



Women's Basketball Team To Play Home Games at Four Different Locations This Season

By Chana Weinberg



When the Yeshiva University's women's basketball team takes the court for their first home game of the 2017-2018 season, the white jerseys and the name on the scoreboard will be the sole indicators that they are the home team. The locker room will have no nameplates and there will be no Macs logo underfoot at the tip-off.

After nine years of playing home games at Baruch College, the women's basketball team will play their 10 home games at four different locations. On September 15, Baruch notified the YU athletics department that the ARC Arena at Baruch College was being rented out by The King's College. With just eight weeks to go before the season began, Carly Moss, Assistant Athletic Director, tried to find a new and consistent gym that would fit the schedule.

"If I would have heard earlier, I could have made arrangements at another gym," said Moss. "In NYC, specifically midtown Manhattan, there are a plethora of colleges and universities that need to use NCAA regulation courts for practice and game times, yet only a sparse number of gyms."

Although the women currently practice in the Max Stern Athletic Center (MSAC) on the Wilf campus in Washington Heights, they are unable to use the space for games for a variety

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Dennis Prager to Speak at YU in December

By Avi Strauss

Famed political commentator Dennis Prager will come to Yeshiva University for a talk on December 4th for an event organized by YU's Young America's Foundation chapter.

Several of YAF's members sparked controversy last fall when they invited Ben Shapiro to address the student body for an event that was attended by over 800 students. While speaking to a mostly receptive audience, Shapiro ignited a firestorm with comments declaring transgenderism to be a "mental disorder."

Prager's invitation appears to be an attempted encore by the students who organized last year's event, as they try to repeat last year's audience size and the subsequent political debate.

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Syms Administration Increases Efforts to Combat Cheating

By Yossi Zimilover

Joining the push for increased academic integrity on campus, the Sy Syms School of Business administration has recently taken new steps to combat the issue of students cheating within the school. Interim Dean Michael Strauss stated that additional proctors have been added to administer final exams, posters that promote academic integrity will be hung up in classrooms, and room assignments will now be announced the morning of exams, instead of on the previous day. The move was taken in response to an incident in which students placed post-it notes with information on them in the classroom the day before the test in order to cheat, described Strauss.

The Syms administration has also instructed the faculty not to reuse finals from semester to semester, or assign take-home exams. Instead, professors have been told to create numerous versions of multiple choice tests so students cannot easily copy from their neighbors. Additionally, the faculty has been told not use test-banks, which are documents provided to professors from textbook authors that contain thousands of potential questions that can be used to create tests, "because unfortunately students can go online and get test-banks," Strauss remarked.

Strauss said that from his first days at Syms, he has been "laser focused" on trying to eliminate cheating, especially during finals and midterms. He explained that it is not a new phenomenon and the problem has been

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The EDITORIAL

Ambiguous Requirements in the Yeshiva College Honors Program

By Benjamin Koslowe

There is a disconnect between the students and the administration about Yeshiva College's Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein Honors Program.

Somewhere between 150 and 200 men on the Wilf Campus are current Yeshiva College honors students. They all demonstrated sufficient academic success and intellect in high school to merit anywhere from \$10,000 to full academic scholarships.

In addition to monetary benefits, the Honors Program offers its students special courses, lectures, and cultural outings, all of which typically boast low student-faculty ratios and high academic rigor. The Honors Program also makes several demands of its students. It is from these requirements that our disconnect between honor students and the administration has sprouted and continues to grow.

Uncontroversially, honors students must maintain a GPA of at least 3.4 to keep up their merit scholarships. It is likewise undisputed that a student officially graduates from the Honors Program only if he completes 108 credits in residence, takes six honors electives, and writes a senior honors thesis.

But there is grey area too. May a student enjoy a scholarship from the honors program and yet choose to not graduate with Honors? In fact, a large percentage of Yeshiva College honors students do not graduate from the Honors Program. Instead, they operate as honors students for three years, accrue 84 on-campus credits and 128 total credits (typically 32 off-campus credits are awarded for a year of learning in Israel), and then receive a diploma awarding them regular, non-Honors Yeshiva College degrees. These students benefit from significant merit scholarships, but do not write senior theses.

The nature of the thesis requirement is vague. YU's website states that "the culmination of the honors program is a senior honors thesis." Regarding the scholarships, the website explains that they "last for as many years as students are enrolled and remain in good standing in the program." These formulations leave open to interpretation whether honors students stand to lose their scholarships if they indicate intent to graduate without Honors, or whether the senior thesis is merely an option that students can forgo, along with the Honors title on their diploma, if they so desire. No applications or signed agreements are any more specific on this matter.

This past January, Professor Shalom Holtz took over as Director of the Honors Program. In April, he sent an email to honors students eligible to graduate in 2018. After reminding them of the requirement to complete six honors courses and to write a thesis, his email concluded: "Students in your situation face the tempting prospect of taking the merit-based financial aid without any intention of completing the program. Be advised that acting on this temptation violates the terms of your award and may result in its termination for your final semester(s) on campus."

That week in April, I heard many students express anxiety about Professor Holtz's email. Some of these students were already finishing their second year in Yeshiva College, set on an academic path toward graduation the next year—a path they believed to be acceptable. The email's implicit demands were by no means insignificant: either stay another year and write a thesis or pay a retroactive fine of up to \$40,000 for a third year on campus.

Holtz sent a similar email just this past week to fourth-year honors students who have yet to propose a thesis topic. This reminder email concluded: "Please be aware that if you intend to graduate without writing a thesis, you will have dropped out of the Honors Program and your merit-based funding may be suspended for Spring, 2018." Once again, there was palpable confusion on Wilf Campus.

I recently decided to confirm on my own what I sensed to be the student pulse. I surveyed over 150 current Yeshiva College honors students, asking them if they plan to write a thesis, and, if not, why. I also left room for additional comments. The survey generated 55 responses from students spanning nearly all Yeshiva College majors and class statuses (18 first-years, 17 second-years, 16 third-years, and 4 fourth-years).

Roughly half of those who responded indicated an intention to complete the Honors Program and a senior thesis. This

corresponds to what I gathered from many conversations with administrators and others involved with the Honors Program to be the amount of students who matriculate with honors and wind up completing the Honors Program (estimates ranged anywhere from 20% to 50%).

More importantly, the majority of students who filled out my survey—including those who themselves intend to write a thesis—believe that it is a permissible course of action to graduate in three years and forgo the Honors title on the diploma. As for historical trends, I reached out to Professor Holtz, Professor Gabriel Cwilich (the old Honors Program director), the deans, the Office of Admissions, and the Office of Institutional Research & Assessment for the number of honors students who completed the Honors Program and the number of those who supposedly violated their scholarship terms and did not. None of them were able to offer any concrete data.

The historical practice and current student sentiment is thus clear. Professor Holtz, in conversations that I had with him about his email, acknowledged that many honors students have not completed the program, and told me that he and the administration hope to begin a trend that will increase the percentage of students who finish the Honors Program and write a senior thesis. Dean Karen Bacon, the Dean of Yeshiva College, expressed to me as well that she believes that the "take the money and run" course of action is unethical. She pointed to the S. Daniel Abraham Honors Program at Stern College, where nearly 100% of students—because of strong oversight and the option to finish in three years—complete the program. In short, the administration believes that, despite recent practices and current opinions, Yeshiva College honors students have a responsibility to complete the program to the best of their abilities.

Several students in the survey's "additional comments" section, as well as others in person, told me that representatives from the Office of Admissions explicitly told them in high school, as one student succinctly put it, "that [benefitting from the Honors Program but graduating without Honors] was a legitimate plan of action."

It is worth considering why honors students might desire to graduate from the program in three years. In this regard, the second most common sentiment expressed in my survey was that, as another student described, "The program deliberately sets the rules so that it's virtually impossible to graduate with Honors with three years on campus, despite having a full year of credits from Israel." Indeed, graduating from the Honors Program requires 108 campus on-campus credits, which is impossible to complete in six semesters given the school's limit of 17.5 credits per semester. This student added, "I think this is unfair as honors students deserve to graduate from their program with four years of credits like any other YU student. Nor would staying three years on campus preclude writing a thesis."

If the senior thesis in fact represents what the Honors Program is all about—if YU grants generous scholarships for this very purpose—then the administrators of the program should make its requirements crystal clear. Sending ominous emails serves only to worry students. These emails also damage the credibility of the Honors Program because, in practice, the Office of Student Finance will not fine students who drop out of Honors at the eleventh hour. Moreover, it is wrong to force current students who have been grandfathered into the implicitly condoned system to write a thesis.

Instead, for a new trend to begin, the administration—together with the Office of Admissions—must fix the system starting with current high school seniors. New firm rules of expectations and potential punishments for non-participation can, with effort and clarity, become the norm within three or four years. In considering updated formulations, administrators should take students' concerns—particularly about residency requirements—seriously.

Or perhaps the senior thesis does not represent what the Honors Program is all about. Perhaps it is a nice project for some, but isn't right for all honors students.

Long-term thinking perfuses Yeshiva University air these days. Let's make the Honors Program a reason for students to study at Yeshiva University, not an inconvenience that turns them away.

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For 82 years, The Commentator has served students and administrators as a communicative conduit; a kinetic vehicle disseminating undergraduate social, religious, and academic beliefs across the student bodies; and a reliable reflection of Yeshiva student life to the broader Jewish and American communities.

The Commentator staff claims students spanning the diverse spectrum of backgrounds and beliefs represented at Yeshiva.

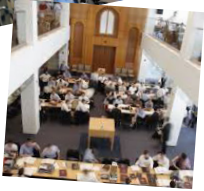
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1 Astros Win the World Series
#earnhistory. This city really does deserve this.



2 October 31st Fire Drill
Conspiracy theory: Rav Schachter pulled the alarm to make people daven Mincha in the Glueck Beit Midrash and not in the Heights Lounge.

3 YU Ideas
The first topic of this new "World of Tomorrow" initiative praises artificial intelligence. And no, that's not referring to the answers you copied off your friend's test paper.



4 Mailbox First Floor of Furst
Rumor has it that this hunk of antiquity is really a chute leading to a *National Treasure*-esque bounty. You heard it here first.



5 YU Barber
Creatively using ystud emails to advertise. I guess there's got to be some way to compete with the Heights' 24/7 salons.



6 Tohubohu
It's a real word. Look it up.

7 Winter Has Come
After a crazy-warm October, planet Earth has compensated with some frighteningly cold weather this past weekend. Turn up the heat and take out those heavy blankets, because we are in for the long night!

7 UP 7 DOWN



1 Stern Cheating Scandal
After learning in *Basic Jewish Concepts: Prayer* that sometimes God answers your *tefillot* with a "no," the students decided to take matters, and the midterm exam, into their own hands.

2 Boom Boom Pow
So 2008.

3 Seasonal Flavors
From now until New Year's, SOY will be offering pumpkin spice cholent in the Nagel commons on Thursday nights.

4 "Manhattan Schist"
The large slabs of stone on YU's 185th St. Plaza have begun to rust. Actually, take a look, it's really gross.

5 Baby Carrots
According to this Persian kid in my class, they're not a real thing, just carved from normal carrots. Such a letdown.

6 Journal of the Fine Arts
Mark October 30th as the first of 247 days on which you will receive multiple pestering emails about submitting to this YU publication.

7 Twitter
Honestly, I don't get why Twitter had to double its allowance to 280 characters. I mean, seriously, isn't 140 characters way more than enough

Letter to the Editor: The Seforim Sale 2018

To the students at Yeshiva University,

It has come to our attention that there has been a miscommunication regarding a supposed pricing policy that was instituted during our annual Fall Seforim Sale. Regardless of how the mistake came about, we want to emphasize that we mark up our prices according to what costs we receive from our vendors and not in accordance with any outside influence or organization. We apologize if there was anyone confused or offended by this misunderstanding and want to ensure to you, our classmates and friends, that we are dedicated to providing our customers with the fairest and most outstanding service possible.

Since our inception in 1964, we have been devoted to making Seforim available to the greater Jewish community, and, most importantly, the YU student body. We are committed to equality and access to Torah for all, regardless of identification or background. We want Torah to be tangible for all Jews in any and every form possible and are committed to providing the cheapest possible prices in order to obtain that knowledge. From our humble beginnings working out of a Yeshiva College dorm room to becoming the largest Jewish book sale in North America, we have constantly kept our goal in mind: to do everything for the talmidim of the university at large. We would have never reached this point without the support of you, the students. We are very grateful and appreciative for your continued support every step of the way and for that, we must thank each and every one of you.

Everything we do here at the Seforim Sale is for the students. From the middle of January when we begin to set up through clean up in the middle of March, we give the Sale everything we've got. We put our blood, sweat, and tears into it and while it's a daunting task, it's all a labor of love for our customers. Every detail - from the books to the CDs to the Roshei Yeshiva posters we order to the displays customers see - is thought through and approved by our Upper Staff and organized by our section managers, cashiers, backend staff, and interns. We treat every employee equally, as we'd like to every one of our patrons. Our goal is to make our clientele happy and never to discriminate against any person who walks through our doors in Weisberg Commons. We want every person to be satisfied and to feel as if he or she was treated properly under our care.

The Seforim Sale this year will run from February 4th through 25th, 2018. We will be working with thousands of titles and authors, as well as working with over one hundred students university-wide. We have over 30,000 loyal customers each year both in-store and on our website who use us as their means to expand their Torah knowledge.

This year, for the first time in over ten years, the Seforim Sale opened its Fall Sale on the Beren campus downtown. We offered a wide selection of books needed for Judaic classes, machzorim, and mussar seforim for the Yamim Noraim. This was a great opportunity in Torah accessibility for the next generation of Jewish scholars. This Fall Sale on Beren was run by women for women and we hope to continue and grow it for years to come.

But our work is far from done: looking forward to seeing all of you this February at the 2018 Sale!

The Seforim Sale 2018

Correction

An article titled "If You WILF It, It Should Be No Dream" in the October 23, 2017 issue of *The Commentator* about purchasing Gemaras at Stern incorrectly reported that Yeshiva University subsidizes the cost of Gemaras for its male students but not for its female students. *The Commentator* editors and the author have learned that any difference in prices was solely based on different book sizes. The pricing at both campuses was consistent. The original article has been taken down from the website.

Disrupt YU Boosts Student Startup Ideas to the Next Level

By Esti Kuperman

A new club at Yeshiva University is turning startup ideas into realities. The club, entitled Disrupt YU, aims to give students the tools and guidelines they need to turn their ideas into functional and successful startups.

Founded by Sy Syms School of Business juniors Menajem Benchimol and Zev Livitis, Disrupt YU's goal is to inspire current undergraduate students to get involved with startups and pursue their own ideas. The club will meet once a week and give students information on how to develop and pitch their own ideas.

Benchimol and Livitis plan to bring in both keynote speakers and past YU students who have been involved in startups as undergraduates. The meetings will be focused on giving lessons on various topics, including how to build a website, market research, financial evaluations, and creating a business proposal. The meetings will help students fine-tune their ideas and organize them into professional startup proposals. After a student organizes his or her idea, the student will present the finalized idea to the club's board members and a panel composed of undisclosed startup founders. If the panel approves, the club will then send the idea to an International Venture Capital firm (to be announced soon) that will work with them to see if the idea could be profitable.

Both Livitis and Benchimol have experience in the startup world. Livitis works at an International Venture Capital firm that invests in early stage startups as a campus ambassador for YU and Benchimol has a background in starting companies, such as Jabrutouch (an online chabura setup), and Kefbot (a chatbox agency). Benchimol and Livitis created Disrupt YU this past summer with the goal of catering to students who have startup ideas but no outlet to get them started.

"The lack of entrepreneurial spirit and startup culture [at YU] made us realize that there was a huge problem on campus, and we wanted to find a solution for this," said Benchimol. "Everyone wants to take the same career path, but what about following your passion and making a company from something you love to do and making money along the way?"

Sharon Pocster, recently instated Chair of the Sy Syms Management Department, which was recently renamed the Department of Strategy and Entrepreneurship, was optimistic about the new club. "The formation of Disrupt

YU represents YU's renewed commitment to elevating the entrepreneurship of our students and signals the clear growth of our department and the school to become a leading education center for entrepreneurship in NYC."

Benchimol describes Disrupt YU as "a club that will guide students from ideating their concepts, researching, and Minimal Viable Products, to preparing business proposals and an opportunity to pitch in front of a Venture Capitalist if their project [is] developed enough." Their goal is to make YU more of an entrepreneurial school,

their accomplishments to get involved and pursue their own ideas.

"From my involvement with Tamid, I know that there are many students in YU who have startup ideas or are interested in being part of a startup ecosystem and it sounds like this club will aid them in their efforts," said Adam Kramer, a senior in the Sy Syms School of Business.

Disrupt YU is open to all students in Yeshiva College, Stern College for Women and Sy Syms School of Business, regardless of their major. The club will hold its first event



similar to schools that foster startup ideas such as MIT or Stamford. They want to see students from YU being responsible for the newest Apps or innovations that are sweeping the world today.

Livitis and Benchimol believe that Yeshiva University students are innovative and intelligent and with the right guidelines and leadership, they can achieve boundless goals. They are hoping that this club will be just the beginning and that students will inspire their peers with

after midterms and will shortly after begin lessons to help students develop their ideas and conduct market research.

"Remember, ideas are worthless without execution," said Benchimol. "We want students to stop pushing off their ideas and start executing them. Even if they don't work out and fail you can learn from your mistakes and try again with your next idea."

CHEATING, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

bothering him for many years. "As soon as I came here, I heard that there was some cheating going on," he stated. "There is as much cheating going on here [at Syms] as in any other school, less so with the women, but the cheating is not only [at] Sy Syms, it's all over," he added. Strauss claimed that cheating is not prevalent but recognized that that there is certainly a perception that it is occurring, and remarked that "perception is reality."

