By Micah Greenberg

On Sunday, a nine-year-old girl experiencing a mental health crisis was handcuffed and pepper-sprayed by police officers. Two graphic body camera videos were released showing Rochester Police Department (RPD) officers, called by the girl’s mother, detaining the girl who cried for her father. This incident took place on Harris Street on Friday, Jan. 29, after the child’s mother told police that her daughter was intent on harming herself and others. Prior to the release of the footage on Sunday, Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren held a press conference alongside interim Rochester Police Chief Cynthia Herriott-Sullivan and Executive Deputy Chief Andre Anderson. All three called for protocol reforms in response to the incident.

“This is not something that any of us (...) can justify,” Warren said. Her speech underscored concerns about whether the involved officers entered the situation with empathy and compassion for the child. “I know what it’s like to be a member of a community (...) that feels that at every turn there’s harm, there’s hurt, and undervalue (...) I’m asking for everybody, all of us, to understand, to honor the humanity of all of us, to act differently,” War- ren said.

Anderson went over the specifics of the incident and the immediate response of the RPD. “We are in the process of reviewing policies and making changes, right now, as we speak (...) It’s not just with the officers that were involved; it’s going to be something that’s extending to the entire organization,” Anderson said. None of the proposed reforms included answers to the long-standing community demands to def- und or abolish the RPD. Later the same afternoon, Mike Mazzio, president of Rochester Police Locust Club (the RPD’s bargaining union), held another press conference in which he de- fended the decisions of the of- ficers involved. “There was a decision, when they couldn’t get her into the car, despite everything they were trying (...) there was a short blast of Cap-Stun [pepper spray]. It worked. It calmed her down, it got her in [the car].”

What we need to do is change a lot of things, but those officers (...) broke no policy. There’s nothing that anyone can say they did that’s inappropriate,” Mazzio said. His comments circulated widely on social media and sparked outrage as users crit- icized a perceived defensive- ness and a lack of empathy for the wider community in his statements.

In response to the way the child was detained, Communi- ty Justice Initiative (CJI), a local activist group which strives to dismantle white supremacy in the Greater Rochester region, organized a march. A Monday after- the incident, demonstrators moved down North Clinton Avenue to the gates of the RPD’s Clinton Section Office to list a range of demands for accountability in the wake of the incident. The demonstra- tion kicked off a week of pro- tests organized by the group. “That was a savage act on a 9-year-old girl,” CJI orga- nizer Niya Shabazz said in a speech delivered to a crowd at the corner of North Clinton and Avenue D before Mon- day’s march. “It’s time for us to stand up. It’s been time.” Later that afternoon, Shabazz spoke again: “Our babies are not seen as babies. The police [in the body camera footage] said, ‘stop acting like a child’. She is a child you fucking id-iot! That exposed how they view our children and how they view us as a people (...) How could they care for a community that they don’t even know? They don’t even live in our neighborhoods and they come here and they brutalize our men and wom- en.”

Multiple politicians were among the crowd on Monday. New York State Senator Jer-emy Cooney (D-56) was in- vited by CJI to speak against qualified immunity and on his plans to address police re- form moving forward. Di- lio Payne, another CJI organi- zed New York State Senate leader Cooney and the wider group, citing steps Cooney can take to as- sist CJI’s goals: “On the state level, write this down, there’s 886688. So, when Cooney’s in the senate he can push that. That will allow for pri- vate lawsuits against the cops, carved out specifically for citi- zens to sue the cops in the state law to make it easier.” Monroe County Legislator Vince Fielder also spoke, but was quickly confronted by protesters and stepped down. Members of the crowd ex- pressed support for a range of reforms, including defunding the RPD, expanding govern- ment transparency, and de- veloping better mental health crisis response.

Over the week, CJI organized two more demonstrations outside of the Rochester Police Locust Club office, during which they reiterated their accountability demands and called for Mazzio’s resigna- tion. On Saturday, CJI held a press conference on the steps outside of Rochester City Hall with similar messaging and an announcement of the sup- port for Nailah’s Law, which would prevent officers from handcuffing or pepper-spray- ing children and require the county and city to compile a list of mental health profes- sionals capable of assisting with the officers that were involved.

COVID: Last Semester in Review

By Melanie Earle

Despite the daily emails, last semester’s Dr. Chatbot rates weren’t great, with about half of the student body filling it out on any given day. This spring, UR is looking to promote Dr. Chatbot usage through positive reinforcement: a semester-long competition with some eye-catching prizes, such as a free dining plan for a semester.

Dr. Chatbot is a daily COVID-19 screening question- naire that is mandatory for all students and employees who will physically be on campus that day. A more detailed ver- sion is also used by UR Medi- cine staff.

To encourage participation, Wilson Commons Student Ac- tivities developed the Complete and Compete Challenge, which began on Feb. 5, the start of Winterfest Weekend, and runs until May 7. See Chatbox Page 3.
Wu Delves into the Intersection of Music and Science

By Hannes Ahmed

Wu, a Mathematics and Music double major from the Brian and Cognitive Sciences Department, is currently researching the intersection between music and formal language processing. In the past year, Wu has worked on a data science project with three other students, determined to find the correlation between a tonal language and sung melodies. Wu's current project involves machine learning, based on MIDI data from piano performance. "I am working on has already been collected before the COVID-19 lockdown, my research process is not interrupted by COVID-19," Wu said. "We proceed with the project on the computer, however, the virtual reality of the semester is usually hard for us to keep up the motivation."

After several research projects, Wu has plenty of wisdom to share. She suggests that students do a literature review before beginning their research. This will allow them to gain a more comprehensive understanding of research works and learn the importance of acknowledging the contributions of other individuals. "So far, I think the most valuable thing for me is not about getting a valid result of the research project, but about what I have learned from the research experience," Wu mentioned. "But I always remain humble. I stay curious, keep learning, while expecting 'aha' moments."

