

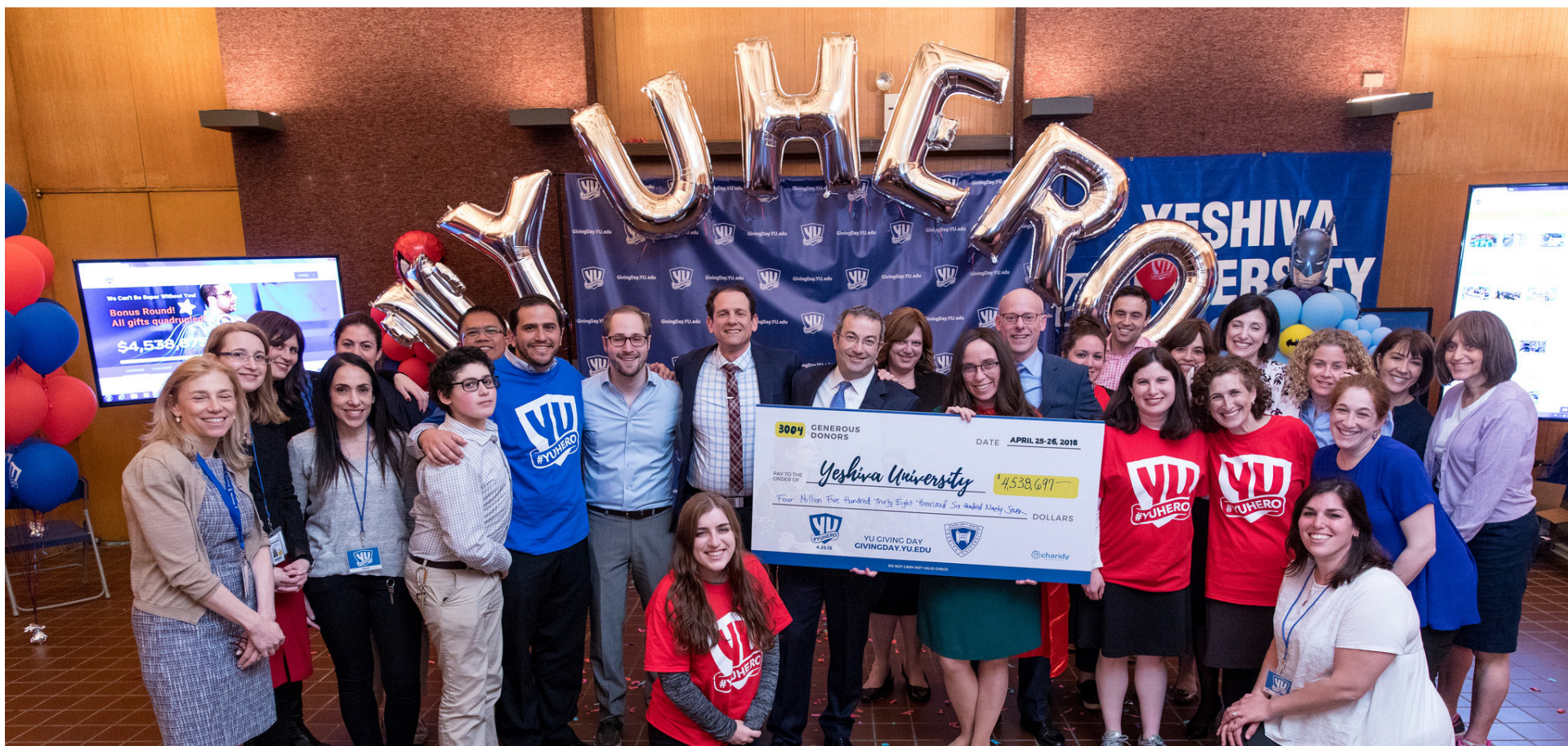
The COMMENTATOR

The Independent Student Newspaper of Yeshiva University



Volume LXXXIII
Issue 10

Second Annual Giving Day Raises \$4.5 Million in 24-Hour Campaign



By Chana Weinberg

The second annual YU Giving Day campaign raised \$4,538,697 from 3,004 donors, surpassing the original stated goal of \$3 million from 3,000 donors, according to the Giving Day website. While the original \$3 million goal was reached with hours to spare, the total donors goal was aided by a push of over 1,000 donors in the last two hours.

The 24-hour campaign ran from noon on April 25th to the 26th and included promotional events on both the Wilf and Beren campuses. Unlike last year's campaign, there were also promotions made on the graduate school and high school campuses. All donations collected during the first 22 hours were doubled by donors, while donations during the last two hours were quadrupled. Donations continued to come in after the allotted 24 hours and count

towards the overall totals of the day.

According to the Giving Day website, money raised will help fund the 27 YU schools and programs at the high school, undergraduate, and graduate levels. The largest single donation was \$200,000, and 104 donations given for the senior class gift, surpassing the 100 donor goal.

SEE GIVING DAY, CONTINUED
ON PAGE 4

Frozen Salaries and Numb Morale: From Supreme Court to Faculty Council

By Yardena Katz

Alongside a thunderous report on the Iran hostage crisis, Yeshiva University made the *New York Times* front page on February 20, 1980.

"A day that will live in academic and judicial infamy, the Supreme Court rules against us, 5-4," wrote YC Professor of English Literature Manfred Weidhorn in his memoir, *By Luck Possessed*. "For me, this crushing blow marks the end of the six-year quest for justice."

As vice president of the Yeshiva University Faculty
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Wood-Hill to Oversee Pre-Health and Pre-Law Advising on Wilf Campus

By Yitzchak Carroll

Lolita Wood-Hill has assumed the role of Executive Director of Pre-Professional Advising Programs on the Wilf Campus. In this capacity, she will oversee pre-law and pre-health students.

The appointment came in the wake of former Pre-Law Advisor Dina Chelst's departure in early March. In an email announcing her departure, Chelst said that Deans Bacon and Sugarman would be the "point people" for pre-law students, but Wood-Hill took over those responsibilities shortly thereafter.

In early March, Chelst left YU after three and a half years to return to practicing law. Under the change, Wood-Hill, who has served as the Pre-Health Adviser for Yeshiva College students for more than seven years, has

expanded her role to advising pre-law students as well.

Wood-Hill, who has been involved in academic advising for more than 25 years at both YU and throughout the CUNY system, is excited about her new position. "Much of advising is making sure you hear the students' concerns, making sure resources are available and providing solid advice," she said. "I enjoy helping students understand how they can achieve their professional goals. Helping someone identify and successfully transition to their passion for a particular professional goal is so fulfilling!"

To adjust to her new duties, Wood-Hill plans to add more office hours. The University also intends to hire a new general academic adviser, according to Yeshiva College Associate Dean for Operations and Student Affairs Fred Sugarman. According to a job posting for

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The EDITORIAL

What Would Be Counterintuitive?

By Avi Strauss

I've always found it somewhat ironic that some of the most highly read articles produced by newspapers are opinion pieces. If the core function of a publication is to produce news, it seems strange that such a popular section of the paper would be those articles that, by design, are slanted and biased commentary.

More ironic still is that the chief of the paper, who is presumably deserving of the position for his or her investigative skill, editorial acumen, and overall ability to function as a manager, is charged with leading a paper's opinion commentary in the editorial column when his or her appointment is predicated on skills unconnected to sharing opinions publicly.

No doubt it's even more ironic for that very same editor to undercut his own editorial with a meta-commentary on the enterprise of editorializing in the first place.

**"REFLECTION PIECES FROM
OUTGOING EDITORS-IN-CHIEF ARE
CLICHÉ, AND I LIKE TO GENERALLY
THINK I AM COUNTERINTUITIVE
WHEN IT COMES TO THIS PAPER."**

This isn't to say I don't think I have what to offer when it comes to opining. As a student who's been invested in the journalistic venture for four years, my commentary may be seen as uniquely valuable amongst a sea of opinions on campus. And...well...I happen to also think I have pretty

good opinions.

So here's one: YU is a pretty great place. To be sure, like any university, it's bogged down by bureaucracy and inefficiency, high food prices, and its general unwillingness to hand you everything on a silver platter. But it's also filled with some of the most accessible administrators, brilliant minds, and driven students around.

Here's another: Reflection pieces from outgoing Editors-in-Chief are cliché, and I like to generally think I am counterintuitive when it comes to this paper. And the more I think about it, counterintuition and the irony described above are really just two sides of the same coin. Irony for its part, provides the reflective, and at times, humorous content to the self-aware, while counterintuition is the manifestation of awareness that prevents the unwitting production of the conclusionary ironic step to a progression.

In the case of the paper, data is boring and archived pieces are old. But data can also help end baseless speculation, while past articles can help illuminate what's at stake in the present. It is notions like these which have guided my stewardship of The Commentator this year, because providing information that readers assume *a priori* to be boring, but learn to appreciate, is maybe the most counterintuitive thing a paper can do.

When it comes to the publication of stories we've worked on, the question of counterintuition comes into play as well. If newspapers are to be read, the logical and intuitive thing to do, as many publications have transitioned into doing, is to manufacture headlines for optimal clicks, or to feature a ratio of opinion to news that calls into question a publication's status as an unbiased interpreter in the realm of current events.

SEE COUNTERINTUITIVE,
CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Commentator Blueprint for '18-'19

By Benjamin Koslowe

Truth.

From beginning to end, journalism's *raison d'être* is truth. Journalism fosters accountability, calling attention to falsehoods and ethical lapses. Journalism demands consistency, where adherents to the will of God push back against the pressures of skepticism in a postmodern world. Journalism provides empowerment, granting the masses a voice that can be heard and recognized by the powerful.

This is where The Commentator plays an active role. As a well-established and respected platform, this newspaper owes all Yeshiva University undergraduate students the page space to have their voices heard, and to make an impact. We are in a good place with a talented, diverse group of editors and writers, mindful and capable of achieving this higher purpose.

This year I had the privilege to immerse myself in the endlessly fascinating Gottesman Library collection of Commentator archives. Thousands of pages document 83 years of devoted students reporting on YU happenings. This year alone, publishing over 100 well-written, well-evidenced news stories, and over 350 articles in total, we did justice in carrying the colossal ark that is this newspaper's responsibility, successfully bringing The Commentator to one of the best places it has ever been. The publication's quality is as important as its quantity, and, to our credit, we have regularly received praise this year from students, faculty, and outsiders about our professional, dedicated, impressive pursuit of truth. My recent and more distant predecessors have overseen this newspaper fantastically, and even just matching the quality of their outputs would, in my eyes, mean success of my impact as editor-in-chief.

My testifying to The Commentator's historical commitment to truth is one thing; providing public access to our archives is another. I believe that this newspaper should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this year is out, of digitizing its archives and making them available to the public. I have begun the process of brainstorming with our amazing librarians how to make this a reality. No single journalism innovation in this period will be more significant to us, or more important for the long-term possibilities of The Commentator. The archives represent an historical perspective on the university, providing a window into YU's history for students, alumni, and the broader Jewish and academic communities.

While The Commentator takes pride in its impressive history, it is a living organism very much entrenched in the present. We stepped up to modern expectations this year with consistently quick reporting. We will continue such service to our online readers in the next academic year, and we will print on a more frequent basis than we have in the past, for the benefit of our readers present on the Wilf and Beren campuses.

The Commentator's new "Top Comments" podcast as well is a testament to our modern awareness. The podcast taps into a new medium for providing news and creative discussion to the public. We have only scratched the surface with this nascent, promising addition to the newspaper. The untold potential will continue to develop, next year and in years to come.

As this newspaper has shown, calling attention to truth

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The COMMENTATOR 2017-2018

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*The Commentator is the student newspaper
of Yeshiva University.*

*For 83 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.*

*We are united by our passion for
living the ideals of Torah u-Maddah,
and a commitment to
journalistic excellence.*



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1 BONF Award

This is the award for writing for all four Commentator sections, and we promise that it's a real thing. Congrats @MatthewSilkin! #4for4



2 Graduation

As long as my friends snag the Testbanks, I'm sure I'll do fine and be right on my way to Wall Street. Graduation is a test, right?



3 Apartment 24

President Nolan Edmonson, Vice President of Class Affairs Judah Stiefel, and Senior Rep. Avi Ennis are all member of YSU and all live in the same apartment. Smells like collusion but ok.



4 Caf Daddying

The latest craze to subvert opaque and contradictory Dining Services rules...and to feed your out-of-town friends.



5 Waffle House Hero

After Kevin Durant's mom, this guy is hand's down the real MVP of the century.

6 #YUHero/The Avengers

One of these made a record-breaking billion dollars in only 11 days. And the other is a supersaturated geek-fest spearheaded by an institution filled with religious nerds.



7 Syms Dinner

In the spirit of consistency, attendees sat in stadium seating with open laptops as their student council presidents read off of a slideshow. Or so I heard, I honestly was spaced out the whole time, there was a super dope basketball game going on during the dinner.



7 UP 7 DOWN

1 Angry Facebook Comments

I'm not here to call out the writer, but we all know that you're there to call out the writer.

2 Shavuot Torah Tours Emails

I think I received around an email a day from these people between mid-March and the end of April. It's almost approaching the number of emails I receive from LinkedIn requests... and that's not a good thing.

3 Chess and Chill

I'm all for clubs advertising as they please, but somebody should send them a link to Urban Dictionary since I'm not sure the club knows what the term means...

4 SOY Election Platforms

It's really too bad that there were no debates this year for the candidates to talk out the all-important topic of Thursday night cholent vs. Thursday night poppers that has been raging on campus.

5 Juan Pablo Duarte Boulevard

The much cooler name for St. Nicholas Avenue.

6 Hotel Cliff

I'm convinced no one has ever stayed there to not have an affair. Unrelatedly, The Commentator has also just learned that Stern students will be staying here next year for the first Uptown co-ed Shabbatons.

7 7up/7down Vol. 83 Honorable Mention

And finally, here are this year's headlines that never wound up making the final cut for 7up/7down (you'll have to guess which side they would've been!): Mail; Uranus; Java Updates; Cotton Schwabs (you read that correctly); IBC Rabbi Beni Rofeh; That Door Outside of Rubin; The Last Jedi; Kale; Sports Business Club; Ronaiah Tuiasopopo; Manor Consortium; Cheerleaders; and, last but not least, Halfpace.



COUNTERINTUITIVE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

But those aren't things The Commentator does. The Commentator works hard to print the news stories expected of it, investigating where YU promotional activity won't, while also striving to produce work with real value to the long-term discussions and debates that shape campus culture and perspectives. Headlines are merely the descriptors—if content is balanced and reasoned, quality readership will surely follow (and in the history of this paper, has followed.)

And while every piece may be subject to its own praise or critique, the thoughtfulness and thoroughness of this paper's editorial board these past few years has been eye-opening, generally reassuring, and something of which I am very proud.

Certainly, it's possible to read the above and think even my *description* of the paper is counterintuitive, if not outright ironic. After all, longtime readers of these pages can surely find opinion pieces to be indignant about, so much so that "thoughtful" and "thorough" might just be the most ironic words I could put in print.

But to do so misses the point of a campus paper generally, and this paper in particular. The news and the opinions produced here are part of a never-ending university commentary in which I've been fortunate to play a temporary role. Even when stories are uncomfortable or difficult to read, they are still a part of the general story of the institution. Likewise, the responses to those stories in print and in person are a part of an historical commentary—a series of chronicles that document just a sliver of a complicated, but overall positive history for the flagship university of Modern Orthodoxy.

Yes, every editor has a chance to put his own flavor on the direction of the paper, but as an institution, The Commentator continues to serve the same function as a disinterested spectator, which also features the opinions of the passionate.

In my case, I'd like to think that the charges for the paper to be fair and balanced were met. Moreover, I believe that this year, the paper met its goal to level the campus playing field with information, making it more readily dispersed throughout the two undergraduate campuses, while fostering a greater collective interest in our shared demographic profile.

Doing so was a pleasure, and an experience I will always remember fondly. And I think it would be fair to say I would not have had such an opportunity any place else, and for that I will always be grateful.

And so I guess even the counterintuitive path towards finishing a year as an editor can too conclude ironically.

Women's Tennis Team to Make First-Time Leap to NCAA Tournament

By Chana Weinberg

After wins in their respective Skyline Conference championships, the men's and women's tennis teams will be competing in the NCAA Division III tennis tournaments, which begin on Thursday, May 11. For the men, this will be their fifth consecutive appearance, while the women's team will become the first ever female team in YU history to compete in a NCAA tournament. Their opponents and location of play will be revealed at noon Monday, May 7 via web stream.

"[Our success] comes from a combination of hard work and effort," said Syms student and tennis team member Shani Hava. "I feel like in the last four years the team has gotten more and more eager to win the title and to make YU proud. I think the combination of support between the athletics department and our professors made this success possible."

Hava, an athlete from Petah Tikva, Israel, is an example of the extra effort put in by the athletics program. Spearheaded by the efforts of Athletics Assistant Director of Recruitment and Alumni Affairs, Josh Pransky, YU has made an effort to recruit international students to play sports. Hava joined four other YU tennis players from outside North America as well as many other student-athletes scattered around Maccabee rosters.

Hava also mentioned the impact that she hopes to make as a female Jewish athlete playing for a competitive college program. "I hope this shows girls that they can come to YU and get good academics while also being a competitive athlete. I hope this success shows them that we are a great place to come to."

SEE TENNIS, CONTINUED ON PAGE

BLUEPRINT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

does not include only information explicitly or obviously available to the watchful observer. Careful documentation is important, to be sure, and our News section aptly holds the fort on reporting all university news. But we delve deeper too, reading between the lines and beneath the overt. Along with their many important responsibilities, the News and Features sections publish on a regular basis: serious investigative pieces on academic, social, and intellectual trends; close scrutiny of administrative practices and policies; creative stories by and about YU students; and spotlight pieces interviewing influential YU figures. We succeeded in these ventures this past year, and we aim for even better and more comprehensive success next year.

The Commentator's Opinions section has hosted incredibly thought-provoking and impactful articles. Minimally, they cause readers to reflect; sometimes, they lead to intense, but respectful and articulate, back and forth dialogue; and on occasion, as we saw this spring semester with the Klein @9 articles, they spark communal discussions about Yeshiva University's ideology and its future. The newspaper has done well in publishing interesting opinions, from across varying spectra, and this will only continue.

Our Business section has flourished since its founding only a few years ago. It has served as a platform for writers to inform and educate fellow students on important developments in the economy. Students publish articles that showcase technological and geopolitical innovations in business. Next year, we will inaugurate a column called "The Monthly Meeting," in which strong writers will interview executives and notable figures in various industries, providing readers with exclusive portraits of some of today's leaders.

Another small addition next year will be the presence of several student columns, which I intend to offer to a handful of our most talented writers. They will have the opportunity to consistently write, with their own tone and theme, on a unique topic of interest. These columns may include anything from culture reviews to ideological musings to satire, though the fine details, depending on student interest, remain to be determined.

I marvel in awe at the impact that this newspaper has had. To this day, articles in The Commentator, even when they cause only minor ripples and boast only modest readership, are perceived by the broader YU community as indicators of student sentiment on campus. We take this phenomenon very seriously. We owe our readers an open window into YU. We are responsible to actively promote news articles about positive developments, and praiseful op-eds, when we notice success. This same

sense of responsibility drives us to criticize, carefully but vigorously, when we see that it is necessary.

Twenty-five years ago, this newspaper ignited a riot that saved the Bernard Revel Graduate School from closing. This newspaper has hosted heated debates between college faculty and *roshei yeshiva*—on multiple occasions. This newspaper has consistently kept close tabs on YU practices and policies, and has had writers and editors become prominent thinkers and leaders in post-college capacities.

Before Volume 84 begins to fill the shelves, the current academic year must come to a close. The Commentator owes itself a well-deserved summer vacation. But though we may rest, we will never sleep. We will use this summer to re-energize ourselves, to kindle the fire in our journalistic souls, to hit the ground running as we reemerge next fall in full force.

If praise is due, we will praise.

If criticism is due, we will criticize.

If creativity is due, we will create.

If investigation is due, we will investigate.

Tirelessly, for the goal we seek is truth.

And truth is good.

-Titein emet l'Yaakov, chessed l'Avraham, asher nishbata la'avoteinu mimei kedem.

GIVING DAY, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

"What we are trying to do is marry the bigger philanthropists with the crowd in a way that is engaging for the students and the community," said Alyssa Herman Vice President of Institutional Advancement.

The student engagement that Herman imagined came from the campaign theme, YU Hero, which was made in salute to the heroic nature of the students and faculty of YU. Students of all the YU institutions were encouraged to nominate their own YU Hero and post about it on social media using the hashtag #YUHero. The YU Hero theme also included social media challenges, a new feature for this year's campaign, and free swag with a minimum donation of \$5.

The main fundraising event was a telethon held in Weissberg Commons on the Wilf Campus on Wednesday night. The phones were manned by YU employees and

student volunteers from both undergraduate campuses. At the telethon there were snacks, games and free Carlos & Gabby's sandwiches for the volunteers. President Ari Berman and a number of the donor matchers also spent time in Belfer hall.

"THE 24-HOUR CAMPAIGN RAN FROM NOON ON APRIL 25TH TO THE 26TH AND INCLUDED PROMOTIONAL EVENTS ON BOTH THE WILF AND BEREN CAMPUSES."

"I think giving day is really important because it provides a forum for *hakarat hatov* for all the wonderful individuals and leaders at YU that are dedicated to

improving and enhancing our institution," said Stern College for Women student Elen-Sarrah Dolgopolskaia. "I think the social media aspect and swag prizes is a great was to create a fun environment to raise money"

In response to questions about this year's low expectations relative to the \$5 million goal of last year's campaign which brought in \$6 million, Herman explained that the main difference is the time of year. While last year's campaign was in December, the heart of giving season, this year's took place in April, the start of the fiscal year.

Though she has participated in and ran many fundraisers in the past, Herman was excited for the "student army" that comes from running a campaign for an educational institution.

The numbers printed above are accurate as of April 26, 2018

WOOD-HILL, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

the new position on Indeed.com, applicants are required to have a master's degree and two years of related job experience.

Wood-Hill noted that the timelines for medical and law school applications are completely different, so students in each track will be appropriately accommodated. Pre-health students typically begin their applications the summer before their senior year, whereas pre-law students typically apply during the fall of their senior year. She also plans to attend the national pre-law conference in June with an eye towards fostering relationships with law school admissions officers to help her better advocate for students in the admissions process.

"Although I am not a lawyer, I am well-versed in helping students excel in making their goals a reality," she said. "I will work diligently to make sure that we continue to provide quality events and programs that will attract law schools to our exceptional student body."

With the shifts in the advising department, Sara Schwartz will be promoted to Senior Academic Advisor and will oversee pre-engineering students, as well as students who are struggling academically. Schwartz currently serves as a general academic advisor at YC, and also has been advising pre-engineering students since Chelst's departure. During her time as an advisor, Chelst worked with pre-engineering students.

"I am delighted by these changes," said Dean Sugarman. "We have two superb professionals in charge of advising activities and a third generalist soon to join."