When discussing the consequences for getting caught cheating, Strauss said that although a zero-tolerance policy, meaning expulsion, exists at several other universities, he does not feel that such a policy is necessary because he has been hearing "less and less" regarding cheating incidents and believes that the issue is not prevalent. When detailing the current policy, he said that those caught cheating will instead receive a failing grade in the course. "We want to give our students an opportunity, [but] we can't let it just slide, so they do have to fail the course." He clarified that this policy is extended to those caught plagiarizing, and explained that repeat offenders will be forced to take a leave of absence for that semester. Strauss believes that these policies are sufficient and hopes he will never have to enact a zero-tolerance policy, "but if we have to, we will," he remarked.

Liz OuYang was also hired as the Finals Exam Director of Syms, a position in which her total responsibility is to handle finals, in an attempt to minimize cheating. According to Strauss, her responsibilities include interviewing and assigning proctors and creating a set of guidelines which include a prohibition on cellphone use during tests, and a requirement that students sit in alternating chairs in the classrooms. These guidelines have been implemented for midterms as well.

OuYang explained that she was hired to be the Final Exams Director of Yeshiva College (YC) over 10 years ago, and approximately two years ago, she was appointed to the same position at Sy Syms on the Wilf campus. "It helps to have an outsider be the Exam Director, [because] it brings more objectivity and credibility to the process," OuYang stated. "I am an attorney and adjunct [professor] at area schools so I understand the needs of teachers, students, and need for rules to have an orderly exam process," she added.

She described how she has transferred parts of YC's exam protocol to Syms, including "checkered seating where multiple exams are being given, securing outside proctors, [allowing] no bathroom breaks, and uniform standards for approving deferrals."

At the Student-Deans Forum on Academic Integrity in Spring 2017, Dr. Moses Pava, former Dean of Syms, predicted that in five years there would be cameras in the back of classrooms to prevent cheating and to catch offenders. When asked for an update, Strauss said that the Syms administration discussed the technology with YU facilities services, but noted that it is a major expense and not much progress has been made in the area. "If

"DEAN STRAUSS EMPHASIZED THAT WHILE THE ADMINISTRATION WAS DOING EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO PREVENT CHEATING, 'THE BOTTOM LINE IS, STUDENTS THEMSELVES NEED TO FEEL THAT THEY SHOULDN'T BE CHEATING.'"

we need cameras to convince students not to cheat then I think we're in a bad place," he remarked.

Dean Strauss emphasized that while the administration was doing everything in its power to prevent cheating, "the bottom line is, students themselves need to feel that they shouldn't be cheating." He noted that one of the pillars of the Sy Syms School of Business is ethics and that students should hold themselves to a strong ethical standard, especially at Yeshiva University.

This message was reiterated in an email that was sent to the Syms student body regarding academic integrity on November 2nd, which concluded with the following message. "Once students enter the corporate world, opportunities to advance due to unethical and/or illegal means will, of course, present themselves. The consequences of being caught in such cases can be life altering to the individual and can generate a traumatizing Chillul Hashem. Students should therefore utilize their years at the Sy Syms School of Business and Yeshiva University as a time to strengthen their ethical behavior in preparation for successful careers."

Diversity Club Seeks to Break Down Borders Between YU Students

By Elana Luban

A new club at Yeshiva University is seeking to celebrate the differences among the student body, whether in skin color, sexual orientation or country of origin. Dubbed “the Diversity Club,” this club will focus on emphasizing the fact that each student is more than just what makes him or her distinct, said the club’s founder, Rivkie Reiter.

Reiter, a senior at Stern College, founded the club when she realized that Yeshiva University was more diverse than she originally thought. “People, myself included, love to joke about how homogeneous Yeshiva University is,” Reiter said. “But that’s an oversimplification.” To Reiter, the fact that the student body is quite diverse is often overlooked. “We have the Sephardi Club, we have the International Club, and they try to celebrate specific niche cultures, but there are so many other things that make students at YU different from one another,” she said.

The idea for the club came after a few informal conversations Reiter had with friends at Yeshiva and Stern College who represent minorities on both campuses, such as gay and convert students, along with a few other underrepresented groups. After a few meetings with Chaim Nissel, University Dean of Students, in which Reiter and a group of friends explained the lack of outlets for students who fall outside of the average YU student type, the idea for a “Diversity Club” was born.

Dean Nissel said he thinks the Diversity Club, with its purpose of educating the YU community about diversity among the student body and the challenges different groups experience, is very important. “Getting to know the ‘other’ is essential, and one of the keys to reducing xenophobia and intolerance,” Nissel said. “We can acknowledge our differences and still accept that people are more alike than different.” Everyone is created in the image of God, and therefore everyone deserves to be treated with respect, Nissel explained.

Clubs with similar missions have sprung up in Yeshiva University in the past. “The Tolerance Club” was founded by Avi Kopstick in 2008 with a mission to to spread “the notion that every person, within YU and without, deserves to be treated with dignity and respect,” according to the Tolerance Club’s one-time newsletter, published for the entire student body in November of 2008.

The board of the club, Reiter said, is still in its formative stage and sign-ups to join the club are still available. Ideally, Reiter explained, the goal would be to eventually expand and have specific subcommittees, like a Sephardic Committee, a Convert (or “Jew By Choice”) Committee, and an LGBTQ+ Committee, among others. At this point,

however, the priority is getting the club off the ground. Some other more immediate goals include running joint events with other clubs, like the Sephardic Club or Active Minds. In addition, Reiter hopes the club can run some faculty-centered events in which it can bring in speakers with minority-centric stories to share with students to help them see the world through their eyes. Reiter and Pittler say they’ve also been talking to Dean Nissel about a particularly exciting speaker that the University is bringing in and how to spread the news to as many students as possible.

“I think it’s a great platform for people from all different backgrounds and groups to come together,” said Alex Pittler, a senior at Stern College majoring in accounting who contributed to the club’s creation during its early stages by making flyers and tabling at the Beren Club Fair. Pittler acknowledged that YU has a lot of clique problems and believes this club will give people a chance to be themselves while learning more about other students and their backgrounds. “Hopefully, this will become the club that helps cross those invisible boundaries between students,” she said.

In addition, Pittler hopes the club will enable students to come together as a stronger unit against anti-Semitism, reaching further than just Yeshiva University. “There are enough miscommunications and misunderstandings between us [Jews] and the outside world... I think this club will help us work towards eliminating much of that within ourselves.” Pittler believes that working through individual differences in the student body will let the university become all the more united against broader issues like anti-Semitism.

she finds the YU environment somewhat suffocating. “Many students are afraid to speak out about their differences,” she remarked. Marks regards a group setting like this club as the perfect outlet for these students and believes it’s “very healthy to have on campus.” The reality is, she said, “a lot of people feel like they can’t be their true selves since they might not necessarily see or know anyone on campus with a similar identity, orientation, or feelings.”

“I think it’s a great idea,” said Yonah Taurog, a third-year Math and Computer Science major and the only Vietnamese-American student at Yeshiva College, about the club. “It’s never a good feeling to be the outsider kid.” Taurog recalls a specific incident from a shabbaton this semester on the Beren Campus in which a Yeshiva College student he didn’t know at all approached him and asked, “Where are you from?” When Taurog replied, “I’m from Texas, what about you?” the student said, “No, I mean where are you *really* from?”

“Anyone who doesn’t feel like they belong here shouldn’t be feeling that way,” Taurog said.

Reiter believes that the Orthodox community is often too hesitant in opening its mind to variation, leaving many students feeling overlooked. She brought as an example the idea of “ashkenormativity,” a term that refers to a perception of all Ashkenazi-related practices and customs as the “norm” (a phenomenon especially present in most American communities), and a subtle yet significant disregard for all non-Ashkenazi groups. Another issue, she explained, is the way in which the Orthodox community generalizes about and overlooks its *Baalei Teshuva* and converted community members and the unique issues

“I THINK A CLUB THAT SUPPORTS, PROMOTES, AND PROVIDES A SAFE SPACE FOR INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES WHICH MIGHT NOT BE ACCOMMODATED BY OTHER SPACES OR CLUBS IS INCREDIBLE AND VERY NECESSARY; SAID COURTNEY MARKS, AN OPENLY GAY PRE-MED STUDENT AT STERN COLLEGE.”

“I think a club that supports, promotes, and provides a safe space for individual differences which might not be accommodated by other spaces or clubs is incredible and very necessary,” said Courtney Marks, an openly gay pre-med student at Stern College. She explained that although she is fully “out” to her Modern Orthodox family members,

they might face.

“So while YU has some clubs that represent different ideas and cultures,” Reiter argues, “the Diversity Club is here to celebrate what makes us unique, and remind ourselves of everything that connects us.”

Report: SOY Spends \$6,400 a Year on Cholent

By Avi Strauss

According to former Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY) leaders, SOY spends upwards of \$6,400 on cholent each year. Current SOY president Dovid Simpser confirmed the council is on track to spend a similar sum on cholent during the current academic year.

Cholent is a mainstay of many yeshiva-oriented programs, like Thursday night mishmars and Friday night tisches, where as many as 200 students may show up to get a bowl of the traditional Jewish stew.

According to last year’s SOY president Shua Brick, SOY spends approximately \$800 per Thursday night mishmar, which precedes an In-Shabbos, and has also paid a similar sum once per year in the past two years to serve cholent at an In-Shabbos kiddush on Shabbat morning.

“SOY is here to enhance the student-yeshiva experience on campus,” remarked Simpser. “That means working hard to implement appealing and exciting programming, as well as giving the students the food they want.”

Under the current Wilf campus student council budget framework, SOY receives 28% of uptown students’ student activity funds, which totaled just over \$47,000 in the 2016-2017 academic year. This means that SOY cholent spending translates to 13.5% of its annual budget.

This percentage does not include any funds which SOY may contribute to Cholentfest, an annual student cholent cooking competition sponsored by several student councils, and subsidies for In-Shabbatot, during which cholent is provided by the Office of Student Life.

Cholent, and SOY’s spending on it, became a major issue in the SOY presidential election in the Spring of 2016, when students upset with what they called the “Gush Establishment” complained SOY officials were planning to serve less cholent at events

in order to pay for other SOY programming. Frustration at the time led some students to rally around the slogan “Make SOY Great Again” and consider any cuts to spending on cholent an attack on the yeshiva elements of YU.

Students like Yeshiva College Junior and Mazer Yeshiva Program student Daniel Schwarz seem to agree. “Not only is YU’s great, but the Thursday night ‘cholent chill’ gives a really warm feeling to the YU Yeshiva experience,” said Schwarz.

“I’m so glad that they’re willing to spend it on us,” echoed Junior Shimon Cohen, continuing, “because it really brightens up my week, and gives me that homey yeshiva feel that can sometimes be lacking in YU.”

Other students found the sum spent on cholent to be high. Sophomore Benjamin Freund, also in MYP, commented, “spending that much money on cholent is a bit excessive for the type of social hangout that the Thursday night mishmar program has become.”

Cholent appears to be a key item in the council budget, and will appear at several large events throughout the academic year.



Fall Wilf Election Results Announced

By Ben Strachman

The winners of the fall Wilf campus student council election on October 24th were announced the day after the election. Detailed election results were released by the Canvassing Committee for the first time after an amendment to the Wilf Campus Constitution was ratified last semester requiring it to do so.

Daniel Ferber won the race for Sophomore Representative, Yehuda Brick won Junior Representative, Amitai Miller won YSU VP of Clubs, and Akiva Clair won the new position of SOY PR Secretary. After no students declared candidacy for Freshman Representative or JSS Representative, the positions remain unfilled after no write-in candidate garnered the minimum of twenty votes and a plurality of the vote necessary to win.

A total of 357 students, or 32% of the male undergraduate student body, voted in the election, marking a significant decrease in voter participation from the spring 2017 election, where 548 students, or 50% of the student body, voted. The spring election, seen by many as the more important of the two yearly elections, in which students

vote for the YCSA, YSU, SOY, and SYMSSC presidencies, has historically pulled in a higher turnout.

Daniel Ferber won 52% of votes cast, 54 votes in total, compared to the 36% of the runner-up. Yehuda Brick won 56% of the vote, 70 votes in total, compared to the 37% of the runner-up. 246 students voted for Amitai Miller, 74% of the votes for declared candidates, and his opponent won 26%. Akiva Clair received 177 votes, 54% of votes cast for declared candidates, and his opponent won 149 votes, 46% of the vote.

In accordance with the amendment passed last semester requiring the Canvassing Committee to share the detailed results of the election with the student body within three days of the election, Canvassing Committee Chairman Nolan Edmonson shared the results with *The Commentator* the night after the election and sent an email with the results to the student body the day after the election.



“World of Tomorrow” Panel Discusses Role of YU in a Changing World

By Eli Weiss

On Sunday, October 22, Yeshiva University hosted a conference entitled “Yeshiva University and the World of Tomorrow.” Coming on the heels of President Berman’s September investiture, the program was designed to examine and discuss YU’s role in the future of a rapidly changing world, primarily in the areas of education, values, leadership, and marketplace.

Over 500 students, alumni and members of the YU community attended the event, which took place on the Wilf Campus. The conference featured breakout sessions with more than 40 presenters that covered a range of topics and disciplines including textual learning and the use of social media in a rapidly changing world.

The program opened with an interview of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, former chief rabbi of the United Kingdom. During the interview, which was conducted by Rabbi Ari Lamm, special advisor to President Berman, Rabbi Sacks spoke about the challenges that face the Orthodox community in the “world of tomorrow.” He concluded the interview by challenging YU to add to the meaning and spirituality of a world that is rapidly moving away from them.

“We have 4,000 years of culture,” he remarked. “Modern orthodoxy is not the best we can come up with.”

After the opening program, speakers from a variety

of fields across the university and professional world led specialized sessions for the attendees. The guests were invited to attend two of the 13 breakout sessions, in which more than 40 presenters covered topics ranging from

“THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THESE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ARE A SIGN THAT WE LIVE IN AN ERA WHERE HISTORY IS MOVING FORWARD,’ SAID PRESIDENT BERMAN”

business to Jewish education.

At the “Business Leaders of Tomorrow” session, the panelists discussed the changing facade of the modern marketplace. Bruce Taragin, managing director of Blumberg Capital and one of the panelists, remarked “by the time my sixth grade child is ready to join the workforce, 65% of jobs will have been replaced by automation, and 40% of Fortune 500 companies will no longer exist.”

Laizer Kornwasser, a panelist at the event and a clinical

professor in the Sy Syms School of Business, asserted that “experiential learning” is the most important feature that educators should be integrating into the classroom.

“Being at the conference was an incredible opportunity to recognize and learn from YU’s diverse faculty, industry innovators, and spiritual leaders,” said Joshua Zirman, president of the Sy Syms School of Business Student Council. “I was shocked at the world experience the faculty has. Professors I had never heard of before were leading panels about educational reform, building non-profits, and the future of business.”

President Berman gave closing remarks and related how “Torat Tzion,” or our mandate to be “drivers of history,” is critical to understanding the role of Yeshiva University in the world of tomorrow.

“The very existence of these challenges and opportunities are a sign that we live in an era where history is moving forward,” said Berman, “It is incumbent on us all to raise the next generation of people who can grapple with these changing realities.”

YU Announces Sharon Poczter as New Chair of Syms Management Department

By Shoshy Ciment

Sharon Poczter, former Professor in the Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University, has been formally announced as the Chair of the Department of Management of the Sy Syms School of Business. Under Poczter’s guidance, the Management Department will be renamed as the

“THE DEPARTMENT OF STRATEGY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP WILL INCREASINGLY FOCUS ON PREPARING STUDENTS TO MEET THE GOALS OF THE CURRENT MARKETPLACE.”

“Department of Strategy and Entrepreneurship.”

Poczter, who will also join Yeshiva University as an associate professor, taught at Cornell for five years, where she researched the role of the government in promoting growth in both emerging and advanced economies. Poczter’s columns have been published in The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, Fox News, and the Hill. Poczter

received her BS in Applied Economics and Management from Cornell University and a Masters and PhD of Business and Public Policy from the University of California Berkeley.

The renaming of the Management Department is a feature of a larger initiative to rebrand the department as a whole. The Department of Strategy and Entrepreneurship will increasingly focus on preparing students to meet the goals of the current marketplace.

“The Strategy and Entrepreneurship department will be a one-stop shop for students looking for preparation for consulting and strategy roles, as well those looking to build their own companies either now or in the future,” Poczter said in an email distributed by Michael Strauss, interim Dean of the Sy Syms School of Business.

There are currently 29 full-time students in the Sy Syms School of Business with a concentration in Management—18 at Wilf, 11 at Beren. There are several hundred students enrolled in management courses this semester.



Office of Student Life Institutes New \$150 Fine for Breaking Coed Shabbaton Rules

By Eli Weiss

The Office of Student Life has instituted a new fine of \$150 dollars for the violation of any of the coed shabbaton rules that male students sign in agreement to prior to the shabbaton. The rules include a requirement to attend all tefillot, meals, and “all scheduled programs” over the shabbaton.

Rabbi Josh Weisberg, the Senior Director of the Office of Student Life, conveyed over email that the fine was designed to “reimburse the university for monies spent” on the student that violated the rules of the shabbaton, and that fines would be dealt with on an “individual basis by the disciplinary committee.” The shabbatons are “highly subsidized by the Office of Student Life” said Weisberg. “The goal of these co-ed shabatonim is to enhance the Shabbat experience at the Beren campus and to provide

healthy opportunities for social interaction.”

A student who wishes to remain anonymous who has

“RABBI JOSH WEISBERG, THE SENIOR DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF STUDENT LIFE, CONVEYED OVER EMAIL THAT THE FINE WAS DESIGNED TO ‘REIMBURSE THE UNIVERSITY FOR MONIES SPENT’ ON THE STUDENT THAT VIOLATED THE RULES OF THE SHABBATON.”

been penalized for violating one of the rules stated he initially felt that the fine was a positive thing. “It seems like a good way to enforce the rules,” he said. After learning that the fine could be exercised because a student missed any part of the shabbaton, he expressed concern and said it would “majorly impact” his decision to participate in future shabbatons.