Wu encourages undergraduates to follow their interests and not hesitate to reach out to professors for research opportunities. "Along the way, you might be able to figure out which kind of [research is your favorite, re- search/question-oriented or project-oriented. Stay curious and be open-minded for any possibility," Wu added. "Even if you are not confident in the research field that you are interested in."

Wu is exploring and deciding on various post-graduate pathways. She plans to apply for Take 5 first, with a potential topic in Empirical Aesthetics. Additionally, Wu plans on exploring research in the humanities with an emphasis on digital humanities or musicology. "I might also want to continue doing research and projects related to science of music and music technology, or pursue an industrial job in music composition, or, or do something interdisciplinary," Wu explained. "Just don't be afraid to reach out to people even though you are not majoring directly in that field."

Ahmed is a member of the Class of 2022.

A Review of Dr. Chatbot

By Micah Greenberg

This academic year, students have been receiving unavailing daily emails reminding them to complete their Dr. Chatbot health screening. Dr. Chatbot, the University’s COVID-19 symptom reporting app, was originally implemented in the Medical Center for employees as they came in to work. Now it is used in — theory — by all students on campus, and is heralded by administration as a key part of the University’s system to combat coronavirus spread on campus.

When a student reports no symptoms, exposure, or travel on the Dr. Chatbot app, a green checkmark comes up verifying that “You are clear to go on campus today!” If the student does report symptoms, a red pop-up appears informing them to stay home and contact the appropriate services. Additionally, anyone from University Health Services calls to get more information about the symptoms.

All students coming onto campus on a given day were expected to fill out Dr. Chatbot. Towards the end of the fall semester, events and giveaways required students to show their Dr. Chatbot results along with their normal identification to participate. All students living on campus are expected to fill it out daily, even if they remain in their room the entire day. According to Head Athletic Trainer Eric Rozen, athletes were required to complete their Dr. Chatbot in order to practice. But the app was not checked in other areas, such as dining or in-person classes.

According to Vice Provost and Director of University Health Service Dr. Ralph Manchester, students who are not going to be on campus do not have to fill out their Dr. Chatbot, even to report symptoms. He said that having staffing seven days a week to communicate with those reporting symptoms was difficult this past semester.

Daily reminder emails telling students their Dr. Chatbot began in July, starting at 4 a.m. to catch early-morning employees before they clock in. But as the chart shows, many students did not fill out Dr. Chatbot. The persistence of early-morning email messages even for those conducting the semester remote- ly were mocked by students in memes.

From mid-September through late October, the percentage of students living on campus who filled it out hovered near 50% each day, reaching as low as 43%. Some students living off-campus also filled out the app, but there is no way of knowing what percent of those students who came on campus on a given day completed their symptom screening.

Compliance was an issue throughout the semester. “It’s important,” Manchester said. He later added, “I would like 100% of people to do it every day they’re on campus.”

But beyond requiring Dr. Chatbot for opt-in events, there was little enforcement and incentivization for compliance. For example, dining halls did not have the staffing to check everyone’s Dr. Chatbot, and doing so would slow down entrance in a way that could cause further crowding and spread while waiting in line.

A June 15 @RockEmail announced that the University was planning on dropping the Dr. Chatbot open source and free. In the following week, administrators repeatedly mentioned Dr. Chatbot in their emails to the community regarding the Fall semester.

“On campus, all students will be asked to take a daily Dr. Chatbot health screening survey, which is already in use by faculty and staff at the Medical Center,” read a June 19 email from Provost Robert Clark.

“Students will be asked to take a daily health screening using an online tool, Dr. Chatbot, to help us track symptoms and the possible spread of COVID-19,” said Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering Jeffrey Runner in an email on June 28.

Both framed the completion of Dr. Chatbot as something being requested from students, not as a true requirement, despite its importance to contact tracing. Seeing as the University had attained-optimal compliance from on-campus students, administrators considered ways to get more people to fill it out. Starting on Oct. 29, as quarantines and isolations began to spike due to an outbreak, the University implemented additional email reminders at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. as well as text reminders via AlertUR. As the chart shows, this did significantly increase compliance for on-campus students, but the highest compliance rate on any single day was still only 72.9%. These additional alerts were not kept for long, as students began heading home for winter break three weeks later.

Manchester indicated that other incentives for filling out Dr. Chatbot were considered, including making the ability to use student ID cards for dining conditional on completion. Instead, a positive reinforcement system is being pursued this semester with the Complete & Compete challenge.

Haven Workley contributed to the reporting for this article.

Greenberg is a member of the Class of 2021.
How Close UR was to Going on ‘Pause’

The river campus was adorned with new yellow and blue signage making the new COVID-19 policies extremely clear throughout the fall. The Complete and Compete Challenge is a way for students to earn rewards for being compliant with the University’s COVID-19 policies for the fall semester. This is shown on the river campus and in the sky.

Complete and Compete: Dr. Chatbot Contest

The Complete and Compete Challenge is a University-wide initiative and expands beyond undergraduate students, to students from Graduate School, the School of Nursing, and Simon Business School. Students can enter the competition through an online survey.

The grand prizes, which will be available to students who complete Dr. Chatbot every day, include a Blue Unlimited Dining Plan for a year, valued at $2,741 dollars, and a Year-Long Parking Pass. There will be three grand prizes available.

Raffles for prizes will be held bi-weekly and monthly, for students that complete Dr. Chatbot every day during that time period.

Departments and groups throughout the UR community have also chipped in prizes to promote Dr. Chatbot usage. These prizes include iPads, Airpods, Starbucks gift cards, T-shirts, hats, and more.

