

THE COMMENTATOR

The Independent Student Newspaper of Yeshiva University

VOL. LXXXVII

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2021

ISSUE NO. 4

YU Clarifies Fans Can Attend Women's Basketball Games After Team Was Told They Were Banned Due to 'Orthodox Law'

By SRULI FRUCHTER

This article was published online on Nov. 2

Spectators will be allowed to attend YU's women's basketball team games, a YU spokesperson told The Commentator, one day after the women's team was told that, due to "orthodox law," fans could not attend their games.

On Monday, Nov. 1, Athletics Director Gregory Fox emailed Associate Athletics Director Carly Moss and Head Women Basketball Coach William Zatulskis that he had met with Rabbi Yosef Kalinsky, dean of men's Undergraduate Torah Studies. "At this point," Fox wrote, "we are still not allowed to have spectators at our women's basketball games — the primary reason being orthodox law."

The concern likely arose from halachic considerations of women's modesty, as team members can dress in shorts, sweatpants or jerseys. Women are permitted to play in skirts and long sleeves if they would like, according to YU's student-athlete handbook.

"Worst case," Fox wrote, "I'll try to convince [Rabbi Kalinsky] to allow parents to attend and [players] on each team can provide a pass list. But even with that, I'm not sure it will fly." The email thread was forwarded by

Zatulskis to basketball team players.

When the women's basketball team resumed practice last year in November 2020, the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020, the team began holding practices and home games in the Max Stern Athletic Center (MSAC) on Wilf Campus. Last season, games did not have spectators because of COVID-19 safety. Before then, practices and home games took place in Baruch College, about 10 blocks from Beren Campus, where male and female spectators were allowed.

"We understand there has been some confusion regarding the location of the upcoming home games for our women's basketball team."

YU Spokesperson

After The Commentator contacted the university, a spokesperson said, "We understand there has been some confusion

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The YU Maccabees women's basketball team played against Mount Saint Mary in February 2020.

YU ATHLETICS

YU Lessens COVID-19 Testing Requirements to Once Weekly, Citing Low Cases

By AVIGAIL GREENBERG

This article was published online on Nov. 10

COVID-19 testing will now be required only once a week, as opposed to the previous twice-weekly policy, the COVID Monitoring Team announced in an email sent on Nov. 10. The policy will begin Thursday, Nov. 11.

This announcement comes after several weeks of low COVID-19 numbers on both the Wilf and Beren campuses. Last week, there was only one positive result on the Wilf Campus and three on Beren Campus, reflecting a downward trend. The week prior, there were two cases on Wilf and six on Beren.

"I'm glad that YU has seen that the COVID cases have gone down recently and have acted accordingly," said Nissim Cantor (YC '23). "I trust YU's ability to make judgment calls when necessary and think they've been doing a good job so far."

YU will continue to offer on-campus testing twice a week on both campuses, though students will only be required to get one PCR test a week. Testing options will now take place on Mondays and Tuesdays for the "convenience of the student body," as

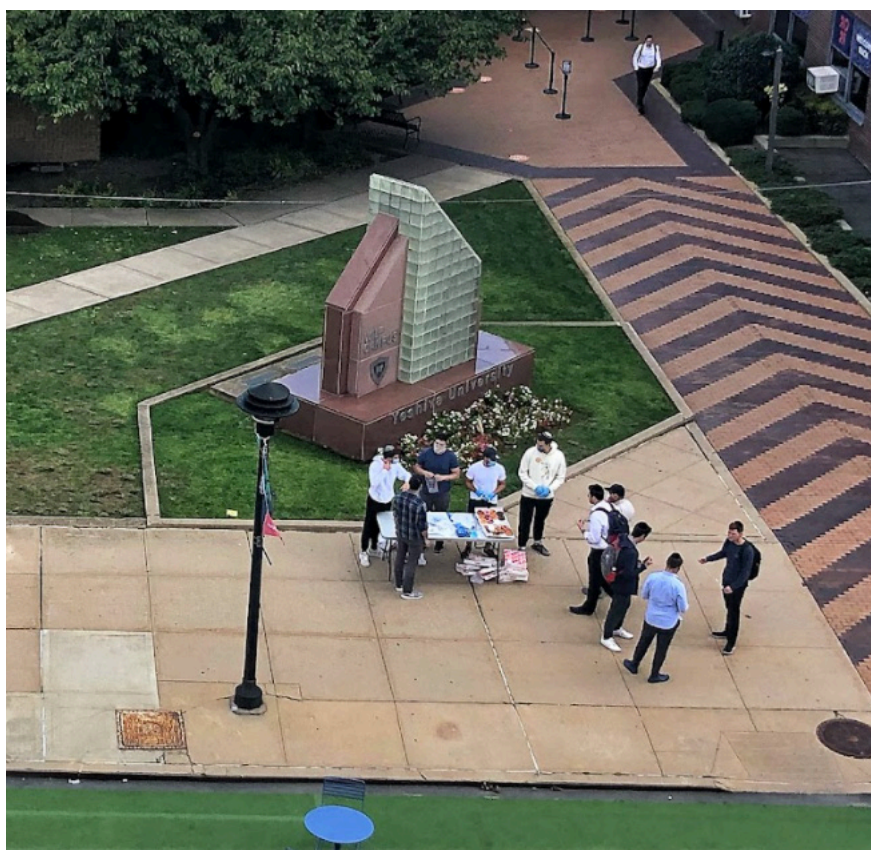
testing at non-YU locations will only be accepted under "unusual" circumstances that must be approved by the Student COVID Line. Faculty and staff will continue to be randomly tested, the email noted.

Going forward, testing for Beren Campus will be held in room 501 of 215 Lexington from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and on Wilf Campus in Furst Hall room 501 from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

"It's exciting to be able to relax testing protocols in the wake of low case numbers," commented Molly Weisbrot (SCW '24). "This email is encouraging and reflective of the improvements from our diligence and cooperation as a school."

While COVID testing protocols are being eased, the indoor mask mandate remains in effect on both campuses. Currently, the mandate extends to inside all academic and administrative buildings, including cafeterias, as well as public spaces in residence halls.

In its email, the COVID Monitoring Team asked that "everyone in the YU community remain vigilant in protecting themselves and others from the virus. Together, we can continue to keep our campus safe."



Testing on the Wilf Campus

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Are YU's Five Torot Just a Gimmick? They Don't Need To Be.

By THE COMMENTATOR
EDITORIAL BOARD

If you have ever spoken to President Ari Berman, you have heard about the Five Torot. Highlighted during his 2017 investiture speech, the Five Torot are said to be Yeshiva University's "five core Torah values" — truth, life, infinite human worth, compassion and redemption, corresponding to *emet*, *chaim*, *adam*, *chesed* and *zion*, respectively. Yet, with the Five Torot's high promises, it begs the question: Are they just a gimmick?

People need not walk far in Midtown or Washington Heights to see the rainbow-colored banners spread across YU's once-naked buildings, proclaiming to be the university's "moral compass" and "guide toward a better future." Over the past weeks, about six-foot signs have popped up all around campus, including the library, residence halls and building lobbies. Just last week, Wilf Campus saw a crane plaster six solid-colored squares along the Amsterdam Avenue side of Rubin Hall, with five of them containing one of the Five Torot. This overbearing marketing makes it hard not to get cynical.

Slogans are easy. They're catchy, memorable and hardly require any commitment. The difficult part is taking the form and giving it content, and more than four years since President Berman first mentioned the Five Torot, that seems to be the struggle.

As they currently stand, the Five Torot are an abstract talking point. Notwithstanding an occasional social media advertisement by YU or a speech by President Berman, the Five Torot play no role in campus life. On the off chance someone gives these Torah values a closer thought, they are left with lingering questions: What do the Five Torot mean for the YU community? How does YU demonstrate that these are its values? Do *roshei yeshiva* even agree that these are YU's values?

We admit that questions and critiques are always the easy part of any initiative (even one four years in the

making). There are many ways for President Berman to make the Five Torot into something meaningful, but the following three are a good place to start:

*Torah Umadda
was not pioneered by
President Emeritus
Rabbi Norman Lamm
z"l overnight, and if
the Five Torot are to
be anything religiously
meaningful, they won't
be either.*

First, use them to spearhead new initiatives. Simply declaring that YU believes humanity's purpose is to "transform our world for the better and move history forward," as in *Torat Adam*, is easy to say in a vacuum and, thus, means nothing. Instead, it needs to be concretized in real-world action. Take, for example, President Berman's conversation with Sheikh Mohammad Al-Issa. That event was an opportunity to highlight such an idea, demonstrating how the university engages in interfaith work to bridge religious divides and move Jewish-Muslim relations forward. In that same vein, YU can organize rallies and advocacy trips to address critical issues, such as the Uighur genocide in Xinjiang, China, as Rabbi Yosef Blau did several years ago. Involving students, faculty and *rebbeim* can strengthen this even further.

Second, connect them to academics. Sadly, it's an open secret that *Torah Umadda* is a dying element of the YU experience. Once the hallmark of our institution, this term has become the cynic's favorite line and an idea alien to the average student's experience. With the Five Torot, however, that can change. Introducing the Five Torot into the classroom can connect academics to a more holistic Torah view. *Torat Emet*, for example, notes that people

of faith "believe the act of discovery is sacred, whether in the realm of philosophy, physics, economics or the study of the human mind." Offering seminars or programs that directly synergize discovery and sanctity can encourage students to follow suit; *Torat Emet* is just one example of this. Aside from potentially transforming students' academic experience, this approach has the added benefit of reviving *Torah Umadda*.

Third, make them religious. There are many values to be found in Torah, so selecting five to form the pillars of our institution seems a bit arbitrary. Naturally, it leaves us to wonder: What makes the Five Torot special? If they are nothing more than mere talking points for a Jewish institution, then the Five Torot don't need much depth, but if they are to be the bedrock of Yeshiva University, they must be rooted in authentic Jewish thought. Explaining and illustrating how the Five Torot are integral to religious living — such as *tefillah*, *talmud Torah* and *halakha* — cannot be overemphasized. *Torah Umadda* was not pioneered by President Emeritus Rabbi Norman Lamm z"l overnight, and if the Five Torot are to be anything religiously meaningful, they won't be either.

We still await to see what President Berman plans to do with the Five Torot. As to the question of whether the Five Torot are just a gimmick, that remains to be seen. What we do know, though, is that they don't need to be. For now, all we can do is wait for President Berman to answer the questions he posed more than four years ago: "What is Yeshiva University? What does it stand for?"

Editor's Note: For an article to be designated under the byline of "The Commentator Editorial Board," a minimum of 75% of editorial board members, including the editor in chief, are required to give their assent.

THE COMMENTATOR

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1 Macs Extend Win Streak
"Yeshiva is tough bro." You heard it on Twitter from @wiljour first.



2 Inflation. Big Up.
A different kind of "up."



3 Thanksgiving
Turkey is a state of mind.



4 Coed Shabbaton at Beren
If they tried that at Wilf ... Well, we know what happened last time ...



5 4:15 Mincha-Maariv
This is the best thing the Jewish People have gotten since the Torah.



6 Once-a-week COVID Testing
Don't tell the Faculty Council.



7 Chag HaSemikha Celebrations
The Five Torot Army has been unleashed.

7 UP 7 DOWN

50 cents for spicy mayo?!

We repeat: This will not pay back YU's debt.

1



Biden Undergoes Colonoscopy

Happy Birthday Mr. President! (For 85 minutes, it was Madam President.)

2



Elevators

The prophecy has spoken: An elevator will go "down."

3



Midterm Grind

Although there's something exciting about learning three months of economics in one night, this is still a "down."

4



Pedestrians Near Beren Campus

Beren getting heckled by YU and the pedestrians. Smh.

5



Women Violating "Orthodox Law" in Basketball

That's the sixth torah thou shalt not transgress.

6



School During Chanukah

Where is YU's Chanukah spirit?!

7



News Brief: Rabbi Sacks Center, Katz Election Results, New Chairman of YU Board of Trustees

By ADRIEL KOHANANOO

YU to Open New Leadership Center in Memory of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Yeshiva University announced the creation of the The Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks Center for Values and Leadership on Oct. 27. Founded by Terri and Andrew Herenstein in memory of Rabbi Sacks, the center will focus on transmitting his leadership values and modern-era wisdom to the next generation in classrooms and public platforms.

The announcement of the creation of the center took place on Rabbi Sack's yahrzeit. Also known as the Sacks-Herenstein Center, the center will aim to create leaders of Jewish thought and values who will go on to educate and lead in various settings, as per the university's press release.

Rabbi Sacks served as the chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth for 22 years until 2013.

He also held many professorship positions, including one at YU in 2013. Rabbi Sacks has also authored over 35 books, ranging from discussions on the Torah to the many challenges Jews face in the modern world.

"Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks uniquely exemplified and articulated Yeshiva University's worldview and mission to the broader Jewish people and the world at large," said President Ari Berman in YU's press release about the creation of the center. "While his loss left us bereft, his words and teachings continue to inspire and inform. This new center, powered by his teachings, will be dedicated to both transmitting values and educating next generations' leaders."

As of now, further information about the center is unannounced, such as when and where the center will commence.

Katz Election Results

Solly Sussman (Katz '24) was elected as

Katz School representative on Nov. 4 in a 2-1 vote in an unprecedented second fall election, after the first election was inconclusive.

Sussman was the only registered party on the ballot. The Katz representative position was part of an amendment ratified to the Wilf constitution in Dec. 2020, which stated that Katz and Makor students are not able to vote for Yeshiva Student Union (YSU) president, Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY) president, class representatives and other positions. Instead, it created positions within YSU for a Katz and Makor representative.

Ira Mitzner Replaces Moshael Straus as New Chairman of YU Board of Trustees

Ira Mitzner is taking over the chairman position on the YU Board of Trustees as former Chairman Moshael Straus completes his six-year term, becoming chairman emeritus.

As chairman of the YU Board of Trustees, Mitzner will have a bigger say on university matters and a more influential leadership role.

Mitzner first joined the board in 2007 and became the vice chairman in 2013. He was awarded an honorary degree in 2011 for being a significant YU benefactor. Mitzner helped establish many educational and outreach programs at YU, including the David Mitzner Dean of the Center for the Jewish Future and the David Mitzner Presidential Fellowship. More recent contributions include the Mitzner Master of Science in Real Estate at the Sy Syms School of Business and scholarship funding for YU Today, a university publication that recognizes significant talent among the YU community.

Additional board developments are the joining of new trustees Joseph Liberman, a former U.S. senator, and David Nagel, along with the promotion of Elliott Gibber to vice chairman.



The Rabbi Sacks center was founded by Andrew and Terri Herenstein; Ira Mitzner has been on the YU Board of Trustees since 2007.

THE COMMENTATOR

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL Continued from Front Page

regarding the location of the upcoming home games for our women's basketball team."

They said that while the team's home games were traditionally held at "a facility near Beren Campus," that location is temporarily unavailable due to COVID-19 restrictions. "We have secured an alternative facility for their upcoming home games," the spokesperson added. "Fans are invited to attend and cheer them on."

As of publication, the basketball team has not been notified by the university about this development.

According to the women's basketball schedule, the team's first game against Lehman College is a home game with no set location, and the men's basketball schedule specifies that their games will take place at MSAC. The women's volleyball team, which needs an indoor space for home games, also

has MSAC designated on their schedule.

"Our team is very excited to hear that spectators are permitted again," said Daniella Rothman (SCW '23), one of the team's three captains, when told about the correction.

"I'm very happy," Yuval Nitzan (SSSB '23), another team captain, commented. "I wish we could play at YU with fans, but it's not my decision. I appreciate everyone who made this decision, and I will invite my friends to watch us at our game this Sunday. I am very excited."

Nitzan added, "I think that the best solution for both parties is our team to play at [MSAC] with only female fans. It is very important to us to play in our home court as we have been practicing here and we love playing in a gym that says our school name."

Rothman agreed. "We would also love to

play on our home court, since we have one," she said. "There's nothing like playing on a home court and being cheered on by YU fans, but [the allowance of fans] is a move in the right direction."

Two weeks earlier, the women's volleyball team faced a similar communication regarding dress after its tri-match on Sunday, Oct. 17 against Baruch College and St. Joseph's College.

The following day, one of the Athletics staff emailed the coaches that after a few players who were "dressed inappropriately" went into the Furman Dining Hall during the tri-match, the Athletics staff needed to meet with "a few key Rabbi administrators" to ensure that it does not happen again.

"When Joe [Bednarsh] got this arrangement approved for women's volleyball and basketball to use Max Stern Athletic Center

two years ago, there were a few stipulations that we needed to adhere to," they wrote in her email. "One was that female student-athletes' sports attire should be worn in the gym only."

YU's undergraduate student dress code for academic buildings requires women to wear knee-length dresses or skirts, along with tops that have sleeves and a modest neckline, while men must wear pants and a shirt. Neither of these rules is enforced on Wilf or Beren campus.

The Athletics staff added in her email, "If one of our student-athletes is not dressed modestly in common areas (anything outside of the gym), we would be in danger of this agreement ending."

SSSB Announces Three Redesigned Graduate Programs

By CHAIM BOOK

Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB) Dean Noam Wasserman announced the redesign and launch of SSSB's new MBA, M.S. in real estate and M.S. in accounting graduate programs in an email to SSSB students on Nov. 9.

The three programs, which were all launched this August, have been redesigned "from the ground up" for the post-COVID era with an emphasis on student flexibility, and high ethical and educational standards. The programs are focused on creating a model that will work for students who are early on in their careers with a less flexible lifestyle and give students choices in course content, timing and location.

"We have strengthened our educational excellence while giving students full choice over where to live during the program, the ways in which they want to tailor the program to their skills and interests, how quickly to get the degree, and even what part of the year they want to start," Wasserman told The Commentator.

SSSB began rethinking its Executive Masters of Business Administration (EMBA) program in 2019 in consultation with then EMBA Program Director Mark Finkel, with the goal of addressing constraints on

emphasis on practical "real but relevant" training. With this new approach in mind and to increase efficiency, Dean Emeritus Moses Pava helped design a system that incorporates business ethics throughout the

two Israeli students were able to attend that course virtually despite the seven hour divide. The university hopes that such exchanges, in what the university has termed as part of "YU's Israel Superhighway," will be more common, with students from both YU and Hebrew University attending the other institutions' courses remotely.

To better reflect the modern workplace environment, which requires interaction with people of different functions, students across the graduate programs can now take cross-program courses — both requirements and electives — such as "Leading with Emotional and Moral Intelligences." The redesigned programs also offer opportunities for undergraduates to take graduate level courses that count towards a graduate degree.

Currently, the new MBA program and the master's in real estate are both bigger than the programs they replaced. Additionally, although January enrollment is historically lower than August, SSSB is currently anticipating a January larger than August.

"The graduate programs reinforce our mission of developing values-grounded professionals who will excel in the workplace and in the community."

Sy Syms School of Business Dean Noam Wasserman

program growth. To better focus the program's branding on younger students, SSSB switched to an MBA model which focuses more on preparing students for entering careers, instead of an EMBA program generally geared toward experienced business professionals looking to advance efficiency in their field. Finkel is the current director of the MBA program.

The onset of the pandemic and the shift to online learning inspired the implementation of new teaching methods and increased

standard coursework instead of one compartmentalized course. Wasserman said that "The graduate programs reinforce our mission of developing values-grounded professionals who will excel in the workplace and in the community."

In the email to SSSB students, Wasserman pointed to the success of the past spring semester's version of his Harvard Business School course, "The Founder's Dilemma." Additionally, as part of a new course-exchange agreement with Hebrew University,

Students Against Sexual Assault Club Leads Event About Sexual Assault and Title IX Process

By RIKKI KOLODNY

This article was published online on Nov. 2.

Students Against Sexual Assault (SASA) hosted its annual event about sexual assault and the Title IX process at YU on Tuesday, Oct. 29 with about 40 participants. This was the third time an event of this nature was held at YU, with the first taking place in 2019.

Associate Dean of Students Joe Bednarsh, who is YU's deputy Title IX coordinator, and Counseling Center Senior Therapist Shira Sifton also joined the program. The Counseling Center worked with SASA to plan and coordinate the program.

The event began with Chloe Horowitz, a trauma therapist and "Enough is Enough" coordinator, presenting a slideshow on the importance of understanding Title IX policy and procedure, and what constitutes sexual assault and violence. "Schools are required to ensure that all students receive an equal education without gender discrimination ... [and] sexual harassment," Horowitz explained. "Schools are required to respond to reports [by students] ... and are required to have protections in place for survivors of these types of violence."

Horowitz also described how schools must respond to reports of misconduct and ensure that there are protections in place for sexual assault survivors. She noted that the roles of the Title IX coordinators involve helping survivors access resources like confidential therapy, ensuring due process for their report, and overseeing training and education on harassment.

She also destigmatized common myths regarding sexual assault, such as how most people are sexually assaulted by people they know and not by strangers, and that most reported rapes are found to be true and not an act of revenge. In addition, Horowitz went over how trauma can affect people differently and that the main goal of healing from a sexual assault is to regain a sense of autonomy. She also discussed the definition of consent — "Freely Given, Reversible, Informed, Enthusiastic and Specific," under

the acronym "FRIES" — how to support sexual assault survivors and why survivors might be hesitant to report their assaults.

Horowitz ended by giving a list of resources for support, and students were encouraged to ask questions or share comments.

This event comes about two months after an anonymous student alleged that she was raped and the university did not help her in an article published by The Commentator on Aug. 25 at the beginning of the school year. The following week, Dean of the Undergraduate Faculty of Arts and Science Karen Bacon emailed students expressing that faculty were "stunned and pained by the recently published story," noting that "that there is more that we can do to better educate and secure our students ... on both campuses how to protect themselves from potentially harmful situations." She added that "the President made this issue a top priority for the University."

In the aftermath, YU formed a committee, headed by Bacon, which included Rabbi Josh Blass and deans Bednarsh, Danielle Wozniak, Leslie Halpern and Sara Asher. According to Bednarsh and Bacon, the committee was assembled to provide suggestions to "further enhance [e] our educational programs regarding sexual misconduct and harassment and to improv[e] our communications so that students who feel they have been subjected to sexual misconduct or harassment are better aware of the resources available to them and the procedures that will be followed to investigate their allegations."

The committee had two separate meetings with students, one with student leaders and one with about 15 students to hear their concerns and suggestions regarding YU's Title IX policy and procedure. "At this time, the Committee is processing the information and comments that they received from students at two meetings," Bacon said. "And we will continue to keep students involved as we move forward with this work."

"Students have to feel safe," Bednarsh said.

"SASA aims to be the help that you need in situations of all types of sexual assault," the club said in a statement sent to The Commentator. "We work as a unit to spread

this message and provide the proper outreach to those at YU. This club gives resources to those seeking mental therapy, self defense lessons, a community of support, and more. No one is alone, no one deserves

to be mistreated, and with the proper education that we provide throughout our events, we hope to create more leaders to continue spreading our message."



Beren Campus

MOSES PAVA

RIETS Celebrates Ordination of 150 Rabbis at First Chag HaSemikhah Since COVID Began

By CHAIM BOOK

This article was published online on Nov. 3.

150 former semikha students celebrated their formal rabbinic ordination this past Sunday, Oct. 31, at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary's (RIETS) triennial Chag HaSemikhah convocation. This year's program was postponed from its original date of March 2020 due to the onset of COVID-19.

Over 1,000 friends, family members and teachers gathered in the Nathan Lampert Auditorium at Zysman Hall to celebrate with the graduates of the 2018-20 classes. Speeches and presentations were delivered by various distinguished rabbis and dignitaries, including a special award ceremony and address from Rabbi Joel Schreiber, chairman emeritus of the RIETS Board of Trustees and the event's guest of honor.

Although masking and other protocols were in place, the event marks the largest in-person event on campus since the pandemic began. Live streaming video was held for audiences on the lawn in front of Rubin Hall on Wilf Campus and on an online webcast with close to 3,000 viewers.

"RIETS is the special jewel in the crown of Yeshiva University."

Chairman Emeritus of RIETS Board of Trustees Rabbi Joel Schreiber

"RIETS is the special jewel in the crown of Yeshiva University," Rabbi Schreiber said at the event, "it is the bedrock upon which rests so much of our institution, its dedication to Torah permeates the balance of the university. It is an oasis in a world that in so many areas has lost its mooring and sense of values."

In the weeks leading up to the event, RIETS established the celebratory tone with

communal Shabbatons in the Five Towns and Teaneck. Additionally, RIETS Director of Semikha Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz and RIETS Dean Rabbi Menachem Penner led special sichot mussar presentations — which were held in the Glueck Beit Midrash on successive Wednesday nights — regarding the value

of a career in the rabbinate.

The day began with the inauguration of a new Sefer Torah donated by Rabbi Schreiber and his family.

Rabbi Ronald Schwartzberg, director of Jewish career development and placement in RIETS, began the ceremony serving as herald, ushering in the rabbinic faculty, administration and honorees.

Following introductory remarks from

Rabbi Penner and Lance Hirt, chairman of the RIETS Board of Trustees, Rabbi Joel M. Schreiber was presented with the Etz Chaim Award, the highest honor given to lay leadership in the yeshiva. Schreiber was described as a man "who may love RIETS more than anyone in the world."

