NEWS

"In the end, the most important thing is to be true to yourself and those you love and work hard."
MICHAEL JACKSON AMERICAN SINGER

Democratic Socialist vying to represent Ward 9 in special election

BY NELLIE KENNEY
STAFF REPORTER

Two Democrats, including a Democratic Socialist, are running to represent Ward 9, which includes parts of East Rock and Fair Haven, in a special election in two weeks.

Former Ward 9 Alder Caroline Tanbee Smith '14 SOM '25 stepped down in August, teeing up the special election. In a June email announcing her resignation, Tanbee Smith wrote that she was moving out of the ward — and, per the city's charter, could no longer serve as its alder.

Running to replace her are Maria-Threese Serana, a biology teacher and Democratic Socialist, and Gavin Arnold, who works at Webster Bank.

If Serena, endorsed by the Connecticut branch of the Democratic Socialists of America, were to win, she would continue the legacy of Charles Decker GRD '18, a fellow Democratic Socialist who represented Ward 9 from 2018 to 2022. She is running on a platform of affordability and school funding, while Arnold is also focusing on issues like public safety.

Two other candidates — Blaise Berglund, the agricultural programs manager for a local nonprofit, and Conor Gilligan, an adjunct biology professor at Connecticut College and Sacred Heart University — have dropped out of the race, although their names will still appear on the ballot. Both said they would support Serana.

Serana was endorsed by the Ward 9 Democratic Ward Committee at an August meeting, as well as New Haven Federation of Teachers President Leslie Blatteau.

Serana said that her experiences as a teacher, along with what she heard from her son during his time as a student representative to the Board of Education, informed her decision to run.

"Why are our facilities leaking roofs?" she asked. "Why are there no teachers in the classrooms?"

If elected, Serana said that she would be interested in looking into details of where school funding is going. New Haven Public Schools has run on a deficit for over a decade. In May, Tanbee Smith was the only alder to vote against the current city budget, calling for more transparency about the Board of Education's expenses.

Serana said that as an alder, she would draw on the "mentality that every one of us has a responsibility to really make the change happen," a mindset which she said is central to the Democratic Socialists of America's platform.

Serana also expressed concern about the cost of housing. East Rock, where she currently lives, is "so expensive," she said. She suggested that one way to address this issue might be for groups of residents to collectively buy abandoned houses in the neighborhood and turn them into multi-family homes.

Arnold said that his decision to run for alder "comes down to thinking about" how he can "make an impact" in the ward and "affect it in a positive way."

Arnold said that in conversations with residents, he's heard concerns about housing prices, pedestrian safety and road safety. Pedestrian safety is top-of-mind for him, he added.

"It's nice to live in a place that you can walk around. It's nice to live in a place where kids can walk to school and be safe," he said.

Addressing these concerns would involve building relationships in the city government, Arnold said.

"From there, you can start to drive change a little bit iteratively with conversations and getting support for various projects," he said, citing Tanbee Smith's work addressing traffic issues on Willow Street as an example of this process.

Early last year, the US Department of Transportation awarded New Haven $2 million to study ways to reconnect the neighborhoods disrupted by the highway.

Arnold suggested that there is "a lot to be done" with the underpasses of Interstate 91 that currently connect East Rock and Fair Haven.

"The most important thing is ensuring that the Fair Haven side feels connected to East Rock just as much as the East Rock side feels connected to Fair Haven," he said. That will involve "starting to make those spaces under the bridge feel nicer, have less trash," he said.

Serana said she would want to ask constituents, particularly those in Fair Haven, what she could do to help them feel connected to the rest of the ward.

Tanbee Smith said in a Thursday phone interview that she was "excited about the energy" that the contested election represents.

"I'm a big believer that of course an exciting outcome of elections is who's elected, but I also think the best elections and the best campaigns are opportunities to have a surge of involvement and engagement in a community," she said.

Early voting will begin on Sept. 10.

Contact
NELLIE KENNEY *at*
nellie.kenney@yale.edu.