The competition will not only be limited to raffle drawings but a “Prize Patrol” run by UHS Public Health Ambassadors. These ambassadors will appear around campus to reward students who have completed Dr. Chatbot for the day. Participants in the competition will be given clues on where the Prize Patrol may be hiding for the day.

When UR reflected upon fall semester student feedback on their COVID-19 performance, one complaint was the lack of prizes. “But the biggest challenge was getting people to take the time to do it because they want to protect the hive. When you are thinking about those questions, all the symptoms are different. You have to think about ‘did I travel,’ ‘do I feel this,’ it’s really good to think about that before you step out onto campus.”

To promote the competition, organizers have given Ks an incentive to have all their hall members sign up to win dessert boxes from Dining Services for the entire hall. The promotion for the Complete and Compete contest will continue throughout the first week of classes.

My humble goal is to hit 500 [enrollments] in the next week with people returning to campus and more promotion and campaigns,” junior Madelyn Candela, Student Lead for Complete and Compete, said. “I think students are going to get talking about it, but I think that is what I want to see from the undergraduate community.”

Earle is a member of the Class of 2023.
Fraternities and sororities are closely related to American collegiate culture. Across the country, these organizations are currently experiencing a semester rush that will look quite different from previous years thanks to COVID-19’s obstacles.

Recruitment this year is coming off the heels of mass digital recruitments taking place on campuses across the country, including UR and broader discussions of abolishing Greek life. As fraternities and sororities prepare to welcome new brothers and sisters to their ranks, they are also prepping to justify the price.

The fees of joining a Greek life organization can add up, and while UR’s Greek life dues aren’t as high as those at other universities, it is still an expense to put to the $37,189 yearly tuition.

Junior Heidi Budd, the former Archon (president) of Phi Sigma Sigma, said she always acknowledged this during the recruitment process. “Giving the financial explanation during recruitment is always kind of awkward,” said Budd. “We are trying to make $500 don’t seem like $500 dollars.”

‘The cost of joining a fraternity or sorority can be a limiting factor for prospective members, and the full cost may not be revealed until later.’

Greek-life benefits can differ depending on the organization, but the general benefits include a support network, scholarship opportunities, academic support, networking help, leadership opportunities, internships, and more.

The cost of joining a fraternity or sorority can be a limiting factor for prospective members, and the full cost may not be revealed until later in the recruitment process. Because of this, there has been a push to be more transparent about what a member is paying for and receiving in return, such as the National Panhellenic Conference’s (NPC) Transparency Program.

“Our parents and caregivers often feel uninformed about the financial burden of being a member,” NPC Chairwoman Carol Jones said. “We do have an NPC financial transparency program to help educate new members and their parents before they do join a sorority, and then from there the member organizations can talk [...] to the potential new members [about] what their dues and fees are.” During the standardized Panhellenic recruitment, there is also a day dedicated to disclosing financial information.

Out of the 16 NPC and Interfraternity Council (IFC) chapters contacted for an interview and a request to see their dues, four interviewed with the CT. The other 12 either did not respond, did not want to contribute, or were restricted from participating in the article by their national offices.

So, what are you paying for when you join an NPC/IFC Greek-life organization?

The dues of a Greek life organization can be broken down into three categories: national chapter dues, national chapter dues, and local chapter dues.

The NPC is the umbrella UR’s Panhellenic sorority lies under. The UR Panhellenic Association is a board that represents 26 sororities nationally, eight of which are at UR. The UR Panhellenic Association coordinates and partially standardizes training, resources, recruitment, and programming.

“We are the advocacy and support organization for the advancement of the sorority experience,” Jones said. “We advocate for the sorority experience on the behalf of our member associations and the Panhellenic Association.”

The UR Panhellenic Association pays an annual due to the NPC which is based on the number of sororities on campus. The UR Panhellenic Association pays $55 per chapter which each chapter requests. If there are more than 10 chapters, that amount would increase to $65.

The UR Interfraternity Council pays an annual due to the North American Interfraternity Council. According to the North American IFC website, UR’s fraternities fall under Tier 3, which requires that the UR IFC pays at least $750 to the North American IFC. The basic package includes resources such as coaching, crisis communication support, NIC guidance, recruiting materials and guidance, and insurance.

Greek life members pay two different insurances — one to the IFC/NPC, and one to its national chapter. The difference between the two in whom the insurance covers. If an event has NPC/IFC involvement, such as NPC recruitment, then the insurance paid by the councils can be applied.

If the NPC/IFCs do not have a role in an event or situation, such as a fraternity-specific event, then the insurance from the chapter’s national organization will cover the event.

All fraternities and sorority organizations at UR are required to have general liability insurance that covers the chapter from $1,000,000.00 dollars and general aggregate coverage of $2,000,000.00 if applicable. The University of Rochester must also be covered under these insurance policies.

‘Once a new member accepts a bid/invitation to join, a new member fee is tacked on top of normal semester dues.’

The insurance usually extends to members, collegiate officers, the University, and advisors of the chapter. The liability insurance can also cover the property of the chapter. To be covered by the insurance, all parties must be able to prove that they were acting within their responsibilities and roles.

For liability coverage in matters involving alcohol, if the fraternity or sorority proved they followed the policies set by the NPC/IFC and their national chapter, then the insurance may be applicable.

Once a new member accepts a bid/invitation to join, a new member fee is tacked on top of normal semester dues. This new member fee can pay for new member education, apparel, membership processing to the national chapter, and a formal pin/endorsement.

Based off of the dues received from chapters who participated in this article and the national websites, new member fees can range from $50 to $200 dollars.

