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Eastman Museum Staff Want To Become Union Workers, Vote Date Set

BY TEDDY ALMOND
NEWS EDITOR

Rochester's George Eastman Museum employees have been trying to unionize over the last few weeks amid concerns over turnover and need for better working conditions. Now, they have a date set to vote on whether or not to go through with this project.

The Eastman Museum is one of the world's oldest photography museums and features the estate of George Eastman, the founder of the Eastman Kodak Company.



The main entrance to the George Eastman Museum on East Avenue.
TEDDY ALMOND/NEWS EDITOR

The Museum, which employs roughly 100 staff, filed with the national labor union, Workers United, to unionize.

The Museum, which employs roughly 100 staff, filed with the national labor union, Workers United, to unionize. Members have set Oct. 2 as their election date to vote on

whether to go through with the union.

Vivian Rivers, the museum's community and volunteer liaison, explained that high staff turnover, low pay, a need to work towards a harassment-free workplace, and lack of transparency from the institute's leadership have all contributed to worker dissatisfaction.

"This really has been years in the process," Vivian Rivers, an employee of the Museum said. "I want to make my career at the George Eastman

Museum, and I see a union making that a sustainable option for myself."

Rivers also explained that, by having a union, employees will be able to "have a voice at the table for policies that will concern the staff, the community internally, and the community externally."

According to Rivers, the Museum has been resistant to unionization and has hired a third-party "union buster," the Government Resources

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Inside Rochester's Laser Lab: Home to The World's Largest Academic Laser

BY SHLOKA KARI
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The University of Rochester is home to more than a world-renowned music school and premier programs in optics and research. Just a short drive away from River Campus is the world's largest academic laser. That's right, the Laboratory for Laser Energetics (LLE) here at URochester is home to the OMEGA Laser System. This year, the LLE received a record \$111 million in funding, the largest annual funding in its history. This funding will allow the lab to significantly modernize its operations and extend its lifespan, ensuring it remains operational and reliable into the 2040s. Additionally, the LLE received \$13.7 million to enter the final design phase for the U.S. National Science Foundation Optical Parametric Amplifier Line (NSF OPAL), to make it an even more powerful academic laser facility.

Sophomore Sonia Eddolls, who is currently conducting research on upcoming experiments planned for the NSF OPAL laser facility, shared that a notable feature of the laser is its size.

"The OMEGA laser system at the LLE is the size of a football field," she said. This size allows the laser to contain the 60 beams it directs toward a tiny target to create the extreme conditions needed for experiments.

Eddolls is currently working on validating a model for stimulated photon-photon scattering. Understanding how photons interact with one another could help scientists investigate fundamental questions about light and quantum electrodynamics, expanding our understanding of how light behaves under extreme conditions.

However, the LLE's importance extends beyond

the experiments themselves. "The LLE is an academic facility, which distinguishes it from national labs," Eddolls explained. Unlike facilities where research is primarily conducted by established scientists, the LLE provides students with opportunities to participate directly in large-scale scientific research. She compared URochester's OMEGA system to the National Ignition Facility (NIF) at Lawrence Livermore: "The NIF fires its laser once a day, but at the LLE, we fire the laser an average of 10 shots a day." She noted that this greater rate of shots gives students more experimental opportunities. "Students have way more opportunities to use the laser, which is so unique." For undergraduate and graduate students, this means contributing to experiments that attract researchers from across the world, while gaining experience with a technology unavailable at most universities.

Unlike facilities where research is primarily conducted by established scientists, the LLE provides students with opportunities to participate directly in large-scale scientific research.

The proposed NSF OPAL facility will further expand these opportunities. With a more powerful laser system, researchers can conduct new experiments and investigate questions that current facilities cannot fully address. For students like Eddolls, this means the chance to contribute to research still being developed, even before the facility is completed.

Kari is a member of the Class of 2029.

Fall SA Elections Welcome New Senators and Class Council Members Amid Declining Voter Participation

BY YENAH PARK
NEWS EDITOR

This fall's student government elections brought a new group of senators into office, while also highlighting broader questions about student participation in campus politics.

A total of 391 students voted in this round of elections, marking both a decrease from the 412 votes last fall and a record low in a fall election since at least 2022, according to election data provided by Fall Elections Coordinator and junior Angelo Romero.

The results follow a broader decline in participation across recent Students' As-

sociation Government (SA) elections. While 790 students voted in Fall 2023, that number fell continuously each year, reaching 391 this semester. Spring elections have experienced a similar trend, falling from 1,326 voters in Spring 2022 to 577 in Spring 2026.

The results follow a broader decline in participation across recent Students' Association Government (SA) elections.

This fall's election was also largely driven by first-year students. Of the 391 students who voted, 327 (83.6%) were

members of the Class of 2030. Comparatively, 29 (7.4%) were members of the Class of 2029, 15 (3.8%) were members of the Class of 2028, and 20 (5.1%) were members of the Class of 2027.

According to Romero, at URochester, fall elections focus primarily on first-year Class Council and Senate seats. While first-years vote for their own Class Council representatives, students of any class year can vote for any Senate candidate. Candidates who do not secure one of the four Senate seats designated for their class are then considered for at-large seats based on the same election results.

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From Eastman Student to Tenured Professor — Dr. Cory Hunter's Rochester Journey

BY HANNAH SMITH
FEATURES EDITOR

BY JENNA AHN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

When Cory Hunter was an undergraduate at the Eastman School of Music, he remembers seeing hardly any faculty of color and having no classes with professors of color himself. Two decades later, when he received an offer to return to the University, Hunter was given the opportunity to become the kind of professor he once rarely saw.

Now, with a dual appointment as Associate Professor of Music in the Arthur Satz Department of Music and Associate Professor of Musicology at Eastman, Hunter has received tenure, marking a new chapter in a career shaped by gospel music, scholarship, ministry, and teaching.

Hunter has received tenure, marking a new chapter in a career shaped by gospel music, scholarship, ministry, and teaching.

Hunter grew up in a Black church singing gospel music, which he described as something “near and dear” to him. His passion for voice led him to the Eastman School of Music, where he received his

Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance in 2006. Hunter later answered a call to ministry, studying at Yale Divinity School and the Yale Institute of Sacred Music before becoming an ordained minister.

It was at Yale that Hunter began seriously considering pursuing a Ph.D., and noticed a gap between the gospel music he had known throughout his life and its presence in academic scholarship. He went on to pursue his Doctorate in Musicology at Princeton University, where gospel music became a focus of his scholarship.

Since gospel music had been such an instrumental part of his upbringing, Hunter saw an opportunity to contribute to its study.

“This is an area where I can make a contribution,” Hunter said. “I’ve grown up listening to this music, and I can make an impact.”

A central goal of Hunter’s scholarship is demonstrating that gospel music is worthy of the same rigorous intellectual inquiry that is applied to other musical traditions. He described himself as a kind of “middle man” who could help translate the depth of gospel music into academic discourse.

After receiving his Ph.D. in 2016, Hunter held postdoctoral fellowships at the University of Virginia and Brandeis University before

returning to Rochester as a postdoctoral fellow at the Frederick Douglass Institute for African and African American Studies. In 2019, he moved into his dual-appointment tenure-track faculty position in the Arthur Satz Department of Music.

Looking back on his time as a student at Eastman, “It’s good to be back. It’s a familiar place,” Hunter said.

When asked about his current experience as a professor at Rochester, Hunter immediately broke into a smile: “I’m not trying to flatter you, but [URochester] students are by far the best I’ve ever taught,” he said.

Returning to Rochester also gave Hunter an opportunity to give back to a community that had shaped him. Having experienced a lack of faculty representation himself as an Eastman student, Hunter recognized what his presence could mean for students of color.

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“I knew I could be present and visible for students of color coming along,” Hunter said.

That sense of purpose extends into the classroom. Hunter approaches music intersectionally, encouraging students to consider not only how music sounds, but what it can reveal about race, gender, sexuality, class, and the social and political environments in which it is created.

“Students come to my class not realizing you can analyze music from a social [and] political, race [and] class perspective,” Hunter said. “I teach in an intersectional manner.”

His scholarship directly informs that approach. In studying genres such as gospel and blues, Hunter considers questions ranging from Black women’s agency to expressions of gender and sexuality within music. For Hunter, these questions allow students to look beyond the notes themselves and examine the cultural forces surrounding them.

“That’s how my scholarship and my teaching overlap,” he said.

And for Hunter, the reward comes when that way of thinking begins to resonate with a student.

“The reward I get from teaching is when I see that lightbulb moment and see

that I have impacted how a student thinks about a particular issue,” Hunter said.

After years spent working toward tenure, Hunter described reaching the milestone as both fulfilling and a relief.

“You work for decades to get to this point. It lets you know personally and professionally that your colleagues value the work you’ve done.”

For Hunter, that recognition goes beyond his scholarship. He said receiving tenure reassured him that his colleagues value his teaching, his presence in the department, and the changes he has helped bring about during his time at URochester.

Professionally, tenure also lifts some of the pressure that comes with working toward the milestone.

“You don’t have that time clock on you breathing down your neck. I can just breathe a little bit.”

That breathing room has given Hunter an opportunity to consider not only what he wants to accomplish next, but how he wants to spend his time as a scholar. Rather than constantly working toward the demands of tenure, he can now think more deliberately about how he wants to prioritize teaching, research, ministry, and other parts of his life.

“It’s more about what I want to do than what the institution wants me to do,” Hunter said.

For him, that freedom is especially meaningful because academia represents only one part of his life. Alongside his work as a professor and scholar, Hunter is a minister and musician — roles that have continued to intersect throughout his career.

“Honestly, when you’re pre-tenure, there’s not much of a balance,” Hunter said.

Working toward tenure taught him to become intentional about saying no, even when doing so meant disappointing people in either academia or his church community. Rather than trying to pursue everything at once, Hunter said he has learned to prioritize different parts of his life during different seasons.

Although he has not had as much time for performance in recent years, music remains part of his daily life. He continues to vocalize and has begun devoting more attention to playing piano by ear. He also continues to preach, bringing the skills and knowledge he has developed as a scholar into his ministry.

For Hunter, academia and ministry are not separate pursuits. His research informs his teaching and preaching, while his upbringing in the Black church and lifelong relationship with gospel music continue to shape the questions he explores as a scholar.

“Being an academic and a minister go very, very well together, actually,” Hunter said.

With the tenure process behind him, Hunter is already thinking about what he wants to do with that newfound freedom.

He has been using his time to work on his current project called “Spiritual Realness in Black Gospel Music Discourse and Practice,” which, according to his University biography, provides “a theoretical framework for studying how Black gospel artists construct realness.”

Alongside this endeavor, Hunter hopes to develop new courses that would give URochester students additional ways to explore music within its cultural and social contexts. Among the possibilities he is considering are courses on hip-hop, jazz, and blues — ideas he said he had little time to develop while meeting the demands of tenure.

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Beyond the classroom, Hunter is already considering publishing a second book centered on race and gospel music, continuing the scholarly work that began with the music he grew up hearing in the Black church.

For Hunter, then, tenure represents less of an endpoint than an opportunity to decide what comes next. After years spent balancing the expectations of academia with teaching, ministry, and music, he now has more freedom to determine how those parts of his life fit together — and where they might take him next.

Smith is a member of the Class of 2027.

Han is a member of the Class of 2028.



Headshot of Dr. Cory Hunter. COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

iGEM’s V.E.R.D.A.N.T. Engineers Bacteria as an Environmentally Friendly Pesticide Alternative

BY MANGO NORENBURG
COLUMNIST

One of the most prominent causes of environmental pollution is the use of pesticides. Commercial pesticides, especially, are often made from harmful chemicals that degrade natural habitats. Since insect pests are developing resistance to these pesticides at a faster rate, pesticide use has increased, further harming the natural world. URochester undergraduate students in the International Genetically Engineered Machine (iGEM) program have been working to find and develop a solution to this problem.

iGEM was originally founded in 2003 by scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). They wanted to build biological systems from the DNA of living things that serve different purposes by applying techniques from engineering. It then began to spread across the world as a platform in synthetic biology, a field which merges biology with engineering.