CHRIS RANDALL AND WILL GRUBBS
Maria-Threese Serana, a Democratic Socialist, is facing off against Gavin Arnold to replace former Alder Caroline Tanbee Smith '14 SOM '25, who stepped down from her position representing parts of East Rock and Fair Haven in early August.

Vibrant smoothie bar closes York Street branch after financial strain

BY ELSPETH YEH
STAFF REPORTER

As students flooded back to campus for the new academic year, one trendy establishment was not there to greet them.

Pedals Smoothie and Juice Bar, the local chain known for its acai bowls and fresh fruit smoothies, closed its location at 284 York St. on Aug. 14. While Pedals maintains its New Haven presence with its storefront in East Rock, its York Street location was especially convenient for many Yale College students.

Katie Hughes-Nelson SOM '21, who owns Pedals, said that the York Street location had a particular bond with the Yale community.

"We're very sad to leave York Street," she said in a phone interview. "When the students were there, we did well, and when the students weren't there, we often did very poorly, and it was just tough to make money that way."

The 284 York St. space is currently being cleaned out, and The Shops at Yale team is looking to place the location on the market in the near future.

Hughes-Nelson said the York Street Pedals location barely broke even — a stark contrast to her other successful ventures, including a restaurant in Middletown, Conn., that services Wesleyan University. When evaluating the location's performance over the last five years, Hughes-Nelson and her husband struggled to find a way to make the business more profitable, and eventually decided it should close, she said.

The lease for Pedals' York Street location — first signed during the COVID-19 pandemic when Hughes-Nelson was inspired to create a healthy, nutrition-based restaurant — expired this year. To renew the lease, she would have had to commit to another five years.

"I got my MBA from Yale School of Management five years ago now, and a lot of those lessons came into play too with the risk of running a business that only makes a bit of money," Hughes-Nelson said.

There were other aspects of the lease that Hughes-Nelson found unfavorable. For one, the lease prohibited her from selling the business if she decided to move on. It also required her to maintain the HVAC system.

The storefront at 284 York St. is owned and managed by Yale University Properties, and Pedals was affiliated with The Shops at Yale.

"University Properties works closely with each of our tenants to establish lease terms that support a successful and sustainable tenancy," David DelVecchio, the director of real estate asset management for University properties, wrote in an email to the News. "As with most commercial leases, there are provisions governing the sale or transfer of a business to ensure that any prospective new operator is appropriately qualified," he wrote.

The loss of Pedals is already being felt within the Yale student body.

Pedals' focus on sustainability and community involvement was a significant draw for Mercuri Lam '28, who said they were an avid customer.

"I've always been super into health foods and I shop at a lot of local businesses, so the fact that they were also pretty present in the New Haven farmers market scene was really important to me," they wrote in a text message.

Lam enjoyed using Pedals as a study space, and even spent their birthday there. They spoke highly of the service they received and had been hoping to apply for a position behind the juice bar before the closure.

Hughes-Nelson found that Yale athletes, stopping by on their way to the gym, seemed to particularly enjoy Pedals.

Keeran Murray '28, a varsity athlete on the Yale men's track and field team, said he was a regular customer at Pedals and is sad to see the York Street location go.

"I go to Pedals after really difficult training sessions," he wrote in a text message. "It gives me a healthy snack on my way to study in Sterling."

Lam wrote the closure "speaks to how unattainable and hard it is to operate a small business in New Haven especially on Yale owned property."

According to DelVecchio, supporting a "diverse mix of local, regional, and national businesses" remains a priority for The Shops at Yale team.

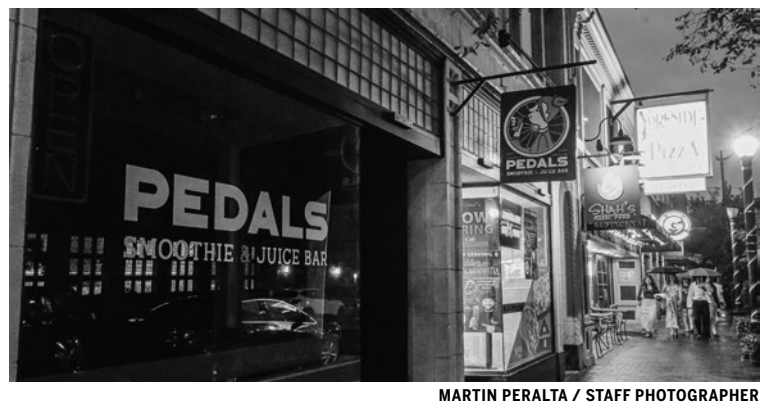
"We just love all things Yale so much that it was hard to say goodbye," Hughes-Nelson said.