Local dues are set by each individual chapter, and make up a chapter’s budget.

Fraternities and sororities are given guidance by their national programs, alumni advisors, and the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs on their budget composition and dues.

The chapters will decide upon the budgets for the committees that lie within the chapter, which can be things like programming, philanthropy, social events, recruitment, and more.

The Greek life organization can choose how much apparel, like T-shirts and sweatshirts, a member will pay for. The organization can also choose how much a member will be responsible for if the organization chooses to have a social event such as a dance, dinner, or fun activity (like bowling or laser tag).

The active members of the chapter will then vote on the budget, and therefore vote on the dues for the semester.

Each member of a Greek life organization on campus must pay a $20 dollar fee each semester to the office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs. UR covers staff salaries, but the fee is implemented to help with the cost of managing fraternity and sorority programming. The fee can be used towards costs such as community events, leadership programming, and campus printing.

In addition to the dues paid each semester, some chapters charge a fee if a member commits certain infractions, such as alcohol-related incidents.

While these numbers can add up, many organizations have means of offsetting the costs. A big method for doing this is with alumni donations. These donations, which are managed and regulated by UR, are used for financial transparency. Gift accounts are limited to academic mission-related activities only. Approved expenses include building repair, leadership development programs, retreats, and hosting education programs.

The donations can also be used to pay national fees for insurance for prospective members with financial need, but these are set up through a different account.

The level of alumni involvement is different for each fraternity and sorority on campus, which translates to a significant difference in who is receiving donations.

For Phi Sigma Sigma, their national chapter, Delta Kappa Epsilon (DKE) chapter has enough alumni donations to cover the chapter’s expenses, putting their national chapter dues at $70-90 dollars. But a younger organization such as the Beta Phi chapter doesn’t yet have this network.

“You have the option to split it up into a couple of payments; they’re pretty rigid on when those due dates are, though, and what the plans they offer, for Phi Sigma Sigma, their donations are very real and existent.

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CONTRIBUTING WRITER
By Zophia Dadlez

20-minute Albums: Creativity Concentrated, or a Capitalist Cash-Grab?

Short albums: they’re quick, fun, and easy to listen to. You can finish three of them with the mic muted well before your Zoom class is over. But are they also a sad reflection of our generation’s lack of willingness to consume art for extended periods of time?

From Kanye West’s “ye” to The Weeknd’s “My Dear Melancholy,” 20-25 minute, 6-7 track albums seem to be becoming more and more of a trend—especially within hip-hop. They’ve been very popular, and it seems healthy to consume art for enjoyment, and easy to listen to. You can look at a post, a video, or a show for as long or short a time as we’d like, and when we click off, there is a virtually infinite amount of other forms of entertainment waiting for us. I often find myself checking my phone while watching YouTube just because the video hasn’t held my interest for longer than 30 seconds. Unfortunately, I believe this trend is not likely to gravitate towards constant and varied stimulation has affected our ability to fully consume art, especially music, for longer periods of time. In turn, artists may feel financially pressured to create projects that cater to this phenomenon.

Streaming may also be heavily affecting not only album length, but individual song length as well. Once a listener passes the 30-second mark of a song, Spotify counts the listener as being a full stream and pays the artist accordingly. With Spotify paying only about half of a cent per stream, many artists aim to garner as many plays as possible, and listeners may be more likely to stream a song multiple times if it’s particularly short.

The world moves at a breakneck speed. And thanks to social media, YouTube, and other digital platforms, we never have to be bored. We can look through thousands of albums on a platform within a few seconds. It’s the perfect embodiment of a digital era.

“The way people engage with music today,” says Sam T.B., a 20-year-old student, “is different from the way they did a few years ago.”

“With Spotify paying only about half of a cent per stream, many artists aim to garner as many plays as possible, and listeners may be more likely to stream a song multiple times if it’s particularly short.”

Let’s be real: Sometimes our friends’ partners flat out supplant us in our lives. When you think your friend is happy with the world, do you worry about whether your soul is being slowly eaten by demons?

Do you want to say something because you’re annoyed, or worried? It’s normal to worry about your friend!

While our friends are, in fact, adults who get to make their own decisions about who to date, we might naturally feel compelled to look out for them. After all, sometimes being infatuated with someone can render us ignorant of red flags. Once you’ve figured out exactly what’s wrong, and have decided it’s worth confronting, ask to speak with your friend privately and express what you are concerned about—right relationship and their well-being. They might be more willing to talk in a one-on-one setting rather than in a group. Make it clear that you respect their choices and autonomy, but also make it clear that you have been offended by their partner’s behaviour.

Your friend may not take it well, but the best you can do is let them know you care about them. Hopefully, it could lead to a change in how their partner treats you. If spending time with their S.O. continues to be difficult for you, it’s totally within your right to set that boundary and limit contact with your friend. After all, it’s your friend’s partner, not yours!

“I asked this girl to be my girlfriend this year. I’ve been talking and hanging out, and she said it could only work if the sex is good, so we go to her house once she arrives on campus. Is this normal?”

“I have never been in a relationship and had sex once in my life, and that too was nearly three years ago. I really like this girl she’s simply the girl of my dreams. I am really nervous. Idk what to do. Any suggestions?”

Generally speaking, relationships are more than sex—good or bad. If this girl’s deciding whether to date you based solely on sexual performance, we think you’ll need to have a healthy relationship you want and deserve. Sex is really personal, and we here at the CT aren’t qualified to tell you what will make you or your partner feel good. That’s a whole different kind of sticky situation, and unfortunately, we’re not a sex advice column.

