

The Commentator

Official Undergraduate Newspaper of Yeshiva College

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YESHIVA UNIVERSITY, 500 W. 185 ST., NEW YORK, NY 10033

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President Lamm, with Vice President Miller at his side, holds court in meeting with student leaders.

Student Reps Rip MYP, JSS

by Daniel Oshinsky

YC student leaders lashed into the College's Jewish studies programs during a December 4th meeting with Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm at the President's Central Park West home. The leaders directed their harshest criticism towards the Mazer Yeshiva Program, telling Dr. Lamm that in their estimation, the YP program fails to provide for the needs of its 500 plus students. The James Striar School also came under fire as leaders complained of the lack of a genuine beginners class and an influx of overqualified students. Dr. Lamm defended the two programs, but also said all criticisms brought forward by the students would be taken

into consideration.

The meeting, an annual event, was attended by the presidents and vice presidents of YCSC, SOY, JSSSC, and IBCSC, the editor of the Commentator and Hamevaser, and their counterparts from Stern College for Women. SSSBSA's representatives did not attend.

Vice President Rabbi Israel Miller served as an informal MC during the meeting, while Rebbitzin Lamm was a gracious hostess. Dean of Students Efreim Nulman, and his assistants Mr. Jeff Cheitoff and Ms. Zelda Braun were also present.

During an hour long Presidents Meeting held the week before, the five student council heads of YC decided to focus in on problems specific to the Jewish studies divisions, as opposed to raising several

different issues as in previous years. Dean Nulman suggested the change, noting that previous student meetings with Dr. Lamm had been characterized by a harping over details and a lack of depth.

SOY President Lawrence Burian opened the discussion with Dr. Lamm. Complaining of a lack of warmth and excitement within the Yeshiva Program, Burian estimated that perhaps only half the students enrolled truly benefit from MYP.

"I know it's a sweeping statement," explained Burian, "but unfortunately, I think it's the truth. Many, many students are falling through the cracks and not really gaining- at best it's

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Late Start Proposed for University

by Jay Bailey

The office of the Vice President has proposed to start classes next Fall a full month later than they began this year. The Senate was presented with the tentative Yeshiva College Undergraduate calendar for 1991-2, with the first day of class slated for the unusually late date of October 7. Although classes have begun in October four times in the last twenty years, the proposed calendar has already become the focus of controversy between all those it would affect.

According to the calendar, the semester would begin after the Holidays, with Thanksgiving as the only break in the Fall Semester. The semester would end January 23rd, and resume on the 4th of February. After this ten day intercession, the semester would have the usual breaks for Purim and Pesach, and finally come to a close on June 3.

Dean Rosenfeld claims that as far as the College is concerned, there really is no alternative to this plan. To try to conduct classes on and off for the month of September is not a feasible recourse. With this calendar, students will start in October and study straight through, without the distracting

Proposed Calendar 1991-1992

Late Registration

Oct. 6

First Day of Classes

Oct. 7

Thanksgiving Recess

Oct. 28-30

Winter Intercession

Jan. 24-Feb. 3

Passover Recess

April 17-April 27

Commencement

June 4

interruption of a Yom Tov break.

Senate Chairman David J. Kay says he supports the calendar, but only because it is the lesser of two evils. "It's a choice between having a month of sporadic classes, which takes away from the seriousness of the atmosphere, or dealing with the pressure a concentrated semester, with only Thanksgiving weekend off to study." Chief opposition to the proposal has come not from the student body, but from the heads of the Jewish studies divisions of Yeshiva College. Rabbi Charlop, Dean of the Mazer Yeshiva Program, feels very strongly that "to lose the Elul

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Special Joint Issue
Commentator-Observer

Available Today

Protestors Told Not to Wear Kippot

by Michael Z. Kellman and Neil Torczyner

Students Mobilized Against Saddam Hussein (SMASH), a multi-college organization, sponsored a controversial rally on Sunday, December 9, to demonstrate mainstream American student support for current US policy in the Gulf. However, the controversy surrounding the rally has little to do with Bush or Hussein. Rather, outrage over the rally has centered on the decision of SMASH organizers not to allow participating YU students to wear Kippot.

YU students who attended the rally were told beforehand to either take off their kippot or

wear hats. SMASH baseball caps were distributed before the protest began. When this reporter arrived to cover the rally, he was told by a YC organizer, in no uncertain terms, to remove his Kippah, don a hat, or leave.

Many students and faculty members labeled the SMASH decision a discriminatory policy. They expressed dismay that YU's own student leaders involved with SMASH could condone a policy restricting expression of religion.

"I understand you want to show that a cause is not Jewish," said Rabbi Yosef Blau, Mashgiach Ruchani at YU, "and that America is not protecting Jews and Jewish causes. But to

hide one's Jewishness and Jewish nature, I don't understand this."

"There are other ways to show a broader coalition," he continued. The organizers should have gone to other colleges and recruited more people. "Nothing justifies denying your beliefs that way," he asserted.

Jacob Davidson, President of the Jewish Students' Network, called SMASH's injunction against kippot "definitely wrong". "I would never tell someone, 'Hey you, put on a hat,'" he maintained. "What they should have done was make sure non-Jews were there. Telling people to wear hats, that's just hiding what you are."

Moshe Schwartz, a rally organizer, and a YU student, claimed that if students wore kippot at the protest, that factor would be a major media focus.

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Critical Thinking

During the annual meeting between student leaders and the administration, students focused discussion on problems within the Jewish Studies divisions. At one point during the exchange, Dr. Lamm responded as such:

"... We could also tighten up on discipline. Who's the Editor of THE COMMENTATOR? O.K. [are] your friends going to go along with tightening up discipline or are you going to scream bloody murder because we're treating you like high school kids? Who's going to make the first Va'Yitzaku [outcry] if I tighten up on requirements... Which of your reporters is going to come up with the great idea that we're also a university and you can't treat us like high school kids and there's a difference between church and state and you can't force us to do these things and religion means you have to do whatever your heart-I can give you the whole thing... I mean, I can give it to you by heart, I can read it in my sleep without even looking at the paper... I mean that as a rhetorical question because I know the answer and no matter what you're going to say I know the real answer. You're going to have such an article and such an editorial anyway-and probably should, I don't know-maybe you should."

Often, administrators and even presidents complain that the YU student body is unjustifiably critical of their actions. THE COMMENTATOR is thought of as a rag, and Student Council is seen as a society of hotheads. However, any administrator who honestly believes this is reaching for a simple-minded way to disregard the legitimate complaints of the student body.

Yeshiva University student leaders are elected to effect the changes that the student body desires, not for show. They are a sincere group and their criticisms are an outgrowth of their commitment to the students. It would be extremely irresponsible for student leaders to simply stand and watch cheerfully while an unwanted meal plan is enforced or to silently wonder, "What ever happened to the Schottenstein center?" Their job is to ask these questions out loud, and to then to find the answers.

THE COMMENTATOR, likewise, is counted on to question policy and investigate circumstance. We do not sacrifice countless hours of sleep just to rub noses.

The administration should understand that the staff of THE COMMENTATOR and University's student leaders are genuinely concerned about this institution and seek improvements for all its members. Students, in turn, should be aware that the administration's patience is limited. Criticism must be responsible and accompanied by well thought out solutions.

We realize that a University where the administration and the students are constantly at odds is counter-productive. Only by working *together* in an atmosphere of mutual respect can the students' dreams and the administration's plans be forged into reality.

Smashed Pride

We should not stand by idly and watch the unfolding events in Iraq merely as curious spectators. The involvement of Yeshiva College students in such organizations as Students Mobilized Against Saddam Hussein is a commendable way of generating student activism. Nonetheless, YU students insisting that other YU students publicly hide their Judaism is both a disgrace and an embarrassment to the entire Jewish community.

We wear our kippot as a sign of self respect. It is our way of telling the rest of this nation that we are comfortable with our identity and proud of our religion. By not merely asking, but rather demanding that we cover up our identity, SMASH organizers undermined the pride that YU tries to instill in us all. Any YC student who can sincerely ask a fellow Jew to publicly hide his kippah, let alone remove it entirely, is simply a hypocrite.

The organizers of SMASH justify their demand by claiming that they were preventing the rally from becoming an issue of Jewish concern. This is equally hypocritical. YC students were involved in planning the rally precisely because such protest would benefit Israel. Moreover, it is completely justifiable for us as YC students to protest against Iraq for this reason. Israel has done more than her part, playing a passive role at the request of President Bush. Yet, with America being so geographically removed from the Gulf, it is still Israel who faces the greatest danger. It is not the American families who must make proper preparations lest a chemical warhead be detonated in their neighborhood. Removing kippot to hide the fact that YC students are attending a rally for Israel's sake is simply a lie.

Hundreds of SMASH posters decorated the YC dorms before the rally. Hundreds of students, however, did not attend the rally. Not surprisingly, the posters made no mention at all of the demand on us to cast off our ritual headgear in an act of religious disrepute. Apparently lying - both to our fellow students and to the general public - does not pay.

The Commentator extends a *Refuah Shlemah* and a speedy recovery to Mrs. Judis

The Commentator

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GUEST AT THE DESK

ANDREW GOLDSMITH

A Glance Back

THE COMMENTATOR has a problem. Like most college newspapers, the staff is inexperienced. Unlike most college newspapers, few (if any) of the members of the staff have any intention of making journalism a career.

Factor in that most YU students are on campus for a three year accelerated program, and add the time-consuming dual curriculum. Add a social life. And don't forget the importance of grades.

How much time can anyone have left?

The miracle is that every second week, regularly and on schedule, a newspaper appears. No, it isn't magically published. Little elves do not appear in the computer room after midnight and finish the copy-editing or layout.

It is, and hopefully always will be, one of the very few projects in this university that from start to finish is the product of the students at Yeshiva College.

THE COMMENTATOR is, like the university it is a part of, unique. It is a newspaper where a dedication to the public trust is tempered with concern for halacha. A newspaper that strongly debates what is "right" to do as Jews and what is "right" because a story needs to be reported.

A typical editors' meeting debates constantly these two factors, over and over again, covering all aspects of publication. Do we run a student's opinion piece attacking the YP program? Do we print a rumor? Do we publish student's names caught in disciplinary action? Or even simpler problems, like do we give charitable causes free advertising?