"I cannot even express in words how thankful I am to have [Wood-Hill] as an advisor, mentor, and friend," said Syms Academic Advising Coordinator Aitan Magence, who is starting medical school in August. "I would not have been able to get to where I am today without a number of individuals, Mrs. Wood-Hill and Ms. Beaudreau being integral individuals to making that happen. I cannot think of a more deserving person than her to receive this promotion and I wish her much luck and success!"

"Ms. Wood-Hill is absolutely fantastic. She's so helpful in guiding the students to the various medical and dental school programs," said YC Junior Jacob Roffe, a pre-health student. "She makes sure everyone is prepared for their interviews and applications and it's great to work with her."

"While I have never met Ms. Wood-Hill, I hear only positive things about her. As a recipient of the Campus Partner of the Year Award, Ms. Wood-Hill seems like someone who is quite helpful with placing students into graduate study programs," said YC Junior Nolan Edmonson, a pre-law student. "I look forward to Ms. Wood-Hill working with pre-law students like myself to help realize our dream of getting into a good law school."



NY State Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi Discusses Homelessness at Wurzweiler

By Yitzchak Carroll

New York State Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi (D-Forest Hills) spoke to a room of approximately 50 Wurzweiler School of Social Work students on Thursday, April 19, on the Wilf Campus. Hevesi, the Chairman of the State Assembly's Social Services Committee, talked about the statewide issue of homelessness and other related topics.

Hevesi spoke of the policy and politics behind his recently-enacted initiative to stem the tide of homelessness

throughout New York State. In the state budget passed this year, Hevesi successfully shepherded a groundbreaking measure named the Home Stability Support program that gives needy families rental subsidies and ultimately helps them stay in their homes. Hevesi also discussed strategies he is working on to tackle other social services issues, including preventative services for children in troubled households and culturally-sensitive shelters for victims of human trafficking.

"I visited Yeshiva's campus to engage with students

who are interested in legislative advocacy and civic engagement, and to detail how to lobby for legislation within the state legislature," Hevesi said. "I hope that those in attendance were able to gain a better grasp on how they may effectively advocate for legislative initiatives, the resolve needed to implement legislation, and a more thorough comprehension of the legislative process in general."

Hevesi was invited to YU by Director of Government Relations Jon Greenfield. In his previous position as Managing Director of Communications at Red Horse Strategies, a Brooklyn-based political consulting firm, Greenfield helped Hevesi's Home Stability Support program gain traction and press coverage, leading up to its inclusion in this year's state budget.



"I VISITED YESHIVA'S CAMPUS TO ENGAGE WITH STUDENTS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT..."
-ANDREW HEVESI

"So much of the work our students and faculty do at Wurzweiler is shaped by the laws passed in Albany," Greenfield said. "Assembly Member Hevesi's visit was a rare opportunity to hear firsthand how programs like Home Stability Support become state law, and what this means for social workers on the front lines of the homeless crisis."

"He spoke very passionately, and as opposed to most politicians, it seemed that he had something real," said Yossi Levin, a Wurzweiler student. "He has the honesty to speak about politics and reveal what is going on—and that gives a certain element of trust."

Student Speakers Discuss Mental Illness in "Stomp out the Stigma" Event

By Eli Weiss

Around 250 students gathered to listen to speakers tell their stories about mental illness on April 16 at an event titled "Stomp out the Stigma," a project of the Active Minds club.

According to advertisements for the event, this program was designed to send the message that "mental health is a normal, common problem and seeking help is 100% acceptable and encouraged." The program had three keynote speakers; one guest lecturer followed by two student speakers. Following the conversation about mental health issues and the benefits of seeking help, a representative from the counseling center spoke briefly to the crowd and encouraged students to take advantage of their services.

The National Alliance on Mental health reported in 2015 that nearly "1 in 5 adults in the U.S. — 43.8 million, or 18.5% — experiences mental illness in a given year." And one in five young adults (ages 13-18) — or 21.4% — "experiences a severe mental disorder" in their life.

The program opened with remarks from a president of the Active Minds club, Yisroel Mayefsky. Co-President Emily Rosenblatt then introduced the guest speaker Aliza Blumenthal, the Director of Student Life at Bruriah

High School, who frequently speaks to groups on the topic of mental health.

Blumenthal opened with a discussion of her past struggles with anorexia, bulimia, and depression. Throughout the conversation, she spoke about the

damaging effects of stigma attached to mental illness and how it can be harmful in seeking the help a person

**SEE STOMP OUT THE STIGMA,
CONTINUED ON PAGE 7**



Koslowe to Edit Newspaper, Ciment Named Managing Editor

By Matthew Silkin

On April 16, the Editorial Board of The Commentator announced Benjamin Koslowe (YC '19) as the new Editor-in-Chief, and Shoshy Ciment (SCW '19) as the Managing Editor, replacing Avi Strauss (YC '18) and David Rubinstein (YC '18), respectively, for the 2018-2019 academic year.

Koslowe, who is pursuing a double major in



Editor Koslowe

mathematics and philosophy, has been writing for the paper for three years, including several news articles whose readership numbered in the tens of thousands. He joined the staff of The Commentator in Spring 2016 as a Junior Features Editor, before moving up to Senior Opinions Editor in Fall 2017. He is the third Editor-in-Chief of The Commentator in his family, following his grandfather Neil Koslowe (YC '66) and great-uncle Mark Koslowe (YC '73); additionally, he is the sixth in his family on the staff altogether, following his great-uncle Kenneth Koslowe (YC '69), who was a Sports Editor, his father, Jamin Koslowe (YC '93), who was a News Editor, and cousin Jason Koslowe (YC '04), who was a Senior Editor. He is also a tutor in the Wilf Campus Writing Center.

"I see Benjamin taking The Commentator to amazing places," remarked Ciment. "He is unbelievably devoted to this paper and has great ideas about how to make it even better."

Ciment, a journalism major, joined the staff of The Commentator in Spring 2017 as Junior News Editor, moving up to Senior News Editor in Fall 2017. She will be the first female Managing Editor in the history of the paper since its creation in 1935. She is a tutor in the Beren Campus Writing Center and has contributed articles to The New York Times, The Huffington Post, The Jewish Press, and other publications. Additionally, she has served as a reporter for Our Town, a local paper covering the Upper East Side of Manhattan. Over the summer, she will be covering theater-related news in an internship for Playbill.

"Shoshy this year led the helm of one of our most prolific and effective News sections in this newspaper's history," stated Koslowe. "Her aptitude and commitment will make my job that much easier, and our reporting that much more successful."

Other members of the editorial staff shared their support for the decision. "I'm thrilled by the recent appointments

of Benjamin as Editor-in-Chief and Shoshy as Managing Editor," stated Junior Opinions Editor Sam Gelman (YC '19). "Benjamin has been a great mentor to me throughout my years at The Commentator, and Shoshy did an unbelievable job with the News section. The two are great leaders and I have no doubt that they will continue to uphold The Commentator's good name." Junior Features Editor Lilly Gelman (SCW '19) added, "Working with Benjamin and Shoshy thus far has been an incredible experience. They are both extremely talented and dedicated to their work yielding great content which I am sure will continue under their leadership."

"OUR BOARD OF TALENTED, DEDICATED, FEARLESS EDITORS—AS WELL AS SCORES OF UNDERGRADUATE WRITERS—MAKES ME CONFIDENT THAT WE WILL EXCEL IN BEARING THE VERY HUMBLING AND AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY THAT THE COMMENTATOR DEMANDS!"

-BENJAMIN KOSLOWE

Members of the 2018-2019 board will also include Yossi Zimilover (SSSB '20) as Senior News Editor, Sam Gelman (YC '19) as Senior Features Editor, Lilly Gelman (SCW '19) as Senior Opinions Editor, Akiva Frishman (YC '19) as Senior Business Editor, and Avi Hirsch (YC '20) as Senior Layout Editor. Additionally, the Gelman siblings will continue spearheading Top Comments, the official podcast of The Commentator that they created and ran this year.

Describing his thoughts for the future, Koslowe said, "I am very excited and have high hopes for next year. Our board of talented, dedicated, fearless editors—as well as scores of undergraduate writers—makes me confident that we will excel in bearing the very humbling and awesome responsibility that The Commentator demands."

Private Tutor Nomi Ben-Zvi Tutoring Illicitly on Beren Campus Despite Deauthorization by Dean's Office

By Commentator Staff

A private tutoring service has been illicitly conducting sessions for undergraduate students on the Beren Campus, without permission from the Office of Events, Security, or the Dean's Office, an investigation by The Commentator has revealed. The Chromium Prep tutoring service, conducted by Nomi Ben-Zvi, a science tutor who has been known to Beren students for several years, operated on the Beren Campus with permission in the past, but had its authorization rescinded by the Dean's Office after the Fall 2017 semester.



Photo Credit: Chromium Prep Facebook page

Director of Security Paul Murtha informed The Commentator that YU Security was "not notified that [Ms. Ben-Zvi's] services were canceled and [they] were unaware that she was conducting unauthorized tutoring sessions." Mr. Murtha also confirmed with the Dean's Office that "Ms. Ben-Zvi's tutoring services were canceled and she was no longer authorized to tutor in Beren." Ben-Zvi will no longer be permitted to enter any YU building unless her visit is cleared with YU security.

According to students currently using Ben-Zvi's tutoring service, the sessions have been conducted in different rooms in Beren Campus buildings at different times each week. Last year, the sessions were operated out of the same room at the same time.

Ben-Zvi did not return repeated requests for comment on her tutoring services.

The Dean's Office did not respond to immediate requests for comment on why the course was de-authorized.

According to the YU Office of Events, any tutor not affiliated with Yeshiva University is required to gain approval from the Dean's Office before beginning to tutor on campus. The tutor is required to pay an insurance fee as well as a room rental fee of approximately \$150 per session.

Dean Karen Bacon, the Mordecai D. Katz and Dr. Monique C. Katz Dean of

Undergraduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences, informed The Commentator that "way back in time," no formal policies existed "regarding outside 'for profit' and 'not for profit' groups wishing to use our facilities. Now we do have such policies," Dean Bacon continued, and "each request is considered on a case by case basis." Dean Bacon would not comment on Ben-Zvi's previous arrangements with YU, but did say that Ben-Zvi "would need to be prepared to [comply with the policy] in order for us to consider a future request."

The Office of Events told The Commentator on April 26 that the only approved tutor currently holding sessions on YU campuses is Fischel Bensinger, who runs an LSAT course on Tuesday and Thursday evenings in First Hall on the Wilf Campus.

Ben-Zvi, who has tutored on the Beren Campus for several years, currently teaches group tutoring sessions on the Beren Campus for General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, and Biochemistry. This semester, Ben-Zvi tutors General Chemistry and Organic Chemistry classes. A Biochemistry session was run at the beginning of the semester, but has not been taught on a consistent basis.

Ben-Zvi is the founder of Chromium Prep, a tutoring service offering both private and group sessions and specializing in Chemistry, Biology, Organic Chemistry, Physics, Physiology, MCAT, and DAT.

This article has been updated since it was originally published.

New Mock Trial Club Competes at Cardozo

By Yossi Zimilover

On Sunday, April 22, after several months of preparation, 24 YU students participated in a mock trial competition organized by the Mock Trial Club. The event took place in a moot court room at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law.

Four teams, two playing the prosecution and two acting as the defense, competed in two separate trials. The teams each competed a single time, and were composed of three lawyers and three witnesses. Mr. Henry Wasserstein, Esq., an experienced litigator and grandfather of Mock Trial Club Co-President Reena Wasserstein, served as the judge, and two additional students acted as bailiffs.

Mr. Wasserstein stated that “The student lawyers exhibited professionalism, dedication and ability way beyond their years. They have extraordinary talent and, if they choose to do so, will have bright futures in the legal profession.” He also noted that “The witnesses played their roles perfectly. It was a pleasure to work with all of them.”

The competition was preceded by a co-ed *shabbaton* on the Beren Campus, during which club members engaged in a number of activities regarding general law topics, and the relationship between *torah* and the modern legal system, and prepared for the competition.

Two other events have also been organized by the Mock Trial Club this semester. On March 22, it co-sponsored an event with the Agunah Advocacy Club on the Wilf Campus that discussed careers in law and the “agunah crisis”. It also hosted Judge Esther Morgenstern, a Supreme Court Justice at Kings County Integrated Domestic Violence Court, and Professor Michelle Greenberg-Kobrin, the Director of the Indie Film Clinic at Cardozo and former Dean of Students at Columbia Law School, on April 17 on the Beren Campus.

This semester marks the first time since the 2015-2016 academic year that there has been an official club relating to mock trial. When asked why she decided to create the club, Stern College for Women Sophomore Shanee Markovitz, one of the Co-Presidents of the club, said that she was “frustrated with the lack of opportunities for students to practice skills relating to courtroom and trial” and approached Reena Wasserstein, a fellow SCW Sophomore and the other Co-President of the club, who had also been contemplating the idea of creating the club, with this concern.

Wasserstein explained that she was involved with



mock trial while in high school and knew that this was something she wanted to continue in college. She described her disappointment with the lack of commitment and community she believed most clubs demonstrated, and said she was looking “more for a team than a club” and “wanted the practices and the team work and the bonding.”

Markovitz stated that they also wanted to give students the opportunity to “meet professionals in the field, get exposure to a future career in law, and build an atmosphere of like-minded students that were interested in law,” and “as a result, we created the mock trial club to try and address those needs.”

Yeshiva College Sophomore Chezky Frieden, the captain of one of the defense teams from the competition, described his appreciation for the club. “As a previous captain of my high school’s mock trial team I was interested to see what the Mock Trial Club at YU would have to offer. Beyond a high level of learning and competition, I also found a community.”

Markovitz looks forward to expanding and enhancing

“I WAS INTERESTED TO SEE WHAT THE MOCK TRIAL CLUB AT YU WOULD HAVE TO OFFER. BEYOND A HIGH LEVEL OF LEARNING AND COMPETITION, I ALSO FOUND A COMMUNITY!”

-CHEZKY FRIEDEN

the club for next year, and Wasserstein described that she has reached out to the American Mock Trial Association to discuss potential religious accommodations for a YU team that would compete with other universities, due to the fact that competitions traditionally occur on Saturdays.

STOMP OUT THE STIGMA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

needs. She also discussed the positive impact of seeking professional help and having a support system.

She concluded by saying, “anyone who has had feelings like I just described, please know that you can be an amazing spouse, parent, friend, an asset to your community and job. You can be successful, and do anything you want to, even though you struggle with something.”

Dovid Schwartz, a Senior in Yeshiva College, spoke about his battle with depression in relation to his study of Torah. “I care about excellence. I relentlessly pursue it; I obsess about it; I meditate on it; I brood over it; I also torment and torture myself with it. Because of this, I have always—or at least as far back as I can recall—felt inadequate.”

Schwartz explained what it means to have clinical depression, and the deep impact it can have on a person’s life. He also spoke about the benefits of therapy and medication, explaining that recovery is a long process. “... we continue to look ahead with an immodest hope and an unwarranted courage. We seek help, not because we are weak, we seek help because we are strong enough to know weakness.”

Shanee Markovitz, a sophomore at Stern College for

Women, founding Vice President for Refuat Hanefesh, and a student speaker at the event, related the story of her mother’s suicide. She spoke about the importance of asking for help, breaking the silence, and therapy. “Deciding to break my silence has allowed me to be relatable by extending empathy,” she said.

Markovitz also discussed her experience with post traumatic stress disorder, and how therapy helped her regain control over her life. “The decision to go to therapy continued daily, despite the hard work it required and

“THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL HEALTH REPORTED IN 2015 THAT NEARLY ‘1 IN 5 ADULTS IN THE U.S. — 43.8 MILLION, OR 18.5% — EXPERIENCES MENTAL ILLNESS IN A GIVEN YEAR.”

how drained it left me feeling. The whole time, I kept remembering why I made [the] decision...of getting the professional help I deserve: I believe in myself and my future.”

She ended by expressing that there is a lot of work to

be done. Markovitz called upon institutions to invest in providing “education and outreach,” saying that mental illness should be treated the same as physical illness.

Max Gruber, a Junior in the Sy Syms School of Business and a first time attendee of the program, remarked, “the people who have the courage to speak tonight are heroes.”

Associate Director of the counseling center, Dr. Martin Galla, reminded students that help is always available. He also mentioned that the counseling center is there to discuss anything and can be reached at counseling@yu.edu.

The counseling center, according to their website, provides free confidential consultation to students. Students from all campuses are welcome to discuss issues such as anxiety, relationships, depression, familial issues, and death — among others things. According to Dr. Galla, the counseling center currently services 20-25% of the Yeshiva University student population.

Student representatives from the Crisis Text Hotline were also present. The hotline is a national service that was founded in 2013. Users can text in their crisis to 741741 and speak to a “trained Crisis Counselor” if they are in a “hot moment.” Volunteers can sign up at crisistextline.com/volunteer.

Shira Wein, a student volunteer for the Crisis Hotline, said “There’s no reason too small to reach out.”

Paprika Kicked off Caf Card for Double Charging Students

By Avi Strauss

Editor's Note: This story has been updated since its original publishing on April 18, 2018. Since then, Paprika has been returned to the Caf Card, a development covered in the article entitled "After Investigation, Paprika Returns to Caf Card," which you can find on page 9.

In an email to the student body, Dean of Students Dr. Chaim Nissel announced that "Paprika restaurant is no longer participating with the YU Dining plan." This means that students will no longer be able to use their Caf Cards at the midtown restaurant.

The Mediterranean-style kosher restaurant was added to the Dining Club during the Fall 2017 semester, shortly after it opened next door to Brookdale Hall by the Beren campus.

According to Director of Dining Services Sam Chasan, Paprika was removed from the Dining Club following a series of complaints from students who claimed that their Caf Cards were charged twice for the same order. A review of student transactions at the restaurant by the YUCard Coordinator Sandhya Leonard confirmed the double-charges.

According to Ms. Leonard, some of the charges occurred between the hours of 2:00 and 6:00 AM, well past the store's 9:00 PM closing time. She said that it was

unclear whether those charges were made manually or by a glitch in the restaurant's charging system.

Dining Services contacted Paprika, who denied intentionally mischarging students. Paprika owner David Yazen explained that the tablet that the store uses to charge students was locked inside the store during the time that the charges occurred. According to Yazen, video evidence



shows that the tablet was unused at the times when the erroneous charges were made.

"Paprika removed the tablet," said Yazen, "because the university ... asked us to refrain from using the tablet until an investigation can be concluded to determine what went wrong with the mystery charges."

Yazen stated there were four suspicious charges in question, spanning from January 30 to March 2.

Evidence of the double-charges prompted YU Dining

Services to remove the restaurant from the Dining Club for the time being. Yazen hopes that the matter will be resolved and that the restaurant will be reinstated in the Caf Card program. He explained, "The card is a service to the students, it's better for the students to be able to use it when they come to [Paprika]."

"PAPRIKA RESTAURANT IS NO LONGER PARTICIPATING WITH THE YU DINING PLAN."

-DEAN OF STUDENTS DR. CHAIM NISSEL

Mr. Yazen and Ms. Leonard are going to meet at Paprika to review the tapes tomorrow, in an attempt to resolve the issue. This is part of the ongoing investigation to determine the extent of the double-charging, and to decide whether or not Paprika's removal from the Dining Club will be temporary or permanent.

Mr. Chasan said students whose cards were charged multiple times would have their Caf Cards refunded.

Katz School Launches Pathways Program for Graduating Seniors, Cuts Their Potential Tuition in Half

By Avi Strauss

On May 4, The Katz School announced its new Pathways program to streamline the process for graduating seniors from Stern College for Women, Syms School of Business, and Yeshiva College to enroll in its graduate programs. The program waives the GRE and letter of recommendation requirements for admission to Katz School programs and cuts tuition in half for qualifying students.

"We believe that undergraduates should be given the opportunity to complete both a bachelor's and master's at YU," said Director of Graduate Recruitment and Admissions Jared Hakimi. "The Katz Pathways program will provide YU undergraduates an important next step in their educational and professional goals."

More specifically, The Katz School is looking to make their programs more accessible to undergraduates, in an effort to ready students for a "competitive job market," where technical skills and know-how are becoming more important for job seekers.

In order to qualify for Pathways, a graduating senior

must have at least a 3.0 GPA. Some of the programs require several pre-requisite courses to qualify as well. For instance, the Data Analytics and Visualization program, beginning in the Fall, requires a B+ or better in at least two quantitative, programming, or database courses.

For now, Katz School classes are not available for undergraduates to take prior to graduation, unlike with the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education & Administration, or the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies. Nonetheless, according to Hakimi, the school is taking steps "to work with Deans and Faculty across the university to develop flexible and seamless Pathways where students begin taking graduate courses during their senior year." Hakimi added, "This is an important initiative to support YU undergraduates whose goals are to earn a master's degree early on in their career planning."

Currently, The Katz School offers graduate programming in marketing, mathematics, quantitative economics, data analytics, speech-language pathology, and biotechnology management. Still, more new programs are in the works, under a plan Hakimi calls "ambitious." A

master's program in cyber-security is set to begin in 2019. "We are excited about launching degree programs that meet market demands and students' need. We share the President's commitment to educate the whole, for spiritual life, family, community, and career," continued Hakimi.

As far as getting the word out about the opportunities offered by The Katz School, Mr. Hakimi noted Katz School administrators are working with "student clubs, student advisors, faculty, and other campus organizations" to spread the word and adapt programmatic opportunities based on student need.

As a final note on this new component to The Katz School, Hakimi enthused about the "quality of education" and "future-proofing" for students' careers that Katz provides. "[We are] thrilled to offer this incredible opportunity for YU graduating seniors."

**The author of this article was accepted to The Katz School's Biotechnology Management and Entrepreneurship program, prior to the announcement of the Pathways program.*

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Yeshiva University
KATZ SCHOOL

After Investigation, Paprika Returns to Caf Card

By Avi Strauss and Benjamin Koslowe

After six days of non-participation, Paprika has been placed back on the Dining Club program, effective Tuesday, April 24. The change was announced by Dean of Students Dr. Chaim Nissel via email.

Paprika's return follows its removal from the Dining Club on April 18 for a computer issue that resulted in four Beren students being double-charged for their restaurant bills. These overcharges occurred between January and March of this year.

"I am pleased to announce," wrote Dean Nissel in an email sent around 10:20 PM on Monday, April 23, "that effective Tuesday, April 24, Paprika restaurant will again be part of the YU dining card."

"ACCORDING TO DIRECTOR OF DINING SERVICES SAM CHASAN, THE DECISION TO ALLOW PAPRIKA TO RETURN TO THE DINING CLUB PROGRAM WAS MADE AFTER A COMMITMENT BY PAPRIKA TO BE MORE CAREFUL AND DILIGENT IN THEIR OVERSIGHT OF THEIR PAYMENT SYSTEM."

Nissel cautioned, "As with any restaurant transaction, students should check the charges on the YU Card mobile app or online and report any issues to the YU Card office at

yucardsupport@yu.edu." He further advised for students to direct questions about the YU Card system to the same email address.

Paprika owner David Yazen could not be immediately reached for comment.