[Meyer] became fascinated with the way scientists can design DNA and bacteria for different purposes.

URochester Biology professor Anne Meyer, the faculty mentor for URochester’s iGEM, has been involved with iGEM and synthetic biology since 2012. When she first heard about this field while working at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, she became fascinated with the way scientists can design DNA and bacteria for different purposes.

“Synthetic biology is an interesting field that kind of marries bioengineering with biology,” she said. “It’s so unusual for undergraduates to have the chance to choose their own research topic from scratch ... [The students will] think about what are interesting new biological approaches that could be interesting views. What are real-world problems that could be targeted by DNA engineering?”

“What are real-world problems that could be targeted by DNA engineering?”

This year’s iGEM project, V.E.R.D.A.N.T., which stands for Vip3A (a protein with insecticidal properties) Engineered Response for Defense Against Natural Threats, is centered around agriculture.

A group of 15 undergraduates have been divided into different teams that each focus on a specific aspect of the project, such as wet lab (working with chemicals and other biological agents), logic and concepts, hardware, and press release. Science Manager Gaven Giauque and Team Lead Norah DeMayo, both juniors, described the science behind their pesticide, made from bacteria, and how it is more effective than traditional pesticides and helps the environment.

This pesticide reduces the need for frequent commercial pesticide applications.

“Plants naturally produce this signal whenever they are threatened, and this can be uptaken by different organisms, [and] it can be converted to its active form, salicylic acid, which can then induce gene expression to have our bacteria fight against the pest,” Giauque explained. “Our project is trying to respond to natural plant stress signals that they produce whenever they are attacked by these pests and make the pesticide then and there, so it only kills the pests whenever there is an active threat.”

DeMayo emphasized how this pesticide reduces the need for frequent commercial pesticide applications. “When [pesticides] are sprayed on plants all the time, insects can develop resistance really easily because the stress is so high that they’re really forced to, but with ours, we only wanted to respond to the plant stress signal [and] only produce when it’s needed. And that would make it so the insects are against less stress and they’ll develop resistance more slowly, and that’ll hopefully make our pesticide more effective.”

Junior Isla Ablin echoed Giauque’s and DeMayo’s theories, saying, “The whole idea is to make it so that you wouldn’t have to use it as a pesticide.”

To join iGEM, students are required to apply for the program during the spring semester and register for the course BIOL

228A/B, which takes place over two semesters, including the summer between that fall and spring. Once they are enrolled, team members brainstorm ideas for the calendar year’s project while performing early experimentation during the summer. This fall semester, the various team members, each in different groups, have been hard at work with different tasks such as running tests on the effectiveness of their pesticide, building the hardware to apply the pesticide, and generating publicity.

“The various team members ... have been hard at work with different tasks such as running tests on the effectiveness of their pesticide, building the hardware to apply the pesticide, and generating publicity.”

Hardware Manager and sophomore Sophia Fietkiewicz discussed how her department had been working on building a drone to apply the pesticide, spraying it using technology similar to most humidifiers. She mentioned that her team had been reaching out to local farmers in Monroe County to let them know that their team is building alternative devices that meet the needs of farmers on smaller farms.

“We heard from some smaller farms that they wouldn’t necessarily use a drone to cover their field. Some of the local farmers said they used backpack sprayers currently and they requested a hand-held sprayer,” Fietkiewicz said.

As Press Relations Manager, Ablin has been working to gain publicity for iGEM’s project, communicating with other stakeholders and the general public. She was in charge of creating and maintaining iGEM’s social media feed and communicating with different media outlets to spread the word.

“I’ll sit down with [newspapers] or I’ll write my own articles and then those get put into sites that get picked up by people. We’ve previously gotten interviews with different news sites. We published in all the newspapers for everybody’s home[town],” Ablin said. “A lot of it’s just, as of right now, making sure people know what our pro-

ject is and people see it and they’re interested in it.”

The undergraduate researchers have been preparing for upcoming milestones of V.E.R.D.A.N.T.

While diving deeper into final routine testing of each sector of the project, the undergraduate researchers have been preparing for upcoming milestones of V.E.R.D.A.N.T. These milestones are WikiFreeze at the end of October, where they publish the finalized version of the website which describes the project itself and the team, and the competition all iGEM teams enter in November, called the iGEM Jambo-ree. Members, including Giauque, illustrated how recently, work has been stressful due to these important events along with students’ outside commitments.

These milestones are WikiFreeze at the end of October ... and the competition all iGEM teams enter in November, called the iGEM Jambo-ree.

“I think this is an incredibly high-stress time, not just for the project, but we had the first midterms coming up for our classes,” Giauque described. “The biggest thing going forward is just ensuring that our mental health is proper. We are naturally giving effort to the project and all its different facets.”

Despite the stress of wrapping up the final phases of the project and preparing for the competition, he and DeMayo acknowledged that the challenges of working in iGEM have been worthwhile. DeMayo emphasized that team members have the opportunity to bond with each other as they work together and look back at their accomplishments.

“I hope that we can all just take a step up and look at the big picture and see what we’ve accomplished over the past year.”

“Beyond the science aspect of [iGEM], we have a very fun, collaborative, outgoing team. We’ve had

a lot of social events with everyone ... Having that social connection with everybody, making new friends and expanding my broader connections at [URochester] has been really impactful,” DeMayo reflected. “Dr. Meyer once said to us that iGEM is a very challenging experience, but it’s worthwhile. So I hope that we can all just take a step up and look at the big picture and see what we’ve accomplished over the past year.”

iGEM has allowed this group of undergraduate students to pursue this unique venture by applying their knowledge of different STEM fields in innovative projects that could change the fields of STEM and the broader world.

iGEM’s V.E.R.D.A.N.T. team will continue to work hard on completing the project in the lab and prepare for the iGEM Jambo-ree this November. iGEM has allowed this group of undergraduate students to pursue this unique venture by applying their knowledge of different STEM fields in innovative projects that could change the fields of STEM and the broader world.

“It’s not like any other lab experience you’d get at [URochester]. You are in charge of your own experiments.”

“It’s not like any other lab experience you’d get at [URochester],” DeMayo said. “You are in charge of your own experiments. And if you’re interested in any kind of biology, especially genetics or synthetic biology, it’s a great experience.”

Norenberg is a member of the Class of 2028.

UNION FROM PAGE 1
Consultants of America, to quash their efforts.

While some employees are eager to proceed with unionization, Bruce Barnes, the Director of the Museum, is reluctant to move forward.

According to a statement published on the George Eastman Museum’s Workers United Instagram page, employees called upon museum leadership to end ties with this organization and instead use the money they are paying them toward employee resources.

“We do not believe a union makes sense for the museum’s employees, but we support their right to form one if that is their choice.”

“We do not believe a union makes sense for the

museum’s employees, but we support their right to form one if that is their choice,” Barnes said in an email to the *Campus Times*. “Of course, we will respect the vote [on Oct. 2] of our employees and will bargain in good faith with the union, if it is approved.”

Despite not believing a union makes sense, Barnes does not characterize Government Resources Consultants of America as a “union buster.” He said instead that the consultants are only intended to help employees form their decision.

“The museum and its representatives strictly follow the rules of the National Labor Relations Board,” he said. “Our goal is to enable all of our employees to make free and informed choices of whether to vote ‘yes’ or ‘no’ on the formation of the proposed bargaining unit.”

Though high turnover is an issue, Barnes said it is not one unique to the museum. Furthermore, employees at museums are generally paid less than they would be paid in the for-profit sector, so concerns about low pay are not out of the ordinary either.

“That said, we have already been acutely focused on these issues and, over the past several years, the compensation of our employees who would be represented by the union has increased at a rate higher than the rate of inflation in the Consumer Price Index,” Barnes continued.

“Whatever they decide, we know that they are the utmost professionals, who only have the museum’s best interests at heart.”



The façade of the George Eastman mansion located on East Avenue. TEDDY ALMOND/NEWSEDITOR

Barnes also explained the difficulty in navigating the complex situation, admitting that, “Certainly, we have not been perfect, and we could never promise to be. We hope that the employees will continue to trust us to operate without the interference of a third party, but whatever they decide, we know that they are the utmost professionals, who only have the

museum’s best interests at heart.”

Almond is a member of the Class of 2028.

ELECTION FROM PAGE 1

“I want people to know that elections are happening,” Romero said in regards to low student participation. “I want candidates to have time to be able to campaign. I want more people to run for campaigns.”

“Some people didn’t know voting was happening. Some people don’t care about elections. Some people don’t know what the Students’ Association is.”

Part of the challenge, according to Romero, goes beyond getting students to the ballot box. “Some people didn’t know voting was happening. Some people don’t care about elections. Some people don’t know what the Students’ Association is,” Romero said. He also noted that some students confuse SA with Class Council, which

le others may not realize that they can vote for Senate candidates outside of their own class year.

Additionally, the depression in voting may have come from students not seeing a representative from their own class on the ballot, or feeling removed from SA altogether. Romero emphasized, however, that the decisions made through campus elections still have the ability to affect students.

He hopes for all members of this community, regardless of citizenship status or nationality, to learn that “no matter where you’re from ... every election matters.”

He hopes for all members of this community, regardless of citizenship status or nationality, to learn that “no matter where you’re from ... every election matters.”

For Romero, that makes increasing awareness of SA just as important as increasing the number of students who vote. His statement also echoes concerns raised by newly elected senators about communication between students and the institutions meant to serve them.

“One of the things I noticed upon coming to [U]Rochester was the amount of confusion students, including myself, seemed to have when they first arrived on campus,” first-year Joanna Lee, a newly elected senator, expressed.

When asked about what kinds of issues on campus she hopes to improve, she voiced her concern about the accessibility of URochester information and resources to students. “While [U]Rochester resources are great, they could be updated to be more easily accessible for students, and allow them to not feel as lost or confused.” Part of addressing that disconnect, she explained, means increa-

sing awareness of resources that are already available to students.

“I want to make sure that [U]Rochester can be made more easily accessible, updated, and organized for all so that the students’ lives can be made easier.”

He sees the Senate as a “mechanism to bring some of those passions to light and start making real change on behalf of [his] community.”

Senator and first-year Jack Catten conveyed similar concerns, saying that during the recent elections week the “miscommunication between our school’s institutions and the student body couldn’t be more prevalent.”

He hopes to address these issues through his position and protect the passions he’s observed within students during his first few weeks. He sees the Senate as a “mechanism to bring

some of those passions to light and start making real change on behalf of [his] community.”

In the future, Romero hopes to increase advertising, put up more flyers around campus, and hold events where students can meet candidates before voting.