After short interludes of featured musmakhim (ordained rabbis), President Rabbi Ari Berman delivered the keynote lecture. He underscored the values of the rabbinic leaders of the yeshiva during the past two years. He stressed the uncertainties of the time, the rise of antisemitism, health concerns and lack of proper political discourse. Discussing a personal conversation with President Isaac Herzog in Israel, Rabbi Berman emphasized the Jewish People's need for YU rabbis.

Rabbi Jacob Bernstein represented the freshly minted rabbis with a speech, and Rabbi Penner concluded by urging the musmakhim to push boundaries and open new opportunities to spread the message and values of YU across the Jewish spectrum.

The convocation was drawn to a close with "Dancing on Amsterdam," as undergraduates, friends and family members assembled to dance and celebrate with the new musmakhim.

Former students who celebrated the ordination felt grateful for their time at RIETS. "I was happy to invest in my growth and my learning before I started working. I feel like a different person and fortunate to be a part of this" said Rabbi Ilan Brownstein (RIETS '20). "I work in advertising and I feel proud to be in an institution which is Machsiv a path not in learning, that it is recognized as a valid option. Getting semikha here, I don't feel like an outsider."

"Covid changed the dynamics of shul life," said Rabbi Alex Hecht (RIETS '18), who is the rabbi of Congregation Beth Shalom in Scranton, PA. "RIETS provided the personal and professional tools I needed to go serve the community."



Rabbi Lebowitz speaks at Chag HaSemikhah program.

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

COVID-19 Cases Significantly Drop on Wilf Campus Over Last Two Weeks

By SAMMY INTRATOR

This article was published online on Nov. 2.

COVID-19 cases have significantly dropped on Wilf Campus over the last two weeks, according to Yeshiva University's COVID-19 Tracker. Beren cases have continued to remain consistently low.

From Oct. 10-15, one week after in-person classes resumed from YU's month-long holiday break, there were 65 positive cases on Wilf Campus and 10 cases on Beren Campus. The following week of Oct. 17-22, those numbers fell to nine positive cases on Wilf Campus with only one on Beren. This past week, Oct. 24-29, Wilf had two cases, and Beren saw a slight increase to six cases. The two Wilf cases continue the downward trend of positive cases over the last two weeks.

"We are pleased to see a significant decrease in positive cases across campus, and we appreciate the support and cooperation of students, faculty and staff in keeping our university safe through testing, masking

and other best practices," a YU spokesperson told The Commentator. "We know just how vital these components continue to be to limit spread of the virus on campus. As we continue to gather new information through our COVID Monitoring program, we will navigate these challenges with the best interests of the YU community in mind."

Over the coed Shabbaton at Beren Campus at a panel for students, Associate Dean of Students Joe Bednarsh said that if case numbers remained low for the next few weeks, testing could be reduced.

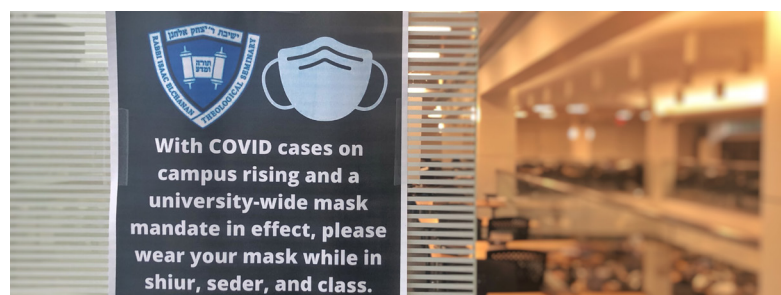
On Oct. 12, in an email detailing 49 new COVID-19 cases on Wilf Campus over a few days, the COVID Monitoring Team announced a stricter COVID-19 policy. The mask mandate, which previously applied to academic and administrative buildings, was extended to include public spaces in residence halls and dining halls. There was also an emphasis on students continuing the mandatory bi-weekly testing. Faculty and staff were to begin random COVID-19 testing, as well.

The university has also made efforts to

coax students to adhere to the mask mandates by putting signs in many different locations across campus. Campus security has inconsistently been requiring students to wear masks when entering YU buildings and has also started giving out masks to those who enter YU buildings without wearing one.

Despite the added efforts by the university, students' masking compliance has not seen significant progress. Most Wilf students continue to refrain from wearing masks as long as they aren't asked to do so, and many Beren students have relaxed with wearing their masks. Some professors and rebbeim also don't wear masks nor require their students to wear masks in their classrooms.

Some students are appreciative of the lower cases. "I think it's nice that the numbers are down. That's definitely a good thing because it ensures that we won't go back to online learning," said Shuie Berger (YC '23). "I don't really know if it's because of masks, because I don't see any more mask wearing than I did in previous weeks, but I think the masking that has happened has helped."



The university has made efforts to coax students to adhere to the mask mandate by putting new signs around campus.

THE COMMENTATOR

About 180 Students Join First Coed Shabbaton on Beren Campus Since Pandemic Began

BY RIVKA BENNUN

This article was published online on Oct. 28

About 40 Wilf and 140 Beren students attended the coed Shabbaton on Beren Campus this past Shabbat of Oct. 22-23, the first since the start of COVID-19, according to Beren Shabbat Coordinator Adina Passy (SCW '21). The Shabbat included both an Ashkenazi and a Sephardic *minyán*.

Wilf students stayed in the Schottenstein Residence Hall, which is currently empty as it did not reopen for students on Beren Campus this semester due to lack of interest. The Ashkenazi *minyán* took place in Koch Auditorium, while the Sephardi *minyán* was held in the *beit midrash*. Beren and Wilf students mainly ate in Kushner Dining Hall and rooms 101-102, while some opted for an all-women meal in the Reference Library Lounge.

Joe Bednarsh and Sara Asher, both assistant deans of students, were guests on the Shabbaton. The Shabbat was planned by the Beren Shabbat Team in partnership with the Office of Student Life and representatives from the Wilf and Beren student councils.

"I'm proud that every member of YSU showed up and led *zmiros* [and] *divrei torah*, and cultivated a healthy social environment," Yeshiva Student Union (YSU) President Elazar Abrahams (YC '22) told The Commentator.

Students had the opportunity over

Shabbat to spend time with Bednarsh and Asher, with an open Q&A session on Friday night and a *shiur* with Asher on Shabbat day. Additionally, rabbinic intern couple Mairav and Rabbi Josh Kaufman spent their first Shabbat of the year on campus, with Rabbi Kaufman giving the Shabbat morning *derasha* and Mairav giving a pre-*mincha shiur*.

"The shabbaton was an incredible experience where the YU students participated in shared meals, student-led minyanim, Torah talks, and socializing with friends."

Assistant Dean of Students Sara Asher

"I am so grateful for the warm welcome my kids and I received by everyone on campus. It was an incredible Shabbat filled with energy, excitement, camaraderie, and many wonderful opportunities to speak with and hear from students," Bednarsh shared. "It's so important for the students and the administrators to share these types of experiences and have opportunities to speak openly and honestly with each other."

"The shabbaton was an incredible experience where the YU students participated in shared meals, student-led *minyanim*, Torah talks, and socializing with friends," Asher commented. "I found it immensely meaningful to be a part of the welcoming and warm shabbat atmosphere and to spend time talking with and enjoying the YU students."

This Shabbat was also the first time in

four years that there was a Sephardic *minyán* present on Beren Campus for Shabbat. According to Stern College for Women Student Council (SCWSC) President Talia Leitner (SCW '22), this was planned by the Sephardic Club in collaboration with the Office of Student Life (OSL), and the Sephardic Club hopes to have a Sephardi

and the maturity/responsibility of all the men that came."

"I very much enjoyed joining the Sephardic *minyán* for Mincha, being able to give a *Dvar Torah* to hundreds of students, and sitting at a table to share meals with students," added Bednarsh. "I am eagerly awaiting my next invitation."

Coed Shabbatons have traditionally been held on Beren Campus, as opposed to the Wilf Campus.

"Pre-COVID there were many club-themed Shabbats where men would be brought down to Beren," Leitner shared. "However, this year we are moving away from club-themed Shabbatons so that everyone feels that they can stay in for Shabbat, regardless of whether they are affiliated with a given club ... Because of this, we wanted to still give an opportunity to men to join us on Beren for Shabbat, so we had a Student Council themed Shabbat which would be inclusive of all interested in joining."

"I liked that I got to spend time with my YU friends on Shabbat who I normally wouldn't get to hang out with," Flora Shemtob (SCW '24) said. "Another thing I really liked was that they gave an option for an all girls meal, and I had a lot of fun."

Associate Director of Student Life Marjorie Rasinovsky-Albert, who was involved in the general oversight of the Shabbat, commented, "Joint Shabbatot have been happening on campus for years and we are happy that we are able to bring them back this year."

Macs Reach 38-Game Win Streak With First Two Victories of the Season

BY DANIEL MELOOL

This article was published online on Nov. 7

The Yeshiva University Maccabees extended their win streak to 38 games on Sunday afternoon, Nov. 7 with a 105-52 victory over Penn State Schuylkill during the Dutch Birch Tip-Off in Pennsylvania. The team beat the Lycoming College Warriors 90-54 the night prior, the first time the teams have faced each other since 1954.

The Macs entered the season ranked no. 2 in the NCAA DIII national ranking, the highest in school history. The team came into the game against Lycoming riding a 36-game win streak, the longest in YU's history and tied for the second-longest in DIII history. This streak caused the Macs to receive news coverage from prominent media outlets such as the Los Angeles Times, CNN and ESPN.

The team made some improvements in the off-season, acquiring DI player Ethan

Lasko, who is a first-year student at Cardozo School of Law, and Oberlin College's Jordan Armstrong, a new graduate student at the Katz School. Good fortune also found the Macs when they received news that last year's captains Gabe Leifer (SSSB '21) and Eitan Halpert (SSSB '21) would return for one last season. All four of these players were granted an extra year to play by the NCAA due to the COVID-19 pandemic ending the 2019-20 season in the middle of the playoffs and limiting the 2020-21 season for all DIII teams. The Macs played a total of seven games last season, with their last three unexpectedly canceled.

Saturday night's game, the first time the Macs have played in front of fans since their Skyline Conference Championship victory in March 2020, began with a slow start. But the Macs found their offensive rhythm after a technical foul against Lycoming forward D'Andre Edmond. This incident lit a spark as the team then went on a 31-5 run en route

to a 47-21 first-half lead. Ryan Turell (SSSB '22) led the way in the first half with 15 points off of 7-11 shooting.

The Macs extended their lead to 33 points to start the second half. While the Warriors played better then, they were unable to overcome the large point deficit built by the Macs.

Leading the night offensively for the Macs was Turell with 32 points, going 14-20 from the field. Ofek Reef (SSSB '23) also played a part in the opening victory, contributing 16 points off of 7-10 shooting. Leifer grabbed 10 rebounds, and Halpert posted 13 points. Newcomers Lasko and Armstrong also earned their first points as Maccabees.

Less than 24 hours later, the Macs were back in action against Penn State Schuylkill. Once again, the team got off to a slow start but kicked into high gear and took over from there. Like the previous night's game, Turell led the charge, going 6-6 from the field including two three-pointers. At the end of the first half, the Macs held a commanding

lead of 59-33.

The Macs did not take their foot off the pedal when the second half started, jumping out to a 16-0 run to extend their lead. Turell again led all players in scoring with 24 points off a perfect 9-9 afternoon from the field. Leifer posted a double-double, grabbing another 10 rebounds in addition to his 11 points. Overall the Macs shot 64%, an improvement from their previous night's 58%.

With these back-to-back victories, the Macs now officially hold the second-longest win streak in DIII history. On Wednesday, Nov. 10, the Macs will face off against the Eastern Connecticut State Warriors in the Max Stern Athletic Center on the Wilf Campus, where fans will be permitted for the first time since March 2020. COVID-19 vaccinations and masking are required for all attendees. The game will be broadcast via MacsLive.



Ryan Turell (SSSB '22) led the way in the first half against Lycoming College with 15 points off of 7-11 shooting.

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'I love YU': An Interview With Yehoshua Fineberg

By JARED SCHARF

Yehoshua Fineberg (Makor '22) is a senior student at Yeshiva University's Makor College Experience Program. He will be in the program's second graduating class. The Commentator interviewed him in order to highlight his unique experience in Yeshiva University.

Could you tell me about your background? Some basic demographics and info?

So I'm Yehoshua, I grew up in Cedarhurst, NY, Long island. I'm actually from Lawrence but I moved to Cedarhurst in 2002. I went to public school all through my life. I was a musician, I was athletic, and I loved playing the drums. I used to play in the marching band in high school. I played in the concert band, and I played in Disney World. I did Yachad at Camp Lavi and Morasha, and Yad B'yad, and did Camp Simcha.