UR HELPED
By Amanda Liang

UR Helped: Tackling Two Questions from UR Confessions

It sounds like your partnership is already off to a rough start. Sex seems like her top priority, but it sounds like you value her for more than just her sexual performance, which means that you two may not be on the same page. There’s nothing wrong with engaging in a casual sexual relationship, but you need to ask yourself if that’s what you’re entertaining—whether you want to have a healthy relationship; you’ll need to agree upon what you both want. If you want more, you need to communicate clearly: What’s going on, what do you need, and what do you want and expect? These are questions only you can answer.

Liang is a member of the Class of 2021.

UR HELPED
By Jacob Hanley

UR Helped: Tackling Two Questions from UR Confessions

“Girlfriend” means something different to everyone. You might be able to talk it out! But it’s also possible that you have totally different priorities. In that case, don’t push it. We understand really wanting to be with a specific person, but your needs are important. Why is the “girl of your dreams” someone’s who’s willing to throw you away just because the sex is bad? In fact, forget the idea of a “dream girl,” what’s your notion of a healthy and fulfilling relationship? These are questions only you can answer.

Hanley is a member of the Class of 2023.
'Pop’ping into the Mind of Andy Warhol

By Olivia Alger
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

As the wave of pop art hit the sixties, Andy Warhol was a man who truly embraced and brought great recognition to this particular style. Placing emphasis on commerce and celebrities, his art magnifies the beauty of commodity, widely consumed popular culture.

‘Warhol seems to be pointing out a kind of beauty.’

Take a walk down to the Memorial Art Gallery in Neighborhood of the Arts, and you’ll see how he mastered such a style. In this exhibition, one can get a taste of how he outlines details to include both a sense of materialism and idolatry. This first example features a depiction of the famous boxer, Muhammad Ali. In these pieces, Warhol creatively highlights the surroundings, ears, and fists of Ali through his use of tertiary colors. These areas symbolize senses that were heavily relied upon by the boxer, inspiring feelings of security and wonder in viewers. Warhol seems to be pointing out a kind of beauty within this connection. The contrast of the colors moves the eyes to the most exciting areas of the boxer. The pop effect makes Ali appear superhero-esque. Warhol uses this technique to magnify the various celebrities and figures people cherish.

More examples of this style:
(Note: Warhol made use of crushed glass to create a glittering effect to intensify the effects of these figures)

More famously, Warhol is known more for his repetitive depictions of consumer products. The Campbell soup cans are an iconic example of Warhol’s ability to capture widespread attention, and the simplicity of the various soups depicts a level of comfort that people derive from these objects.

‘It fosters a deeper appreciation for some of the objects that are symbolic to us.’

The cans would appear on the shelves of nearly every grocery store, and thus, Warhol’s illustrations would evoke a feeling of familiarity within viewers at the time. It is interesting how the outline of something as simple as a can of soup can bring about a natural calmness within a person, as a result of it being intertwined with our daily lives. It fosters a deeper appreciation for some of the objects that are symbolic to us, because we have associated the feeling of normalcy with materials like cans, flowers, and household ingredients. Is there any object that reminds you of normalcy?

Ramisa Maliyat is a member of the Class of 2024.

Bob Ross and the Bittersweet Reality of Mistakes

By Olivia Alger
MANAGING EDITOR

It’s the third semester of online school, and lately I’ve been worrying that I’ve made too many mistakes. It’s not that I’m discontent with my life. I like who I am. I like my friends, I like my roommates, I like my classes.

It’s just that I spend more time at home than I ever have before, which means I have more time to think, which means that I’ve been reflecting on the decisions I’ve made that led me to where I am today, and well, there are some things I could have done differently.

While I was at home during winter break, these thoughts rose to a deafening volume. I was overcome with a sense of anxiety that I could only calm by scribbling in adult coloring books and watching episodes of “Bob Ross: The Joy of Painting” on YouTube. I watched an episode almost every day — while I ate lunch, while I sat around with my family, before I fell asleep. My anxious thought patterns were so overwhelming that I had to constantly distract myself from the noise in my head. It was too much. Bob Ross was my only relief.

Each episode of Bob Ross’s show is almost 30 minutes long. He sports the same look in every episode: a pair of tight jeans, a button down shirt (the first three buttons undone), and a mountain of hair permed into a big, tight sphere around his head. The background is completely black, so the viewer can focus solely on the canvas and Bob Ross’s calming voice. “Hello, and welcome to ‘The Joy of Painting,’ he says at the beginning of the show. These are words I’ve come to memorize as if they were my own.

Still, while I watched Bob Ross scrape gentle sloping mountains onto the canvas with his painting knife, my anxious thoughts would creep forward. You’re stupid, they’d tell me. You spent your first two years of college doing all the wrong things, and now look at you. You’re stuck doing online school and you have no control over your own life.

‘I had to constantly distract myself from the noise in my head. It was too much.’

But the thing about regrets, as my friend told me the other day, is that there’s absolutely no point in having them.

‘The thing about regrets, as my friend told me the other day, is that there’s absolutely no point in having them.’

and self-discovery. So, what am I so worried about? If it’s true what people say, that mistakes help you learn, then I should be grateful that I messed up as many times as I did. After all, isn’t that what youth is about? Messing up, making mistakes, and learning from them?

I’m starting to think, though, that there’s no such thing as mistakes at all. I like to think that Bob Ross had it right when he said, “There are no mistakes. Only happy accidents.” Even if you get physically repulsed by thinking about a mistake you made in the past, as I often do, try not to be so hard on yourself. Because although you made it once, you’ll never make it again.

Olivia Alger is a member of the Class of 2022.
Take a Closer Look at Wilson Commons’ War Memorials

By Ethan Busch

I n Wilson Commons, on the wall underneath what used to be the Flag Lounge, there are a series of plaques honoring the members of the UR community who lost their lives serving in every major war since the school’s founding. Well. “Honoring” might be a strong word.

