

Yale is like a box of chocolates—you never know what you're going to get. For a gourmet Godiva selection. There are plenty of nasty ones in the box, but you get the most out of...

Yale's Mix of Undergr

Neomi Rao and Markham Chenoweth

POLITICS

Yale Political Union

For budding political hacks there is no better organization on campus. Scary as it may sometimes seem, this is the place where, in all likelihood, the future Lee Atwaters and James Carvilles, Bill Clintons and Dick Cheneys are bred. Ostensibly a forum for student debate, the PU's main function consists in bringing marquee speakers from the political, cultural and media establishment to campus. Its long history and formidable reputation enable it to construct a schedule of reasonably prominent guests every semester.

Last year the PU demonstrated its ability to attract top-notch speakers in a non-election year. Generally, as with most campus organizations, the PU rises and falls with the quality of its leadership. Don't expect too much. C-SPAN has offered to tape meetings of the PU for its national audience in the past only to have the administration step in out of fear that it would be an embarrassment to the school. If you want to see good speeches by your classmates, don't miss the prize debates. Be looking for the freshman prize debate in the fall for an early chance to win some money.

To satisfy the needs of its politically-obsessed membership, the PU is divided into five separate parties that vie for PU offices every semester. This is where the PU's nasty reputation is born. Parties battle it out for the right to chair meetings, invite speakers and offer constitutional amendments. Of course, the parties themselves also hold their own elections. It gets ugly as friends backstab each other, enemies sabotage candidacies and rival parties leak nasty rumors. It's nothing if not political. Here then are the five parties—separate personalities unto themselves.

Liberal Party

The Libs are the only party whose history dates back to the founding of the union in the 1930s. As such they have a long tradition, but they don't let that get in the way of anything. Libs are not radicals. By and large they are not even activists. Rather, they are, with some exceptions, representative of the modern elitist

class of Democrat bent on paternalistic social engineering. No group on campus really puts forward a coherent defense of the Left, but the Libs come closer than most groups which aspire to. If you love Bill Clinton, you'll want to join the Liberal Party.



Progressive Party

The short, happy life of the Progressive Party began when members of the Independent Party and the Party of the Right decided the Left needed another party in the political union. Some Progs call themselves liberal. Some call themselves conservative. Some are self-styled moderates. All of them drink Bass beer. The Progs have a social action coordinator, but participation is not as high as they would have everyone believe. The Progs are not really sure what, if anything, they stand for, but rest assured that they don't let it get to them.

Independent Party

Despite their claim to "be the political spectrum," the Ips are the political union's third left-leaning party. Three kinds of people are drawn to the Independent Party: those who wish to conceal their political beliefs because they want to hack their way to union office, members of the Yale Debate Association, and those who correctly perceive the Ips as the home for people who do not want to bother about defining a coherent set of political and philosophical beliefs in the first place. Join the Ips if you must, but please don't affiliate with them thinking that you want

your PU dues to go to moderates. They always get extra money that way.

Tory Party

The Tories split from the Party of the Right over 20 years ago. The rivalry between the two parties goes up and down, but the Tories generally can be counted upon to help defend the traditions of the political union, including the wearing of a coat and tie for male speakers and the use of Robert's Rules of Order. One observer characterized the Tories as exhibiting "Burkean dogmatism tempered by Anglophilia." That is probably as good a definition as any, but avoid the Tories if you desire intellectual stimulation to accompany, or at least precede, inebriation.

Party of the Right

The POR is the second oldest party in the political union. Traditionally, the Party has been comprised of two distinct groups of individuals—traditionalists and individualists. The POR suffers from (and sometimes glories in) one of the nastiest reputations on campus. If you are curious what happens when libertarianism meets conservatism (when Ayn Rand meets Russell Kirk), go to a POR debate. While detractors claim that POR members take themselves too seriously, even they admit that the Party takes ideas seriously as well. We guarantee you will never see anything like it anywhere else.

Conservative Forum at Yale

Ostensibly dissatisfied with the monolithically liberal slate of speakers offered by the PU (which last year included Caspar Weinberger, John Sununu, Malcolm Forbes, Jr., and John O'Sullivan), the YCF was established to bring speakers of a more conservative mindset to campus. The Forum also eschews student debate in favor of setting up well-attended debates between professors and invited guests. The Conservative Forum has done a capital job of fundraising which allows it to match the PU's poster efforts and to offer receptions following its events where students can talk with guests informally. YCF also bills itself as an umbrella organization for conservatism on the Yale campus,

although lately it seems bent on controlling or competing with established campus groups than on assisting them. Rumors that they plan to have their own political union party and start their own newspaper will most likely prove false.