According to Director of Dining Services Sam Chasan, the decision to allow Paprika to return to the Dining Club program was made after a commitment by Paprika to be more careful and diligent in their oversight of their payment system.

Chasan also stressed the importance of students reviewing their payment history through the YU Card program, as it is the main avenue by which Dining Services can be alerted to these types of issues. Chasan noted that mischarges occur from time to time with any of the restaurants in the Dining Club program, but student feedback is needed to identify the situations where a

charge was wrong.

In February of 2016, students noticed that the popular uptown restaurant Golan Heights was charging students sales tax on their orders, even though all Caf Card transactions are supposed to be tax-free. This resulted in Golan's temporary removal from the Dining Club, before the issue was addressed and resolved with Golan's ownership.

"The convenience of Paprika's proximity to the dorms would have been greatly missed by the Brookdale residents," remarked sophomore Yael Attias. "Hearing that it was put back on the Caf Card was an amazing way to start the week!"

Students can view their Caf Card transaction history by visiting onecard.yu.edu, and clicking the "Transactions" link, found under the "Financial" tab.



Post Pesach Program Enrollment Rate Declines for First Time in Five Years

By Michelle Naim

The enrollment rate for this year's Post Pesach Program reversed a four year trend of growth, but was nevertheless consistent with the average rate of the program since its inception eleven years ago.

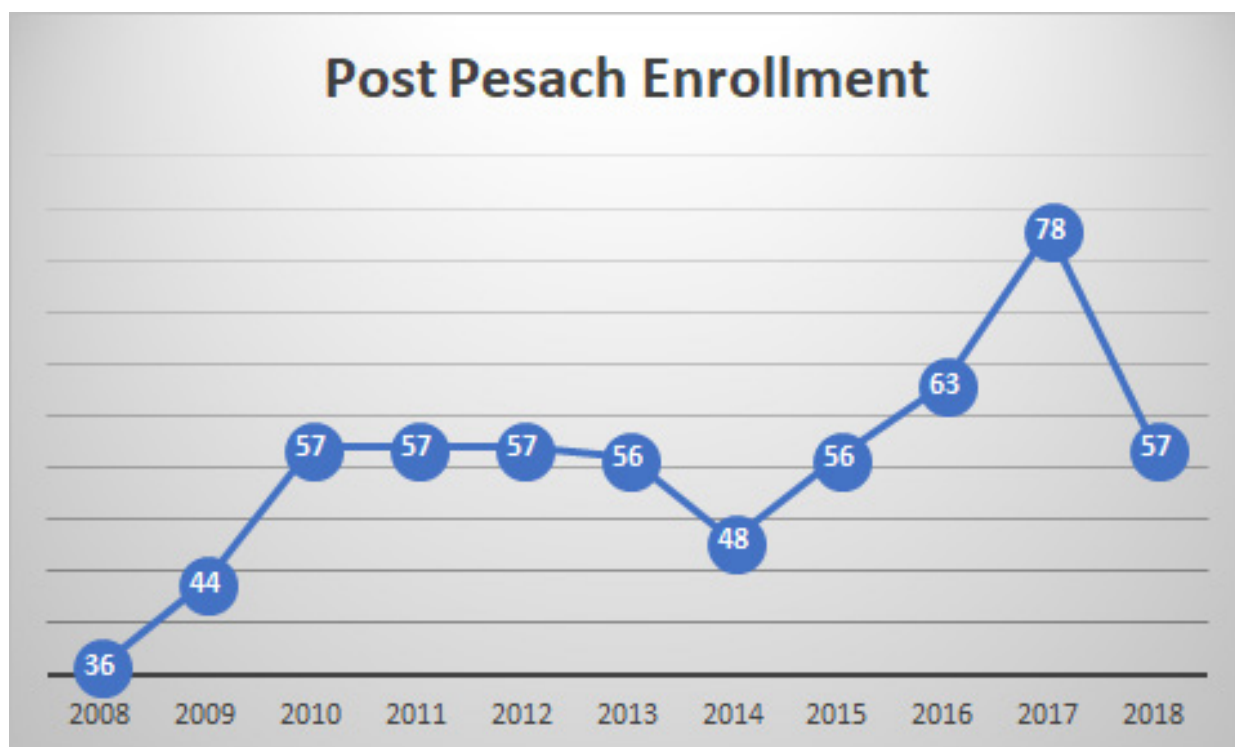
The Post Pesach Program, this year lasting from April 9 to May 17, gives male students who have completed nearly two years of study in Israel an opportunity to begin earning college credit immediately following Pesach while also experiencing YU's unique campus and student life.

"LAST YEAR'S ENROLLMENT OF 78 STUDENTS WAS AN ANOMALY, ALBEIT AN EXCITING ONE, AND THIS YEAR'S ENROLLMENT OF 57 IS STRONG."

-DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS GERI MANSDORF

The program's registration form notes that students enrolled in the program must pay \$500 per credit. With most of the courses counting for 3 credits, students pay an average of \$1,500 per course. Students may not take more than 6 credits or take multiple courses that meet at the same time. The courses are similar in structure to summer session classes, with lectures Monday-Friday, instead of fall or spring classes which generally meet twice per week.

In an email to The Commentator, Director of Undergraduate Admissions Geri Mansdorf described, "Over the last few years, we have implemented a number of changes to enhance the experience of the students including increased course offerings, moving housing to



Data from the Office of Institutional Research & Assessment and the Office of Admissions

Morgenstern Hall, the addition of a meal plan, a seamless fall registration experience, along with additional programming and student life activities."

Regarding the number of enrolled students in the program, Mansdorf stated, "The average enrollment for any of the past six years, excluding last year, is 56. Last year's enrollment of 78 students was an anomaly, albeit an exciting one, and this year's enrollment of 57 is strong."

She added that "our satisfaction surveys at the end of each year's program indicate that the students are very pleased with their experiences and their fall enrollment is

the proof of that. We look forward to a similar outcome this year as well."

Jacob Naiman, a Yeshiva College sophomore who completed the Post Pesach Program last year remarked that the "Post Pesach [Program] was a nice [and] relaxed atmosphere and a great way to ease yourself into YU." Zachary Greenberg, a current student enrolled in the program said "Having been in yeshiva for nearly two years, I knew the YU Post Pesach Program was the next step to transition back to college life while still being in a growing environment."

Wilf Campus Undergraduate Student Government Election Results

By Commentator Staff

On May 1, the Wilf Campus student body voted in the Spring 2018 Wilf Campus undergraduate student government elections. The night of the election, the Canvassing Committee, which oversees student government elections, shared the results of the election with The Commentator. In total, 590 out of 1004 Wilf Campus students voted, or 58.8%. The following are the results of the election, followed by per-candidate vote totals:

SOY President: Moshe Spirn
SOY Vice President: Micah Hyman
SOY PR Secretary: Ilan Lavian
SOY MYP Representative: Yoni Schechter
SOY JSS Representative: Jeremy Orlian

A SOY SBMP Representative and SOY IBC Representative were not elected, as no candidates appeared on the ballot, and no write-in candidate received the minimum 20 votes necessary to win.

SSSBSC President: Brandon Emalfarb
SSSBSC Vice President: Jason Brody
SSSBSC Secretary/Treasurer: Chayim Mahgerefteh
YCSA President: Amitai Miller
YCSA Vice President: Akiva Frishman

A YCSA Secretary/Treasurer was not elected, as no candidates appeared on the ballot, and no write-in candidate received the minimum 20 votes necessary to win.

YSU President: Nolan Edmonson
YSU Vice President of Class Affairs: Judah Stiefel
YSU Vice President of Clubs: Josh Aranoff
YSU Senior Class Representative: Avery Ennis

A YSU Junior Class Representative was not elected, as no candidates appeared on the ballot, and no write-in candidate received the minimum 20 votes necessary to win.

Four proposed amendments to the Wilf Student Government Constitution appeared on the ballot, and none of the amendments garnered the three-fifths majority necessary for ratification, according to the rules outlined in the Constitution.

The Canvassing Committee released the breakdown of each race, which is summarized below. In races in which candidates officially appeared on the ballot, all of the candidates and their vote tallies are listed below; for positions where the victor was a write-in candidate, only the winning candidate is listed:

SOY President
 Moshe Spirn - 374
 Noah Marlowe - 200
SOY Vice President
 Micah Hyman - 253
 Tani Polansky - 165
 Yoni Broth - 142
SOY PR Secretary
 Ilan Lavian (Write-in) - 54
SOY MYP Representative
 Yoni Schechter - 310
SOY SBMP Representative

No candidates appeared on the ballot, and no write-in candidate received the minimum 20 votes necessary to win.

SOY IBC Representative

No candidates appeared on the ballot, and no write-in candidate received the minimum 20 votes necessary to win.

SOY JSS Representative

Jeremy Orlian - 23

SSSBSC President

Brandon Emalfarb - 148

Mikhail Grayster - 100

SSSBSC Vice President

Jason Brody - 145

Doni Yellin - 112

SSSBSC Secretary/Treasurer

Chayim Mahgerefteh - 233

YCSA President

Amitai Miller - 282

YCSA Vice President

Akiva Frishman - 135

Zack Rynhold - 83

Scott Weissman - 78

YCSA Secretary/Treasurer

No candidates appeared on the ballot, and no write-in candidate received the minimum 20 votes necessary to win.

YSU President

Nolan Edmonson - 524 votes

YSU Vice President of Class Affairs

Judah Stiefel - 518

YSU Vice President of Clubs

Josh Aranoff (Write-in) - 24

YSU Senior Class Representative

Avery Ennis - 255

YSU Junior Class Representative

No candidates appeared on the ballot, and no write-in candidate received the minimum 20 votes necessary to win.

None of the amendments on the ballot received the required three-fifths majority, or 60%, necessary for ratification:

Amendment #1 (Restructuring of Student Council)

DID NOT PASS (44.1% voted yes)

No - 329

Yes - 260

Amendment #2 (Katz School Representation)

DID NOT PASS (51.4% voted yes)

Yes - 303

No - 287

Amendment #3 (Addition to Amendments Committee)

DID NOT PASS (50.3% voted yes)

Yes - 297

No - 293

Amendment #4 (Deadline for Proposing Clubs)

DID NOT PASS (44.2% voted yes)

No - 329

Yes - 261

Beren Campus Undergraduate Student Government Election Results

By Commentator Staff

On May 3, the Beren Campus student body voted in the Spring 2018 Beren Campus undergraduate student government elections. The following are the results of the election:

SCWSC President: Shoshana Marder

SCWSC Vice President of Academic Affairs: Talya Saban

SCWSC Vice President of Clubs: Racheli Moskowitz

SCWSC PR Secretary: Abby Stiefel

SCWSC Treasurer: The write-in candidates for the position are under review, as of time of publication.

SYMSSC President: Shirel Swissa

SYMSSC Vice President: Anat Jacobson

TAC President: Adina Cohen

TAC Vice President of Shabbat: Bella Adler

TAC Vice President of Speakers: Yael Blau

TAC PR Secretary: Tamar Schwartz

TAC Treasurer: Avital (Tali) Greenberg

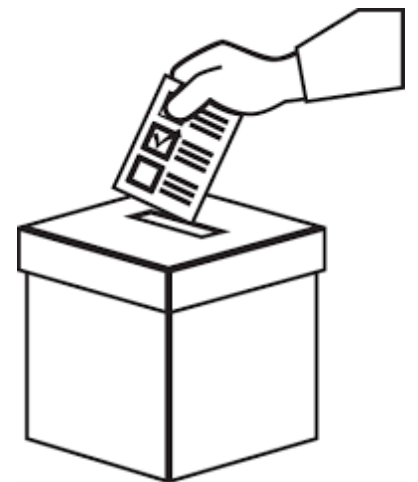
Senior Class President: Kyra Englander

Senior Class Vice President: Devorah Meisels

Junior Class President: Chaya Green

Junior Class Vice President: Chaya Cohen

Sophomore Class President: Shani Kahan



TENNIS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

"It's wonderful for the University to be able to send female athletes to the NCAA National Tournament to represent the Department, the University and our people," added Director of Athletics Joe Bednarsh.

While the women's program makes history, the men will be continuing their four-year legacy.

"We all stepped up, helped each other out and worked together," said men's captain Adam Rosenblum, who specifically emphasized the quality contribution from the first year players.

"We had a very strong roster built of seniors last year who graduated and it put a lot of pressure on the new guys on the team but in the end they stepped up and proved they were worthy of making the team." Rosenblum hopes that this year, the team can make it past the second round of the tournament. In the past four years there have been two first round exits, in 2014 and 2016, and two second round exits, in 2015 and 2017.



Photo Credit: YU Macs Website

I Feel Pretty Misses the Mark on Body Positivity

By Shoshy Ciment

You can definitely expect to laugh when you sit down to watch a movie starring Amy Schumer. Unfortunately for *I Feel Pretty*, her most recent flick, that's about all you can expect.

Schumer's latest love letter to herself shouldn't be judged for its moral value. This film isn't the two-hour crash course in body positivity that we were all anticipating—though it tries to be. Instead, it feels more like a frustrated blog post written by someone who isn't really sure what she wants or how to get it. She just knows the pretty people (or according to Schumer's character, the rest of the female species) have it easier.

“THIS IS AMY SCHUMER, A COMEDIAN, BEING THROWN INTO A TERRITORY THAT IS CERTAINLY OUT OF HER LEAGUE.”

After an insecure Renee Bennett (Schumer) bonks her head on a spinning bike during an unfortunate SoulCycle accident, she begins to see herself as she always dreamed: “undeniably pretty.” The effect of her hallucinations is life-altering, her newfound “confidence” leading her to obtain a boyfriend (a bland Rory Scovel), a job at a top makeup company, and ultimately, confidence.

It's a good thing the film spends a considerable amount of screen time on Bennett's life before her accident, because that is where the comedy is. Like her stand-up, Schumer shines when it comes to the humor of self-deprecation and jokes that resonate with the typical human being. Watching her epically fail to imitate a hair-styling tutorial is gut-wrenchingly funny, her accustomed disappointment

all the more so.

But once she gets prettified, Bennett's likeability decreases. She adopts a cocky and better-than-you attitude that alienates her from her friends, yet propels her to girlfriend status and a better job. In a way, her unappealing confidence seems to do more good than bad; her life takes off as she becomes the person she always admired. And for some reason, people appreciate her.

And that's where we run into trouble. Bennett's confidence, or the ultimate key to her success, isn't actually confidence at all. Instead, it's cringe-worthy, over-the-top arrogance that seems unattractive at its best and wildly inappropriate at its worst. Bennett's provocative performance in a bikini contest on her first date with her new boyfriend is a testament to that. Any other girl who danced seductively on a stage for the pleasure of drunken men would be deemed promiscuous, not cool and confident.

But Bennett is lauded for this behavior, and so the film's

intended message falls flat.

Thankfully, Bennett's confidence, while off-putting, is merely a ruse. Although Bennett eventually realizes that her success was in no way due to her outward appearance, she doesn't slow down in her pursuit of beauty once the spell wears off. Instead, she continues to plunge herself into that hellish SoulCycle dungeon and spin until she is finally content with herself.

In other words, while her confidence may have helped her get this far, being pretty is still the chief necessity. And evidently, beauty doesn't come as easily as a freak concussion to the noggin. It takes hard work!

So no, this isn't about body positivity, this isn't about confidence, and it surely isn't about empowerment. This is Amy Schumer, a comedian, being thrown into a territory that is certainly out of her league. *I Feel Pretty* fails in its attempts to relay any sort of positive message about body image and confidence. But for now, at least, there is still something to laugh about.



YCDS's Harvey: One Giant Rabbit and a Whole Lot of Questions

By Lilly Gelman

With Rabbi Yosef Blau's halakhic approval on the record, anticipation for the Yeshiva College Dramatics Society's production of *Harvey*, directed by Lin Snider, has spread amongst the student body.

Written in 1944 by American playwright Mary Chase and set in the 1940s, *Harvey* focuses on Elwood P. Dowd (David Cutler) and his presumably imaginary 6-foot tall rabbit friend, Harvey. Vernon Dowd (Laivi Malamut-Salvaggio), Elwood's brother, tries to have Elwood committed to a sanitarium when living with him and the enigmatic Harvey interferes with Vernon's plan to find a suitable wife for his son Marvin (Herschel Siegel). Upon arriving at the sanitarium, however, comedic mistake follows comedic mistake as Dr. Lyman Sanderson

(Matthew Trautman), an assistant at the sanitarium, commits Vernon instead, leading to a wild goose chase around the town searching for Elwood.

Chase originally wrote characters such as Vernon and Marvin as women; Veta, Elwood's sister and Myrtle Mae, Veta's daughter. The decision to rewrite these and other characters as men—matching the all-male members of YCDS—while noticeable even for those who have never heard of *Harvey* before, does not seem to detract from the play or the messages delineated throughout. In fact, watching men stress and struggle over marriage in a way most often attributed to women was refreshing. These somewhat original characters and their relationships in the play blend seamlessly with the script and storyline.

Harvey leaves the audience with many questions: How do we define normal? Do we value fitting in over genuine kindness? How do we properly address the treatment of mental illness? Does Harvey really exist? When can one put their own happiness above that of a loved one? Aside from the presence of these themes in the plot and script of the play, these questions are skillfully portrayed by the meticulous and genuine acting of YCDS's talented cast.

While every member of the cast and crew deserves a round of applause for their tireless efforts in producing a theatrical production, the characters of Vernon Dowd, played by Laivi Malamut-Salvaggio, and Dr. Julian Chumley—the director of the

sanitarium—played by Jason Siev, brought the themes and questions inherent in the written words of *Harvey* to life on the Schottenstein stage.

Throughout the play, Vernon struggles to choose the proper course of action for both Elwood and his son Marvin. Living with Harvey—imaginary or not—leaves Elwood the subject of ridicule, and Vernon and Marvin

“HARVEY LEAVES THE AUDIENCE WITH MANY QUESTIONS...HOW DO WE PROPERLY ADDRESS THE TREATMENT OF MENTAL ILLNESS? DOES HARVEY REALLY EXIST?...[T]HESE QUESTIONS ARE SKILLFULLY PORTRAYED BY THE METICULOUS AND GENUINE ACTING OF YCDS'S TALENTED CAST.”

social outcasts, forcing Vernon to choose between the Elwood he knows and loves and his and his son's social status. In every scene and with every line, Malamut-Salvaggio presents this dilemma, compelling the audience to weigh the options themselves.

Siev's depiction of Dr. Chumley causes the audience to question the existence of Harvey. When Dr. Chumley ventures out in search of Elwood, he returns disheveled and shaken, seeing Harvey as a real-life rabbit. Siev's ability to become the proper, medically trained psychiatrist, as well as depict the mental chaos which ensues once Dr. Chumley

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Avengers: Infinity War is a (Somewhat Clouded) Marvel Gem

By Matthew Silkin

There's something about the end of a piece of art that fascinates me - the crescendo of a movement, the finishing touches of a painting, the last few minutes of a film. It's moments like these where I look retrospectively on the building blocks to see determine how structurally sound, in a sense, the finished product is. What was the process, the journey that led to success? What does the retrospective look like from every party involved? So much effort put in, and what was gained? These are all questions I consider when judging the merit of a movie's story - basically, am I satisfied?

This question is hard enough to ask for one singular movie. It's a little harder to ask for a series of movies, like *Star Wars*, since I must not only ask this question for each movie in that series, but for the series as a whole as well. This is partly why I couldn't bring myself to review *The Last Jedi*; my judgments of the movie were just too entrenched in the other movies for me to easily give my thoughts over about it. For a franchise - nay, a metaphorical spiderweb - that's been in the works for ten years, like the Marvel Cinematic Universe, it's downright

near impossible; the threads that weave each movie into each other are so tangled that when I have to look back, I have a hard time finding who it was worth it for - and I'm a fan of the movies!

And so we come to *Avengers: Infinity War*, the nineteenth film in and capstone of the Marvel Cinematic Universe so far. Was it worth it?

"IT'S A MOVIE EIGHTEEN FILMS, TEN YEARS, AND HUNDREDS OF ISSUES OF COMICS IN THE MAKING, AND IT DEFINITELY FEELS IT!"

I say yes. Mostly.

The story of *Infinity War*, barring any and all spoilers, is as follows: A galactic being named Thanos is on the hunt for six ancient, powerful stones known as Infinity Gems (or Stones, in the movies), each one a concentrated source of something fundamental in the universe - space, time, reality, power, mind, and soul - which, when together,

give the person or being wielding them absolute mastery over the known universe. At the beginning of the movie, each stone is in a different location around the universe, and Thanos is going around collecting them to be placed into a specially made gauntlet, which he wants to use to reshape the universe in the image that he so desires. This, of course, brings him in conflict with the Avengers, who, teaming up with the Guardians of the Galaxy, band together to stop him.

To call the 27 - and I counted - person main cast of *Infinity War* an ensemble would downplay the sheer size of this film; to list every single actor folly. Suffice it to say that if you've seen the poster for a Marvel movie in the past three years, you know who the movie is starring. Anthony and Joe Russo, the directors of *Infinity War*, made the decision to have the characters split up into different locations around the universe, which both allowed for multiple storylines to unfold at once, and also made sure that the main characters wouldn't overshadow each other.

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HARVEY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

begins to question Harvey's imaginative nature, greatly contributes to the larger themes portrayed during the performance.

With great actors comes a great responsibility for equally laudable stagecraft. Having said that, YCDS seems to have missed the mark in this regard. *Harvey's* scenes take place in either the Dowds' home or Dr. Chumley's sanitarium. When in the Dowd's home, the audience feels transported to a 1940s living room, complete with a glowing fireplace and black-and-white portrait. Similarly, the sanitarium elicits a realistic cold clinical feeling, with its bland walls and bleak desk and chairs. The transition between the two, which requires the lowering of multiple curtains and the sliding of fake doorways, dragged on between scenes. The lack of full curtains in the

Schottenstein Theatre does not help, as the audience can clearly hear and see the movement of the stage crew as they turn the Dowd's living room into Dr. Chumley's office. While Snider attempted to lessen the dead time by inserting comedic instrument-free musical interludes, the multiple minute-or-so periods of darkness filled with the noise of shuffling feet and scraping furniture left something to be desired of the set design.

Despite these technical difficulties, YCDS's *Harvey* leaves the audience impressed with authentic acting and pondering the questions and topics touched on by the plot and script. This serious yet comedic production offers a unique opportunity to experience a great work of American playwrighting, as well as the talented efforts of the entire cast and crew.

Progress

By Shai Yastrab

Any bad creation
Deserves examination for good
Hypotheses,
Inevitably, joining kept leftovers
Makes new, odd, premises.
Queer results start to unfold
Voila!
What xenogenic,

COURTESY OF THE YU POETRY CLUB

FROM THE COMMIE ARCHIVES

Editor's Note: The Commentator has decided to reprint two editorials, one published immediately following Israel's establishment, the other five years later. With 70 years of history already in the past, we hope that these pieces can offer some insight into the early campus conversations surrounding the establishment of the State of Israel, and provide meaning for us today.