Every issue is a debate. Judaism constantly clashes with secularism, what is "right" constantly clashing with what is "wrong." But every issue forces us to deal with these two opposing issues. And, in turn, every issue forces us to think.

But after all that work, it's a shame that few officials take the newspaper seriously.

University administrators, on any issue of real substance, do not take the views expressed in the newspaper or issues covered to heart. Unless, of course, the

issue could possibly damage the image of the university. A reporter investigating a sensitive story hits what I call "the wall of silence." It descends when an issue of importance arises, an issue that could somehow embarrass the university in circles outside the university.

Not long ago, a brave and controversial Editor-in-Chief named Behnam Dayanim raised the issue of Shabbat television use in the dorm. It raised difficult issues and the debate became both intense and heated.

Should THE COMMENTATOR have printed the story? Is a Yeshiva College newspaper the forum to discuss internal problems of the university? The opinions ranged from strong condemnation of the action to vocal support, and Dr. Lamm, in move that few other university presidents would care enough to make, descended from the mountain to voice his opinion.

It's now nearly two years later. The emotion is gone from the issue, the heated arguments, condemnations and approbations no longer heard. But strangely enough, it may have worked.

The university responded. Roshei Yeshiva met. Faculty became aware of a problem. Student leaders made efforts to improve the Shabbos atmosphere at Yeshiva. And the problem raised two years ago, although it may still exist, seems on the way to a solution.

It may not have been the article, someone will certainly argue. But we can't be sure. It's difficult, no, nearly impossible to pinpoint how a trend begins.

It did, however, shake us up. It forced the student body and administration to question, to reassess, to debate among ourselves, and even to think.

And it's a shame it takes that sort of drastic action by a student newspaper to cause a response.

Extremes should usually be avoided, but become necessary when an issue is ignored or remains unsolved. Perhaps if the administration took us a little more seriously extremes would never be needed.

Ah, well, so much for wishful thinking.

Andrew Goldsmith is the Executive Editor of THE COMMENTATOR.

Conscientious Kiruv

by Moshe Rothchild

Throughout the course of the school year, one need not look very far for opportunities to participate in some form of Jewish Outreach. Torah Tours, Kiruv, Seminar, NCSY, JPSY, Soviet Jewry, Achy, Counterpoint, ISS, JOLT- the list goes on and on. The number of students who participate in an outreach program at some point in their college careers is a large one. We, the students of Yeshiva University, vociferously state by our actions that we reject the notion that one may sit idly by without trying to insure that others hear the words of Torah, the language of truth. How is it possible that we can possess a truth of truths, the instruction manual for utilizing the world, and not share it with others? Hence, Outreach.

Outreach deals with some of the most sensitive matters of the soul. It is an improper approach to try to "convince" or "make" people religious, for this risks a violation of the fundamental right of each Jew to free choice. Rather, Outreach is or should be a presentation of Torah True Judaism, with the message being "come and look us over" and see what we have. If we really believe as we should that we possess a divine truth, that a Torah life style is satisfying, fulfilling and most of all a divine imperative, then we should pull no punches. An honest presentation of the Torah viewpoint on "controversial"

issues should not be presented as apologetic or with a "what can we do, the Torah says it" approach. Rather, it should be offered with a sense of pride and conviction in the Jewish



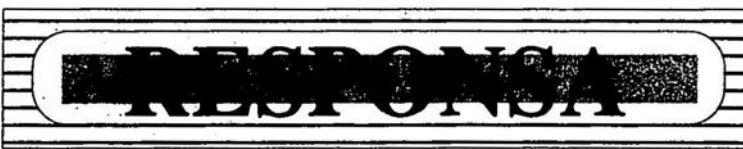
religion that we are trying so hard to represent.

Based upon this premise, the more one is prepared to be a representative of Torah Judaism, the more likely he or she is to succeed. Unfortunately, the converse is also a cold reality. Lack of preparation can result in countless people being turned away from Judaism. "If one saves one life, it is as if he has saved the whole world." So too if one theologically kills someone, it is as if he has destroyed an entire world. But one does not gain without some measure of risk, and risk we do. We lay our religion and hence our lives on the line whenever we choose to actively represent Judaism through outreach. Outreach is perhaps one of the most noble acts one can do because it involves this very risking of your own "life" for others. In the fulfillment of "lilmode u'lelamed" we

actualize our learning by offering it to others.

Realizing the seriousness of outreach and the potential destruction we can inflict without being a proper living example of the Torah, is one of, if not the most fundamental principles of outreach. Unfortunately, all too often we don't have to look very far to find those in violation of this principle, myself included. Most often it is due to a lack of understanding or forgetting the ramifications of our actions. A single act may place countless people on an endless chain of unpredictable effects. All too often we hear of those who attend various outreach programs for ulterior motives, which in theory could be okay, but unfortunately it usually impinges upon one's performance as an outreach worker. Would any of us ever consider stealing someone's money? Is stealing someone's right to Jewish exposure and perhaps a Jewish lifestyle any different? We should approach outreach with the most serious attitude we can muster, tremble at the task, yet be bold and secure that with proper attitude and preparation we can succeed.

So, if you are going to work in outreach remember that old boy scout adage. Be prepared. Not only be prepared to give a well tuned session, but prepare yourself as well to understand what outreach is, and that we represent Torah Judaism. Tampering with someone's soul has global repercussions. Let's not just begin a "chapter in someone's life," but maybe with proper preparation we can help change the ending.



To the Editor,

A slight correction to Dov Chelst's article on Machal (issue number 4) is required. The article incorrectly stated that "according to law an American may not volunteer to serve in a foreign army." In fact, in *Wiborg v. U.S.*, 163 U.S. 632 (1895) the Supreme Court endorsed a ruling that it was not a crime under U.S. law for an individual

to go abroad for the purpose of enlisting in a foreign army. (Being recruited in the U.S. is the problem, not the case with Machal.)

As far as losing citizenship, volunteering in a foreign army is not enough but must be

accompanied by the intention to relinquish U.S. citizenship. Becoming an officer or accepting a policymaking position in Israel would be considered such an intention.

There is more here than meets the eye and anyone interested in seeing written State Dept. guidelines should feel free to look me up.

Haskell Nussbaum
YC '91

Official Policy
THE COMMENTATOR
does not print unsigned
letters.

**The Commentator expresses its most sincere
condolences to Rav Meir Goldwicht
and his family**

on the loss of his father.

*May you be comforted with the mourners of Zion and
Jerusalem.*

CAMPUS NEWS

Sephardic Journey at the YU Museum

by Joel Haber

Five hundred years of Sephardic Jewish history, stretching from the Spanish Inquisition to the present, have been encapsulated in a comprehensive exhibit now on display in the Yeshiva University Museum. The display includes over 1000 articles, many of them being shown for the first time anywhere, from 10 different countries around the world.

The show contains religious and cultural objects garnered by the Sephardic people, as well as costumes, photographs, paintings, and shul models. While some of the material for the exhibit was taken from the museum's permanent collection, other pieces were lent to the museum by synagogues, other museums, and private collectors around the world. Many articles were gained through the direct cooperation of the Spanish government.

Some of the items making their American debut include ketubbot from pre-expulsion Spain, 17th Century embroidered Torah mantles from the Portuguese Synagogue of Amsterdam, and 14th century Jewish community documents which include commentaries on the Torah, medical records, and money lending contracts.

The museum's director, Sylvia Hershkowitz, finds the magnitude of the exhibit to be one of its most remarkable aspects. "It's the most ambitious exhibition we've ever done," she said. Hershkowitz also pointed to the exhibit's staff, the largest ever assembled for one Yeshiva Museum display, as a strong point of the exhibit.

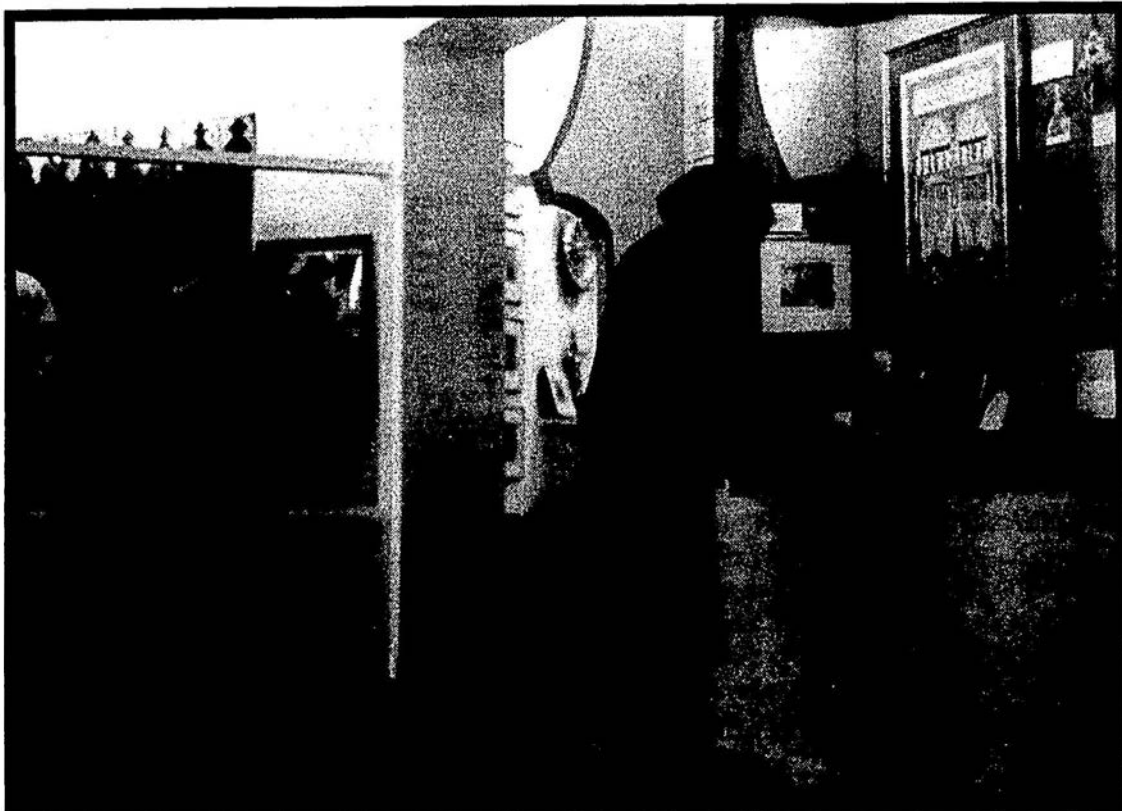
As well as the usual personnel employed by the museum, two Israeli curators worked as consultants on the project. Dr. Shalom Sabar is an expert on old manuscripts at Hebrew University and Chaya Benjamin is a curator at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem with knowledge in the field of ceremonial objects.