Model United Nations

Even more well-heeled than the Conservative Forum, Model U.N. seems to be the activity to join if your interests lie with getting lots of free meals. Much like the Model U.N. organizations in which many Yalies participated in high school, Model U.N. offers an outlet for those interested in the politics of international affairs. Model U.N. hosts a conference for high schools from all over the Northeast at the beginning of second semester (whence all their money), so forget about reserving a room at that time for any other campus organization.

Yale Debate Association

Yale is the only ivy-league school whose debate team requires try-outs (mt other schools let potential team members sink or



swim at tournaments). The arrogance which this suggests speaks volumes about the YDA as a whole. What should be a visible and respected group of capable speakers has successfully isolated itself into self-important irrelevance. Maybe one of these years some embittered freshman who sees through YDA's sham political litmus-test try-outs will start a rival debate organization. It would attract those more interested in public-speaking than politics. Or maybe they will join a campus publication and vent spleen down the road. Either way there's really no reason to be bitter—even those who get on the team don't like it. Besides,

everyone knows parliamentary-style debate isn't real debate anyway.

Dwight Hall Cabinet

If you are beginning to notice some strange groups located under the subheading of "politics," then you have discovered an important early lesson about Yale. As for Dwight Hall in particular, it should first be said that many of those who participate in community service at Yale are wonderful people whose efforts at improving New Haven deserve plaudits. Generally, those are the people out performing community service rather than running for office to oversee the Dwight Hall Cabinet, the group which oversees all Yale service projects. Dwight Hall began its constitution two years ago to incorporate diversity goals. This allowed it to add groups such as the Black Student Alliance at Yale (BSAY) and the Bi-sexual, Gay, and Lesbian Co-op for whom service is not a primary function. At the same time they succeeded in defunding, at the Co-op's behest, the local inner-city Boy Scout troop. If that is your idea of community service, Dwight Hall may be for you. Our best advice is to participate in as much community service as your schedule permits, but to keep Dwight Hall at arm's length.

Consent

Another apparently strange group for a political description, Consent bills itself as a counseling hotline for those who have been through unwanted sexual experiences. They have a definite ideology, however, which involves treating "survivors" as victims. Some of those who have had contact with it suggest that Consent's counselors are incapable of helping students in need, if indeed any students ever felt like calling in the first place.

Women's Center

Groups representing every conceivable women's issue and then some are housed at the Women's Center, Yale's effort to placate women by institutionalizing their concerns. As with any subsidized group, the number of organizations seeking affiliation with the Women's Center has proliferated. More than a dozen fiefdoms now exist

sure it's much closer to a Whitman Sampler than careful selection and a tall glass of milk can help

Graduate Organizations

ranging from Yalesbians to Women of Color for Reproductive Health. The proclamations of oppression emanating from the center have reached such levels of absurdity that even the *Yale Daily News* took to lambasting the Women's Center last semester, an action for which it was quickly chastised.

The Co-op

Not to be confused with the Yale Co-op on Broadway, the Bi-Sexual, Gay, and Lesbian Co-op is known to most students by the popular dances which it hosts. At one point last year the Co-op threatened to exclude heterosexuals from its events. It backed off when members realized that only by counting the large numbers of straight people who attend the dances could it possibly cling to its "one in four, maybe more" canard.

When it's not postering for dances, the Co-op is spending the revenues from them to promote its predictable agenda. This includes spreading myths about AIDS and "raising awareness" about homophobia/heterosexism. If you didn't know better, you'd think that Yale was the most difficult place in the world to be gay, rather than one of the easiest. Fortunately, not all gays parrot the propaganda of the Co-op; unfortunately, all too few promote the libertarian causes which they should.

Yale College Council

The YCC is the only organization which has campus-wide elections. For this reason alone, it attracts some politicians who must have ambitions for later national office. (Why else would anyone want a position from which it is practically impossible to exert any influence on the school?) The YCC controls relatively insignificant amounts of money, exercises no real authority, and has no voice on the Yale Corporation.

The YCC could lead the student body if it were to take bold stands on the moral and political issues affecting student life. Regrettably, it leaves that job to the *Yale Daily News* editorial board. At least it planned the Yale Prom this year in addition to providing yet another election scandal.

PUBLICATIONS

The Yale Daily News

Ahh, the nation's oldest college daily, the "paper of record" committed to bringing you riveting stories about everything from students sleeping in class to the latest political union speaker. For a price just less than a subscription to *The New York Times*, you can receive this paper delivered straight to your room. At most universities, the best and brightest write for the campus daily, but with so many alternatives at Yale, the *Daily* staff has suffered over the years. Last fall the *YDN* changed its format. The editors explained that this was intended to improve content. The irregular headlines and sans serif fonts do little to spice up headlines like "Students Seek Housing" or "Science Majors are Growing." Perhaps the most interesting part of the paper is the editorial page, on which bi-weekly columnists, the *YDN* editorial board and an occasional nasty letter writer share their thoughts with the campus. Although most of the columns are, well, lame, and the editorials predictable, they become amusing if you read the paper regularly (something which the *YFP* does not necessarily recommend).