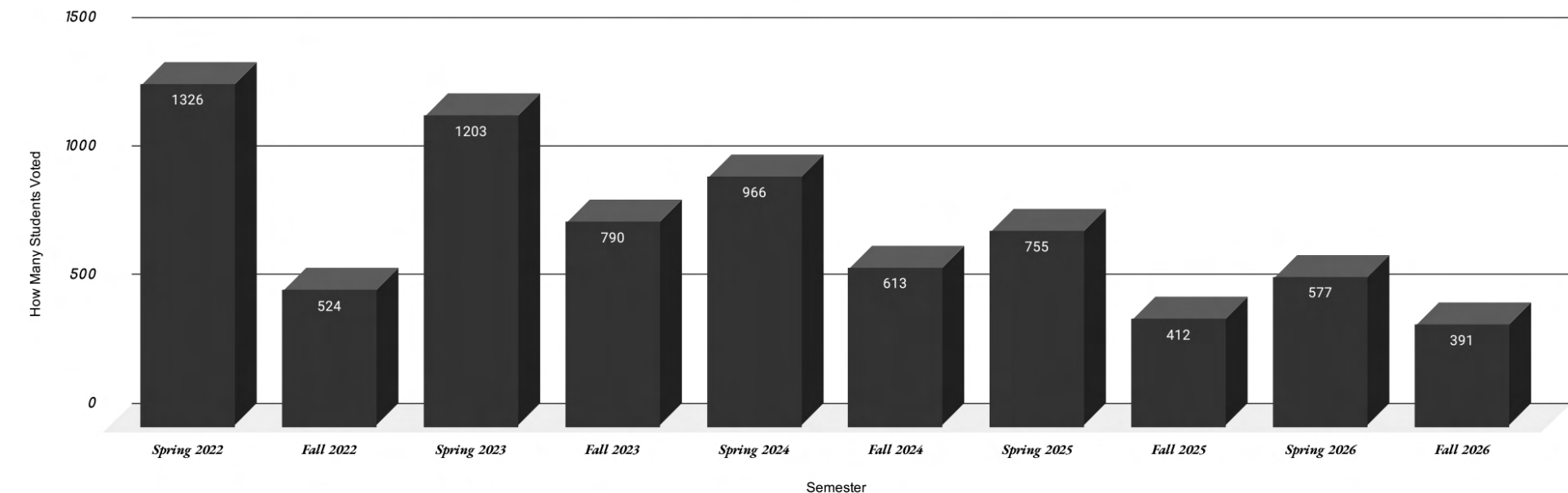
Whether through running for office, learning who represents them, or simply casting a ballot, he hopes more students will see themselves as having a place in that process.

He hopes more students will see themselves as having a place in that process.

“I want to see students engaged,” Romero said. “That’s the goal.”

Park is a member of the Class of 2027.

How Many Students Voted Each Semester



Graph of students who voted in Students' Association (SA) elections from Spring 2022 to Fall 2026, provided by SA. COURTESY OF ANGELOROMERO

COMMUNITY

Birder’s Log: Spotlight on Migration

BY MANGO NORENBURG
COLUMNIST

Fall has officially arrived this September, which means countless highlights to look forward to: the crisp weather, the colorful fall foliage, all things pumpkin- or apple-themed, the holidays, and sweaters, to name a few. But one thing that we birders look forward to is the fall migration season. Starting as early as August, with its peak activity throughout September–October in the northeastern U.S., billions of birds leave their northern breeding grounds and journey toward tropical zones for the winter. This article is about migration in many species of birds and how humans can mitigate the harms caused to this journey south by climate change.

In a broad sense, migration is the general term for the regular and usually seasonal movement of parts of or all animal populations.

Species include but are not limited to insects such as butterflies, fishes such as salmon, mammals such as caribou and whales, and multiple species of birds. For birds, the cycle of migration occurs annually and is linked with the changing of the seasons as well as the abundance of food.

In the summer, migratory birds reach their northern breeding grounds, singing, foraging, nesting, and raising their young. Over the course of the summer, food availability begins to shift as they prepare for their journeys south. Their diets change as well from late summer to early fall: they eat foods rich in sugar and fat as a long-term energy source for their trips. By early winter, birds will have arrived in their wintering grounds, which are often tropical, but can sometimes be more subtropical or even temperate for some waterfowl and sparrow species. The climates are relatively mild and the habitats are rich in food sources with plenty of sugar and fat as well as shelter to avoid predators. Eventually spring begins to approach and the wintering birds become restless. They will begin to forage later in the day and gain enough weight to fly back up north to their breeding grounds, and the cycle begins anew.

Migration patterns can vary across different bird groups. However, the migration patterns remain similar, as birds change their environments from north to south due to seasonal changes in environmental conditions, plus the abundance of food sources.

Songbirds are notable examples of migratory bird groups. Songbirds such as the colorful and lively warblers breed in the northern forests and other temperate regions throughout the summer and travel thousands of miles to tropical zones during the winter. They can be as close as the Southern United States to as far as areas of the Caribbean, Central America, and South America.

Shorebirds are also a large, diverse group of birds with remarkably long migration journeys. As early as late March or April, different kinds of shorebirds from avocets to godwits and sandpipers to plovers fly nonstop to their breeding grounds in the Arctic Circle. After a short window for breeding season, they fly back down south to parts of the Southern U.S. or the Southern Hemisphere for winter.

Another diverse group of migratory birds worth learning about is waterfowl. Each species of duck has their own unique migratory patterns. Most duck species breed near the Arctic Circle or throughout Canada. Many especially settle in the Prairie Pothole Region in the prairie provinces of Canada and parts of the Midwestern U.S., a habitat characterized by wide grasslands with large pools of shallow water making up productive wetlands. In the winter, many dabblers (ducks that feed at or just below the surface) travel to temperate and subtropical parts of North America. For divers (ducks that dive or swim underwater), including sea ducks that breed in the Arctic, they only travel to temperate zones throughout the winter and are hardy enough to withstand the low temperatures of the Northern U.S.

Seabirds, especially terns, are no strangers to migration. The Arctic tern is the bird that holds the record of the longest migration route from the Arctic to the Antarctic, flying around a whopping 25,000 miles every year. The tiny hummingbirds can withstand traveling long distances, stopping in different places to sip nec-



MARISKELLY/ILLUSTRATIONSEDITOR

tar from flowers and feeders. Birds of prey, or raptors, such as hawks, falcons, and ospreys, stand out as they migrate during the day, while most birds migrate at night. While most woodpeckers in the Northern U.S. opt to stay in the same place year-round, the yellow-bellied sapsucker stands out for being the only woodpecker that migrates.

No matter what species or when and where they travel every fall and spring, migration is the way of life for many birds in North America. Migration is an important and rewarding part of their lifetimes, but it can also be a perilous journey, and it has become more perilous due to various factors from human impact.

Human impacts, such as excess development, deforestation, runoff from chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and habitat loss, affect migratory birds by also reducing the availability of food or shelter.

To start off, rising temperatures have interfered with when and how birds can start preparing for each journey. Birds rely on cues such as temperature, rainfall, length of day, and plant abundance. When winter shortens and spring arrives earlier than usual, it can cause food sources to become abundant earlier than what birds are used to; this ultimately affects how birds properly prepare for each migration. They may not be able to survive if they can't

keep up with these sudden changes.

Migratory birds rely on food sources such as insects, aquatic invertebrates, and the fruits and seeds from native plants. When these important sources of food and shelter are destroyed by deforestation and replaced with non-native plant species or when insects are harmed by pesticides, migratory birds will not be able to survive.

Another prominent factor that impacts the survival of migratory birds is collisions. Most birds migrate at night, relying on landmarks such as the moon and stars to guide them in the direction of their routes. When excess lights are switched on at night, the birds become disoriented and crash into the lit structures. During the day, these birds are also susceptible to strikes from untreated windows. To a bird, a window is not a barrier but an illusion of natural markers such as trees, reflected in the background. This confusion causes them to collide with the windows and die from their injuries.

Fortunately, there are plenty of actions that nature lovers of all backgrounds can take to help these birds travel safely to their destinations. Since most of the birds' travel occurs at night, turning off excess light sources can prevent the birds from crashing into the light sources. To reduce these collisions, outdoor light sources can be turned off, dimmed, or aimed closer to walking surfaces right after sundown. To prevent window collisions, another key solution is placing patterns on any untreated windows. When birds spot basic patterns such as

spaced-apart dots or even fancier, more colorful decals on these solid windows, they will not collide with them thinking they are another blockage in their routes and travel more safely.

Birds rely heavily on native plants for habitat, protection, and a source of food. Gardeners and plant enthusiasts can plant native plants as a food source for birds stopping in their hometowns during their migrations. Native plants provide shelter and protection from harsh weather or predators for songbirds. They are also a key food source, as they attract insects, which are the favored prey of birds like warblers and swallows, and provide other food sources such as fruits, seeds, and nectar specifically for hummingbirds. When summer turns to fall, seed-bearing plants such as thistles and coneflowers should be left as is without the tops pruned so birds such as goldfinches can eat the seeds to fuel up for migration.

Participating in citizen science helps keep track of migrating bird populations across different areas of the U.S. When bird lovers count and log their bird sightings in programs such as the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird or other programs such as iNaturalist, biologists and the general public can see the states of bird populations as they migrate and know when they need help.

With fall officially here, bird migration is one of the key events that we birders and nature lovers of all experience levels look forward to. No matter what type of bird, how far of a distance they travel, or when they kick off their journeys north and south, migration is one of the most important tasks to handle, as they travel far and wide when the seasons, environmental conditions, and food abundance change. Because bird migration has become increasingly riskier due to climate change and development, it is important that we do our part to help these magnificent creatures have a safe journey down south for this coming winter and ultimately, live full lives now and in the future.

Norenberg is a member of the Class of 2028.

OPINIONS

Why Do We Care About Fictional Aliens? The Evolution of Characters in Science Fiction

BY MILES MCCORTNEY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In science fiction — particularly the classics of the twentieth century — characters like Spock or Luke Skywalker are doubtlessly memorable, connected to well-known franchises, images, and nostalgic memories. However, in terms of the degree to which audiences can empathize and connect with emotionally complex characters, science fiction is sometimes thought to be lacking. As an author of science fiction, I sometimes see this judgment applied without a second thought to all science fiction appearing in a public, popular, or commercial light. Whether in high-budget epic films, novels from major publishers, or any media related to established franchises, science fiction characters seem to accrue a reputation as dry archetypes and set pieces to frame simple entertainment or parables about society.

There are many who would insist that this viewpoint is justified, yet also many who would come rushing to the genre's defense with a slew of examples to the contrary. Could both be right?

Even from a cursory glance, it's clear that characters and broader characterization in science fiction have evolved over time. "Dune" is one of the best examples of this evolution: it originally appeared in literature in 1965, and later was adapted for film in 1984, and again film trilogy in 2021–2026. The novels are typical examples of popular science fiction.

The original "Dune" book is very different from the newest films. Its time-jumps repeatedly hit the fast-forward button on developing relationships, while Paul, the main protagonist, ruminates on his visions of the future as much as he engages in emotionally meaningful bonds. But compared to the book's version of the main protagonist, the emotional bonds Paul (portrayed by Timothée Chalamet) forms with other characters seem much deeper in Villeneuve's "Dune" trilogy. In the original book, the two years from Paul and Chani's first meetings to the birth of their son breeze by in one chapter. In the newest films, the audience instead undergoes a much more realistic and character-focused romantic journey. While the films remain action-dominated, Chani (portrayed by Zendaya) enjoys prominent

and emotionally meaningful time on screen; Villeneuve populates her character with additional relationships and lines of dialogue that did not appear in the original.

Moreover, another franchise (primarily in film) hosts the most dramatic evolution: "Predator."

