

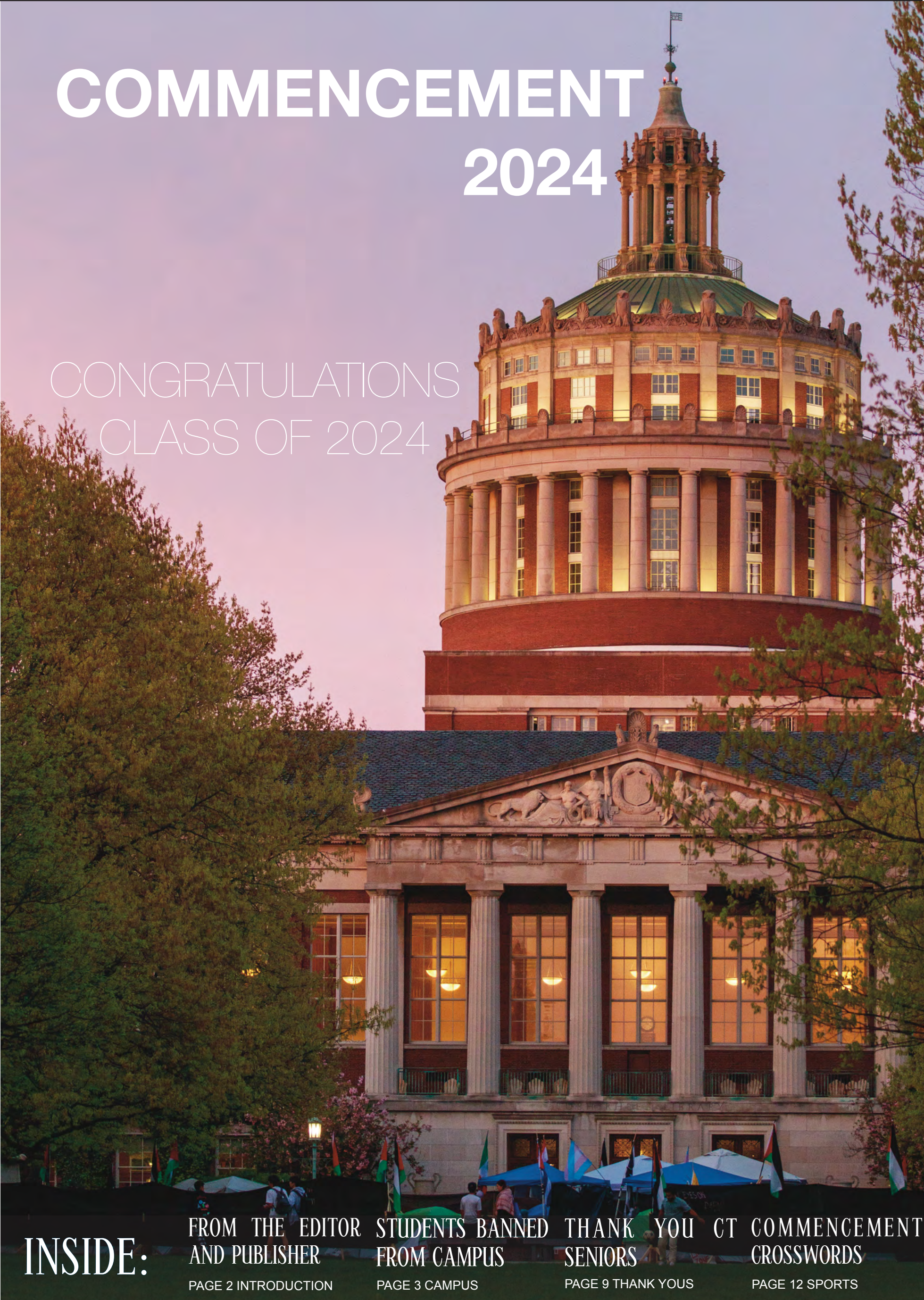
Campus Times

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COMMENCEMENT 2024

CONGRATULATIONS
CLASS OF 2024



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INTRODUCTION

Note On The 2024 “Best Of The CT” Commencement Special Edition:

BY ALLIE TAY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

BY MICAH BETTENHAUSEN
PUBLISHER

We at the *Campus Times* would like to thank you for picking up a copy of our 2024 Commencement special edition, the “Best of the CT.” As the school year drew to a close, we wanted to highlight our favorite stories of the year and thank our dedicated staff for their contributions to the paper. This special print edition contains only previously-published content with the goal of holistically representing aspects of student culture at the University.

We believe that journalism

encompasses both hard and soft reporting. With the evolving situation between student protesters and University administration in the last couple weeks, we realized it would be difficult to both cover and print news on Palestine-related issues in a time-sensitive manner, as events may have changed by the time of print. To address this, we’ve decided to shift the majority of our Palestine-related news online where coverage may be continuously updated, with the exception of one recent news story regarding student bans that we felt aligned with our “Best of the CT” theme and can function as a stand-alone piece. The bulk of this

special print edition leans toward spotlighting some of our most memorable Culture, Features, and Opinions pieces. We appreciate your support and we hope you enjoy the “Best of the CT!”

See you next fall!

Best,
Allie Tay, Editor-in-Chief
Micah Bettenhausen,
Publisher

Tay and Bettenhausen are members of the class of 2025.

Front Page Photo Taken By
Publisher Micah Bettenhausen

Image Description:

The sun sets on the University of Rochester’s Eastman Quad on May 6th, 2024. Students participating in the Gaza Solidarity Encampment on Eastman Quad are seen playing soccer and socializing with peers.

Campus Times

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It is our policy to correct all erroneous information as quickly as possible. If you believe you have a correction, please email CT_editor@u.rochester.edu.

Best Of Illustrations



ANGELINA YANG / STAFF ILLUSTRATOR

Illustration initially published alongside the article “Angery Bills Rant” by Trevor Shooshan on February 26th, 2024.

Yang is a member of the class of 2024.



SUBAAHSYED / ILLUSTRATION EDITOR

Illustration initially published alongside the article “Cultural identities are a balancing act” by Eva Naik on February 5th, 2024.

Syed is a member of the class of 2027.

Best Of Photography



CHARLIE LU / PHOTO EDITOR

Photo initially published alongside the article “Pagan Students’ Association: A space for Pagan religious exploration” by Paige McCurdy on February 5th, 2024.

Lu is a member of the class of 2027.



KEVINHU / PHOTO EDITOR

Photo initially taken for the article “Hippo Campus’ D-Day show was to “Ride or Die” for” by Alex Holly on April 28th, 2024 but was ultimately not selected. This photo has not been previously published in the CT.

Hu is a member of the class of 2025.

5 Students Banned From Campus For Gaza Solidarity Encampment

APRIL 30, 2024

BY KATIE JARVIS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The University of Rochester has been banning community members from campus since November for on-campus protests, but this weekend marked the first ban of a current UR student.

On Friday, Laith Awad, who has in many ways acting as a leader of the ongoing Gaza solidarity encampment, received a letter from Assistant Dean of Students Kyle Orton stating that “due to your continued and unregistered protest and disregard of reasonable requests from University Administration, you and other participants of the group will be receiving a letter from me banning you from campus, except for academic and living purposes.”

By Saturday, Awad and four other students involved in the organizing had received interim bans from campus. According to the Code of Conduct, an interim ban is meant to be a temporary measure “until the formal conduct process is completed” in cases in which a student’s presence on campus poses a “perceived or immediate threat.”

The letter sent to Awad goes on to explain that “the University retains the right to suspend, ban, or otherwise constrain or restrict students, groups, and organizations, on an interim basis until the formal conduct process is completed, if they pose a perceived or actual threat to themselves, others, or to the orderly process of the University community.” (The formatting is preserved from the letter.)

All five students were served identical ban letters by Orton on Saturday. The reasons were as follows:

This action stems from reports alleging:

- Sound amplification was used, disrupting your fellow students and the Rochester Community during an unapproved demonstration on campus property.
- You were asked to vacate the Wilson Quad by noon on April 24th, 2024 and failed to comply with this reasonable request. This disrupted the setup and work of many University staff and vendors setting up for Dandelion Day.
- You were informed not to have flags with poles and they remain at the location you are occupying on Eastman Quad.
- Organized an unregistered protest/rally on April 26, 2024 that brought a large crowd to campus.

The specific terms of

the ban can be read at <https://www.campustimes.org/2024/04/30/5-students-banned-from-campus-for-gaza-solidarity-encampment>. The letter also states that students who do not comply with the ban will not be able to continue their degree or attend commencement.

Between the initial letter and the start of his official ban, Awad spoke to a crowd on Eastman Quad to address the administration’s April 25 statement on academic divestment, the state of the encampment, and his ban, among other things.

In his speech, Awad criticized the University for hypocrisy.

“The administration speaks about ‘governance,’ about decisions not being made in a ‘top-down manner’ but can this truly be the case when a student is banned without a fair hearing? Without a transparent due process? Is this the University’s definition of ‘governance?’ To make unilateral decisions that deeply impact a student’s life and academic future?” he asked.

Notably, the office that served the current bans, the Office of the Dean of Students, is also the only office empowered to process appeals of those bans.

The second student to receive a ban was sophomore Sarah Al-jitawi. In an interview Wednesday (before her ban was served) about community member bans, Aljitawi said the encampment’s work on campus is not intended to threaten anyone.

“It’s not like we’re doing this to purposefully bug these specific administrators or to get them fired or have them face a lot of pressure from outside sources,” she said.

“We understand [the pressure on administrators] but at the end of the day, we just believe that, as students at this campus, we should be your top priority, and you’re not really hearing us or listening to us.”

The next two bans were served to graduate student Halima Aweis and senior Andrés Arocho González. The final ban was directed at senior Sybilla Moore, former vice president of the Students’ Association, UR’s student government.

Moore, who has been acting in an advisory role to the protest, finds the whole situation heinous, but also somewhat ironic.

“I think less than a week ago, I got an email from Anne-Marie Algier, the interim dean of students, who I’ve worked with since before last year, basically giving me a community leader award,” she said during a phone interview Sunday night. “And then a week later, for trying to act as, in some ways, a commu-



CHARLIE LU / PHOTO EDITOR

nity liaison or community leader, I’m now banned.”

She later continued: “I think the way they went about it is so skeezy and I think it points honestly also to some bigger issues in the Student Code of Conduct that had probably existed for a long time.”

Moore said she is not entirely sure why she, specifically, or any of the final four banned students, were chosen, compared to other protesters. “They’re all sweeping statements. None of them are person-specific, as far as I can read.”

Moore also spoke on how the bans are impacting her academics: “I think I’m worried about my finals. But more than that, I think it’s just the worry of graduation.”