From the Archives (May 20, 1948; Volume 13 Issue 11) — State of Israel

By William Herskowitz and the Commentator Governing Board of 1947-48

Two thousand years of waiting have at long last ended. The land of Israel, built with the blood, sweat, tears, and lives of countless martyrs who so longed for that land, now exists in the cradle of our religion's birth. Our persecuted and down-trodden shall flock to Zion to build anew the glory of old. At this solemn moment, we look towards the East with new hope and faith, expressing fervent thanks that our generation has been blessed with the fruition of our forefathers' prayers.

The value of self-rule in the land of Israel to the inhabitants of the Yishuv and to the D.P.'s is obvious, but it is the worth of a government of our own to the Jews all over the world that really staggers the imagination. The members of our nation who are scattered over the four corners of the earth now have a champion, somebody to speak up for their rights, somebody to protect them against all oppressors, somebody to welcome them when they are not wanted elsewhere. They now have a defendant whose support will be constant, whose backing will not depend on bribes, oil, or politics.

Israel is a country which will teach the democracies what freedom and equality really mean, a people whose bravery will become a byword for courage and fortitude, a nation whose constant insistence that justice rather than expediency become the basis of policy will cause the hypocritical statesmen of other lands to blush with shame. It is a state whose actions will cause the world to regard every Jew with esteem, one which will make the name Jew a proud one and we will be proud of.

It is said that the second commonwealth was destroyed because of dissension among the Jewish people. We cannot allow the third commonwealth to fail because of political differences. The existence of the newly-formed Medinas Yisrael is being threatened by Arab hordes. We must forget party lines in a concerted effort to smash these aggressors. The Jews in America have to do their part by donating their money, their blood, and their services. Do not wait to be called or cajoled. Contact the agencies set up for these purposes and sign up to do your part for our victory.



From the Archives (April 23, 1953; Volume 18 Issue 10) — A Salute to Israel

By Irwin Witty and the Commentator Governing Board of 1952-53

Five years have passed since the proclamation of Jewish statehood in Tel-Aviv on a tense Friday afternoon in May of 1948. Since that time, Israel has been on the verge of financial disaster and has gone from one political crisis to another. Yet, it has managed to achieve recognition in the council of nations and withstand the onslaughts of hostile neighbors.

There are those who have succumbed too readily to the notion that the new state is the embodiment of Jewish

redemption, and with it we have a panacea to all that ails the Jew in the diaspora. Others have expressed the view that there is nothing in the state which marks it as Jewish, and hence we ought to disclaim it entirely. Those less extreme in their views and more hopeful, have envisioned grandiose plans for the renewal of a "Sanhedrin," or have looked forward to the ideal of "a state like other states." We cannot see our way clear to adopt a position at either extreme.

As Yeshiva students, we are bound to see the events of the past half-decade with thankfulness and misgivings. For us, the survival of Israel, with great territorial, economic,

political and cultural hardships, will not be affected by human ingenuity alone. The Divine in history was seldom more apparent. The hackneyed expressions of "two-thousand-year-old-dreams-fulfilled" are not made less true by their repeated use.

We must remember that the creation of a sovereign Jewish political unit is not for us the sum total of prophetic promise. We shall continue to await the day when "Torah shall come forth from Zion," and will continue to regret extremism on both sides which hinders the coming of that day.

A Faculty Tribute to Dean Joanne Jacobson Upon Her Retirement

By Yeshiva College Faculty, compiled by Professor Lauren Fitzgerald

Editor's Note: In honor of Dean Joanne Jacobson's departure from Yeshiva College after nearly 30 years as a beloved professor of English and valuable administrator, the Commentator has decided to publish a tribute to her written by several members of the Yeshiva College faculty.

We thank English department chair Professor Lauren Fitzgerald for her idea for this piece, and for her effort in obtaining the faculty quotes.

When I was asked to contribute an article to The Commentator about [Dean] Joanne Jacobson's work and longtime dedication to Yeshiva College as a Professor of English and Dean of Academic Affairs, it immediately occurred to me to ask for help: Dean Jacobson is, above all, a gifted community builder—someone who connects to people and forges connections among them—so it only seemed fitting that this tribute be a collaborative effort. What follows are heartfelt comments by just some of the many colleagues from across the disciplines who've come to admire her over her nearly 30 years at YU. Their recollections reveal her many roles and talents—as teacher, mentor, writer, administrator, leader, friend, and human being. We will all miss her enormously.

—Lauren Fitzgerald, Chair, YC English, Director, Wilf Campus Writing Center

In the Fall of 1992, my first semester in Yeshiva as an undergraduate, I was a student in Dr. Joanne Jacobson's Composition class. I have vivid memories of some of the experiences from that course, including, for example, our discussion of the Kitty Genovese murder case and writing a paper about the first Gulf War. The impression made on me from that class which has lasted 26 years was not due to the informational content per se, but rather due to the depth of feeling with which Dr. Jacobson conveyed it. That is, of course, the mark of a good teacher. I thank her for that lasting experience and wish her all the best in the next stage of life which she is now beginning!

—Judah Diamant, Co-Chair, YC Computer Science

It's very hard for me to imagine Yeshiva College without Dr. Jacobson. I was a student in her class in American Literature back in the 1990s and learned much from her then about literature, reading, and the interplay between texts and the world they are representing and creating. Since then, I've learned immeasurably more from Joanne, as a mentor, an administrator, a colleague, and a friend. I will miss her!

—Aaron Koller, Chair, YC Beren Department of Jewish Studies

In addition to admiring Joanne for her beautiful writing, photography, analytical thinking and playfulness, I admire her gifts as an administrator. So many times in meetings I have watched her grapple with a knotty issue, mull it to transparency on the spot, then propose a practical and wise solution. She has been a great advocate for faculty and students and understands the importance of friendship and comradeship on the job.

—Barbara Blatner, YC English

There's an adage in nonfiction writing that when you don't know what else to do, get more honest. The implication is not to become confessional, but rather to more clearly confront or specify or describe what's really happening. Professionally, personally, and creatively, Joanne has, time and again, brought this notion to life. In sometimes tense work meetings, in our friendship, and in her illuminating prose, she has shown me that grace is not a contrast to honesty, but an embodiment of it.

—Liesl Schwabe, YC English, Writing Program Director

As our leader, Joanne has earned our trust. She has done this by being honest and fair, even when she, like we, would have wished for better outcomes. From her years of experience, she has a finely-honed sense of how academia should run. Whenever I speak to her, I know that she is genuinely interested in what I'm saying and is willing to

take advice and change course.

—Shalom E. Holtz, YC Bible, Director, Jay and Jeannie Schottenstein Honors Program

It's impossible to imagine Yeshiva College without Joanne Jacobson. Students may know her as a dynamic, caring teacher, but for so long, she has been the person that faculty members turn to when they have an issue that needs sorting—someone you know will have a sympathetic ear and a clear way of thinking through just about anything. It's hard to overstate how much she will be missed.

—Rachel Mesch, YC French and English

"JJ" has always been an exceptional colleague, a mensch to the YU community and a dear friend to me. She has been a source of support, optimism and the well-needed laugh in between for many of us. I am sure I am not alone in appreciating her friendship and advice over my years at YU and in looking forward to her friendship and advice outside of YU for many more years.

—Silke Aisenbrey, Chair, YC Sociology

Joanne always is concerned with the well-being of her colleagues. In recent times she has been constructively obsessed with making sure that young faculty get fair treatment in evaluations and that mechanisms for efficient mentoring are in place.

—Fredy R. Zypman, Chair, YC Physics



Joanne is a trusted friend and mentor. I have thrived under her constant encouragement, be it my academic potential or my culinary skills, and mentoring—when she allowed me to shadow her for an entire year before I took upon the administrative position of Associate Dean. I will forever be grateful for her ability to listen to my thoughts and worries—be it professional or personal—and offer me well thought out advice. Joanne—I will miss you at YC, but I hope we will remain friends forever!

—Raji Viswanathan, YC Chemistry

As a junior faculty member starting my career at YU, I was very fortunate to have Joanne as my associate dean. She always found the time and the empathy to lend an ear and offer good advice. Her presence in the Dean's Office and on campus will be missed.

—Josefa Steinhauer, YC Biology

Without Joanne, not only would I almost certainly not have a tenure-track job, I very likely wouldn't even have finished my PhD. Just sticking my head through her door and saying hi was often the nicest part of my entire day. Joanne always has your back, is always there for you, and always tries to do the right thing.

—Daniel Kimmel, YC Sociology

Among Joanne's many qualities, we want to point out her willingness to listen, readiness to help and her being always very straightforward. We appreciated and valued those important aspects on several occasions during her

tenure as Dean. Thank you for everything, Joanne.

—Graciela and Marcelo Broitman, YC Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

From the time that Joanne Jacobson arrived at Yeshiva College, she has been a paragon of civility and collegiality. Although we may not always have agreed on academic policies, I knew that when the discussion was over and a decision was made, there was never any leftover hostility or resentment, no matter what the result. Although I'm a few years her senior, Joanne was always the person to whom I turned when I needed a piece of advice about awkward institutional politics, and she never steered me wrong. She always cared deeply about Yeshiva College, and the College will be a poorer place for her absence.

—Moshe J. Bernstein, YC Bible and Jewish History

In addition to Joanne Jacobson's devotion to her teaching and administrative work, improving education at YU, she has always found time for colleagues. From chatting about memoirs over lunch midtown to hosting an English faculty get-together at her apartment to answering e-mails with good humor on the most pressured days, Joanne has been a friend to many and a role model we will greatly miss.

—Linda Shires, Chair, SCW English

I arrived at the Dean's Office of Yeshiva College feeling a stranger. Joanne turned that around and gave me credibility in the eyes of the faculty. I am forever grateful.

—Karen Bacon, The Mordecai D. Katz and Dr. Monique C. Katz Dean, Undergraduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences

When I think of Joanne, the following attributes come to mind: principled, strong moral compass, responsible, reasonable, open, sensitive, compassionate, a good friend, and wise mentor. Joanne's entire academic life has been devoted to creating and sustaining quality education which inspires and provokes us to be better human beings. Throughout her tenure at YC, Joanne has been completely dedicated to the College, its faculty, its students and its undergraduate mission as defined by the faculty. Joanne never sought positions of power. Nevertheless, when called to lead, she selflessly answered the call. As a leader, I was impressed not only by her interpersonal and administrative skills but also by her attitude and outlook. Joanne is at the core a pragmatist who doesn't sulk about what cannot be accomplished—she is always focused positively on what can be accomplished. We have all benefited greatly from her prudent leadership and warm friendship. Thank you, Joanne—you will be sorely missed.

—Barry L. Eichler, YC Bible and Cuneiform Studies

Among Joanne's many admirable qualities is her commitment to speaking her mind while remaining empathetic. Her honesty, wisdom, and forthrightness inspire and encourage us, her colleagues and friends, to be our best selves, and to serve our college community with integrity. Joanne has been a wonderful mentor and a pillar of support, and I am deeply grateful to her for all that she has done for the arts at YU.

—Daniel Belavsky, Chair, YC Fine Art and Music

Nomi Ben-Zvi: Old Tests and New Problems

By Lilly Gelman

Nomi Ben-Zvi, a private science tutor, has garnered polarizing reactions from Stern students. Her tutoring has inspired and helped many succeed, while simultaneously creating a culture of exclusivity and pressure to enroll in her courses.

On Thursday, April 26, a Commentator investigation revealed that Ben-Zvi has been illicitly conducting sessions for undergraduate students on the Beren Campus, without permission from the Office of Events, Security, or the Dean's Office.

According to the Yeshiva University Office of Events, any tutor not affiliated with Yeshiva University is required to gain approval from the Dean's Office before beginning to tutor on campus and is required to pay an insurance fee as well as a room rental fee of approximately \$150 per session. Ben-Zvi, who operates the tutoring service Chromium Prep, previously had approval to utilize YU space. In Fall 2017, the Dean's Office rescinded the authorization.

The Dean's Office has yet to respond to a Commentator request for the reason for Ben-Zvi's de-authorization to operate her tutoring service on campus.

Ben-Zvi, who is the founder of Chromium Prep—a tutoring service offering both private and group sessions and specializing in Chemistry, Biology, Organic Chemistry, Physics, Physiology, MCAT, and DAT—teaches group tutoring sessions on the Beren Campus for General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, and Biochemistry. This spring semester, Ben-Zvi was tutoring classes in General Chemistry and Organic Chemistry class. A Biochemistry session was run at the beginning of the semester, but has not been taught on a consistent basis.

Ben-Zvi's tutoring sessions are advertised mostly via word of mouth. Students who have taken and benefited from the sessions pass on the message to peers who are enrolled in the relevant Stern College courses. Additionally, Ben-Zvi sometimes contacts Stern students using Canvas, a private online service used by Yeshiva University to facilitate contact between faculty and students, offering organized access to assignments, grades, and class communication.

Ben-Zvi, who herself does not have access to Canvas, has, according to an anonymous Stern student, asked a current Stern student enrolled in her sessions to contact incoming students registered for General Chemistry, requesting that they forward an email through Canvas introducing the tutoring service and outlining the details to the class. A junior in Stern College for Women, who wished to remain anonymous, recalled, "I heard from friends I have who went to Stern who took her for multiple science classes and they all had amazing things to say about her! An email was sent out at the beginning of last year to my Chemistry class, and I took that opportunity to sign up!"

The sessions have been conducted on average once a week, in varying classrooms at different times and typically cost around \$50, lasting last about 2-3 hours. The same Stern student explained that this pricing "created a way to make it available to as many people as possible, where getting access to someone like [Ben-Zvi] would normally be for people who have the money to spend on expensive tutoring. Now everyone can afford a tutor who cares about them."

During the sessions, Ben-Zvi reviews the material covered in the lecture, goes through practice problems, and hands out comprehensive notes and tests to assist the students in their studying. According to the same Stern student, Ben-Zvi offers "specific notes she wrote up for each topic, and practice questions she made up to prepare for a certain professor."

The tests Ben-Zvi distributes come from previous General Chemistry and Organic Chemistry courses. Currently, Ben-Zvi distributes old exams written by the current General Chemistry professor, Dr. Chaya Rapp. In previous years, Ben-Zvi had access to Organic Chemistry tests written by the previous Organic Chemistry professor, Dr. Evan Mintzer. Since Fall 2017, however, Dr. Ran Drori has been teaching the

Organic Chemistry course. Ben-Zvi does not have access to Dr. Drori's exams.

Many students see the value in Ben-Zvi's tutoring sessions. Malka Marmer, a pre-med senior at Stern, said that Ben-Zvi was an "incredible" tutor. The anonymous Stern student stated that she found "Nomi extremely helpful for all of General Chemistry as well as Orgo I. [Ben-Zvi] taught concepts in a way that wasn't memorization, and really helped us understand difficult concepts easily."

But not all Benen students have had a positive experience with Ben-Zvi's tutoring service. When Tzip Roffe, a senior studying Mathematics at Stern, was struggling

"BEN-ZVI'S TUTORING AND HER USE OF YU RESOURCES FOR RUNNING HER SESSIONS AND CONTACTING STUDENTS...CREATES 'A CULTURE IN WHICH STUDENTS EXPECT THAT THEY NEED TO USE A TUTOR IN ORDER TO EXCEL.' ACCORDING TO BERGER, THIS ATMOSPHERE IS 'UNHEALTHY FOR THE STUDENTS... AS THEY FAIL TO RECOGNIZE THAT THEY CAN MASTER THE MATERIAL ON THEIR OWN.'"

in Organic Chemistry, she turned to Ben-Zvi's tutoring class. According to Roffe, Ben-Zvi "was just the obvious go to. Anyone who was having any problems, the answer was Nomi, she became an icon."

Yet for Roffe, Ben-Zvi "was not helpful. The class was not controlled and so it took hours longer than necessary ... The only thing she was doing for me was giving me test questions, which if I asked around I could get myself. I was 20 years old, I didn't need someone reading the textbook to me."

Some of the dissatisfactions with Ben-Zvi, however, seem to go beyond teaching style and class structure. Tehilla Berger, a junior double majoring in Biochemistry and Judaic Studies, feels that a major issue with Ben-Zvi's tutoring services lies in the fact that Ben-Zvi "tutors on school premises." According to Berger, "while

students that are not in Nomi[']s class] may be capable to master the material on their own in less time, they often feel at a disadvantage to those in [her class], being as it is on campus, it almost seems as a necessity in order to excel in the class ... If Nomi is a necessary resource for some to succeed, she should be utilized, just not on campus."

Ben-Zvi's tutoring may not be an official part of any Stern College science department, but her service is so widely used that at times it feels as if her tutoring is part of the regularly offered science courses. "Taking Nomi," according to Berger, "becomes the default ... and puts pressure on students who can't afford the luxury."

Attending Ben-Zvi's sessions seems like an added requirement for the course along with lecture and recitation, making many students, even those who cannot afford the cost, expect and assume that they must attend Ben-Zvi's sessions in order to succeed.

"As a general rule, I think it is totally acceptable for students to hire private tutors for classes," Berger continued. The strong presence of Ben-Zvi's tutoring and her use of YU resources for running her sessions and contacting students, however, creates "a culture in which students expect that they need to use a tutor in order to excel." According to Berger, this atmosphere is "unhealthy for the students who cannot afford the time or the expense, as well as [for] the students who use the service blindly, as they fail to recognize that they can master the material on their own." Dr. Drori feels similarly about the tutoring culture prevalent in Stern. According to Dr. Drori, students should not feel that they need a tutor to succeed in a class prior to attempting to study and excel on their own.

Once the semester begins and students decide whether or not to register for Ben-Zvi's tutoring, a rift begins to form within the students enrolled in Stern's General Chemistry and Organic Chemistry courses. Ben-Zvi asks her students to keep any notes and old tests, which she distributes, to themselves. Because of Ben-Zvi's well-known presence on campus and the large amount of students who utilize her services, however, the secretive nature of her tutoring encourages an in-group, out-group mentality. Berger remarked how "it adds more tension to the already high pressure pre-med environment on campus. Because what happens in Nomi, stays in Nomi, it creates a divide among students."

*NOMI BEN-ZVI,
CONTINUED ON PAGE 22*



CHROMIUMPREP
Be Exceptional

A Student's Tribute to Professor Richard Nochimson Upon His Retirement

By Yaacov Bronstein

Editor's Note: In honor of Professor Richard Nochimson's departure from Yeshiva College after 30 plus years of dedication to its English department, the Commentator has decided to publish a tribute to him written by one of his students.

My experience as an English Major in Yeshiva College has primarily revolved around three professors who repeatedly drew me to their classrooms. I have found that each of these professors teaches literature from a distinct position. The first tends to teach literature from the perspective of the writer, while the second does from that of the literary critic. However, the third, Professor Richard Nochimson, chooses to teach literature from the perspective of the audience member.

One might question whether the skills involved in reading literature as an audience member really qualify as a serious literary method. If the study of literature means approaching texts with a measure of academic rigor, that would imply that objectivity and detachment constitute the basic premises of study. Many feel that keeping literature at arm's length ensures that analysis remains rigorous and systematic. In this type of model, the subjective reactions of the individual reader become displaced by more objective priorities.

However, while Literature as a discipline might deeply

depend on detachment, no one first approaches literature as a literary critic. Those drawn to read and study literature do so because of the power of an individual reaction, the same subjective power which fuels the creation and cultural eminence of literature in the first place. By organizing his courses around the reading experience, Professor Nochimson harnesses this essential appeal of literature while crafting students into sensitive and intelligent audience members. He encourages the individual reaction and places it at the center of classroom

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discussion, fostering an atmosphere of genuine literary excitement and engagement.

Professor Nochimson manages to balance this commitment to individual experience alongside a softly guided approach to encountering literature. While I initially took his facilitation of classroom discussion for granted, I have come to appreciate his guidance as quietly masterful. These discussions will often extend

into his office, where Professor Nochimson has always welcomed both personal and academic conversations with his characteristic warmth. His departure from the college entails not only the absence of our resident Shakespeare scholar but the loss of a genial and genuine personality.

In my first semester in YC, I attended a Core class taught by Professor Nochimson called "Classical to Renaissance." The course covered many essential works of western literature, including *The Odyssey*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Othello*, and *Don Quixote*. In retrospect, it remains significant to me that in formulating this introductory course, Professor Nochimson opted not to present a particular theme or method which united the syllabus. Instead, he gathered what he perceived as several instances of essential reading, and we read them.

The importance of reading and discussing these works seemed natural and self-evident to our professor, and this confidence framed the reading of each text as a meaningful encounter. The course and its professor epitomized the values of a liberal arts education, fostering thoughtfulness, cultural literacy, and a sincere appreciation for the humanities. Professor Nochimson's commitment to this foundational literature became for me a mark of real admiration and emulation. He has made the most of this commitment over the course of a long and rich career, guiding his students through the best that literature has to offer while always reminding us why we choose to read in the first place.



Up, Up, and No Way

By Ellie Parker

I am mid panic attack.

Flying has never been my favorite pastime, but until recently, it was doable. However, after an intensely turbulent airplane experience coming home from vacation a couple of months ago, stepping onto a plane has become increasingly more difficult. Being an out of townner, this is a discomfort that I cannot avoid, which makes the sudden panic attacks all the more grueling.

I am well aware that flying is one of the safest modes of transportation but, however statistically safe airplanes are, nothing feels more dangerous than being thrown around like a pair of dice in the open air.

My in-flight experience consists of gripping armrests and obsessively muttering *Tefillat Haderech*. While my peers enjoy movies and sleep, I sit, eyes wide, contemplating how they can sit so still in the midst of such chaos. By the time my plane touches down, I am too emotionally and physically drained to be tense any longer.

My best friend's birthday is this weekend and to celebrate, she requested we take a trip to Montreal, Canada. When I brought up the idea to my parents, they suggested I fly there. Just the thought of having to get on a plane before the end of the year made my heart pound. But thanks to my years in therapy, I knew that anxiety feeds on avoidance: if I drove, I would never confront my fear. For days leading up to the flight, I worked on identifying what really made me so nervous about flying.

The notion of control is so powerful.

In a previous article, I had written about my dream of skydiving. It is strange to think that in my mind, jumping out of a plane is more secure than sitting in one. It all boils down to a sense of control.

I was never nervous to drive. Since the first day I got my license, I was ready to hit the road. Though driving is undeniably dangerous, I felt that behind the wheel, I was

somehow safer since I was in control. However, Judaism teaches us that humans control is finite. There are certain things that are within our control, and there are certain precautions we can take to keep ourselves safe, but ultimately, G-d rules the world.

Deep down I knew I would land safely as I had done hundreds of times before. The true discomfort lied not in the notion of crashing, but in the idea of having no say in the matter. Putting your life completely in the hands of a greater power is incredibly difficult, but, with tireless effort and focus, it can be equally empowering.

On my flight back to New York at the end of my long weekend, I tried to actualize this change in perspective. At each bump and dip, I worked to envision G-d holding up the plane. I associated this comforting image with the

anxious thoughts I had been feeling regarding my upcoming flight. I found that the more I concentrated on this idea, the more I was able to relax. The frequent turbulence that once caused me so much panic felt like nothing more than potholes in the road. True, I still had little control over my situation, but I found solace in the knowledge that something much greater had taken the wheel.