Did you ever learn in Yeshiva before YU?

I went to MAY, Mesivta Ateres Yaakov for two years.

And then after that you went to YU?

Ya. In 2018.

My advice would be to always be down to earth. Keep learning, keep davening and learn Torah.

How did you find out about YU?

This is the story: my uncle found this great program called the Makor college experience. The Makor college experience is a non-degree program for three years, the fourth year is optional, and what you do is learning, vocational experiences, and [judaic] studies.

Once your uncle told you about the program what did you do?

Then I came here for an interview with Dr. Glicksman. I was very excited, it was really amazing and then once I got my acceptance, I was *besimcha*.

What did you do when you got accepted?

I was screaming from the top of my lungs. I jumped up and down and I screamed when I got accepted. And then once I came into the *beis medrash* with [fellow Makor students] Menachem Aron, Simcha Rosenbaum, Jacob Adler, I was so excited when I saw all my friends who I knew from the past come.

So this is your fourth year in Makor. Do you have plans for once you graduate?

I wanna work in a *seforim* store.

Have you ever worked in one before?

I volunteered when I was in highschool at Judaica Plus in the Five Towns.

What have you learned in your shiurim this year and the past three years?

We learned Bava Kama, we learned Bava Metzia, we learned Pesachim, and Bava Basra.

What did you learn today?

We learned Pirkei Avos.

Can you tell me a chidush?

So basically what we learned was *Moshe kibel Torah* means Moshe received the Torah and he passed on the Torah from Har Sinai to each generation. And then he gave it over to the *zekenim* and *neviim* and *Anshei Knesses Hagedola*. So that teaches us that *mesorah* is something that's passed on to each generation.

What have you learned in your classes?

We're learning psychology, how to have a conversation with people, how to behave like

a *mentsch*. We take science, math, reading, vocational research, and music appreciation.

What's your favorite class and why?

Psychology. It teaches us how to be like a *mentsch*.

Being that you've been here for a long time, what's advice you'd give someone in the Yeshiva?

My advice would be to always be down to earth. Keep learning, keep davening and learn Torah.

What do you do during your free time when not shtyging or in classes?

I read books.

What type of books?

Wonder, Touched By A Story, Chassidus.

What Chassidus do you like?

Spinka. I like Spinka.

Why?

Because I grew up davening in a Spinka Chassidus Shul. Bes Yisroel in Cedarhurst.

Your family is chassidish?

No.

Why did you daven there?

I like it. They don't care.

What do you like about YU?

I like the YU events.

Like what?

Trivia night. Because I love interacting with people who come from different backgrounds. It's good to be involved in the outside world. See what the outside world is like because there's so much other stuff outside the world besides learning in the *beis medrash*.

Is there anything you dislike about YU?

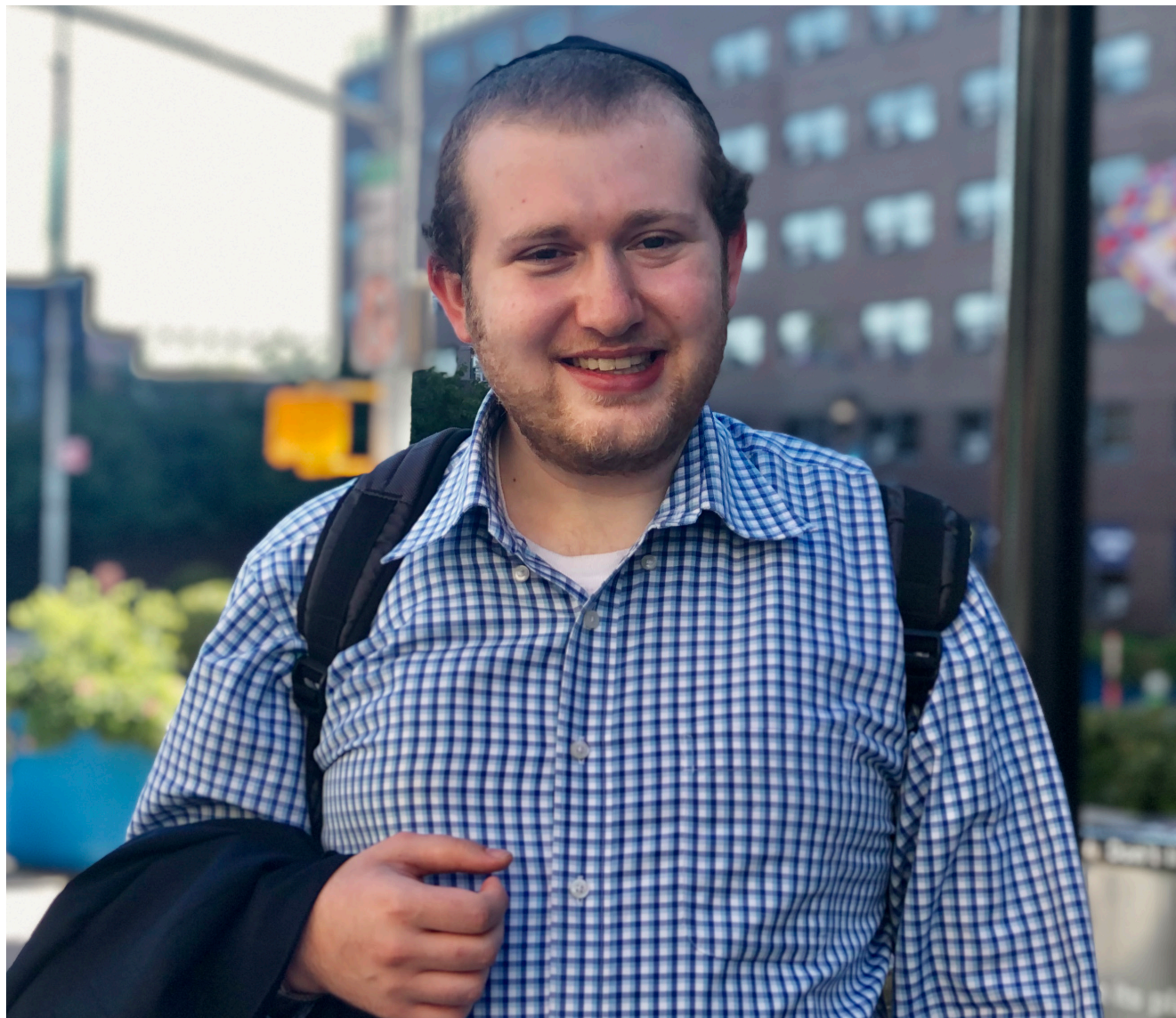
Nothing.

So you mamish have no complaints?

No.

So you're just happy to be in Yeshiva?

Ya.



THE COMMENTATOR

Challah Bakes Are More Than Just Challah Bakes — Even at YU

By NAVA KATZ

Growing up, YU alumna Raquel Sofer's (SCW '19) friends and family had participated in challah bakes run by a prominent figure in her community: Rabbanit Sarah Levy. When Rabbanit Levy passed, the tradition continued in her memory and was run by another local Rabanit and Sofer's

mother and grandmother. (Challah bakes are events where participants get to learn about the mitzvah of challah and enjoy baking it together.)

When Sofer came to YU, she was surprised that the Jewish institution had never run a challah bake. Coming from a "challah bake" household, Sofer had personally experienced the beauty of the mitzvah and wanted to bring it to Beren students, many of whom

had never baked challah and were unaware of its significance. As the president of the International Club, Sofer felt that she was in a unique position to make that happen.

Every year, Jewish communities worldwide participate in The Shabbat Project, a movement that unites Jews in experiencing one Shabbat together. This extended weekend begins with a Thursday night challah bake. Although her childhood challah bakes

had not been affiliated with The Shabbat Project, Sofer decided to run the 2017 YU Challah Bake in affiliation with the movement.

The project was difficult to get off the ground. There were many technical issues, including funding and getting approval to run a large event that included preparing

Continued on Page 10

CHALLAH BAKE Continued from Page 9

food, in addition to receiving permission to use the school cafeteria ovens. With the help of faculty from the Office of Student Life and the International Club, Sofer worked hard to ensure the event happened in spite of the obstacles. She fundraised and worked to get supplies and a speaker for the event. She packed bags with bowls, aprons, and booklets that explained the mitzvah while she was at home in Panama over holiday break and convinced people to help her bring them back to Beren. With only three weeks to the event and numerous hurdles standing, many doubted that the event would occur, but Sofer knew that if she could initiate it, there would be infrastructure in place to continue it year after year.

Although it was not easy to coordinate, over 200 people attended the event, and it was an overwhelming success. For some participants, this was “their first time [baking] challah, and [they] were really grateful for this amazing opportunity,” Sofer recalled. She was grateful for the chance to make a difference. “My mom taught me that you can always make an impact, no matter how large or small,” she continued. Aside from last year’s cancellation due to COVID-19, Sofer’s dream of instituting the challah bake as a yearly event has continued to be fulfilled. Pre-COVID participation was high, with 250-300 women participating in the 2019 challah bake.

The challah bake is a fun way to unite the student body in learning about the *mitzvah* of baking challah. “It is huge and so special to get all these women together to do a mitzvah!” International Club Co-President Lara Amar (SCW ‘22) told The Commentator.

Costs associated with the event are expensive — requiring around \$3,000-\$4,000 — so the International Club runs fundraising campaigns to pay for it. Much of the funding comes from alumni, but YU sponsors a large portion of the costs.

This year, the YU Challah Bake took place on Oct. 28 in the Koch Auditorium on the Beren Campus, where it has traditionally been held. Due to COVID-19 and the fact that the event coincided with midterm week, turnout was lower this year than in past years, with only around 70 attendees. Regardless, the event was a huge success.

Students had a great time learning about *hafrashat* challah and getting to know each other better. The event featured three guest speakers — Danielle Immerman, Adela Cojab and Sheli Fouzailoff — who spoke about their experiences as working religious women. “They gave us amazing insight on how to [stay] religious in their [respective] fields of work, and it was really inspiring to hear them talk about what motivated them to do what they do,” said International Club Co-President Sharon Benzaquen (SCW ‘24).

“It was a beautiful event,” she continued. “Having 70 girls in a room doing an important mitzvah and seeing the impact it had on everyone was really special for me.” The event has become an integral part of YU’s student life on campus.

The challah bake is accompanied by a coed Shabbaton hosted on the Beren Campus, which will take place on Nov. 19. “You’ll hear a ton of different languages being spoken, and everyone has different traditions, but everyone shares their love for Shabbat!” said Amar, regarding the upcoming Shabbaton.

The club also continued an initiative they began in 2018 known as the “Pick-a-Mitzvah” campaign. It involves picking one new mitzvah to focus on for the week of the Shabbat Project, with hopes to continue it for the rest of the year. The campaign started in Panama five years ago and has now spread globally.



YU Challah Bake

LENA OHAYON

We Asked, Y(O)U Answered

YU’s ‘Minhagim’ During Midterm Season

By ETHAN SCHUMAN

Midterm season at YU can be described by many as a very chaotic and intimidating time. In contrast to finals season, where there is a concrete time and date for each exam and an allocated studying period beforehand known as reading week, there is no allocated study period for most classes during midterm season. Furthermore, many exams can occur on the same day making studying more difficult. As a result of this, many students in YU have different practices and methods for how they handle this “high pressure” time. The Commentator reached out to various students questioning them about their studying habits and practices for midterms.

Asher Kirshtein (YC ‘24) Computer Science

“Knowing that during the midterm season there are many tests, projects and essays that overlap with each other, I make sure to leave myself a lengthy period of time to study. I study/work on each topic a few hours each night based on the subject that is the most relevant at the time. Since I am a computer science major, I cannot spend significant time studying for other courses each day, so therefore, I put most of my focus on reviewing the notes I take more than anything else in order to prepare for the exams.

“I make sure to study for a limited amount of hours each night so I can still get a proper amount of sleep, be able to exercise and manage volleyball. Nevertheless, it is difficult balancing each of these things, as well as learning Torah.”

Koby Rosinsky (YC ‘24) Undecided

“In order to properly study for my midterms and also complete my other projects and assignments, I set aside at least five hours each day reading and reviewing my Biology textbooks and notes, and then spend the rest of my night completing the rest of my work. The only study trick I can do besides constantly reviewing textbooks is to complete many practice tests online in order to get used to potential questions on my exams.

“I like spending some time throughout each day, whether it is at meals or late at night, to hangout with my friends and swim at the pool in order to recuperate. I also make sure to relax on Shabbos and after Shabbos so that I do not get overwhelmed from constant studying and work.”