She continued: “With the threat of the suspension looming over, it’s hard. I’m both trying to rush against the clock because if I get all my assignments in, they can’t really do as much [to me]. But also, you’re trying to give as much as you can to focus on Gaza, which makes it hard to do your work.”

Moore also said the University should have expected disruptive behavior when they admitted passionate and talented students. “[If you] want people that are going to push the boundaries, expect them to push the boundaries everywhere, not just STEM fields.”

The University has worked to attract such students for years. In an X post in 2018, the then-Dean of Admissions Jon Burdick said:

Any student who participates in a meaningful, peaceful protest—especially those individuals who lead such efforts for change—will definitely not face any negative consequences during their application review process at the University of Rochester. We look favorably upon applicants who question everything in the pursuit of

making the world ever better. This is baked into our historic DNA and our motto, Meliora.

More recently, Admissions has been asking prospective students to share how they would invoke change as a Rochester student. For the ’23-’24 admissions cycle, one essay prompt read as follows:

Susan B. Anthony, champion of abolition and women’s rights, once said “Organize, agitate, educate must be our war cry.” As you look to join our community of doers and disruptors, in what ways do you envision using both the curricular flexibility and co-curricular opportunities to invoke change for marginalized groups? How has your unique lived experience shaped you and prepared you to be a changemaker here?

One student at the encampment, Elena Perez ’25, responded to a similar prompt in their Rochester application with a story of their own protest experience. Perez, who wrote about their work in organizing a climate walk-out at their high school, said the ’23-’24 essay prompt made them think that involvement in protest “is something that [UR] wants from its students, whether it’s for optics or for other reasons.”

“It just shows that they love the attention when it’s convenient,” Perez further speculated. “It’s really nice to be able to say that your institution is a bastion of free speech if then you don’t have to do anything about it.”

Moving forward, the five students hope to appeal the bans. There is currently an open letter circling the campus community calling President Sarah Mangelsdorf, Provost David Figlio, and the entire UR administration to “lift the Interim Bans on all students who have been served thus far, to revoke the use of such bans, and to intervene in the Dean of Students’

office in order to find a more just way forward.” The letter has 545 signatures at the time of this article’s publication.

A smaller group of students are also looking to challenge the bans legally.

“I think based on what I’ve been reading on the Standards of Student Conduct, a lot of it is very intentionally loose to sort of give them grounds to apply them as they see fit,” said Aaron Weiner ’24(e5). “So, in the language of the code of conduct, the way that its phrased I believe that they do have the ability to issue interim bans. I do not believe that the specific circumstances of this ban are reasonable.”

Weiner believes that the four reasons for the ban are especially vague.

“Nothing is severe or extreme enough to do an immediate ban. It seems unnecessary to have it go into effect immediately,” he said. Wiener found in the Student Code of Conduct the language that interim bans are tools intended for immediate threats, not to be used against offenses like the use of flagpoles or loudspeakers.

In the meantime, banned students are trying to finish out the year while preparing younger students for the future of the movement after they have graduated.

“Three of the banned [students] currently are seniors, and I think that I find that [fact] really despicable too, just because the role of the upperclassmen should be to model and teach the next generation,” Sybilla Moore said. “And so if you’re going to punish people for doing that, how do you expect that [to go]?”

Editor’s Note: Read our Israel-Palestine reporting disclosures at <https://www.campustimes.org/2024/04/30/israeli-palestinian-conflict-reporting-disclosures>

Jarvis is a member of the Class of 2025.

OCTOBER 1, 2023

BY JUSTIN O'CONNOR
MANAGING EDITOR

BY SARAH WOODAMS
PUBLISHER

One of UR's most popular therapists smells like Fritos, pees outside, and doesn't mind eating baby carrots off the ground.

Sasha, a five-year-old golden retriever, runs her practice out of a second-floor office in the Interfaith Chapel that she shares with her owner — Rev. Dr. C. Denise Yarbrough, UR's director of religious and spiritual life.

Faith symbol banners, college degrees, and varied curios cling to the room's cinder block walls, and stuffing its cluttered shelves are hundreds of holy texts and tomes on spiritual scholarship. None of these works are of any concern to Sasha, whose decorative tastes seem more eclectic and (perhaps) a bit less refined: two tennis balls, a stuffed ducky, and a mangled Lambchop toy with rainbow ears adorn her part of the space.

Pull up to her office hours — which run 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays and Fridays — and the scruffy-around-the-edges psychiatric puppy is liable to greet you with tail wags, happy grunts, and some not-so-subtle demands for pets that won't relent for anything except shut-eye or her midday walk breaks. It's this patented charm that has allowed Sasha to meet the needs of the throngs of students who drop

Meet UR's Furriest Therapist

in to see UR's first and most accessible therapy dog in residence, Yarbrough says, even though her introduction to campus was complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sasha was Yarbrough's third golden retriever when she adopted her in 2018 from a Vermont breeder. She wasn't initially gunning to train a therapy dog, but she saw that Sasha came from a doggy dynasty of sorts, as both of her parents were certified too. The gel between the services of a therapy dog and the chapel immediately clicked, so Yarbrough bit the bullet.

Sasha has been a mellow mutt since the get-go, but the path to her puppy Ph.D still called for three rounds of training.

First was a two-week residential camp in nearby Walworth on the essentials — sit, stay, come, heel, etc. There her penchant for people pleasing revealed itself when, on her very first day, she made a loop around the bundle of dogs in her playpen to greet the kind humans along the perimeter. The quick learner had picked up on a cold, hard fact about this cruel world: Other puppies don't bear tasty treats.

That training was followed by the American Kennel Club's eight-week Canine Good Citizen program, where she learned how to stay composed in crowds, to resist reacting to other dogs, and to be comfortable with Yarbrough leaving her side. A five-week therapy

dog specific course was the last step in her journey. There she studied approaching people with mobility aids like wheelchairs, tolerating loud noises, and the importance of the "leave it!" command, among other things.

Sasha passed the therapy dog boards at nine months old but couldn't get certified until she was a year old, so the puppy prodigy had to do a retake in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic postponed her on-campus arrival, but Yarbrough did eventually get to bring her to work, and chapel staff and students consequently fell in love.

"I had this constant stream of students, and so I thought, 'um, obviously this is meeting a need,'" Yarbrough said. "This is the third year we're doing this, and she does get a pretty steady stream of friends coming in on the days that she's here."

Since then, Sasha's role at the chapel and in the community has ballooned.

Now, she's become something of a TA for Yarbrough's Sexuality in World Religion class. A litany of barriers prevented her from taking on the role in the past — allergies, COVID-19, students scared of dogs, and the like — but this year has worked out. Welcoming every entering student is her primary role. Taking light naps on the couches lining the classroom is her other big contribution.

She has also become an unofficial Hillel mascot, most re-



JUSTINO O'CONNOR / MANAGING EDITOR

cently attending their brunch this past Sunday, where Sasha got to worship a holy object of her own — bagels. She also accompanies Yarbrough to the Students' Association for Interfaith Cooperation's (SAIC) "cafe" discussions, as Yarbrough is the group's advisor.

A roving off-campus therapeutic practice is an additional part of Sasha's repertoire. She sometimes volunteers at the School of the Arts and East High School on weekday mornings, where she is so popular that a private escort ushers her in and out of the buildings to avoid causing chaos during passing periods.

While she is plenty busy, seeing Sasha in action assuages any fears of canine burnout. She is an ardent multitasker, blending work and sleep like a master alchemist. Take up a session with the pup, and you might easily mistake her for a downed trophy buck — if not for the accusatory darting eye

glances and warm-but-insistent paw nudges she'll toss your way if you stop petting her. Sasha doesn't judge, but she does demand payment for her services.

All-in-all, Yarbrough says Sasha's been a big boost on a bunch of fronts, but she's been a particularly great servant of the chapel's goals of promoting interfaith cooperation and refuge.

"Sometimes I have a whole bunch of students sitting in here with her in the middle, chatting away," she explained. "We've had interesting interfaith conversations, you know, Muslim kids and Jewish kids and Hindu kids all exchanging stories. They're all meeting people that they wouldn't have otherwise met, except that they all like the dog."

O'Connor is a member of the Class of 2024.

Woodams is a member of the Class of 2024(T5).

An Interview With HermAphrodite, UR's Newest Drag Performer

APRIL 14, 2024

BY PAIGE MCCURDY
STAFF WRITER

George Mechalke has been a dancer his whole life since he was three years old. And recently he's found his new passion.

HermAphrodite is George's drag persona. She is both a drag queen and a drag king. She came up with that name during a car ride while visiting home, and is extremely proud of how well it represents her.

"I think it's one of the strongest parts of this character. I'm so proud of the name," she said. "I know it lends me to not only being a drag queen, but also being a drag king, which I think works really well with my personality, and I get to be really versatile."

Her first time publicly performing was at the Student Drag Show in iZone on March 21. She performed with Mrs. Kasha Davis and some student drag performers. HermAphrodite spent the week before preparing for the show, spending hours each day learning how to do drag makeup and practicing her

choreography for the piece.

"Rehearsing and figuring it out and teaching myself how to do a pseudo death drop — that took a lot of time," she said.

She explained that the show was a fun experience and an exciting space. The crowd was encouraging and validating of the performers.

"They were a great audience, gasping when gasping was the right thing and lots of cheering."

On the way to her performance, HermAphrodite saw many people that she knew, and none of them recognized her.

"That's incredibly satisfying for me, to kind of dress bigger and a lot more feminine than I would normally and have people not recognize me even though I'm calling more attention to myself in my opinion," she explained. "Several people's eyes just passed right over me, and I was like, 'whoa, okay, cool.'"

The makeup and the outfits are the most challenging aspects of drag for HermAphrodite. She explained how she was never into makeup as a kid, even though she had to

do stage makeup for dance. When doing drag makeup, the contour is the hardest part for her. But she made clear how the community is very helpful, wants new performers to grow, and are willing to share their tips and tricks.

"Like, one queen, her name is Eden Alive, she's amazing. And I was like, girl, how is your contour so good? Her makeup is absolutely stunning and she was so forthcoming with any information I might need to up my game in that way."

HermAphrodite has done multiple performances at ROAR, a nightclub and bar in Rochester, since the Student Drag Show. She has been performing during the So You Think You Can Drag nights, which are every Thursday night, for three weeks. She tries new things out and learns from other drag performers while growing into her character.

Hermaphrodite's favorite aspect of drag is the performance. Dance performances require hours and hours of rehearsing for only a few showings, and doing drag has allowed her to maximize that

ratio of performance to rehearsal time.