Another student who often participates in coed shabbatons, Yeshiva College Junior Yaacov Siev, expressed skepticism. “The [students who break the rules and get away with it will continue to break the rules.” Siev was concerned that the Office of Student Life would not enforce the rules, stating, “if they want [more students to follow] the rules they should bump up the enforcement, not the consequences.”



Raised Student Activity Fees Find a Home, OSL Prepares Changes in Overall Fund Distribution

By Avi Strauss

Two months into the Fall semester, the additional \$200,000 for student activities, which arose as a result of the recent increase in the student activity fee, has been allocated to Dean of Students Dr. Chaim Nissel for distribution amongst the Office of Student Life (OSL) and the student councils. This framework represents a shift in the status quo for student activity fee funding, as in the past, all money raised by the student activity fee was distributed to the student councils in proportion to the size of their undergraduate student constituencies.

Despite the \$50 per semester increase in the student activity fee, an additional charge outside of base tuition, the OSL and student councils have been operating as if they were budgeted last year's totals, pending the recent transfer of the additional money raised this year by the increased fee. In practice, this has yet to affect typical student programming, as the largest sums of money spent by these groups is directed towards large events like ChanukahFest and the Syms dinner, as well as new initiatives like "Swag Day" and evolving Shabbat programming which are all slated for later in the year.

In a phone call with The Commentator, Dean Nissel was enthused by the transfer of money, explaining that he plans to discuss the distribution of the money with the

"THIS FRAMEWORK REPRESENTS A SHIFT IN THE STATUS QUO FOR STUDENT ACTIVITY FEE FUNDING, AS IN THE PAST, ALL MONEY RAISED BY THE STUDENT ACTIVITY FEE WAS DISTRIBUTED TO THE STUDENT COUNCILS IN PROPORTION TO THE SIZE OF THEIR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT CONSTITUENCIES."

OSL and the student council presidents.

In the past, funds from the student activity fee were distributed exclusively to the student councils to fund student clubs and larger events and programs. However, as the increase in the student activity fee represents a 67% increase in overall funding, Dean Nissel is exploring varied

distributions, which would divide the distribution of funds between two entities. Under this new system, some additional funds would go directly to the student councils, coming directly from the additional \$200,000 raised this year, while the remaining funds would be directed to various departmental Student Life funds which are used to supplement funding for large events and programs when student councils request additional funds. In the past, the Student Life funds were filled with university funds or outside donations.

Although each council is given its own budget, large programs and events typically involve coordination and cooperation between councils and the OSL, which involves cost-sharing as well. In this regard, Dean Nissel felt confident the additional money from the raised student activity fee would be spent on programming that would benefit the largest amounts of students. He stressed that this money would not be spent on programs like student missions, which he believes are "important," but limited, as they each typically involve small groups of between 10 and 20 students. Rather, Nissel said "The student activity fees will be utilized to enhance the student experience by supporting larger scale programming for the majority of students to benefit from and enjoy."



PRAGER, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Prager, a political conservative, is a nationally syndicated radio host, columnist, public speaker and creator of the website Prager University, which features short videos on various political topics. He was raised Modern Orthodox and attend the Yeshivah of Flatbush. Prager is outspoken on a wide array of political issues, and holds strongly conservative positions on issues like same-sex marriage and the media.

He is also known to use extreme comparisons to amplify his stances, like comparing his support of Donald Trump in the presidential election to supporting "a Stalin" to defeat "a Hitler" and saying president Barack Obama's Iran Deal was equivalent to Neville Chamberlain's attempt to appease Hitler in 1938.

Prager's published works include two books, *The Nine Questions People Ask About Judaism* and *Why the Jews*, co-authored with Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, a RIETS-ordained Rabbi. This past year, that number amounted to \$586 million, or an average of a 12.6% pay increase per-employee. The company culture seeks to impart on its employees that each of them are vital to the team's success and this philosophy encourages them to always play their best.

There is evidence that other airlines in the industry are seeking to adopt Southwest's commitment to customer satisfaction. For too long, fliers have rightfully complained

about delayed flights, irritable personnel, and luggage weight limits and its possible that these grievances have finally met the ears of those in the boardroom. A 2016 study conducted by Wichita State University and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University found that the likelihood of lost baggage or a delayed flight has dropped along with the quantity of customer complaints and that these improvements have contributed to higher customer satisfaction (It is worth noting that Southwest receives the lowest number of customer complaints among the major airlines). Dean Headley, the co-author of the report, writes "People don't look at numbers. They just care about what happened to them." In other words, the staff, gate check workers, and flight attendants all contribute to the actual flight experience which could determine if a flier chooses a specific airline. It seems to be the case that a passenger's experience is inextricably linked to the behavior and actions of the employees on board.

In an economy that has been wholly transformed by automation, the airline industry remains one of the few that is still very much dependent on quality, face-to-face, employee-customer relations like those of Southwest. And while some airlines have taken steps to improve their flier experience, there is still a long way to go. If airlines want to ensure that their clients are satisfied, they ought to implement--or build upon--a system that encourages the highest degree of employee performance. Attention Airlines: Southwest's philosophy is ready for take-off.

The ChabOdd One Out

By Ellie Parker

Growing up in a *Ba'al Tshuva* (someone with a secular upbringing who becomes religiously observant) home has taught me a lot about authenticity. My parents' journey started when I was young and, although at times I may miss the luxury of pulling up to a McDonald's drive-through window, their fervor and passion for religion has made it impossible for me to deny it's realness. Every parenting book since the beginning of time implores it's readers to lead by example, something my Mom and Dad have taken to heart and mastered. My siblings and I know that our parents will support us in whatever endeavor we set out to achieve as long as it embodies something genuine. This knowledge and support was what allowed me to embark on my ongoing journey towards becoming Chabad.

In my immediate family alone, we span the entire religious spectrum, and, in this diversity, I now feel at home. My sister, a religiously unaffiliated expert on all things pop culture, differs significantly from my brother who can quote whole *gemaras* by heart, who is an anomaly to my eldest brother, who has found his place among the hipster-Conservative movement. Though our paths' may diverge in every which direction, we could not be prouder of one another.

One of the great things about being raised by *Baalei Tshuva* is that no idea or concept is off limits. Around our Friday night dinner table, my family discussions range from the deepest secrets of *Kabbalah* to my father's classic rendition of anything David Bowie to the latest news on TMZ. I always felt comfortable talking to my parents about my struggles and hiccups along the road to discovery, as I knew that they had been there too. So when I began to look seriously into the philosophy of Chabad, my parents could not have been more encouraging.

Although I now only see the blessings of my unique upbringing, it wasn't always that way. I struggled a lot in high school trying and fit myself into a box. I was envious of

my friends who, seemingly, had such a clear understanding of their place in religion. While my peers had religious *minhagim* (customs) that were set in stone, my family was still trying to find our footing. I resented my parents for their apparent satisfaction with our religious fluidity. While they seemed content not aligning themselves with a specific sect of Judaism, I found it impossible to be religious without a conventional structure.

As I searched for a place in Judaism, I found I was shaping myself to fit the mold of different groups. I would attend Modern Orthodox events in a knee length skirt and three-quarter sleeve top and quote appropriate passages of Rav Kook, thus playing the part I assumed my cohorts expected of me. When shifting gears towards more Chassidic occasions, I would make sure to throw on some stockings and read up on the Baal Shem Tov. Though this conformity allowed for smooth insertion into the various affiliations, it left me with a burning question. Which was the real me?

It wasn't until I stopped trying to fit in that I found the answer that I had been searching for for years. After almost a full year in a Modern Orthodox seminary, I decided to

learn Chabad's central work, the *Tanya*. No longer willing to dance between the two factions, I thought it was time to delve deep and find out which one truly resonated with me. As I read the Alter Rebbe's in-depth description of the yearning a Jewish soul has for sincerity, I was reminded of my nights around the Shabbos table.

Growth is meant to be ever changing, and the breadth of my family conversations epitomized a tangible journey towards truth and understanding. All at once, things that at one point seemed conflicting, like my difficulty in claiming a sect of my own, no longer seemed opposing. I began to view the stress that I had encountered in shaping my identity as the common discomfort of growing pains. I learned more about myself and my family in those two weeks reading the *Tanya* than I had growing up under my own roof. Truth means something different to everyone, and, after years of searching, I had found my own definition. Though my family and I may never be on the same page with the details of religion, I have found a place for myself in the diversity. Sometimes standing out is the only real way to fit in.



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

of reasons, mainly because of scheduling conflicts surrounding the gym. After reaching out to her contacts in other schools, Moss secured the Nat Holman Gymnasium at CCNY for five of the 10 home games. Two more games will be played at Maritime College in Throggs Neck, two more at the College of New Rochelle, and one game will be at Fordham University, a Division One school. YU opted to add Fordham to the list of home gyms to give the athletes the experience of playing in a Division One arena. Yeshiva University is a Division Three school, so the facilities that the athletes come in contact with are typically lower quality than those of Division One schools.

The lack of a consistent home game space brings to light a different issue: the team will not play games in the same place that it practices. The team practiced at Baruch until two seasons ago.

"It's very frustrating not to practice and play on the same court because we never know one court. We keep jumping around," remarked a member of the basketball team who wished to remain anonymous. "All courts are different sizes and lengths. It's very hard to learn to play with your team when the location you practice in is not the same as it is for a game."

Women's Basketball Coach Michael Alon echoed this sentiment. "Most teams play better at home, where they practice," he explained.

Playing home games on other courts is not a situation specific to Yeshiva University. At least seven NCAA varsity teams don't have a facility on their specific campuses, including teams at schools such as The King's College, NYU, and Cooper Union.

Joe Bednarsh, Athletic Director, understands the team's discomfort with playing in multiple arenas, but he also acknowledges that finding a gym at all while other NCAA colleges are also looking for home gyms in NYC is an accomplishment.

"It's not optimal that [the team] is playing home games in multiple locations, but this year with all the challenges that we have had, having found City College for the majority of the games is amazing," Bednarsh said.

In addition to having an inconsistency with the location for practices and games, not having a consistent home gym also makes it more difficult for spectators to come and watch the games. Ilana Kisilinsky, a senior at Stern College for Women, said, "I would love to continue to come to home games, but now that they are going to be in so many places, it's going to get hard to make it out." Baruch, which is located at 55 Lexington Avenue, only 10 blocks away from the Beren Campus, was convenient for spectators. In an attempt to give the unfamiliar courts at the new locations a home-crowd feel, the athletics department is considering distributing free giveaways and holding halftime competitions during games.

"My boss, [Senior Vice President] Josh Joseph has been very receptive to our ideas, he is always asking 'what can I do for you to make this program better'" said Bednarsh about the actions stated above.

Bednarsh, a member of the athletics department since 1991 and athletics director since 2006, has been working with YU leaders such as Joseph on additional changes this for season in regards to the women's practice experience at Wilf.

Though they can't clear out the rush hour traffic on the Harlem River Drive, the athletics department has cleaned out and given the women access to the visitor's locker room at MSAC with locks provided by the school. During practice hours, the restroom next to the locker room is switched to a women's restroom. Additionally, the women's basketball team was allowed to use MSAC for a scrimmage, a practice game against another team that has no effect on either team's regular season record, against Mercy College on October 26th.

The scrimmage was allowed to happen at MSAC because it is "essentially a practice; low key and informal," said Bednarsh. "As long as we kept to the same rules in terms of the facility being closed to anybody not involved in the practice, we were able to play it uptown."

According to Bednarsh, before Moss booked the other arenas for this season's games, the possibility of using MSAC was being "discussed internally." However, this never became a reality.

Michal Alge, senior captain of the women's basketball team and athletics liaison on the Beren Student Life

Committee, said that female athletes being barred from using MSAC for games sends an unclear message to the athletes. "Are we allowed to have the same access to MSAC as the men or not? Why should [women's] NCAA teams be any different when it comes to playing games?"

The YU men's basketball team currently uses MSAC for its home games. According to Bednarsh, the high demand for MSAC makes it difficult to fit women's games into its busy schedule.

"There is a delicate balancing act between the NCAA Teams, Recreation, Intramurals, HS, student event usage and University event usage," said Bednarsh. "We have to accommodate every one of the various constituencies and that does sometimes mean that other events take precedence over the NCAA teams...I also have to consider that the number of non-student-athletes is larger than the number of student-athletes and I need to be somewhat proportional in my considerations."

For the Maccabees, many believe Baruch would have been the best option for a home gym, to practice and play at, potentially better than MSAC.

"The team would then be able to practice and play on the same court, would have fewer travel delays, would have less frustration with truncated practices due to travel delays, among a host of other reasons," Bednarsh explained.

Unlike the scheduling issue that Bednarsh pointed out, Alon received a different reason for why the women's basketball team cannot play games at MSAC.

"There were a few but the main reason as I understood it was for religious spectator purposes," he said, referring to how women playing games on the Wilf campus could lead to men attending games where women are immodestly dressed.

Despite the inconsistency surrounding the location of games, Alge is confident in her team's ability to compete, regardless of the situation.

"No matter where we play, we will obviously be giving it our all," she said. "We are looking forward to a really successful season with our talented and committed team."



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Rewind: A New Marvel Movie Came Out, but I'm Rewatching Blade Runner Instead

By Josh Leichter

Thor: Ragnarok came out on November 3, making it the 17th movie in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. You read that correctly. Marvel has made 17 movies in almost 10 years. It is understandable that after such a long time, one would suffer from the fatigue of a cookie-cutter formula full of endless quips and flashing colors with a different superhero in the background. To combat this weariness, I turned the clock back to classic movies, the ones I prefer over the explosion-filled tent pole Blockbusters of 2017.

Don't get me wrong for a moment; I'm not some guy sitting on his rocking chair facing the street yelling at kids with their newfangled iPhones and rock n' roll music, just a movie buff craving the quality of the movies of the old. Being a sci-fi fan I turned back to the granddaddy of sci-fi, Blade Runner, a movie that turns most new viewers away because of its "three different versions" that must be watched (see last month's Commentator's Twin Peaks article) and the 2 hour 44 minute runtime of the sequel (Good Lord! That's practically three hours with no social media. How will any millennial survive?) But think about

it for one moment, without Blade Runner's steam punk dystopian future, there would be no Matrix. (Oh no! How will any Philosophy major attempt to prove our lives exist only in a mainframe of some computer?) There would be no Terminator (that one may be a blessing in disguise seeing how the most recent two in the franchise fared at the box office.) The point is that Blade Runner has inspired many science fiction movies and TV shows that have been on the screen in the last 35 years.

Some of you may be thinking, "Seriously, this little true-freshman is reviewing a movie that came out 19 years before he was born?" Well, I have an answer to that. Firstly, you wouldn't be lying about the little part; I am 5 feet and 3 inches. But you would be wrong on another account. The responses that I have gotten about a movie from 1982 is that the special effects are dated or that there aren't any explosions. While both of these criticisms are valid, the movie is a simple detective movie, and it does move pretty slowly. As a matter of fact it was dubbed Blade Crawler upon first release, which just added fuel to the fire for the haters who wonder why they should watch a 1 hour 45 minute movie that doesn't move as quickly as their Facebook feed updates or that they will need to pop a few

Adderall to focus on. To be honest ladies and gentlemen, this may not seem like the kind of movie anyone would want to watch, but trust me it is like a family event, it's more fun than it is on paper (quite literally).

Now for the million dollar question: What the heck is the movie about? Without further delays, I present to you a spoiler-free review of Blade Runner: The movie takes place in dystopian Los Angeles in the year 2019 where robots, referred to as "replicants" (maybe because the term robot was overused, but I wouldn't read too much into it) are illegal, but try to survive by integrating into human society. The replicants are identical matches to humans, though they lack emotions (kind of like that person that sits next to you in class). The LAPD has an elite force called Blade Runners, special police trained to hunt down these replicants. The movie centers on a Blade Runner named Deckard, played by a grumpy Harrison Ford, who is called out of retirement to find four replicants and kill them. What ensues is a pretty basic cop hunting criminals plot that has been used before and copied more times than I can count (I'm a Political Science major, I obviously can't do math.)

While it is as thin as dental floss on plot, the philosophy behind the movie makes up for it. This is the kind of movie that opens up debate about the nature of a character as well as what it means to be human. In terms of the infamous "three versions" that exist, skip over the theatrical release and director's cut and head straight for the 2007 final cut, which was the definitive edition that the director wanted to release in the first place, but of course the studio heads did not want it. The final cut adds a few previously deleted scenes, has a better ending than the theatrical cut, and leave Blade Runner a much more ambiguous yet compelling film. The special effects and coloring of the movie are also digitally restored to be clearer, and it definitely helps the movie age better.

Despite its flaws, Blade Runner continues to inspire the sci-fi genre, and overall I would give it a 3 and 1/2 out of 4. So all that's left is to watch it, and, as always, don't forget to rewind.



FROM THE COMMIE ARCHIVES

Editor's Note: With Deans at both Yeshiva College and Sy Syms School of Business instituting new reforms to testing protocols and initiatives to combat cheating and reaffirm YU's commitment to academic integrity, The Commentator has decided to reprint the following article from close to 30 years ago, from a different wave of student discontent with academic integrity and a university push to enhance it.

From the Archives (November 28, 1990; Volume 55 Issue 5) — New Proctor to Crack Down on Cheating

By David J. Kay

Dr. Robert Moss, Professor of Biology, has recently been appointed by YC Dean Rosenfeld as the new Director of Examinations. Moss replaces Mrs. Dobkin, the former head proctor and organic chemistry laboratory instructor who retired at the end of last year.

Laying Down the Law

- Only a writing implement may be brought into the examination room.
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- No assignment may be submitted at the exam.
- Seating assignments are to be strictly observed.
- Proctors may request to see ID.
- Students may not leave the exam during the first 60 minutes. Anyone needing to use the rest rooms must do so before the exam begins. After the first 60 minutes, students wishing to visit the bathroom may do so one at a time, and only when escorted by a proctor.
- Violation of any of these rules will be reported to the Director of Examinations and the Dean, and may result in disciplinary action.