The Yale Herald

Everybody reads the *Herald*, or so it seems if you stay in the dining hall for dinner on Friday night. The *Herald* can truly be called Yale's newspaper, if only because most students are too cheap to subscribe to the *YDN*. The *Herald* epitomizes what the Yale mainstream, if there is such a thing, strives to be—insouciant.

The Yale Free Press

According to the *Review of Politics* (see below) the *Yale Free Press* is "the best-looking publication on campus and everybody reads it"—all that from people who position themselves as the ideological opponents of the *YFP*. The staff of the *YFP* runs the full spectrum of people loosely affiliated with the modern Right. They include:

- 1) The Libertarian: "The market may not take care of everything, but it comes damned close."
- 2) The Neo-Conservative: "I

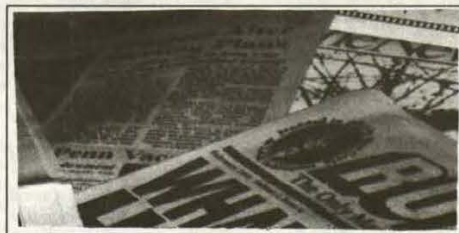
used to be liberal in high school, but gosh, the eco-freaks and feminists have gone too far."

3) The Traditionalist: "New York City is evil—give me my Bible and a good cigar."

4) The Post-Liberal: "I feel disillusioned with classical liberalism and conservatism. I defy labels, it's much more modern."

Rumpus

Everybody's favorite tabloid,



Rumpus always manages to keep people guessing. Last year the issue on "Yale's 50 Most Beautiful People" had students disgusted, but glued to their copies. Staffers at *Rumpus* claim that every story is true, but others have their doubts. If you want to learn more about 23-inch curly fries and other trivia, tune in. We just hope the new editors can keep it up.

The Review of Politics

The *Review of Politics* is the journal of liberal opinion. The *ROP* has struggled over the past year to change its format and improve its quality, borrowing ideas of design and content from the *YFP*. Ultimately, however, a liberal magazine on a liberal campus doesn't excite anybody.

The New Journal

Good writing, nice layout, wins lots of awards. Who cares? *The New Journal* prints thousands of copies each month with the anticipation that students will suddenly get an uncontrollable urge to read about math programs in New Haven elementary schools. Cold oatmeal anyone?

The Yale Daily News Magazine

Two years ago, a scandal involving conservative women and theft brought this magazine campus fame, but in the past year

it has avoided controversy by writing about subjects like coffee. The *YFP* loved the freshman issue. How come no one else noticed?

The International Forum

Writers for the *Forum* always seem to be publishing drafts of their senior essays, which makes the magazine extremely long and tedious. Other articles read like modified travel logs of summer vacations and semesters abroad. Philosophy professor Karsten

of women, minorities and the poor. It seems that these groups have always been on the margins, which leaves one to ask, who are the editors reclaiming the fringes from? Conservatives?

The Yale Woman

A fairly reasonable magazine. A recent issue about sex at Yale (no, the pages were not blank) was snatched up by eager students eating Sunday brunch alone. The *Yale Woman* stays clear of the strident feminism preached from the Women's Center. It reads like an on-campus *Mademoiselle*.

digressions

The bitterness avoided by the writers of the *Yale Woman* finds its home in *digressions*. This journal for Asian-American women spits out hateful diatribes against all things white, male and powerful like it was still in style. With graphic poetry and obscene language these women are writing to express all the anger and oppression which they have felt. It's a sort of teen-angst-rage-against-the-world kind of publication.

Compass

A magazine relating to various Hispanic issues which prints poetry and prose in Spanish and English, *Compass* is even-tempered and runs everything from stories about unmarried teen mothers to poems about Chicanoa.

My Tongue

This magazine is produced by the Gay, Bisexual and Lesbian Co-op during BGLAD week every Spring. It contains articles and art work about the queer experience. In 1993 some particularly graphic photographs of homosexual acts, taken by and involving Asian filmmaker Quentin Lee, raised a big stir. So last spring the editors printed the pictures again, with censor labels. *My Tongue* is an in-your-face propaganda tool which most students ignore. Even if you manage to get over the initial disgust, it's still bad art.

Markham Chenoweth, Editor-in-Chief, is a senior in Berkeley College. Neomi Rao, Editor Emeritus, is a senior in Silliman College.

Reclaiming the Margin

The editors announced the coming of the paper in both the *YDN* and the *Herald*, saying that they would be the true voice of leftism on campus. Their debut issue last spring was a shabby newsprint job with hackneyed articles about the marginalized life