

Jaime Teevan '98, chief scientist and technical fellow at Microsoft, has been elected an alumni fellow of the Yale Corporation. A pioneer in AI and web search, Teevan led the development of M365 Copilot and invented Bing's first personalized search algorithm. She began her six-year term on July 1. Teevan holds a PhD from MIT and serves on boards including Shutterstock and the Computing Research Association. Her service to Yale includes the SEAS Leadership Council, and she was named one of *Time's* 100 most influential people in AI in 2023.

Schwarzman Center hosts immersive light installation

Renowned visual artist Leo Villareal '90 debuted *Celestial Garden (Yale)* in the Schwarzman Center's Dome, an immersive light and sound installation powered by

custom software and ten projectors. Inspired by nature's evolving patterns, the exhibition created a communal, meditative space for visitors. The display, which was free and open to the public, was on view from August 9 to October 10. (For a photo, see the last page of this issue.)

Divinity School



Gregory E. Sterling, Dean
divinity.yale.edu

Living Village welcomes first student residents

Joy and excitement filled the sunny hallways of the Divinity School's Living Village on August 25 as the first student inhabitants moved into the new residence hall, which aims to meet the world's most exacting standards for environmental sustainability.

A state-of-the-art residential complex designed to give back to the environment more than it takes, the Living Village featuring Carol B. Bauer Hall has emerged as a key component of the Yale Planetary Solutions initiative and the Divinity School's growing emphasis on ecotheology. The residential complex was designed to meet the seven principles of the Living Building Challenge (LBC), the most rigorous sustainable building certification program in existence, including sustainable water practices, clean energy generation, and building material safety. It is on track to become the largest residential facility on any university campus to achieve the LBC's Living Certification, according to the International Living Future Institute, which administers the Living Building Challenge.

A full story can be found at Yale News and the news area of the Divinity School website.

Video series explores careers in ecotheology

Nearly two dozen Divinity School alumni are featured in a new video interview series released by the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology. "Reflections on Religion & Ecology: Yale Alumni Speak from the Field" explores the career pathways blazed by graduates working

in the growing field of religion and ecology, including ecotheologians, ecological chaplains, activists, and others. A link to the interviews is available at the website of the Forum on Religion & Ecology and the news area of the YDS website.

David Geffen School of Drama



James Bundy, Dean
drama.yale.edu

Hurston play brought to stage for first time

Yale Repertory Theatre opened its 2025–26 season with the first-ever production of Zora Neale Hurston's *Spunk*, 90 years after it was written. Perhaps best known as a novelist, folklorist, and anthropologist, Hurston was also a prolific playwright. *Spunk*, adapted in 1935 from her own earlier short story, was filed for copyright that same year with the Library of Congress.

In 2001, a Congressional librarian uncovered the script amidst a tranche of Hurston's unpublished papers and shared it with Catherine Sheehy '99DFA, chair of dramaturgy and dramatic criticism at David Geffen School of Drama and resident dramaturg at Yale Rep, who championed Hurston's play with music for more than two decades. The Yale Rep production began to take shape four years ago when Sheehy shared the script with Tamilla Woodard '02MFA, then newly appointed as chair of acting at the Geffen School and a resident director at Yale Rep.

James Bundy '95MFA, Elizabeth Parker Ware Dean of the Geffen School and artistic director of Yale Rep, commented, "Tamilla; Catherine, production dramaturg alongside Eric M. Glover (faculty); composer, arranger, and music supervisor Nehemiah Luckett; and choreographer nicHi douglas have endeavored to bring Hurston's wondrous, life-affirming fable about the triumph of love to life with care and infectious enthusiasm."

The production was made possible in part through the generosity of the Roy Cockrum Foundation. The Foundation—which previously

school notes

A supplement to the Yale Alumni Magazine.

supported the Yale Rep's 2022 production of *Between Two Knees* by The 1491s—spontaneously reached out and offered the theater a grant in the amount of \$30,000 to replace the monies that were rescinded by the National Endowment for the Arts earlier this year.

School of Engineering & Applied Science



Jeffrey Brock, Dean
seas.yale.edu

Giving robots a hand

Developing wrist mechanisms for robots has long proven a challenge. They're often complicated and bulky, and they struggle with certain maneuvers, such as unscrewing a light bulb or turning a door handle.

Yale researchers, led by Professor Aaron Dollar, have taken a simpler approach that could give robots a way to handle more complex movements. Forgoing the use of cameras or sensors, their design features a spherical mechanism that can both grasp and rotate a wide range of objects—an ability critical for putting robots to use in homes and other unstructured environments.