"I love performing, and I know that I get so much joy out of it," HermAphrodite explained. "So this is a really exciting way to do that, and it's also a really exciting way for me to work on improvisation and being more present in the moment when something doesn't work when I was planning to do something on a certain cue and I don't get there."

"Rehearsing and figuring it out and teaching myself how to do a pseudo death drop — that took a lot of time."

Something different from performing as a dancer is the tipping and audience participation. During a drag show, audience members can show their appreciation by tipping the drag performers and interacting with them. This ability of improvisation is something HermAphrodite has been working on.

"When that happens, that's a really concrete way that that

person is showing appreciation for you. And you also show appreciation back. It's really nice to have a moment with them to do some drama, to lip sync to them," she explained.

Being a drag queen can be expensive, so HermAphrodite has gotten really good at being crafty. She spends time doing things that she said are really silly, like making hip pads from couch cushions from Michaels. These fun, weird skills that she's picked up are something that she's been enjoying.

Since she's so new to drag, HermAphrodite is just exploring things, learning what works for her, and having a good time.

"I think that a lot of times I don't give myself a specific goal because I just want to continue to improve myself and let open doors lead me where they will."

HermAphrodite can be found performing at ROAR on Thursday nights and at her Instagram, @h3rmaphrodite.

McCurdy is a member of the Class of 2025.

OCTOBER 1, 2023

BY EMMELY ELI TEXCUCANO
STAFF WRITER

We have entered an age where “soft launches” cause an uproar and relationships are kept under wraps. Relationships seem to be kept increasingly more private.

As Taylor Swift sang in her song “Peace,” “All these people think love’s for show / But I would die for you in secret.” In the modern world, the need for romantic privacy is a common desire.

In 2023, there isn’t a desire to publicize our more intimate affairs – a stark contrast from the climate of the 70s and 80s at the University. The “Classified” section proves just how public students were with their affection. This need to publicize one’s relationships and yearning is most visible in the culture of the section.

The “Classified” section in a newspaper traditionally displays text-based ads sold by word count or lines. They are usually paid for by individuals rather than businesses. However, the *Campus Times*’ “Classified” section evolved from the traditional paid advertisements for lost objects and listings in one centralized location to a section more closely resembling Twitter, consisting of jokes between friends played out on a public feed. The section eventually evolved to become an essential part of Valentine’s Day on campus.

Throughout the 70s and 80s,

the “Classified” section in the *CT* became a vital part of the socialization and relationships of students on campus.

The “Classified” section made its first appearance in an ad on Sept. 26, 1961. Ads under the “Classified” label appeared sporadically for the next several years until finally gaining a recurring weekly labeled section starting Feb. 3, 1968. Occasionally, throughout the earlier editions of the “Classified” section, there was a subsection labeled “Personals” categorizing the listings.

Throughout the decade, you can see hints of the larger impact the “Classified” section would have had in the University community, with one of the earliest editions including a Valentine’s Day-related note. Among the few job listings and lost ads, we see an occasional inside joke directed at a friend—some that make you wonder how they got approved. See:

“WOULD YOU BLOW a goat for a million dollars?” (February 14, 1973)
“SPINACH DOESN’T make it happen anymore – You need vitamins and protein. Tell ’em Wimpy sent you.” (February 14, 1973)

These ads cost \$0.50 for 15 words, and an additional \$0.50 per each additional word, all for the satisfaction of the writers’ friends. These types of messages littered the section throughout its time in the *CT*, making this section gain popularity.

The section expanded from one or two ads to over 61 ads in a single edition, covering over half of a page by Feb. 1973. The “Classified” section then took a turn, beginning to gain recognition as a place for Valentine’s Day announcements.

“NICOLO – HAVING you as a Valentine is better than a room full of artichoke hearts. Happy V-Day, Theo.” (Feb. 14, 1973)

‘In the 70s and 80s, the section became a vital part of the relationships of students on campus.’

It was really in the 80s, though, when these public declarations became a known spectacle for Valentine’s Day. 1986 marked the first time the section filled more than one page—in fact, the section spanned nearly six pages that year, consisting of public expressions of love and general tomfoolery coming from friends, couples, organizations like sororities, and anonymous admirers.

Romantic entries included: **“S.B.: SWEETHEART,** I miss you tremendously. I’m thinking of you and waiting impatiently. Only 881 or 505 more days, or until we both go crazy, whichever comes first. I love you — always. -A. (Had we but world enough and time...)” (Feb. 14, 1986)

“A PHRASE CAN SOMETIMES LOSE ITS

MEANING OVER TIME, but this I will ever keep dear to my heart: I love you, Jaena. -Ron” (Feb. 14, 1986)

“I would send you a valentine, but I don’t know if you would really want to go through all of those ads to find it... are people [from] Oleans, NY that patient?” (Feb. 14, 1986)

(An acknowledgment of the known culture for using these “Classified” ads for romantic endeavors.)

The latter half of the 90s marked the decline of the “Classified” section in the *CT*, though, as the section dwindled in 1997 with only two messages for Valentine’s Day. The section became a husk of its former self.

A few ads appeared occasionally over the course of the 2000s. A notable addition to the paper was a recurring listing involving a couple continuously offering to adopt a college student’s child.

The number is currently disconnected, and it’s unknown if it’s even real, buried among the satirical personal messages and genuine sale listings.

The “Classified” section ended its 49-year run on Sept. 13, 2012.

Echoes of the “Classified” section now only exist in the University’s Campus Community Connection (CCC). The redesign of the University’s CCC page in 2012 introduced a Campus Feed. Over time the Campus Feed has evolved to include

hints of the character only seen in the “Classified” section of the 70s and 80s.

Typical posts include those in the “lost and found” section and occasional listings, more representative of a traditional “Classified” section. Occasionally, though, there will be the same antics. People making posts directly addressing their friends are buried among the regular listings like this recent post.

“I SAW A RED SALAMANDER with black specs that made me feel moved and amazed outside my door earlier tonight. He asked if I could take him to The Pit, so we went and ate chicken sandwiches together. He was super chill...”

These joking posts are few and far between, and not even close to the level of personal messages that overtook the “Classified” section. Long gone are the days of love stories documented through a public campus forum, or even in general social media.

Maybe one day there will be a second wave of “Classified,” a desire for public declarations of love and friendship. Until then, you can page through past editions of the *Campus Times* and bear witness to UR campus relationships past, platonic and romantic, documented so adeptly in the “Classified” section.

Texcucano is a member of the Class of 2025.

iZone’s New Escape Room, “Cabin Fever: Snowed In,” Keeps The

JANUARY 1, 2024

BY ALYSSA KOH
SENIOR STAFF

It is not often that you see a twin XL mattress get lugged through iZone — but for when you’re junior Oren Schwartz, it is just part of the job.

“I have never had more eyes on me than dragging that mattress through iZone,” said Schwartz, who is part of iZone’s marketing team. He is no stranger to the spotlight — having been in multiple ROC Players shows, a part of the YellowJackets a cappella group on campus, and one of the founders of Pet Rock Sketch Comedy, which had its first show on Friday. Now, he has found comfort (and a lot of overtime) in working behind the scenes on the library’s first ever escape room, “Cabin Fever: Snowed In.”

Schwartz is a fervent fan of escape rooms. He boasts a current undefeated record in his own escape-rooming, and on the production side of things, his work with iZone isn’t his first rodeo either. In his first-year dorm, he created an escape room in a common room — and was then told to remove parts of the set dressing due to fire safety code. As a camp counselor at the Reform Jewish overnight camp URJ Camp Harlam in Kunkletown, PA, he set up an escape room in his campers’ cabin in the foothills of the Pocono

Mountains. Now, as the team lead for “Snowed In,” all that experience is getting put to the test.

Schwartz presented the concept to iZone’s full team — currently, eight student staff members and director Yasmin Mattox — at their semesterly Pitch Day and was met with immediate excitement. Seniors Sanghamitra Subba, Katie Ho, and Rachel Kamata signed on to aid in the project, and since then, they’ve been meeting each Friday to do what iZone prides itself on most: ideating, brainstorming, and producing.

A couple of *Campus Times* members went to experience the escape room for themselves first (at-the-time Editor-in-Chief Alyssa Koh and Staff Writer Elena Bachmann) and then spoke to the team while they ran another team’s pass-through.

The escape room itself was themed around needing to find coordinates within a cabin to give a search-and-rescue team your location. “We started with a theme brainstorm session,” said Ho. “Someone suggested a haunted library, but then Oren said, ‘ghosts are cringe.’”

“I stand by that,” Schwartz said.

The puzzles utilized group collaboration and finding resources from different parts of the room to solve them. Thus, having a variety of thinkers in a team can lead to more efficient

escapes, according to the team.

“The fastest team we’ve had with no hints was a 41:09,” said Schwartz. “That was a mix of students, grad students, and a random Med Center employee who jumped in.”

“‘We started with a theme brainstorm session,’ said senior Katie Ho. ‘Someone suggested a haunted library, but then Oren said, ‘ghosts are cringe.’”

The escape room is entirely built off the student team’s work — from the puzzles to the Amvets-sourced, budget-approved decorations and the staffing of the room itself. For those interested in signing up, all the open time slots for the escape room have been based on the four team members’ personal availability throughout the week.

“The team is smaller than normal, since we’re working on hiring new full-time staff members,” said Kamata, who has worked for the marketing team since Fall 2020 — and whose extra Southside mattress is being used for the escape room. “The iZone student staff has really picked up the ball this semester.”

However, this amount of student investment isn’t uncommon for the library. Most

auxiliary iZone projects — such as the annual improvisational presentation-giving game Pitch Imperfect and last semester’s Springfest-Palooza — are entirely student-driven.

The finalization of the project came all within the week prior to the launch date, due to the fact that the room being used is normally a classroom space. Thus, the team had to create puzzles without being able to playtest in the actual room until much later. When they were finally able to set up the room, some puzzles needed to be changed last-minute to better suit the space. This led to a couple long nights that ended in the team getting kicked out of the library by Public Safety.

Due to the lack of staff members, one of iZone’s office spaces was converted into the “Snowed In” headquarters for the week. The room, which is separated from the rest of the library by a transparent glass door, is where those going through the escape room can drop their bags.

‘The escape room is entirely built off the student team’s work.’

On entry, you’re immediately surrounded by organized chaos — ripped open boxes of congratulatory stickers for players, a whiteboard with scribbled quotes from teams that have

gone through the room, and trays full of homemade chocolate chip-oatmeal-walnut cookies (courtesy of Kamata). There, whoever’s staffing the escape room sits with a phone to track the team’s progress and a walkie-talkie to communicate with the team for hints.