To get the easy, nitpicky complaints out of the way, the memorial to those who lost their lives in Operation Desert Storm. I could go into the myriad of reasons why, but I don’t think that would be appropriate occasion that I encounter the language in my daily life, I try to translate it as practice. I mentioned the plaque to my Latin professor, who was surprised to find out that the phrase was chosen for this purpose.

He explained that it’s Dulce et Decorum Est beautiful and haunting. It describes the terror and pain of fighting in that bitter war — and ends by declaring Horace’s words a lie.

The work is a well-known direct criticism of those who blindly glorify war. The First World War was bloody and brutal, and by many — if not most accounts — unnecessary. Owen’s point was that it was a mockery of soldiers like him to glorify what he considered an unmitigated tragedy.

“Can we really say that we’ve honored them?”

I’ve never fought in a war, and I doubt I ever will. I don’t have the authority to say whether this is a fitting memorial for those that our community has lost to violence. But I don’t imagine Wilfred Owen would think it is. If we’re callous, careless, or ignorant in our memorialization of those who gave their lives for this country, can we really say that we’ve honored them?

Operation Desert Storm. Sweet and fitting, isn’t it? Busch is a member of the Class of 2023.

Prioritizing Donors Jeopardizes the Vaccine Rollout

T he vaccine might be free, but money can certainly get you to faster. Last month, an internal URMC communication strongly implied that major financial donors were to be offered a fast pass to the COVID-19 vaccine.

The email, the author, Senior Associate Vice President for Medical Advancement, told staff that some donors had asked to skip the line and that requests from those eligible in accordance with state guidelines would be considered.

A few days after the email was leaked, University President shared and was met with immediate and by many — if not most accounts — unnecessary. Owen’s point was that it was a mockery of soldiers like him to glorify what he considered an unmitigated tragedy.

The Wilson Commons memorial to those lost in Operation Desert Storm.

given the subject matter. Just like I don’t think it’s appropriate to leave a typo on such a memorial for an extended period of time. But that’s easily fixed, and likely an honest mistake, though one might think the University might try a little harder to avoid such mistakes in the context of honoring war dead.

I’m more troubled by the University’s commemoration of those who lost their lives in the First World War. The plaque was funded by the mother of one of hundreds of these students, and features 11 of their names. Under the list of names are the words of the Roman poet Horace: “Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.” In English: “It is a sweet and fitting thing to die for one’s country.”

...one might think the University might try a little harder to avoid such mistakes in the context of honoring war dead.

I noticed this because I take Latin, and on the rare
Everyone You Know Has an Accent

By Ofinan Ha

Y ou have an accent, I have an accent, and so does everybody else on Earth. This might not make sense to you at first. When I mentioned to some friends that we all have accents, most of them proudly replied, “Well, I speak perfect English/Chinese/etc.” But this kind of miss

e extends the point.

More often than not, what we mean when we say someone “has an accen
t” is that their accent is different from the local one. We’re usually talking about pronunciations differ
t from our own, and sometimes foreign slang usage. But this defini
tion of accents is limiting and could give rise to prejudice.

Funnily enough, in a lin
guistic sense, every person speaks with an accent. A linguist’s definition of an accent refers to systems of phonological variation. In simpler terms, the regular differences in how we produce sounds define our accents. For example, in American English, the words “three” and “tree” are pronounced differ
tly. But in Singapore English, “thai” is pronounced exactly the same way as “tree.”

It’s time to reframe how we view accents. Even if you don’t hear it yourself, or it’s not as dramatic as a TV New Yorker, you speak with some sort of accent. In this sense, it’s pointless to point out that someone “has an accent.” We all do! The right question to ask is, “What particular accent does the person have?”

Language difference

ences like these provide in

sight into people’s cul
tural experiences and

backgrounds. In our glob

al school in a global age, the way we speak is a dis
genous part of one’s identity.

There is much that accents and dialects could teach us about cultures, if we would just listen. As se

ior Sakhile Ntshangase once wrote in the Campus Times, “If I want to go to Makati? (‘You want to go eat?’), don’t label it a ‘foreign’ or ‘inferior’ accent, or an incorrect version of the language. Rather, treat it as a perk of our diverse campus commu

Dictionary

You/Standard English to

English

STAFF WRITING

An Open Letter to Openers, Closers, and People with Keys

By Rachel Breining

Why is the third floor door in the Wilson Commons tunnel locked? Why is Georgen locked? Why is LeChase locked? Why are the side doors to Gavett and Harkness locked? It’s incredible to me that with all the big key carry

ing managers and Public Safety officers on this campus, essential doors still manage to be forever closed. Why bother shov

ing a path to the WLCO tunnel if it’s a dead end more often than not? It’s almost like they want me to walk up to it and re

alize I can’t get in, so that I have to walk all the way back around to anoth

er door, just to spite me personally.

Clearly, I like to joke around about this topic, but rerouting around these locked doors over the past few weeks has me thinking about the way physically dis
abled students do about their days.

As an able-bodied studen

t, this extra walking is a minor disruption to me at best, and fuel for my end

ess “curse.” But this isn’t the case for the hun

dreds of disabled people who will have to reroute to adjust for key carriers’ la

ziness and neglect.

‘Honestly, recalling

the myriad ways the University fails disabled students, I shouldn’t be surprised.

Honestly, recalling the myriad ways the University fails disabled students, I shouldn’t be surprised. Remember when Wilson Commons wasn’t up to ADA standards because the second floor entrance had a ramp outside, show

ing that the path was for people with physical disabilities, but then had no stair-less way to get from the entrance to Hirst Lounge, or the elevator? That was only fixed last year after years of students complaining.