I may never be a happy flier, but this change in perspective has made the trip a little easier. Everyday we step on the subway or cross the street, we are putting our faith in mere human beings: traffic cops, drivers, and pedestrians alike. It is the least we can do to extend this same faith in the One who created us. It is a leap full of bumps and dips, but I promise it's worth the journey.



FROZEN SALARIES, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Association (YUFA), Weidhorn had been spearheading—to the horror of the YU administration and Board of Trustees—a YU faculty effort to unionize. When the YU administration refused to negotiate with the union upon its certification by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), YUFA and the NLRB sued and lost to the YU administration. Cited 1,428 times in subsequent court opinions, *NLRB v. Yeshiva University* is a historic case that established continuously applied federal precedent that bars American private university faculties from unionizing. The “Yeshiva Decision” is still discussed in legal academia and reviled by the influential American Association of University Professors (AAUP). Since 2016, a wave of graduate students and adjunct professors has been successfully challenging the application of the case to their faculty categories.

Weidhorn wrote that the “legal battle has cured a symptom—unionization—but left unattended the ailment that gave rise to the symptom: a badly underpaid faculty that is harassed, aggrieved, and demoralized.” Enveloping the case is an ongoing tale of YU faculty undercompensation and representation. The conditions that prompted faculty to unionize in the 1970's have circled back for present-day faculty, whose frozen salaries and dilute morale are propelling their Faculty Council to pursue representation on the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees.

This article is divided into two parts, each focused on one faculty generation's representative body and its attempt at increased compensation. The first examines the Yeshiva University Faculty Association (YUFA) from 1974-1980 and its journey to the Supreme Court. The second explores the contemporary Faculty Council since its birth in 2012 and its evolving relationship with the Office of the Provost and Board of Trustees.

YUFA and Supreme Court

In the wake of a financial crisis in the 1960's, the YU administration froze faculty salaries twice between 1968

and 1980. Because of inflation, these pay freezes actually amounted to pay cuts. Universities typically account for inflation through annual baseline raises of 1-2% that approximate the rate of inflation and maintain salaries' real value. YU's 0% raises actually caused salary values to shrink by 25% between 1968 and 1973. By 1974, YU had rigorized sabbatical policies and increased the minimum faculty workload to 5 courses per semester, equalling 12-15 classroom hours per week. Faculty salaries dangled at a \$16,600 minimum, 20% below the average minimum at comparably ranked New York City universities.

“THE CONDITIONS THAT PROMPTED FACULTY TO UNIONIZE IN THE 1970'S HAVE CIRCLED BACK FOR PRESENT-DAY FACULTY, WHOSE FROZEN SALARIES AND DILUTE MORALE ARE PROPELLING THEIR FACULTY COUNCIL TO PURSUE REPRESENTATION ON THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES.”

“Morale was awful,” wrote Weidhorn. Together with a frustrated Ralph Behrends, Professor of Physics at the closing Belfer Graduate School of Science, he galvanized the separate faculty associations of Cardozo, Ferkauf, Stern, Wurzeiler and YC into a unified YUFA in 1974, of which Behrends was nominated president and Weidhorn elected vice president. Weidhorn undertook the role of “making rousing or—in the eyes of YU administrators, rabble-raising—speeches in faculty assemblies... to persuade others to come aboard” the unionization effort. To be certified by the NLRB, YUFA needed a majority faculty vote in favor. In 1976, unionization decisively

won out, 91-50.

The issue had quickly devolved into “an in-house quarrel (or civil war?) between equal components of the university,” wrote Weidhorn. The faculties of YU's assorted schools had already been at odds with President Samuel Belkin and particularly Vice President Sheldon Socol over salary contentions, and the union tension pushed one dean to resign. Upon President Norman Lamm's appointment in 1976, administrative opposition persisted. Unionization would disadvantage the administration because it allows faculty to collectively bargain over salaries and contract terms while wielding the power of a potential strike. A university lawyer disclosed to Weidhorn that Socol also saw the matter as one “of righteous possession of power and that he was, therefore, willing to spend any sum in order to establish that principle.”

In the Supreme Court's majority opinion, Justice Powell wrote that because YU's professors “effectively determine its curriculum, grading system, admission and matriculation standards, academic calendars, and course schedules,”—and that “the overwhelming majority” of their recommendations “as to faculty hiring, tenure, sabbaticals, termination, and promotion are implemented”—YU faculty are “managerial employees” whose influence over university operations precluded them from unionizing.

“Whatever legal gobbledygook the administration might resort to, there was a heartening consensus among objective observers on the question of who had the power,” wrote Weidhorn.

The New York Times front page skepticized:

Yeshiva's faculty have far less managerial authority than most faculty members. There is no faculty senate at Yeshiva, nor is there any other forum for the administration and faculty to discuss grievances... There was no faculty influence in any of these [financial] decisions.

Having published an editorial supporting unionization

SEE FROZEN SALARIES, CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

FROZEN SALARIES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

in 1976, *The Commentator* reported:

According to [Ronald H. Schechtman, legal counsel for YUFA], the basic problem was that faculty at YU have been "alienated from decision-making." He contends that the court has "taken away needed protection from the faculty" and left them "naked."

YUFA reversed into an impotent faculty association and was later dismantled. Salaries remained below the comparable average for years. According to YU's Chief Human Resources Officer Julie Auster, "Yeshiva University continues to follow the 1980 ruling, which was specifically directed at the University and has not been overturned. If this ever changes, we would comply

Low salaries have encouraged "the best faculty to depart for greener pastures," said one professor, and hampered recruitment of new professors. The resultant overburdening of faculty has sapped course offerings. Numerous YC departments now scarcely offer electives because there is barely enough manpower to teach certain majors' required courses. Professors handling heavier course loads are less likely to volunteer time towards mentoring student researchers, developing new courses and delivering external lectures that attract scholarship and promote enrollment. "It's what we in the Faculty Council sometimes call a 'death spiral,'" said the same professor.

The Council was founded 3 years into the freeze in 2012, at the request of the Middle States Association (MSA) during its reaccreditation of YU. The MSA

made. But others have."

"Normally the faculty that are on the Faculty Council are people who love this institution, although they are probably the ones that are voicing the complaints the strongest," said one member. "But that is precisely because we care." The same professor said that though meetings are on Fridays, during a "time that I cherish when I normally pick up my grandkids from school," he remains involved "because I believe it is important."

From Courtroom to Boardroom

In 2013, the Council resorted to publishing an "Open Letter from the Faculty Council to Faculty of Yeshiva University" in *The Commentator* in response to a financial strategy update by Joel. Yet much of the letter's wording seemed directed at the administration

The Commentator

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US High Court Designates YU Faculty As Managers

On February 20, 1980, the United States Supreme Court announced its decision in the Yeshiva University Faculty Association (YUFA) case. The Court found that the members of YUFA are considered managerial professionals and therefore cannot be protected by the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). This 5-4 decision was an affirmation of the decision given in the Court of Appeals of the Second Circuit on July 31, 1978.

The issue in the case YUFA v. YU, was whether the faculty is instrumental in making managerial decisions at Yeshiva. According to the NLRA, professional employees can form a union protected by law since the decisions they make in the execution of their jobs are in their own interest. They must be expected to exercise "independent professional judgment" if they want their union to be protected. In Yeshiva's case, the Supreme Court found that the faculty interests

Bowery Bank Moves To Foreclose Securities Are Seized, Restructuring

By JONATHAN KENTER

FEB. 29 — In response to a move by the Bowery Savings Bank to foreclose on Yeshiva University's \$40 million mortgage, a Manhattan Supreme Court ruled Yeshiva to show cause why Bowery should not "recover its

all unrestricted pledges and contributions . . . as security," for the mortgage which normally would run until 1997 with monthly payments of \$373,000 per month.

Today's action was the culmination of a series of events dating back to September of 1979. On September first of last year YU failed to pay its monthly installment to Bowery. In a meeting with Bowery representatives, Yeshiva explained that due to, among other factors, the unexpected high rate of inflation, it finds itself unable to maintain its monthly payments and wishes to restructure its debt. At the same time, Yeshiva presented to Bowery a long range financial plan developed by Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Company, which

forecasted that Yeshiva would be able to resume its loan payments in 1983.

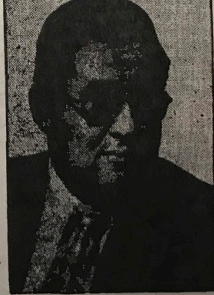
Surprise Seizure

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New Research Programs In Gerontology

with any future NLRB ruling."

Faculty Council and Board of Trustees

Affiliated with 5 different undergraduate departments, YC and Stern professors separately stated the following on condition of anonymity between April 2017 and May 2018:

"Faculty morale is low."

"I don't think that's much of a secret."

"We haven't had any say. There is no transparency."

"Much ill-feeling about faculty being 'taken for granted.'"

"The biggest problem amongst faculty is the depressing morale amongst them. This is affecting the quality of the institution."

YU faculty salaries have been frozen again since 2009 when past president Richard Joel enforced extreme university-wide budget cuts as part of an effort to reduce YU's annual budget by \$30 million. Many other universities froze faculty salaries in 2010 after the recession but unfroze their faculty salaries by 2012. Accounting for inflation, one professor estimates that faculty members are now making 82% of their 2008 income. In 2009, the university's pension matching contribution was shaved from a 7% to 2% maximum. Though President Ari Berman raised pension matching contributions to 3% in September 2017, comparable universities offer a 10% maximum.

One tenured professor remarked that "this is probably the worst pension plan for any faculty. We felt [the 7%] was a sort of contract," he said. "It was one of the reasons I took the job. It hurts the retiring faculty because of course there will be less money for them, but it also hurts in attracting young faculty." A 2013 Faculty Council survey found that only 11% of YU faculty foresaw being financially able to retire before age 70.

expressed concern over YU's absent faculty governance structure. Then-provost Morton Lowengrub was open to instituting a more organized system for gathering faculty sentiment, and so the administration cooperatively selected 20 professors from YC, Stern, Syms, UTS, Azrieli, Cardozo, Ferkauf, Wurzweiler and Revel to form the Council.

Now elected for 3-year terms, members proportionally represent roughly 15 faculty from their respective institutions. The Council annually selects a speaker, vice-speaker, secretary, and parliamentarian; co-speakers for 2017-18 are Syms Professor of Finance S. Abraham Ravid and Chair of Economics James Kahn. Held 5-6 times annually, Council meetings begin with an open public meeting with the provost and are followed by a closed executive meeting exclusively of members. The minutes of each meeting are posted online following their confirmation at the next meeting.

The Council's by-laws describe it as "responsible for advising the President, the Provost, and the Board of Trustees on governance issues of importance to the University," but the mechanism by which it does so has been mostly limited to communication with Provost Selma Botman. Typically the sole administrator who attends Council meetings, she was accompanied by President Berman in October 2017 at the second of 5 meetings conducted under his presidency thus far.

The Council also has the power to vote on formal "recommendations," which were referred to in meeting minutes as a "departure point" for faculty pension plan revisions in February 2013 and treated as prompts for "subsequent discussion" in October 2014. Council feedback on healthcare benefits and pension changes has "probably helped with efficiency in the process," said one member. Another commented that "some of the resolutions have been more like public statements, and so they did not seem to change any decisions that were

rather than faculty, suggesting the minimal power of the Council in swaying administrative decisions. A main contention of the letter was that "the administration must understand and recognize that a strong and well-supported faculty is vital to the long-term stability and success of the institution."

Of the Council's push for broadened influence, one member commented that YU "is a very hierarchical institution. It was difficult for us to make an impact on anything. So we insisted for years that we should get representation in the Academic Affairs Committee meeting of the Board of Trustees." In 2015, two such seats were granted to the Council and are currently filled by Kahn and YC Professor of Physics Gabriel Cwilich. Attendance at the meetings allows faculty to "see what is being discussed" and "offer feedback," said another member.

In April 2018, the Council passed a recommendation to secure seats on the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees. Faculty Council representatives are set to meet with YU's CFO and Vice President of Business Affairs Jacob Harman sometime this May, though the Council has yet to receive a formal response to the recommendation.

"We hope this one will get a response," said one Council member. "There is always a delicate equilibrium that you have to play here in how much to press for things."

"The Board of Trustees might be very savvy, but in other universities, the faculty plays an active role in running the place," said his colleague on the Council. "We are still fighting. We are heard more than we used to be, but there is still a long way to go until the university gives more than lip service."

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

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Court Rules Law Does Not Protect Faculty Unions at Private Colleges

5-4 Finding Says Teachers at Such Institutions Are 'Managerial' Workers

By LINDA GREENHOUSE
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 20 — The Supreme Court ruled today, 5 to 4, that members of faculties at private universities are "managerial" employees whose efforts to unionize are not protected by Federal labor law.

The decision specifically applies only to Yeshiva University in New York but, because Yeshiva's administrative structure is regarded as typical of most private universities, the ruling broadens the

The Supreme Court upheld, 5 to 4, the constitutionality of a New York law permitting reimbursement to parochial schools for the costs of meeting state testing and record-keeping requirements. Page B1.

Because the National Labor Relations Act does not apply to state or local government workers, today's opinion will have no bearing on the status of faculty unions at publicly supported universities.

Continued on Page A20, Column 1

CONFEREES APPROVE THREE-WAY DIVISION OF 'WINDFALL' YIELD

Nonbinding Allocation Plan Would Provide an Income Tax Cut — Break on interest Voted

By A. O. SULZBERGER JR.
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 20 — House and Senate conferees agreed today on how to distribute the \$27.3 billion that the "windfall" profit tax on oil companies is expected to raise in coming years, but left the details to future legislation.

The panel also approved an amendment that would give individuals a new \$300 tax exemption for some interest income.

Today's action dealt up the two biggest problems facing the conference committee, which has been working since before Christmas to reconcile the House and Senate versions of the bill. President Carter should now have the legislation he has been calling for since last April by early next month unless either house of Congress rejects the compromise, which is not likely.

The tax exemption would become law once the compromise windfall tax bill was accepted by the House and the Senate and signed by the President. But separate bills would be needed before the

U.N. PANEL DELAY AMID NEW DOUBT KHOMENI BOLST

President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, left, helping aides write cables.

Lady Bird: A Perfect Film at the Perfect Time

By Zack Rynhold

When I walked out of my first of many viewings of last year's *La La Land*, I confidently announced that it would win the Oscar for Best Picture. Of course, we all know how that turned out. Upon leaving the theater after a screening of *Lady Bird*, I reflected similarly. Unfortunately, Greta Gerwig's cinematic masterpiece did not win in any category on Oscar night. If the Academy's failure to present the film with any of the accolades it deserved has taught me anything, it is that I should probably stop making Oscar predictions.

Lady Bird tells the story of a high-school senior in Sacramento, California. Christine McPherson (Saoirse Ronan), who prefers to be called "Lady Bird," complains to her mother, Marion (Laurie Metcalf), that she wishes she could "live through something," and aspires to go to college on the East coast, "where culture is." The film focuses largely on this mother-daughter relationship in the context of Lady Bird's coming-of-age narrative. It is therefore unsurprising that this film has resonated most strongly with mothers and their maturing daughters. So, you may ask, what compels a 22-year-old male student to share his experience of this film?

For a film to succeed in delivering its underlying message, it must transcend the boundary of the screen. A viewer should not only feel a distant *sympathy* for a character or situation, but must empathize with a character or situation. The film achieves this connection to its audience through a realistic representation of human experience. Gerwig's casting plays an instrumental role in this feat. Ronan and Metcalf provide masterful performances, forging the complicated relationship at the film's heart. The first scene of the film sets the tone for this rapport. As Lady Bird and her mother drive home from a college road-trip, the pair is moved to tears listening to John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. Reference to this novel highlights the centrality of California as the culmination of the American Dream, a recurring theme in the film.

As the audiobook ends, Lady Bird attempts to turn on the radio, prompting her mother to request that they let the experience sit with them, rather than reverting to constant stimulation. This, of course, quickly transitions into an argument ranging from Lady Bird's college aspirations to driving tests. In response, Lady Bird comically throws herself out of the car. This emotional rollercoaster encapsulates the tumult of their close, yet fiery, bond.

Such polarizing encounters between mother and daughter characterize the film, the most sensational of which elicits one of Ronan's best moments of, if not the film, perhaps her career. As her mother completely ignores her attempts to reconcile after yet another dispute, Lady Bird pleads with her mother to speak to her, berating her own impudence and ungratefulness. Her tearful apology, which receives no response from her mother, is heartrending. Despite their differences, Lady Bird feels incomplete without her mother's pride in her. As she tells her mother earlier in the film: "I wish that you liked me." Marion answers: "Of course I love you," to

which Lady Bird asks: "But do you *like* me?"

The tension underlying these exchanges relates to Lady Bird's ambition to break out of the confines of home, much to the distaste of her mother who feels underappreciated and unfulfilled as a result. Lady Bird goes as far as risking their relationship in her mission to escape Sacramento, applying to universities on the East Coast behind Marion's back.

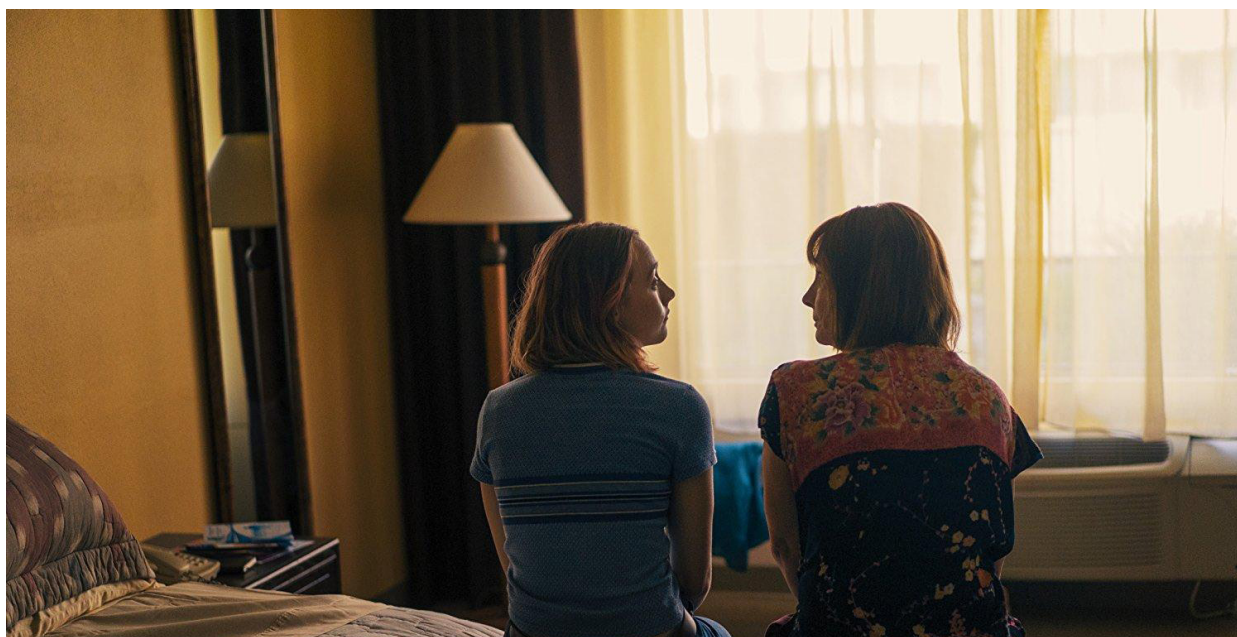
This adolescent desire to leave the nest reflects a broader theme of searching for identity. Lady Bird longs to express herself, hence she changes her name. She yearns to be socially understood and accepted, thus she abandons Julie to befriend Jenna (Odeya Rush), the most popular girl at school. Her drive for fresh experiences mirrors the struggles of aspiring young adults. The film portrays such intricacies of growing up from various perspectives through Lady Bird's interactions with different characters. We gain insight into the vulnerability of a student coming to terms with himself in the shape of Danny (Lucas Hedges), Lady Bird's boyfriend, whom she discovers is homosexual. We witness the complications of intimacy in the form of her second boyfriend, Kyle (Timothée Chalamet), a stereotypical playboy-mystique, with whom she shares her first sexual encounter. We relive the ups and downs of companionship with Julie (Beanie Feldstein), Lady Bird's best friend.

Lady Bird's progression in the film hinges on how these interpersonal experiences coalesce as an acknowledgement of her true self. Once she arrives in New York, she recalls the familiarity of home. Waking up in the hospital after a drunken night, Lady Bird glances at her hospital wristband; it reads "Christine McPherson." She proceeds to a church where she listens to the choir, reminding her of high school. This nostalgia prompts her to leave her parents a voicemail message, in which she uses her given name, Christine, and reminisces about the beauty of Sacramento. Vignettes of her hometown

appear on the screen, illustrating her appreciation of its uniqueness. The visual composition of this scene reflects this shift in Lady Bird's persona. Lady Bird walks the streets of Manhattan from screen left to screen right, reversing earlier scenes of her walking from right to left in Sacramento; she figuratively returns home by walking in the opposite direction. Upon this realization of home and family as integral components of her identity, she has finally become comfortable with herself.

Despite our gender and background differences, Lady Bird's development of identity resonated with me. The notion of creating an identity out of a combination of new and familiar experiences, while learning to accept these multifaceted aspects of individuality was both intriguing and moving. More impressively, the film enabled me to inhabit Lady Bird's world and mind. While I can never fully comprehend the issues a young woman, such as Lady Bird, may encounter as she grows up, the fact that I can empathize with her speaks to the resounding impact of this film.

This accomplishment of connecting people with different identities provides hope that we can emulate such empathy on a larger scale, particularly for the causes of distressed individuals. In this context, perhaps this film serves as a bridge for young men, such as myself, to the plight of women in the current social climate. In light of the devastating stories of sexual harassment in Hollywood and in the political arena, films that can elicit empathy and compassion, rather than mere sympathy, could influence people of different identities to unite against the injustice from which others suffer. As Lady Bird's discovery of self demonstrates, this should not involve the loss of identity in order to find common ground. Rather, we should recognize and encourage distinct identities while building bridges between them through a defining factor of our humanity—empathy.



To Infinity and Beyond

By Shira Perton

In the year 2032, a space based community referred to as Mars One will be landing on Mars. In order to build a sustainable community, Mars One aims to establish a permanent human settlement and create a habitable living space. Their ultimate goal is to make this small mission a global mission that will eventually lead to multiple habitations in the extra-terrestrial sphere.

While all my childhood fantasies of becoming an astronaut and jumping beyond gravity are finally being fulfilled, sending people to Mars is a huge undertaking. Although there is a lot of work behind the scenes, space travel seems almost effortless. From a screen, one would see a spaceship taking off, soaring through the atmosphere, and then suddenly flying through space. Astronauts are floating around like they can accomplish anything and

it's all very thrilling to watch. Yet, as glamorous as it sounds to leave all the materialism and, insert any other satirical word you like, of this world, there are many risks associated with space travel. The effects that the travel can have on a person's body are immediate and upon landing, there is a lot that Mars One participants will need to do in order to maintain their health.