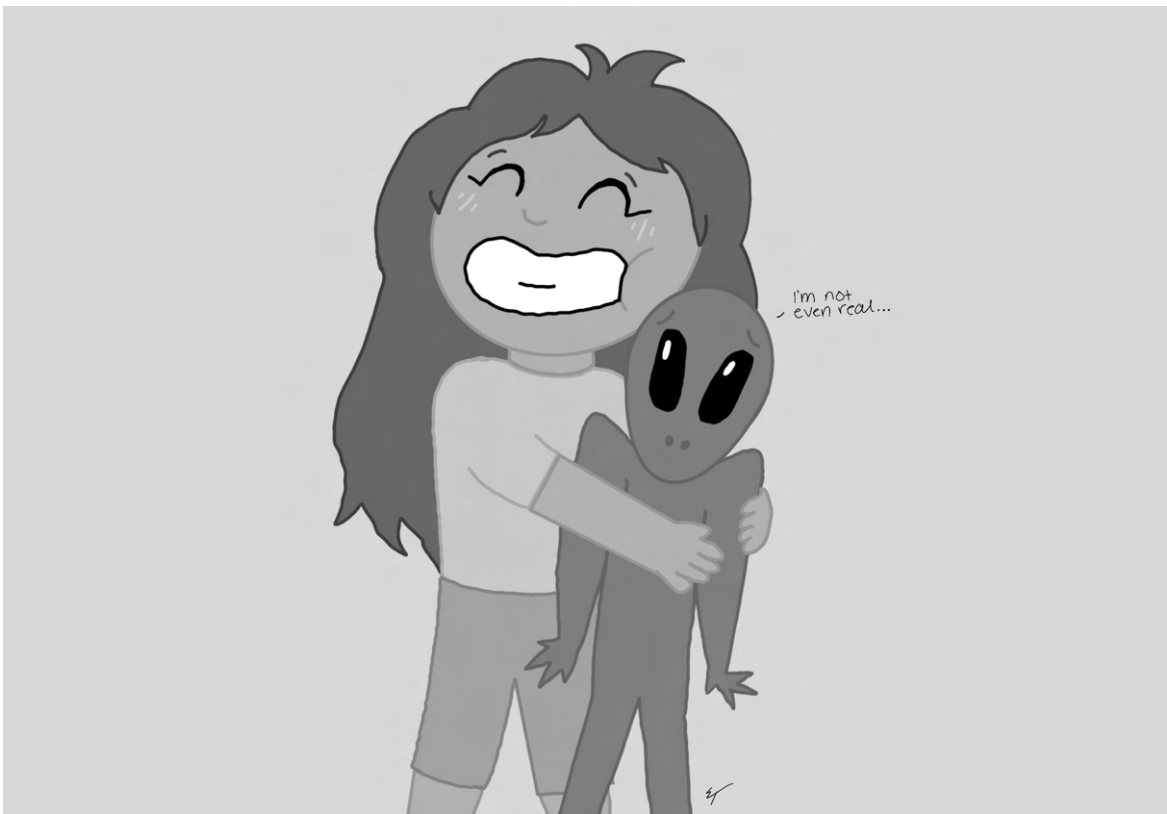
The original "Predator" film (1987), thick with action, leaves much to be desired character-wise: the main protagonists are little more than sweaty, muscle-flexing men shooting up the jungle while fighting an extraterrestrial threat.

But the most recent installment barely resembles the original. The film "Predator: Badlands" (2025) follows protagonist Dek — an underestimated "runt" of a "Yautja," the alien species also known as Predators. Dek does not resemble a human at all in the face, with spiked mandibles attached to his mouth and harsh reptilian features. All of Dek's dialogue is in the fictional Yautja language, subtitled for the benefit of human audience members. Moreover, there are no biological humans in the movie; the closest are human-looking corporate androids sent from Earth into space. And yet, Dek undergoes his family's rejection of him, witnesses his brother die, and eventually learns to find an unlikely family of his own. I would tend to agree with some of the reviews and opinions floating around: as something new and unexpected but with emotional cores to its characters, "Predator: Badlands" is among the best of the "Predator" franchise.

In fiction, storytellers ask audiences to invest their time, thoughts, and emotions in people who do not really exist. In exchange for this, the audience is promised various things: basic entertainment, emotional reactions, moral insight, or the empowerment of witnessing someone you can connect with grow and respond to the trials they face in life. Sometimes the exchange is worth it, revealing the story to be of high quality. Other times, it isn't. But science fiction of this kind encourages people to invest themselves not just in fictional humans, but fictional nonhumans. Unlike fiction such as "Watership Down," these nonhumans are not even familiar creatures, but something wholly invented.

This evolution of characters inspires many questions.

What about these fiction-



ELIANA THOMPSON/ILLUSTRATIONS EDITOR

al nonhumans makes them worth identifying with and investing compassion into? Is the difference between a fictional human and fictional alien negligible as both are ultimately not real?

Or is the difference between the alien Dek and the hypermasculine humans of "Predator" (and Paul, the colonial nobleman-protagonist of "Dune") that Dek stands

unfettered from pre-existing biases, being so fictional, so fantastical?

Or do more people simply interpret fictional nonhumans as metaphorical? Like Tolkien's three-foot-tall hobbit protagonists, could they represent how dreadful circumstances of war loom tall over everyday people?

Whether as storytellers, critics, or fans, these ques-

tions are worth considering. Perhaps, better understanding how and why we relate to fictional aliens can teach us something about doing the same for real humans.

McCortney is a member of the Class of 2028.

Campus Times

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CULTURE

On ‘Dealbreaker’ at the MAG



Patrons watch a show at one of the festival’s main tents last Monday, Sept. 21, night. **TEDDY ALMOND/NEWSEDITOR**

BY STACIE OKUNSERI
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I am smack-dab in the middle of my first semester here at URochester. Despite being extremely busy between classes, friends, clubs, and the occasional Starbucks run at Wilson Commons, I had something of a strange calling to attend Fringe Fest, an annual festival in Rochester that brings over 700 performances to over 40 venues through several days in late September.

Performed at Lynne Lovejoy Parlor in the Memorial Art Gallery, “Dealbreaker” by Lauren Kee is a one woman show about her experience dealing with the social stigma of contracting genital herpes. Kee is an up-and-coming Chicago-based storyteller but also a URochester alumna. Her story started at the age of 21, after learning that her first and last one-night stand resulted in a genital herpes diagnosis. Genital herpes, caused by HSV-1 or HSV-2, affects one in six people in the U.S. aged 14–49. Though outbreaks can be controlled through common antiviral medications, the stigma surrounding the diagnosis can make living with it difficult.

Despite 50–80% of U.S. adults already having oral herpes (either dormant or reactivated) and genital herpes affecting approximately 12% of U.S. adults,

herpes is still highly stigmatized. Test screening for herpes isn’t even included in standard STI panels for an assortment of reasons but in large part because you could very well already have it but just be asymptomatic.

After breaking off a long-term relationship and jumping back into the measureless dating pool six years after her diagnosis, Kee shared how she had to navigate rejection following the decisive dealbreaker that was the disclosure of her herpes diagnosis. At the turning point of the show, Kee described to the audience how she chose to reinvent herself in response to rejection. She attempted to get fit, get attractive, make friends, do hobbies — all to try to make up for her diagnosis. But it still was not enough, as after disclosing her diagnosis to men she dated including “Linkin Park guy”, a future physician, and a promising Hinge fling, they all called off the budding relationships in spite of whatever connection they might have had. These rejections were particularly upsetting to Kee, but they did have one upside: they led her to the beautiful, vast world of storytelling.

Chicago, where Kee lives, has a rich storytelling scene with many opportunities for her to vent her frustrations through stories. At a storytelling workshop, Kee

found herself sharing her diagnosis willingly, and her audience positively engaging and even asking questions with a genuine desire to learn. In a story, her diagnosis wasn’t a confession, or something she felt the need to apologize or make up for, it was a simple fact of life.

Kee ended the show by saying that she then decided to keep storytelling, and keep dating without putting on an act this time in the hopes of finding a genuine connection. Soon after, she met someone she really liked, and he really liked her too! Her diagnosis wasn’t a dealbreaker that time, as it should never have been. As Kee said during the show, “it’s okay to have dealbreakers, but it should be something that actually matters.”

Kee did eventually find love. I can vouch for her. Her husband was sitting right behind me during the performance. But, even though she eventually found her person, the stigma of herpes unjustly limited her dating pool.

After the show I asked Kee what we could do to lessen the stigma of herpes. She said that talking about herpes more openly would help break the negative stigma, and would positively impact everyone’s sexual health — especially on college campuses. Kee was exceedingly brave and expressive in her telling of “Dealbreaker” — the show requires a degree of vulnerability that’s incredibly difficult to manifest. She took her courage and has since told the story of “Dealbreaker” to sold out audiences at Den Theatre in Chicago and the Stonewall Inn in New York. She now is preparing to bring the show to Chicago for the Not Alone Anymore: Asian American Solo Show Festival on Oct. 17.

Okunseri is a member of the Class of 2030.

Inner Voices Answers

BY CALEB OSHINSKY STAFF PUZZLER
BY JULIEN DIAMOND CONTRIBUTING PUZZLER

S	L	E	S		S	P	A	N		S	T	U	V	G
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This crossword can be found on page 16.

Fall Favorites Answers

BY ELENA BACHMANN PUBLISHER
BY JO ANDERSON CONTRIBUTING PUZZLER

BY KATE STOUT
CULTURE EDITOR

N	R	O	C		S	M	E	H	T		S	T	S	E
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This crossword can be found on page 16.

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Fringe Fest’s DRAGMASTER Features Wigs, Riddles and More

BY MAYA BROSNIK
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As someone who has grown increasingly obsessed with “Taskmaster” since an episode first appeared in my YouTube recommendations about a year ago, I was expecting a lot when I sat down to witness Fringe Fest’s take on the show: “DRAGMASTER.”

For those unfamiliar with the incredible experience that is watching “Taskmaster,” I’ll give you a quick rundown. Each season features five comedians who complete a series of tasks administered by the Taskmaster’s Assistant before the show. These tasks can range from somewhat ordinary (for example, eating a watermelon as fast as you can) to immediately bizarre (make the most socks stand up). Montages of each task are then shown in-studio for the audience and the Taskmaster to see. The Taskmaster then awards five points to the most successful contestant and one point to the least, with the contestants in between being awarded the corresponding 2–4 points. The winner of each episode earns the prizes that the contestants bring in each episode, while the overall champion takes home a golden bust of the Taskmaster.

This rendition of the competition was hosted by “Dragmaster” Kyla Minx, and the role of the assistant, or as Minx called it, the “Dragmaster’s Bitch,” was played by Vivian Darling, who was also the creator of this production. The competition was split into two shows, each featuring competitors Gus JW, Lori Lippa, Jakarri Buckner, Queen Marie-Adelina, and Chintz McMahon.

The show opened, as all “Taskmaster” and “Taskmaster”-adjacent competitions do, with the prize task, where each competitor brings in a prize that fits the assigned category, in this case the most unintentionally gay item, to be awarded to the winner of the night. The Dragmaster was unimpressed with Buckner’s offering of a plunger, or Queen Marie-Adelina’s painting of her dog in regency clothing, but agreed that McMahon’s crew magazine featured enough shirtless shots to earn the five points.

The show then moved into the first pre-recorded task of the night, which instructed contestants to paint the most accurate picture of the Dragmaster using only their lips. Minx then had to guess who made each painting, and each accurate guess earned the competitor a bonus point. Each contestant received multi-colored lipstick to



“DRAGMASTER” contestants prepare to complete the live task. MAYA BROSNIK/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

work with, and four out of the five chose to paint their lips and use them to draw. Buckner, however, put the lipstick brush between his lips, finding a loophole that allowed him to draw a much more accurate representation, and earn the full five points. For an added twist, Darling turned off the lights halfway through each contestant’s time. Buckner, once again thinking outside the box, was the only contestant to think to turn the lights back on.

The second task was to tease a wig with only the items on the table, which ranged from a fork to a deflated balloon — tallest wig wins. In classic “Taskmaster” tradition, McMahon was assigned an extra solo task, which was to smile at the camera more enthusiastically every 30 seconds. In the process of completing the task, multiple contestants found a slip of paper with writing in Welsh inside the balloon. Despite that, Lippa was the only contestant to ask if Darling would translate the message, which she happily did, letting Lippa know that she had to look under the table. There she found helpful tools, such as a brush and hairspray. Further cementing her win, Lippa was the only one to remove the wig from the mannequin head and wear it, giving her a multiple foot advantage over her competition, and earning five points for her efforts. Once all the contestants’ attempts had been shown, Darling revealed, to uproarious laughter from the crowd, that beyond the clue in Welsh, she had written “under the table” on the front of the table, and in large lettering on the painting behind her.