Sometimes, if a puzzle breaks, they have to scramble to fix it — or, in Ho’s case, create a new proxy puzzle in 10 minutes. “It’s a lot of hard work, so we’ll probably only be able to do this annually,” she said.

However, that doesn’t mean there isn’t interest for more escape room content beyond iZone’s annual foray. Every possible group slot was filled for this go-around, and the first signup happened to be Provost David Figlio (who unfortunately had to cancel 20 minutes prior to his own escaping). In addition, Ho mentioned that at an inter-library meeting, there had been talk of Advancement wanting an escape room for Meliora Weekend.

“I just really wanted to get paid to do an escape room,” said Schwartz. “... Internally, iZone’s always been thinking about these concepts — pitching, ideating — and now we get to make it fun.”

Koh is a member of the Class of 2025 (T5).

OPINIONS

Technology, Humanity, And The Death Of Death

NOVEMBER 12, 2023

BY ENANA JACOB
STAFF WRITER

I have long felt that the most human phrase of all time is a simple and short one: “I was here.”

You can find it anywhere and at any time: etched into a desk in the library, spray-painted on the side of a building, scrawled on the walls of Pompeii (no, seriously, the oldest graffiti known to man is in Pompeii, reading “Gaius was here”), painted in nail polish on the shelf of your local dollar store (another true story, from a middle-school version of yours truly).

Sometimes the sentiment is expressed without words, too: footprints in the shape of a heart at the beach, fingerprints of paint in the tunnels of our school, and handprints stamped over 200,000 years ago on the walls of ancient caves.

‘Past generations were allowed to have much of their lives fade into the blurry, fluorescent filters of memory.’

It is a fundamentally human impulse to not only want to be heard but to want to be heard forever. To be, in one way or another, immortal.

In today’s world, we have incredible cameras in our pockets at all times, lodged into devices armed to the teeth with social media platforms to send content off to. We have ways to encase any and every moment in amber, to sign them with our names, to send them into orbit and to tell everyone, until the Internet burns and disintegrates — that we were here, we were here, we were here.

We feel a need to prove, not just to ourselves but to the world, that we saw and touched and felt — that we exist. This is the reason that at any tourist destination, everyone there is taking photos despite the surplus already in existence. No one wants a stock photo of the Eiffel Tower; they want their own, horribly overexposed, slightly off-center iPhone photo. They want proof that they were there, that for the briefest moment, for the millisecond of the aperture shutting and opening again, the Eiffel Tower was theirs, and only theirs.

However, I don’t think we were ever meant to remember forever, let alone exist forever. It’s the subject of a hundred stories, and within them, immortality becomes a burden, a curse, an inescapable evil. Finality — of our lives, our impacts, our memories — is

not a tragedy, but a relief.

We are the first generation to not remember a time without the Internet and social media; the first to be able to conjure every facet of our lives through photographic evidence. This has made us all too aware of the importance of impermanence.

‘Where handprints fade over time, our videos and posts won’t go away until the Internet itself does...’

Past generations were allowed to have much of their lives fade into the blurry, fluorescent filters of memory. But for us, so many moments in time are almost eerily preserved. We can look back on our memories, our words, and our voices in perfect crystalline recreations, rather than through the merciful distortion of nostalgia. And while it’s a blessing that I have shaky cassette-tape footage of my brother and me, four and seven years old, eating popsicles on our fold-out Elmo chair in the living room, it is a curse that I have Snapchat videos from middle school with some of the most cringe-inducing content I’ve ever had the (dis)pleasure to view.

As this way of life



JOYLU / ILLUSTRATIONS EDITOR

becomes more and more ingrained in us, it scares me what this will do to the way we experience our own lives. We see it already. We see it in toddlers trained for the camera, whose childhoods are documented for the entire world to see by fame-obsessed parents. We see it in young kids with YouTube channels, who are just trying to have fun but are unable to grasp the permanency of what they are putting out to the world.

‘We feel a need to prove, not just to ourselves but to the world...’

In the age of social media and omnipresent cameras, we are unable to escape the embarrassments and mistakes of our pasts. The past is constantly coming up to meet us, packaged in perfect resolution and stellar audio quality, available

at the touch of a smooth LCD screen. All because we want to remember, and to be remembered.

But I have to say it again: While the methods may be new, the pursuit is certainly not. Where handprints fade over time, our videos and posts won’t go away until the Internet itself does (which feels as equivalent to the end of time as the death of our sun). Maybe it’s the terrified optimist in me, but I have to believe that if humanity disintegrates and society collapses because of social media and terrifying technology, it will somehow still be in the most endearing of pursuits: to tell the universe, however long it stands, that we, in all of our imperfect, selfish glory, were here.

Jacob is a member of the class of 2025.

BookTok Is Turning The Publishing Industry Into Fast Fashion

JANUARY 21, 2024

BY SHERENE YANG
OPINIONS EDITOR

If you’ve been on BookTok, a subgenre of TikTok dedicated to books and authors, you’ve probably heard of “Fourth Wing,” a book published last year by Rebecca Yarros. The novel was published on May 2 and its sequel, “Iron Flame,” following just six months later on Nov. 7, garnered Yarros fame and fortune. Yarros was able to publish the first two installments quicker because she had written some of “Iron Flame” beforehand. However, Yarros planned to release the rest of the series in a slower manner. The release of “Fourth Wing” came with skyrocketing hype around the “romantasy” genre — a mix between romance and fantasy.

But along with it came a new question brewing in the reading community: Are publishers and authors publishing books too quickly, and does this affect the quality of the writing?

On the day of the sequel

release, Yarros and Barnes & Noble hosted a premiere featuring a Q&A where Yarros apologized for her attempts at pronouncing the Scottish Gaelic words and names mentioned in her novel. Yarros and her publisher, Red Tower Books, were met with much criticism about this misuse of Gaelic grammar, with many contending that the mistakes could have been avoided if the publishers had hired someone to proofread the Gaelic used in the book and had better prepared Yarros for interviews.

So what does BookTok have to do with this? It was one of the reasons why within the first week of “Fourth Wing” being published, the book shot up to the top of the New York Times’ Best Sellers List almost instantaneously despite criticism. The whole ordeal highlighted similarities between the modern publishing world and another contemporary industry: fast fashion.

Like fashion trends,

BookTok generates temporary hype around a particular genre or set of tropes. In her book series’ premiere, Yarros managed to appeal to many of BookTok’s beloved tropes while also blending two of BookTok’s favorite genres. This, combined with the fast-paced plot of the book, caught the eye of many readers.

With a readership surge, it isn’t uncommon for both publishers and authors to use that hype to their advantage, cranking out more when it’s still popular. Even a quiet announcement by the publisher (which turned out to just be a special edition of “Fourth Wing”) was enough to sell out the book even before the cover or any details were revealed. This hype was likely a reason why the series, originally a trilogy, was dragged into a five-book series.

This is kind of what fast fashion is all about. Fast fashion refers to the process of clothing manufacturing that moves from production/design to

stores quickly to keep up with current trends. These pieces are often cheap and low-quality, sent to retail stores with the hope of selling out quickly thanks to current trends. This same approach emerging in the publishing world, thanks partially to BookTok, could lead to diminishing book quality when writing and edits aren’t able to reach their maximum potential.

This isn’t to say that books like “Fourth Wing” are bad just because they are hyped up so much. For many readers, a book not meeting expectations can create disappointment, especially when the potential is there. But ditching developed work for cranking out crowd-pleasers doesn’t do all readers justice.

It’s important for authors to understand the material and history they incorporate into their books. I love to see authors using the history and languages of minority groups as inspirations for books, and to expose their readers to these wonderful cultures.

But with publishers hurrying to print to capitalize on the hype period, less effort is put into the things that make books appreciable to people beyond basic elements like plot, characters, and story arcs.

These qualms about the quick turnover in the publishing industry, much like in the fashion industry, aren’t directed towards indie authors who write, edit, and publish themselves, but rather towards those who disregard the importance of everything that goes into the writing process. Thorough research and editing are just as important as the characters, plots, and arcs of a book. But, these are just some small thoughts in the minds of many readers like myself, and it doesn’t mean we can’t appreciate a novel that’s well-loved by BookTok. Read what you love because, in the end, sometimes a good BookTok paperback is all you need.

Yang is a member of the class of 2026.

CULTURE

‘La La Land in Concert’: Not a Waste of a Lovely Night

FEBRUARY 25, 2024

BY MAHNOOR RAZA
MANAGING EDITOR

It’s the first act of “La La Land” (2016). Jazz musician Seb takes aspiring actress Mia to a jazz bar to expose her to the genre’s beauty. “You can’t hear it [...] you have to see it — you have to see what’s at stake,” he insists, gesturing at the jazz band performing on stage. “Every one of these guys is composing, they’re rearranging, they’re writing [...] It’s conflict, and it’s compromise, and it’s just — it’s new every time. It’s brand new every night. It’s very, very exciting.”