Moss has immediate plans to reduce the amount of cheating during final examinations through a series of new examination rules. As before, no books or coats will be permitted in examination rooms, and additionally no books or calculator watches will be allowed in. Any exam which permits the use of extra materials beyond a paper and pen will be administered in a separate room, with its own proctor. Students must sign in before and after their exam, and must have their I.D. with them

to be shown on request. Moreover, students will not be permitted to re-enter the examination room if they leave before sixty minutes into the exam. Note that this includes trips to the bathroom: After an hour, students may leave for the bathroom only if accompanied by a proctor.

These new regulations come as a response to allegations of widespread cheating during final exams. Most students in the school can attest to having witnessed, or at least gained knowledge of, specific instances of infractions of the examination rules. Many students are said to enter an exam room with answers written on crib sheets or even on their hands. It is the intention of the new proctoring rules

resolves Moss, “and aggressively proctor during exams.” Dean Rosenfeld adds that the problem is compounded because “I have not been able to get outside proctors to help,” partially due to the lack of available graduate students on campus.

The problem of cheating is additionally exacerbated because of a degree of leniency on the part of faculty members in levying punishments on apprehended offenders. One student, who wishes to remain anonymous, tells of a retest he took for a midterm he missed. Being left alone in the room, he looked up all the answers in his textbook. It was not until he was finishing the last twenty point question that he was caught. The teacher gave him a zero for that question; he received an 80% on the exam.

Moss himself relates the frustration he underwent after having caught two students redhanded using crib notes on a final exam last year. While he lobbied for maximum punishment, the professor administering the exam decided to be lenient. Both students received lower grades, but neither failed the exam.

This leniency extends beyond faculty to include students themselves. Last year the Senate passed a motion reaffirming that “It is the students’ moral responsibility to report all cheating to the Dean.” In August, YC published a document on “Upholding Academic Integrity,” specifically dealing with the “Definitions of and Consequences for Cheating and Plagiarism.” Pioneered by Professor of English Dr. William Lee and the Senate, it had been in the works for the past four years. This document, already distributed to every undergraduate student by the Dean’s office, explicitly states on the second page:

“If you witness or have other evidence that a fellow student is cheating during an exam, you are morally responsible for immediately contacting a proctor. If you know of specific evidence that a student is guilty of plagiarism or cheating of any kind, you are morally responsible for contacting the professor, if possible, and in any case your Dean.”

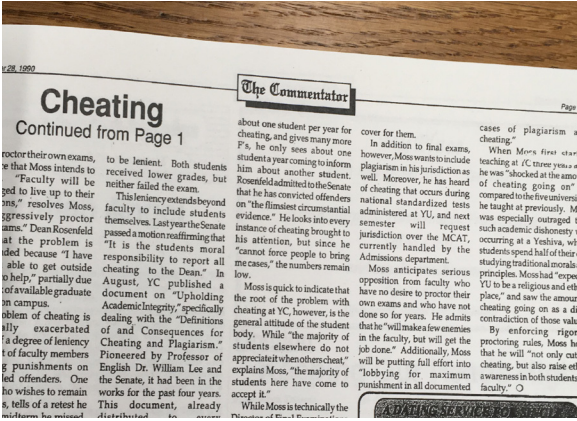
While Rosenfeld does expel about one student per year for cheating, and gives many more F’s, he only sees about one student a year coming to inform him about another student. Rosenfeld admitted to the Senate that he has convicted offenders on “the flimsiest circumstantial evidence.” He looks into every instance of cheating brought to his attention, but since he “cannot force people to bring me cases,” the numbers remain low.

Moss is quick to indicate that the root of the problem with cheating at YC, however, is the general attitude of the student body. While “the majority of students elsewhere do not appreciate it when others cheat,” explains Moss, “the majority of students here have come to accept it.”

While Moss is technically the Director of Final Examinations for the entire undergraduate uptown campus, these new regulations will apply to Yeshiva College exams only. The Sy Syms School of Business will continue to administer their own exams, being comfortable with their status quo of diligent proctoring. Since it is a smaller school, SSSB has the luxury of having few enough classes not to require one large examination room. Furthermore, all SSSB faculty are required to proctor their own exams, or at the very least to find a replacement to cover for them.

In addition to final exams, however, Moss wants to include plagiarism in his jurisdiction as well. Moreover, he has heard of cheating that occurs during national standardized tests administered at YU, and next semester will request jurisdiction over the MCAT, currently handled by the Admissions department.

Moss anticipates serious opposition from faculty who have no desire to proctor their own



exams and who have not done so for years. He admits that he “will make a few enemies in the faculty, but will get the job done.” Additionally, Moss will be putting full effort into “lobbying for maximum punishment in all documented cases of plagiarism and cheating.”

When Moss first started teaching at YC three years ago, he was “shocked at the amount of cheating going on” as compared to the five universities he taught at previously. Moss was especially outraged that such academic dishonesty was occurring at a Yeshiva, where students spend half of their day studying traditional morals and principles. Moss had “expected YU to be a religious and ethical place,” and saw the amount of cheating going on as a direct contradiction of those values.

By enforcing rigorous proctoring rules, Moss hopes that he will “not only cut out cheating, but also raise ethical awareness in both students and faculty.”

The Galaxy’s Tempo

By Gabriella Englander

Beneath the humming gaze of Galaxy,
Clouds shed their summer slumber
Into thunder, twined as sterling spores,
Albino powder, winged oars,
Which stir nature’s umber bed
Into a woolen terrace, white-wed.
Moonlit stardust ponders air,
And sheaths silver poplar’s bare
Skeleton in lace veil.
When gust-chimes through willows wail,
Vines spooled with ice-dripped pearls,
Graze lakes’ glazed swirls,
En-marbled with crystal fossil, fixed-foam,
Alabaster alchemy, metallic-chrome.
Frosted fields of ferns unfurl,
Snowdrops and crocuses uncurl,
Into a pale-draped tableau,
Beneath the Galaxy’s tempo.

Courtesy of The Yeshiva University Poetry Club

From the SCWSC President's Desk

By Keren Neugroschl, SCWSC President

"What is Orthodoxy?" my Muslim coworker asked me from across the room.

We were sitting in the designated interns area in the headquarters of a political campaign, working on a data entry project that involved an Orthodox Jewish directory. As the only female Orthodox Jew in the room, the question was clearly directed at me. I opened my mouth to answer, but before I could say a word, another intern decided to respond for me.

"They're different because the women don't do things," he said authoritatively, as he went on to list all of the ways that Orthodox women are not regarded as equals. His words stunned me into silence, and I let the conversation drop even though I had a flurry of thoughts racing through my mind.

I was disturbed by the irony of the situation. This man was trying to point out the gender inequality in my

"THE GROUNDBREAKING WORK AND INITIATIVES THAT ARE HAPPENING TODAY EXIST SOLELY BECAUSE OF THE VISION, HARD WORK, AND PERSEVERANCE OF THE WOMEN OF YESHIVA UNIVERSITY!"

community and claim that women are not given a voice, but in the process he was disregarding my presence and denying me the very right that he was presumably defending.

I was also angry that this person, who did not know me, felt that he could draw a conclusion about me based on his limited knowledge about the Orthodox community. And his conclusion was that since I am an Orthodox Jewish woman, I am repressed and submissive.

While this happened during the 2016 election, which

was now over a year ago, I often think about this exchange when I consider my role in the Orthodox community and specifically at Stern College.

What my coworker did not understand about me or my community is that we do not value, and are not taught, to be passive women. This is especially evident at Stern College, a place unique in that it is filled with thoughtful, diverse, and empowered Orthodox women.

During my three years at Stern College, I have been inspired by the many women together with whom I have studied. I have watched the women on Beren set ambitious goals for themselves – personally, academically, and religiously. I have seen them organize popular lectures, win scholarships to study a wide range of topics, and take leadership positions within the school. I have seen them ask thought provoking questions, push themselves outside of their intellectual comfort zones, and evaluate their beliefs and the role of religion in their lives.

Beyond these accomplishments, I have been amazed at how the students on Beren refuse to stay silent. When problems arise at YU, the women on the Beren campus are quick to recognize them and to offer creative solutions. Women on campus have improved the student experience by challenging norms, instigating changes that have led to shifts in university policies. The women on campus see problems and refuse to turn a blind eye, instead taking the initiative to fix them.

In my capacity as president of the Stern College for Women Student Council, I have already seen dozens of women on campus take initiative, specifically to start new clubs, events, and programs. This semester, there are nearly 70 SCWSC clubs – 17 of which are new. These clubs were created by women who felt a void on campus and decided to take action and fill it. The Diversity Club is forming a space for students who have felt disenfranchised in the past. Both the Poetry Club as well as the Slam Poetry Club are providing students with new creative outlets that did not exist before this semester. The Meals on Wheels Task Force is offering opportunities for students to get involved in volunteer work that has not previously been present on the Beren campus. The groundbreaking work and initiatives that are happening today exist solely because of the vision, hard work, and perseverance of the women of Yeshiva University.

Despite all of this, I understand that there are real problems at Beren. It is a common sentiment on the Beren campus that the women are often forgotten in favor of the men on Wilf. It is understandably frustrating to students when so many events, especially the larger events, are concentrated uptown. Along with the presidents of TAC and Syms Beren, I am working to create more events on the Beren Campus. As for events that are located on Wilf, we are committed to ensuring that they are organized in ways that allow women to participate in as convenient a way as possible.

As student council president, I will do what I can to help the women on Beren continue to have their voices heard. In order to create a direct line between students and student council members, we are working on new initiatives including a forum that will be held in the near future for students to express their concerns and brainstorm creative solutions.

Ultimately, student council representatives should be viewed as an additional resource on campus. We are eager to help the women on Beren as they continue questioning the status quo, taking initiative, and looking to improve the overall student experience.



A Closer Look at YU's Recent Blood Drive Turnouts

By Avigayil Adouth

Among the philanthropic events held at Yeshiva University are student organized blood drives. The blood drives take place on both the Beren and Wilf Campuses; officially a function of the each campuses' respective student council, YSU on Wilf and SCWSC on Beren, in conjunction with the NYC Blood Center. The NYC Blood Center supplies all necessary materials, leaving students organizers to choose a time frame, reserve a space, and draft volunteers to help the process run smoothly from check-in to donor recuperation. Between the two campuses, there are on average eight blood drives, yielding around 740 units of blood, per academic year for the last 4 years.

9.2% of YU Students donate blood at each blood drive, a noteworthy statistic compared to the 3.8% of the United States population who give blood annually. 38% of the United States population are eligible blood donors, with an equal distribution of eligibility between men and women. To be eligible one must be at least 17 years old, in good general health, measure at least 5'1 and weigh a minimum of 110 lbs. Only 10% of that eligible community, however, choose to donate blood. The YU student body is not a sociological parallel of the US population at large, making it a difficult standard to against which to view YU statistics. Nonetheless, it is essential to keep in mind that not all students are eligible for the process when assessing the percentages of students who do choose to donate blood.

Wilf Campus blood drives take place either in the Basement of Morgenstern Hall or The Weissberg Commons. In the past 4 years, 9-14% of Wilf Students

donated blood at each blood drive. An average of 116 students register for each blood drive, of which 9.3% are deferred due to an ineligibility to donate blood. Close to 15.6 Students give blood without registering, bringing the average donations per drive to 131.6 or 11.94% of students on the Wilf Campus. While the percentage of the student



body who donate at each blood drive remains within the 9-14% range, April and September drives see a higher rate of donations, 11-14%, whereas the ones that are held in May or November draw no more than 10%. It is possible to infer that this increase in student donation during these months comes as a natural outgrowth of the academic dynamic inherent in that time of year. September and April blood drives both take place close to long vacations - which could mean students are under less academic stress, or feeling refreshed from a long break at home.

The Beren Campus' blood drives take place in the back

lounge of the 36th Street dormitory. Since 2010, anywhere between 5-9% of Beren students have donated blood at a given drive. On average, 68.75, or 7.5% of Beren Campus students, donate blood. There is no significant favorability toward particular months on Beren.

One can only speculate as to why blood drives on the Wilf Campus are in general more successful than those on Beren. While the Wilf Campus is home to around 53% of the Yeshiva University undergraduate student body, it is consistently responsible for approximately 65% of Yeshiva University's blood donations. This is particularly intriguing when one considers that nationally, women tend to be responsible for close to 54% of total blood donations. It is possible that the discrepancy between campuses can be attributed to the physical layouts of each respective campus. The Wilf Campus is centralized, representative of a standard college campus. The Beren Campus' arrangement by any measure is far more similar to that of a city school. This practical difference leads to Wilf Campus drives being more accessible to their student body, as compared to those taking place in the back lounge of one of the dorm buildings that Beren students might not pass by on a typical day. It is also important to note that, as female and graduate students spend a significantly larger amount of time on the Wilf Campus than do their male counterparts at Beren, it is likely that several of these women and graduate students contribute to the Wilf statistics by choosing to give blood there.

The National Eating Disorders Association: A Volunteer's Perspective

By Shira Wein

All of us have been engaged in extracurricular activities at one time or another. One in particular that has stood out to me has been my experience volunteering at the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA). I believe that the lessons I have learned through working at NEDA are not only worthy of being spoken about, but necessary, due to their widespread and prominent effect.

Richelle Goodrich, noted writer and author once wrote, "there are far too many silent sufferers. Not because they don't yearn to reach out, but because they've tried and found no one who cares."

Responding to this need, the National Eating Disorders Association was founded to provide support for individuals and families affected by eating disorders and to provide access to quality care. The founders of the organization realized that, among the many gifts of social media, the ability to connect to others and guide them through their struggles is perhaps the greatest. This organization has a powerful mission, as those who reach out for help often feel judged and misunderstood. For those suffering with eating disorders, having someone to confide in, who understands what they are going through, is critical for recovery. Moreover, knowing who to reach out to for clinical help, such as eating disorder specialists, is a key component in regaining one's health. NEDA works to provide the aforementioned services and resources for those in need.

"FOR THOSE SUFFERING WITH EATING DISORDERS, HAVING SOMEONE TO CONFIDE IN, WHO UNDERSTANDS WHAT THEY ARE GOING THROUGH, IS CRITICAL FOR RECOVERY."

I began working at the National Eating Disorders Association as a Helpline volunteer in the spring semester of my sophomore year. In this capacity, I speak with those who feel ready to reach out for help. It is essential to note that I, and all volunteers at NEDA, do not offer counseling, which is the provision of assistance and guidance. Rather, we offer support, information, and resources. We receive extensive training, and we conduct searches for eating disorder specialists in geographic proximity to our callers.

Reflecting on nearly a year at NEDA, I have come to recognize the impact of this experience on me. I am deeply moved by the struggles, stories, hopes, and dreams of those with whom I speak. They have made me laugh, they have made me cry, and they have forever altered the way in which I view the human condition. The grit, fortitude, and motivation that so many of my callers display is astounding, and the fact that they keep trying to move forward despite numerous obstacles in their way is inspiring.

Once I began working at NEDA, I had a few unlikely personal revelations: I experience a renewed sense of purpose at the conclusion of every call or shift, and conversely, almost nothing demoralizes me quite as much as realizing that there are those suffering who are out of reach of clinical care due to their location or insurance policy.

Given my time on the Helpline, two phenomena struck me as being of note.

Firstly, there is growth in the number of men who are coming forward to report eating disorders. For a long time, eating disorders were thought to be the exclusive domain of women. We have witnessed a shift, in that men, once highly stigmatized for coming forward or unaware that they might have an eating disorder altogether, reach out more

for assistance in order to achieve recovery. Many of the calls I receive are from men, and I am proud to be part of a generation in which we acknowledge that all types of people can struggle.

In a similar vein, several studies indicate a rise in eating disorders for Jewish women, ranging from the irreligious to the ultra-orthodox. One study even posits that Jewish Orthodox females have eating disorders at a rate about 50 percent higher than the general U.S. population (Sacker, 1996). These eating disorders manifest themselves similarly to those in the secular world, but what differs is the way in which our culture responds to them. According to the Washington Post, health experts say eating disorders are "underreported among Orthodox Jewish women and, to a lesser extent, others in the Jewish community, as many families are reluctant to acknowledge the illness at all and often seek help only when a girl is on the verge of hospitalization." According to the National Eating Disorders Association, this reluctance to acknowledge an eating disorder is impacted by fear of stigmatization for any mental health illness in many corners of the Orthodox world. This comes in addition to several other factors affecting the reporting of eating disorders in Jewish communities including the importance placed on being thin for marriage arrangements. Jewish girls may also turn to eating disorders as an attempt to achieve perfection and control, as a coping mechanism, or to express prior trauma. Additionally, the focus on food during Shabbat within the Orthodox Jewish community is thought to exacerbate this issue.

With increasing awareness of the prevalence and seriousness of eating disorders, the Orthodox Jewish community has slowly begun to address these issues as well. In my eyes, one of the ways our community can fight against stigmatization is to understand the facts. By rectifying false assumptions about eating disorders, everyone will get better access to diagnosis and treatment.

"The scope and severity of eating disorders are often misunderstood. Eating disorders are serious illnesses, not lifestyle choices. In fact, anorexia has the highest mortality rate of any mental illness" (NEDA). In the United States, there are 20 million women and 10 million men suffering from a clinically significant eating disorder, including anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, or EDNOS (eating disorder not otherwise specified) (Wade, Keski-Rahkonen, & Hudson, 2011). Eating disorders are mental illnesses that can affect people of every gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic group. Notably, a person



National Eating Disorders Association

does not have to be underweight in order to have an eating disorder. The cause of eating disorders is unknown, but a growing consensus suggests that a range of biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors come together to spark an eating disorder. Once the disorder has taken hold, it can become a self-sustaining process that usually requires professional help and support to recover. With inadequate treatment, eating disorders can be deadly, with heart failure and suicide as two of the most common causes of death.