The next, and final, pre-recorded task was the team task, which split the contestants

into a team of two and a team of three to decode and then solve a riddle without leaving their rooms. To make the uneven teams fair, Queen Marie-Adelina on the team of three only had to make her fellow contestants say “grapefruit” in order to earn points, rather than have materials to help decode the riddle. Unfortunately, as Darling shared before we saw the recording, Queen Marie-Adelina forgot about that assignment entirely.

Though it took the team of three an unimpressive 58 minutes to come up with the correct answer, the team of two took an hour and 22 minutes, a timestamp that was not helped by the fact that it took JW 32 minutes to discover the riddle that was on the table in front of him. Despite that, the Dragmaster awarded five points to the team of three, and a very generous four points to the team of two.

To round off the night and determine the victor, the contestants had to complete one final task live in front of the audience. Their assignment was to use the materials in front of them, mainly vegetables, to create a salad worthy of the Dragmaster in 100 seconds. At the end of that time, with a few ingredients eaten by the contestants along the way, the Dragmaster was presented with four salads — Queen Marie-Adelina earned five points for not making one, as Minx does not like salad. The four points for the most impressive salad however went to Lippa.

JW wringing dressing out of the lettuce and McMahon trying to piece together bitten up vegetables.

points this time as a reward for squeezing the lettuce.

Finally, it was time to learn who would earn Kyla’s Golden Tucking Panties: the reward for the overall champion across both shows. Darling read the point totals from last place, JW with 31 points, to third, McMahon and Lippa tied with 33. Then, it all came down to Queen Marie-Adelina and Buckner, who held each other’s hands as Darling paused to let the tension build. Darling then announced that, while Queen Marie-Adelina’s live task performance earned her the win for the second show, Buckner’s 36 points gave him the lead overall, and earned him

Finally, it was time to learn who would earn Kyla’s Golden Tucking Panties.

the golden panties. From start to finish, “DRAGMASTER” was incredibly engaging, keeping the audience laughing almost non-stop. Though the show suffered some minor technical difficulties, Minx or Darling were always quick to quip, keeping the energy alive and moving even through deadtime. In my opinion, Fringe’s first ever “DRAGMASTER” was an incredible success, and if the competition continues next year, I’ll definitely be buying a ticket.

Brosnik is a member of the Class of 2027.

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Campus Times

Focus Theater’s ‘Conspiracy Council’ Could Be More Truthful Than You Think

BY ALEX HOLLY
ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

I’ve heard a lot of crazy things in my life. Many of them have even come out of my own mouth. However, many of the kookiest things I’ve heard (whether from myself, my mother, or the media) have wound up being true. The same can be said — if you care to indulge me — for the “Conspiracy Council” at the Focus Theater: a rambunctious Fringe Festival event featuring some of the strangest yet well-backed theories to recently grace Rochester.

As one may expect, this “Conspiracy Council” means some pretty official business.

As one may expect, this “Conspiracy Council” means some pretty official business. Pretty official science, one may say, as justified by the panel’s strong accreditations in “Ph.D.s” (like Andrew X. Hunter) and “AdhDs” (represented by Briar Rose-Murphy) alike. URochester alum Drew Consorti, who argued that wearing makeup in your sleep is actually better for you, presented field

research of their own self-experimentation. After what they claimed to be three weeks (which included visits to both Paris and Mount Rushmore — a world traveler!), I had to admit that their eyeliner held up pretty strong. Rachel Nates, who ran on the theory that all Aldi cheese is the same, just dyed different colors, brought in a classic blindfolded taste test as certifiable empirical evidence. Plus she donned a tin-foil hat as a means of aesthetically certifying her conspiracy prowess. With Nates’ cleverly included manipulations, like manufacturing holes in a piece of cheddar, our dear audience participant guessed with only 25% accuracy the types of cheese in the Aldi Cheese Party Pack.

Despite the differences in these entities, both alluded to the greatest conspiracy of them all: “Big Capitalism.”

It’s for certain that our dear presenters find opposition to be quite big. Consorti cited “Big Cosmetics.” Nates introduced the concept of “Big Cheese.” Despite the differences in these entities, both alluded to the greatest conspiracy of

them all: “Big Capitalism.” Hunter, holding strong to his pseudo-doctorate (and countering “Big Xenophobicphobia”), went into the linguistic weeds to prove a well-nuanced take on an existing conspiracy: that Bigfoot, despite his name, does not actually have big feet. Following an ominous survey in which folks imputed their height, foot size, and an instantly snapped photo of the “audience anomalies” around them, he revealed his mathematically grounded Size Over Length Estimate (SOLE) methodology. In the theorem, sasquatch is just average — which is actually pretty good if you consider that size doesn’t matter. While my biggest takeaway from Hunter’s half-yelled presentation was his desperate need for a cough drop, I found myself quite convinced by his headstrong argument and audience-derived scatter plot. Talk about data journalism.

I found myself quite convinced by his headstrong argument and audience-derived scatter plot.

On the other hand, some of the arguments found looser

conclusions. While Rose-Murphy’s initial concept (pertaining to “Mamma Mia” and Donna’s suggested blessings from Demeter) felt strong, the plot unraveled as quickly as, well “Mamma Mia: Here We Go Again.” This as well as a few AI-generated images scattered throughout the slides soured the act, despite her best and humorous efforts to hand out corn in the grain goddess’ honor.

On the other hand, some of the arguments found looser conclusions.

The evening’s final (and seemingly most determined) conspiracy came from a blanket-donning “third grader” (wink) named “Ana” (wink?) who “most of us probably didn’t know because she needed extra time in some of her classes” and “had to talk with the counselor a lot” (wink wink wink). Her theory, which you’ve probably never heard before, proposed that Christmas’ present-granting guardian isn’t real. I know. Santa being fake? Probably the most unrealistic theory of the night. However, Ana took to the stage with a whiteboard and a red-stringed hypothesis, quite literally

winding the audience up into the twisted concept that Santa is actually “her parents.” Laugh out loud. At the end of the night, Nates ended up bringing in the cheddar, winning the evening’s crown: a tin-foil hat trophy that matched her own. As much as I don’t want to believe it, it is a scary thought that this Big Cheese theory could actually be true.

I really hate to tell all the truth seekers out there that the “Conspiracy Council” seems to be on hold for the foreseeable future.

With the performance’s temporary run, I really hate to tell all the truth seekers out there that the “Conspiracy Council” seems to be on hold for the foreseeable future. However, for more laughs in otherwise dark times, upcoming events can be found on The Focus Theater’s website.

Holly is a member of the Class of 2027 (T5).



An audience at Fringe Fest. TEDDY ALMOND/NEWSEDITOR

‘Tarot Cabaret,’ A Delightful Spread of Musical Fun

BY BELLA NAVE
COPY CHIEF

This Fringe Fest had many wonderful events, but my favorite was “Tarot Cabaret” performed by the Sunday Stages Theater Group. For “Tarot Cabaret” the audience pulls 11 cards out of a tarot deck, and the group performs a song that is related to each card, leading to a completely random performance each night.

For “Tarot Cabaret” the audience pulls 11 cards out of a tarot deck, and the group performs a song that is related to each card, leading to a completely random performance.

“Tarot Cabaret” was performed three times this Fringe Fest, on Aug. 17, 18, and 25. I went to the final one, and I honestly wish I had gone to the earlier performances as well. The performance took place in the Black Box Theater in the School of the Arts, which is right downtown next to the Memorial Art Gallery. The room was small, with three sides filled with bleachers, and the fourth back wall being where the actors and musicians were mingling. There were two main musicians, brothers Joseph and Michael Janover, though both also sang on occasion. The main cast was made up of Michaela Buckley, Ian Cannioto, Charlie Cowan, Jocelyn Coburn, Reece Gurell, Kayta Janover, and Tiffany Thompson.

When we entered the room, we were given the opportunity to write our intentions, thoughts, or questions for the cards on little slips of paper, and then put them into a communal bowl. Once we all found our seats, Buckley mixed the bowl thoroughly and asked five audience members to pull a slip of paper and read it. These were our “questions” for the Tarot deck.

For those who don’t know, Tarot cards are an intention-based divinatory tool. Some believe that they are magical in and of themselves, but for those more skeptical, there is a sort of science behind them. Tarot cards work by the user asking a question — usually an open-ended question — and then pulling one or more cards, each with their own meanings and connotations, that “answer” the



With the performance wrapping up, the cast begins their bows. **BELLANAVE/COPYCHIEF**

question. Through these open-ended questions and open-ended answers, the user makes their own connections through their subconscious. Tarot cards work off of your subconscious, you create meaning with them, and externalize your internal thoughts. The questions selected were as follows: “Why does loss happen at random?” “Seeking balance,” “How can I feel like a force of creative energy again?” “I intend to be in the moment and soak in Fringe,” and “Any thought provoking albums you’ve listened to lately?” These questions and intentions set the tone for the show and for how the cast interacted with the audience, as well as how the audience interpreted the cards.

Buckley then asked the 11 people who were given blank cards as they entered the room to mark that they were participants to come to the middle of the room and form a circle around a small table, which had the Major Arcana — otherwise known as the “named” cards, such as “The Fool” — of the Tarot deck spread out upon it. One by one, they traded in their blank cards and grabbed one of the 21 face down cards on the table. The extra cards were cleared, then participants placed their card in any of the 11 marked spots on the table. This was the determination of the set list. Each card had an associated song, and their placement on the table determined which order they were sung in.

1. “The Emperor.”

This was the first card played, and so the first song. This card is descri-

bed as the “Divine masculine” and a healthy masculine figure. It can mean strength or action, or fatherliness. The song for this card was “Falling Slowly” by Once, sung by Katya Janover and her husband Joseph Janover as a duet while he played guitar. It was a sweet song, very slow and high, and being able to see Joseph Janover’s face, an example of healthy masculine love, while they sang made it so much more impactful for “The Emperor.”

2. “The Hermit.”

This card is very emotionally reflective. It pushes self reflection and awareness, and inward contemplation. Buckley, Katya Janover, Coburn, and Thompson sang a quartet for this card, to the song “To the Mountains” by Lizzy McAlpine. The number started as a duet between Buckley and Thompson across the circle table, and then a duet between Janover and Coburn across the other way, and then a quartet to end it as they all walked in a circle around the table. This song is all about going up into the mountains (as the title implies) and taking time to think and reflect, all on your own, which is truly what “The Hermit” symbolizes.

3. “Judgement.”

Though this card sounds foreboding, truly what it symbolizes is looking back after an era; it is reaching the end of something and reflecting on it. Gurell sang a solo for this card, a section of the song “How It Ends” by Big Fish. Their voice was so smooth and clear for this solo, it was

fantastic, and really pulled me into the longing and the reflection of the song.

4. “The Empress.”

The other half of “The Emperor,” this card is the “Divine feminine,” or the healthy feminine figure. It leans more towards the nurturing and the caring aspects of life. The song for this card was “Grow” from “The Great British Bake Off Musical,” and despite what “The Great British Bake Off” brings to mind, this song almost made me cry. Coburn sang it as a solo, and the emotion they poured into the lyrics truly made me tear up. “Grow” is about a woman who learns to bake from her Italian grandmother, and yearns to be, but struggles to become, a mother as she grows up.

5. “The High Priestess.”

Magic, mysticism, and faith are the main core parts of this card, and the associated song was “The Song of Purple Summer” from the musical “Spring Awakening.” The entire cast sang. This I felt, though technically impressive with all of the overlapping harmonies, was one of their weaker numbers. There was no clear way this song symbolized the card, or the intentions we presented at the beginning of the show. The execution was definitely there, but the context was a little weaker. It sounded gorgeous though.

6. “Temperance.”