Research done after the Apollo missions in the 1970s opened up a world of data that provided us with an important piece of information about space travel: When in areas of reduced gravity, our body will immediately react with a reduced heart rate, oxygen consumption, and metabolic rate. To counteract these effects, it would be helpful to perform exercise so that you can offset the effects that microgravity has on our bodies.

While these three effects might not seem so threatening, we should acknowledge why these changes would occur in

space. Earth is the only planet that we know of right now that is ideal for sustaining life. It has the perfect amount of water that will sustain us, there is not too much that is covering mountains and not too little in the desert that it will dry up. Ironic, right? The habitat was formed through existing the optimal distance from the sun, providing the necessary climate and living conditions. What makes planet Earth so ideal for human life could merely be its lucky position in the solar system.

Additionally, Earth is blocked by Jupiter that protects us from any debris that could land on Earth if it was not there.

Earth's tectonic plates actually allow for proper regulation of carbon dioxide, Venus, on the other

SEE TO INFINITY, CONTINUED ON
PAGE 20

TO INFINITY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

hand, has no water or tectonic plates and it is a lot less geologically interesting. As much as Earth may be small, it is the generator of the statement "good things come in small packages" as if Earth was any larger it would be too hot for sustainability. So, if we think about the concept of space travel, it is not like jumping in our cars, turning on The Proclaimers and taking a road trip. Space travel requires leaving a completely comfortable and viable environment that is made perfectly for us and entering one that runs its own course and has its own particular atmospheric conditions.

On Earth, our body temperatures are about 37 degrees Celsius, yet when entering a weightless environment our core body temperature becomes increased. The increase in even one degree of our body's temperature can lead to a decrease in interleukin-1 receptor antagonist, which is an anti-inflammatory in our body and is integral to our general immune system function. The slight change in one's body can impair our physical and cognitive performance, which could translate into the astronaut failing to get to space safely.

A common association with space travel is that there is no gravity. The effects of microgravity can also have a heavy impact on our bones, especially when it comes to extended time in space. Using a dual energy x-ray to examine the bone densities and mineral content of astronauts, after returning home, scientists saw that they lost a lot of their lower body skeletal functions, mostly in the pelvic bone, lumbar vertebrae, and proximal femur.

The results that were found in the changes of bone density, as well as their calcium balance, showed a correlation between these symptoms and the condition called osteopenia. Osteopenia is the stage right before someone gets diagnosed with osteoporosis and is still concerning for one's bone stability and aptitude to perform the activities they are used to. There is an overall loss in limb muscles and although aerobic exercises can help maintain our abilities, the long-term space travel will still affect our motion sickness, which could lead to a lifelong prescription for Dramamine.

Astronaut Scott Kelly traveled to space in 2015 for 340

days, leaving his identical twin brother, Mark, behind. When they were reunited, Scott had grown two inches taller than Mark. Cool, right? However, after research was done, it was shown that an immediate effect of space travel is spinal elongation and back pain. This elongation could result in almost 2 years of therapy post space travel just for us to regain full function.

"ONE SMALL STEP FOR MAN, MORE LIKE ONE LARGE LEAP TOWARDS MONTHS OF REHABILITATION FOR THOSE GOING TO SPACE."

Usually space travel is not thought to be long. Astronauts get to the moon, put a flag down and then head on back to earth, right? The long-term exposure to radiation that astronauts are subject to during their

trips and missions can lead to loss of control as well as cancer risks to one's immune system. Surprisingly this can be easily fixed through proper shielding for aircrafts. Ironically, although it is simple to repair, it is not because of the costs and the lack of research that has been done in the field in order to prove to creators that it is useful.

One small step for man, more like one large leap towards months of rehabilitation for those going to space. Star Wars, Star Trek, The Martian and even Space Jam, all icons that we grew up on, and are still being exposed to, make space seem like a journey to reach for. We romanticize the ability to fly around like Iron Man with no gravity, and that having a Walle-like wingman is a goal to achieve, but it is not necessarily as glamorous as the movies portray. Although traveling to space, creating a community, and trying to maintain life may be a huge step for our scientific world and mankind, there are things to consider before we trade in the many different functions and pleasures in life that we take for granted.



Review of Morning Programs since 2008 Shows IBC Rises to 25% of Undergraduate Torah Studies Students, JSS on Growth Trajectory

By Avi Strauss

A review of enrollment in the four Wilf Undergraduate Torah Studies Programs by The Commentator has revealed several trends in the overall makeup of the morning programs.

Overall, the Wilf student body population has lost a net of 170 students in the last ten years, dropping from 1,240 students in the Fall of 2008 to 1,070 students in this semester.

Over the ten-year examined period, the Isaac Breuer College (IBC) morning program is at its largest size since 2010 relative to the other morning programs, currently comprising 25.0% of uptown students. IBC provides a classroom-oriented program for students to study topics in *Tanach*, Talmud, Halakha, and Jewish history, among other things. This semester, 267 students were enrolled in the IBC program.

Over the last 10 years, the James Striar School (JSS), the smallest of the four morning programs and oriented towards those with a more basic background in Judaic Studies, has grown to nearly double its portion of male undergraduate students, rising to compose 12% of the Wilf student body, from 7.01% in 2008. In real numbers, JSS has added 40 students since Fall 2008, to its current total of 127 students today.

Recently elected JSS representative Jeremy Orlian was pleased to hear his program has been growing over the last 10 years. "It comes as no surprise to me that the number of enrollees in the James Striar School has been steadily expand[ing] over the last few years." Orlian continued by explaining "[The incredible diverse study body and remarkable and learned Rabbis have] enabled JSS to succeed and grow...and the sense of mutual respect

and the willingness to learn from one another makes this program truly unique and has surely played a significant role in its attraction of students."

"A REVIEW OF ENROLLMENT IN THE FOUR WILF UNDERGRADUATE TORAH STUDIES PROGRAMS BY THE COMMENTATOR HAS REVEALED SEVERAL TRENDS IN THE OVERALL MAKEUP OF THE MORNING PROGRAMS."

Comparatively, the Mazer Yeshiva Program—the program that devotes the most time during the day to seder and shiur—is on a downward enrollment trend. In the Spring of 2012, MYP represented the majority of the Wilf student body (54.8%) and was composed of 581 undergraduates. IBC was the second largest program at the time but made up just 20.1% of the male students. Since then, MYP has shed students both in real terms and as a percentage of the student body. Today, still represents a plurality (478) of Wilf students, albeit 10% less than it used to (44.5%).

The Stone Beit Midrash Program (SBMP), which has seder and shiur from 9:00 until 1:00 PM, and covers some topics outside of Talmud, has both risen and fallen significantly over the last 10 years. The program's low-point in enrollment occurred in Spring 2011 when just 13.4% of the Wilf student body was enrolled in SBMP.

Shortly after that, however, the program grew in size and prominence following the additions of *rebbeim* like Rav Moshe Tzvi Weinberg, who joined YU in Fall 2013, and whose shiur averages over 33 students a semester.

Revamping SBMP helped it rise to nearly a quarter of the Wilf student body by Spring 2016. However, the program has since lost ground and returned to an 18.5% relative makeup of students. SBMP's average size over the last ten years has been 18.9%.

When presented with the enrollment trends, Dean of RIETS and Undergraduate Torah Studies Rabbi Menachem Penner remarked that "the percentages have remained pretty constant over the past five years. I think that speaks to the fact that all four programs are meeting student needs."

Associate Dean of Undergraduate Torah Studies Rabbi Yosef Kalinsky said he strongly supports all four programs, as they each provide space for students to pursue their own religious goals. "Every morning program is a *l'chatchilah* (an ideal) in its own right," said Rabbi Kalinsky.

When it comes to choosing between the programs, Rabbi Kalinsky said that "the goal for each semester is for students to be in the appropriate program for the appropriate reasons."

It is somewhat common for students to switch between different morning programs during their time on campus. A significant portion of students who transfer into IBC from MYP and SBMP do so as they become upperclassmen, in an effort to discharge Judaic studies requirements like Jewish History and Bible, or to allow

*SEE MORNING PROGRAMS,
CONTINUED ON PAGE 21*

MORNING PROGRAMS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

them the flexibility to pursue academic interests that they otherwise would not be able to. IBC provides courses to this end, as well as a spectrum of course sections in halakha and *machshava* (thought) that are not provided in their seder/shiur based morning programs.

Yeshiva College senior Yosef Sklar stressed the ability to study and complete a major in an additional discipline as the impetus for his temporary switch to IBC from MYP. “Switching to IBC for a semester allowed me to complete a second major in Jewish Studies that I would not have had the opportunity to complete otherwise.” Sklar has since switched back to MYP.

Sklar stressed that he benefited from IBC’s offerings beyond his second major, and from the IBC instructors too. “While it was not even a class that counted towards

my Jewish Studies major, I greatly enjoyed Rabbi Hayyim Angel’s class on Shemot. He is an outstanding pedagogue and a figure that [I believe] more students in our institution should be exposed to.”

Liam Eliach, a junior, switched from MYP to IBC after his first semester, citing the time constraints of a demanding double-curriculum for his change. “I didn’t find myself having enough time to take advantage of MYP, do well in class and most importantly have time to relax, exercise, and breathe.”

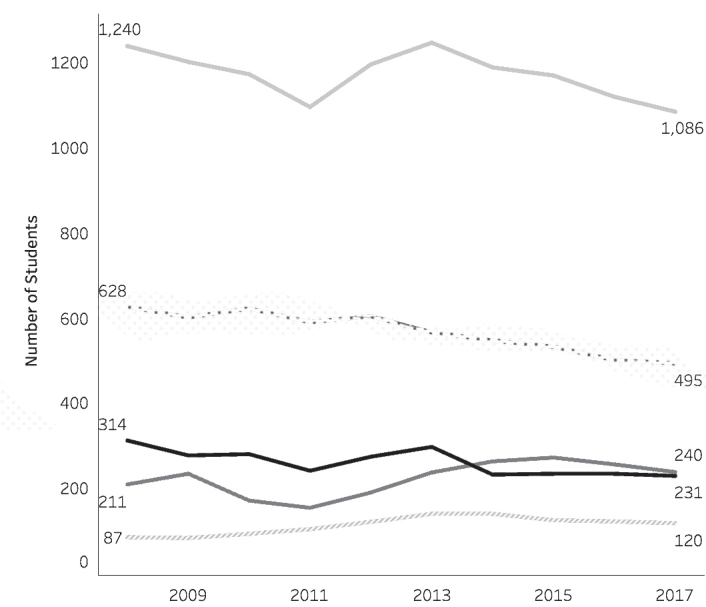
Additionally, Eliach said he didn’t find the extended period of time learning Gemara, sometimes as long as five hours of seder and shiur, to be fulfilling. “I didn’t feel like I was growing in any way, so, to me, that was an indicator that it was time to switch morning programs. In IBC, I was able to make a lighter schedule, while still taking interesting Judaic classes, especially in Tanach,

while having time for myself to do other things including learning what I was interested in/would facilitate my growth.”

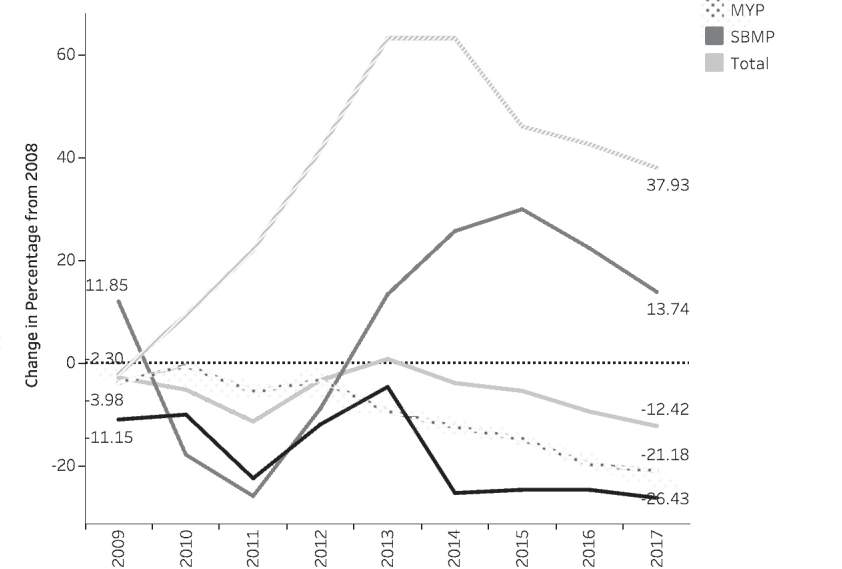
In an ideal world, Rabbi Kalinsky said he would prefer if students chose morning programs for “personal learning reasons” as opposed to requirements. Nonetheless, he stressed his “main concern is that everyone should be in the right program.”

As far as numbers go, Rabbi Kalinsky noted that he looks at the numbers each semester but that he is “not driven by numbers.” He added that every year, the UTS administration takes a look at one of the four programs, thinking of new ways to strengthen it from a programmatic and faculty perspective.

The Number of Students in UTS from 2008-2017



The Growth and Decline of the Different UTS Programs



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**NOMI BEN-ZVI,
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15**

The Commentator attempted to contact Ben-Zvi to discuss her tutoring and the impact she has had on Stern students. Ben-Zvi initially responded that she “would prefer not to comment on my curriculum and strategies because it’s something that only the people I tutor should have access to.” Since the recent report of her deauthorization, Ben-Zvi has not returned repeated requests for comment.

Prior to tutoring in Stern, Ben-Zvi worked with Dr. Rapp for three years, an experience which Ben-Zvi, in an email to the Fall 2016 General Chemistry course, said helped her “teach [students] how to think like me and therefore how to think like her.” Additionally, the old exams distributed and used during the sessions help students prepare for the types of questions likely to appear on the exams in addition to mastering the material.

Dr. Rapp provides her General Chemistry courses with two old exams per test, and any student in Ben-Zvi’s class receives additional material. Dr. Rapp would not comment on any aspect of Ben-Zvi’s tutoring, but did say that she has “always returned exams so past exams are ‘out there’ and available to anyone.”

While this may be true, by giving old tests to her stu-

dents, Ben-Zvi expedites the process of asking around for old exams and independently collecting the resources. In one email made available to The Commentator, Ben-Zvi requests of her students that they “DO NOT forward these [exams] to other [people]... there are exams out there, but I def[initely] make it easier by collecting and scanning, etc. ... I hope I can trust you guys and you can respect the work I do.” Ben-Zvi adds, “do not ask [Professor Evan Mintzer] questions from the exams, or even talk [about] them with him... the less he knows the better it is for YOU!!!!”

Students do not always honor Ben-Zvi’s requests. Roffe recalled that, before she began attending Ben-Zvi’s sessions, she “just asked people in the class to email [the exams] to me and they did.” Marmer said that many students share these resources using Stern In the Know, a popular private Facebook group where Stern students share and sell resources for classes.

Most Stern students and professors do not take issue with studying from old exams. In addition to Dr. Rapp, Dr. Harvey Babich, the Director of the Biology department at Stern and professor of Genetics, and Dr. Richard Weiss, an adjunct instructor in Biology at Stern, encourage their students to study from practice exams which are part of the Yeshiva University E-reserves.

What Ben-Zvi offers to students goes beyond old tests and comprehensive notes. On its LinkedIn profile, Ben-

Zvi describes Chromium Prep as “more than just a tutoring company. It’s the place ... [to] help individuals find the power to become the best version of themselves.” A major goal of the sessions is to “empower [students] to cross the finish line to success” and “climb their own mountains of challenge.” The anonymous Stern students said that Ben-Zvi “has [students’] success and goals in mind, and wants the best for them, both in school and life.” Shara Feltheimer (SCW ‘13), a second-year medical student at New York College of Osteopathic Medicine, wrote in her Facebook review of Chromium Prep that Ben-Zvi “doesn’t only care about tutoring, she deeply cares for each person she meets with and will do anything to get them the success that they need in all areas.”

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**AVENGERS, CONTINUED
FROM PAGE 12**

This works, for the most part - there are some characters who see the spotlight a bit more than other characters, and some who didn’t even make the cut from earlier Avengers movies. Nevertheless, by the end of the film I felt that every single Avenger, Guardian, or otherwise got their appropriate amount of screentime.

That being said, some of those characters make questionable decisions at best, and outright stupid decisions at worst. Entirely out of character decisions? Now that I think about it, not really. Still though, at certain points in the movie I felt frustrated with the way characters were behaving on screen - not enough to make me dislike the film, but enough that I felt the need to point out that the feeling was there.

This movie is funny. It is, after all, a Marvel movie. I’m not entirely sure I agree with that decision, at least to the extent that it presents itself in the film. There should be moments of lightheartedness in the movie to cut from the heavier aspects, something which I feel DC should take notes from to do, or at least to integrate better into their stories (Looking at you, *Suicide Squad* and *Justice League*). However, I think there was a little... too much humor in the movie, especially for a story as dark and with such consequences as *Infinity War*.

Oh yes, there are consequences in this film. People die. And I applaud screenwriters Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely for that. I’ve noticed that the past few Marvel movies have made lasting decisions, either by killing off characters or destroying previously known locations, and I welcome that change into a franchise that I think relies a little too much on plot contrivances to make sure that everything is fine in the end. Sometimes, though, it shouldn’t be, and I think *Infinity War* is one of those times.

Another thing that needs commending is the villain. Josh Brolin’s Thanos was menacing, powerful, but most of all, he was a character - a character with motivations, with sympathies, with emotions, something else that’s been on the rarer side in Marvel movies. And I get it - it’s the hero’s story, and therefore you need to build up the hero as much as possible, with some character sacrifices being made with regards to the villain. However, with eighteen other films of hero character development already there, *Infinity War* takes some time to focus on the villain, to make him a character too, and for the impact that Thanos has on the overall Marvel Cinematic Universe, I’m glad that Markus and McFeely took that time to flesh him out a little more.

So yeah, *Infinity War* is pretty worth it. There were moments that made me waver in that statement, but I think I can confidently say that it is. It’s a movie eighteen films, ten years, and hundreds of issues of comics in the making, and it definitely feels it. The end of the era is upon us, and the least I can do is tell you that it’s worth a watch.

Card-Sharing and Other Non-Issues: Caf Card Chronicles

By Rachel Lelonek

A few weeks ago, I had dinner in the uptown Furman Dining Hall. As I waited on line, a friend saw me and offered me his Caf Card, stating that he had a lot of extra Caf dollars leftover. He joined me on the line and purchased my food for me before scurrying off to class. After placing my food down and going to pick up a set of utensils, I was approached by the assistant manager of the Wilf Campus cafeteria. She asked me if I had just purchased food for another student. I told her the truth and said that someone else had purchased my dinner for me and when she told me that it was not allowed, I told her that my friend had simply offered and that Dining Services downtown were more lenient, before proceeding to sit down.

A few minutes later, I got up to get a drink and fries to go when I was stopped by the same woman, who stood next to the cashier and asked who I was buying the food for. Though I protested that the food was for myself, she told me that I was not allowed to buy my drink and fries because I had bought food for another student, a crime uptown that was punishable by having my Caf Card taken away. I tried to explain that someone else had bought me the food, but she refused to listen and told me I knew better because of the numerous signs by the cash registers in the Furman Dining Hall. Though she asked which boy gave me his Caf Card, I remained tight-lipped as she told me how lucky I was that she didn't catch me in the act, because she would have confiscated my card. After a brief back-and-forth where I tried to proclaim my innocence, the woman told me to leave my food behind because I was not allowed to purchase it, which I did only after getting her name and leaving in an angry huff.

I would like to think of myself as a loud and vocal person who speaks out against injustices that have faced me. For the past three years, this has continued to be the case here at Yeshiva University as I refused to stay silent about the many issues I'm passionate about. From gun control to body shaming to Beren's pre-law advisor struggles, I have been vocal about various issues that arose throughout my education at YU. But recently, a lot of hype has surfaced about the wrongs that have occurred—particularly on the Wilf Campus—surrounding to the new regulations on YU's Caf Card and the strictness of Dining Services staff. And while I may not be a student on the Wilf Campus, it affects me just as much as any other student—as my prior story illustrates.

Throughout my duration at Stern, there have consistently been two types of Caf Card users: Those who run out of money before the semester has ended and those who have lots of extra money left over. Despite introducing new meal plan options last year with three tier options for money on an individual's card, this dichotomy still exists and many of the students with leftover money often offer to buy meals for other students. While many students with extra money graciously offer to pay for meals for other peers (sometimes labeled the provocative term "Caf daddies"), those in charge of Dining Services on both campuses try to make sure that each student is using his

or her own Caf money.

In order to find out Yeshiva University's official policies pertaining to the use of others' Caf Cards, I went on the Dining Services' website. As of May 2, 2018, the website stated that YU meal plans are "non-transferable and non-refundable" because of the New York State tax exemption that is allotted to undergraduate and graduate students. But what happens to all of the money that goes unused? According to Dining Services, "any balance must be used by the end of the second semester, as there are no refunds. For the [2017-18] academic school year, balances must be used by midnight of May 17, 2018." In short: you use it or you lose it.

In order not to lose their prepaid money, many students across both campuses have tried various techniques to spend their money throughout the semester. On the Wilf Campus, many students stock up on food from the mini-market within the Furman Dining Hall. The same is done on the Beren Campus at Milner's Markets in both the Brookdale and Schottenstein Residence Halls. This is seen as problematic by other students, who become frustrated with the lack of sufficient stock in the mini-markets and are frustrated with their peers who clear off the shelves. Another, more popular, method of spending excess money is to share it with other students who have used up most of their Caf money or Omni Dollars in restaurants—a method not only frowned upon, but prohibited by Dining Services.

Since the beginning of the current school year, and more forcefully since the beginning of the Spring 2018 semester, Dining Services' employees have begun to crack

dollars as "cafCoins"—a spoof of the successful Bitcoin.

In recent weeks, signs have gone up in YU cafeterias, as well as Nagel Bagel, with more stringent outlines as to what students can and cannot spend their money on. One sign in the 215 Lexington Avenue cafeteria stated that students could not buy more than six sushi rolls per purchase. Another sign in Nagel Bagel said that students could not have more than a \$100 purchase. These new restrictions have been put in place to further prevent students from spending money on others, even if their peers aren't necessarily there. This also prevents a student's ability to stock up on extra food—a common practice in the 215 Lexington Avenue caf, as well as the mini-markets around both the Wilf and Beren campuses.

But despite these efforts, many students have still been using their peers' Caf dollars for food. Even in the presence of the cardholder and with the cardholder's permission, some Dining Services' employees have remained staunch in following the rules. Others, however, have been more lenient and allowed cardholders to buy food for other students with them or nearby waiting.