Hilariously enough, the newly added elevator is frequently out of order (includ

ing as I write this ar

ticle), rendering it useless and difficult to rely on. The common theme here seems to be a lack of both reliabil

ity and accountability.

‘The common theme here seems to be a lack of both reliability and accountability.

Speaking of Wilson Commons, that ramp out

side is unusable during bad snow (which, in Rochester, might as well be daily) due to a lack of prioritization from the school. It was seen last year covered in a sheet of ice, even though other staircases that are only available to able-bod

ied students are regularly salted and cleared. With all the resources available to this institution, how radical of an idea is it to believe that one of the most essential commons build

ings should be consistent

ly accessible to the entire student body? Able-bodied students can shuffle up and down snow-covered stairs, but people in wheelchairs cannot roll their chairs safely down a sheet of ice.

Then there’s the eleva

tors — so slow and un

reliably functional, they might as well not exist.

College students have busy and demanding schedules, and their ability to climb stairs shouldn’t be a decid

ing factor when it comes to their day-to-day suc

cess. High traffic elevators such as the ones in Wilson Commons and Genese

es are — once again — so fre

cquently out of order they can’t be relied on. But for some students, there are no alternatives, and these modes of transportation have to be relied on.

My freshman year, two people on the seventh floor of our building had to use the elevator, but it was out of service. One was chron

ically disabled, the other only temporarily, with a sprained ankle. They had to be carried down seven flights of stairs. If two of my hallmates hadn’t been willing and able to help, what were they supposed to do?

‘How radical of an idea is it to believe that one of the most essential commons buildings should be consistently accessible to the entire student body?’

People will make excuses for the University, im

plying that UR has better things to spend their time and money on than shoot

ign higher than the bare minimum of ADA compli

cance. They’ll argue that nothing is ever perfect for disenfranchised groups, so take what you can get. These people are abelists.

As much as I personally

am just annoyed by these issues, I should be using that annoyance to amplify the voices of those the University refuses to hear. Why have these issues per

sisted for so many years over so many campus lo

cations? Because we have a culture of negligence, encompassing everything from locked doors to si

multaneously unos

able and asinine.

Breining is a member of the Class of 2023.
I could have been more naive.

I just travelled back to Rochester from India after about 10 months, because I knew I couldn’t bear another semester of 2 a.m. classes. But even with the assurance that my professors and I are finally in the same time zone, I’m still trying to figure out if all the effort I made to get here is going to be worth it.

I don’t know if I’ll get to enjoy even a fraction of the aspects of college life I took for granted before COVID-19.

For instance, I totally underestimated how arduous a 24-hour journey across an ocean is with a mask on and the sheer amount of sweat that gathers underneath said mask. It felt like the bottom half of my face had a tiny sauna all to itself.

I learned that for once in my life I’d actually made a smart choice!

I decided to quarantine in an Airbnb, as the University’s hotel option was way outside my budget. After talking to some friends about their experiences, I learned that for once in my life I’d actually taken a smart choice! It may have been a choice I had to make, but it’s kind enough for me to fund me for three days’ worth of great Chinese take-out, from what my friends told me, this food was much better than the hotel’s offering.

Ten months away from Rochester has made me appreciate just how much it really is here. Rochester gave me a characteristically frosty welcome as I left the airport, just before I fell in the snow hugging my mammoth suitcase behind me, spraining my wrist. This series of unfortunate events only ended when my COVID-19 test came back negative, and I could finally meet my absolutely wonderful suitemates.

Seeing my friends physically after months of Zoom calls and group chats felt amazing, and I actually forgot for a while that I’d sprained my wrist. We have the cutest, comfiest little apartment in Riverview which, after a series of small fixes by Facilities and an extremely deep cleaning by its residents, feels almost like a home away from home now.

What I do know is that 2021 hasn’t completely solved all of our problems, but it has brought some hope.

Again, I don’t know if returning to Rochester will worth it. I don’t know if I’ll get to enjoy even a fraction of the aspects of college life I took for granted before COVID-19. I don’t know if I’ll make it to an in-person lab more than a few times, or if campus will shut down mid-semester.

‘We need to learn how to enjoy the simple things.’

What I do know is that 2021 hasn’t completely solved all of our problems, but it has brought some hope in the form of vaccines. Life at the University definitely won’t go back to the ‘old normal’ anytime soon. All we can do is adhere to social distancing norms so that we don’t switch to a completely virtual curriculum all over again.

We need to learn how to enjoy the simplest things like having dinner with our suitemates or even just spotting a familiar face at Target. Exercise gratitude for the moments that bring a smile under that mask.

Hang tight just a little longer. The sunshine of spring is just around the corner.

Muskaan Vasandani is a member of the Class of 2022.
Campus Times

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Lake Ontario: Shockingly Bereft Of Crabs

By Ethan Busch
ILLUSTRATION EDITOR

Coming from Baltimore, I’m a southerner at heart. Baltimore definitely gets snow, but it’s nothing like the bay freezes. We also spend more time crabbing than fishing. I love crab, which is somewhat problematic for the son of two Rabbis. However, it’s really their problem, not mine. My love for crab is stronger than my affection for Jewish tradition. Suck it, Teyva. 

Lake Ontario: Shockingly Bereft Of Crabs

unfortunately no blue crabs in lake Ontario. There is, however, plenty of ice. This led me to the conclusion that I should try ice fishing. So I went up to the lake, and ventured out onto the ice.

A disclaimer: I know nothing about ice fishing. I started by trying to kick a hole in the ice. That didn’t work well. I’m told that if you can kick a hole in the ice you probably need to get off the ice before you fall into a freezing lake. Which, while surely an interesting experience, was not the goal.