The rapidity with which the exhibition was compiled is itself extraordinary. Although the museum staff had been working on the project for a few years, no formal inquiries were made about the acquisition of items until after Sukkot this year. Hershkowitz attributed the speedy compilation of the exhibition to the museum's extensive use of a fax machine. Foreign correspondence which used to take three to four weeks can now be completed in a few hours.

One visitor to the museum was fascinated by the collection amassed at the exhibit. "It's always wonderful to see how people use different points of view to create aspects of Judaica," he commented. "It's also remarkable how you can see the tradition going from generation to generation."

Before the exhibit officially opened, a special preview was held to display the project. It was attended by officials from foreign countries such as Turkey, Spain, Yugoslavia, and Portugal as well as members of the American Sephardic community.

Hershkowitz and the entire museum staff are hopeful that the show will be a success and that the Yeshiva community will support the exhibit.



Sephardic Journeys opens at the Yeshiva University Museum.

Poor Turnout Greet Israeli Ambassador Gvir

by Michael Z. Kellman

Israeli foreign ministry representative Rafael Gvir addressed a small crowd last Monday night. His topic of discussion was "Israel and the Gulf." Arriving an hour and a half after the scheduled time, he faced a crowd of barely thirty students from YC and Stern.

Zvi Bornstein, president of the Israel Club, said that he was "very disappointed in the turnout." However, he claimed that the speaker's lateness, various conflicting events and the inclement weather all contributed to the poor showing. Although these accounted for most of the absences, both Bornstein and the Ambassador expressed their surprise at the lack of student support.

"YU and Stern have over 1000 students, there should have been a nice crowd," exclaimed Bornstein. "Last year, Israel Club had a lot of events with 300-1000 people every time." Bornstein says he is reconsidering scheduling some of this year's planned events, including a speech by Binyamin Netanyahu, Deputy Foreign Minister and ex-Ambassador to the United Nations.

The Monday night lecture, held in Weissberg Commons began with a short speech by David Benayim, Deputy Mayor of Ma'aleh Adumim. He commented on the poor attendance and urged students to become more active by taking

a leading role. Then he introduced the "voice of Israel," Ambassador Gvir.

The Ambassador spoke about the current situation in the Persian Gulf, focusing on the possible repercussions for Israel. First, he analyzed the news emerging from the Gulf, delineating between "good news" and "bad news".

The Soviet Union's increased role in world diplomacy and their interests in Iraq insure their participation in this crisis, he said. Unfortunately, Saddam Hussein's statements linking the Gulf crisis with the Israeli policy in the West Bank and Samaria have brought the Soviets into the Arab-Israeli conflict as well.

The Gulf crisis has also necessitated alliances between the United States and many traditional enemies of Israel, such as Syria and Saudi Arabia. This may be good for the United States in their current predicament; however, as the Ambassador claimed, "It may well mean the destruction of Israel." Gvir said these friendships of convenience, combined with a new influx of American arms, worry Israel a great deal. Long after the Americans leave the region, the weapons will remain in the hands of these enemy kingdoms.

The Ambassador also emphasized Jordan's precarious position as a buffer between Iraq and Israel. With King Hussein completely under the control of Baghdad, Israel's

future looks bleak. Furthermore, should Iraq suffer defeat at the hands of the American coalition, the Israeli government fears that their country may be forced to pay the price for Hussein's defeat.

On the other hand, the situation does have its good points. Ambassador Gvir pointed out that the U.S. military presence in the Gulf serves as a major deterrent to any and all Arab countries who may plan to wage war on Israel. However, he emphasized that Israel is not asking America for protection. Quoting Moshe Dayan, he said "We never asked American boys to die for our country."

Gvir pointed out that Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait shows the U.S. that Israel is their only stable ally in the Middle East. The ease with which Hussein annexed Kuwait and the threat which he presents to the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan only serve to highlight Israel's importance as the only point of stability in a volatile region.

Lastly, the complete support which the PLO has given Saddam Hussein and his policies has greatly diminished their standing in public opinion. By hugging Saddam Hussein, Yasser Arafat ended his career as a diplomat, claimed Gvir. The leaders of the world may no longer accept him as a legitimate negotiator for the rights of the Palestinian people.



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Dr. Helmut Adler, 40 Years at YU, forced to Retire

by Shlomo Zwickler

After forty years of service at Yeshiva College, Dr. Helmut Adler will relinquish his position as chairman of the Psychology Department, reverting strictly to part-time status.

Adler's retirement, however, is not by choice, as he becomes subject to a mandatory retirement program in effect at Yeshiva and most private universities. The policy is federally mandated by a long standing law permitting institutions of higher education to force tenured faculty into retirement at the age of 70. Interestingly, the statute expires in 1993.

Adler insists that he has no grievances against the University, although he would rather have the upcoming 1993 rule change apply to him as well. When asked of any prior instances in which faculty have been forced into retirement, Adler recalls a professor of German named Rosenberg. "Rosenberg sued the University and lost because the policy is perfectly legal."

YU did not ignore the future of YC's psychology department, and the need for a new full time professor to replace the outgoing Adler. The University has widely advertised the position and conducted a nationwide search, forming a committee to select the new faculty addition.

By approval of the search committee and recommendation of Dr. Adler, native



"The policy is perfectly legal." - Dr. Adler

Californian Dr. Robert Reynolds will become a full-time Associate Professor of psychology at Yeshiva College beginning in the Spring of 1991.

Reynolds, an experimental psychologist formerly on the faculty of Fordham University, is currently teaching part-time in Santa Barbara, California. He holds his B.A. from the University of California at Santa Barbara, his Masters from the University of Chicago, and a PhD from Rutgers State University in New Jersey. He is said to be an expert in physical behavior, and particularly in the neurosciences. Executive Vice President Dr. Egon Brenner insists that a factor in his selection was his versatility.

"We always try to choose someone who is versatile, someone who can go beyond his own area of specialization." Brenner brought the example

of the new English professor Johanson, who is a specialist in 19th century literature, but will teach the whole range of literary courses offered at YC.

Reynolds is not expected to become full chairman of the department as his predecessor. Brenner alluded to a new order in the psychology department at YC, utilizing the two full-time professors to their fullest. Reynolds will oversee experimental psychology and

Meet the Roshei Yeshiva

JSS Students Talk with Rav Shacter

by Jonathan Taub

JSS held its second "Meet the Rosh Yeshiva" night on Monday, December 3. HaRav Herschel Schachter, Rosh Yeshiva, Rosh Kollel and YP magid shiur, addressed and entertained questions from an audience of 25 in Tannenbaum Hall. A majority of the students were from the JSS program, although there were also a few YP and RIETS students present.

Rav Schachter spoke first about the two traditions, Torah shebikhtav and Torah shebi'al peh, and their mesorah, or how they were handed down. He spoke about the evolution of the written text and how changes, if any, were made. The Rav also gave considerable attention to the topic of how halacha has evolved throughout the generations and how one would deal with apparent contradictions between poskim. The focal point of the Rav's drasha was that two poskim can have divergent views on an aspect of halacha, as long as their seemingly contradictory viewpoints stem from a difference in their understanding of a text.

The Rosh Yeshiva then entertained questions, some on topics about which he had already spoken, and others on current and controversial topics

in halacha. The question to which he paid the most attention dealt with how one becomes a posek. The Rav stated that a major problem in Judaism today is the existence of many unqualified people who pasken halacha. The basic requirements for anyone to qualify as a posek, he said, include, but are by no means limited to, thorough knowledge of halachic sources including the Talmud and Shulchan Aruch, publishing of papers, and widespread acknowledgement of the posek as a Talmid Chacham. When asked whether or not women may paskin Halacha, the Rav replied that they may if they meet all of the above requirements.

This statement raised the controversial question of whether women can become spiritual leaders. The Rav replied that it was not impossible for women to obtain semicha halachically. However, certain criteria must be met in appointing a spiritual leader. He quoted the posuk in Devarim (1:12) which states that one should appoint wise and knowledgeable men. Should a woman be the only person capable of religious leadership, then she may be appointed. The Rav also cited the example of tsnius to show how women should not enter the public eye

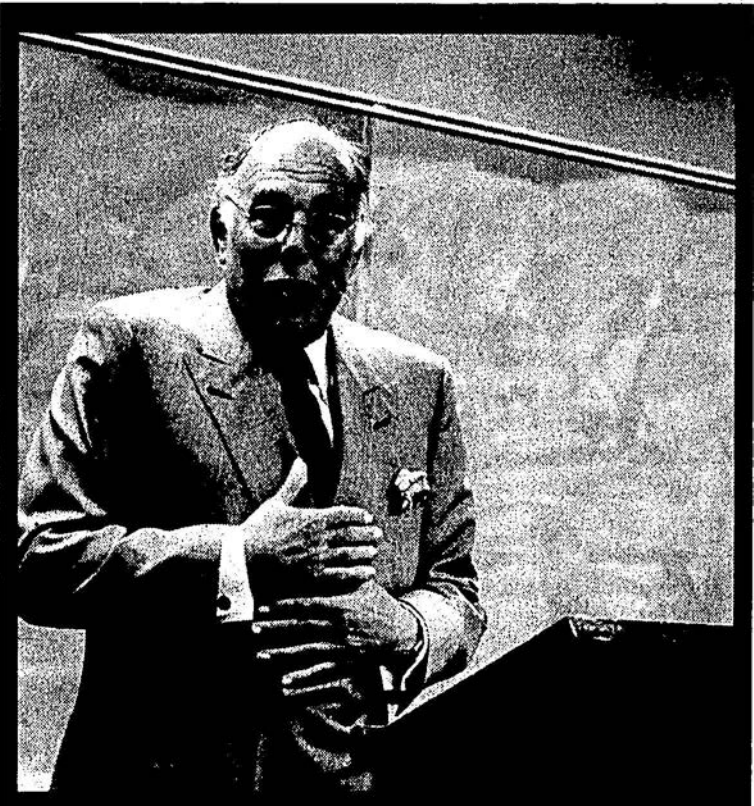
more than necessary.