Professor wins CAREER Award

For a project that predicts how very small particles move in porous environments, Professor Amir Pahlavan has won a Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Award from the National Science Foundation. Pahlavan will use the \$610,000, five-year grant to develop a means of predicting and controlling the transport of colloids suspended in porous media, which can include everything from soil to biological tissues to human-made materials. The research has the potential for a broad range of applications, including drug delivery to tumors, filtration, wastewater treatment, and contaminant remediation.

A better way to make nanowires

One-dimensional topological nanomaterials—that is, extremely thin nanowires—hold great promise for quantum and electronic devices.

Making them on a large scale, though, is tricky and time-consuming. A team of researchers led by Professor Jan Schroers has developed a new method for creating these materials that's quick and easy to scale up. Their approach allows atoms to essentially self-organize, automatically moving from a high-pressure environment to a low-pressure one to form single-crystal nanowires. The breakthrough could lead to a practical way to manufacture nanowires at a large scale for industries and research fields specializing in quantum computing, optoelectronics, and others.

School of the Environment



Ingrid C. "Indy" Burke, Dean
environment.yale.edu

YSE launches executive degree programs

Set to welcome its first cohort in August 2026, YSE's new executive master of environmental management (EMEM) and executive master of forestry (EMF) programs will offer mid-career professionals the opportunity to deepen their expertise, expand their leadership capabilities, and advance environmental solutions.

"Our new EMEM and EMF degrees are exciting opportunities for experienced leaders who want to build their knowledge base and skill set in environmental management and forestry in a world-leading school of the environment," said senior associate dean of academic affairs Kenneth Gillingham. "A hallmark of the program is that it is fully residential, offering students the chance to spend a year at Yale, enjoying the incredible opportunities at the school and on the campus."

Participants will complete a 30-credit program over two semesters, including the one-credit summer intensive Leading Through Complexity: Tools for Environmental Problem-Solving; a five-credit capstone Executive Capstone in Designing and Driving Environmental Solutions; and 24 credits of fully customizable electives.

Urban heat is delaying spring in NYC's parks

As climate change accelerates and cities grow warmer, researchers assumed spring would arrive earlier each year. Yet, a new study led by scientists at the Yale School of the Environment suggests the opposite is happening in New York City's parks. Spring is arriving later, especially in the city's medium-sized green spaces.

"Previously, the assumption was that warmer temperatures would advance the start of spring," said Juwon Kong, a postdoctoral associate in the Seto Lab at the Yale School of Environment, and lead author of the study, published in *Environmental Research Letters*. "However, now we're seeing that warming, particularly in winter, is actually delaying it."

Kong and a group of researchers examined more than two decades of satellite imagery and advanced remote sensing analysis, finding that warming winters and intensified urban heat are delaying the start of the growing season for trees in the city's parks, and the implications could reach beyond New York. (For more on this research, check out the story *Late Bloomers* on page 31.)

Faculty of Arts & Sciences



Steven Wilkinson, Dean
fas.yale.edu

FAS appoints new professors in the practice

The FAS appointed four outstanding new professors in the practice this fall: award-winning poet and translator Peter Cole (Jewish studies), Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Sarah Stillman (English), two-time Tony winner Jeanine Tesori (theater, dance, and performance studies and music), and six-time Grammy winner Dawn Upshaw (music). Professors in the practice are exceptional practitioners of their craft—be it the arts, literature, or journalism—and bring unmatched practical experience to Yale's classrooms and community. They join other esteemed FAS professors in the practice, including cartoonist

Alison Bechdel, novelist Michael Cunningham, playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, and others.

Chemists win national honors

James Mayer, Charlotte Fitch Roberts Professor of Chemistry, and Scott Miller, Sterling Professor of Chemistry, won American Chemical Society awards for their work investigating the complex chemistry that underpins modern life and technology. Mayer won the James Flack Norris Award in Physical Organic Chemistry for his work, which includes discoveries in important chemical processes used in solar fuels and fuel cells. Miller won the Gabor A. Somorjai Award for Creative Research in Catalysis for developing “new methods for the synthesis and derivatization of complex molecules and the catalytic modification of natural products,” with applications that include pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and beyond.