This card is about balance and self-fulfillment, and the song they chose for it was “For Good” from “Wicked.” Cannioto and Thompson sang this song

as a duet, and it was very playful and chill. It had more banter than the other songs did, but it began the lead up to the more high energy songs.

7. “The Magician.”

While “The Hermit” focuses more on inward reflection, “The Magician” is about outward reflection and action. It is about being the change you want to see in the world and making things happen. The song for this card was “Louder Than Words” from “Tick, Tick... Boom!” The song was very much a call to action, to fight oppression and cages, and to do good in the world, not just for you, but for all.

The song was very much a call to action, to fight oppression and cages, and to do good in the world, not just for you, but for all.

8. “The Wheel of Fortune.”

When this card was revealed, all the cast laughed, and we found out why when we reached this card in the performance. “The Wheel of Fortune” is about luck, karma, and fate. It is about dealing with what it dealt to you as you get it, and fittingly, the song chosen here was “We Didn’t Start the Fire” by Billy Joel. This song was the most high energy, and focused more on audience participation than vocal techniques. As a consequence it was a little weaker in the singing aspect, but the dancing vastly made up for it. The whole cast was jumping

TAROT FROM PAGE 10
about, and near the end of the song they invited the audience on stage to participate in a conga line and to jump around with them. We were also invited to sing. This high energy song came at exactly the right time in the set, as it hyped the audience back up, and helped everyone keep up the energy until the end.

9. “The Devil.”

A lot of people have preconceived ideas about this card, but in Tarot, it just means transformation and recognition of the things that aren’t helping you anymore. The song for this card was “When the Chips Are Down” from “Hadestown.” It very much channeled the recognition aspect of the card: realizing when you are at your lowest and how you must transform and change to get out of that situation. Katya Janover, Cannioto, and Coburn sang this song, and did a fun little dance number with it.

10. “The Moon.”

This card, similar to “The Empress” is more feminine. It deals also with dreams, shadows, and wonder. Thompson sang a solo for this card, with the song “Wondering” from “The Bridges of Madison County.” It was a very reflective song, and a little slower too, but it didn’t feel too out of place as the second-to-last song.

11. “The Sun.”

I believe this card was possibly the best we could have had for the last song. “The Sun” as opposed to “The Moon” is a very positive card. It is hopeful, it is energetic, and it is abundance and optimism all wrapped in one. The song chosen for this card was “The Ladies Who Lunch” from “Company.” Cannioto sang this song as a solo and put so much energy and passion into it. It was a little more interactive, and very punchy. The last lines of the section of song they sang, were “Everybody rise,” with full gestures to the audience on all sides. It was a fantastic way to end the show, as we were all already standing and could then applaud all of the cast, musicians, and crew.

“Tarot Cabaret” was an overall fantastic show, and one I would gladly attend again, especially because the order and experience would change. The Sunday Stages Theater Group’s production quality is very high, and I have no complaints about any of the voices in the group, or the choreography. All were wonderful and high quality and most importantly, very fun.

Nave is a member of the Class of 2029.

Chat Pile’s ‘Who Loves The Sun’ Is Music for the Moment

BY COLIN JONES
SENIOR STAFF

Few bands feel as sonically reflective of the 2020s as Chat Pile. On any given song you will find coal-black humor, soporific murmurs of defeat, and pained shrieks of agony. Since their breakout album “God’s Country” released in 2022, I have had my eye on these guys. I even reviewed their last solo record, “Cool World,” for the Campus Times when it came out. Seeing as I was a first-year when “God’s Country” dropped and I now walk the hallowed halls of URochester as a masters student, it’s fair to say that I have gotten to see Chat Pile’s development over the years. The only thing more shocking than the excellent quality of their music is the rapidity of its release; “Cool World” was released less than two years ago, and last October the band unveiled a collaborative effort with guitarist Hayden Pedigo. It is surprising to see the band back in action so quickly with a new full-length album, titled, “Who Loves The Sun.” What’s even more surprising is how good it is.

For those unfamiliar, Chat Pile trades in varying strains of metal and rock that evoke the filth and horror of human suffering. Sludge metal and noise rock combine with the melody of gothic rock and the bounce of “nu metal” to brew the band’s concoctions. Chat Pile is replete with both familiar and new ideas with this album; Across its 43 minutes, “Who Loves The Sun” shifts from tuneful gothic rock (“Same Rules”) to bludgeoning noise rock (“Influence”) and the album excels at everything it tries. The band still maintains their twisted sense of humor with some occasional amusing lyrics — “It’s time to jerk off under the stairs again” — providing an undercurrent of levity to their mire of loathing.

Chat Pile trades in varying strains of metal and rock that evoke the filth and horror of human suffering.

Opening track “Creature” reminds us that this is the Chat Pile we’ve come to know: calcified bleakness in musical form. Some melodic lead guitar moments are buried under doomy riffs from the rhythm guitar and churning bass as the drums rise to the occasion, creating a menacing groove. The song sports not one, but two breakdowns, the band switching gears and allowing some mosh friend-

ly moments amid the gloom. The lyrics, as always, are chillingly aware of the mess humanity is in; “Please don’t say we couldn’t stop this/And please don’t feed me all that bullshit/’Cause this is what you’ve always wanted/An empty world, vast and haunted.” Lead single “Deep Blue” laments our descent into AI hell and social media isolation as vocalist Raygun Busch intones, “You move deeper into screens.” It is a lyric that might feel corny in the hands of a lesser band, but Busch’s dead-eyed clarity with which he delivers each and every line on this album makes it serious.

While Chat Pile has always trafficked in metal, this song feels like their most wholehearted embrace of the genre’s aggression, with pummeling riffs and an absolutely demented vocal performance from Busch.

Ironically, the most serious moment of the album is the song “PEN I S MALL,” an explosive diatribe against capitalism that easily takes the title of the band’s heaviest song to date. While Chat Pile has always trafficked in metal, this song feels like their most wholehearted embrace of the genre’s aggression, with pum-

meling riffs and an absolutely demented vocal performance from Busch. The song lyrically details his time working as a maintenance man at a mall. The song hits a catchy groove for the prechorus, “Simon says maybe next time/Simon says get in the subfloor,” before switching into a nasty, cymbal-hammering stomp as Busch bellows, “This was mine but the world is full/Of hallowed halls of degradation/Hard to think that your whole life can pass/As a series of acts of subordination.” The song collapses in on itself as it progresses, slowing down into a shambling breakdown as audio of a bong hit plays over the chaos. The song grinds to a terrifying halt as it concludes, contrasting its energetic opening. If nothing else, please listen to this song. It is perhaps Chat Pile’s finest work to date.

Perhaps more than anything, this album excels as a true mission statement of Chat Pile’s unique identity in the music scene. No one really sounds like them, writes like them, evokes like them. There’s something oddly comforting about their music, chaotic and depressing as it is —perhaps because it is so point-blank, so acutely aware of the current moment. The band is anything but escapist. On closing track “October All The Time,” Busch paints a vignette of a world in which humanity has gone extinct, and the world moves on, al-

beit in a damaged state from pollution; “Everything will be fine/The sun will continue to shine/Everything will be fine/October all of the time.” It’s almost beautiful in a twisted way, imagining the Earth’s slow recovery from the stain of humanity. One can even imagine an alien visiting our abandoned planet, listening to a scratched Chat Pile CD, and seeing how horrible humans really could be.

Perhaps more than anything, this album excels as a true mission statement of Chat Pile’s unique identity in the music scene.

Jones is a graduate student in the School of Arts & Sciences.



MARISKELLY/ILLUSTRATIONSEDITOR

‘Primetime’ Review: Righteousness for Ratings

BY BENJI CUTLER
STAFF WRITER

Released in theaters on Sept. 25, A24’s “Primetime” is a 2026 film that feels more like a 2000s television fever dream. Documentarian Lance Oppenheim’s feature film debut, “Primetime,” follows Chris Hansen (Robert Pattinson) and his glorious ascension and gradual downfall as the host of Dateline NBC’s “To Catch a Predator” (2004–2007). The reality show exposed adult men trying to meet up with children in a sexual setting by luring them into a home with hidden cameras, law enforcement on-site, and a young adult actor decoying as a teenager.

The film is specifically set in 2006, when NBC moved “To Catch a Predator” to the highly-viewed 9 p.m. slot on Thursdays, also known as “primetime,” where it is directly competing against ABC’s hit show “Lost.” With this new pressure to create higher stakes and find more shocking predators to draw more viewers in, Hansen, Dateline NBC producer Andie Bender (Merritt Wever), and young decoy-actor Dan Plumb (Skyler Gison-do) face the ultimate task of building an Emmy-winning, rating-smashing phenomenon.

The genius of the film comes from that exact dilemma though; can a show that is doing “the Lord’s work”

(as is repeated in the film) truly be considered righteous if it is being made for the wrong reasons? As the title suggests, “Primetime” is all about the behind-the-scenes mayhem of the show itself and does not put its focus on the sensitive topic of the show whatsoever.

Can a show that is doing “the Lord’s work” (as is repeated in the film) truly be considered righteous if it is being made for the wrong reason?

That focus is a direct parallel to where Hansen’s mind is, as the movie explores his self-centered obsession to make the show bigger and better no matter the mental or emotional toll the contents of the show take on him, his co-workers, or his family.

Out of any actor that could have possibly conveyed such a poetically flawed character so flawlessly, Robert Pattinson was the best choice on this planet.

Out of any actor that could have possibly conveyed such a poetically flawed character so flawlessly, Robert Pattinson was the best choice on this

planet. Pattinson embodied Chris Hansen, not just in the mind-blowing transformation into Hansen’s look, voice, and mannerisms, but in the contrast between his on-camera facade and off-camera instability.

Every second he is on screen, he demands your attention with sharp comedic timing and creative decisions in his gestures, line delivery, and movements. He truly nails Hansen’s slow descent into madness as he realizes the control he has over the show is falling out of his hands, oddly feeling just as helpless as the subjects on his own show.

He truly nails Hansen’s slow descent into madness as he realizes the control he has over the show is falling out of his hands, oddly feeling just as helpless as the subjects on his own show.

Lance Oppenheim directed this film like a true visionary. “Primetime” has a grainy, weirdly nostalgic, and unsettling aesthetic that feels inescapable and oddly addicting. The color grading is beautifully intense, the cinematography is gorgeously precise, and the score is eerily haunting. If the general landscape of cinema in 2026 is described as cookie-cutter and lifeless, this film could not

be farther from that, with Oppenheim’s style injected into every frame.

However, that overt style is matched with a clear dramatization of the real-life events and Hansen. This strongly upset Hansen himself, and as such, he has been vocal about his thoughts on the film online. Yahoo reports that Hansen was not involved in the making of the film, and when A24 finally asked him to be involved in the promotion of the movie, he declined.

Hansen was not involved in the making of the film, and when A24 finally asked him to be involved in the promotion of the movie, he declined.

According to TMZ, Hansen initially claimed that A24 asked him to “sign away [his] rights to [his] name, image, and brand” as well as his right to take legal action against A24 in a “very restrictive agreement.” However, TMZ later found out that what Hansen refused to sign was a standard non-disclosure agreement (NDA), which all early viewers of the film have to sign solely to ensure the movie is not spoiled online. Hollywood Reporter also explained that Hansen purchased advertising for his own predator investigation streaming

network, TruBlu, that will play before every screening of “Primetime.”

Thus, Hansen watched his own biopic just like any viewer: at the theaters on opening night. Right after exiting the theater, Hansen reacted on his X stating, “It was so bizarre and so in and out of reality ... it was so detached from reality or anything I’ve ever experienced, then or now, doing the investigations ... I’m not sure what the point of it was.”

With that warning in mind, “Primetime” may not be designed to tell the story of Hansen and “To Catch a Predator” in the most authentic way possible.