Rav Schachter also discussed Jewish education. He cited the mishnah in Pirkei Avos which states, "At five for Chumash, at ten for Mishnah, at fifteen for Talmud." This method, he claimed, was still the best derech halimud. "One should start with easier sources, especially Chumash and Rashi, and then move on to harder material," he said. Rav Schachter stressed that the most important point in learning is to know the maskanah, or the conclusion at which the Gemara arrives.

"The most important thing is to know the Din. Chidushim aren't as important, and if one ignores the maskanah... that's not tradition."

One student asked about how a community should deal with Karaites and mamzerim (illegitimate children). The Rav explained that the Karaite divorces are not performed according to halacha and can consequently result in mamzerus. However, it might be possible to marry one of Karaite descent because of a doubledoubt (s'feks'feka): Maybe he was not a Karaite, and if he was, perhaps the parents were not divorced.

"Meet the Rosh Yeshiva" is scheduled to continue monthly.



Zelman Bernstein, founder of Sanford Bernstein Inc., in an address to the student body. During the Sy Syms School of Business Dean's Forum, Mr. Bernstein discussed the "Royal Reach," Judaism and the securities field. The address was particularly enjoyable and many students noted that Mr. Bernstein is truly humorous and quite personable. For some students, the evening lecture was also profitable. Mr. Bernstein wagered with two students over the outcome of the Giants-49ers game the following Monday night. Picking the Giants was one investment that did not payoff for Mr. Bernstein.

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Formost students at Yeshiva University, the path to YU involved no more than a hastily filled out application and a curt interview. But for many members of YU's foreign student body, YU was the final destination on a road filled with fear, danger and triumph. The stories you are about to read are fantastic, moving and very real.

Fanatics. Dictators. Oppressors. Persecutors. These are a few of the descriptions with which YU's foreign students portray the regimes from which they have emigrated.

Amir Sedaghatzandigrew up in Iran. In 1984, overwhelmed with anger and frustration over the limited rights allowed Jews in Iran, Amir and his sister decided to escape their country. With thorough research and meticulous planning, they devised a design for their escape.

Amir's father, a successful businessman, employed his monetary influence to help with his children's secret escape. Amir's father had heard of many people escaping from Iran by bribing patrolmen stationed at the frontier. For the right amount of money, these patrolmen had the connections to lead Amir and his sister to Turkey where they would be safe.

Amir's father approached the patrolmen, who said they knew the key routes and the right time to lead Amir and his sister towards their destination. Amir's father was overjoyed. A deal was made, and a date was set for Amir and his sister to escape from oppression to liberation.

The night of the escape finally arrived. After the tearful goodbye, Amir and his sister were picked up in a car and were driven on a three hour journey across unfamiliar terrain. They were told to get out and wait for the next group to lead them. After the car drove off, Amir and his sister found themselves in the middle of a gloomy desert, shivering half to death.

Suddenly, they heard a loud noise heading their way. As the noise grew louder, they saw five horses swiftly galloping towards them. Two men got off the horses and told the two children that they would now be lead towards Turkey. Amir and his sister, frightened and exhausted, climbed onto the horses with their heavy luggage and began the long journey.

An hour into the trip, they arrived at a deep river stretching nearly a half mile. They had no choice but to cross the river with the horses. The horses barely kept their heads over the water. Amir's legs were buried in the ice-cold water for the entire stretch. As the horses climbed inland, Amir was unable to feel his legs. The horses then had to climb a huge

True Stories

Flight to Freedom

mountain. As they reached its pinnacle, Amir, with no feeling in his legs, lost his balance, fell off the horse, and went tumbling down the mountain. Instead of being discouraged, he became even more determined to reach his final destination. Amir crawled back up to the others and the journey resumed.

The next morning, they arrived at a narrow path, with huge cliffs to its right and a fast moving water flow to its left. Amir's horse, trying to avoid the cliffs, leaned to the left, fell over, and was swept with Amir

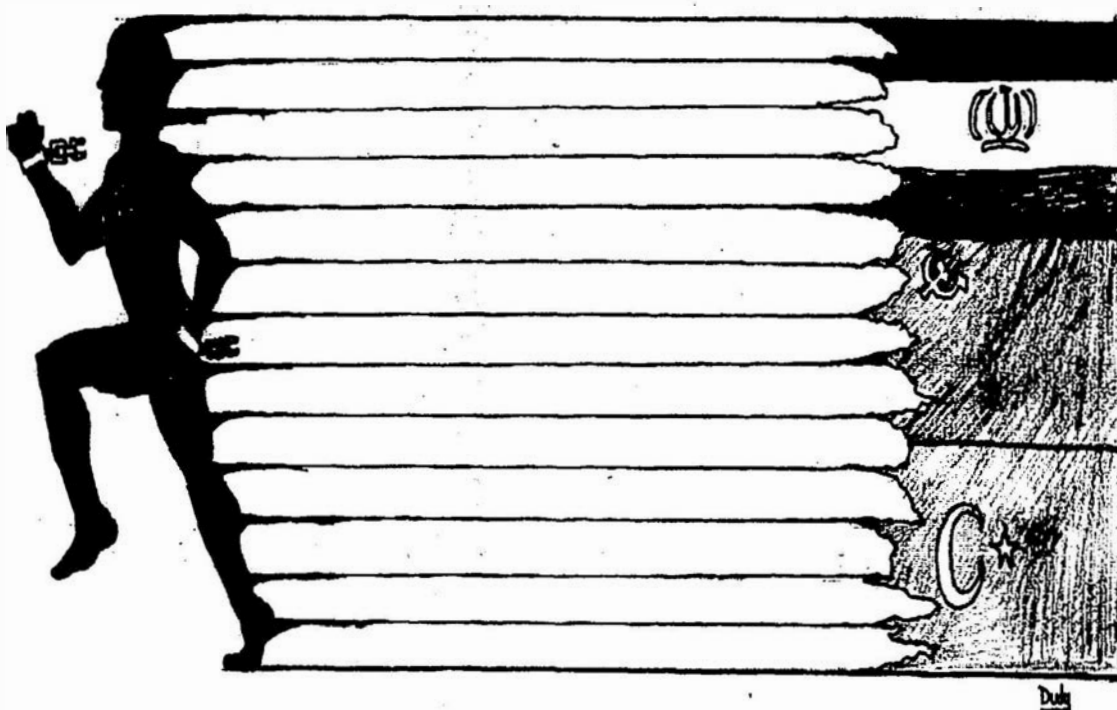
to YU. Unlike most of his Iranian peers who escaped in secret, Steve opted to escape overtly.

Growing up in Iran, Steve realized the opportunities for Jews were very limited. The prosperous businesses his relatives once owned were in demise during the post revolution era, simply because they were non-Muslims. As a Jew, there was no chance of getting into a college, and the prospect of being drafted into the Iranian army was very high. Steve simply could not see himself fighting on behalf of a

simple one.

Upon his arrival in Vienna, he immediately came into contact with the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, the Jewish organization which helps any Jewish refugee attain a visa to America. The process was technical and seemed to take forever. After seven months, Steve was finally on his way to America.

Steve had heard of YU from his older brother who attended YU a few years earlier. Steve presently attends YU and is on his way to medical school. He



by the fast moving whitewater. Getting up a little slower this time, Amir was still determined to finish his journey.

After a few more hours the horses stopped, and Amir and his sister were told to get off. They were told that the Turkish border was few hundred yards away and that they were now on their own. Amir and his sister were terrified and began to cry.

Amir and his sister managed to cross the border without getting caught. After a few weeks wandering helplessly in Turkey, they arrived in Istanbul where they got a visa to Switzerland. Once in Switzerland, they stayed with a Jewish family for two weeks and then went to Austria. There they were finally able to get a visa to America.

Amir arrived in America in the beginning of his ninth grade. He went to the Ezra Academy of Queens, where he says the faculty and the student body made him feel very comfortable. Upon graduating high school, Amir decided to continue his Jewish education and applied to Yeshiva University.

Another Iranian student, who wishes to remain anonymous (we'll call him Steve), took a different approach into coming

Muslim fanatic such as Khomeini. Steve was determined to get out of Iran, and get out quickly.

Steve was sixteen when he decided to escape. He contemplated whether or not he should tell his family. He knew his parents would not escape with him because they were too old and too accustomed to life as they knew it. Steve eventually revealed his plan to his parents. They forbade him to go. Steve's older brother had escaped several years before, and his parents still felt hurt. But Steve was determined. After many tears, his parents succumbed.

With careful research, Steve found a skilled passport master with whom he was able to strike a deal. Steve paid a large sum of money to have his passport status changed to a Muslim. This was a risky scheme, facing a harsh jail term and permanent passport confiscation. He went through with the scheme nonetheless, and succeeded.

Saying goodbye to his family was extremely difficult and emotional. Steve did not know when or if he would ever see his family again. But his determination far exceeded his emotions. He was ready to leave, and his destination was Vienna. His false passport enabled his trip to be a fairly

hopes that he and his brother can one day see their parents again.

Tzvi Berman emigrated from Russia just five months ago. Ever since Tzvi was a child, he had continuously been interested in Judaism. But back then, Tzvi's only link to Judaism was his grandfather. His grandfather was as observant as one could be behind the Iron Curtain. As Tzvi grew older, so did his burning desire to learn more about Judaism. He managed to accumulate a vast knowledge of Jewish history, basic Jewish law, and a minimal amount of Bible—all self-taught. But this was not enough. He wanted more. He wanted a deeper insight and understanding of Judaism which he simply could not attain in Russia. He often wondered if his prayer for this dream would be answered.

During a regular day in school, Tzvi happened to glance at a university catalogue which listed universities throughout the world. Glimpsing through the catalogue, one particular university caught his eye. Tzvi had never heard of Yeshiva University, but reading its description rekindled his burning desire to broaden his Judaism. He realized that at YU he could advance his

Judaism while maintaining a good secular education. But reality slapped him once more. How would he leave Russia and withstand the language and culture barriers? Yeshiva University seemed but a hopeless fantasy.

Opportunity finally came Tzvi's way. Rabbi Mendelbaum, a YU alumnus, was in Russia spreading Torah among thirsty Russian Jewry. Tzvi immediately seized the opportunity to meet with Rabbi Mendelbaum and told him of his dream of attending YU. Rabbi Mendelbaum, impressed with Tzvi's knowledge and desire for a better Jewish education, sat with Tzvi, and together mapped out a plan for Tzvi to attend YU. Tzvi was in a state of euphoria.