Miriam Felzenstein (SSSB ‘24) Finance

“My overall process when studying for midterms includes breaking down each of my classes into sections and studying those sections each night leading to the exam. I like writing down vocabulary terms ten or twenty times each to allow myself to better memorize them. For math courses, I like to practice math problems, use Khan Academy, or watch YouTube videos. I also use the tutoring center at YU which can help for certain subjects. I try to get a good night’s sleep and study later in the day. Furthermore, I mainly study in a different setting outside of my room, because it is more productive. Lastly, I usually have a big meal before I study and drink lots of water so I can focus.

“I try to set studying limits and space out my studying so that I feel less stressed and have time for other things. For example, one day I plan to study from 7-10 p.m., so that I can do some things with friends earlier in

the day, such as getting lunch or dinner.”

Ezra Emerson (SSSB ‘23) Management

“My overall process for preparing for midterms is knowing the exact date each midterm is long in advance and making a schedule for everything I need to do. This includes completing all of my other pending assignments first so that I can have an extended period of time to put my entire focus into studying. Although my studying habits vary based on the class I am taking, I always review my notes and work. I also generally study with other people in my classes so I can get clarity on concepts I do not understand and help others who need it.

“I manage my time with the schedule I make before studying. I set aside times to study for each subject and leave enough time in between for breaks. However, while I am actually studying, I look at what is more important for me to be doing at the moment, whether it is studying or taking a break.”

Naomi Farage (Katz ‘23) Liberal Arts

“I study for a few hours a day during midterm season in a semi-quiet place either in the morning or late at night when everyone is sleeping or in class. I try to study for most tests at times and in places where there are few distractions so that I can properly focus.

“I also try to spend most of my free time outside of class each day either studying or doing something to take my mind off of midterms for an hour or two, such as hanging out with friends. This helps me rest my mind a little and not overwork myself.”

FROM THE COMMIE ARCHIVES

(December 31, 1986; Volume 101, Issue 4) — Annual Chanukah Dinner is Time for Rejoicing

By JEFF KAYE

Editor's Note: An in-person Chanukah celebration is approaching us once again, and in that vein, we wanted to highlight a Chanukah-related piece from pre-COVID times. Below is a piece detailing YU's 1986 Chanukah dinner in the Marriot Marquis which featured the opening of the Sy Syms School of Business, as well as appearances from Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker and House Speaker Tip O'Neill.

This year's Chanukah dinner, held at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in Manhattan on December 14, was extremely significant for the students of Yeshiva University. Among other things, an extraordinary sum of money was pledged toward improving the quality of the University's education. In addition, the opening of the Sy Syms Business School was formally declared.

The dinner was preceded by an academic convocation during which five staunch supporters of Yeshiva received honorary degrees for their efforts on behalf of the University. Dr. Lamm presented an honorary degree to Paul Volcker, commending him for the moral sensitivity he has demonstrated in his position as Chairman of the Federal Reserve. In his acceptance address, Volcker praised

Y.U. for combining the study of ethics with other studies. He called upon all institutions to "teach that business is ultimately based on human relations, and that the best relationships are those which could be based on mutual trust."

Chairman Volcker then treated the audience to a short discourse on the economic state of the nation. Echoing the growing sentiment that all is not economically sound in America, Volcker pointed to the rising national debt and the increasing trade deficit as symptoms of the problem. The way to remedy these maladies, according to Volcker, is to redirect business efforts away from imports and into the improvement of our industries to meet "the industrial challenge." Volcker expressed his hope that Y.U.'s new business school will be a leader in fostering this attitude among the students of America.

A special tribute was paid to Dr. Lamm for completing his tenth year as president of the University. He was commended for having guided Y.U. out from its financial crisis into an era of prosperity. In turn, Dr. Lamm paid tribute to the late president of Yeshiva University, Dr. Samuel Belkin, for teaching the synthesis of the sacred and the secular. He also praised Rav Joseph B. Solovietchik for his role in shaping American Judaism. Dr. Lamm emphatically stated that Torah U'mada is, and will continue to be, the central



Honored guests at the Chanukah dinner, including Rabbi Lamm and Paul Volcker, Chairman of the Federal Reserve.

The Commentator Archives

THE COMMENTATOR

motif of Y.U.

A rosy picture of the University's future was painted as it was reported that over one hundred million dollars has been contributed to Y.U. and will be allocated towards the improvement of its academic and extra-curricular activities. Specifically, the creation of the Sy Syms School of Business was officially announced. This seemed to generate an air of excitement within the audience although some questioned the need for such an institution.

Thomas P. O'Neill, Speaker of the House of Representatives, delivered the keynote address. With a profound sense of urgency, he

expressed the need for American Jews to work with the government in demanding freedom for Soviet Jews. In response to fears that U.S-Israel relations might be damaged due to Israel's involvement in arms shipments to Iran, O'Neill declared that the bonds between the two countries are close and as a result will not suffer from the scandal.

The University plans on using the monies raised in its One Hundred Million Dollar Campaign for further improvements on campus as well as improving faculty salaries.

What Does It Take To Get Into YU's Early Assurance Medical Program?

By GILA LINZER

Pre-med students know that they have a long road ahead of them; and those who see medical school in their future want assurance about their future education. Luckily for these students, on Jan. 15, 2021, Yeshiva University and the Albert Einstein School of Medicine launched a new partnership B.A./B.S.-M.D. program that provides "early assurance" admission into the Einstein Medical School for students to apply from while in high school.

Students must meet many qualifications

for acceptance at the time of submission and during their years at Yeshiva University to confirm their admission to Einstein. A prerequisite for acceptance to the program is acceptance to the S. Daniel Abrahams Honors Program at Yeshiva College or Stern College for Women. The average honors student accepted has an SAT score of 1460 or 32 on the ACT with a grade point average of 94. While applicants to the honors program do not need to meet these exact criteria to be accepted, students applying to the Einstein program do need those scores at minimum. Prospective students must opt in to apply to the program along with their

honors application. Only 10 students will be accepted to the program from Yeshiva College and Stern College combined.

Furthermore, these students will face many restrictions and challenges after initial acceptance. Students in the program can only spend one year in Israel. Once admitted, students are required to maintain a GPA of 3.75 as undergraduates. These students must also score at least a 515 on the MCAT exam, a 90th percentile score to remain in the program. It is possible that a student will be rejected from Einstein during this application process despite meeting all the requirements. Therefore, it remains unclear exactly what that "early assurance" is and how much of an advantage the students in the program will have against other applicants.

Many students might not even find this program appealing, considering the program does not allow for students to go to Israel for a Shana Bet and acceptance does not guarantee admission. Similarly, students applying to this program would have to make this commitment to medical school in high school. Pre-med major Ma'ayan Schwartz (SCW '24) agreed with this sentiment, "I think between people not wanting the pressure of needing a certain score and people not knowing as a senior in high school if they want to go to medical school or not, this new option doesn't seem life changing."

This announcement came after YU ended its operational ties with Einstein in 2015 because of the severe debt the medical school was collecting for Yeshiva University. Over the past five years, the link between Yeshiva University and Einstein has been murky — until 2018, when YU stopped granting the school's degrees yet credited Einstein with "academic oversight." After that, any link

between the schools seems to have vanished, calling into question their mutual associations. This new program seems to be an answer to the question, as it offers an unprecedented partnership between YU and Einstein, allowing high school seniors graduating in June 2022 and beyond a chance to apply.

Prospective pre-med students can also consider other programs that YU offers. The Upstate Medical University College of Medicine (SUNY), is another guaranteed entrance program offered by YU. Once high school applicants are accepted into this program, they are guaranteed admission to the medical school and are not required to take the MCAT exam and apply to the medical school separately. According to the YU website, applicants are expected to have some prior experience in the medical field and have at least a 1360 SAT score or 29 ACT score. Once YU has approved their application, students are required to interview with the SUNY admissions committee as well.

While it is true that the Einstein program has more demanding requirements for admission than SUNY, it is also considered to be a more prestigious school and has a more appealing location for most people. Einstein is ranked number 39 in the country by U.S News and World Report, while SUNY Upstate is ranked 88. Einstein is also much more selective than SUNY with an acceptance rate of 4.3% compared to SUNY's 34% acceptance rate. Both programs, however, will provide YU pre-med students with a unique opportunity to choose a more complete path for their studies straight out of high school.



Einstein Medical School

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I Donated Stem Cells Through The Gift of Life, and It Changed My Life

By **RAPHI SINGER**

My first interaction with the organization Gift of Life, whose purpose is to facilitate bone marrow and blood stem cell donations in hopes of curing blood cancer, was in the winter of 2019 while I was in yeshiva in Israel. A representative from the organization spoke to us one evening about what they do, the importance of swabbing for potential matches and what could potentially happen if someone was a match. After he spoke, I swabbed and headed out. I knew I had just done a nice thing, but in my mind I was never going to hear from the organization again.

Fast forward to this past summer, two-and-a-half years since that night in yeshiva. Toward the end of August, I got a call from someone who worked at Gift of Life who told me that I was a stem cell match for a woman who was battling blood cancer.

The next few weeks were a blur. Coordinators reached out to plan logistics

and learn about my medical history. I was flown out to Boca Raton for a physical at their headquarters, meeting with doctors, nurse practitioners and others working in the clinic. Soon after, I was cleared to be a stem cell donor and the procedure was scheduled to take place the week before Rosh Hashanah.

Every time I worried about [my donation], I always came back to the fantastic fact that I, alone, had done my part in saving a human life. I still can't get over that.

I was put on a special medication to boost the stem cell count in my body for five days before the procedure, but it left me feeling weak and in some pain. I did my best to stay positive throughout these early stages as I knew that this was just beginning prep. After this process, I was back in Boca Raton for the two-day procedure. I got to my hotel with enough time for a day of relaxing by

the beach and the pool, mentally preparing myself for what was going to be happening the next day. Stem cells extracted from my blood were going to be saving someone else's life. Whatever pain I was going to have to endure would pale in comparison to what my recipient was going through each day. At the same time, I was worried about

complications that could arise from the procedure. Previous experiences with needles and hospitals made me weary and nervous.

The big day finally arrived, and I was a mess. Luckily, I had some prescription Xanax with me that calmed me down for the duration of the procedure. As the nurses began to prep, needles were inserted into both of my arms, one to generate the cells and the other to recycle the blood back into my body. The process took around seven hours, and was repeated the next day for another four.

After I finished the two days of collection, I left the clinic feeling weak and exhausted. Yes, I had just done something amazing, something that few people can say they have done in their lives. But I didn't feel any different. I didn't have a connection with my recipient; in fact, I had never even met them! Who were they? Would I ever be able to meet them? And more importantly, would they even want to meet me? This feeling stayed with me for some time, and I struggle with it even today.

I was even asked if I was comfortable with being called again to potentially donate bone marrow, a procedure which would take a lot longer, is more dangerous and would require me to be put under anesthesia. I didn't know how to answer that question. Would my lack of agreement make me selfish? Technically, any donor can decide to opt out at any time, but that doesn't always make it the right thing to do. In my mind I had "completed"

my part of the donation process, and did not know how comfortable I was agreeing to yet another one.

Despite these questions and concerns, my experience overall was overwhelmingly positive. Every time I worried about these things, I always came back to the fantastic fact that I, alone, had done my part in saving a human life. I still can't get over that.

Furthermore, the care and consideration that I received from Gift of Life was amazing and truly made me feel like a hero. Each person working at the organization, from the coordinators and secretaries to the doctors and nurses, was extremely caring and willing to cater to my every need. Nothing that I requested was too much for them, and they made sure my accommodations were taken care of without worry. Any concern I had about the procedure was explained to me in great detail, and anything that I was uncomfortable with was immediately taken care of.

Thanks to both this positive experience in the moment and the emotional gratification of doing such an important deed, I highly encourage everyone who is reading this to find the location of your next local Gift of Life swabbing event and actively do your best to attend. It takes less than ten minutes to give all your information and swab inside your mouth. You could be the reason that someone else gets another chance at living.

Realistically, you probably will not be a match. One in every 250 donors is called as a match, but that number doesn't always result in your going ahead to donate. There are genetic screenings and medical tests to complete, and by the time they're finished, 80 percent of donors end up being sent home.

That said, there is always a chance that your DNA will be used to save someone else's life. There is now a part of my body that is helping someone else in the world breathe, eat and function like they normally would. I never believed that I would be called upon to go ahead and donate stem cells, but my donation happened and a woman is alive today because of it.



The author after his donation with Gift of Life

RAPHI SINGER

Empathy Is Important, But It Has Its Limits

By **NAVA KATZ**

I've always found beauty in the fact that in times of crisis and tragedy, *Am Yisrael* is one. The ability that we have to feel connected to people that we have never met is quite moving. But do we take it too far? Should someone feel guilty if they aren't brought to tears by every tragedy on the news? With advancements in globalization and the interconnectivity of the "world wide web," we have access to the plights of billions of people around the world. How much emotional energy is appropriate to expend on strangers?