With that warning in mind, “Primetime” may not be designed to tell the story of Hansen and “To Catch a Predator” in the most authentic way possible. However, if you’re looking for a surreal experience packed with energy, color, bizarrely mesmerizing visuals, unbelievable performances, and layered themes about the dynamic between media and morals, “Primetime” is undoubtedly worth seeing in theaters.

Cutler is a member of the Class of 2029.



ELIANA THOMPSON/ILLUSTRATIONS EDITOR

SPORTS

‘Who Are We...’ ‘ROC!!’

BY MADDIE UNRUH
SPORTS EDITOR

The URochester Yellowjackets played the Tufts University Jumbos Sept. 26, in a game of field hockey dedicated to Morgan Rodgers, a former lacrosse player from Duke University who passed in 2019 from suicide. The URochester field hockey chapter of Morgan’s Message was there to eliminate the stigma around mental health and asking for help when needed. The Morgan’s Message game is always the last home game in September, to round out Suicide Prevention Month.

The URochester field hockey chapter of Morgan’s Message was there to eliminate the stigma around mental health and asking for help when needed.

The game unfortunately ended in a 4–1 loss for the

Yellowjackets, but the game was action packed regardless of the score. The first half of the game was a battle between the ‘Jackets and the Jumbos for who would get the first score. Though the Jumbos got the overall first goal from a penalty shot by senior Defense Claire Casey (23), the ‘Jackets scored their first goal in the second quarter, thanks to senior Attack Grayson Honig (14). The equal scoring ended there.

The Jumbos’ Casey scored

The game unfortunately ended in a 4–1 loss for the Yellowjackets, but the game was action packed regardless of the score.

a second goal in the second quarter, marking the beginning of the story of the rest of the game. By the end of the match, the Jumbos had 14 shots on goal, compared to the 5 from the ‘Jackets, but they had less saves on goal (1–6). While the semantics don’t matter in comparison to the scoring plays, knowing



Yellowjackets successfully blocked a penalty shot from the Jumbos. MADDIEUNRUH/SPORTSEITOR

what went into each strategy tactic and decision is important to understand, and adds depth to the game.

The third quarter was a lot of back and forth across the field for the players on both teams. The Jumbos’ senior Forward Reagan Malo (17) scored the third goal for the team, making the score 3–1.

After a brief two-minute rest between the third and fourth quarters, Casey scored again, bringing the score to 4–1. Though the game ended in favor of the Jumbos, the message of the game and the dedication to Rodgers evened out the feelings on the field from the post-game score, leaving everyone feeling positively, even with the loss.

The ‘Jackets played again on Sept. 27 at Allegheny College, winning with a final score of 3–0. Their next game is at Vassar College at 4 p.m. on Oct. 2, starting the Liberty League games.

Unruh is a member of the Class of 2029.

‘Jackets vs. Herons: Sept. 23



With September being Suicide Prevention month, the ‘Jackets debuted their new warmups in solidarity to Mikayla’s Mission – an organization here at the University of Rochester that aims to end the stigma associated with mental illnesses and struggles. HALEIGHLAUD/CONTRIBUTING WRITER

BY HALEIGH LAUD
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Yellowjackets faced off against the William Smith College Herons in a 1–0 match on Wednesday Sept. 23. In honor of Suicide Prevention Month, the Yellowjackets donned their new warmups in support of Mikayla’s Mission. The women proudly sported these warmups in hopes of spreading mental health awareness and decreasing the stigma around asking for help in times of mental health emergencies.

In the first half of the match, the women fought neck and neck for the first goal of the night. The Herons maintained control of the ball for a good majority of the half, but once the ‘Jackets got a hold of it, there was no stopping them. In a clean pass from junior Forward Natalie Santangelo (10), senior Defense/Midfield Eileen Harvey (27) made the only goal of the night. Though the Herons made quick work of getting the ball back, they failed to score as the ‘Jackets ended the first half with top-tier defense.

The Herons maintained control of the ball for a good majority of the half, but once the ‘Jackets got a hold of it, there was no stopping them.

In the second half of the match, the Herons brought more spirit to the field. The Herons’ goalie, senior Antonia Goerke (1), seemed on top of her game, blocking numerous shots from Harvey, junior Defense Claudia Ferreira (30), and senior

Forward Sydney Holmes (3). Still, the Yellowjackets fought through increasing tensions and physicality, and maintained their own excellent defense.

The Yellowjackets ended the match with a win, leaving their perfect 7–0 record untouched. The ‘Jackets faced off against Misericordia University Sept 26 ending the match in a 1–1 stalemate. The ‘Jackets play RIT Sept. 30 at 5 p.m. at Fauver Stadium.

Laud is a member of the Class of 2030.

Campus Times

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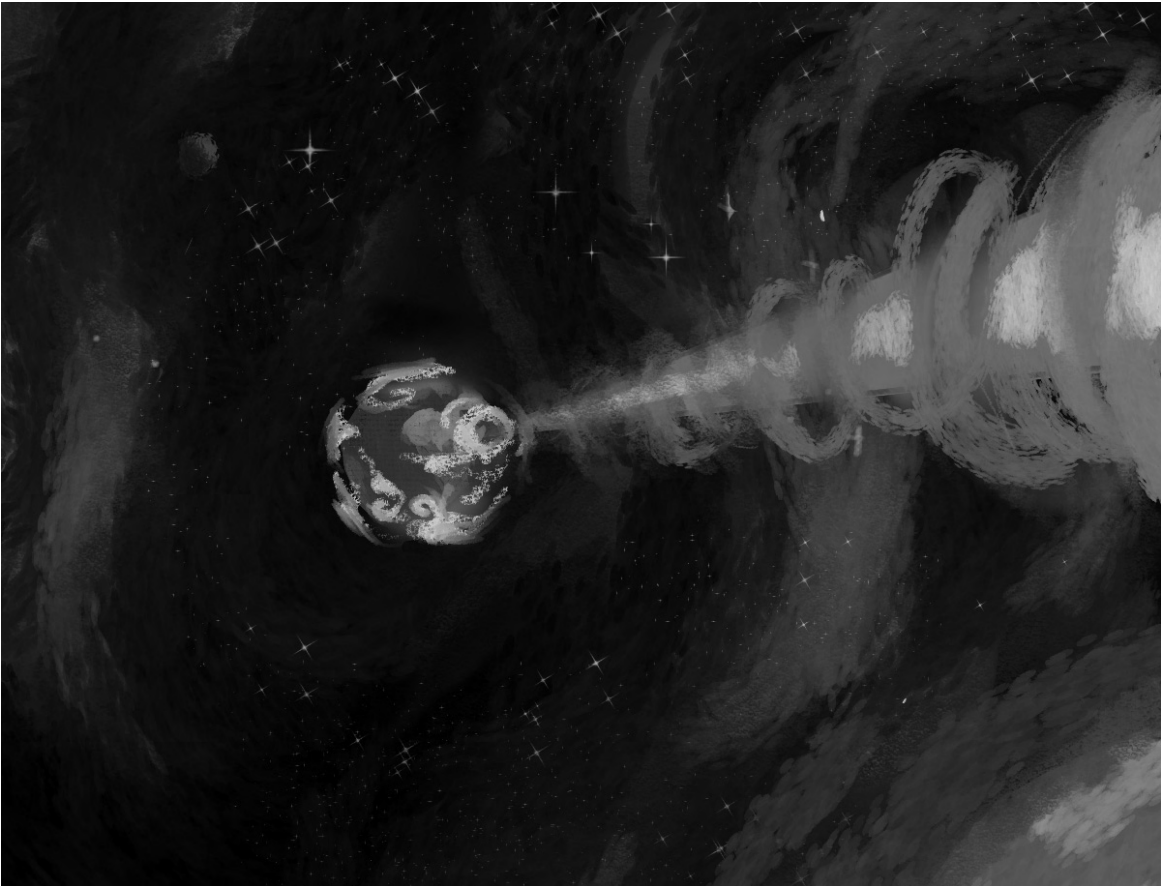
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HUMOR

That’s No Laboratory for Laser Energetics



MARIS KELLY / ILLUSTRATIONS EDITOR

BY THOMAS RASCHILLA
PRESENTATIONS CHIEF

That night, I felt a great disturbance at URochester, as if millions of voices cried out in terror and were suddenly silenced. I woke up in a not-so-cold sweat (thank you to whoever decided the First-Year Quad doesn’t deserve air conditioning), and after looking around, I noticed a bright-green light coming in from my window. It disappeared as fast as it showed up, so I just assumed it was a result of some particularly intoxicated residents of the Fraternity Quad before going back to sleep.

Upon waking up the next morning, I couldn’t stop thinking about that light and proceeded to dedicate every minute to researching last night’s phenomenon while listening to the “Star Wars” soundtrack. My exams could wait until after the mystery was solved. Was the light truly just a frat party? Or was it something more supernatural, like a bottle of week-old Mountain Dew? After hours of research, I found a headline about recent donations to URochester’s Laboratory for Laser Energetics (LLE). The site warned that some “routine tests” had taken place, including last night. Any rational person would have stopped there, satisfied with that answer. But I had my tinfoil hat on, so I knew something else was up.

I infiltrated the LLE under the cover of darkness.

After a shockingly easy break-in, I began scouring files to see what was really going on. The title “URDStar” kept floating around, but most of the data on that was blocked off. I tried to gain access to the files every way I could, but I made no progress. Just as I began to run out of ideas, I heard some almost cartoonishly-evil cackling coming from down the hall. Feeling curious, I crept up to the door where the sound originated, and when I looked inside, I saw University President Sarah Mangelsdorf decked out in a black robe, sitting on a quite luxurious office chair in an otherwise empty room with a giant window overlooking the campus. As if she could sense it, she called out to me.

“Come forth, young Skywalker!” President Mangelsdorf shouted. “Or— whatever your name is!” As I approached her, I felt a sense of uneasiness rise in me. “So, you have uncovered the truth. You found out that I’ve been raising the price of tuition each year and accepting donations to the LLE so that I can construct a Death Star laser to finally show the University of Richmond who the real “UR” is! I’m sick of them always flaunting their copyright, thinking they’re better than us. But no mor —”

“Actually,” I interjected, “I hadn’t figured any of that out whatsoever. I was honestly kind of stuck on how to look at some of the more-hidden files. But thanks,

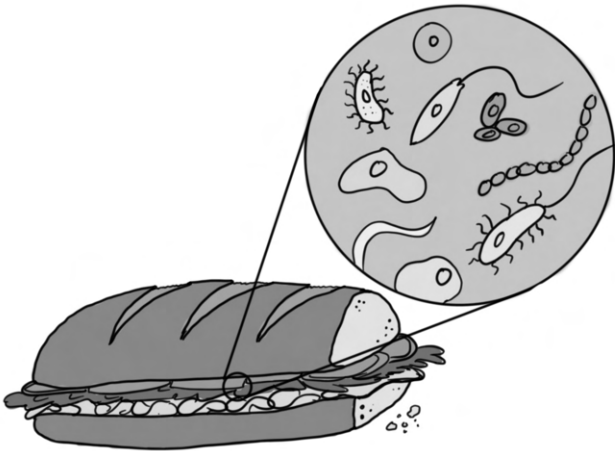
this was way easier.”

“Oh—” the President sighed. “Shit. That was not my brightest idea. Well, now that you know this, you can’t leave. You see, in just 24 hours, you shall witness the firepower of this fully armed and OPERATIONAL battle station! Our first test shall be upon Pluto. It’s a dwarf planet, so who really cares what happens to it? At last, we will reveal ourselves to the University of Richmond. At last, we will have our revenge!”

“Uh-huh, that makes total sens — LOOK OVER THERE!” I then made the heroic and noble choice of cowardly running for dear life, and hoping I didn’t get vaporized by lightning on my way out. Thankfully, I escaped and made it back to my dorm. The President never got my name so I’ve remained under the radar. And she was right, no one cared that Pluto blew up. (Have you seen any headlines about it? Exactly.) This article is far too important to be kept under wraps though, so I implore everyone reading this to remember my tale. Whenever the LLE gets brought up, know that the University of Rochester is dangerously close to acquiring a weapon of mass destruction. It’s up to everyone reading this to convince the University of Richmond to give up the “UR” trademark so that no actually relevant planets suffer Pluto’s fate.