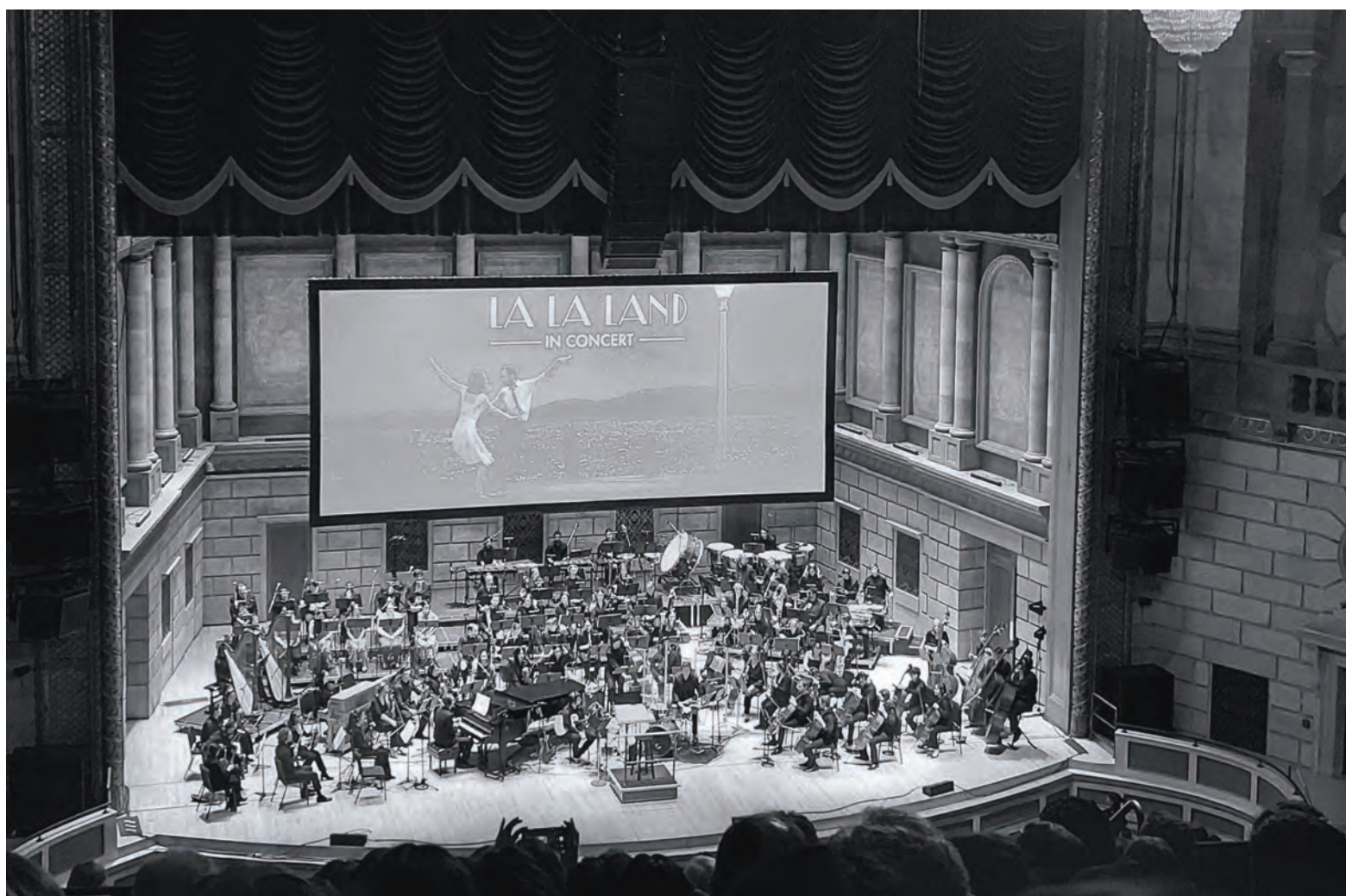
Despite having seen the film repeatedly, it wasn’t until I watched “La La Land in Concert” Feb. 16 that I was fully able to grasp what Seb meant.

‘This was “La La Land” on steroids.’

Conducted by six-time Emmy Award-winner Mark Watters and performed by the Empire Film and Media Ensemble (EFAME), the concert breathed new vitality into Justin Hurwitz’s Oscar-winning score and provided extraordinary value for old and new fans alike. As a seasoned “La La Land” enthusiast, the difference was stark. Although the visuals remained the same, the live orchestra and chorus accompanying a scoreless version of the film on the big screen gave it a whole new dimension. And unlike “Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince in Concert,” which the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO) performed at Kodak Hall last semester, this show made full use of every tool at its disposal, including lighting and sound design. Director and writer Damien Chazelle is unparalleled at encapsulating the visceral experience of live music in film, but seeing the musical push and pull — collaboration, competition, even whiplash, some might say — unfold on stage for a sold-out audience at Kodak Hall was an out-of-body experience.

This was “La La Land” on steroids. Eastman Ph.D. student and “La La Land In Concert” classical/electrical guitarist Isaac Romagosa attributes the show’s success to the presence of a live orchestra. “I love performing with an orchestra because [...] all the details are super big,” he said, speaking of the show’s larger-than-life scale. The fireworks at the end of “Someone in the Crowd” were a little more dazzling, the confetti blown into Mia’s hair sparkled a little brighter, the s35mm cinematography was just a tad dreamier, and the imitation technicolor felt slightly more saturated.

Throughout the film — particularly during the musical numbers — the onstage lighting morphed to correspond with the dominant colors on screen. They



The RPO has performed movie scores from La La Land to the upcoming Wizard of Oz in January 2025.

MAHNOOR RAZA / MANAGING EDITOR

turned green and red during Gosling’s begrudging Christmas Eve performance, a deep blue as Gosling and Stone waltzed at the planetarium, a twilight purple during Gosling’s solo at the pier, and a summery orange during “Summer Montage/Madeline.” Red and yellow lighting and a live chorus accompanying John Legend’s vocals made “Start a Fire” all the more jarring. Teal lighting to match the curtains behind Mia and Seb welcomed the audience into their apartment and their “City of Stars” duet. The lighting accentuated Mia’s salmon pink and Seb’s midnight blue color palettes, and effortlessly blended them together during their joint scenes, symbolizing their union as well as their separation. Most impressively, during “Epilogue,” the lighting seamlessly cycled through every color featured in the montage, making the fantasy of their alternate life together more vivid — and heartbreaking.

‘The parallels between what was unfolding on screen and what was happening at Kodak Hall - both on stage and in the audience - expanded the world of the film beyond the screen.’

However, the lighting design for the concert went beyond the ambient washes of color behind the screen. As Seb played his and Mia’s theme at his new bar, pianist Dariusz Terefenko played it solo on stage. A single spotlight shone on both Gosling in the film and Terefenko on stage, and both Mia and the Kodak Hall

audience held their breath. And then the lights gently faded up, jolting the audience and the on-screen duo back to reality and separating them once more.

The parallels between what was unfolding on screen and what was happening at Kodak Hall — both on stage and in the audience — expanded the world of the film beyond the screen. There are three things that both Kodak Hall and “La La Land” have an abundance of: live music, impeccable lighting, and applause abound. And so, when the auditorium dimmed and the orchestra performed “Overture,” I saw Mia and Seb’s relationship — real and imagined — play out before my eyes. When the real audience at Kodak burst into applause alongside the fictional audience at Seb’s concert, when the chorus sang Mia’s roommates’ lines from “Someone in the Crowd” while wearing dresses that matched the characters’ jewel-toned outfits, when Terefenko (and Gosling) left the final note incomplete at the end of “Epilogue,” when there were audible sniffles, sighs, and sobs in the theater, it became delightfully difficult to separate fact from fiction.

My only criticism of this blurring of boundaries is that it was often difficult to discern between the on-stage chorus and the film’s original vocals. For someone less familiar with every earnest crack and breathy exhale in Stone and Gosling’s performances, it might not have been immediately clear whether the chorus was only performing supporting parts or the lead vocals as well. I, for one, did not realize that Mia’s roommates were being played by members of the chorus until one of the vocalist’s

British accents seemed slightly off.

Although audiences should not need to have listened to the soundtrack on loop to be able to distinguish where the recorded score ended and the live score began, perhaps the blending of vocal performances was the point. The concert experience preserved what the film’s mix engineer Marius de Vries has called “the integrity and fragility of the vocal performances” by retaining Gosling and Stone’s vocals while elevating the “realness of the instrumental performances.”

‘For someone less familiar with every earnest crazy and breathy exhale in Stone and Gosling’s performances, it might not have been immediately clear whether the chorus was only performing the supporting parts or the lead vocals as well.’

This soundtrack’s “realness” was reinforced by the contrast between live and recorded instrumentals in the concert. The orchestra did not perform the parts of the soundtrack that were portrayed as digital recordings within the film, such as the characters listening to the radio or playing vinyl. For example, in comparison to the back of the truck sliding open during “Another Day of Sun” while musicians played timpani drums live on stage, the song Seb was listening to in his car after the opening song immediately and intentionally fell flat.

It was also clear that the orchestra was improvising and collaborating in real-time, further demonstrating the “realness” of the performance.

‘This soundtack’s “realness” was reinforced by the contrast between live and recorded instrumentals in the concert.’

“We were following the conductor, but even if you want to play what’s written, if there’s different musicians playing it, it’ll never sound the same — and that’s the cool thing about music,” Romagosa said. For a movie about bringing jazz back to life, the concert felt like a testament to the power of live music.

I am envious of anyone whose first experience watching the film was in concert. Having live orchestration accompany the film brought its visual, thematic, and, of course, musical direction to life. And, although making every track a front-and-center spectacle sacrificed the relative invisibility of the background score, it amplified an otherwise overlooked theme of the film: the magic of live performance. It reminded me that “La La Land” is not just an homage to Hollywood and jazz but also to the very experience of witnessing musicians performing in front of you and the collective effervescence of being part of an audience.

If the medium is the message, this remediation of the film with a live orchestra was the best possible love letter to live music. “La La Land” has never shined so brightly.

Raza is a member of the Class of 2025 (T5).

“An Evening with Renée Elise Goldsberry”: A Shining Mel Weekend

OCTOBER 22, 2023

BY KAYLIN HAN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Before we start, let me make a disclaimer: I am not a musical person.

I have taken up three different instruments in my life and yet currently know how to play none of them. I have no musical expertise besides the remnants of the music theory my piano teacher taught me ages ago and what I got from watching the movie “Tár.” I’m the type of person whose entire music taste consists of songs I’ve listened to and responded with “Hm. Sounds good.”

Despite that, once upon a time, I was a Broadway fan. It’s not an era I tend to look back fondly on, but it makes me nostalgic nonetheless.

So, this past August, when I saw the Eastman Instagram account announce that Renée Elise Goldsberry, who originated the role of Angelica Schuyler in the Broadway musical “Hamilton,” was going to perform as a headliner for Meliora Weekend, I couldn’t help but get excited.

The performance, “An Evening with Renée Elise Goldsberry,” took place on Friday, Oct. 6, in Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre. Eastman’s own Empire Film and Media Ensemble (EFAME) opened the show with an overture dedicated

to “our favorite neighboring suburb, New York City,” conducted by Mark Watters.

The current director of the Beal Institute for Film Music and Contemporary Media, Watters is a six-time Emmy Award-winning composer and conductor best known for his work composing for various projects, including film, television, and two Olympics. However, the composition of the medley itself was done by the students of EFAME, who supposedly put the whole thing together in one hour. With my closest experience hearing a live orchestra being my brother’s high school band, I was blown away by the harmony and talent of the orchestra playing before me.

‘The composition of the medley itself was done by the students of [the Eastman Empire Film and Media Ensemble (EFAME)], who supposedly put the whole thing together in one hour.’

After the overture — and an introduction by Watters — Goldsberry took the stage, greeted by thunderous applause. Her following performance was nothing short of extraordinary.

Although I wasn’t familiar

Performance

with most of the songs she decided to sing that evening, I was hooked by both her amazing voice and her compelling stage presence. She not only sang, she performed. She told stories. She danced along. She hyped up her band, her background vocalists, and the orchestra.

Goldsberry was a fluid, active presence; serving both as the star of the show and the key component that brought all the different parts of the stage together. Her voice blended with the orchestra to create a sound that was an out-of-this-world experience to my ears.