The new crackdown has caused varying opinions on the once former leniency of Dining Services amongst Caf employees—all of whom requested to be quoted anonymously. "I think the problem with people taking other people's Caf Cards to pay for their food didn't really become an issue until recently," said one Dining Services employee. "Before [the current managers] came to campus, I don't think [Dining Services] cared so much ... it wasn't a big deal. They didn't crack down on [using other

"I THINK THAT THE CAF NEEDS TO STOP CRACKING DOWN ON STUDENTS WHO WILLINGLY GIVE THEIR CAF CARDS TO THEIR PEERS TO USE THEIR EXCESS MONEY THAT WILL OTHERWISE GO TO WASTE."

down on the use of other people's Caf Cards. Initially, students were no longer able to give their 800 or 900 YU ID numbers to Caf employees upon checking out their purchases to prevent students from using other people's YU ID numbers and to prevent students from possibly using others' YU ID numbers without their knowledge. This method took place in both YU cafeterias, as well as OneStop Kosher in Washington Heights and surrounding restaurants that use Omni Dollars. This forced students to use their ID's at the time of purchase in order not to use someone else's meal plan. The next step that Dining Services took was putting up signs in all YU cafeterias, as well as in Nagel Bagel, reminding students that they must use their YU ID's to make purchases.

YU has tried to think of creative solutions to combat the excess Caf money quandary. One initiative, proposed by University Dean of Students, Dr. Chaim Nissel, was the YUCare program, which allowed students to donate up to \$50 of their own Caf money to "a special fund that will be made available to students in need for use in the Yeshiva cafeterias." While I do not know the exact success of this initiative, this program was criticized in many Yeshiva University social media groups online, mocking the Caf

people's Caf Cards] the way they do now." Another Dining Services worker disagreed and said that for as long as he or she worked for Dining Services, "people were never allowed to use other people's [YU ID] numbers and ID's." Despite their varying opinions, both employees agreed that in recent years, a crackdown has occurred on both the Wilf and Beren campuses about students using other students' ID's to purchase food—one that has progressed in recent months.

My experience is not a lone story. When reaching out to others expressing my own discontent with the new hawkish behaviors of some Caf employees, they responded with stories of their own. One student explained that he/she was trying to make a purchase in the Furman Dining Hall mini-market that came to a total of \$100.20, exceeding the \$100 limit. He/she proceeded to explain that someone from Dining Services refused to allow him/her to make the complete purchase, making a mountain out of a molehill all for a grand total of 20 cents extra. Another

*SEE CAF CARD, CONTINUED ON
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Is Judaism Really That Simple?



By Brian Chernigoff

As I continue my journey in my first year here at YU, I continue to look back to my year spent studying in yeshiva in Israel for inspiration and hope. I do not believe that it is an overstatement to say that this applies to most, or nearly all, of the students here at YU. While life seems to continue normally here, something is different. Something has changed post-Israel.

While it is wonderful to recall the experiences that we had in Israel - what we learned, how we matured, and the blast that we had - what is often not discussed are the challenges one faces upon returning home after a year or two of study. The issue that I would like to discuss was raised by the articles "When 'Chosen' Becomes Racist" and "Extremism: Thoughts From a Religious Zionist in YU" in the February 19 issue of The Commentator. These articles spoke about the development of attitudes within our community typically associated with right-wing Orthodox Judaism. In writing this article, I intend to explain the development of such attitudes within our community and the challenges faced by those who adopt them. By doing so, I hope to demonstrate that the development of a proper *hashkafa*, or religious outlook, is very complex.

Based on personal experience, as well as many conversations with friends, various educators, and *rabbanim*, I have to come to understand that the sad reality I am about to recount to you is not an anomaly, but rather quite ubiquitous within the Modern Orthodox community here in America. The truth is, that while we may wear our *Torah U-Madda* t-shirts, enjoy a nice round of "Ki Mitzion Teitzeih Torah" on Yom Ha'atzmaut, and dance with the Torah on Simchat Torah, sincere regard for Torah study is severely lacking in our communities.

In the typical Modern Orthodox home, Shabbos table discussions will primarily revolve around mundane matters. If parents have high school aged children, the discussion will mostly focus on academics, summer internships, college plans, and future career paths. Little time is spent speaking about the *parsha* or other Torah related subjects. When children want to raise an interesting Torah question or thought, they are often met with snores and their parents' sudden need to use the bathroom. Parents will give their children severe rebuke for poor performance in secular subjects but will simply shrug when they hear of similar performance in Judaic subjects. Parents will tell all their friends about how proud they are that their son has excelled in his secular subjects, but will view excellence in Judaic subjects as insignificant. Thus, many parents are unknowingly raising their children in a way that will leave them apathetic towards Torah study.

Unfortunately, because of this apathetic attitude towards Torah study, the Torah education in our high schools is not quite where it should be. Students lack both the skills and the motivation to gain them to study Torah seriously. While *rebbeim* in our high schools may be top notch educators, the overall indifference to the study of Torah that exists is making their jobs extremely difficult. If the message that students are getting from their parents is that the only thing that really matters is whether or not they get into an Ivy League college, how can we possibly expect them to take their Judaic studies seriously?

Going back forty years, it was very rare to hear of someone who would pack up his belongings and head to Israel to learn in yeshiva. Only a very serious and motivated student would embark on such a journey. Thus, the yeshivas that took American students thrived and successfully produced many *bnei Torah*, many of whom became *rabbanim* and educated laymen. However, as the years passed, the idea of studying in Israel became more widespread and normative within our community, exploding in the last couple of decades. The average onlooker would probably look at this as a positive development and see this as a strengthening of religious practice. However, I have understood from

experience that this development has created other problems. As studying in Israel became more of a norm in our community, the "senioritis" mentality also grew within high school students. People often speak about how such a mentality has negatively affected students academically. However, what people do not speak about, is what this has done to students religiously. What respect and seriousness students do have for Judaic studies and religious pursuits is discarded for a year of fun and excitement. Students expect that they will "frum out" and get back into it in Israel. Many high school *rebbeim*, fed up with this mentality, eventually despair of properly teaching their students. At that point, they stop taking their job as teachers seriously and simply hope that the *rebbeim* in Israel will work their magic and steer their students onto the right path. Such a development has negatively impacted the younger grades as well, as it is the senior class which has the power to influence the overall tone and attitude of the school.

It is within this context that the average Modern Orthodox person now enters yeshiva in Israel. Many yeshivas catered to American students nowadays have lowered their standards to about absolute zero, expecting that the average student they get will lack both the skills and motivation to independently pursue Torah study, especially Gemara. It is their job to first motivate students to want to learn, and then to teach them how to learn by building them from the ground up.

"WHILE WE STUDY HERE IN YU, IT IS CRUCIAL TO NEVER FORGET THE IMPORTANCE OF CRITICAL THOUGHT IN ALL AREAS OF LIFE, ESPECIALLY RELIGIOUS ONES."

At some point, many students will begin to take their Judaic studies and overall dedication to an observant lifestyle much more seriously. As a result of this, many students begin to look back to their pre-Israel lifestyle in a very negative way. This leads them to cast aspersions upon the religious sincerity of their parents and overall community. They then reject many of the beliefs and practices of their communities and adopt more radical views, ones that they believe to be representative of true Torah values.

However, upon returning to YU, such people will face complexity. They will encounter people who appear to be deeply rooted and connected to Torah yet still hold onto what they perceive to be flawed beliefs of the Modern Orthodox community. These people will then be stripped from their comfort zones and realize that the world is not as simple as they had previously thought it to be. Although YU is an Orthodox institution and the majority of its students are Orthodox, uniformity of religious thought is certainly nonexistent. Students here in YU constantly discuss and debate various religious issues pertinent to our community. If someone has simplistic views on religious issues, he will quickly realize that such issues are not as simple as he has made them out to be. He will be introduced to viewpoints that he had considered to be incompatible with Torah values. He will be forced to think about ideas that he would have otherwise not thought about deeply had he not come to YU.

While we study here in YU, it is crucial to never forget the importance of critical thought in all areas of life, especially religious ones. Studying in YU truly affords a fantastic opportunity to engage in such critical thought, as we have so many different kinds of people to discuss it with. My advice to you, my fellow students, is to not let such an opportunity slip through your fingers. Sit down with someone a little different than you and engage in a calm but serious discussion about religious issues. Speak your opinion, don't be shy, but don't be deaf to your fellow's point of view. Think. Analyze. Don't take things for granted. Only then can we develop into thinking and mindful religious individuals.

Holier Than Thou: How the Mystification of the State of Israel Alienates Its Free-Thinkers

By Aryeh Schonbrun

I write to you during a bittersweet season of the Jewish calendar. Jews have traditionally regarded (some of) these 49 days between Pesach and Shavuot as days of mourning and introspection. We commemorate the 24,000 students of R' Akiva killed by plague/war and the countless Jews who were pillaged and murdered by the Crusaders, en-route to pillage and murder many more in Jerusalem. These days were not held in high esteem by the rabbinical consensus, and, owing to their lugubrious and painful nature, Jews worldwide have adopted traditions of mourning and commemoration in memory of the destruction. However, many of us do not approach Lag Ba'omer, the traditional day marking the cessation of mourning, fully-bearded and downtrodden. Little did the ancient rabbis know that these days of mourning would get a makeover. From sadness to glee, from despondency to pride, we experienced the transition from the exile to the beginnings of our redemption *davka* in these dreadful months (through

Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim).

We stand at the crossroads of history: The painful exile that we must remember, and the sprouting of the redemption, over which we should rejoice. This contradiction takes form not only in the superficial layout of the calendar; the coincidence just highlights the sociological, philosophical, and theological tension we all sense regarding the nature of our redemption. I will attempt to analyze the phenomenon in a holistic manner, with a focus on the divine.

Pre-*yishuv* (sometime in the early 20th century), when Israel was in Edom's land, the Jewish soul had not begun to wrench itself from its gentile home and strive homewards. Jewry, populous and (fairly) secure, found itself quite comfortable in its newfound patria. We established prosperous communities in the West, devout *kehilot* in the East, and we had the entirety of the Americas to explore. On the eve of WWII, a small minority of Jews had taken up residence in British Palestine, hampered by the majority's unwillingness to uproot themselves and the

anti-Semitic policies directed against us by those reigning British officials (à la "White Paper"). The Holocaust, a great equalizing force, destroyed our complacency, and instigated monumental reform. The Jew, along with his identity, suffered a fearsome blow, one from which we still have not fully recovered.

The factor that allowed the Holocaust's universal destruction to come to fruition, ironically, traces back to simpler times. Before the Modern era, Judaism and Jewry meant the same thing. One who did not practice became as non-Jewish as *halakhically* possible, while the non-Jewish convert became integrated quickly into the Jewish community. When Modernity struck, things began to get messy. Many individuals started to search for themselves outside the fold of the orthodox communities, but failed to find themselves welcomed by their gentile compatriots. Owing to natural xenophobia, or simply to enduring

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**MYSTIFICATION,
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24**

cultural differences, Jews found themselves time and again rejected by the 'enlightened' races of Europe. As a result, and in an attempt to extract itself from the confines of a separate identity, Jewry began to redefine itself in broader terms. Universalism supplanted particularism in our attitudes, and we began to adopt more-liberal social practices. Inspired intellectualism replaced the rigid scholasticism of the dogmatic Middle-Ages, Chassidut found a great following promulgating universal, subjective truths, and some communities even heralded the opening of general society (in the West) to their liberal-minded, Enlightened offspring. What remained, however, played into the hands of our enemies.

We could not, however much we tried, sever our ties to our brethren, and we could not completely eliminate our longing for autonomy, religious or political. This pre-modern holdover, the identification of Jew with Judaism, imprinted upon all of European Jewry the mark of Jacob, and collectivized our political condition. The Holocaust, so aggressively barbaric in its nature, regressed to the pre-enlightenment definition of Judaism, one which equated belief and community, man and his people.

When, in the wake of destruction, an autonomous Jewish state was finally established, it not only marked a departure from both the futile attempts at the dissolution of a common, national identity (the world would not have it), it also reignited the flame of nationalism. The shared trauma of the Holocaust and the ingathering of a bruised *Jewish* identity clashed head-on with the intent of the founders of Israel to construct a secular *Israeli* identity, devoid of the *Judaism* of the exile. As one might have expected, this tension between old and new, ancient and modern, did not resolve itself naturally. We continue to feel confused and torn between two aspects of ourselves. Am I Israeli or Jewish, or, as it might seem fitting, American?

This tension takes its form in the two identities that civilized Man assumes: Adam I, the majestic, powerful, proud, and independent creature of nature, and Adam II, the introspective, lonely, and thus communally-inclined servant of God. Additionally, Adam the private, conflicted, subdued, and limited, and Adam the collective, selfless, and idealistic. The contradiction between one's secular, materialistic needs, and the soul's quest for self-fulfillment poses the ultimate question for all who roam the earth, however, the Jew sees it in more detail. Shall I see myself as a divine creation, subject to the will of God and part of a glorious nation, or rather a mere individual

sustenance, culture, and society, but she also serves a higher purpose: She is the rallying cry of Jews and others world-wide, serving as the center of our religious experience.

In desire of synthesis, we have attempted to subsume the dual functions of the Jewish nation under one formal entity, the State of Israel. The tension present in our individual psyches as a result of our conflicting identities comes to the fore in our relationship vis-à-vis the Jewish State. What can we expect from her? What if she fails to realize our religious or material desires? Should that impact her standing? How much should we criticize or defend her policies? Whom do we hold accountable for her failings? The Nation? God? Ourselves?



Meanwhile, the spiritual component of *Ahavat Ha'aretz* and respect for the new State of Israel gets much attention in our communities. We have come to cherish the Karlebach-infused euphoric *Hallel* ceremony as much as we might appreciate potato latkes. We bless the State, love her, and many are even willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for her well-being. On Yom Hazikaron, I wandered through the maze of graves at Har Herzl, a monument to the great *mesiras nefesh* of those brave fighters. We declare their memories a tribute to their great selflessness that maintained our dream of Israel. All Israelis recite the '*El Male Rachamim*' prayer, inserting addenda denoting the divine purpose of the fallen lives. On Yom Ha'atzmaut, much of the country presides over the ceremonious unification of the Twelve Tribes, where dignitaries light the torches of Jewish brotherhood. '*Hatikvah*' is sung patriotically.

“INSTEAD OF TRYING TO DETERMINE HOW A FUTURE REDEMPTIVE STATE SHOULD LOOK OR WHAT WE SHOULD DO IN ORDER TO ATTAIN THE FULL REDEMPTION, WE SIT BACK, BLESS THE STATE, AND FAIL TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR FUTURE.”

in a vast sea of humanity, a private, exiled citizen? Shall I strive to beautify God's world and work to fix it, or should I maintain my own security and my own interests as a responsible adult?

Many have discussed these questions at length, and for that reason I must confine my argument to its specific application as regards the nascent State of Israel. Israel similarly is cleaved in two separate directions. She safeguards our material welfare, providing defense,

The great Zionist rabbis of the past generation and their *talmidim* make it quite clear that we must thank the Lord for His beneficence. They invoke passages from the Prophets, emphasizing the redemptive nature of today's reality and, in so doing, aim to increase our awareness of God's greatness. *Hodu laHashem ki tov!* We dance and sing in the mountains of Judea as we rejoice in our fate of not having been born 'exiled Jews.' Society at-large also endorses the redemptive narrative, among other

fundamentalist beliefs.

I, too, feel satisfaction that I was not born back then. The State of Israel and penicillin have done wonders for the modern Jew, but I still don't share my friends' all-too-rosy view of reality. The dogmatic adoration for Israel, as espoused by our leaders (religious and secular alike) strikes me as self-serving. Of course, Mssr. Netanyahu will give you a positive report. Per Bibi, the economy surges ahead, we are strong and secure! But, did you honestly expect him to get up and describe our *real* problems?! Why would he do that? Instead, as a result of pure manipulation, and on account of our leaders' inability to conceive of a more just, humane society, we are left with a speculative, unfinished, unpolished, and unholy *ideal* form of redemption.

In essence, the blind belief in Israel's redemptive qualifications reveals our inability to think freely about our future. Instead of trying to determine how a future redemptive state should look or what we should do in order to attain the full redemption, we sit back, bless the State, and fail to take responsibility for our future. We relegate the shortcomings of society/the State to a list of chores, and we procrastinate interminably. Logically, the State can't be both redemptive *and* exilic. We may call it a step forward, but should we go all-out and party like it's 1967 *every* year? From my observations, we tend to emphasize the positive, while ignoring the negative aspects. This is a dangerous course of action, as we too easily fall into a state of complacency or paralysis.

When we overemphasize the 'divine' nature of today's State of Israel, we transform the material status-quo into a spiritual devotion. The current state of affairs gets mystified and turned upside down. Instead of judging Israel by critical philosophical and religious ideals, we turn the broken, bureaucratic reality into an ideal itself! We force Providence into a well-defined box, one that serves our lower instincts of greed and immorality. The result of this corrupt application of political theology forces us into accepting reality for the divine, and indeed pushes us in the general direction of paganism. If reality is god, we must then begin to believe in the supernatural gifts and authority bestowed upon either the established mechanisms of power (state, corporations, military, courts, etc.), or semi-divine, godlike individuals. One should always maintain caution with such relationships, but we pay no heed.

Which leaves me and others like me in a bind. I do not wish to separate myself from society, but society does not offer me many satisfactory options. I critique society, call it out for its iniquities, but, owing to the mystification that we have attributed to our current state, I find myself critiquing not only society, but its gods themselves. My political argument has transformed into a theological struggle. Any view critical of the State becomes a religious *jihad* for both sides, and thus we cannot even come to the table. Society as we know it dissolves into tribalist attitudes of 'my god's holier than your god,' eliminating the chance for progress.

Instead, we should refocus on the importance of both basic and complex social interaction, and thereby identify the aspects of our social realities that need fixing. Though we may not agree on matters of theology, we may yet come to a common ground as it concerns ourselves, our feelings, and our wishes. Leave God out of it for a while. Upon having addressed the mundane, we may once again seek out the *true* divinity.

L'shanah haba'ah b'erushalayim habenuyah!

**CAF CARD, CONTINUED FROM
PAGE 23**

anonymous Dining Services employee also expressed that he/she had heard a story from his/her supervisor of a case on the Wilf Campus where a girl was buying food for her brother on her Caf Card and had her card confiscated and disabled as a consequence. When asked about these cases, the Beren Campus Food Services Manager said that these actions by Wilf Dining Services are unacceptable and that Dining Services "are there to serve the students, not the other way around."

Opinions on the recent crackdown on Caf Cards have also illustrated a general frustration amongst students with the "Big Brother" approach that Dining Services has been taking. One anonymous Stern student expressed her

confusion about students buying food for others when the student with excess money is present and paying with his or her own ID: "when the person whose ID it is is standing there, handing [over their] card and giv[ing] consent right there ... then it is their money and they have the right to spend it as they choose." Another student, SCW senior Chaviva Freedman, concurred with the anonymous student, but argued the issue is twofold: "While I'm glad that the Caf is trying to control [students from using other people's Caf Cards], there are some [people] who need to borrow Caf money for any number of reasons." Freedman offered a similar solution to the previous student, stating that "maybe what should be done is to have the person whose card they're going to be using next to them to prove that they aren't just stealing. That way people can have food and still be able to use other Caf Cards if necessary."

As for my opinion, I think that the Caf needs to stop cracking down on students who willingly give their Caf Cards to their peers to use their excess money that will otherwise go to waste. I must admit that I too am guilty of buying food for peers in a pinch and who are without extra Caf money. But after being told that I was being penalized for supposedly buying food for another student (who in fact had bought food for me), I am a little more reluctant to buy food again on the Wilf Campus despite having been a frequent customer. I think that these excess regulations put in place to stop Caf Card sharing are outrageous and an overreaction by Dining Services. Though I am sure that nothing will be fixed in my few short remaining weeks at Stern, I hope that something changes so the Caf daddies can live on.

A Start to Better Dialogue: Takeaways from the Recent SOY Election

By Ariel Reiner

The results of Tuesday's election for SOY President were undoubtedly surprising. Breaking with traditional results, the outsider candidate, Moshe Spirn, defeated the incumbent Vice President of SOY, Noah Marlowe, and by a respectable margin at that. While this will certainly raise concerns for certain demographics in YU, and jubilate others, I want to explain why I think this is the best possible outcome, at a critical juncture, for the YU student body.

Over the past few months there has been a serious debate about Klein @9, which serves as a good test case to indicate a larger issue at play amongst the student body. Often, people characterize rifts in YU as rifts between outlooks of those in different morning programs: YP students pitted against IBC students, and so on and so forth. But it seems clear that this is an oversimplification, if not a myth. Many of the heads of Klein @9 are YP students, and those uncomfortable with the potential changes are also within YP. Thus, to some extent this is an ideological battle being waged within the *beis medrash*. The issue is, no one seems to be talking to each other, but rather at each other at the most, or not at all at the least.

This is the backdrop on which Tuesday's election took place. I also believe that this backdrop can explain why Moshe Spirn's campaign was robust, plentiful in volunteers, and turned out results in droves. Many students have felt that the "unified voice" in favor of certain changes to the *minyán*, and the pushback against certain rabbinical decisions, were not adequately representing the diversity of the student body. No doubt, their near silence until now was, to a large extent, self-inflicted. Not being part of the discussion, albeit in a newspaper whose readership often criticizes their opinions when they do decide to write, leads to a one-sided story.

This election is an opportunity to begin a new narrative, and an encouraging one at that. In my few

years at YU, the typical joke has been that the election is one Israel *yeshiva* against another, and that the same side wins every time. It was getting so boring and expected, to the point where last year's SOY President won unopposed. This election, if nothing else, showed that there are multiple sides, and that both have a potential for involvement and dedication. Sure, some who voted did so because they were nagged to, but I also witnessed a large group of individuals participating in vibrant campaigning throughout the day, demonstrating a drive to accomplish something special.

**"THE ONLY THING WORSE THAN
POLARIZATION IS INDIFFERENCE,
AND THIS ELECTION IS A STEP AWAY
FROM INDIFFERENCE TOWARDS
ACTIVE PARTICIPATION!"**

This isn't a step forward for just the "*beis medrash* guys," as some would call them. It is important for everyone. Accomplishing goals and pushing the bar under the guise of representing the view of the large majority of the student body is not only a misrepresentation of the spread of opinions, but leads to resentment from those who are uninvolved. The illusion that these are the goals of the student body as a whole stems both from those portraying it and from those who say they care, but don't involve themselves in changing that which they deem inappropriate. Only if there are two vocal sides, expressing opinions in a cogent way, can there be real conversation.

The outcome of this election shouldn't be celebrated just by those who voted for the victor; to some degree, everyone who is concerned for YU's future should celebrate. The only thing worse than polarization is indifference, and this election is a step away from

indifference towards active participation.

How do we foster these results into the upcoming year to create a real conversation and encourage all sides to seek mutual goals? I believe there is a *sur meira* aspect as well as an *aseih tov* one. First, it is important to acknowledge common denominators. Both sides of the Klein @9 debate, and the SOY Election on a broader level, are working towards what they feel is the best way forward for Modern Orthodox Judaism. Comments on articles, for example, or articles themselves, which argue that the other side is objectively wrong categorically, or worse, attack the character of those portraying certain ideologies, do a disservice to anyone looking for a real discussion.

The second integral aspect, in my opinion, is to parallel the involvement displayed in Tuesday's election in other venues. Complaining about a certain ideology in YU gets you nowhere if you are not capable of articulating your own view in a coherent way. Many complain that the articles displayed in The Commentator that relate to ideology are one-sided. But what drives that perceived phenomenon is the same cause that has driven unopposed SOY elections: a certain level of indifference. Changing the rules on the ground involves not just clicking a name on a ballot and running away, it involves continued discussion. One way to change the makeup of published articles is to write some articles. Doing so could create a real discussion and illustrate that there is a true diversity of opinions on campus.