Tzvi first sent his high school references to Rabbi Mendelbaum in America, who then handed it over to YU. After working out the technical problems, Rabbi Mendelbaum then raised the money for Tzvi's tuition. Tzvi was now ready to embark on his long awaited dream.

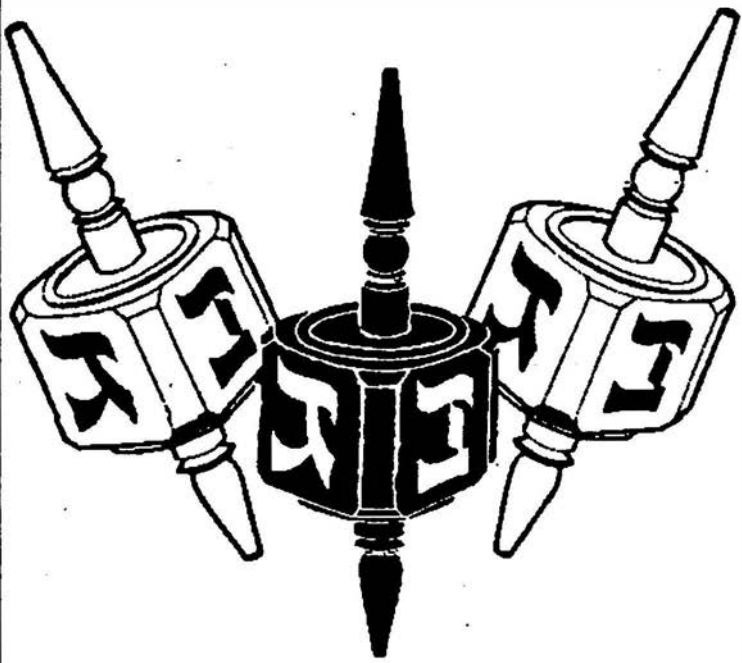
Tzvi arrived in America with his mother. His mother, only able to attain a tourist visa, was forced to return to Russia after a month. At YU, Tzvi's experiences are far greater than he ever contemplated. The hundreds of students who engage in learning every day is a sight he never expected to see in his life. Tzvi feels very lucky to be here, but at the same time he hopes he will see his family in the near future.

For Naftali Haleva, the road to YU was not an escape from an oppressor or dictator, but rather a step towards his distinguished future. Naftali hails from Istanbul, Turkey, home to about 20,000 Jews. The Jewish community there is a unique and tightly knit family. From the age of five through adolescence, the young Jewish adults remain avid members of Turkey's Jewish clubs. The social activities in these clubs include Israeli folk dances and films, Jewish plays, various lectures, and much more. There are no Jewish schools in Turkey, so it is in the Jewish clubs that the Turkish Jews receive their Jewish experiences and identity. Membership in these clubs is restricted to Jews only, which inevitably condenses the community into one tight unit. As a result, that intermarriage in Turkey is almost unheard of.

Naftali's father is the Assistant Chief Rabbi of Turkey. A few years ago, it was decided by the prominent leaders of Turkey's Jewish community that Naftali should receive a formal Jewish education elsewhere. The idea behind this was that Naftali would some day be the next Chief Rabbi of Turkey.

YU was the obvious choice. The community concluded that Naftali could receive the best of

THE COMMENTATOR wishes the entire YU community a very happy Chanukah.



YC Students Meet with Collegiate Afro-Americans

by Neil Torczyner

A new direction in student activity was established on Thursday December 6th, when YC students traveled downtown to the Borough of Manhattan Community College to meet with black students and student leaders. The students discussed issues relevant to Afro-American cultural life, Black-Jewish relations and Jewish life in general.

This meeting was the culmination of a Black-Jewish program initiated by YU Professor Blanche Blank this semester, in her class "Political Power in the United States." In September, Professor James Blake, an instructor at BMCC and a black leader in the St. Albans section of Queens, visited Dr. Blank's class at Yeshiva. Dr. Blake, who has represented the black community in many capacities, held a forum with the YC students to introduce them to black culture. At the end of this meeting, an invitation was extended by Dr. Blake to the students to visit BMCC.

Thursday's conference dealt with the problems of black family life and other black issues that are not usually examined by YU students. Many black student groups helped educate the Yeshiva students, including the Caribbean Students Association and the African Students Association.

A key issue discussed was the African American movement towards rediscovering their roots. It was proposed by Dr. Blake and many members of the council that the slavery which had been forced on blacks throughout history stripped them of their identity and culture. This led to the black male's feeling of social incarceration and his attempt to escape any strong commitment. The final result is the single mother family problem that is prevalent in the black community.

According to Dr. Blake, one of the main problems facing Black America, is the fact that there are more young black males incarcerated in prison

than in attendance at the nation's colleges. The panel felt that a return to roots would solve this problem and other ailments of black society. The movement plans to re-introduce African culture via black universities and black social studies programs on the high school level. This is known as the "curriculum of inclusion."

The issue of Israel and its treatment of the Palestinians was discussed towards the end of the conference. On this topic, YU students were able to share their views on Arab propaganda and questionable journalism with the panel.

The general feeling at the end of the meeting was positive. Many of the participants indicated a need for further conferences and joint meetings. John Eggleston, President of the African Students association remarked, "We need to form a coalition uniting both communities with basic commonalities, and initiate action based on the commonalities."

The meeting ended with a statement by Dr. Blake. He characterized the proceedings by saying that, "It's a significant step in understanding. We did learn that we can agree, and if we disagree, we aren't disagreeable."

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Escape, Cont'd from p. 6

both worlds in YU, and thus become a respectable scholar as well as a Jewish leader. They wanted a modern "Renaissance Man" as their future chief Rabbi, and YU was their answer.

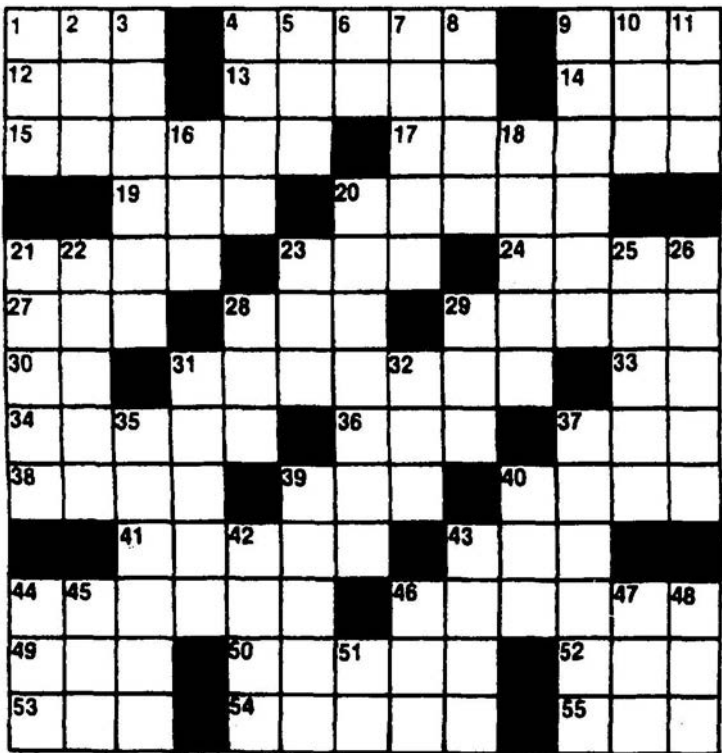
The Turkish community as a whole considers itself traditionally Orthodox. However, according to Naftali, "a solid religious foundation is lacking in each person and the community is therefore unstable." At YU, Naftali hopes to gain not only a solid religious foundation, but also a strong enough

love for Judaism that will enable him to spread it to the Jewish community in Turkey. So far, Naftali is doing just that at YU.

"Raise the banner to gather our exiles, and gather us together from the four corners of the earth."

Isaiah was obviously alluding to Israel in Messianic times, but at YU we are experiencing a similar theme. Many of our foreign students were oppressed and had no chance of living as a Jew. Now at YU, free and reborn, they have that chance, and we can all share and learn from their experiences.

Commentator Classroom Companion



ACROSS

- 1. Fort _____
- 4. Fast
- 9. Hole in one
- 12. Indian
- 13. Next to
- 14. Playing marble
- 15. Remake
- 17. Once again
- 19. Indefinite (pl. pronoun)
- 21. Window glass
- 23. The sun
- 24. Spouse
- 27. Malt beverage
- 28. Animal skin
- 29. Rent again
- 30. Street (abbr.)
- 31. Misconduct mark
- 33. 13th Gr. letter
- 34. Claw
- 36. Small bit
- 37. Seed vessel
- 38. Ireland
- 39. Speck
- 40. Paying passenger
- 41. _____ Pole
- 43. Light breeze
- 44. Catch
- 46. Pull out
- 49. Eastern state (abbr.)
- 50. Large deer
- 52. Away from wind
- 53. Notice

- 54. Flammable liquid
- 55. Before (poetic)

DOWN

- 1. Belongs to us
- 2. Route (abbr.)
- 3. Heavenly
- 4. Male sheep
- 5. Snake
- 6. 3.141592
- 7. Perfect
- 8. Surface depression
- 9. Without tone
- 10. Vehicle
- 11. Female sheep
- 16. Dined
- 18. Star with tail
- 20. State of tedium
- 21. Glue
- 22. Elevated church structure
- 23. Total
- 25. High male voice
- 26. Musical composition
- 28. Bog
- 29. Chest bone
- 30. Street (abbr.)
- 31. Giver
- 32. Rodent
- 35. Small
- 37. Conditional release
- 39. Station
- 40. Cone-bearing tree
- 42. Gentle
- 43. One who copies
- 44. Newspaper chief (abbr., pl.)
- 45. Born
- 46. Employ
- 47. Over (poetic)
- 48. Prepare golf ball
- 51. Mild expression

For Your Information... (first in a series)

What is the Student Court?

by Jay Bailey

Unless they receive a subpoena and are brought on charges, few students know of the existence of the Student Court. Fewer yet can describe the function of this seldom-seen service. In the first of a series of articles dedicated to presenting many of YC's little-known clubs and organizations, the staff of THE COMMENTATOR hopes to enlighten readers and encourage them to utilize many of our unused resources.