It was her stories and anecdotes that she told in between some of her songs that brought her down to Earth and made the performance more engaging. Some of them were funny, like when Aretha Franklin left Lin-Manuel Miranda a voicemail asking for Hamilton tickets, then never responded when they called her back, much to Goldsberry’s dismay. Yet some of them were more personal, more vulnerable.

She told us about her emotional audition for “The Lion King” on Broadway, which was her first major audition after years of trying to hit it big. It happened not long after 9/11, and she recounted her deeply emotional experience when she was asked to

sing the ballad “Shadowland” from the soundtrack.

“I never imagined that singing a song like [Shadowland] would land me here, in Kodak Hall,” she said, as if she was the one who was privileged to get to perform for us.

‘Goldsberry was a fluid, active presence; serving both as the star of the show and the key component that brought all the different parts of the stage together.’

While much of her setlist was upbeat, I genuinely got chills during her performances of songs like “Shadowland” and “Satisfied” from “Hamilton.” As Goldsberry did not have a whole ensemble of performers supporting her as she did during her time on “Hamilton,” it was especially unreal when members of the audience took the ensemble’s place during “Satisfied,” singing the parts of “To the groom!” and “To the bride!” in between the appropriate lines, like in the original song. (They were probably Eastman students. They were all on the left side of the balcony. I swear they even harmonized.)

After her last song, a “Rent” medley as a tribute to her time portraying Mimi Marquez

in the closing cast of the acclaimed musical, Goldsberry closed the evening with an encore, in which she sang an original song that she wrote for her daughter. This song will be a part of her debut solo album releasing in 2024. As she sang this slower song, it felt as if she was singing to each of us.

“This show is a blatant attempt to manipulate you into falling in love... with love,” she mentioned at one point in the middle of her show. To each member of the audience, this message could be interpreted in a different way. To me, with my memories as a former “Hamilton” fan arising during the show, her words reminded me to not be so harsh to my younger self. If anything, my younger self has gotten me to where I am today, and surely that’s no small feat, even if it involved a Broadway phase along the way.

Does that mean I should thank my younger self for my ability to still recall the lyrics to some “Hamilton” songs five years later? I’m not so sure. But at the same time, I should thank her — as well as Goldsberry — for reminding me that it’s okay to love music solely for the purpose of loving music, no matter the genre.

Han is a member of the Class of 2027.

APRIL 21, 2024

BY ALEX HOLLY
CULTURE EDITOR

BY EMILY ENGLISH
CULTURE EDITOR

The University of Rochester Theatre Program takes on a modern interpretation of Shakespeare’s “Othello” and does an excellent job of capturing the intricacies of the renowned tragedy.

Director Nigel Maister carefully explores the conversation of race that threads throughout “Othello.” While Othello holds a place of high power as a Venetian general, he is described as a “moor” (an archaic term associated with dark-skinned appearance), isolated from his associates and disapproved of by his father-in-law.

“It’s one of those plays that really does encapsulate the Black experience in majority white spaces,” says sophomore Onosejere Ugbenin, who plays Othello.

Along with the story’s overarching connection to race, Ugbenin credits the bravado intrinsic to the role for pushing him out of his comfort zone. The show’s frequent portrayal of violence, both through direct contact and the guns added, call for a layer of separation between character and performer — often a difficult state to tap into.

Junior Anna Bakina plays

antagonist Iago, who is male in the original text. This gender swap was a calculated choice by Maister, providing a contemporary perspective on the already-malleable script. While Shakespeare is not known to have written weak women, first-year Madeleine Christopher (Desdemona) claims that the inclusion of a female antagonist as a high-ranked military officer challenges both Elizabethan and modern-day expectations of women.

While the language of the play is still deeply gendered, such as female characters being labeled “whores,” Bakina’s performance of Iago, a character not beholden to these expectations, invites a discussion of the internalized misogyny that both women and men may face in the modern day. Bianca, played by sophomore Mikaila Son, speaks to this throughout the show by comparing women to food and men to stomachs, as well as balancing her devotion to both her Lady Desdemona and her villainous wife Iago. The dynamic between Iago and Biananot only allows for a complex perspective on womanhood, but also that of sexuality, naturally introducing queer characters into the narrative.

As a theater-goer adjusted to the constant portrayal of female actresses as male

characters, it was refreshing to see this dynamic switched, even if solely through a few pronoun adjustments and costume switches. For Bakina specifically, it was wonderful to see the contrast in her performances this school year between the female-adapted Iago and her performance as Grandpa in TOOP’s “You Can’t Take It With You.”

‘Othello keeps the audience enraptured by utilizing a malleable set and entertaining blocking.’

“Othello” runs for 3 hours and 15 minutes with one intermission, keeping the audience enraptured by utilizing a malleable set and entertaining blocking. The production managed to eloquently portray Shakespearean language, and make it understandable and digestible to the audience for the entirety of its long running time.

The set was minimalistic but fluid throughout each scene through the use of subtle elements such as curtains, bars and situational blocking. Iago would turn the metal bars, leaning into her manipulation throughout the narrative, shifting the set more and more as the play progressed. The production began with just a

blackout set and a red curtain with the Lion of Venice projected upon it, and behind the large velvet curtain was a concrete wall with a wire fence lining the top. As the plot unfolded the set was stripped away — using the curtains to emulate the dark seas of a storm before eventually tearing them down.

The usage of backroom dialogue and entrances from all across the theater kept the staging dynamic and allowed the audience to feel more immersed. Along with the set design, the show’s lighting paired excellently with the production’s rawness. The lights behind the concrete wall were kept muted — detaching from the audience and even the performers but maintaining the solemn tone. Front-of-stage lighting lent well to Shakespeare’s soliloquies, while small touches such as the warmth from Desdemona’s lamp and the flashes of gunshots provided allure and maintained edge-of-seat attention.

The vilification and martyrdom of Othello is represented primarily in the last act, where Othello starts to be “poisoned” by jealousy. Jealousy is a disease that seizes Othello and leads to him falling into convulsions while the instigator of his jealousy, Iago, simply watches, refusing Cassio’s assistance. He starts clad in royal

garments, but slowly shifts into earth-toned clothes as jealousy is planted into his mind, which shifts to dark tones as his disease takes him over. When he kills Desdemona in a fit of jealousy he is clad in white except for a black shawl draped over his body.

Once he realizes his mistake, he pulls off the shawl and sets it down next to the corpse of his wife. At the end of the play, he picks up her body and brings her to what will be the scene of his own suicide at the back of center stage, bright fluorescent light focusing on them and casting them in a heavenly glow. The music starts to build and grows louder as a medic walks up to their bodies and throws the white sheet of divinity onto them.

In whole, “Othello” is a must-see production, an excellent reflection of the prowess of Todd’s creative and technical skill sets. Particularly with its adaptation to a contemporary setting, the performance provides something to take home for any audience member and leaves one stunned, impressed, and hungry for more.

Holly is a member of the Class of 2026.

English is a member of the Class of 2027.

CT Watches: Othello

Congratulations, CT Seniors! You Did It!

RACHEL CAREN
NEWS EDITOR

It’s not often that someone like Rachel Caren steps foot into the *CT* office — but when they do, you know you’ve struck gold. Rachel wrote for the Humor section for a couple semesters before getting dragged into News, but her meticulous writing and snappy wit shine through in all of her pieces. In addition, spending an entire month of her summer learning about quantum physics, Rachel broke national news, with her news article covering the retraction of University professor Ranga Dias’ research articles from top science magazines being referenced by the New York Times. Beyond all her accomplishments, though, the effect of her willingness to support newbies foraying into News and her morale-boosting cat photos will be felt for years to come.

MADDIE GREENE
COPY CHIEF

When we think of Maddie Greene, we think of her holding up the Copy fort in the back of the office surrounded by a huddle of new writers and staff alike. Maddie was someone always with a smile and an open ear, with the ability to bring together people at all different points in their journalism endeavors with her kindness towards all. Beyond her uncanny appreciation for AP style and exceptional editing skills, you could always rely on her to make your day just a bit brighter. Maddie’s diligent work ethic and love for the *CT* will not be forgotten.

CARTER HASENOEHRL
CULTURE EDITOR

Carter Hasenoehrl started writing album reviews for the *CT* in the fall of 2021, and from then on, the music taste of the Campus Times got “ever better.” As Culture Editor, Carter’s unfortunately easily-misspelled surname and gut-bustingly funny sense of humor made him a recurring star on our beloved office quote wall, and his laidback presence in the office made him integral to getting through long nights, crazy articles, and the weight of being a college student in THIS economy. Thank you, Carter, for finding your way out of the Campus Mail Center and into our hearts. We’ll listen to “Ribs” by Lorde and forever think of you.

HENRY LITSKY
PHOTO EDITOR
NEWS EDITOR
MANAGING EDITOR

Henry Litsky once said: “Just when I thought I was out... they pull me back in.” During his time at the *CT*, Henry revitalized our Photo section and helped establish a standard for photography and categorization that has now become commonplace for all that follow. Henry’s dedication to the *CT* has lasted longer than most spend in college. He has made the *CT* more social by hosting bonding events, has brought new initiatives for journalistic integrity, instituted organizational improvements, and has always had the *CT* in his heart. From constantly wearing his *CT* hat to drinking champagne from *CT* cups, he truly embodies the *Campus Times*. His presence will be missed dearly by everyone who had the pleasure of crossing paths with him. Thank you Henry — don’t you dare forget us.

JUSTIN O’CONNOR
NEWS EDITOR
MANAGING EDITOR
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Justin O’Connor was Editor-in-Chief of the *CT*, but one title wouldn’t be able to encompass how much he’s transformed the brand of the *CT* during his time here. From revamping budget meetings to training a new generation of budding news writers, he will be remembered in *CT* history most by his dedicated news coverage of Palestine-related issues, including his initiative for the *CT*’s Israel-Palestine special edition. Justin’s wisdom and passion for journalism was unmistakable to everyone who knew him, and he served as a role model for everyone in the *CT*. Thank you Justin — your skill, expertise, and personality will be missed.

SANGHAMITRA SUBBA
NEWS EDITOR
FEATURES EDITOR

Sanghamitra Subba started with the *CT* from the jump, being one of the breakout *CT* members of the first post-COVID class of students. Beyond her initial contributions to pandemic coverage, Sangs shifted towards feature writing — mainly focused around campus-developed products and the communities they affected. Her writing was full of heart, and her impeccable style and empathetic demeanor made the office a kinder, warmer place.