Yale Center for Civic Thought launches

This fall marks the first semester of programming at Yale’s new Center for Civic Thought. The nonpartisan center, led by Bryan Garsten, professor of humanities and of political science, provides a space for students, faculty, and the public to engage in thoughtful civic discourse. This year, the center is prioritizing three topics across its events, discussions, and research: constitutional democracy in America, universities’ role in civic life, and humanity in the age of AI. The center builds on Garsten’s decade of experience leading the Citizens Thinkers Writers summer program, which invites New Haven high school students to Yale to read and discuss foundational texts about democracy and civic life.

Jackson School of Global Affairs



James A. Levinsohn, Dean
jackson.yale.edu

Jackson School welcomes its largest master’s class

The Jackson School of Global Affairs admitted

its largest class of master’s students this year, including 45 students in the two-year master in public policy (MPP) in global affairs program and 15 students in the master of advanced studies (MAS) in global affairs program. There are also six students enrolled in the five-year BA/MPP program for Yale College students. Six of the MPP students are also pursuing joint degrees with other Yale professional and graduate schools. This diverse group of students speaks more than 30 languages and represents more than 30 countries, while roughly half of the class is from across the US.

Iceland prime minister returns to Jackson

The youngest state leader in the world, Iceland prime minister Kristrún Frostadóttir ’16MA returned to campus September 24 for a discussion hosted by the Blue Center for Global Strategic Assessment. In just nine years since graduating from Jackson, Frostadóttir has rapidly ascended the political ladder. She was elected to the Althing, Iceland’s national parliament, in 2021, became the leader of the country’s Social Democratic Alliance in 2022, and was appointed prime minister in 2024 after her party won a snap election. “We’re a small country but we have a lot of natural strengths,” said the prime minister, citing the country’s unique natural resources, its strategic geographic position in the North Atlantic, and its strong relationships with the US, NATO, and the European Union.

Graduate School of Arts & Sciences



Lynn Cooley, Dean
gsas.yale.edu

Distinguished alumni honored with Wilbur Cross Medal

Four distinguished alumni of Yale’s Graduate School of Arts and Sciences were awarded 2025 Wilbur Cross Medals on October 20. This year’s honorees include an acclaimed cultural historian, a pioneer in modern linguistics, a leader in personalized cancer medicine, and a noted physicist.

Philip J. Deloria ’94PhD (American

studies), the Leverett Saltonstall Professor of History at Harvard University, was honored for his research and teaching on the social, cultural, and political histories of the relations among American Indian peoples and the United States, as well as the comparative and connective histories of indigenous peoples in a global context.

Samuel J. Keyser ’62PhD (linguistics) was recognized for his contributions to the field of linguistics. He is the founder and long-serving editor in chief of the journal *Linguistic Inquiry*, a premier publication in the field, and the *Linguistics Inquiry Monographs*, which recently published its 90th volume.

Andrew J. Lankford ’72, ’78PhD (physics), is a particle physicist who has searched for new fundamental particles and new phenomena at colliding beam accelerators around the world. He was honored for his many achievements, including being part of the team that discovered the Higgs boson, a long-sought-after fundamental particle.

Jeffrey E. Settleman ’89PhD (genetics) was recognized for his leadership in molecularly targeted cancer therapeutics, the epigenetics of cancer drug resistance, and personalized cancer medicine. He is the chief scientific officer for oncology research and development at Pfizer and previously taught at Harvard School of Medicine for 18 years.

The Wilbur Cross Medal honors the legacy of service and excellence inaugurated by Wilbur Lucius Cross (1889PhD), who served as dean of the Graduate School from 1916 to 1930 and as governor of Connecticut from 1931 to 1939. The award is the highest honor that the Graduate School bestows on its alumni.

Law School



Yair Listokin, Interim Dean
law.yale.edu

Two receive named professorships

Former dean Heather K. Gerken was appointed Sterling Professor of Law, the premier campus honor for a Yale professor, and will remain part of the faculty as professor emerita. She assumes the presidency of the Ford

school notes

A supplement to the Yale Alumni Magazine.

Foundation after eight years of transformative leadership as dean of the Law School. Amy Kapczynski '03JD, a scholar whose work examines the intersections of law, inequality, and democratic governance, was appointed the John Thomas Smith Professor of Law. Kapczynski is faculty codirector of the Global Health Justice Partnership and the Law and Political Economy Project.

Professor honored at international conference

Roberta Romano '80JD, Sterling Professor of Law and codirector of the Center for the Study of Corporate Law at the Law School, was recognized at an academic conference at the Comillas Pontifical University in Madrid. The international conference brought together more than 20 academics to discuss their research in relation to Romano's work on capital markets, legislative competition in the EU, director liability, corporate restructuring, the impact of sustainability on financial regulation, and litigation finance.