Raschilla is a member of the Class of 2030.

Foodborne Illnesses Send Public into Panic



GABRIEL JIANG / HUMOREDITOR

BY GABRIEL JIANG
HUMOR EDITOR

Since last month, there has been a reported 67% rise in the number of clogged toilets and exploded stalls, with the number only growing higher.

With the rising risks of foodborne illness, the public continues to grow more anxious about their own dinners. Since last month, there has been a reported 67% rise in the number of clogged toilets and exploded stalls, with the number only growing higher. To minimize risks, many worried citizens have reported taking a sample from their meals every time and checking it under a microscope for any microbes. One such citizen reported that if they saw anything moving, they would proceed to blast their food with UV radiation for 20 minutes on 203°C heat before quarantining it for two weeks. Many people have said that it’s all become normal practice prior to each meal, calling it the CCP (Common Caution Practice, not to be confused with the Chinese Communist Party).

Since the start of using the CCP on food from the Pit, there has been a discovery of 15 new strains of microbes.

Still, with growing concerns over food poisoning, some have even opted out of eating entirely. A group of people sitting outside the Campus Times office have said that they “haven’t eaten for two months.” Additionally,

since the start of using the CCP on food from the Pit, there has been a discovery of 15 new strains of microbes.

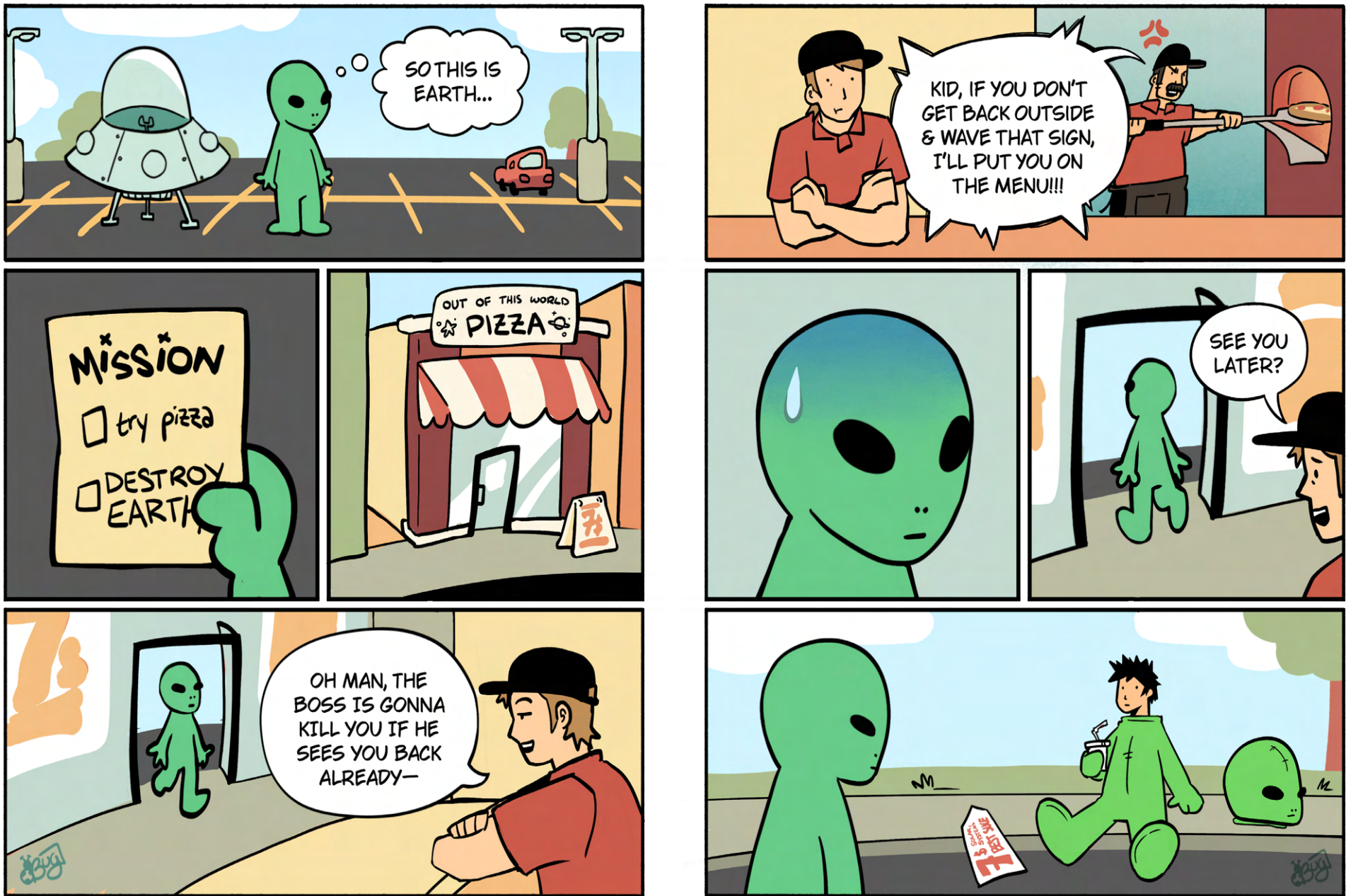
To address the concerns, RFK Jr. put out a statement to reassure the public that foodborne illnesses are there to add flavor to the food and make it an unforgettable experience.

To address the concerns, RFK Jr. put out a statement to reassure the public that foodborne illnesses are there to add flavor to the food and make it an unforgettable experience. His statement goes on further to say that these “flavors build a person’s character” and that he “enjoys the new experience.” There are ongoing efforts to try and see if RFK Jr. would like to elaborate, but he seems to be preoccupied with something, and he hasn’t left the bathroom in a couple hours.

Jiang is a member of the Class of 2028.

Mascot Mishaps

BY BUG CARTWRIGHT
STAFF WRITER



My Fridge Molded Over During Summer Break

BY LEN LAN
HUMOR EDITOR

Yeah, I know, I'm an idiot. You don't have to tell me twice, because I already paid a moldy-fridge fine from the storage place I got it from. You'd think that they'd be the one to pay me for my fridge molding over, but you know how storage companies work. They'll charge you for everything, from the boxes and buying the locks to the "yeah ... you just look like you have money" fee. I bet if there was a break-in at the storage unit, they'd probably charge me a "burglar" fee as well.

"It smelled of a geriatric hospital and old socks."

Actually, I wouldn't even be surprised if there was a break-in at the storage unit. Last month, I pulled up in my ratty ol' 2013 Toyota Corolla, just strolled in, and they didn't even check for my damn ID! The condition of the storage unit I rented was also horrendous. It smelled of a geriatric hospital and old socks. When I lugged



LEN LAN/HUMOR EDITOR
DORA WU/STAFF ILLUSTRATOR

my fridge out, my fingers touched something slime-y on the sides. I immediately pulled back in shock, and the fridge slipped from my hands, landing on the floor with a CLUNK! The door to the fridge sprung open like a broken faucet. A green

fog poured out onto the floor, mixing with the smell of dirty laundry.

Shit. I had just opened Pandora's box.

There was moss covering every inch of the inside. Vines hanging from the

shelves. A moist and fleshy sludge started to ooze out. As I took a step closer, I noticed things moving among the greenery. All kinds of organisms. An insect fused with moving human hairs on its back was injecting its larvae into the green sludge. There was a white worm that sort of looked like an alien sperm, weaving along the moss floor. Even the flora didn't look normal — it seemed to stick to whatever touched it (or whatever it touched). There was a whole ecosystem in here! New plants, new species, all in my own fridge!

"There was a whole ecosystem in here!"

I knew what I had to do. I kept it safe in my dorm — secretly, of course. My fellow suitmates are getting more and more suspicious of the smell emanating from my room, but my research is still ongoing. At this point, I've documented over 50 different and unique species. I can't have anyone destroying (or even knowing about) this fridge. It is no longer simply a means to store my open cans of Budweiser. No. It has become so much more

than that. I've become much more than that. This wonderful ecosystem that birthed itself is my responsibility now. I'm like a god, watching over his earthly domain.

"Some day, my beautiful creatures will evolve into new life and replace humankind as a species."

Perhaps this is my new purpose. To be the creator of a new world and bring justice and peace to this one. Some day, my beautiful creatures will evolve into new life and replace humankind as a species. But for now, just to mask the smell, I'll tell my roommates I'm simply a boy going through second puberty.

Lan is a member of the Class of 2029.

Inner Voices

BY CALEB OSHINSKY
STAFF PUZZLER

ACROSS
1 Garden entrance
5 Peel
9 Monastery figure
14 Raison d’____
15 ”Step ____!”
16 Private, multiplayer
Minecraft server
17 Wilson who says ”wow”
18 Young state?
19 B-girl?
20 *Weekly dinner tradition
featuring cheese-stuffed
pasta squares
23 Be in Kübler-Ross’s five
stages
24 ”I’m out ”
25 Dr. of hip-hop
28 Mononymous ”Only
Time”
singer
31 Improvised, musically
33 *Terminate a network
print
job directly at the machine
36 Taiwanese laptop brand
38 Take care of loose ends?
39 Routes
40 *Task delegated by a
manager
45 Syrian city situated on
the
Silk Road
46 Linguist Chomsky
47 Bolshevik
48 ”The Sopranos” network
50 What a student might
receive parked in a ”Dean
of Research” spot
55 What sentimental songs

BY JULIEN DIAMOND
CONTRIBUTING PUZZLER

pull on ... or a literal
description of what’s in 20-
33-, and 40-Across
58 ”Aladdin” adversary
61 Pitcher’s aim?
62 Pink-masked Brawl Stars
character released in 2017
63 Skateboarding 101 trick
64 Foul smell
65 Happily ____ after
66 People conquered by
Julius
Caesar in the 1st century
BCE
67 Plural follower of kid or
cat
68 1D’s mathematician’s
subject of interest

DOWN
1 Maestro Solti or
mathematician Cantor
2 Ukraine, vis-a-vis Russia
3 Fountain making over \$1
million each year from
coins
4 First word in a children’s
rhyme
5 Composer of a 1943 so-
nata
for a circled item in this
puzzle
6 Not pro
7 ”Knives Out” director
Johnson
8 Weber’s ”The Protestant
____” and the Spirit of
Capitalism”
9 Antiquated
10 Thing kept by 1D’s

conductor
11 Segment of time on a
musical score
12 Antiquated
13 ”Didn’t need to know
that!”
21 It takes the cake?
22 Pita sandwich
25 Key of Chopin’s
”Raindrop
Prelude”
26 Count (on)
27 Breyers rival
29 Creature of Sherpa
folklore
30 Square up
32 ”Aww, what a cute
deer!”,
for example

33 Like a variable in the
leading term of a degree
three polynomial
34 Abbreviation ironically
referenced in the title of a
piece taking 639 years to
complete, in one
performance
35 Late-night host Jay
36 How not to leave the
door
to your dorm room
37 One and only
41 Eversible shapes, as
demonstrated in the 1994
animation ”Outside In”
42 Buckwheat noodle
43 Has significance
44 Kuwaiti bigwig

49 Welles who once
accidentally convinced
radio listeners of an
ongoing Martian invasion
51 Gives a 50-across
52 Scalawag
53 Wading bird
54 Peter and Paul, but not
Mary
55 ”Project ____ Mary”
56 ”Voilà!”
57 ”AI ____”, with Tung
Tung
Tung Sahur or Tralalero
Tralala as examples
58 Refresh, as memory
59 Pie ____ mode
60 Winter malady