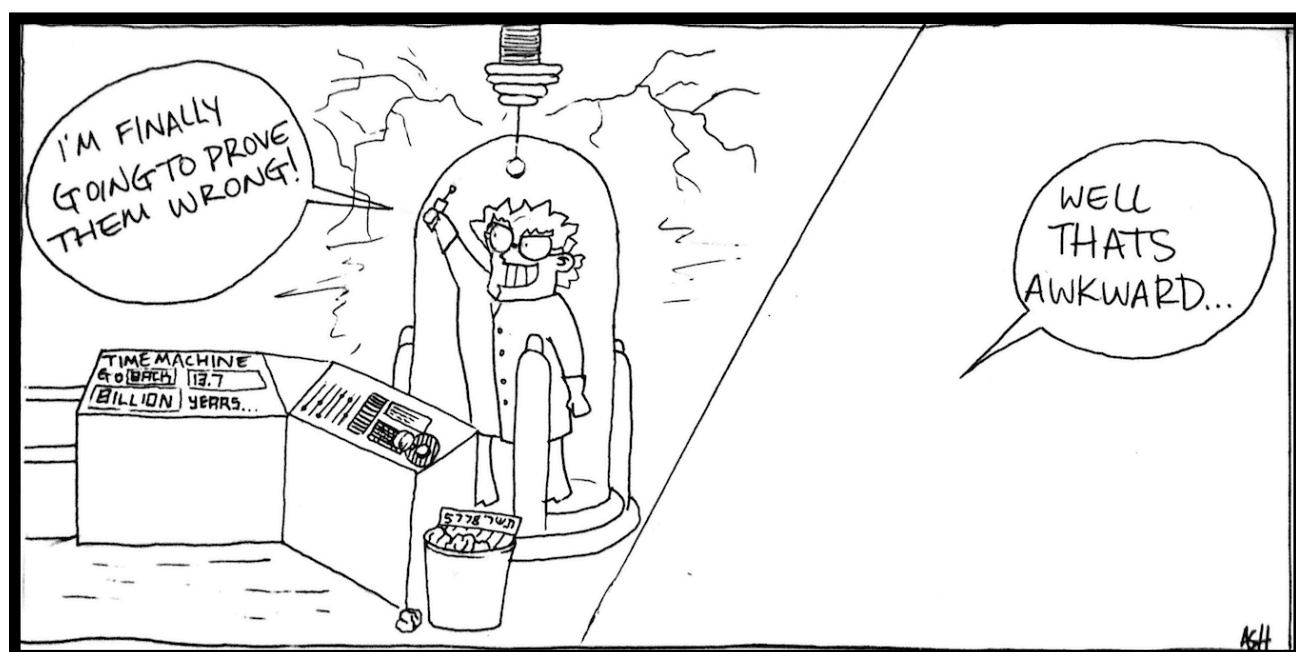
Taking the time to be sensitive about how you speak about body image can help alter the perceptions of those around you. Eating disorders are often silent and may appear in the most unexpected people or friends. If you fear that someone you know suffers from an eating disorder, there are avenues for you to seek guidance, including Yeshiva University's Counseling Center and NEDA. Many of NEDA's callers are friends and family of those suffering with an eating disorder, inquiring how to best understand and support loved ones who struggle. There is also a plethora of information available on NEDA's website for family and friends.

And to those of you who are currently struggling: you can get through this. This disorder does not have to overtake your life any longer. Please feel free to reach out for help on the helpline, via chat on our website, or to YU's Counseling Center. Those at NEDA and the Counseling Center are here to listen to you and support you.

National Eating Disorders Association's Website: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/>

You can reach the Helpline at (800) 931-2237 or online at <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/support/contact-helpline>

COMIC THE ATHEIST SCIENTIST



Thor: Ragnarok *Hammers Home Another Marvel Hit*

By Matthew Silkin

Dear Thor,

How have you been, man? It's been some time since I've seen you on the big screen - two years, I think? Four since your last standalone movie? I heard that you have a third film that just came out, and that you're gonna be back next year in *Infinity War*, so I just wanted to say congrats, man! That's really good news, I'm proud of you!

Listen, I'm really sorry. I'm sorry that I haven't seen either of your previous movies, *Thor* and *Thor: The Dark World*. I know you worked pretty hard on them (You even got Kenneth Branagh to direct your first movie!), but, based on what critics and audiences were saying about them, I didn't think they would be that entertaining. I mean, you're an alright guy, and you've got funny moments, but you tend to get overshadowed sometimes by the other Avengers, especially Steve Rogers and Tony Stark. That's not your fault, though! You just needed a movie where you got to shine and a director who knows enough about comedic timing to be able to carry about 2-2.5 hours of jokes.

So with that said, let's talk about your latest movie, *Thor: Ragnarok*. I was pretty excited when I saw Taika Waititi's name attached as director. He's a pretty funny guy; he made *What We Do in the Shadows* -- a mockumentary about vampires who live together in an apartment in Wellington, NZ -- back in 2014, and that was a blast! I'm sure you approved of him before letting him be a part of your movie, and I'm glad you did, because this movie was a riot from start to finish. You got to really show your comedic chops, while also keeping yourself reserved in the more dramatic moments of the film. You found yourself some great people to work with - Mark Ruffalo was a fantastic rollover from previous Marvel movies, and Tessa Thompson made a great addition as the newcomer Valkyrie. It was also a treat seeing Tom Hiddleston as Loki again, and let's not forget Jeff Goldblum as The Grandmaster, who had one of the greatest post-credits scenes that Marvel put to film, even though his wasn't as lore-heavy as some of the others.



And boy, oh boy, that color palette! I know that people have complained, especially in your earlier movies, that the colors in the film seem muted and drab, and from the pictures I've seen of *Thor* and *Thor: The Dark World*, I would have to agree. This movie, however, cleared that (admittedly) low bar by a wide margin! The colors in this movie just popped and added to what was already a stellar visual presentation. The audio, too, had an awesome synth motif to it, and the use of "Immigrant Song" by Led Zeppelin in the bigger action set pieces was just plain fun. Even the credits and credit music were treats to sit through while waiting for the post-credits scenes.

I'll be honest, though, your movie wasn't perfect. Don't get me wrong, the film was hilarious, but some jokes intruded into the more dramatic moments, which hurt those scenes a bit. Cate Blanchett made quite the intimidating Hela, although she ultimately suffered from being a serviceable, yet forgettable, Marvel Cinematic Universe villain. Listen, I get it, I really do. The studio spends most of its time building up the hero, which doesn't leave a lot of character developing moments for the villain to shine. You also peaked, and peaked hard, with casting Tom Hiddleston as Loki, who does reprise his performance

in this movie. All I ask for is that you kind of wean off Loki for a little bit and get some more interesting villains, okay? And maybe ease up a bit on the cliches too; I don't want to sit in the theater predicting every single moment or line in your movie! I didn't for the most part this time, which was great, but the few that crept in there were a little too noticeable.

I really think you redeemed yourself in this one, Thor. The first two movies weren't so hot with fans or critics, but this one has all the right ingredients to end that slightly mediocre streak with a real winner. I look forward to seeing it again, because, who only sees a Marvel movie once, am I right? And I can't wait to see you square it up with Captain America and Iron Man in *Avengers: Infinity War* next year -- now that I know what you're capable of comedically.

One more thing, you're a deity, right? Can I ask a favor of you? Let God know to maybe intervene on my behalf on a midterm or two, I don't think I did so hot on a few of them.

All the best,
Matthew

Results of Spring 2017 Campus Climate Survey Analyzes Sexual Assault on Campus

By Lilly Gelman

On Sunday October 15th, in response to the sexual assault scandal surrounding film producer and studio executive Harvey Weinstein, actress Alyssa Milano tweeted, encouraging women to write "Me Too" as their status in order to "give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem." According to The Washington Post, by Monday afternoon, close to half a million people had tweeted "Me Too" and over to 600,000 people were talking about it on Facebook.

The issue of sexual assault commonly arises in conversations on college campuses, and, despite Yeshiva University's separate campuses and undergraduate classes, the subject is

"JUST UNDER TWO PERCENT, 13 STUDENTS, INDICATED HAVING BEEN VICTIM TO UNWANTED SEXUAL CONTACT AT LEAST ONCE IN THE PAST YEAR."

not absent from the YU conversation. During the Spring 2017 semester, the university's Campus Climate Committee conducted a Campus Climate Survey in order to "ascertain general awareness and knowledge of the University's prevention and response to sexual assault." As a regulatory requirement for the university, the results were published online by The Office of Institutional Research.

639 responses were recorded, constituting 13% of YU's undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students. 56.9% of the respondents identified as female, and the majority of responses came from undergraduate students.

The survey posed questions pertaining to the "well being" of Yeshiva University students, with 91% of responses either "Strongly Agree[ing]" or "Agree[ing]" to the statement that "YU is trying hard to make sure that all students are safe."

83 students, 13% of those who responded, stated having experienced some form of sexual harassment such as "sexual advances, gestures...or jokes," or being sent "sexual pictures, photos, or videos." Just under two percent, 13 students, indicated having been victim to unwanted sexual contact at least once in the past year. The majority of these incidents were reported as being perpetrated by a male, with seven of the victims who responded indicating that the assailants were YU students.

Respondents were also asked whether they reported the event to an authority such as the local police, YU security, or the Dean of Students; nine of the thirteen respondents answered that they had not reported the event. Yael Muskat, Director of the Yeshiva University Counseling Center, said "Often, victims of sexual assault do not seek professional help to cope with the emotional impact of the event. We want to encourage students to reach out for support from the Counseling Center, among other resources."

The Counseling Center was most reported as being helpful after the event. "It is difficult to generate conclusions based on such a small sample size," Muskat commented, "however, it is encouraging to note that the students who did seek emotional support at the Counseling Center felt that it was helpful to them... Survivors of sexual assault can feel a range of emotions, including isolation, shame, and guilt and talking with a therapist, along with getting support from loved ones and friends, is often an important part of the healing process."

No respondents reported finding the Title IX Coordinator helpful.

In addition to surveying the amount of sexual harassment and assault on campus, the survey examined incidents of stalking, spying and vandalism of personal property. 14% of student responders affirmed such incidents.

The survey concluded with general questions regarding the overall view YU students have towards the university's response to sexual assault. The results indicated that the majority of respondents agree that Yeshiva University considers assault a critical issue and would take serious measures to rectify such issues if they were to occur.

Nutrigenomics: The Science of How Food Interacts With Our Genes

By Jonah Stavsky

Imagine with me for a moment: Joe, the quirky, astute, dedicated scientist, approaches his laboratory for the day's research. He opens the large double doors and begins to run routine safety checks. Equipment expiration dates are within range, ventilation systems are adequate, emergency showers and eyewash stations are functional. Joe settles upon himself a thick apron, dons industrial-type gloves, and places those classically oversized chemistry goggles over his eyes. Proceeding to the incubator, Joe reaches in, removes the day's research specimen, and, whilst placing



it on the laboratory bench, he reveals the promising item: a single, green, leafy, stalk of broccoli.

On April 1st, 1869, Friedrich Miescher, a swiss physician and biologist, first isolated deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) from a pus-filled bandage. This discovery launched a scientific revolution, which, in 1990, prompted the beginnings of the human genome project: an attempt to sequence the instructions that make a human being. Finally, in 2003, the human genome was published, and, following closely, was the field of *nutrigenomics*, the science of how food interacts with our genes. Because, as we discovered, the three-billion letter sequence was not at all as simple as it seemed. In fact, as we learned, the expression of these letters can be controlled by on and off switches, of sorts. In this article, I would like to discuss the field of nutrigenomics, which attempts to explain one of the many ways in which these switches are controlled -- with food.

Let us return to the example from our fictional scientist and focus on broccoli. It is almost like a mantra at this point: eat your veggies. And, when we zoom in a little further, it is particularly the leafy green vegetables that are preached. Finally, of the leafy greens, the research seems to be biased towards broccoli, and, more specifically, its flowery head. But why? Really take a moment to think about this: it is understood that the miniature tree-looking food piece is "healthy" for humans; what are the reasons for this?

Every plant contains compounds termed phytochemicals (phyto, as in plant). These phytochemicals have been shown to be biologically active in the human body. Specifically, promising research has been targeted toward a phytochemical in broccoli which can be found in the vegetables' sprouts called sulforaphane. In order to understand why sulforaphane has been so strongly connected with various health benefits, a brief review of molecular biology is needed. Don't fret, however; even if the last time that you spoke about a cell was high school biology class, I will stick to the basics!

I suggest we start with free radicals and antioxidants, terms which you have likely heard of previously. Free radical formation is a natural part of human biology, and occurs very often in our lives, for example whenever we breathe the oxygen that surrounds us. Oxygen tends to become a free radical due to various processes in the body, and can therefore cause cellular damage in its path,

leading to a myriad of health issues as will be discussed shortly. Antioxidants are molecules that can donate an electron to these free radicals, thereby stopping their destruction, *without* becoming dangerous themselves, as they are satisfied in either form.

This can be easily demonstrated when you slice open an apple: when the flesh is exposed to atmospheric oxygen, oxidation begins to occur, thereby turning the flesh brown. However, if you have ever tried to slow this process by squeezing a fresh lemon over the flesh, the antioxidant process can be clearly seen. The vitamin C in lemon juice acts as an antioxidant, thereby preventing the browning process. While human biochemistry is far more complicated than this analogy, and our insides are not necessarily "browning" per se, scientists have done their best to extrapolate these concepts to human health.

At this point, it may be worth asking, what do free radicals and antioxidants have to do with our genes? This seems like a simple environmental issue: eat more antioxidants to balance out the free radicals. Alas, the situation is not quite so simple. Often times, external antioxidant consumption is unable to keep up with free radical production. However, the cell has developed an extraordinary way to keep up with the myriad of free radicals that the body is exposed to. According to several studies, including a 2007 study in the journal *Clinical Interventions in Aging Medical*, the genome can produce specific antioxidant enzymes that break down free radicals in immense quantities, far more than external antioxidants (Rahman et al).

This all sounds well and good. But these antioxidant enzymes require an initiation of sorts -- they aren't simply active all the time. In fact, according to a 2013 review article in *Oxidative Medicine and Cellular Longevity*, intermittent activation of these enzymes complexes are preferable to continued activation (Hyun-Ae Soe et al). Thus we find our main question: how do we effectively and efficiently activate these enzyme complexes at the appropriate times? You guessed it, with broccoli, and, more specifically, with sulforaphane.

Sulforaphane has, along with various other phytochemicals, been shown to activate the Nrf2 pathway. According to a 2013 study on cancer prevention, this is how it works: Sulforaphane, the compound in broccoli, interacts with another compound called Keap1. Once Keap1 is activated, a subsequent compound, Nrf2, accumulates in the nucleus of the cell. Nrf2 is what we call a transcription factor, it helps express specific genes along the genome. In the case of Nrf2, the gene for Antioxidant Response Element (ARE) is activated. This is where the magic happens. The ARE spurs a release of several of the aforementioned enzyme complexes, ultimately preventing *large amounts* of free radical damage to the biological system (Kensler et al).

The bottom line of all this is that, while not containing many antioxidants of their own, the phytonutrients in broccoli enhance our body's ability to produce antioxidants when necessary, and thus serves as a highly efficient guard against the dastardly effects of free radicals.

Now that we have our baseline biology covered, let us move to the macroscale and figure out with this may mean for human health.

In recent years, many aspects of human health have been connected to the Nrf2 pathway. The list is lengthy and includes topics such as general inflammation, mental health disorders, gastrointestinal diseases, and arthritis to name a few. However, I would like to focus on three areas in particular: obesity, cancer, and neurodegenerative diseases.

Let's start with obesity. The excess body mass accumulated in the form of fat tissue causes detrimental effects on an obese individual's health. How might the Nrf2 pathway impact obesity? The article cited previously, "The Role of Nrf2: Adipocyte Differentiation, Obesity, and Insulin Resistance" published in the *Journal of Oxidative Medicine and Cellular Longevity* covers this topic well. According to its findings, the precise biochemical relationship between the Nrf2 pathway and obesity is

"NUTRITIONAL SCIENCE IS COMPLICATED; YET, IT HAS IMMENSE PROMISE."

unclear. When you feed both wild-type mice (normal mice) and Nrf2 KO mice (mice in which the Nrf2 gene pathway does not work) a high fat diet, inconsistent results ensue. Notice, however, that the gene pathway was *completely knocked out* in these cases. Subsequently, the researchers concluded, "intermittent Nrf2 activation reduces total body weight and fat tissue content under HFD (high fat diet) conditions". This is consistent with the idea that bioactive compounds in food may be the ideal modulator of the Nrf2 pathway, and, even more, that this may stem from its antioxidant effects, according to the authors (Hyun-Ae Soe et al).

In regards to a cancer, a similar, albeit different mechanism is thought to be at play. In a 2014 study published in the journal *Topics in Current Chemistry*, the authors stated, "sulforaphane is a potent inducer of Nrf2 signaling and blocks the formation of dimethylbenz[a]anthracene-evoked mammary tumors in rats as well as other tumor types in various animal models". Translated into English, this is a good sign. Ultimately, the authors concluded, "the overall potent and multimodal actions of sulforaphane makes it appealing to use in both preventive and therapeutic settings" (Kensler et al).

Finally, in an article titled "Nrf2-regulation in brain health and disease: implication of cerebral inflammation" published in the journal *Neuropharmacology*, authors concluded: "emerging evidence suggests that Nrf2, in addition to its antioxidant functions, may also play an important role in regulating inflammation in the brain" (Sandberg et al). Moreover, depression is often cited to be a result of cerebral inflammation. As an article in the journal *Psychoneuroendocrinology* states, "A causative relationship between inflammation and depression is gradually gaining consistency" (Martín-de-Saavedra et al).

I digress for a moment: the subject of the Nrf2 pathway and antioxidant regulations invoke temptations of radical conclusion, even with certain causal relationships. It should be understood that the sheer number of individual molecular pathways in human physiology surpasses our comprehensive abilities at this point in time.