This election has the ability to change the nature of the discussion at YU. My assertion is undoubtedly self-critical of the demographic, with which I associate most, for a past of non-participation; and yet, I am encouraged by recent events of a potential for new engagement. While I am optimistic by the excitement towards, and commitment to, electing a President for SOY, the only way to continue having an effect is by continuing to carry a voice in the discussion on campus.



Bone Day: Reflections on Yom Ha'atzmaut

By Yehuda Greenfield

Growing up, I never heard of Yom Ha'atzmaut. It just wasn't something I was told existed. Not that my parents or community didn't love Israel. They loved it with all their hearts. They just wouldn't call it Israel. They didn't call it Palestine either. They called it "Eretz Yisro'el." Though my parents were, for all intents and purposes, Zionists, they would never refer to themselves as such. Zionism was a *treif* word in my community.

In yeshiva I learned about something called "the *Medinah*." We loved Eretz Yisro'el, but we hated "the *Medinah*." I was taught that *treife* Zionists created this *Medinah*, and that the *Medinah* was terrible because it was created by secular anti-religious people. I didn't really understand what "the *Medinah*" was, but from what I can make out, it referred to the Israeli government. I was taught to despise the name Herzl as someone who didn't care about Israel and actually wanted the Jewish state to be in Uganda. The first time I visited the Ben-Gurion Airport I was twelve years old, and I looked at the big statue of Ben-Gurion in the airport and thought to myself, "so this is the *rasha* Ben-Gurion."

In my yeshiva high school, I thought that the Israeli Zionist government hated *frum* Jews, and they tried to force *frum bochurim* like me into the army in order to make us secular. My yeshiva participated in days of *Tehillim* reading with many other yeshivos because of the

"*shverer matzav*" (harsh situation) of the government trying to force *bochurim* into the army. The first time I heard of Yom Ha'atzmaut, I was 15.

"Are you celebrating Bone Day?" a friend of mine asked in the privacy of the stairwell. He laughed at his joke, but I was confused.

"HOW LUCKY I AM THAT I GET TO BE IN YU, A YESHIVA THAT CELEBRATES MODERN ZIONISM AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL."

"What's Bone Day?"

"Yom Ha'atzmaus! Get it? *Atzamos* means bones, so it's Bone day."

He laughed at the joke he clearly heard from another *feste bochur* in yeshiva.

I was still confused. Yom Ha'atzmaus? Was this some holiday I never heard of? He explained to me that it was the day the Zionists celebrated Israel. This intrigued me. He told me that some people even say *Hallel* on that day. I was shocked to my core. To me, my religious identity was tied up to anti-Zionism. I couldn't imagine that there were *frum* Jews who said *Hallel* for a Zionist holiday. Religious Zionism as a concept was foreign to me.

My views have shifted radically since then, as I grew

dissatisfied with the closed insular approach of the yeshiva world. This past Yom Ha'atzmaut was my third on which I said *Hallel*. On the night of Yom Ha'atzmaut, I danced with my friends and an Israeli flag into the wee hours of the morning. I rejoiced on Israel's 70th birthday, surrounded by my friends, my *rebbeim*, and even the president of my institution. How lucky I am that I get to be in YU, a yeshiva that celebrates modern Zionism and the State of Israel. In YU, I can proudly thank Hashem for the greatest miracle He has wrought for us, returning us to our holy land. I am infinitely happy to be in a yeshiva that calls itself religious Zionist, and doesn't reject the State of Israel simply because it was started by secularists. On the contrary, we support Israel, and encourage students to make *Aliyah* and serve in the Israeli army.

I think many people take YU for granted and don't realize how unique it is. YU is one of the only *batei midrash* in America that proudly supports Israel and observes Yom Ha'atzmaut with our unique religious spirit. It's one of the only places where I can dance with an Israeli flag and celebrate the miracle of our modern state, the same way I'd dance with a Torah and celebrate our religious heritage. We must continue, as a people and an institution, to proudly carry our *gemara/tanach* in one hand, while holding up an Israeli flag with the other. Perhaps, in this way, we can convince the rest of *Am Yisro'el* to do the same.





Why We Don't Study Abroad

By Jacob Stone

Two months ago I realized why most Yeshiva University students don't study abroad. At the time, I was celebrating Purim in Shanghai. For my Purim *seudah*, I had invited my closest friends (both Jewish and non-Jewish) to share a meal of mac and cheese and wine with me. After briefly explaining the cultural significance of Purim to them, I leaned back and enjoyed their company.

The previous Purim, I had eaten my *seudah* in YU's Heights Lounge with ten friends, all of whom were Orthodox Jews, all of whom studied for at least a year in Israel before coming to YU, and all of whom were male. This Purim, I observed, I was eating my *seudah* on the 17th floor of an apartment high-rise in Shanghai with seven friends who represented five different nationalities, three different religions, and two different genders. The difference between this year and last year was amazing, almost absurd. I was struck then by how much my life had changed because of my decision to study abroad.

At YU, we are insulated from the diversity of New York City and the world by the means of carefully erected boundaries that were put in place to preserve the religious integrity of our school. In this article, I do not intend to argue, as so many others have, about when and where those boundaries should be placed. Those boundaries include our school's unwillingness to host speakers and support clubs who conflict with the ideological goals of the school,

the separation of the Beren and Wilf campuses, and the general lack of students on campus who are not Orthodox Jews. Those boundaries will always exist. For those who want to discover the wondrous diversity of opinion and experience that this world offers, the best solution is not to push helplessly against those boundaries.

It is to take a step, however brief, outside of them.

Studying abroad not only provides YU students with the opportunity to meet people from other universities across the world, but also gives them the opportunity to immerse themselves in a new and unfamiliar culture. I chose to study abroad in China, specifically, because it is a nation with a culture vastly unlike that of America. After four months abroad, I'm still noticing the ways that people here are different from me. I'm also still noticing the countless ways that we are fundamentally the same, no matter our nationality or religion.

But a step outside of our community's carefully constructed barriers comes at a cost. After tasting the freedom of the outside world, it is not going to be easy for me, or any other YU student who chooses to study abroad, to integrate back into our relatively homogeneous community. And that is, I think, the heart of why most YU students do not study abroad. We're not afraid of having to take the step outside. We're afraid of having to take the step back inside.

I will say, though, as a student who registered for classes on May 2nd, that the experiences that I have had

this semester are worth more to me than the safety and comfort of staying inside the YU community. I'd prefer to appreciate the things that I like about other cultures rather than only criticize the problems of our own. Studying in a country where people are not free to think what they want, say what they want, and write what they want has made me acutely aware of the negative effects of remaining unexposed to other opinions. No good can come of staying inside our own barriers merely because we are afraid of what we might find out about ourselves on the other side.

I therefore encourage all YU students to seriously consider the possibility of studying abroad. While it is an uncustomary decision, John Stuart Mill defended such decisions in *On Liberty* by claiming, "Customs are made for customary circumstances and customary characters; and his circumstances or character may be uncustomary." In my semester abroad, I realized just how uncustomary we all are.

Finally, I would like to extend an offer of support and guidance to any YU students who are considering taking a semester abroad. Just the knowledge that there are YU students who have done it, like I learned from a Commentator article earlier this year, should be enough to inspire hope in anyone who is considering studying abroad. It can be done, and I know now from personal experience that it is worth it.

How to Succeed: An Entrepreneurship Society Event

By Aaron Karesh

On April 24, the YU Entrepreneurship Society hosted an event where they brought in professionals from three different fields — real estate, equity research, and venture capital. Jordan Sloan is the Chairman and CEO of Harbor Group International, a real estate investment firm with about \$7.3 billion worth of assets. A Managing Director at Barclays, Joseph Wolf works in the company's equity research division analyzing technology stocks. Mickey Klein is the Director of Brooklyn Brands, which owns the company that produces kosher babka that is sold at major grocery chains such as Trader Joe's. These three executives were brought in to discuss their respective businesses and to give advice to students aspiring to achieve success in whatever field they choose.

Yonah Hiller, the President of the Society, moderated the panel, and began by asking what drove the men to succeed in their respective industries. Klein began by explaining that for himself and his partners, the focus was two-fold: "What always drove my partners and me was finding interesting businesses where we liked both the products and the finances." This point forced attendees to take a step back and recognize that while profit is of utmost importance, it is just as necessary to have a love and passion for what you do.

Sloan's message was quite different, emphasizing his affinity for problem solving. He explained that every single day he's presented with 200 new challenges that he could have never seen coming, and it is his job to address them either personally or by delegating responsibilities to his nearly 850 employees around the world. With offices in the United Kingdom and Israel, Sloan is an early riser, and he makes it his mission to learn something new everyday. "If you're not learning something new every single day," he said, "you're doing something wrong."

As an equity research analyst and former engineer, Wolf's mission is driven by finding out what makes the companies he covers and the people he manages tick — why do they do what they do? Whether it's speaking to executives of a technology company or addressing employee needs, Wolf places a heavy emphasis on adaptation: "I was a tech analyst during the tech bubble in the early 2000's, and there wasn't a single day in the office that was anything like the last one. One morning I was in the office and the markets were sky-high, and the next morning I came in and the markets were in shambles. Being able to adapt to changing situations has been a large factor in getting me to where I am today."

On that note, Hiller asked the panelists to define success. As aspiring professionals, we often view success as making a lot of money, living in a nice house, taking extravagant vacations, and driving a luxurious car; the panelists explained that while those things are nice byproducts of succeeding in the corporate world, those things are not the most important. Across the board, they spoke about how important it is to find activities and hobbies they enjoy outside of the office, and stressed how valuable spending time with loved one's is. Whether it's Wolf's cooking for his kids or *leining* in *shul*, Sloan's spending time with family or learning with his various *chavrutas*, or Klein's golfing and whisky-drinking, each and every panelist has a clear hobby — a venture, if you will — that they pursue and enjoy in addition to their work. While work is literally life for many young professionals, it is always important to find time for yourself and for others, because as Sloan iterated, being a businessperson can lead to having a very selfish mindset and it is crucial to remember how important it is to make a positive difference in others' lives: "I don't want to live any day without having done something good for someone else, be it in business or my personal life." This sentiment is one that all YU students should make an effort to instill in their daily lives, especially as we get caught up in the stress and competition of finding a job.

Hiller then shifted the conversation toward the topic of reputation, and to the importance of having a *shem tov* — a good name — in the business world. Sloan explained that from the founding of Harbor Group in 1985, he has placed an extreme emphasis in conducting himself in a manner that would reflect well on himself, his company,

and the Jewish people at large. Wolf complimented that by sharing a line a former colleague of his once told him.

"BEING A BUSINESSPERSON CAN LEAD TO HAVING A VERY SELFISH MINDSET AND IT IS CRUCIAL TO REMEMBER HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE IN OTHERS' LIVES."

"As an equity researcher," he said, "the object of the job is to be right with humility and wrong with integrity," and while he specified his own profession, this is true across the board. Klein played off of Wolf's approach to business by explaining that despite having invested in companies

that ultimately led to losses for his investors, they still came back and invested with him because of the *shem tov* he had managed to maintain. At the same time, though, he recognized the reality in which we live — the reality that has all of us competing against one another for the same few jobs at the same few firms: "As you get into the world of finance, real estate, or whatever career path you wish to pursue, with everyone jockeying for the same position, it's important to stay true to yourself, but at the same time, learn how to play chess and navigate the waters."

At the end of the day, whatever career path we decide to choose, it is important to recognize the following principle — a principle that the panelists all emphasized and live their lives by: While success comes in many shapes and sizes, one must realize that family is of utmost importance, and that the ultimate success in a world that is full of people trying to one-up each other is having a *shem tov*.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP SOCIETY

TUESDAY, APRIL 24TH 6:45 PM

BELFER HALL #430

JORDAN SLOAN: CHAIRMAN & CEO OF HARBOR GROUP

JOSEPH WOLF: MANAGING DIRECTOR AT BARCLAYS

MICKEY KLEIN: DIRECTOR OF BROOKLYN BRANDS



The Art of Persuasion in Business

By Daniel Ferber

Aesop once famously stated that “Persuasion is more effectual than force.” *The Necessary Art Of Persuasion*, a *Harvard Business Review* article written by Jay Conger sheds light on Aesop’s stress on the power of persuasion and why it is the most vital component in conveying an idea. First, he breaks down persuasion into the following four elements: establishing credibility, framing goals in a way that relates to an audience, reinforcing ideas using compelling evidence, and connecting emotionally to an audience. He then states that these elements become effectively persuasive only when all four are incorporated in an idea, argument, or work. The book *Rework* by Jason Fried and David Hannson is a great example of how these elements of persuasion can be used to measure a work’s degree of success.

Fried and Hannson wrote *Rework* to utilize their past experiences in starting an internet company as a frame of reference to delineate the methodologies in achieving a “better, faster, and easier way to succeed in business”. It is a book attempting to reshape the traditional views of starting a business. The core idea is that in order to start a business you need less than you think. Hannson and Fried unpack this through explaining why plans can be harmful, how productivity isn’t a result of working long hours, and why hiring and seeking investors should be an absolute last resort. They title their chapters as such, “screw big corporate marketing”, “Don’t let long hours and meetings prevail, they actually hurt productivity”, and “Go to Sleep”. These titles are followed by 1-5 paragraphs of unpacking before moving on to the next, usually, unrelated chapter.

The first element of persuasion that Jay Conger mentions is establishing credibility. Conger states that credibility stems from individual expertise and it results in having trust in an individual’s perspective. In Hannson and Fried’s preface to their book they very clearly establish their credibility with their opening words, “We have something to say about building, running, and growing a business. This book isn’t built on academic theories; it’s built on our experience.” They then go on to discuss

the success of their business through two recessions, one burst bubble, and multiple business model shifts. Through establishing their credibility, they enable the reader to approach their story and advice with trust.

Once their credibility was proven, the next step that Hannson and Fried had to take was to shift their focus towards framing their goals in a manner that relates to their audience. Jay Conger illuminates what this element of persuasion entails through the following example: the fastest way for a parent to convince a child to come to the grocery store with them is to point out that there will be lollipops by the cash register. While not enticed by the supermarket, the child was persuaded by a focus on the benefits rather than the errand itself.

“THE DEGREE TO WHICH THEY FAILED TO INCORPORATE THOSE ELEMENTS, LED REWORK TO BE, ON A MACRO-SCALE, AN UNSUCCESSFUL AND UNPERSUASIVE WORK.”

Fried and Hannson successfully frame their ideas in a manner that resonates with the reader. For example, they state—“Forget long hours and meetings, they hurt productivity”. They then discuss in three paragraphs why this is beneficial for one in the process of starting their own business. Just like a parent persuading their child to come to the grocery store because there are candies there, Fried and Hannson persuade the reader to buy into their ideas by pointing out several benefits of their ideas. They know that their readers want to succeed in business, and through conveying the advantages of “forgetting long hours”, the readers can easily resonate.

While Fried and Hannson successfully incorporate the first two elements into *Rework*, they fail in integrating the third and fourth together. Beginning with the third element; reinforcing their positions with compelling evidence and vivid language, Conger described this

element as quantitative evidence supplemented with metaphors and analogies to make their credibility and position come into fruition. However, *Rework*’s format makes this nearly impossible. Each chapter consists of a topic followed by approximately three paragraphs stating the advantages, while lacking empirical data and stories. For example, one topic stated, “Meetings are toxic”. This was followed by the logic of “Meetings procreate, one meeting leads to another meeting leads to another. When you think about it, the true cost of meetings is staggering”. The chapter ends there and moves onto the next. While this notion may be true, the position is shallow in that it isn’t backed by quantitative data and supplemented by vivid language. *Rework* lacks this depth in each and every chapter, which causes even its truthful statements to be unpersuasive.

The manner in which Hannson and Fried formatted the book also makes it nearly impossible for them to emotionally connect to their audience. Subsequent to their introduction, they fail to tie their hardships, successes, and on a macro-scale, their journeys, into their business principles. With a focus on Hannson and Fried’s experiences, *Rework*’s principles could have further engaged the reader through an emotional attachment to their overarching story. With only three paragraphs a chapter before moving on to an unrelated topic, there is a failure in conveying a sense of emotion within the book, which causes a disconnect between the author and reader. There is no theme, no engaging stories, and no spotlight on Hannson and Fried, all of which should be vital in persuading the reader to put their principles into practice.

Through the lens of the HBR article, in order to successfully persuade an idea, all four elements of persuasion must be vibrantly on display. While Fried and Hannson successfully established their credibility and identified common ground with their audience, they were unsuccessful in reinforcing their position using vivid language and compelling evidence and connecting emotionally with their audience. The degree in which they failed to incorporate those elements, led *Rework* to be, on a macro-scale, an unsuccessful and unpersuasive work.

“IGNORE THIS BOOK AT YOUR OWN PERIL.” —SETH GODIN

REWORK

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

HELLO
my name is

INTERN

You've Landed that Summer Internship...Now What?

By Sarah Torgueman

It is an incredibly exciting time; the April snow is gone, students are pushing through exams, and everyone is eager for the break to begin. Summer internships are around the corner and should definitely be what to look forward to. Whether you'll be embarking on your first real work experience, narrowing down your career path, or trying to catapult your career forward, these opportunities can be extraordinarily valuable. We have compiled a list of things to do to maximize your internship this summer from the day you walk in that door on your very first day.

1) Reach out.

Make sure to contact the company or your supervisor in advance. Find out the company's dress code and if you should bring any identification or documents (such as your Social Security card for compensation) with you on the first day. It's definitely a plus if you inquire about what they may advise you to familiarize yourself with before you come in.

2) Research. And do it well.

Don't just Google-search. Learn the industry you'll be working in. Speak to people in your field and especially to those you know who have had your position in the past.

3) Familiarize yourself with the company.

Make sure to know the company's website address, the roles of top management, recent publications and press

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releases, and most importantly, the business it operates in.

4) Google yourself.

Think about it. Your new employers will most probably (if not already) look you up on Google. Make sure they'll like what they see or double-check your privacy settings.

5) Remember people's names.

Write them down. From the security guard in the lobby and secretary at the front desk to your supervisors and division heads, learn their names. It shows how attentive you really are. Plus, people absolutely love to hear their own names aloud.

6) Learn quickly.

Keep the company's goal in sight. You are there to contribute to their team, not only for your own experience and certainly not only for your resume. Learn the company's processes as quickly and effectively as you can. (This is where speaking to people who have had your

position in the past comes in. Know what to expect.) You'll be making everyone's jobs much easier by catching up quickly. Pro tip: bring a legal pad.

7) Whatever you are, be a good one.

Don't allow that excitement and willingness to learn fade no matter what. Keep the momentum, show commitment to even the most tedious of tasks, and motivate yourself. Maybe you'll even remind them why they started working there to begin with!

8) Create lasting relationships and don't forget to speak up!

Wherever you work, you'll be meeting new people, young and old. Ask questions. Whether they be about career paths or past schooling, people definitely have what to teach. Additionally, keep in mind that you're still the new guy. Speak up and ask questions to avoid making otherwise avoidable errors.

9) Document your summer.

The days will pass by and you might forget exactly what you've worked on, the places you've gone, and the people you've met. At the end of each day, whether that be on your commute home or before you head out for the night with some friends, document exactly what you've done while it's still fresh. Looking back, it will make all the difference when it comes to the impact you've made, which supervisors can include in a letter of recommendation, and updates to your resume.

The Resurgence of Special Purpose Acquisition Companies

By Daniel Elias

Special purpose acquisition companies (SPACs), also known as “cash shells” or “blank check” companies, have once again become extremely popular on Wall Street. The New York Stock Exchange has recently started to accommodate blank check companies, while NASDAQ listed its 100th SPAC IPO in February 2018.

Before I continue with the recent resurgence in SPACs, allow me to provide some background. A SPAC is very similar to a reverse merger. Its management team may focus on a specific industry or take a more generic approach when selecting prospective companies. SPACs are created to raise money through an IPO in hopes of completing an acquisition of private operating companies. Led by experienced investors or management teams, a SPAC is formed when its founders invest initial capital; the founders of the SPAC then sell its shares for nominal value. The money raised through the IPO is initially held in escrow and can only be used to fund the purchase of an operating company. The IPO consists of units, composed of shares and warrants. At this time, the SPAC has no tangible assets on its balance sheet. In a case where a SPAC fails to complete an acquisition by a specific deadline (typically 1-2 years), it is forced to return its funds to its investors.

The more than two-decade old investment strategy experienced a recent surge since its high in 2007 when SPACs accounted for over 21% of all IPOs. Stronger market conditions since the 2016 US Presidential Election have paved the way for new fundraisers in equity markets. Today, Wall Street is witnessing a newfound interest in using SPACs to bring private companies public. In 2017 alone, 34 different SPACs were listed on a US stock exchange, raising close to \$10 billion in their IPO's, the most since before the financial crisis. While many SPACs specialize in certain industries such as oil, gas, and

technology, others use different strategies to uncover what they hope to be the next big company.

The volatile method of acquiring companies through SPACs started in the 1990s and since then, has experienced years of growth and decline.

your SPAC pursues an acquisition. In addition, you may run into different resale restrictions which arise when dealing with illiquid, over the counter companies.

While investing in a SPAC definitely has its risks, there are many benefits that come along with your investment.

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A few notable companies that were acquired through SPACs are Jamba Juice, which was acquired by Services Acquisition Corporation for \$265 million, and American Apparel which was acquired by Endeavor Acquisition for \$385 million.

In 2011, Bill Ackman, founder and CEO of Pershing Square Capital Management, invested \$500 million in a SPAC which eventually brought Burger King public. Other prominent hedge funds that have invested in blank check companies are Apollo Management, lead by Leon Black, and AQR Capital Management lead by Cliff Asness.

In fact, AQR recently invested in six different SPACs, disclosing a 6.27% stake in Tiberius Acquisition Corporation, a blank check company who recently IPO'd at \$150 Million. AQR's Diversified Arbitrage Fund, led by Ronen Israel, uses a Sub-Adviser to allocate their assets via different alternative investment strategies, in order to maximize their returns.

The fund summary mentions some of the risks involved with investing in a SPAC. One main risk is the potential for extreme volatility, depending on what industry or region

SPACs can be extremely useful for companies that are not able to execute a normal IPO. Companies interested in going public that are small or do not have any future growth, may not be in an attractive position to execute a successful IPO. When the IPO process becomes too difficult for companies in more difficult situations, they can look to get acquired by a SPAC that is already public. In addition, going public through SPACs allows you to avoid the hefty bank fees and underwriting discounts required in a normal IPO. When a SPAC merges with its target company, the process for the target is much less dependent on current market conditions and allows for a quicker route to the public market.

As private equity firms and hedge funds continue to invest in SPACs and interest rates continue to increase only marginally, I believe that SPACs will continue its popularity and experience an even-greater increase throughout the rest of 2018. Then again, no one knows what the future holds, so keep that in mind before you invest SPACs to understand all of the risks.