Over the past few years, the Court has tried to establish itself as a mediation board for disputes that arise between students. The Student Court's jurisdiction is defined in the Yeshiva College Student Council's constitution in Article XI. Cases involve student activities sponsored by the Student Council, YU students as spectators at YC athletic events, and students violating rules and/or regulations concerning extracurricular activities. In addition, matters of Yeshiva security or dormitory violations are sometimes directed to the Court by either security, dormitory

officials, or the Office of the Dean of Students. It is important to note that there is no mention of academic disputes; the court has no authority in academic matters.

When asked for specific examples of recent cases, Senior Justice Naphtali Levin explained that all cases are strictly confidential. Proceedings are held behind closed doors by the request of the defendant or if deemed necessary by the Chief Justice.

According to Associate Justice Andrew Goldsmith, the court "is generally more lenient than the Dean's office in meting out punishment." He feels that the court "better understands the student's perspective on the issues."

The Court can render various punishments, which include fines and community service, or, when needed, suspension of dorm privileges or expulsion from the University (with Dean of Student's Concurrence).

Anyone with a question concerning Court procedures or a case to bring to Court can contact the Chief Justice, Evan Maron in Mo225.

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Calendar, Cont'd from Page 1

Z'man means that we are changing our perspective of the place of Limudei Kodesh in Jewish society.

"In 1988, when YC began on August 28, we were making a statement in regard to the value of Torah. It is important in the world we live in, to have more Torah rather than less."

Rabbi Charlop explained that he does appreciate the difficulties involved with keeping the campus open over September, namely the cost of maintenance and security, as well as the problem disrupting class schedules. But he points out that a question like this would not be asked in any other yeshiva. "Because we are also a college, there is a complication that must be dealt with," he maintains. Rabbi Charlop suggests that instead, there be some sort of voluntary program for all three Jewish studies departments. Although this idea has not been discussed officially, Rabbi Charlop believes there may exist the possibility of a concentrated Bible program that could, if joined with the already optional June months, provide required YC Bible credits.

"Right now, approximately sixty-five percent of the student body is enrolled in YP, and this does not include S'micha and Kollel students. If in a voluntary program with YP, IBC and JSS, we could have three to four hundred students learning, how could we not consider instituting some kind of plan?"

Dean Well echoed these sentiments. "As Yeshiva College, we have a mission; a mission to maintain Torah as a priority," said the Dean. "It is a fundamental concern that we take advantage of the Yomim Tovim. There should absolutely be some level of Limudei Kodesh, whether it be on a voluntary or mandatory level."

Despite the shortened intersession break, surveyed students generally came out in support of the proposed calendar. Out-of-town students preferred the late beginning as it eliminates the need to fly home just a few weeks into the semester. Another sizable group expressed interest in using the month of Elul to spend a month in Israel learning in Yeshivot.

Dean Nulman says that before he voices his opinion, he would like to see an official survey of some kind telling him what the students really want.

Dean Rosenfeld says, "The decision is simply not made by the students. Ultimately, judgments like this are made in the President's Office... The choice will ultimately be in the students' best interest."

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SMASH,

Cont'd from page 1

Anti-Semitic reporters could claim that the rally was a purely Jewish concern, he maintained. This would belittle the purpose of the rally and lessen the impact of its message. He also pointed out that SMASH did recruit heavily among non-Jews at other colleges.

While SMASH is not a YU-run organization, several of its executive board members are from YU.

Approximately sixty students, including six from YU, turned out for the SMASH rally, converging on the Iraqi consulate at 79th street in Manhattan, despite freezing temperatures. Waving American flags and lighting candles beneath a banner reading "In Memoriam for the thousands murdered by Hussein", they handed out leaflets to passerby's and listened to speeches and cheers. Several press organizations were on hand to cover the rally.

Colonel Sam Dickens, a retired Air Force fighter pilot, justified the U.S. presence in the gulf by claiming, "we want stability in the region... and there won't be any stability until Saddam Hussein is done away with."

Jeff Stier, Chairman of College Republicans at Yeshiva, also spoke, stating the goals of the rally. "We are not here to warmonger but to show support for the troops and for President Bush."

Several students pointed out that the conflicts of interest raised by SMASH are experienced by virtually all Jewish political organizations. Jewish activists in America must constantly decide whether displaying their identity will affect popular views of their cause. Explained one

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student, "I think in this case, SMASH was dead wrong, but I understand where they're coming from."

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Reps Meet with Rabbi Lamm

Cont'd from Page 1

maintenance. You come in on a certain level and that's how you leave."

Burian pointed to the slackening of shiur attendance as the year progresses, and the existence of students who use seder time to catch up on sleep, as evidence of YP failure. The problem with YP, according to Burian, is that it does not provide the warmth and excitement students need to advance in their learning. Students "need more than just a room and a rebbe teaching there," said Burian. He described a "ludicrous" situation where he must cajole YP rebbeim into attending SOY events. Burian held up Rav Meir Goldwicht, a popular Israeli RAM, as the paradigm of the outgoing and concerned Rosh Yeshiva MYP students need. For most YP rebbeim, said Burian, giving shiur at YU "is only a secondary job." Burian indicated that the problem does not end with the Roshei Yeshiva. "In many ways, the leadership of the YP program is horribly out of touch with

what's really going on," he said. Burian also warned that overcrowding in YU's two Batei Midrash creates an unfriendly atmosphere.

Dr. Lamm responded that while he did not deny the Yeshiva program is far from perfect, he felt Burian had gone too far. "The very fact that so many guys are coming into MYP says something," he pointed out. "People vote with their feet."

"It's just not fair to say YP has been coasting along with no innovations," Dr. Lamm complained. "There have been very significant changes." Dr. Lamm put forward the Mishna Berura exam and Practical Halachah classes as examples of improvements.

Ideally, the President said, Roshei Yeshiva would live on campus, but because of the "urban blight" in Washington Heights, for most, this is not an option. Rebbaim are required to hold office hours he said, and he would remind them of such.

Dr. Lamm said tightening up on discipline was an option, but an option which was sure to be attacked by the students and particularly, by THE COMMENTATOR.

"[Are] your friends going to go along with tightening up discipline, or are you going to scream bloody murder because we're treating you like high school kids," he asked.

Dr. Lamm was particularly

upset with a comment from Mordechai Book, Vice President of SOY. Book told Dr. Lamm that in his opinion, "The University is not putting as much into the Yeshiva as it is into YC."

"Do you know how much of your tuition goes into the Yeshiva?" asked Dr. Lamm. "Nothing." All of the Jewish studies programs are funded through private contributions. Nevertheless, said Dr. Lamm, "it is the foremost thing on our minds - at all times."

Student leaders from Stern told Dr. Lamm if any division was being ignored by the University, it was Stern College for Women. "Stern College is not taken as seriously as Yeshiva University," claimed Nechama Goldman, Editor in Chief of the Observer. Dr. Miller suggested she meant to say "Yeshiva College", but Goldman insisted she had spoken correctly.

"Stern is part of the University, but many people feel that they are not being treated as part of the University." Stern students pointed to the lack of a real Beit Midrash at Stern as an example of this attitude.

SCWSC President Lisa Horowitz brought up the specific problem of overcrowding in Brookdale Hall. She called the present situation of five girls per room

utterly impossible in an academic institution.

Dr. Lamm agreed, but said that acquiring land in Mid-Town Manhattan is equally impossible. He said the University had made a value judgement between cutting admission or satisfying the needs of the Jewish community.

He also assured the Stern Women that the University considers them a bonafide member. "Eventually, the reputation of Stern will catch up with the reality," the President said.

If the Women of Stern worry that the University underestimates their abilities, JSS student leaders fear their status as the introductory learning track is being rubbed out.

Hirsch Serman, President of the JSS Student Council, told Dr. Lamm approximately half the students in JSS actually belong in MYP or IBC, and are simply looking for an easy ride. Class levels are being geared to accommodate all the students, but as a result, students who still need to be taught the basics of learning suffer. Together with YCSC President Steven Felsenthal, who has been a student in both JSS and MYP, he said YU needs to adhere to a stricter screening process for JSS. Serman also called the hour and a half classes in JSS too long. He recommended the time be broken in to three periods, as

well as the creation of a YP type Seder period.

THE COMMENTATOR warned that social divisions were forming between JSS, IBC and MYP students, and suggested that the three programs be integrated to some extent.

Dr. Lamm said the University was first seeking to join JSS and IBC, since their schedules are more closely aligned.

MC Dr. Miller offered the last opportunity for questions to Dr. Lamm, who asked, "How are things?" Dr. Lamm then polled the leaders on their overall feelings on YU.

"Honestly? I love it," said Felsenthal. He and other leaders stressed to Dr. Lamm that if they were sharp in their criticisms, this was only due to the commitment they felt to the institution and its members.

Dr. Lamm said he was proud students chose to focus in on Limudei Kodesh. He promised that the University "will address the problems you have raised and others you haven't."

"I hope there will be improvements and happy changes."

While Rebbitzin Lamm served dessert, each student leader was able to greet the President privately. Dr. Lamm directed several of the leaders to put their complaints in writing, and in certain cases, specifically asked Dean Nulman to investigate.

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Wrestling Team Strives for a Win

Fanatical Fans Foster Strong Team Spirit

by, Joey Eisenfeld

The wrestling Macs fell to Manhattan College, a Division Two team, in the home opener on November 20. Still, there was lots of excitement before the match as the wrestlers marched out to music and the fans responded with a standing ovation.

Yeshiva lost the first match, but was able to even the total score in the second match via a Manhattan forfeit. In the third match, Effy Zinken enabled YU to take the lead. Zinken pinned his opponent midway through the second match and remained undefeated this season. In the fourth match, Captain Brian Ostrow increased the Yeshiva lead by scoring a technical pin. Ostrow took down his opponent six times. After Ostrow won, the score was 16-6. However, this would be the last points that YU would score. Manhattan proceeded to win the next six matches, defeating the Macs by a final score of 39-16.

In the exhibition matches

which followed the actual meet, Dov Bessler and David Edelcreek pinned their respective opponents. Edelcreek, last year's captain, pinned his opponent just fifteen seconds after the match began.