Evidently, nutritional science is complicated; yet, it has immense promise. Nutrigenomics, including broccoli, sulforaphane, and the Nrf2 pathway, as an example, is just one of the many ways in which the foods we eat are being evaluated for human health. Looking to the future, I will actively search and simultaneously wait with patience for what may emerge in the scientific literature. Until then, I, as well as you, should stay curious, yet questioning -- the foods we eat are far more powerful, and biochemically active than once thought -- a concept which will only advance with time.



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Nowhere But Here and in Israel

By David Aaronson

In his investiture speech two months ago, YU President Ari Berman talked about the "Five *Torot*", the five guiding principles of the Jewish people, and specifically of Yeshiva University. *Torat Tziyon*, the fifth principle that he mentioned, is perhaps the most significant. *Torat Tziyon* teaches us to support Israel, and that by doing so, we not only experience history, but shape history; that we are masters of our own fate and that we control our own destiny. In doing so, President Berman has defined his main goal in his new role: To bring the best of YU to Israel and to bring the best of Israel to YU.

It is no secret that since its founding, Yeshiva University has been the most pro-Israel university in the diaspora.



No other university can claim to have hosted nearly every Israeli Prime Minister on its campus, as we have done. No other university can claim to have as many student clubs and organizations related to Israel in one way or another, as we do. No other university can claim to run a summer camp each year for underprivileged Israeli children in the Negev, as we do. And no other university based in the diaspora can claim to also have a campus in Jerusalem, the eternal undivided capital of Israel and the Jewish people, as we do. Additionally, our campuses are one of the few campuses in the United States which is free of BDS and other anti-Israel student groups. People will say that this is only because all our students are Jewish. Quite the contrary: Many of our graduate students are not Jewish, and they have embraced our core values of mutual respect and tolerance, rather than the baseless hatred

and lies of BDS. As Rabbi Berman remarked in a recent interview: "Maybe we're the only university where an Israeli politician can actually come and not just be greeted without the throwing of rotten tomatoes, but actually be cheered."

Despite all these accomplishments, there is still much more that can be done to strengthen YU's partnership with Israel, and President Berman realized this from the moment he was elected to this job. President Berman is in a unique position: He lived in Israel for almost a decade, he has three children serving in the Israel Defense Forces, and he is the first Israeli citizen to hold the YU presidency. You might therefore say that the relationship between YU and Israel is hardwired in his DNA, and as both the leader of Yeshiva University and as a representative of the Jewish State, he sees and feels the responsibility to enhance this partnership and take it to the next level. One of the first things that President Berman did after he received this job was meet with the presidents of nearly every major university in Israel. He continued this mission on his next few visits back home to Israel, eventually creating a major breakthrough when he announced a joint degree program with Tel Aviv University.

On his next few visits back home, President Berman began creating partnerships with the political leaders on the ground in Israel. During a short trip to Jerusalem over the summer, he met briefly with Eli Groner, Director-General of the Israeli Prime Minister's Office, on the sidelines of an event hosted by Jewish philanthropist Robert Kraft. The next day, he met with the Chief Rabbis of Israel at their headquarters. And on a trip home over Sukkot break, he met with Israeli Education Minister Naftali Bennett, with Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky, and with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin. In the meeting with President Rivlin, Berman was joined by Chairman of the YU Board of Trustees Moshael Straus and also by the Rennert Family Visiting Professor of Foreign Policy Studies at YU, Ambassador Danny Ayalon, who arranged the meeting. President Rivlin discussed his connection to YU, as he is a seventh-generation Jerusalemite and a direct descendant of a group of students of the Vilna Gaon, who followed his teachings and went on to help re-establish the State of Israel. The other group of students of the Vilna Gaon and their descendants, he said, went on to America to help establish Yeshiva University. It's also worth noting that back in September, President Rivlin sent a congratulatory video to President Berman that was

aired at YU ahead of his investiture.

Since returning from these visits to Israel, President Berman has sought other ways to strengthen this natural relationship, including by offering scholarships to students who served in the Israel Defense Forces or in *Sherut Leumi*, Israel's National Service. He then met with both Israel's Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon and the Consul General of Israel in New York, Dani Dayan. In the coming months, President Berman is also planning to join world leaders in speaking and participating in a number of prestigious pro-Israel conferences in the United States and in Israel.

President Berman's vision has been met in Israel with a very positive reception. One university president in Israel mentioned that when he was first approached by President Berman, his initial thought about YU was: "What took you so long? We've been waiting decades to partner with universities in the United States and now finally we have someone who is willing to work with us." He went on to mention that there are many Israelis attending university in Israel who would love to spend one or more of their semesters abroad, and that YU is the most friendly environment for them to do so. Additionally, student and faculty exchange programs have become another possibility in enhancing this cooperation. On the political front, the leaders President Berman met with have all expressed significant interest in visiting Yeshiva University and in working with us to help lay the groundwork in order to achieve these goals.

In these short two months since President Berman officially started his term, much progress has clearly been made in building up the university's relationship with Israel. Many speak of a divide between Israel and Diaspora Jewry. But here at YU, under the leadership of President Ari Berman, there doesn't seem to be any divide, but rather only a common future and a shared destiny. President Berman's vision should serve as an example for other Jewish institutions in the United States, especially by those who feel isolated by or estranged from Israel. As President Berman has demonstrated, there are endless opportunities for joint work between Israel and the Diaspora. If other Jewish leaders in the United States were to follow suit on this mission, it would be a win-win for both the Jews of Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora so that we may one day be able to unite and live as one.

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Life is Not a Movie

By Efrat Malachi

There are many moments in which we find ourselves daydreaming and fantasizing over what our lives would be like if only we were the protagonist from our favorite movie. We sometimes might ask: Wouldn't it be nice to be the one who saves the day? Couldn't he be the guy who finally gets the girl of his dreams? And can't she be the popular girl with a large and loyal following for once? There are countless things that we feel are lacking in our lives and result in us turning to movies for solace; to a screen that hosts images which are mistakenly perceived as the most real and ideal pictures of what the "good life" must look like. But soon after the movie's conclusion, we are awakened by the tragic truth. It always comes back around to gently whisper in our ears and remind us of the obvious.

We all know that life is not a movie – especially not a Disney one. Regardless of this fact, we still look up to our beloved superhero and/or celebrity for some inspiration and motivation that will guide us down the path toward success in every aspect of our lives. This is mostly due to the characters and actors having achieved the very thing we're constantly chasing down – self-actualization. According to the Google dictionary, self-actualization is defined as "the realization or fulfillment of one's talents and potentialities, especially considered as a drive or need present in everyone."

No matter what we're occupied with, our focus is always brought back to seeking a purpose and fulfillment; to complete our own mission in life. That doesn't mean we need to have "Eye of the Tiger" playing on repeat in the background of our everyday lives, but we do need to have in mind that this world isn't an arbitrary existence. There is a larger, greater plan in the works, an exquisite, beautiful tapestry being woven and a perfect, harmonious song being composed. Human beings are born with this inherent desire to find meaning in everything and demand nothing less from their own selves.

Although movies can be empowering, they can also be damaging. It's easy to sink into a couch with our 10th bowl of popcorn and watch a movie purely for entertainment purposes. It's much harder to rid ourselves of the effects that follow. Then, once the fun is over, they latch onto us like a pesky mosquito and its bite. As soon as our temporary

reality, which our minds have adopted, has faded to black along with the credits, only then does the aftershock hit.

Waking up from that trance and having to reintegrate back into real life is oftentimes devastating. Since we must eventually come back down to earth after being on an incredible high, it leaves us with this unsettling feeling inside. All we believe is that we're returning to an ordinary and boring life; nothing worth our time or interest. This isn't necessarily true in all cases, but a majority of people at certain points in their lives feel unhappy with their lot and simply wish to be living lives of movie characters or stars.

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The issue lies mainly with the expectation and idolization built up around these films and TV shows. Even though people might think they need to shape their lives according to how movie directors and writers have shaped their personal worlds of fiction, they simply cannot and should not limit their vision and opportunities to a script. Trying to emulate a non-existent character and play the same part in real life situations only disturbs what's there and what's meant to be. What is seen and done in the movies are staged and brought to life through exact measurements and calculations that are meant to form a perfect imaginary reality! In addition to that, it's practically impossible to predict how the future will unfold. There are countless factors that can affect all the possible variations and outcomes of a given situation, and then combined with reactions that have only been practiced and tested on camera makes these predictions even more doubtful.

This stems from our need to achieve success in all facets of our lives, which is deeply rooted in our nature. While our intentions are good, the consequences of our actions are not always as pure. Movies give us that instant thrill. They provide us with a purpose by having us enter the lives of the characters and join them on their journey. It's as if

we dress up in their persona, take on their life's mission and fulfill it along with them. As a result, we end up feeling satisfied and accomplished, which is what we crave.

On the flip side, movies and shows do benefit us in several ways. We can often take comfort in the fact that life is far from being a movie. All the disproportionate drama, violence, and misfortune that exists on the TV screen will always and only remain on that screen as its own entity, separate from the real world. There are also numerous things we can pick up from a movie in under two hours that might have taken us longer to learn if we had chosen to walk down the longer and more common road – life experience.

Our primary concern though is with our soul, which never ceases to seek out the beauty and value in everything. Not only do movies aid us in our street-smarts but also push us during our most vulnerable times. They can inspire us to think of the unthinkable and allow us to believe that we can truly be whatever we want to be. There are no limitations or boundaries as to what we can do in the realm of wonder and imagination. Sometimes, after walking away from a movie, we feel like we've been transformed into better and more confident versions of ourselves. It's as if we've been elevated to a whole new level, one that was inaccessible before.

In conclusion, movies do have their flaws, but they also possess special powers that can ignite the spark of revolution within the world. They inspire people to initiate change and strive for greatness. We simply must be aware and cautious of the side effects that often tamper with our perception and judgement of what's real and what's an illusion. Movies are useful tools when needing to escape from reality for a while, but it's all about moderation and how long we intend to live in the scenes from our favorite motion pictures. Even though movies can accomplish great things, our own lives hold even greater potential within them. Instead of looking all around us for meaning and worth, we need to start turning inwards and look within ourselves because that's where all the answers lie. We all can do remarkable things and lead fulfilling and beautiful lives if only we pull our eyes away from the screen and draw them towards the real world in which we live in. Life is the ultimate journey, and our own, individual lives are the most captivating storylines you could ever come to write or watch.



Strength in Numbers

By Elana Muller

This past month, while scrolling through my Facebook feed, I came upon a post of a friend which read “Me Too.” That’s all it was, and, at first, I assumed that she had posted it by mistake. But then I noticed the large amount of comments. The first was a simple question “what is this?”, to which my friend replied with an explanation: that it was written as part of a movement to raise awareness and to stand up against sexual harassment, and that anyone who had experienced it should simply post #MeToo. Curious as to how it got started and the implications, I decided to look into the movement further. The most informative resource I found was the *Jerusalem Post*. It explained how the #MeToo campaign began with Alyssa Milano. Following the multiple allegations against American film producer Harvey Weinstein for sexual harassment and abuse, she encouraged those who had experienced sexual abuse or harassment to post “Me Too” on social media. So far, thousands of women (and some men) have posted under #MeToo as they now feel empowered and confident to speak up and tell their stories.

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Over the following week, “MeToo” popped up more and more. I was shocked to find that such a large number of my friends had experienced sexual harassment. There was a large range in their experiences as well, from unwelcomed comments at work, to harassment at high school parties,

to molestation by family members. Every case disgusted me more and more, and I learned just how common an occurrence this sort of behavior was. Perhaps there is something within our human nature that makes this behavior inevitable, or perhaps our society allows this behavior to go unstoppable. Regardless, something must be done.

Legislating for such incidents is hard, and while sexual harassment has been addressed via legislation since 1998 (why did it even take that long?), there is still much work to do. In some cases there does exist a “sexual harassment procedure,” but a formal process is rarely the go-to for woman in a school, a workplace, or even the US army. A recent study shows that one in six women who serve in the military have said that they have been sexually harassed, and perhaps there are even more who did not speak up. There are multiple reasons why formal procedures are rarely perused. Firstly, the victim may want the harassers to stop making inappropriate jokes or comments but not necessarily want to see them fired, ostracized, or labeled as a sex offender for the rest of their lives. The second and more common reason is that the victim fears repercussions if speaking out causes them to be perceived as “too sensitive” or “not part of the team.” They are worried that by reporting and fighting for this issue, they will exclude themselves from the group.

An article in *Psychology Today* by the name of “Pack Mentality” discusses why humans tend to place such great significance on social belonging. In the article, the author quotes Abraham Maslow, the creator of the Theory of Human Motivation. The theory identifies five needs that humans strive to satisfy. Those needs are, in order: Survival, Safety, Social, Esteem, and Fulfilment. According to this theory, it is, in some aspect, “human” to place one’s social status above their self-esteem. This would then explain why it has been commonplace for women not follow the sexual harassment procedure in many of these cases. Another reason, which is more common in younger women or women who come from less stable backgrounds,

is that they feel at fault for the situation, rather than the victim of a crime.

These stories cannot be left in the dark. When there is a clear case of sexual harassment, formal procedures should be initiated and, when the case requires it, reported to the proper authorities. In other situations, it may be that the victim can take matters into their own hands, or use an informal procedure amongst acquaintances. Education and training are key. Many habitual harassers, if asked, don’t actually understand the effect their actions have on people. But simply telling people not to say or do certain things in the moment, without explanation, will not often lead to any real change in behavior.

Only when people speak up, either in public or within the institutions responsible for handling these issues, can the conversation start. We must teach those that do not understand how to draw the line between a joke and harassment. We must make people aware of how their words and actions can cause more than just discomfort or unwanted attention. We must help women detect a threat before it becomes something more. It is our obligation to make a change.

For some, though, it’s too late, and the damage cannot be undone. For them, we can provide a safe place to express emotions and to give them support. Moving forward, it is important to acknowledge what goes on, and do everything in our power to prevent it from happening in the future. The greatest benefit of the “Me Too” campaign is that it gives women a chance to speak up, to express themselves, to know that they are not alone. To know that there are, sadly, so many others who have been through this too.

We are not supposed to nor do we have to suffer through the pain in shame and in silence. Those who abuse others should be shamed, not the other way around. This campaign shows that when we come together our voices become louder, allowing ourselves to be heard all over the world. And, in time, there will be change because, put simply, there must be. Together, we will make it happen.

Integrating Presentation Skills into the YC Curriculum

By Brian Snow

As a student in Yeshiva College (YC), I have taken the typical classes that one would expect a student at a liberal arts college to take. These courses include classes that study diverse cultures, classes that focus on the natural world, and of course, perhaps the most well-known courses of all, the writing courses (such as First Year Writing). These writing courses are designed to teach students how to bring their writing up to college level. For me, the required writing courses are among the most integral classes that I have taken at Yeshiva College. They have taught me to communicate clearly, not just in person, but also in writing.

However, when one surveys the courses in YC, the thing that is most conspicuously lacking is the fact that there is no required speech/presentation class. When I first arrived at Yeshiva University, I did not really pay attention to this fact. After all, I figured that I had nothing to learn in that area. Unlike writing skills, which I felt I could improve, I believed that I knew how to effectively communicate in person.

A few weeks ago, I was talking with a friend of mine in the Sy Syms School of Business. He was telling me how he has a class called “Business Communications” where the students learn how to give elevator pitches, presentations, and how to generally present themselves in business settings. While this class is specifically tailored for the business students in Yeshiva University (as it is a course in Syms), I realized that the general idea applies, and is relevant, to all the students of our institution, including Yeshiva College. All students can benefit from a communications/presentations course which would focus on teaching a few key skills.

The first skill which students need to learn is how to present effectively. Regardless of career goals and, whether someone plans on being a doctor,

lawyer, accountant, teacher, professor, computer scientist, or a banker, knowing how to effectively present will be a critical skill for career success. Additionally, having good

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presentation skills such as speaking charismatically, with a focus on a clear message, is not just important for career success. Knowing how to effectively communicate is a value in one’s personal life as well. A good liberal arts

curriculum must teach students how to communicate ideas to an audience effectively and clearly, both in writing and in person.

The second skill which students need to develop is how to communicate effectively in various social contexts. Students of our institution navigate many different social settings with diverse sets of people. These range from the workplace, to community settings, to family settings, to different countries such as Israel. All of these different contexts require different types of communication, and students must develop the skills to adapt to the diverse settings that they will find themselves in. Therefore, this is a skill of utmost importance which should be taught as part of the liberal arts curriculum at Yeshiva College.

The problem with the course of action that I am proposing is that, no one in Yeshiva College has room in their respective schedules to take more required classes. The dual curriculum already leaves most students with more than enough work to keep them busy. Luckily, I believe that it is possible to integrate communications skills into the already existing YC core curriculum without needing to add additional courses. When Yeshiva College was forced to cut the First Year Seminar Course, rather than getting rid of it completely, they instead integrated it into other core classes by making certain core classes more writing intensive.

Just as writing skills are of fundamental importance and were therefore integrated into the core curriculum, the same thing should happen with presentation skills. Certain courses should be designated as “presentation intensive,” and should require students to give numerous presentations throughout the semester. This solution will keep students happy, because it won’t require a heavier course load, while simultaneously not requiring more money in the budget, and, most importantly, it will enable to student body to develop a very important skill-set.



It Might Be Worth It

By Michelle Naim

I'd like to begin by making a disclaimer that I am not a parent. I do not know what it's like to have to pay up to \$30,000 a year, per child, for Jewish education. To be honest, I don't even know what it's like to have \$30,000 to my name. All I know is what I have done and where I have been thus far. I wanted the full high school experience- the graduation with my entire class, the late nights studying for my SAT's, and working on my high school's yearbook committee. I wanted to stay in my Jewish school and continue my Jewish education. I wasn't supposed to stay in high school until 12th grade, but I did. I wasn't supposed to go to Israel for the year, but I did. I wasn't supposed to attend Stern College for Women, but I did. So I think it's pretty safe to say that I have a particular attraction to Jewish institutions and formal Jewish education.