How much emotional energy is appropriate to expend on strangers?

I began thinking about this issue when I came across an article in *The Atlantic* that discussed the evolution of the role of the U.S. president. The author of the piece argued that, over time, presidential responsibilities have become so extensive that it is impossible to expect one person to be able to

fulfill them all. The most interesting aspect of the progression for me was the development of the emotional responsibilities of the president. In 1955, President Eisenhower went on vacation during a time of national suffering, when multiple states were hit by hurricanes, and no one minded. He wasn't expected to carry the emotional burden of the nation. That same situation would be untenable today. In the 21st century, it would be scandalous for the president to be on vacation during a time of national trauma. He would be fodder for the media, condemned for being cold, unfeeling and out of touch with the people.

This is reflective of a phenomenon that is endemic today: the push to have more empathy. Dozens of speeches and articles in recent years discuss how our society is experiencing an "empathy deficit." Many feel that dramatic news has made us desensitized. However, I would argue that sometimes, we actually have too much empathy. We all know people who react to Facebook posts about foreign crises by crying over the victims — people they didn't know existed until they checked those very notifications. Many try to outdo each other to prove how deeply saddened and affected they are, whether on social media or in person. There is a pervasive social pressure to exhibit a certain

level of emotion in response to tragic news, regardless of how we truly feel. While feelings of connection may seem laudable, they can also be disingenuous and unnatural. Is this level of emotional investment truly healthy, and proportional to those people's actual relation to the tragedy?

This disparity is compounded by the fact that many are often immune to the suffering

of those directly around them. People who are very empathetic on a macro scale often lack empathy for others close to them. We live in a strange time, where societally, we seem to be simultaneously hyper-emotional and less connected to one another than ever before.

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Headline reporting the August 2021 Taliban takeover of Afghanistan following the U.S. military's withdrawal

THE COMMENTATOR

Other Jews Need Us. Now Is the Time to Step Up.

By MICHAEL EISENBERG

At a panel at Yeshiva University's Beren Campus on Oct. 26, Moshe Bellows, Bruce Targain and I discussed venture capital, innovation and the responsibility of YU university students to create the future. I wanted to follow up on the panel with both a quick summary and a call to arms.

As Jews, we are instructed to take responsibility for the other. Sometimes these others are our brothers and sisters, sometimes they are the less fortunate of society and sometimes they are society as a whole. That affirmative commandment demands of us to create the future — a better future.

In today's very complex and challenging environment, that directive is more canonical and salient than ever. Your brothers and sisters on college campuses across America are under attack. They are under attack from woke and antisemitic forces that are scapegoating Jews and Israel for everything. They are spread out and divided across college campuses in the United States, much like the Jews of Persia were scattered across the empire's 127 provinces. It is that separation and division and the loneliness that accompanies it that makes Jews on campuses vulnerable. Since no one has turned up to stand by their side, the attacks continue unabated, rendering their lives highly uncomfortable.

If you take your responsibility to be

responsible Jews seriously, you cannot sit on the YU campus while this is happening to other Jews on other campuses. When I was in Yeshiva University, students led missions to the former Soviet Union to take responsibility for their brothers and sisters. When Scud missiles fell on Tel Aviv, Yeshiva University students led planeloads of other students to Israel, sometimes against the wishes of their parents and the YU administration. Antisemitism on campus is your Russia. Anti-Israel bias on campus is your Scud missiles. You cannot sit in your communities of Teaneck, the Five Towns or Los Angeles, or the YU campuses in New York, and not turn up in person on these other campuses. You must leave the *beit midrash*, the classroom and your comfortable dorms and turn up alongside your brethren: *Shomrei achichem atem*.

You cannot sit in your communities of Teaneck, the Five Towns or Los Angeles, or the YU campuses in New York, and not turn up in person [where you are needed]. You must leave the beit midrash, the classroom and your comfortable dorms and turn up alongside your brethren: Shomrei achichem atem.

The second point is you have been given an opportunity where the tools of technology are at your disposal. Slowly but surely, this Orthodox Jewish institution — under the

leadership of President Berman and Sy Syms School of Business Dean Noam Wasserman — is embracing technology and the jobs of the technological tomorrow. These are tools of immense creative power. With proper intent, content and creativity that is focused on Jewish values and positive innovation, these powerful and wide-reaching software tools enable you to create a better future on college campuses, for Jews generally and for the entire world — all from your desktop. We need to double down on these efforts in order to deepen our engagement with the job opportunities and creative possibilities afforded by advancing technology, while at the same time bringing the timeless wisdom of the Torah to form the timeless principles that accompany this almost all-powerful innovation. We must jump headfirst into this, so that our Torah-based timeless values push

humanity forward.

If you want to live in the future, it is at the intersection of technology and the future of the Jewish people — the State of Israel.

I invest in technology and live in Israel because I want to live in the future, and because I believe the future for our people is bright. With your help, the Jewish people from the State of Israel can become a creative beacon for humanity, solving real problems with these immense tools for the world population at large. Like the prophet Isaiah says, and as we can finally do, we can spread out the timeless principles of Hashem and the Torah to the world, via technology. After taking responsibility for our brothers and sisters per the above, we can become an *or lagoyim*.

We are all connected. We are all challenged now. The Jewish future and the future of technology and innovation are being created as we speak. This demands that we (you) take responsibility and action to create your future, the future of the Jewish people and the future of humanity, and, at the same time, turn up in person on behalf of our people wherever they are. Good luck and Godspeed.

P.S.: There is funding available for anyone taking up the challenge to stand by our brothers and sisters on college campuses in a concerted and persistent manner.

Michael Eisenberg is a former editor in chief of The Commentator, a partner at venture capital fund Aleph and author of the recently published book, "The Tree of Life and Prosperity: 21st Century Business Principles from the Book of Genesis."



YouTube screenshot from a fireside chat on Oct. 26 with Michael Eisenberg, Moshe Bellows and Bruce Targain

THE COMMENTATOR

EMPATHY

Continued from Page 13

This push for more empathy begs a different question: Does empathy even result in more positive outcomes? Many studies suggest otherwise. In an article published in the Wall Street Journal, several studies quoted showed that on average, empathy made people objectively *less* moral. When faced with ethical dilemmas, such as giving treatment to save one child from a terminal illness versus saving many children, participants who had done an exercise to empathize with the first child opted to save her at the expense of the others. Harvard Business

Review adds that empathy is finite, and caring so deeply about strangers depletes our emotional energy and reduces our ability to exhibit empathy in other vital areas, such as our personal and communal interactions. Overextending ourselves emotionally for strangers isn't necessarily a good thing.

This doesn't mean that empathy doesn't have a place, or that we don't have a responsibility to help people. Emotional investment is often a necessary factor to motivate people to be catalysts for good in the world. In the words of Rabbi Sacks, "Jewish history

begins in miracles, but culminates in human responsibility. What changes us is not what is done for us by God, but what we do in response to His call." Without empathy, we might not heed His call. We might decide that the continuation of genocide, child hunger, abuse and hundreds of other causes of human suffering aren't our problem. We might lack the drive to become involved in things that don't result in our personal gain. However, empathy doesn't have to mean taking on emotional baggage for every sad story on the news.

Terrible headlines can affect us, and make us feel for people with whom we have little or no connection. Empathy in the face of tragedy makes us reevaluate our own lives, and can enable us to make a real difference in the lives of others across the globe. Some people really are hyper-empathetic to every tragedy they hear about, and that is beautiful. But if someone doesn't feel that way, they aren't monsters. They might just have a healthy amount of disengaged empathy for calamities a world away.

In Memoriam: Rav Moshe Ashen z"l

By DAVID TANNER

Anyone who has *davened* at the 2:30 p.m. *mincha* in the Glueck Beit Midrash over the past few weeks has noticed the *chazzan* reciting a chapter of Tehillim afterward. Unfortunately, the person for whom those Tehillim were said has now passed away. Our *yeshiva* has lost Rav Moshe Ashen z"l, long-time *mashgiach* of the YU cafeteria, student of Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik z"l and *talmid chacham* par excellence.

In [Rav Ashen's] presence, I felt a sense of connectedness to the mesorah of the yeshiva and the previous generation of Torah leaders. Yet his unassuming appearance meant that so many people who never had conversations with him passed him by, thinking him no more than a simple cafeteria mashgiach.

Growing up in Washington Heights, my earliest memories of davening were when my father took me to the *nusach Sefard minyan* in Zysman Hall's Room 101 on Shabbat morning. Sadly, this *minyan* has disappeared due to the deaths of most of its *mitpallelim*: old-timers such as Rabbi Nosson Friedman z"l and Rabbi Harry Nussenbaum z"l. This was a unique *minyan* at YU, or really anywhere, with its homey, almost *shtiebel*-like atmosphere (enhanced by the weekly *kiddush* held afterward). Rav Moshe Ashen served as *ba'al korei* and *chazzan*, as well as *ba'al toke'ah* on Rosh Hashanah. While Rav Ashen was sometimes hard to hear when he spoke to people, his *keriat hatorah* was impeccable and unmistakable; every syllable was enunciated clearly and precisely. The sound of Rav Ashen's Torah reading still rings in my ears, serving as the first example of *leining* for me and setting high expectations for all *leining* I would hear in the future.

When I got a bit older, I was fortunate to take advantage of Rav Moshe Ashen's vast Torah knowledge in addition to his *leining* and *davening* for the *tzibbur*. Rav Ashen was truly a *baki* in all of Torah; as several *maspidim* noted at his funeral (available on YUTorah), he never forgot anything he learned, including the *shiurim* of his Rebbe, Rav Soloveitchik, and was able to quote the

Shach and Taz on Shulchan Aruch from memory. But as his nephew, Rabbi Yisrael Ashen, noted in his *hesped*, Rav Moshe's prodigious memory came from his incredible love for and devotion to Torah. Rav Yisrael Ashen related how he would learn with his uncle before the Shabbat day meal and then accompany him to the meal.

On one occasion, after they were learning Shulchan Aruch, Rav Yisrael went to leave the *beit midrash* and noticed that his uncle wasn't with him. He went back to the *beit midrash* and saw that his uncle had

reopened the Shulchan Aruch, reviewing what they had learned to make sure he had it memorized. Rav Yisrael told his uncle "we have to go now," and began leaving, until he noticed again that his uncle wasn't with him. He turned back and saw that his uncle had gone back to the *beit midrash* again, reopened the Shulchan Aruch and continued reviewing. This repeated itself once more until Rav Moshe was finally able to tear himself away from the Shulchan Aruch. Rav Hershel Reichman put it succinctly, borrowing a turn of phrase from Rav Soloveitchik: Some people learn Torah, while others *are* Torah. Rav Moshe Ashen made his Torah learning into who he was.

The *maspidim* also noted Rav Ashen's *chessed*. With all his knowledge and understanding of Torah, he could have easily focused all his attention only on the highest level learning of which he was capable. But instead, Rav Ashen was always available to talk to people about what *they* were learning, to answer their questions and give them tips. Two years ago, when Rav Ashen was in a rehabilitation center, I visited him and told him I was learning Chullin. He asked which *perek*, and when I told him Kol Habasar (which discusses the laws of *basar b'chalav*, in which Rav Ashen was particularly proficient), and he gave me a very valuable piece of advice: I should learn

the first few *blat* with just Rashi and without Tosafot, and only look at Tosafot afterwards, because those *Tosafot* constantly quote the Gemara later in the *perek*, and looking at them without seeing the Gemara first would be a recipe for confusion. I followed Rav Ashen's advice and was very glad I did.

Rav Moshe Ashen used Torah to shape his personality in the most positive of ways. His sense of *yirat shamayim* was palpable, and no more than a few minutes could go by in his company without his sharing some words of Torah. He was also a master storyteller, regaling me with tales of Rav Soloveitchik that often concluded with his uproarious laughter at a witty comeback or clever saying of the Rav. In his presence, I

felt a sense of connectedness to the *mesorah* of the *yeshiva* and the previous generation of Torah leaders. Yet his unassuming appearance meant that so many people who never had conversations with him passed him by, thinking him no more than a simple cafeteria *mashgiach*. The lesson I take from his passing is a sobering one: let us all appreciate the great people hidden in our midst before it is too late for us to benefit from their wisdom. May his *neshama* have an *aliyah* in Gan Eden, where he is once again reunited with his beloved rebbe, and may his memory always be for a blessing in the *batei midrash* and cafeterias of our *yeshiva*.