So, I went back to my car to get my ice saw (because every good fisherman has an ice saw in his back pocket) and brought it out onto the lake. It took me a while (because unlike every good fisherman, I know next to nothing about ice saws) but I eventually made a hole. At this point, I was beginning to realize how woeful and unprepared I was to go ice fishing.

‘A disclaimer: I know nothing about ice fishing.’

Go figure. I knew that some people do it with a spear, and I figured that after two semesters of classical archaeology, I would have one laying around, but unfortunately I didn’t. I decided to do some research and try again. I probably should’ve started with that, but we’re here now.

My girlfriend, fortunately, speaks Finnish. I thought that would make her an expert on ice fishing. She disagrees, but she still had lots of advice. Apparently, I was missing beer and a chair. The chair was pretty easily acquired – I stole one from the pile in the corner of Wilco (it’s not like anyone was using it). Unfortunately, I had an AOQ account or made one over quarantine and the amount of mediocre writing you have read makes you feel as if you’ve lost brain cells, but the hidden gems keep you going. You know way too many adjectives — to the point where you are basical- ly sound asleep. If you’re诗歌 any time you hear the word “orbs” it stresses you out to a hilarious degree. Bonus points if you started writing yourself.

I thought I would give the best phase away that easy? That’s just the momentum you’ve built up the best mid-quarantine phase.

Koh is a member of the Class of 2024.
The Real Reason Students Returned To Campus: The Results Will Shock You

By Fabian Halblander

Poll: 87% of on-campus students cite freedom from Duo authentication as their primary reason for returning.

Ah, spring semester. Nothing quite like the feeling of a cold, dark, Sunday night in snowy Rochester, contagion lurking behind every corner, the tally of consecutive sunless days growing like UR’s endowment.

Snuggle up under five or six blankets in your un-insulated dorm room and get some rest. You’ll need your beauty sleep for the next few months of good ol’ pre-recorded academic rigor, and — you guessed it — full price tuition baybee.

“Nothing quite like the feeling of a cold, dark, Sunday night in snowy Rochester, contagion lurking behind every corner, the tally of consecutive sunless days growing like UR’s endowment.”

Bitterness aside, we’re interested, and maybe our readers are as well, in the following question: What is there to do around here, anyways? What does a yellow-jacket have to look forward to after a long day of protecting the hive; that is, shutting themselves in their room at all costs, venerating hall three times a day with their head down? Sure, it has to be done for “the greater good,” or “public health and safety” or whatever, but it’s kind of boring. What are UR students happy to be back for?

To find out, a crew of intrepid CT reporters battled River Campus’ frigid terrain over the course of the weekend, searching for any signs of life, any student, shrew, or Quad Fox, to interview. After some hours, we were able to speak with a first-year whose name was either Alvin, Calvin, or Melvin, we couldn’t tell, his speech obscured by a thick cloth mask and a blustering westerly wind.

“What excites you most about being on campus this semester?”

“Excites me? Uh…” eyes darting back and forth, as if seeking an escape. Alvin, Calvin or Melvin furrowed his brow. “Uh… my um… my parents don’t really let me have sugar. Here I can eat sugar, so that’s pretty cool I guess. I was just going to Hillside for some Chips Ahoy.” He twitched and shifted his stance: “Do you guys know if it’s possible to check the specifics of declining charges? I might get a call.”

After that, a particularly ferocious gust of wind plucked the mic from our interviewers hand, like how one might snatch their little cousin’s candy cane on Christmas, ripping it effortlessly from their frail clutches. We intended to interview another few students, We intended to interview another few students, hopefully other prospecting types like the Chips Ahoy boy, but alas, nature had other plans.

Determined to persevere, we hit the email registry, settling for some virtual polling. The results were overwhelming: 87% of on-campus respondents cite access to school WiFi, and with it, freedom from Duo authentication, as the most exciting part of on-campus vlife. And how, some other things that students are excited about include:

- Pandemic protocol trumpeting brought to you by the Instagram Stories of Poli Sci majors

Email From A Distraught, Unvaccinated Donor

By Ben Schiffman

Dear President Mangelsdorf and whoever didn’t add me to the donor GC,

I’ve just found out that Rich E.D. Est and his cabal of slightly richer than me friends were able to cut the line for the COVID-19 vaccine, while I seem to have been left out of the loop. Nobody told me there was a vaccine, while I seem to have been left out of the loop. Nothing quite like the feeling of a cold, dark, Sunday night in snowy Rochester, virus lurking behind every corner, the tally of consecutive sunless days growing like UR’s endowment.

“Nothing quite like the feeling of a cold, dark, Sunday night in snowy Rochester, virus lurking behind every corner, the tally of consecutive sunless days growing like UR’s endowment.”

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While I expect you to correct this by giving me both vaccines on the same day so I don’t have to wait, I also hope to be further compensated with a refund of the kidneys. Therefore I demand to be put at the top of the organ donor list as retribution to your organization. In addition to these demands, I want a full apology letter to be published. A lack of a vaccine shot, entitled jerks don’t understand that I should be given everything I want when I want it because of my devotion to my alma mater. I spend well over $10 a month to support this university, and I expect a pat on the back and a jab in the arm in return.

Please see the attached image for a diagram of what I expect (you will see a hyper realistic image of me receiving the vaccine. I may have majored in Business, but I minoried in Art).

I hope you feel ashamed. I could have hidden in my grandma’s trunk and slept in a parking lot in Florida for less than I’ve donated to you, and still have gotten the vaccine. If you want to keep my support and prevent further angry Facebook posts, I expect to be immune to COVID-19 by noon Feb. 10.

Love,
Grant Methings, Class of 1983

Schiffman is a member of the Class of 2023.