So of course, when an article came up on my Facebook newsfeed titled "I can 'do Jewish' on just \$40,000 a year," my interest was piqued. In the 2017 article in the *Times of Israel*, a young Jewish father explains his distress and concern about the price-tag of formal Jewish education in the United States of America. He makes several good points, many of which I agree with, but he does not consider the negative consequences of his actions.

In the article, the author explains that he was having a difficult time paying the high tuition of his children's day school. When he went to discuss his financial concerns with the head of the Jewish day school, the reply he got from this spiritual leader was: "[Either] you're in or you're out." After hearing this, he chose to get out. This is one of numerous instances where I feel as though our spiritual leadership has let us, the greater Jewish community,

down. Isn't the purpose of Jewish day schools to fuel and provide a platform for the Jewish leaders of tomorrow no matter what their financial situation is? What if the child that the principle turned away had the potential to be the next *Gadol Hador* of the Jewish people? The "modern orthodox" world hasn't had a *Gadol Hador* since Rav Soloveitchik. It's time for the leaders in our communities to fix this, and it starts with our schools. Our communities, especially our leaders, are failing to recognize the financial burden exorbitant tuition prices are causing. In addition, there are many families I know who have gone through

"ISN'T THE PURPOSE OF JEWISH DAY SCHOOL TO FUEL AND PROVIDE A PLATFORM FOR THE JEWISH LEADERS OF TOMORROW NO MATTER WHAT THEIR FINANCIAL SITUATION IS?"

extremely turbulent times in their marriages because of the hardships of paying for Jewish education.

The lamenting father then explains that he was comfortably able to replace, for a lower cost, his children's Jewish education with Chabad after-school programs and camps. Although a feasible option, Chabad after-school programs, most of which last 1-2 hours a day, will never substitute the learning done in a Jewish day school. The child who learns Torah half of his day will automatically have a better skill-set and knowledge-base than the child who only learns Hebrew or *Parsha* for a couple hours a

week. To say the least, the father's story is an unfortunate situation, and although I think the leader is at fault, I believe there were, and are, other options for the woeful father.

With all of the above mentioned, I am not coming at this article through the lens of a parent or a payer of tuition. I am coming towards it from the perspective of a student and a byproduct of lifelong Jewish education. Although, apparent from my past article, the Jewish education system is far from perfect, it does do a lot of things that this Jewish father cannot replace with Chabad summer camps, Hebrew tutors, and at-home Jewish support and education.

I do not think I would have the same vision of what Judaism is without my Jewish education, and I do not think an after-school program or a summer camp could replace my experiences. I have memories of teachings by my rabbis and teachers as young as the first grade that still touch me to this day. Even more so, my Jewish friends and peers greatly affected my perspectives about Judaism. Having peers in similar frame of mind, life circumstance, and background rubs off on a child, affecting how he sees the world religiously and socially.

Ultimately, I believe the now-broken system can be changed for the better. Until that day comes, however, we need to keep educating our children and envisioning the pros and cons of placing them in an environment that may not be conducive with our values and hopes for their futures. It is time for our leaders to rise up, and create uproar in our communities. After all, the leaders see first-hand the way in which these tuition prices are negatively affecting their communities-parents, children, and teachers. It may not be easy, but I think it's worth it.

Proud to Be an American

By Nechama Lowy

Roughly one-third of one percent of the United States Army is Jewish. In less than a month, my sister will be completing the necessary Army basic training and joining that small percentage. She is strong, both physically and mentally, and extremely brave and determined. She trained vigorously for many months, barely spoke to family and friends outside the base, and was absent from family occasions, including *Rosh Hashana* and my mother's birthday. My sister has made many sacrifices, and I could not be prouder of her dedication to our country.

I say "our" with purpose. The most common response to hearing how my sister will be spending the next four years is, "that's so cool!" followed by, "well, why did she pick the American Army?" -- implying that, were she a good Jewish girl, she would have picked up and moved across the world to fight for a country in which she does not reside. It is not a malicious inquiry, but rather a seeming lack of patriotism enveloping the Jewish community. I usually respond with, "Why do people join the Israeli army?" in an effort to relay to the person that what one Jew might feel towards Israel, my sister feels towards America. This sentiment has not isolated her from the Zionist movement, rather it has redirected some of her passions from Israel to America.

Truthfully, it is a lot more understandable for American Jews to draft into the IDF and, while the reasoning for each lone soldier is unique and embodies inspiring passion, rarely are we surprised to hear the numbers. Roughly 1,000 Americans currently serve in the Israeli army. From my high school graduating class of 63 students, three are currently serving, and from my post-high school gap year program, three committed to draft as well. The Jewish education system does a great job instilling within us a Zionist passion and urges us to do more than just celebrate *Yom Ha'atzmaut* in our hometowns or spend our summers in Israel. People are willing to put their lives on the line and spend time away from home to protect our sacred homeland, and I cannot applaud this enough. However, what does this say about our patriotism? Is having Israel pride a paradox for feeling proudly American?

Patriotism and Zionism have become mutually exclusive to the extent that some communities discuss

America as if it is inferior to Israel and merely just an incubator for our lives until we are ready to make Aliyah. While many people do move to Israel, an immense amount choose to remain in America, building families and lives here. Many of us were born here, and have thrived on the ideals of democracy, including voting and participating in community service activities driven to improve the lives of citizens. As adults, we continue to take advantage of American society by attending graduate school, buying our own homes, and visiting the beautiful national parks, the sunbathed beaches, or the many historic monuments. We are politically active; paying taxes, attending rallies, and even lobbying in Washington D.C. And yet, were someone to ask us where our loyalties lie, many would proclaim that America is just a temporary convenience, but when the right time comes, they will move and settle in to the beautiful Israeli communities. The cognitive dissonance is apparent in our intrapersonal relations within ourselves. We fend off any American pride we may feel and channel it towards Israel by waving flags, donating money, and providing school programming.

Living in America undoubtedly comes with challenges that can blur the lines between appreciation for living here and resentment for being made to feel unwelcome. It is hard to sing America's praises about freedom of speech, progressive society, and advanced technology and education, while also attempting to combat forms of antisemitism and intolerance, whether on secular college campuses or blatantly in our hometowns. Yet, the proper response is not to abandon America, but rather to fight for change while upholding our devotion to the land.

The notion that we can be both Zionists and Patriots is imperative for Jews if we are to continue being proper, upstanding citizens. The time has come for us to stop undermining our roots and start appreciating the positives that American Jewry has given us. While the Israeli national anthem, *Hatikvah*, is being sung, let's not forget the meaning behind the American National Anthem and what it symbolizes. Get involved in your communities to better living conditions and look out for

people -- not only fellow Israelites, but people born and raised in America. With Thanksgiving approaching, now is the time to show appreciation to our country.

This year, Thanksgiving will be celebrated without my sister present. I will see her the week before for her basic training graduation, but she will be spending the family-oriented holiday with her new clan, the privates and drill sergeants -- all amazing people of whom she speaks highly



and who take care of her while her biological family is miles away.

While the holiday used to revolve around delicious meals and quality time spent together with family, this year it takes on a whole new meaning. I now feel connected to the Americans making sacrifices for this country, giving me a stronger sense of patriotism. This year, I am thankful that my sister is strong enough to endure the grueling, yet fulfilling path she is embarking on. I am thankful that I go to school in one of the greatest cities in the world, New York, with the endless supply of amusement, entertainment, and opportunities. I am thankful that I live in a country where freedom of religion and freedom of speech are upheld and that I am privileged to practice my Judaism and Zionism openly. Provided with the opportunity to be loyal to both my religious and secular homeland, I hope to build a bridge between the two and not to take either for granted.

Executive Profile: Michael Eisenberg, Partner at Aleph VC and Investor in WeWork

By Evan Axelrod

Michael Eisenberg, an alumnus of Yeshiva College Class of '93, is currently an Equal Partner at Aleph, an Israeli venture fund with over \$300 AUM. Prior to Aleph, Michael was a General Partner at Benchmark Capital. He currently presides on the Board of Directors as a member or observer at WeWork, Lemonade, Honeybook, Nexar, Freightos, Clarizen, Gigya, and Seeking Alpha. Michael was the Editor-in-Chief at The Commentator when he was a student at Yeshiva University. He is a major advocate for Aliyah and with Aleph has helped organize job listings for potential Olim at hundreds of startups across Israel.

Evan Axelrod: Can you tell us about the path you took to currently managing the Aleph fund?

Michael Eisenberg: It was a long road. I started in political consulting which grew out of editing *The Commentator* at YU during what was known as the "Revel Crisis." Since politics is fickle, I was let go (although nobody told me) and found myself unemployed and not able to get a job. At the time, my lack of a network from the Israeli army was a real liability (today it is not). Out of desperation, I founded a startup merchant bank focused on tech. I knew nothing about tech but I knew a tad about the internet. It was 1995, the beginning of the internet. I then partnered my fledgling merchant bank that had no clients but a good business model with a consulting firm in Jerusalem that had clients but a lousy business model. Getting paid for giving consulting advice in Israel is tough. Then, in a short 3 years, we ended up raising money for and backing 11 companies, 8 of which went public or got bought over time. These included PictureVision which was Israel's first internet exit and the world's first online photo-sharing site. This was before digital cameras or phones with cameras (there was a time like that). We scanned these things called Negatives (look it up in Wikipedia... which also did not exist then). Benchmark was one of the investors in Picturevision, which was bought by AOL and Kodak in 1997 or so. After that, I got recruited to Israel Seed Partners, a Jerusalem-based VC who had turned me down when I asked them for a job 3 years earlier. Neil Cohen and Jon Medved [now CEO of Ourcrowd], Israel Seed's founding partners were very kind to call me back and take me in. One of the companies I backed at Israel Seed was called Dealttime, later to be known as Shopping.com. While at Shopping.com, Bill Gurley of Benchmark (who was already a friend of mine) and I cooked up Shopping.com's purchase of ePinions, a product review site which was backed by Benchmark. We were then co-lead directors of Shopping.com which ultimately went public and then was bought by eBay. I then joined Benchmark for almost a decade. When Benchmark wanted to focus on Silicon Valley and not international VC, I started Aleph because

my passion is creating jobs in Israel. I guess the only thing you can say about this path is that it was unpredictable and involved much siyata dishmaya ["help of heaven"].

EA: You were recently mentioned in a WSJ article detailing the hyper-growth of WeWork, which is currently valued at around \$20 billion. How did you end up sourcing

"I STARTED ALEPH BECAUSE MY PASSION IS CREATING JOBS IN ISRAEL."

WeWork as in investment when you were working at Benchmark? What about the company helped it stand out?

ME: I sourced it through a few channels. Benzi Ronen, founder of Farmigo. Saul Singer, author of Start-Up Nation and a few others all told me that I needed to meet Adam [Neumann, founder of WeWork] and they told Adam he needed to meet me. I did a call with Adam Neumann from the lobby of the Intercontinental Hotel in Tel Aviv. I did not leave to the garage to get in my car because I did not want to get cut off. He was soooo compelling. I ended up getting home late because I was on the call and plugged into an outlet from my cell phone in the lobby. Founders make companies because they see the world differently. Adam is that kind of amazing founder.

EA: What are some trends in the Israeli startup ecosystem that are impacting where VC's are looking to invest?

ME: We are building bigger companies out of Israel. It is what I like to call becoming Scale Up Nation. I try not to invest in trends. I also don't know or care where anyone else is investing. It is not relevant.

EA: What is some advice that you could offer to current students looking to have successful careers in business or technology?

ME: Read a lot!! Focus on people. Stay around good and ethical people. Have a purpose. Make it meaningful. Always be optimistic and look to help others. Work hard. There is no substitute for hard work. Get married young. You need an anchor in your life and a conscience because the pace is dizzying. Life is always better and more meaningful when it is shared.

EA: What advice do you have for students looking to start careers in business or technology?

ME: Learn Torah every day. It is where we draw true values from. The basis of your career is values and people. Not money and companies.



EA: What is one area or industry that you're looking at that you think will be the most interesting in the coming years?

ME: Israel. I like to follow trend lines. The Israel trend line is up and to the right.

EA: What did you enjoy most about being the Editor in Chief of *The Commentator* when you were a student?

ME: I enjoyed the writing and the platform. My first piece as Editor-in-Chief was entitled "Armchair Zionism." I was recently re-reading it. Some things don't change. I also enjoyed the ability to enable change through writing. I am reasonably convinced that without *The Commentator* and the help of numerous board members, it is likely that the critically important Revel Graduate School would be closed today. I did not make that change. The board and the activist students did. However, writing about it clarified the issues, brought them to the fore and empowered change agents. Additionally, it was a creative outlet, a collection of great people and a decent excuse not to go to class. I have really good memories of my years on *The Commentator*, the camaraderie of the team, the very angry administration and the sometimes piqued small handful of rabbanim. Their rebukes and critiques, sometimes right and sometimes not, taught me not to take myself or others too seriously and to pursue truth. It caused me to question myself and my decision making in what I hope and pray is an honest manner. At the same time, it gave me a healthy way to question and challenge the status quo and deeply ingrained beliefs parading as truths. I think that is really important in life. We cannot stay stagnant.

Thank you Michael for your time!

When You Hear Hoofbeats, Think of Zebras, Not Horses

By Benjamin Zirman

I still remember the blaring siren, rolling beds, doctors in white coats, and a million tests that I had to pass. I was a young 5th grader watching my favorite NFL team the New York Giants play the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The Giants were riding a three-game winning streak in Eli Manning's second season under center. But this game had an added level of interest for me because it matched up twin brothers Tiki and Ronde Barber against each other. I have a very close younger brother in appearance, age, personality and people always confused us as twins. It didn't help that our mom decided to just buy two of every outfit she liked and we would match on the daily. So, this game was really special for me as I was watching my dream play out in front of me: My brother and I were both going to be professional sports players and have an epic rivalry! My mother came into the room and made a very questionable decision that I still wonder about until this day. She demanded I go shower in the middle of the game! Now, I wasn't dirty from playing sports or in desperate need of a shower (I had showered just that Friday), yet in order that I get to bed early, my mother told me she was turning off the game and forcing me to go shower. I realized that arguing would waste precious seconds of game time so I immediately jumped in the shower, shampooed my hair, soaped my body, and hopped right out. I didn't even bother putting clothing on as I grabbed a towel and ran to go turn the game back on. In my haste, I never properly dried my feet (or really any part of my body) and as I was getting to the TV I slipped on the wood floor and hit my head on the corner of the TV stand. When I opened my eyes, I couldn't remember anything. Why was my body wet? What time was it? Why was I lying on the floor? What happened to my clothing? I started crying just as my parents rushed into the room, after hearing the loud

thump from downstairs. They quickly figured out I had fallen and were trying to calm me down. I was out-of-sorts and I couldn't get over how my body was feeling. I laid down on their bed and had my entire family sit with me in the room as they dialed 911 to get an ambulance to bring me to the hospital. I thought I was dying. In the hospital, they ran a CAT Scan and later an MRI to determine the extent of the damage. I was diagnosed with a serious concussion and was told about the healing and recovery process. I also found out the Giants had won 17-3! (Thank God!) This was my first hospital experience and my first of four concussions. I have been the beneficiary of some amazing doctors and radiologists working behind the scenes to diagnose these head injuries and to make sure my brain and head would be ok. But just how hard and important is it to be a radiologist?

Radiologists today are looking at more scans, more slices per scan, and much higher resolution scans and it's only increasing as technology continues to improve. The demand for medical imaging services is continuously increasing, outpacing the supply of qualified radiologists and stretching them to produce more output, without compromising patient care. With two billion people expected to join the global middle class in the next decade a crisis is imminent. There are a lot of variabilities and it takes a tremendous amount of training to be able to consistently give the right answer, and these important behind the scenes doctors are playing a greater role in patient decision making and care. There is a clear need to maintain a high level of accuracy even as the volume and complexity continue to rise. Only by adopting new technology that significantly enhances the capabilities of radiologists can this crisis be mitigated. Zebra Medical Vision is trying to create machine-learning algorithms that will help existing radiologists detect diseases

SEE ZEBRA, CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

Good Vibes: Paint, Plants, Design, and Employee Productivity

By Akiva Frishman

Pods, Ping-Pong tables, and hammocks are only a few of the furnishings that symbolize today's modern work space. Once unique to high-tech communities like Silicon Valley, these sorts of upgrades are now found in many industries across the U.S. Amidst this growing trend in office remodeling emerges a fascinating hypothesis: An employee's productivity is impacted by his/her physical environment. Indeed, a host of recent analyses indicate that the layout, design, and aesthetics of an office do, in fact, have a significant bearing on its workers' performance.

Not too long ago, companies determined cost-minimization to be the primary factor in office design—employee amenities were scarce and comfortable seating was only reserved for clients in the waiting room. Inherent within this model was the notion that the workplace served solely as a means to an end: a locale for telephone calls, meetings, and other day-to-day business activities. Though economically efficient, this reasoning provided little incentive for an employee to enjoy her time at the office or even interact with fellow co-workers and consequently, it was often shown to hamper her performance.

In an effort to curb the negative effects of poor office design, firms are experimenting with a number of strategies that are thought to encourage both creativity and enjoyment, and by extension, productivity. But how does the layout of the workplace encourage these sorts of results and which office features should firms focus on in producing them?

Regarding the physical layout—the choice and arrangement of desks, seating etc.—the latest findings suggest that the office should promote both collaboration and focus. On one hand, some theorize that an inviting and comfortable area in which employees can work together and share ideas is the most efficient way of promoting creative conversation. To this effect, many firms are replacing the partitioning cubicles with open, elongated tables and are creating spaces for group dialogue.

In addition, some companies eager to promote inter-departmental conversation are strategically placing restaurants, bathrooms and rest areas in an effort to maximize the opportunities for such encounters. Steve Jobs is perhaps the figure most famous for this line of reasoning. In designing both the Pixar and Apple headquarters, Jobs incorporated many areas in which a diverse group of employees could collaborate on various projects which he believed would generate better products.