Rav Ashen in May 2019

M TANNER

Thou Shalt Not Cancel: A Review of Nevergreen

By AHARON NISSEL

Andrew Pessin, professor of philosophy and religion at Connecticut University, is no stranger to cancel culture. In 2015, he was criticized by a student for a pro-Israel Facebook post that could have been interpreted as racist. Though Pessin deleted the post the day the student emailed him complaining, weeks later the Connecticut University student paper published letters to the editor attacking Pessin, and students started a petition demanding the school condemn his rhetoric. There is no doubt that this incident, and other similar ones from recent years from across the country, were on Pessin's mind as he wrote his most recent work, "Nevergreen."

"Nevergreen" revolves around a man named Jefferey (though he curiously only goes by "J."), who is invited to give a guest lecture at a small liberal arts college called Nevergreen. Though no one shows up to his talk, he is pegged by students as violating the Virtue Code, who then file an

"Offensiveness Complaint" with the "Dean of Community Values." Nevergreen, after all, "values values." And its students, "hate hate." Though a smaller group of students choose to "Resist the Resistance," J. spends the rest of the novel escaping this opposition, a range of other student groups and inclement weather.

"Nevergreen," published by Open Books this summer, is pleasantly readable. The writing is dialogic and humorous, but also grounded and thought-provoking; serious readers will alternate between giggles and gasps.

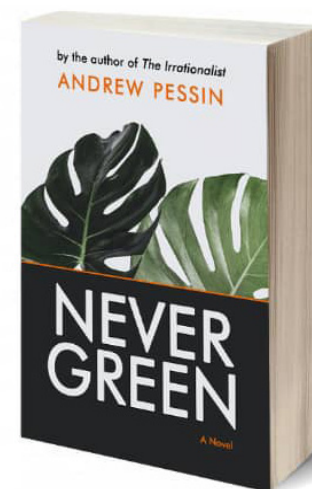
Pessin describes the book as "a portrait of today's liberal arts college scene, cancel culture, and more." J. is never told why the students found his talk (which, you may recall, no one showed up to) to be so full of hateful rhetoric. The chaos that ensues — and it really is chaos — is all based on these unfounded claims. J. publishes a generic apology (as there are no specifics on which to comment), which is immediately

rejected by the "Resistance" of offended students. The Resistance leads the charge against J., and it is quite literally a charge, as they chase after him chanting "kill the beast" and "cut his throat."

Pessin's argument is clear: contemporary cancel culture has gone too far. Anyone can be attacked for anything, and when

"Nevergreen," there's just no reason. Also, contemporary political disputes, especially around social issues, can unfortunately lead

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"Nevergreen"

OPEN BOOKS

The Kyle Rittenhouse Trial: Apparently Self-Defense Is a Thing of the Past

By NAOMI ROSE

This article was published online on Nov. 14.

On Aug. 25, 2020, Kyle Rittenhouse went to Kenosha, Wisconsin to help clean up the wreckage left over by the “peaceful protestors” who were protesting the shooting of Jacob Blake. Kyle, then 17, was spotted scrubbing graffiti off a school building, administering first-aid to people injured by the protestors, and protecting small businesses and policemen from harm’s way. However, as three men advanced on him, Rittenhouse was forced to kill two and injure another in order to save his own life. While the media and then-presidential candidate Joe Biden portrayed Rittenhouse as a white supremacist murderer, it is clear to anyone watching the trial that Rittenhouse’s actions were simply the actions of a terrified 17-year-old who only shot because of self-defense.

Rittenhouse is being tried on six criminal charges, including first-degree homicide and attempted first-degree homicide, and is facing up to a lifetime in prison for simply defending himself. When looking at the witness testimony from the sides of both the prosecution and the defense, it becomes obvious that Rittenhouse should be acquitted.

Let us examine the first man over whom the Left is weeping — Joseph Rosenbaum, 36. Rosenbaum was not merely a convicted serial child molester (not that this has any bearing on Rittenhouse’s guilt or innocence). According to Ryan Balch, a prosecution witness, Rosenbaum had shouted, “If I catch any of you alone, I’m going to f—king kill you.” Rittenhouse added that Rosenbaum had also yelled, “I’m going to cut your f—king hearts out.” Rittenhouse started to run away from him, while repeatedly yelling “friendly,” as evidenced from an FBI surveillance camera. As he was running, Rittenhouse said that he heard another person with Rosenbaum shout “get him and kill him,” and that he heard a gunshot behind him. According to the testimony of Richie McGinniss, a video

editor for The Daily Caller, Rosenbaum then lunged for Rittenhouse’s AR-15. In an attempt to save his own life, Rittenhouse fired at Rosenbaum, killing him. Rittenhouse then ran towards him in an effort to administer first aid but stopped after he saw someone else already giving it to him.

The second man, Anthony Huber, 26, a convicted domestic abuser (which similarly does not affect the outcome of the case), struck Rittenhouse multiple times with a skateboard, knocking him to the ground, and then tried to grab Rittenhouse’s rifle. Rittenhouse said that he had felt “the strap starting to come off my body.” Rittenhouse then shot and killed Huber, too.

*If Rittenhouse is convicted,
it would be an extreme
perversion of American
justice.*

Lastly, Gaige Grosskreutz, 27, the prosecution’s key witness, admitted himself that Rittenhouse had only shot at him once he pointed his handgun (which was being illegally carried, as he had been arrested for a felony burglary) into Rittenhouse’s face:

CHIRAFISI (defense attorney):

Okay. So, when you were standing three to five feet from him with your arms up in the air, he never fired, right?

GROSSKREUTZ: Correct.

CHIRAFISI: It wasn’t until you pointed your gun at him, advanced on him, with your gun — now your hands down, pointed at him — that he fired, right?

GROSSKREUTZ: Correct.

As Rittenhouse put it, Grosskreutz “lunge[d] at me with his pistol pointed directly at my head.” Rittenhouse then shot at Grosskreutz’s bicep, injuring his arm.

Rittenhouse clearly feared for his life many times over that night. According to the

Wisconsin self-defense law, a person has a right to use deadly force if “the actor reasonably believes that such force is necessary to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm to himself or herself.” As we can see from the trial, Rittenhouse had every right to believe he was in imminent danger of death or great bodily harm. Not only that, but Rittenhouse testified that he didn’t even intend to kill anyone. All he wanted to do was to stop the attackers from harming him.

The questions being thrown at Rittenhouse under cross-examination were unbelievably ridiculous. Such questions include why Rittenhouse felt that Grosskreutz was a threat when he was only carrying a handgun, along with an attack on Rittenhouse’s constitutional right to remain silent during his arrest. Thankfully, the judge yelled at the prosecutor for violating Rittenhouse’s right to the 5th amendment. However the fact that this trial is still being debated across the country is both astonishing and heart-breaking.

As J.D. Vance said on Tucker Carlson Tonight, “It’s not a trial, it is child abuse masquerading as justice in this country.” When Rittenhouse broke down in tears on the witness stand the other day, the trauma that Rittenhouse was experiencing should have become clear to everyone.

If Rittenhouse is convicted, it would be an extreme perversion of American justice. As Cassandra Fairbanks tweeted, “our right to self defense is on trial.” Are we now such a progressive society that we would rather an innocent be murdered, rather than have that individual defend his life? Would we rather mourn the deaths of a pedophile, domestic abuser and burglar, rather than sympathize with an innocent child’s trauma? Would we rather turn a simple court case into a show of politics, rather than hand out the justice needed? These are the questions we ought to be asking ourselves as this crazy trial awaits a jury decision.

NEVERGREEN
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to civil disobedience. There have been many examples of this in recent months. But a satanic ritual at the cryptic Moondial in the center of the campus? Surely, that’s a little overboard. Now, I understand that Pessin is exaggerating to make a point, and that point is well made. But he does lose some credibility when he goes so far.

But Pessin’s argument is hardly one-sided. In addition to criticizing the left, he is sure to criticize the reactionary far right. Take, for example, the scene where J. wanders around the student club expo, which is one of the most enjoyable moments in the book. There are the classic clubs and organizations: student government, music, etc. But also the Carnivores club to combat the PETA club, the Settler-Colonial Club to combat the Indigenous Peoples Club and the Cultural Appropriation Club to combat the Marginalized Peoples club. And of course, the Ur-Nazi club, which rejects the mission of Neo-Nazis in favor of “the original real deal.” The club that “resists the Resistance” even dresses up in Civil War Confederate uniforms.

Jewish readers will notice a few subtle Jewish references: 613 pomegranate seeds in a recipe, a professor whose last name is Netzach. But Pessin himself explains that the entire book should be read as about the Jews. Specifically, its lack of Jews highlights the cancellation of Jews, which Pessin sees as especially common, especially when it comes to supporting Israel.

“Nevergreen,” published by Open Books this summer, is pleasantly readable. The writing is dialogic and humorous, but also grounded and thought-provoking; serious readers will alternate between giggles and gasps. Pessin hardly comes across as an “old man yells at cloud” figure, but instead presents a passionate argument against cancel culture that is fleshed out and nuanced. Perhaps he takes his parables a bit too far, but it certainly keeps the reader interested as the story gets wilder and wilder.

The Metaverse: A Chilling Window into our Digital Future

By YONI MAYER

Facebook’s recent name change to Meta, and its demonstration of the proposed metaverse therein, is a dire warning for the future, not the grand utopian vision Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg is making it out to be.

For those who didn’t watch the event, Zuckerberg displayed his vision for a world that exists over the web through the use of Meta’s existing digital infrastructure: Users would don their Oculus Rift VR headsets, chat with friends through WhatsApp and enter virtual video chats, all in the space of a fabricated reality. For a good reference point, Zuckerberg’s presentation reminded me of the film “Ready Player One,” a story in which Earth has become decrepit and its entire population interacts and exists in a virtual worldscape. On top of that, the evil conglomerate vying to take full control over that virtual world only wishes to do so to be able to increase profits through advertising, rather than to improve the lives of its users. Frighteningly similar, I know.

Rather than piquing my interest and idealism with its vision of the future, Facebook’s announcement encouraged me to remove myself from social media even more than I

already have. This realization came through my understanding of what social media is compared to what our idea of socialization should be. Ironically, the realization came through using one of Facebook’s apps: WhatsApp.

Rather than having the depression of social media anchored strictly to a box in our hands, Facebook is trying to make it into a new black hole of modern reality.

I’m in a film group chat with friends in which we all share anything of interest relating to film. One day, after I had sent in something particularly interesting, I had the sudden urge to share it with more people who were interested in film. As a probable symptom of the 21st century’s always-connected mode of existence, I had the thought to share it with people in concentric circles. First, I thought of people I was friends with who were interested in the subject but just weren’t in the group chat. Why shouldn’t they still have the opportunity to see the content? Immediately after that, I felt an urge for people I didn’t even know to share in my enjoyment of the film tidbit I had found.

Since I found it interesting, I wanted others passionate about the subject to be made aware of it. I felt that they had to know, and on top of that, I felt that the more people I shared it with, the greater the likelihood that some of them would find it intriguing.

In an increasingly digital world, the difference between socializing and social media is distinct, and what had just happened to me was my proof. In this case, the group chat was my social life, and the urge to share for sharing’s sake was social media. Nonetheless, the effect that these two structures have on the psyche are similar.

Sharing with friends in a group chat of no more than a few people is the closest approximation social media can give to a real social life and a conversation with friends. The responses are somewhat genuine and the target audience is the same. On the other hand, the urge to share endlessly and without a specific audience is the fabricated

socializing of social media. This model can only conjure feelings of loneliness.

It works like this. After sharing whatever it is I wanted to share to a large social media audience, there are a few possible outcomes: Either no one finds the content interesting, a few people do or everyone does. If no one finds the content interesting, I’m left with a resigned, rejected feeling, wishing I had stuck to my group chat and only shared the info with my close friends who I knew would care to begin with. If only a few people found it interesting, I would still feel dejected, seeing as my intended audience was much bigger but only a few people responded. Lastly, even if a great number of people responded positively, the ultimate feeling of elation would quickly decay, drowned out by a sense of impersonality and a craving for the attention once again. No real connections would be made and I’d be left preferring I had only shared it with a few friends. Large-scale social media is a dead end of empathy.

This paradigm of social media versus sociability will be expressed powerfully in the metaverse. Rather than having the depression of social media anchored strictly to a box in our hands, Facebook is trying to make

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To Be a Georgia Sports Fan

By SHUIE BERGER

It's New Year's day, 2017. Final week of the NFL season. After a statement win against the rival New Orleans Saints, I have a lot to look forward to. My naive young self is excited about the upcoming NFL playoffs. My team is 11-5, and they had a bye for the wild card round of the playoffs. Only three more wins to be World Champions.

So, when I say we did it, I mean we did it. We, the fans, stuck it out, past all the laughter and mockery, to finally say that it is over. "We" are "chokers" no longer.