BRIDGET TOKIWA
ILLUSTRATIONS EDITOR

Bridget Tokiwa served as Illustrations Editor for the *CT* for many wonderful semesters filled with stripping URBees, dapper monocle-wearing cats, and a multitude of other delightfully silly illustrations. Beyond that, though, Bridget was a stalwart force in our Graphics department and kept our merch looking fabulous and our hearts full. Our style of illustrations is now modeled after the incredible work that Bridget did for us, and for that, we are forever grateful. Bridget, as your journey with your Take Five comes to an end, we’d like to thank you for spending so much of your time with the *CT*. We wouldn’t be the same without you.

ARIEL WANG
FEATURES EDITOR

Ariel Wang popped into the Features section at the beginning of the *CT*’s Spring 2022 semester, and from then on, she contributed detailed profiles of students from all across the University’s many departments and campuses. Her work with the *Campus Times* led her to intern with WROC-TV News 8, and her dedication to her writing impacted the office significantly. Her contributions to the *CT* will be sorely missed.

SARAH WOODAMS
PUBLISHER
PRESENTATIONS CHIEF

Sarah Woodams is many things: The former Publisher of the *CT*, our current outgoing Presentations Chief, a friend, a compatriot, a food-orderer, and our beloved Swoodams. Her drive and resilience in email-sending kept the *CT* afloat even when it felt as if the world sought to sink it. Beyond that, Sarah has filled in the gaps of *CT* more than any other staff member could hope to — by taking photos, interviewing for the most precarious of articles, slamming together April Fool’s articles in record time, laying out countless pages on InDesign, and by being an incredible friend and supporter of all.

HAVEN WORLEY
NEWS EDITOR

Haven Worley served as News Editor for the *CT*, covering the University’s pandemic response, on-campus protests and petitions, and the struggles of a campus community regaining traction after being subject to a nationwide lockdown from the second she started college. However, she is also known for her passion for storytelling through the art of filmmaking, the skills of which she used to make her articles glow with humanity and vibrancy. Her determination to give a voice to the downtrodden and push for change has left an impact on how our team approaches the craft of journalism.

Crossword Answers

COMMENCEMENT MINI

Play on page 12

				S	M	I
	D	A	R	G		
D	I	V	O	C		
O	C	I	F			
P	A	D				

CROSSWORD

Play on page 12

S	S	E	L	P	A	R	T	S		R	E	Y	R	D
D	E	N	O	I	T	U	A	C		E	L	A	R	E
E		A	L	L	I	C	S	O		D	I	A	L	P
E	U	H		S	G	E	K		R	E	R	R	U	P
P	O	T	A		A	R	R	E	I	S		E	C	A
S	R	E	N	O			O	G	A		T	A	T	R
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E	N	A	O	L	S		L	I	E	N		O	R	E
L	O	S	L	E		S	L	A	S	I	R	P	E	R
E	N	A	I	D		R	A	T	S	A	R	E	P	O
T	O	C	S	A		S	T	S	A	C	E	R	O	F

HUMOR

Crazy? I Was Crazy Once. They Locked Me In A Room. A Rubber Room. A Rubber Room With Rats. And Rats Make Me Crazy.

SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

BY GAVIN LI
STAFF WRITER

An update to the previous thoughts.

After spending some alone time with rats over the summer, I have become a new man, and thus I have decided to channel my thoughts onto some more productive things.

First, you can no longer microwave forks to start fires. I know I know, it is disappointing. But you know what you can do? You can calculate the speed of light with it.

First, get something melty, like cheese, and spread it all over the microwave. Microwave it for a while and see where the cheese melts. This can show you the wavelength of the microwave. Lastly, find the frequency of your microwave and plug those two numbers into the wavelength formula, and you can find a fairly accurate speed of light.

Regarding the inability to smoke, I guess I've become a changed man. Why should I fear the attention the passerby gives me? I have found a new bridge to smoke under, and it has a lot more foot

traffic than the place before. I have scared the shit out of pedestrians before, but now I can do it for good. Be the reason the couples hold hands when they go under bridges. I could make a business out of this.

Do you want your significant other to hold your hand when you go on midnight walks and are too afraid to ask? Stress no more. Give me the time and route of your walks, and I will pose as a homeless bum smoking on your trail, scaring your partner into holding hands with you. I'll go with a \$15 hourly rate, though better offers are welcome. (I guess I can say I've stopped using drugs for evil or good, unless you count profiting off the homies as an evil deed.)

I still love balls, especially the all-beef ones.

Chat GPT is now useless. They lobotomized an AI so it wouldn't pose as your grandma and tell you a bedtime story about working in the napalm factory. We truly live in a society.

You no longer need to make thermite at home; you can buy it in coffee cans. But it is kinda steep — over six bucks for a can of self-heating coffee — and you will need to cut

the coffee out.

It seems I finally found some success regarding defeating school locks. I bumped open my roommate's door with my key during the first day of move-in, though I have been unable to recreate this effect. Who knows, maybe you can bump open yours too.

I have been informed that due to my previous comments regarding how my girlfriend wanted to twist my [REDACTED] off, I could not get my previous piece published in print. My girlfriend was not happy with how they censored the part about her [REDACTED] plushie, and has threatened about pushing twisting my [REDACTED] off up the timeline. Thank the gods that I have practiced for this exact scenario during the summer by playing multiple sessions of Classic BattleTech (CBT).

I have no more piss story, at least not anything that comes to mind at the moment.

An amendment to previous statements regarding GFCIs (ground-fault circuit interrupter circuit breakers): it seems that one just needs to be in the same room as a water source for the room to be up to code, as my current bedroom does not have

GFCIs even though it is definitely close to a water source.

Another amendment to the previous statement. It seems now the Chemistry department values the students more than mole rats, but values chemicals above students; I guess this is understandable as the students are probably worth more to the Biology department when

expired.

According to my lawyer, I am not allowed to further inquire the difference between yarmulkes and skull caps.

I have become sleepy the goer to bed.

Li is a member of the class of 2025.

Help Geedis Is Leaking

FEBRUARY 5, 2024

BY CADEN DILLON
STAFF WRITER

I found this weird pin on the ground one day. I thought I'd heard someone say my name from somewhere around ground level, but when I looked, the only thing there was this pin that said "GEEDIS" on it. At the time, it seemed like a mildly interesting find, and the figure labeled "GEEDIS" looked friendly in a Dr. Eggman-fursona kind of way, so I picked the thing up.

This turned out to be a mistake.

I never caught the thing moving, but I swear it would whisper to me at night from my bedside table. It kept telling me to find the "lost scepter of Ta," whatever that meant. And one morning, this t-shirt showed up in my drawer. I'd never seen it before. It said "GEEDIS LOVES YOU" on it, but somehow it felt like a threat.

A week later, my alarm went off in the middle of the night. I looked at the time, but the clock must have been broken, because it was 3:71 a.m. As my eyes adjusted to the dim, I realized that I wasn't where

I had been when I went to sleep. Someone had moved my bed to the middle of a forest.

There was a low growling sound coming from the trees.

I stepped onto the forest floor, my footsteps muffled by a soft layer of decay. "Hello?" I said — stupidly, stupidly, because something spoke back. But I don't remember what it said. I only remember a sudden, harsh-toned yelling, and then I woke up. 7:00 a.m. When I rolled over, however, I found a mess of pine needles in the bed.

'Every night, Geedis would whisper to me to sleep, and every night, I would creep a little farther into the dark forest.'

It went on for weeks. Every night, Geedis would whisper to me to sleep, and every night, I would creep a little farther into the dark forest. But the things I saw in the forest haunted me, and I tried to get rid of Geedis. I tried dropping him on the ground on my way to class. I tried throwing him in the river. Finally, I threw him in the Jackson Court fireplace, lit the fire,

and shut the gate. But all the same, I returned to my room and found him sitting on my nightstand, perfectly intact. That night was the first and only time I ever heard Geedis whisper a threat, for all that I felt threatened by him already. I got the message.

"GEEDIS LOVES YOU"

Faced with everything, I decided the only thing I could do was to find the lost scepter of Ta. It seemed to me that the only way to make Geedis leave me alone was to do his bidding, whatever the consequences.

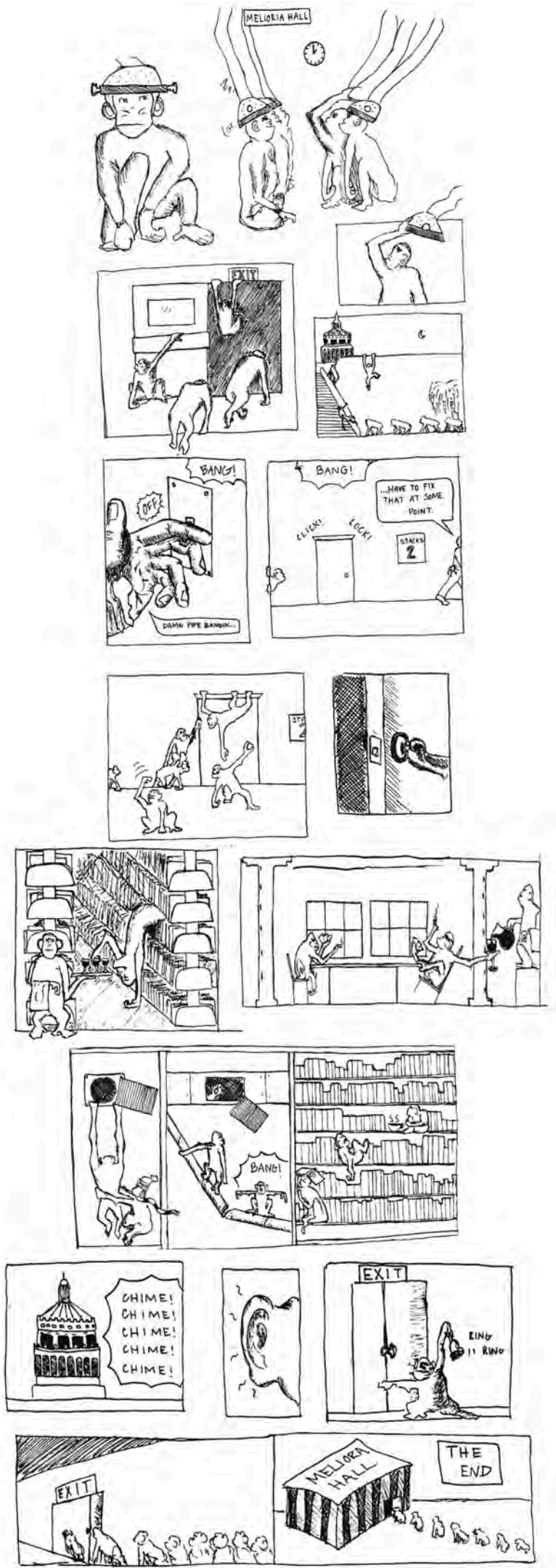
3:71 a.m. The next night when I awoke in the forest, I got to work. I met the man with the falcon's face, and stayed out of sight of the plant with five hundred eyes, as I had done so many nights before. I drank from the bird-bath of night and opened the temple of Shimra, where I dodged traps and crawled dungeons. At last I made it to the room where my most recent foray had ended....