The Macs came closer against their second adversaries of the season, Rutgers, but still lost 28-24. The first three matches of the November 26 meet were all decisions, but in the fourth, YU's Dov Bessler pinned his opponent in under two minutes. At this point Yeshiva led 12-4. Since both teams were missing weight class representatives, coach Neil Elman strategically rearranged the Macs' lineup to maintain the lead for Yeshiva up until the last match (24-22). Unfortunately, Yeshiva lost the final match, allowing Rutgers to win the meet.

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PAGE 2

Challenges Await Tennis Macs

by Eric Davis

The 1990-1991 YU Macs tennis team certainly has its work cut out for the upcoming season. After a 5-2 record and a 3rd place IAC finish in 1989-1990, only two players return from last year's squad. As a result, the team is left with many open spots, and numerous players are competing to fill them.

Coach Mickey Aboff hopes that the availability of positions will push his players to new heights. Coach Aboff explained, "We have a young team, but I'm hoping that the competition for playing time will cause some of our younger players to step forward into the starting rotation." Coach Aboff also hopes that this season's late start will work to the team's advantage. "The actual matches don't start until the spring;

therefore, we have plenty of time for our new players to practice, get into shape, and improve", said Aboff.

The tennis Macs are looking forward to the challenge ahead of them. The team has a history of success with a 16-8 record over the past three years. In addition, the tennis team has topped the .500 mark in each of the past ten years. Coach Aboff believes that the current players are capable of continuing the team's winning ways: "Many of the younger players have shown real promise during practice, and they are only going to get better. With some hard work, I feel that this year's team should be able to continue YU's winning tradition and can even improve on last year's success."

It will be quite a while before the team's ability is tested in actual competition. The opening match is scheduled for March 10th at Pratt Institute.

Schick Superhoopers Advance

by Eric Melzer

The third annual Schick Superhoops tournament began on December 2nd. Twenty-eight teams entered the tournament and four of them received first round byes. Although there was a lot of intense action in the first round, none of the favorites were eliminated. The following are the results of week one.

The Lollipops, a team considered by many to be the tournament favorite, defeated the Ben Torahs 46-28. Jeff Mor connected from three-point land and Gilad Ottensosser controlled the boards for the Lollipops. The Ben Torahs received a nice performance from Saul Fiedler who kept it close for a while with strong penetration and scoring.

In a close game, the Dogs edged the Choppers 36-35. Josh Hain and Avi Savitsky scored key baskets for the Dogs in the last two minutes.

Behind the hot hand of Eli Cohen, the Earwigs beat the Bad Boys of Boston 46-43. The Earwigs will face the Hoosiers, another tournament favorite, in the second round.

The Gamblers beat the Rockers decisively, by a score of 50-32. Charles Schechter connected on numerous baseline jumpers early in the second half to help the Gamblers win.

In a nailbiter, Team Yes halted team Motion, 37-35. Seth Sokol grabbed numerous offensive rebounds to bring victory to Yes. An offensive foul called on

Motion with only ten seconds remaining sealed the game.

Avi Greenbaum fired away from never-never land as Josh's Jammers beat the Canucks 60-46. The sixty points represent the highest week one total of any team in the tournament.

Not By A Long Shot didn't even come close as the team lost to The Sundays, 57-43. David Speiser helped lead the Sundays to victory with his steady outside shooting.

Craig Kornbluth took his awesome three point shooting ability from intramurals to Superhoops to help the 69ers defeat Tropical Snow, 48-43.

In another "down to the wire" finish, The Watsons eliminated the Investment Bankers, 46-44. David Lyons won the game by hitting a jump shot with seven seconds left in the game.

The Pardoners Tale disciplined The Procrastinators, 51-30. Yehuda Blinder and Ronnie Aranoff helped provide the scoring in this lopsided victory.

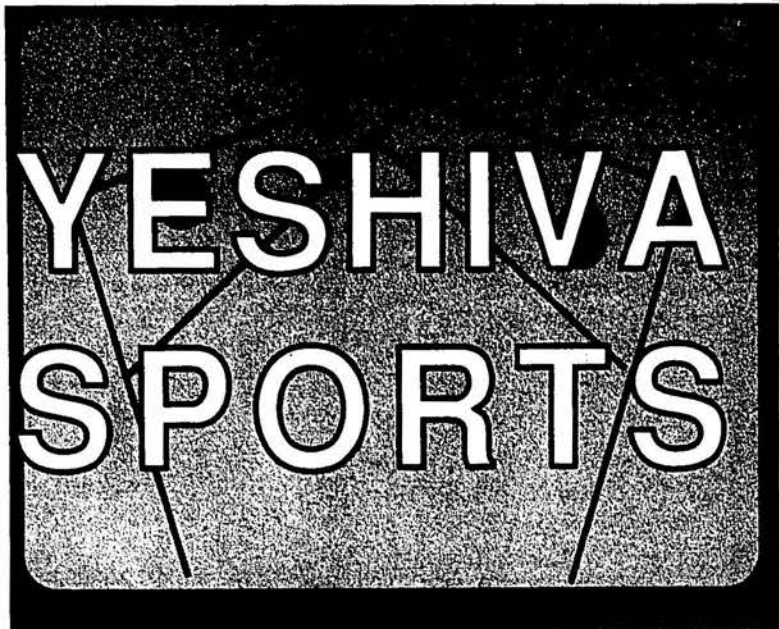
Behind the superb rebounding of Brett Pevan and Ami Drazin, Four and Five defeated The Masmidim 53-42.

Finally, Ranon Mann provided major offensive and defensive contributions to enable 3 Hairy-Mann to defeat the Mittlemans 45-38. Kenny Helfer kept this game close by hitting numerous outside shots.

The tournament finals are tentatively scheduled for Sunday, December 23.

INTRAMURAL BASKETBALL STANDINGS

		<u>W</u>		<u>L</u>
X	- WILDCATS	7	-	1
Y	- ORANGEMEN	6	-	3
Y	- PANTHERS	5	-	3
Y	- PIRATES	4	-	3
Y	- FRIARS	4	-	4
Y	- GREEN WAVE	4	-	4
	EAGLES	3	-	4
	REDMEN	3	-	6
	HOYAS	2	-	6
	HUSKIES	2	-	6
X	- CLINCHED DIVISION TITLE			
Y	- CLINCHED PLAYOFF BERTH			



Macs Bounce Back After First Loss

New Jersey Tech Trounces Macs 86-66
Macs Stun St. Joseph 86-57

by Eric Melzer

Rebounding from a crushing defeat at New Jersey Tech and an unimpressive victory at Bard College, the Yeshiva Macs destroyed St. Josephs on Monday night 86-57. The victory over St. Josephs improved the Macs' record to 5-1. They are 2-1 against Independent Athletic Conference opponents.

The win against St. Josephs was the Macs' largest margin of victory this season. The Macs went on a 17-6 run in the first seven minutes of the game, led 41-29 at the half, and led substantially during the entire contest. David Ehrman shot extremely well from the outside (7 for 9) and led all scorers with 19 points. Eric Davis finished with 15 points and Miko Danan had 9 points and 11 rebounds. Seth Cohen also played a very solid game contributing 12 points on 6 for 9 shooting.

Although the Macs won the game decisively, they were deficient in two areas. First, the free-throw shooting was atrocious; the Macs shot merely 40% from the charity stripe. Second, the defense did not meet the high standards it had maintained in previous games. Earlier this season, the Macs held Polytech and C.C.N.Y., two tougher opponents, to 20 and 25 first-half points respectively. Against St. Josephs, a much weaker team, the Macs surrendered 29 first-half points. Throughout the game, St. Josephs was able to score off the fast break and pull offensive rebounds.

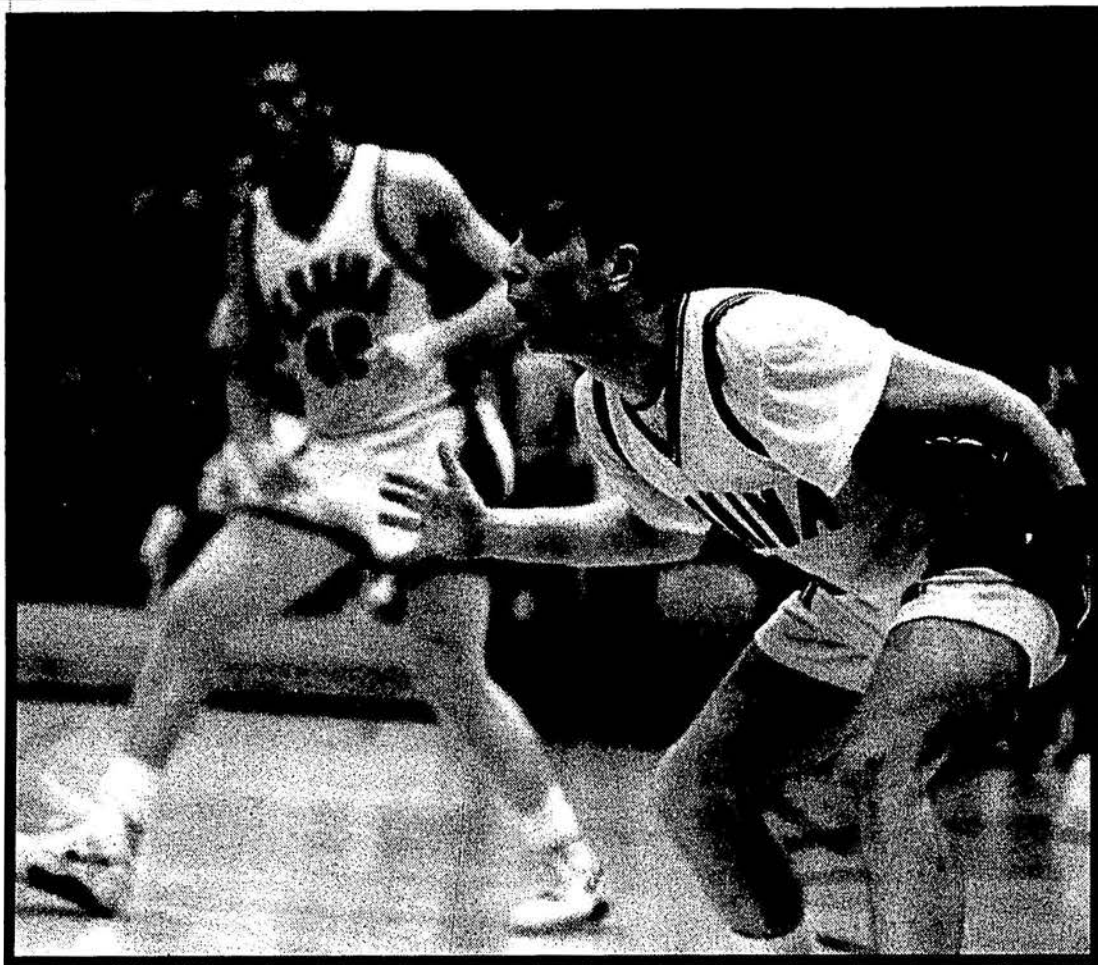
Last week, the Macs beat Bard 85-78. Once again, the Macs struggled from the free-throw

line as they missed ten foul shots. Five Macs scored in double figures. Eric Davis was the leading scorer and combined 22 points with 7 rebounds, 8 assists, and 3 steals. David Ehrman once again shot nicely from the outside and had 16 points. The other three double-figure scorers were Miko Danan (14), Elisha Rothman (12), and Seth Cohen (10).