For those who don't know me, I am a Falcons fan. Yes, 28-3. I get it. Laugh it up. Those of you who understand can skip this paragraph. For those who are still confused, I'll give a quick recap. After big wins in the first two rounds of the playoffs, the Falcons made just their second franchise Super Bowl and played against the legendary Tom Brady and the Patriots "dynasty." The first half was all Falcons, and the score was 21-3 at halftime. With about 17 minutes left in the game (the entire game is 60 minutes), the score was 28-3 in favor of the Falcons. There was no way they could lose. But with a bit of Tom Brady magic, a series of fatal and avoidable mistakes and a lot of luck, the Patriots came back and won the game in overtime. We could not believe it. We were crushed. We had been winning by so much.

The collapse is still talked about: Tom Brady trolls the team constantly, and every March 28 (3/28), social media wishes the fans a "Happy 28-3 Day." If I tell someone I'm a Falcons fan, they always have the same response: "lol ... 28 to 3." While it's become predictable, part of me still hurts from it. I have tried to move past it, but I can't. Not because it actually hurts that much. It is because I am reminded of it, consistently. Not by fans or sports writers and analysts. But by other Georgia teams.

Everyone who follows sports religiously like me knows what I'm talking about. One word is used to describe Georgia sports: "choke." This term was tossed around like a hot potato after the Super Bowl loss, and it continues to describe any team or player of any sport that loses control of a game and blows it. After that Super Bowl loss, the whole city was in metaphorical shambles. The day following the Super Bowl, I flew to Israel to visit Yeshivas, and when people met me, their response was always along the lines of "oh. Sorry."

Just when the town began to move forward, another lead was blown. Just 10 months later in the College Football Playoffs Championship, University of Georgia blew another big lead. It just kept happening. Georgia teams would get as far as possible and then squander their leads. In 2019, the Atlanta Braves held a commanding 2-1 lead in the National League (NL) Divisional Series over the St. Louis Cardinals. They blew a lead in Game 4 and lost in extra innings. They got smothered in Game 5 and lost the series, 3-2. The following year, 2020, the same team got all the way to the NL Championship Series against the juggernaut LA Dodgers. They had a commanding 3-1 lead and were one win away from the World Series. By now, you can probably guess what happened: they

lost three straight games and blew the series.

Atlanta sports teams have become the epitome of "choking." Talk about embarrassing. The Atlanta Braves went to five World Series in nine years, from 1991 to 1999, and they only won once. They won their division 14 years in a row and only had one trophy to show for it. A sad history for a sad town. It was the only championship in any of the major sports that Atlanta had won.

Those of you who do not follow sports might not understand the magnitude of the loss felt by the fans. Maybe this will help: imagine you went to a fancy restaurant where you had been waiting months for a reservation. All your friends had been there and had told you how amazing the food was. "You have to try it," they'd said. You get there, waiters bring out your food and it looks fabulous. Absolutely to die for. But right before you are about to take your first bite, the waiter grabs your fork, takes away your plate and kicks you out. That is what it felt like, but probably worse than you're imagining. Well, last week, we got to take that bite. We got to taste that sweet victory everyone had been talking about.

On Nov. 2, the curse on Georgia sports was broken. The jinx was lifted. The Atlanta Braves became World Champions for the first time in 26 years. Many had doubted them and assumed the worst; even I doubted them until the final inning. I always told myself that if I expected the worst, I'd be less sad when they lost and more excited if they won. It was the best way for me to deal with the inevitable failure. I set the bar really low, so I wouldn't be surprised unless Atlanta won. (Jets fans know what I'm talking about.) This time, however, the Braves exceeded my expectations without question.

Many of my friends came up to me and wished me Mazal Tov, congratulating me on

the win, but they had absolutely no idea what it felt like and what it meant to me. What it meant to the city. To the fans. I almost cried, and I know some who actually did. To go from the laughingstock of the sports world to World Champions is the greatest feeling in sports. It wasn't just that they won. It was *when* they won as well. What the fans of this city had to endure for almost five years, since that Super Bowl, is different from what fans of eternally bad teams must experience. They have an expectation of losing, so it comes as no surprise when they do. (Again, Jets fans know what I'm talking about.) I don't mean to say that being bad consistently isn't a tragic form of loss, but that for us, it was the constant hope that the team put in us that was taken away at the last minute that made it all the more painful. They were never quite good enough to win it all. Now, they have won. Finally, after all the ridicule and jokes, the city can rest. The tension is gone. There's another championship in town and no one can take it away from us. They can't choke away the World Series anymore.

There is a common word that sports fans use: "we." They don't actually mean to say that they are on the roster, or that they work for the organization. They mean that they are deeply connected with the city and the team represents that city. Each and every fan is a part of the fanbase, which is a huge part of the team. "We" is an all-inclusive word that makes the fans feel part of something bigger than any of them as individuals.

So, when I say we did it, I mean *we* did it. We, the fans, stuck it out, past all the laughter and mockery, to finally say that it is over. "We" are "chokers" no longer. So what does it feel like to be a Georgia sports fan, you ask? In order to not make this any longer, I'll describe it with one word: redemption.

METAVERSE

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it into a new black hole of modern reality.

After the pandemic, we're all too familiar with humanity's penchant for virtual alternatives. Why would children go to school anymore when they could just put on their VR headsets and stay at home? Why would consulting firms send consultants around the world when they could stick them in a boardroom and give them Oculus Rifts? The potential of a virtual landscape to interact with others across the globe has undeniable perks, but we know all too well how addictive social media has become. Make no mistake: Facebook's name change to Meta does not mean that the metaverse will be run by a different organization. This new reality of an all-encompassing social media would still be run by Facebook, the company which has been all over the news for its unethical use of social media. Who knows what effects that could have on the psyche of the world at large.

The metaverse has the tragic potential to become not just an accessory or a fun game to play after you get home, or even just a new form of social media, but our new reality altogether. The metaverse doesn't excite me — it terrifies me.



Outside the Atlanta Braves' Truist Park

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NEVER. STOP. COMMENTATING.

How Large Options Trades Impact Markets

By **ARIE G. MANDELBLUM**

What is making the stock market move? Is it news of an ever-increasing supply chain issue? Is it the fact that there may or may not be enough natural gas to keep America warm through this coming winter? Is it all irrational? Is the random walk theory really applicable to today's maniac markets? Do you really believe that Tesla rallied 12% on Oct. 25 due to Hertz announcing that it was interested in placing a large order of Tesla cars for their car rental fleet? What if I told you that \$15 billion worth of call options premium flowed into Tesla stock that same day? What if I told you that on Sept. 30 of this year, the SP 500 index dropped 1.5% because a bank was rebalancing one of their options trades?

On Sept. 30, J.P. Morgan placed an options trade that caused financial markets to drop 1.5% that day. What is an option anyways? An option is a binding financial contract between a buyer and a seller. There are two types of options contracts: a call and a put. A buyer of a call option pays a premium to the seller to have the right, but not the obligation, to exercise their option to purchase 100 shares at the agreed stock price as long as the stock's price is at, or higher than, the agreed price before or on the option's expiration date. A buyer of a put option pays a premium to the seller to have the right, but not the obligation, to exercise their option to sell 100 shares at the agreed stock price as long as the stock's price is at or below the agreed price before or on the option's expiration date.

Options were created for institutions and individuals to insure their portfolio for a cost. In American public financial markets, there are market makers that insure and provide liquidity to the markets. They're

the ones taking the other side of your trades when you place them to insure and protect the stability of markets. Because these market makers are more interested in remaining neutral with their exposure to markets, they use various ways to hedge out these transactions through purchasing or selling stock based on their needs. If a big bank wants to hedge out risk through the purchase of put options, the market maker would have to sell (write) the option to the bank, collect the premium for selling the option and have to sell shares to hedge their risk.

However, what if big players, otherwise referred to as whales, decided to buy short-dated options on individual stocks instead of long-dated options on indexes?

Why does the market maker have to sell shares to hedge their risk? This is because the market maker is taking the opposite side of the bet. If the stock goes below the agreed-upon price, the buyer of the put option would be able to sell 100 shares per contract to the seller of that option. To hedge this downside risk, the market makers sell shares in proportion to how likely it is for the stock to reach or cross the agreed-upon price of the contract on or before the expiration date of the contract. This creates a delicate dance in the stock market because of a sudden extraordinary increase in demand for calls or puts that can cause an imbalance in the market makers' models and in turn cause ripple effects throughout the market as the market makers hurry to hedge their new positions.

On Sept. 30, J.P. Morgan bought 45,000 SP 500 index put options expiring in December as part of their JHEQX hedged equity fund mandate. Because not everyone enjoys paying a hefty premium

for hedging, the bank decided to simultaneously sell 45,000 SP 500 index call options. This enabled them to collect a premium for selling (writing) the call options and use the proceeds to pay for their put options. The market makers had to sell the bank the puts and buy the calls the bank wanted. Both of these trades required the market maker to sell a tremendous amount of shares to hedge this one transaction.

The exact amount of shares that were sold to hedge this trade are unknown; however, Sergei Perfilev, previously a quantita-

tive analyst at Goldman Sachs, estimated that every 1% up or down move in markets could cause the market makers to either buy or sell around \$1 billion worth of shares. The interesting thing about this delicate constant hedging game is that the values used for hedging are all based on historical and expected future volatility in markets. The metric market makers use to hedge their options holdings is Delta. The delta of an option is how much an option rises in price based on a \$1 move. The delta of an option is based on its vega, or how much an option goes up or down in price after a one-point change in the stock's implied volatility.

It's all tied to how volatile markets are. When the market makers began to sell this tremendous amount of shares to hedge their risk, it sent the indices lower, causing implied volatility to rise, which made the vega of the put options rise, which caused the delta of the options to rise, which caused the market makers to sell more shares to hedge this additional risk. This continuous cycle

can be advanced further if other big players hedge the same way at the same time. This is something that we saw in markets as they crashed in March of 2020. However, if markets remain stable for long enough, implied volatility subdues. Additionally, if the options that the market maker was hedging against expire, then the market maker unwinds their hedge and causes markets to rally.

However, what if big players, otherwise referred to as whales, decided to buy short-dated options on individual stocks instead of long-dated options on indexes?

On Oct. 25, \$15 billion worth of call options were bought in Tesla stock. The majority of these purchases were in short-dated options; options that were expiring on the 29th of October. This caused the market makers to have to sell the call options and buy shares to hedge their risk. Being short a call means that you are selling the right to someone else to buy 100 shares from you at the agreed price. If you do not own these shares, you are practically shorting shares at the agreed-upon price. The significance of the short duration aspect of the calls is that the market maker has to hedge more aggressively against their trade. Without getting into too much detail as to what gamma weaponization is, this unforeseen radical change in demand for Tesla calls caused the stock to rally to all-time highs.

Although some might view Tesla's rally on Oct. 25 as a great thing, because after all, rallies in the stock market may bring about financial prosperity for some, I find this new trend extremely dangerous for the stability of financial markets. Everyone is celebrating when their shares rise in price, however, will they be celebrating when the options markets opt to buy short-dated puts instead of calls, thus causing their accumulated wealth to fall?



Large participants in financial markets are often referred to as “whales.”

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2:50 P.M.

Aaron Koller

Ancient Egypt and the Bible

4:50 P.M.

David Berger

The History and Nature of Anti-Semitism

NEW COURSE

6:50 P.M.

Josh Zimmerman

From Catastrophe to Renewal: Polish Jewry since 1939

Ephraim Kanarfogel

Readings in Medieval Talmudic Commentaries and Halakhic Compendia (tractate 'Avodah Zarah)

NEW COURSE

TUESDAY

2:50 P.M.

JJ Schachter

History, Memory, and the Commemoration of Catastrophe: From the Destruction of the Temples through the Holocaust

NEW COURSE

4:50 P.M.

Jeffrey Gurock

American Jewish History 1881–1967

Ari Mermelstein

Introduction to Biblical Studies

6:50 P.M.

Mordechai Cohen

Kabbalistic vs. Philosophical Exegesis

Ephraim Kanarfogel

Introduction to the Literature of the Rishonim

WEDNESDAY

2:50 P.M.

Shalom Holtz

Book of Jeremiah

4:50 P.M.

Jess Olson

German Jewish Intellectual History

6:50 P.M.

Josh Karlip

In the Land of Atheism: Rabbinic Thought and Writing in the Soviet Union

NEW COURSE

Daniel Rynhold

Survey of Modern Jewish Philosophy: Evil & Suffering

THURSDAY

2:50 P.M.

Shira Weiss

Dogma in Medieval Jewish Thought

Joseph Angel

Rabbinic Aramaic of Eretz Yisrael

NEW COURSE

4:50 P.M.

Steven Fine

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Richard Hidary

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