But conversation is certainly not the only factor that could affect employee productivity. On the contrary, the majority of workers also require an area that allows for quiet and focus. To achieve this important synthesis, many firms are structuring their offices to provide spaces for private concentration in addition to collaborative settings. Indeed, a 2016 Gensler Report on the U.S. Workplace

found that “Innovative companies are 5 times more likely to prioritize both individual and group workspace.” In other words, to maximize productivity, firms should implement designs that promote a social atmosphere but not at the expense of entirely forgoing tranquility.

The physical layout is but one aspect that can boost employee morale and productivity. Firms looking to increase worker performance ought to also consider the aesthetic features of their offices; these are often simple, cost-efficient improvements but yet produce notable results.

While the average worker likely spends more hours in

“AMIDST THE GROWING TREND IN OFFICE REMODELING EMERGES A FASCINATING HYPOTHESIS: AN EMPLOYEE’S PRODUCTIVITY IS IMPACTED BY HIS/HER PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT.”

his office than most rooms in his home, there is a clear disparity in the way each is decorated. In the latter, a person might devote weeks to selecting and re-selecting the exact shade that reflects the respective ambiance and purpose of each room. This is not the case for the former; “Off-white will do” is likely the rationale of his employer.

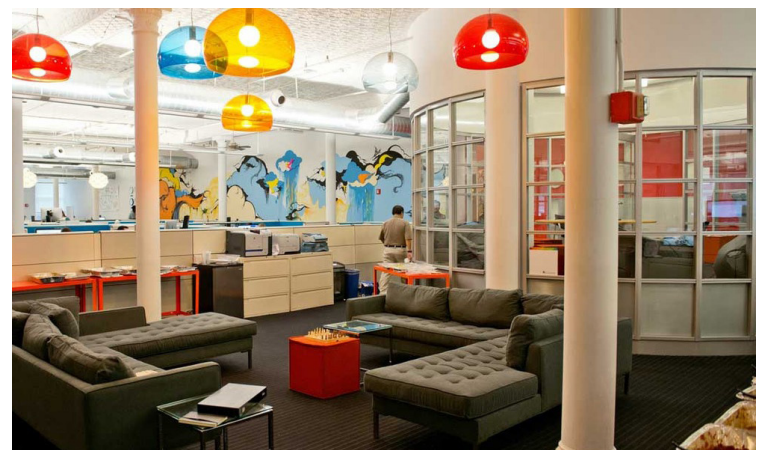
But in the same way that the right color profoundly impacts the home, it also influences the work environment. A study conducted by The University of Texas showed that certain colors actually boost workers' attitude. Specifically, light green and sky blue were two shades that were proven to reduce anxiety and stress—Blue was also found to improve concentration. Moving across the color spectrum, red was shown capable of inspiring both passion and energy. Though paint choice might seem inconsequential to some CEO's, these findings imply that it deserves more attention. If firms are interested in either easing a demanding atmosphere or promoting excitement, they would be wise to strategically consider their choice of color.

However, for a growing number of employees clocking out at late hours in the evening, color might not be enough. In pursuit of a high-profile career—especially in urban settings—many deprive themselves of sunlight and access to nature which could be harming

their performance. Though one solution would technically be to excuse workers at earlier times, installing a few extra plants could also produce the desired effect. Exeter University studied the effects of nature in the workplace on employee productivity and found that offices with greenery were 15% more productive than their nature deprived peers. The research also showed that workers were more satisfied with their surroundings and reported higher levels of concentration. Plants are a relatively inexpensive commodity and with employees spending such little time outdoors it only seems natural (pun intended) that these sorts of items would decorate an office.

Businesses are not the only group that has considered the effects of a person's physical environment. Yeshiva University recently updated its Wilf Campus Library and its features seem to be very much in line with the empirical findings cited above. The campus's academic hub boasts specific floors for group collaboration as well as quiet, independent study. In addition, the interior offers an array of colors (including light blue and green) to promote both relaxation and focus and its updated exterior was enhanced with a fresh selection of greenery. While an official study has yet to be conducted, there is reason to believe that these improvements will encourage stronger academic performance similar to the findings observed in the business setting.

In seeking to strengthen its profits, a company is tempted to concentrate exclusively on spreadsheets, expense reports, and sales outlooks. But in doing so, the firm will fail to address the indirect factors that spur value creation—like its office design—and it will ultimately ignore areas for sizable economic gains. Businesses, employees, and students are all products of their physical environment and are swayed by the influences around them. So if growth is sluggish or A's are in short supply, a quick paint job and a trip to the local florist might just be in order.



Career Center Corner: Am I Late, or is it Still Early to Apply for Summer Internships?

By Tina Lin

It's definitely not early, but the detailed answer to this question depends on the industry and types of companies. **Certain industries** have **rigorous processes** for summer internship opportunities with **advanced timelines** that begin as early as the summer before. **Large, multinational brand name companies** typically have an established annual internship program with a competitive application process of many steps. *Internship application openings and deadlines vary significantly between industries and companies.* (For example, Goldman Sachs 2018 Summer Internship applications opened in July 2017 with a deadline in November. However, CBS News opens its 2018 summer intern applications on Jan 1 with a deadline of Feb 28.)

However, small-medium sized companies or start-ups may be more flexible in creating special, project-based, or ad-hoc internships depending on the company's business needs. These **rolling opportunities** are dependent on various economic factors, and the key here is to keep a lookout for these openings. This is where networking plays a critical role for staying in the loop and staying front-of-mind. Getting these company names and **networking** contacts on your **target list** is a critical part of a diversified job search.

Awareness of industry and company hiring cycle time frames prepares you for seizing the opportunity. Speak to a Career Center counselor to learn more about differences in hiring cycles between various industries, such as technology, real estate, marketing, accounting, finance, consulting, healthcare or others. Be informed

about postings on YU Career Link and how to access the latest job board resources so you can do your research.

Important questions to address in preparing your internship application:

1. Which industry are you looking to get a summer internship in?
2. Which different companies within this industry are on your target list?
3. Is your resume competitive enough to pass the 10-second test?

The time to prepare is NOW. If you are a sophomore or junior, be sure your resume is ready before Thanksgiving, and that you've done a cover letter before year-end. Preparing now will prime you to seize the moment when **new internship opportunities** are posted at the start of the New Year.

Awareness of the process and effort involved in preparing a competitive resume and cover letter enables you to manage your time well in submitting a strong application that lands the interview. Just as athletes practice for a game and musicians practice for a concert, a student needs to practice resume and cover letter writing skills to get that interview invitation. Most students underestimate the number of drafts it takes to create a resume that looks good and sounds good. You have 10-seconds to make a good first impression.

Will your resume avoid rejection and be selected for an interview?

ZEBRA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

earlier and prevent illnesses and death. But on top of that, they want to make these expensive scans more affordable. By analyzing millions of patient scans, Zebra is teaching their software how to identify specific important medical findings in those scans to help the radiologist produce a better outcome for their patients. Additionally, as part of AI1, Zebra is revolutionizing health care by providing access to high-quality care at an affordable cost.

Zebra's Radiology Assistant receives imaging scans from various modalities and automatically analyzes them for a number of different clinical findings. Findings are provided in real time to radiologists or other physicians and hospital systems as needed. Zebra uses a proprietary database of millions of imaging scans, along with machine and deep learning tools, to create software that analyzes the data with amazing accuracy. Providers use Zebra to alert them to patients at high risk of cardiovascular, lung, bone and other diseases. This facilitates preventative care programs, proper risk adjustments and allocation, as well as conformance with quality standards. Zebra's goal is to provide focus to the right patients, at the right time, while saving overall costs and improving patient care.

Headquartered in Kibbutz Shefayim, Israel, the company was founded in 2014 by co-founders Eyal Toledano (currently CTO), Eyal Gura (currently Chairman), and Elad Benjamin (currently CEO). Benjamin went to Tel Aviv University, majoring in physics, and then to Stanford Graduate School of Business for his MBA. He had previously co-founded and was CEO of Vascular Precision, a Medical Device startup that developed a unique vascular closure device for large arteriotomies. He also previously worked as VP of Marketing and Product Management at Algotec Systems, General Manager of Healthcare Information Solutions at Carestream Health, and VP of Surgical Business at Lumenis before Zebra Medical Vision. Gura graduated his BA with the Zell Entrepreneurship Program of IDC Herzliya, where he also Co-Founded the IEC (first entrepreneurship club in Israel). He then graduated the Wharton Business School of the University of Pennsylvania. He served in the Israeli army as the CPO and Head of Navigation for the Submarine Flotilla and Submarine Academy. Gura is an Angel investor and venture capitalist with Pitango Venture Capital, the largest venture capital fund in Israel. He was also formerly the co-founder of TheScouter.com, PicScout (acquired by Getty Images), PicApp (acquired by Ybrant Digital), and The Gifts Project (acquired by eBay). In 2014, he was named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum and sits on the board of many of the companies he invests in. Lastly, Toledano also graduated from the Zell Entrepreneurship Program of IDC Herzliya majoring in Computer Science before getting a Master of Science from MIT. He also served as a Developer and Team Leader for 6 years in the IDF. Zebra Medical vision has raised over 20 million dollars in funding and has been funded by Khosla Ventures, Marc Benioff, Intermountain Investment Fund, OurCrowd, and Dolby Ventures. Zebra's 30 employees are based in Israel, the US, and the UK. They have won recent awards such as Gartner Cool Vendor 2017, Frost & Sullivan Technology Innovator 2017, Ayn Rand's Foundation Atlas Award for social impact, and FastCompany top-5 AI company. This company is equipped with the right people and funding to make a real difference in the AI Healthcare world.

Right now, Zebra's algorithm focuses on 4 main areas, with more to come in the future. The first is Bone Health. Zebra's bone density algorithm uses existing CT scans, performed for any reason, to output a result which is equivalent to the Bone Density T-Score generated by DEXA scans. Providers can use their existing CT data to conduct prescreening for people with increased risk of fracture, with no need for additional tests or radiation. These can then be targeted for Bone Health or Fracture Prevention programs, reducing overall fracture rates and associated costs. Just to put this in perspective, Osteoporosis affects 1/3 women and 1/5 men over 50 and is responsible for 9 million fractures globally every year. 80% of those at risk are not identified or treated, and patients who suffer from an Osteoporotic fracture experience a significant degradation in their quality of life. One example of this is that 25% of hip fracture patients end up in a nursing home within 12 months of their fracture. The costs of Osteoporosis treatment are estimated to be \$17 Billion in the US alone. One of the parameters used to identify patients at risk of Osteoporosis is bone density. A DEXA

scan provides a T-Score, which along with other risk factors gives an indication of the likelihood of Osteoporosis. Unfortunately, few people actively seek to monitor their bone density, and DEXA scans are only performed by a small percentage of the population. This perpetuates the low identification rate. The second aspect of Zebra's bone health tests is compression fractures. Zebra's compression fractures detection algorithm was developed utilizing a combination of traditional machine vision segmentation and convolutional neural net (CNN) technology and can be applied to any CT of the chest, abdomen and/or pelvis. The algorithm automatically segments the vertebral column, and then identifies and localizes compression fractures. This is just one of the ways in which Zebra can help review a patient's CT scan.

Zebra's fatty liver algorithm analyses CT Chest and Abdomen data to automatically segment the liver, and calculates its average density. When detected in time, fatty liver can be reversible with lifestyle modifications involving diet, exercise and reduced alcohol intake. This algorithm can provide a 'wake up' call to pre-diabetics to spur lifestyle interventions. Fatty Liver is common as it's found incidentally on CT in 11.4% of the adult population in the US and in 22% among diabetics. Fatty liver is a risk factor for several key preventable diseases. Presence of fatty liver is associated with subclinical cardiovascular changes, elevated inflammatory markers of atherosclerosis and heart dysfunction. In diabetics (type II), fatty liver is associated with coronary artery disease. It is also independently associated with increased coronary artery calcification and is a strong predictor of high-risk coronary artery plaque. The presence of fatty liver indicates 2.13x – 4.6x risk of having high-risk coronary artery plaque. People with fatty liver are nearly 2x as likely to experience a cardiovascular event (heart attack or sudden death) over a mean follow up interval of 7.3 years.

Zebra's emphysema algorithm analyzes CT Chest studies, detects emphysematous regions in the lungs, and quantifies the volume of emphysema in comparison to the overall lung volume. A more accurate understanding of the prevalence of the disease within a given population can help patients manage the disease more effectively before it degrades to more severe, less treatable manifestations. Emphysema is one of the diseases that comprises COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). It is a long-term, progressive obstructive lung disease in which the alveoli (small sacs) that promote oxygen-carbon dioxide exchange between the air and the bloodstream become damaged or destroyed. There are approximately 12 million individuals in the US who carry a diagnosis of COPD and the American Lung Association estimates that there were twice as many patients with impaired lung function (indicative of early-stage COPD) than patients with diagnosed COPD. COPD is the third leading cause of death behind heart disease and cancer, and current estimates suggest that COPD costs the nation almost \$50 billion annually in both direct and indirect health expenditures. Zebra's Coronary Calcium Scoring algorithm automatically calculates Coronary Calcium Scores based on standard, non-contrast Chest CTs. This tool can provide early detection of people at high risk of severe cardiovascular events. Coronary artery calcium is a biomarker of coronary artery disease – and quantification of coronary calcification is a strong predictor of cardiovascular events such as heart attack or strokes.

Zebra plans to continue to develop a broad pipeline of clinical tools, as they drive towards their mission of AI-based radiology. Their engineers are developing algorithms to detect findings on plain radiography (X-Rays), Mammography, Head CTs, MRI and more. The system can detect 11 different ailments right now, and will be able to sniff out six more by the end of 2017. The company has 35 diagnostic products in total that it plans to release within a year. These will be added to their Imaging Analytics engine, that will grow to become a comprehensive analysis tool. Some future problems they hope to detect are malignant breast lesions, acute brain bleeds, the risk for pulmonary hypertension, the risk for aortic aneurysms, and lung nodules in chest CTs. There is a clear immediate impact that Zebra can make to a radiologist's job but the future looks even brighter and more comprehensive.

So Why is an AI Healthcare Startup company working with Radiologists called "Zebra Medical Vision"? Well, any medical intern is taught a famous quote: "When you hear hoofbeats, think of horses, not zebras". For non-medical students, this means to look for more common diseases. Zebra is the medical slang for arriving at an exotic medical diagnosis when a more commonplace explanation is more

likely. Like in many other fields of our lives, utilization was prioritized over precision. Now with the availability of computing power and data, this company hopes to finally be able to take care of the Zebras!

Using both platforms, and their partner network which reaches over 1,100 hospitals and providers, Zebra is able to leverage the tremendous powers of the global research community and channel subsequent insights to healthcare institutions. They have teamed up with providers such as Carestream Health, Intermountain Healthcare, and Telerad Tech. Carestream Health is a worldwide provider of medical imaging systems and IT solutions; X-ray imaging systems for non-destructive testing; and advanced materials for the precision films and electronics markets. Intermountain Healthcare is a Utah-based not-for-profit system of 22 hospitals, 185 clinics, a Medical Group with about 1,500 employed physicians and advanced practitioners, a health plans group called SelectHealth, and other medical services. Lastly, Telerad Tech is the technology arm of India's first and largest teleradiology company - Teleradiology Solutions (TRS) corporation. They signed a partnership in July to bring Zebra-Med's cloud-based deep learning analytics engine to over 20 countries and 150 hospitals and healthcare organizations. In July 2017, Zebra announced that the company had been granted the CE approval and subsequent release of its Deep Learning Analytics Engine in Europe, as well as regulatory clearance and product release in Australia and New Zealand. These partnerships are just the beginning of impact Zebra wants to have in the radiology world as it hopes to eventually be in every country of the world.

Zebra's newly announced program called AI1 is a new suite that offers all its current and future algorithms to healthcare providers globally for \$1 USD per scan. "With this new model, we hope to facilitate adoption globally, especially in countries where access to radiology is difficult," says Elad Benjamin, "We are making a commitment to provide our current tools, and all future ones, for a flat \$1 USD per scan. By doing so we believe that a true difference can be made in the provision of radiology services worldwide." The business model is designed so that Zebra can be accessible to all customers, even those outside of the Western world.

Just how good can their product be? Zebra recently went through testing at an Oxford University hospital, and the system was sensitive in 95 percent of 100 CT scans, with a specificity of 100 percent. (Specificity measures how well a test can distinguish those with a disease from those without, while sensitivity is the number of true positive tests compared to all patients who actually have the disease.) Also, Gura said that Zebra Medical Vision algorithms were more accurate than expert radiologists. He said that the company's breast cancer algorithm, which was developed and trained using 350,000 mammograms of diagnosed breast cancer, detects breast cancer with a 92 percent accuracy, in comparison to the 87 percent accuracy rate of radiologists. Gura said, "machine and deep learning will help the finite amount of radiologists we have currently to be 10 times better and analyze 10 times more reports per hour."

The cherry on top is that Zebra Medical Vision just announced a partnership with Google to offer its algorithms on the search giant's cloud. Currently, Zebra's software is installed on-site, which can be costly for hospitals having to pay for servers to store the imaging. That's why Zebra has partnered with Google to offer its algorithms as part of the Google Cloud. Major hospitals and healthcare systems are slowly moving their data storage to the cloud, which offers a cheaper way to store large amounts of information. Companies like Microsoft, Google and Amazon offer such services. But these technology giants also provide added services on top of their clouds, such as data analytics and AI capabilities. Both Microsoft and Amazon have special tools in the cloud-focused on areas of medicine such as genomics or drug development. Google has been trying to push the healthcare side of its cloud platform in the past few months. The partnership with Google can help the search giant bolster its cloud efforts as it competes with Amazon and Microsoft in the fast-growing space. And for Zebra, the deal could mean the ability to scale its business faster. This partnership might be just the deal Zebra is looking for to vault it to the top of the AI healthcare world as we close out 2017. So next time you see a Zebra don't be afraid, it's probably just your friendly Israeli startup making the world a better place!





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