Pedals continues to serve at its State Street location and from pop-ups at local markets, and Hughes-Nelson hopes to remain involved in future Yale events.

"We definitely think of it as a successful venture, even if it didn't make a lot of money," Hughes-Nelson said. "As far as I'm concerned, it was, and we loved meeting the students."

Pedals' York Street location opened in November 2021.

Contact
ELSPETH YEH *at*
elspeth.yeh@yale.edu.



MARTIN PERALTA / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
After five years of blending, Pedals Smoothie and Juice Bar is closing down its York Street location due to subpar business performance. It is unclear what venture will replace the local chain beloved by students for its healthy offerings.

Arrests made following local street takeover as crackdown continues

BY EVELYN RONAN
STAFF REPORTER

In a garage chock-full of confiscated all-terrain vehicles, or ATVs, a host of law enforcement personnel — including newly-appointed Yale Police Chief John Healy — announced the arrests of 11 participants in a gathering of motorists over the weekend.

The four-wheelers were forfeited following the arrests of the riders, who participated in a street takeover — a type of gathering in which riders on ATVs and dirtbikes swarm streets and clog intersections at night to engage in reckless driving — that began last Friday at New Haven's Long Wharf. New Haven Police estimated that between 200 and 300 participants raced through the streets of downtown New Haven and into other Connecticut towns during the takeover.

The gatherings of motorists have long plagued New Haven and stymied local leaders. Mayor Justin Elicker has staunchly supported legislative pushes to increase fines on riders and impound more illegal ATVs. Owners can appeal the seizure of their vehicle, but if denied, city officials can crush forfeited ATVs instead of auctioning them off under a state law passed in June 2025.

The New Haven Police Department announced in a Friday Facebook post that they were aware of the "End of Summer Ride Out," a scheduled street takeover with ATVs, dirtbikes and stolen vehicles, and said the department intended to make arrests where appropriate.

"We will catch you, we will hold you accountable and the accountability is pretty severe," Mayor Justin Elicker said, addressing ATV riders. "We've had enough."

The mayor also noted that many convicted ATV riders are also carrying illegal firearms.

Matt King, captain of the Connecticut State Police Department's Central District, said that ATV riders are often intoxicated and carry dangerous or deadly weapons.

The multi-agency team behind the arrests consisted of the New Haven, North Haven, West Haven, Yale and Connecticut State police departments. Together, they seized 18 ATVs and made 11 arrests. So far this year, New Haven has recovered 381 stolen vehicles and made 110 corresponding arrests, according to New Haven Police Chief David Zannelli.

State law prohibits law enforcement from chasing off-road vehicles. Elicker said police departments have thus had to come up with "creative solutions" for apprehending ATV riders.

Zannelli said the department's strategy for derailing these street takeovers is "intelligence-driven" but also relies on tips from community members. He said that technology like Stopstix, a tire deflation device, and Starchase, a GPS tracker that can monitor fleeing vehicles, are "safe ways to track people" who are evading arrest.

"The beauty of our technology is that we have cameras everywhere," Zannelli said. Offenders who are not already in custody could face charges upon video footage review, he added.

Addressing would-be riders, Elicker offered his own advice: "Find another activity that is much more productive to the community, like painting and art, like playing music. There's all kind of different activities that one can do for their pleasure that don't impact negatively other communities."

Connecticut's Joint Regional Dirt Bike and ATV Task Force was formed in September 2023.

Contact
EVELYN RONAN *at*
evelyn.ronan@yale.edu.



EVELYN RONAN / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
With Yale police and multiple Connecticut agencies, New Haven police thwarted ATV use and vehicle theft after motorists took to city streets last weekend.