Read more at www.campustimes.org.

Dillon is a member of the class of 2025.

Monkey Comic

BY MARY JERRED
CONTRIBUTING ILLUSTRATOR



Congratulations

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2023-2024 UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER
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Jacob Greenberg
Eli and Mildred Sokol Prize



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Award for Outstanding Fraternity and Sorority Leadership



Adrija Bhattacharjee
Michael Lowenstein Memorial Award



Jaclyn Dron
Simeon Cheatham Award



Hazel Leung
Andrew Fried Prize



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Giovanni Correa-Quinones
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Award for Campus Contributions (Junior)



Winifred Dorlean
Gwen M. Greene First Generation Senior Award



Xiaolong Liu
Transfer Student Award



Gautam Bajaj
The University Meliora Values Award



STEM Initiative
Award for Excellence in Creative Co-Sponsorship



Simulation Gaming Association
Award for Excellence in Programming



Anime Interest Floor
Outstanding Student Organization Award

SPORTS

Uglies' 2023 Season Ends On a Hopeful Note

NOVEMBER 5, 2023
BY MAYA BROSINICK
STAFF WRITER

UR's Men's Club Rugby team, the Uglies, made the playoffs this year for the first time in a while, coming off of a 2022 season where they did not play at all. Despite a season full of ups and downs, the team made it farther than anyone thought they would. Rugby may not be the most popular sport in the country, but its structure encompasses parts of many beloved ones. It can be described as a fusion between lacrosse and American football, just with no forward passing allowed. Rugby has a reputation of being one of the most violent sports played professionally, so who wants the win the most does count.

'Rugby has a reputation of being one of the most violent sports played professionally, so who wants the win the most does count.'

"It's quite an aggressive sport with few stoppages over the 120 minutes, so it's important to go into the game knowing that you're willing to sacrifice to win, believing that you can win and start the game with the aggression high," said senior exchange student Thomas Gaha. Gaha has played rugby all his life; he is from Australia, where rugby is one of the dominant sports. "Over the years I've grown to love it more and more. It really is the greatest sport," Gaha said. "I've played pretty much everything, but nothing compares to the feeling of winning a hard fought rugby match." The intensity of rugby often means that the team with more determination triumphs over the one with perhaps more skill, and that is what powered the Uglies into their playoff berth. "Favorite moment of the season would be our comeback win against Niagara," Gaha shared. "We were a couple tries down and we managed to dig in and get

back ahead." Injuries and yellow cards led to the Uglies playing on the back foot — for example, in a Sept. 16 game against Niagara University where they ended up with three fewer players than their opponents, yet they still managed to claim a victory. But it wasn't just the determination of the players; the team's successes are in large part due to the commitment of coach Shahzoda Nasimjonova. "Last year we didn't have a rugby team," Gaha said. "The team only exists this semester because she stepped up to organize and coach it all. She has really helped develop everyone in the team and been a great friend, coach, mentor, and source of inspiration." Unfortunately, the Uglies were knocked out of the playoffs after a hard fought match against Ithaca, but the team held their own all season against teams with deeper reserves and more funding. Looking forward to next year, the current makeup of the team gives them plenty of time to build on their successes. "As the team is so freshman heavy, we are in a great position to build the program over spring and come back even stronger next year in the fall," Gaha said. "I can't imagine how good some of our players will be by the time they are seniors."

"We are in a great position to build the program over spring and come back even stronger next year in the fall."

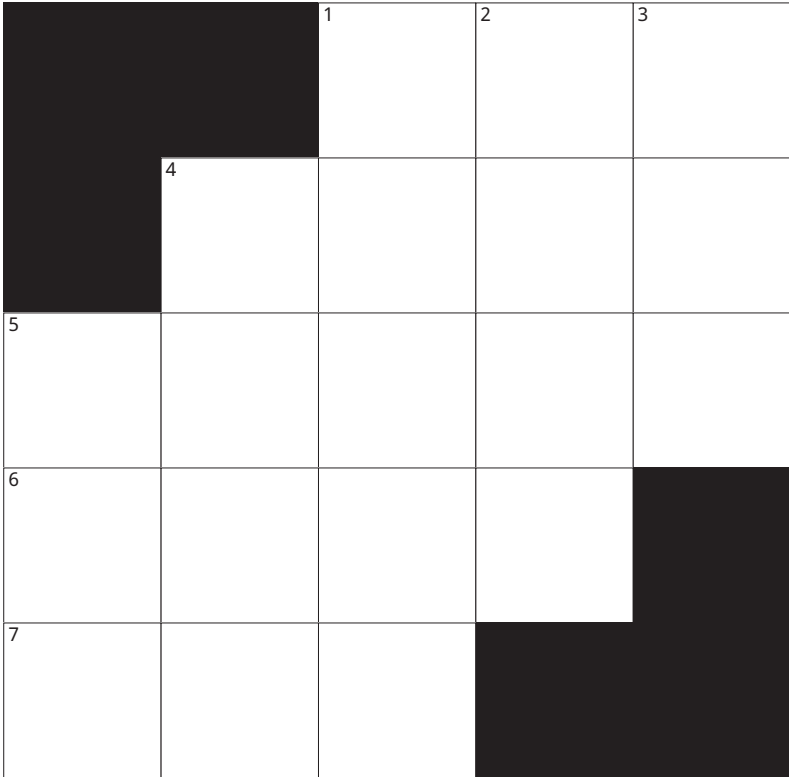
The Uglies are going to keep up the determination that led to their wins this season. That combined with more experience will make them a formidable opponent to face next year. For more information on the team and updates on their season, you can find them on Instagram @uofrm-ensrugby. *Brosnick is a member of the Class of 2027.*



Commencement Mini Crossword

BY CALEB OSHINKSY
STAFF PUZZLER

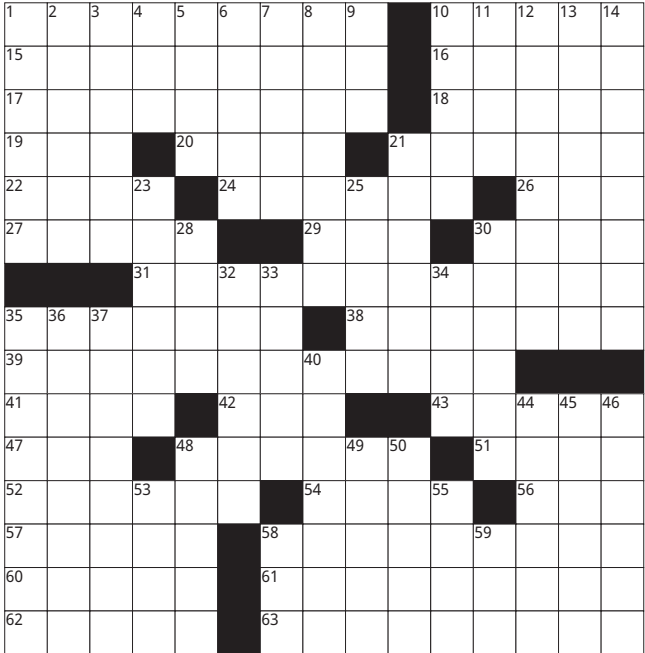
- ACROSS**
- 1 "___ me up bro"
 - 4 Credit rating agency for new adults to worry about
 - 5 Disease dominating alums' first few years
 - 6 (Most of) c.o. 2024, now
 - 7 DMS, on MSN
- DOWN**
- 1 Prima donnas
 - 2 Trip provider?
 - 3 Group of dolphins
 - 4 Item to fill out for the delightful Doctor Chatbot
 - 5 Special FX technology



BY CALEB OSHINKSY
STAFF PUZZLER

Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Weather predictions
 - 10 Formal and fancy tie
 - 15 Pavarotti, for one
 - 16 Keaton of "Annie Hall"
 - 17 Authoritative, retaliatory acts
 - 18 The sun, in Spain
 - 19 Suffix with ranch
 - 20 Astronaut Armstrong
 - 21 Bueller's girlfriend, whose name sounds like our performing arts center
 - 22 Deep cut
 - 24 Sibelius's "Valse ___"
 - 26 Ariz. neighbor
 - 27 Prefix with -porosis
 - 29 Not, to a Scot
 - 30 E. ___ bacteria
 - 31 Renowned traditional English folk tune
 - 35 One-man band, e.g.
 - 38 Topping found in Pizza Pi, perchance
 - 39 Ones who often justify in front of juries
 - 41 Band homophonically named for a rodent
 - 42 ♪ "A long, long, time ___" ♪
 - 43 Standouts, in southern England
 - 47 Point of no return?
 - 48 ___ Nevada
 - 51 Perched on
 - 52 Coddled kitty, e.g.
 - 54 Fraternity party purchases
 - 56 Tint
 - 57 Flannel pattern
 - 58 Obey Hooke's law, harmonically
 - 60 "Alt" country rocker Steve
 - 61 Given a yellow card, say
 - 62 Clothesline alternative
 - 63 Like some evening gowns, unlike 35D
- DOWN**
- 1 Do without
 - 2 Wagner works
 - 3 Something shared more than once, on social media
 - 4 "To ___ is human, but to persist (in the mistake) is diabolical"
 - 5 Abel's brother
 - 6 A valuable thing, like property
 - 7 Step in a flight
 - 8 Capital of Estonia (as of 1918)
 - 9 12th graders: Abbr.
 - 10 "Skyfall" singer
 - 11 Missile housing
 - 12 Eponymous Italian affair artist and bad boy
 - 13 Words to describe a flamingo
 - 14 Air live
 - 21 Inscribed stone markers
 - 23 Billy
 - 25 Full of attitude
 - 28 Like a spoken exam
 - 30 Big name in small planes
 - 32 Cream-filled pastry
 - 33 French floor
 - 34 Capital of Germany (as of 1999)
 - 35 Like someone short on dough, Unlike 63A
 - 36 Prophetic
 - 37 Bookish
 - 40 Toils over
 - 44 Natural gas C2H6
 - 45 Paths
 - 46 Risks a ticket
 - 48 Passover feast
 - 49 Happen again
 - 50 Anxious aggravation
 - 53 Tick off
 - 55 Freudian ___
 - 58 Original characters, abbr.
 - 59 Texter's guffaw



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