First class of Launchpad Scholars heads to law school

Started in 2022, the Launchpad Scholars Program, one of two pipeline-to-law school programs at the Law School, helps applicants navigate the challenges of applying to law school via in-person and remote learning opportunities, mentorship, LSAT preparation, and individualized application support. The first cohort of scholars entered top law schools this fall, including Yale, Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania, Duke, and UC–Berkeley. “We are beyond thrilled with the success of our first cohort,” said associate dean of admissions Miriam Ingber '04JD. “We can’t wait to see what they accomplish during law school and in their legal careers.”

Find out more.

For more information on any of the stories in School Notes, visit the schools' websites.

School of Management



Kerwin Charles, Dean
som.yale.edu

Envisioning a more equitable New Haven

In its second year, nine SOMers participated in the Inclusive Growth Fellowship, a program that pairs School of Management students with New Haven agencies to conceptualize economic development projects benefiting all local residents. The fellowship is part of the Center for Inclusive Growth, a landmark partnership between Yale and its home city. The 2024–25 fellows focused on ways for New Haven to attract more events, reform its zoning code, promote the use of low-carbon construction materials, and support local entrepreneurship. “The fellowship rightfully brings Yale closer to the community it calls home,” said program assistant Edward Chiu '25MBA.

Expanding the frontiers of economics

The Cowles Foundation for Research in Economics, a program housed within Yale's economics department, hosted its annual series of summer conferences at Evans Hall in collaboration with SOM. Over 350 economists and scholars flocked to New Haven for the event, and SOM faculty members spoke alongside colleagues from other peer universities and central banks of several countries about topics including early childhood learning, collective bargaining, and student debt.

“Supporting rigorous research is a core part of our mission,” said Yale SOM dean Kerwin K. Charles. “When SOM helps put scholars in dialogue, the SOM community and broader society stand to benefit.”

Putting principles into practice

MBA students applied lessons learned in their first year at Yale SOM during internships at banks, consulting firms, museums, startups, media companies, and consumer brands. Ben Locklin '26 explored human capital consulting at Deloitte; Jasmine Liao '26 contributed to

a new feature on the language learning app Duolingo; and Jason Kertayasa '26 helped a Tanzanian fair-trade coffee distributor improve its operations. “This summer provided exactly what I hoped,” said Nataliia Nevinchana '27 of her internship at EY Consulting: “Hands-on experience, leadership opportunities, career exploration, and a chance to test life in a completely different place.”

School of Medicine



Nancy J. Brown, Dean
medicine.yale.edu

Gastroenterologist chairs internal medicine

On September 1, Wolfram Goessling assumed the role of chair of the Department of Internal Medicine at Yale School of Medicine, chief of internal medicine at Yale New Haven Hospital, and physician-in-chief for medicine across the Yale New Haven Health System. “We all have different experiences, backgrounds, and interests,” Goessling says. “Making sure faculty, staff, and trainees can find a place in the department to be who they are and who they want to become is an important goal of mine.”

Before joining Yale, Goessling was chief of gastroenterology and the Jules L. Dienstag MD and Betty and Newell Hale Endowed Chair in Gastroenterology at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. He also served as the Robert H. Ebert Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School (HMS) and the HMS director of the Harvard-Massachusetts Institute of Technology Division of Health Sciences and Technology.

New MD students don their white coats

The White Coat Ceremony for the 104 members of the Yale School of Medicine (YSM) MD Class of 2029, which marked the start of their medical school journey, included welcoming, reflective, and inspiring remarks from school leaders and an experienced doctor, as is the tradition. This year, it also included the poignant, thoughtful perspective of a rising

second-year YSM MD student.

Benjamin Doolittle, professor of medicine (general medicine), of pediatrics, and of divinity, and director of the Internal Medicine–Pediatrics Residency Program, shared the insights of this student—Comfort Abuwa—as part of his White Coat address. He explained that he teaches a philosophy seminar at YSM in the summer and asked his students what they would say if they were delivering the White Coat address.

Abuwa's focus on the importance of both knowledge and humanity in becoming and being a doctor was reflected throughout the August 8 ceremony. After sharing Abuwa's remarks, Doolittle stated, "It is a special moment when the student becomes the teacher, and the teacher becomes the student."

School of Music



José García-León, Dean
music.yale.edu

Music education program receives multi-year funding

At this summer's Symposium on Music in Schools, Alexis Roderick Joel, cochair of the Joel Foundation, announced a three-year pledge to support the Music in Schools Initiative—a commitment that will enable the program to more than double the number of New Haven public schools it serves by 2028. The initiative is originally enabled by a gift from the Yale College Class of 1957.

YSM honors jazz artist

At the first concert of the 2025–26 Yale School of Music Ellington Jazz Series, New Haven native and internationally acclaimed jazz pianist Christian Sands was awarded the Ellington Medal for his contributions to the jazz genre. Previous medal recipients have included Marian Anderson, Eubie Blake, Dizzy Gillespie, Charles Mingus, and Max Roach.

Collection of Musical Instruments celebrates 125th anniversary

The Morris Steinert Collection of Musical Instruments celebrated the 125th anniversary

of its founding in 2025. In September, a special event showed off the results of a multi-year renovation project. Guests, including Yale president Maurie McInnis '96PhD and provost Scott Strobel, were treated to a special concert on period instruments. The collection is expected to reopen to the public in fall 2026.

School of Nursing



Azita Emami, Dean
nursing.yale.edu

The healing power of the arts

As part of Yale Climate Week in New York City, YSN presented "Imagining a Healthier Planet," a discussion on the healing power of artistic expression and how the earth, arts, and healthcare intersect. Led by researcher-artists Susan Prescott, AZA Stephen Allsop (assistant professor at Yale School of Medicine), and YSN Associate Dean of Nursing Impact Christine Rodriguez, guests were treated to stunning displays of visual and auditory art, some of which has been used to study our interconnectedness to each other and the planet.

Nursing Hall of Fame honors YSN professor

Professor LaRon E. Nelson was inducted into the International Nursing Researcher Hall of Fame this summer, joining a distinguished group of global nursing leaders. This prestigious recognition from Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing acknowledges Nelson's groundbreaking contributions to healthcare and nursing science.

YSN alum and lecturer takes on new role

Mandy Richards '24DNP has been named president of children's health at Intermountain Health, overseeing children's services across Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and Utah. Mandy also serves as an invited lecturer in the DNP Healthcare Leadership, Systems, and Policy program, bringing her expertise to YSN students and faculty. Her leadership

exemplifies the impact of YSN graduates driving system- and policy-level change.

School of Public Health



Megan L. Ranney, Dean
ysph.yale.edu

2025 Alumni Fund donations set new record

Members and friends of the Yale School of Public Health (YSPH) community donated more than \$600,000 to the school's Alumni Fund in the 2025 fiscal year, setting a new record. This amount of immediate financial support is equivalent to the annual payout of a \$13.3 million endowed scholarship fund.

The YSPH Alumni Fund provides essential scholarship support to students. More than 60 percent of YSPH students depend on these critical funds to support their public health education.

Visit the YSPH website to watch Dean Megan L. Ranney express her gratitude to YSPH's nearly 7,000 alumni for their continued commitment to the school and the vital role they play as mentors, recruiters, and supporters.

Distinguished public health leader joins YSPH

Ashwin Vasan, a practicing physician and distinguished public health leader and innovator, has joined the Yale School of Public Health as a senior fellow in the Department of Health Policy and Management.

Vasan most recently served as commissioner of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the largest municipal government health department in the world.

As New York's health commissioner, from his appointment in late 2021 through late 2024, Dr. Vasan led the city out of COVID-19 and spearheaded the response to the 2022 mpox outbreak when New York was its epicenter. Simultaneously, he reoriented the city's public health system to focus on the main drivers of declining life expectancy, including chronic and diet-related diseases, overdoses, gun violence, and birth inequities. 

last look



How does your garden grow?

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK ALDEN BRANCH '86

For two months, this summer into fall, the dome of the Schwarzman Center became *Celestial Garden (Yale)*, a mesmerizing site-specific creation by artist Leo Villareal '90. Members of the Yale and wider New Haven communities were invited (free of charge) to lie back on a cushy carpet, or a comfy chair, to watch an ever-changing garden of shapes and colors dancing on the domed ceiling; computer-generated tones offered what Villareal describes as a “link between visual and auditory.”

“It’s not prescriptive like so much technology,” says Villareal. “There is no beginning, middle, and end; the viewer doesn’t feel like they have missed anything. There is no ‘go here, buy that.’ It’s creating a more open-ended experience. I hope it elicits a sense of joy.”

Villareal had a more prosaic experience of the domed room as an undergraduate, in the days when it was the *Yale Banner* office. “I remember going to get my yearbook photo taken there.”