Earlier in the week, the Macs suffered their first loss of the season, an 86-66 pounding by New Jersey Tech at N.J.I.T. This game was not much of a contest as N.J.I.T. went on a run early in the game, led 39-22 at the half, and were never seriously threatened by the Macs. Eric Davis led the Macs with 18 points and Miko Danan netted 17. Once again the Macs struggled from the line and shot a mere 12 for 19.

November 26 marked the first regular season game ever at the Max Stern Athletic Center between the Macs and C.C.N.Y. Many fans were in attendance including members of the Yeshiva University Board of Directors, Dean Rosenfeld, Dean Hecht, Dean Nulman, and Rabbi Israel Miller. The fans displayed their excitement and enthusiasm as many, including Dean Rosenfeld, did "the wave" throughout the game. The Macs did not disappoint their fans and defeated C.C.N.Y. 76-60. Eric Davis led all scorers with 24 points.

The game also featured Stanley Watson appreciation night. The crowd displayed its appreciation and love for Watson, the Assistant Athletic Director, with a standing ovation at the end of the game.



Elisha Rothman on defense against CCNY. Macs triumphed, 76-60.

Fencers Snap 12 Month Drought Tauberman Vanquish Vassar 14-13

by Dov Lando

The Yeshiva Fencing Team burst out of a year-long losing slump Wednesday, November 28 by defeating Vassar College. This victory boosted team spirit enormously and established the Yeshiva Taubermen as a strong team with a promising year ahead.

The 14-13 victory began as the sabre squad exploded on the strip, winning all three of their first bouts. With this advantage, team enthusiasm flourished and the judges were frequently forced to ask for quiet as cheers poured forth from the Yeshiva sideline. As the meet continued, the sabre squad, led by David J. Kay, dominated by winning all nine of their bouts.

The Epee squad provided excellent support throughout the meet with a perfect (3-0) night by Co-Captain Sheldon Jonas.

The Yeshiva team rallied together as the meet evolved into a close competition, and morale soared. Tension mounted to a crescendo as the score tied up and victory became dependant on the final bout. Jason Bernath began the foil bout with a three point lead only to lose two consecutive points. Finally, Bernath took the bout and the meet with a quick beat-flesh as the Yeshiva Team went wild.

The potential winning streak ended in disappointment as the Taubermen lost by a narrow margin the following night.

Despite the substantial lead taken by Yeshiva at the start of the meet, the Taubermen lost to Drew 13-14. The night began dramatically as Yeshiva took the first five of nine bouts. However, the valiant efforts performed by the Foil and Sabre squads could not prevent the last minute loss.

Both night's achievements definitively established this year's Fencing Team as destined for a winning season. Coaches Arnold Messing and Pete Rosas feel that within the team exists great potential, and Messing plans on "a much better season than last year."

We wish this year's Taubermen success and we hope to see an end-of-the-year winning record.

The Commentator
 500 W. 185th Street
 New York, NY 10033

UnCommon Observations

A Special Supplementary Joint Issue of The Commentator and The Observer

25 Kislev, 5750

Yeshiva College

Stern College

December 13, 1990

Strictly Social

by Jay Bailey and Mindy Spear

The YU social scene. Everybody talks about it. Everybody has heard about it. And most have partaken in it to some extent, whether they like to admit it or not. For Orthodox students, YU presents an unparalleled opportunity to meet other Orthodox Jews. Students can take advantage of a myriad of social events sponsored by our student councils, class boards, and clubs. Those who still feel that their needs are not being met can take advantage of a multitude of off-campus opportunities to satiate their social appetites.

"There is no way to clearly hammer out the social standards and attitudes in YU," says Rabbi Yosef Blau, Mashgiach Ruchani of YC. "We have to recognize that the student body is not homogenous, and many programs will not be appropriate for specific people. For one person, it may be offensive, while for another, not exciting enough. We can't force the values of one group onto another."

Many students believe it is the University's responsibility to provide the social environment. "YU is a union of students and administration that must *together* effect change," counters Dr. Richard Nochimson, Director of the YU Writing Center and professor of English at both colleges. "If the students want

The University "definitely encourages interaction by providing buses and vans for events held at both colleges," explained one second semester senior at SCW. Co-ed club meetings, Torah U'Mada lectures and special guest speakers were all put forward as enjoyable social events.

Elana Hartstein, a SCW sophomore, disagrees. She complains that "they always schedule lectures at the same time and the van system is inadequate." "It is as if they are doing the bare minimum to bring us together," concurs Alan Horowitz, who graduated YC last may.

Rabbi Zvi Flaum, Mashgiach Ruchani of SCW, explains that his job is to "serve as a liason, bridging the gap between the two colleges. Rabbi Flaum suggests sponsoring co-ed seminars and coalitions, but many students who come to him are uncomfortable with even that type of socializing. The school, according to Flaum, would be willing to accomodate them based on request. "We're here as a resource to help students as much as we can."

Perhaps because of the University's inability to provide an event that is right for everyone, most students look off campus when it comes to socializing. The YC and SCW students interviewed were unanimous in their beliefs that restaurants are the primary locale for social interactions. The second most popular choice is movies, followed by pool halls and comedy clubs. Not as popular are Broadway shows, walks, art galleries, the South Street Seaport, the Marriott Marquis, and village cafes. Obviously, students who are not satisfied with the University's social opportunities do not hesitate to venture off campus in search of entertainment.

But not everyone fits into one of these categories. "Although both the administration and the students offer a variety of social events," says Andrea Rubinstein, "there are many who simply do not take advantage of them." "YU definitely encourages a certain type of socializing," admits Senior Karen



Pruzansky, "but it's not for everyone." Many regard the "scene" as a classic form of social conformity and pressure. Social events are derisively referred to as "Meat Markets." Others label the separated campuses an insurmountable barrier to normal socialization. Dudy Starck, a new student at Yeshiva College, proudly declares his disassociation with the *Meat Market Syndrome*. "I swore to myself before coming here that I would take things at my own pace, going out with friends until I felt that I was ready to date."

He maintains that going out on weekly blind dates is a waste of both time and money, and furthermore he doesn't see the point. "I really enjoy going out with friends in a relaxed, friendly environment when I want to," he says. "YU just doesn't promote that kind of interaction."

YC senior Menachem Maimon claims that students who dorm suffer the worst. In his Washington Heights apartment, he hosts parties and dinners where he and his friends can socialize at their own pace.

"All the dormers have for informal socializing is Morg lounge and Stern lobby. And everybody 'examines' you there. The alternative is to go out, and that has its own significance."

In one's hometown, Menachem

maintains, people have their own homes where they can invite friends over, rent a movie, and have a good time. But for YU dormers, there is simply no physical location to meet. "The fact that YU is a Yeshiva before it is a University dictates that settings for potentially frivolous behavior have no place on campus," he explains. "I have been at other universities with restaurants, bars, and lounges where members of both sexes come to study, talk, just hang out. But here, Halacha dictates that we must be different."

Junior Michelle Lerman regards the dormitory in a different light. She says that schools without dormitories, such as Queens College, do not have the same opportunity to meet other students outside the classroom.

"The YU social scene is ranked on too much," protests Debbie Rudack. "Guys and girls socialize in every college- why is it such an issue here?"

Computer Science major Mark Roth attributes the phenomena to the nature of a dual curriculum, and single sex colleges. "All week we spend up to twelve hours a day in a classroom with other guys. Then we go back to the all-male dorms. It's not surprising that we prefer to spend our rare free nights with members of the opposite sex."

Back when our parents were in college, the New York social system was simple. Local synagogues sponsored events which were aimed solely at gathering young single people. This was standard practice, accepted and popular. Today, the Jewish community is far more complex, and YU students often end up confused as to where they fit in the big picture. Whether we applaud or deride the state of socialization at YU, we must acknowledge the fact that YC and SCW are made up of many different personalities, and each person has his or her own needs. ☛



something, it is up to them to take the initiative. Students should be partners in the school, not clients."

Jilli Spear, a junior, claims that the students themselves have been initiating events. "Student Council tries to achieve high levels of interaction," she says. Other students point to the Hebrew and Science Honors Societies, Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, and Young Democrats/College Republicans as examples of student initiative. In addition to the academic societies, the Student Councils arrange a number of social mixers every year. These programs are enough to make some students content with the social environment on campus.

Surveying the Scene

Inside

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From the Editors' Desk

Daniel Oshinsky and Nechama Goldman

Uncommon Integration

Students at YU are limited. Both academically and socially, YC and SCW relationships can go only so far. The chief obstacle to normal interaction is of course the single sexed undergraduate colleges. This division creates overlap in many clubs and student organizations: two newspapers, two dramatics societies, two student councils. We may be one university, but there is a need for each college to provide for the particular needs of its students. However, this can cause a polarity within the student body.

Recently, a student leader expressed aggravation about an event that both campuses were involved in organizing. The SCW students had complained that the YC students did not "give them anything to do." The YC students had in turn complained that they had been forced to run the event on their own. This created a vicious cycle. According to the student leader, the men did not trust the women of Stern to perform up to par and ended up compensating for what they were sure would not happen. The women, frustrated with this attitude, gave in and did nothing.

No matter the accuracy of this leader's account, the end result was a lack of respect for what goes on within the two campuses and a lot of dissatisfaction on both parts.

The history of the SCW and YC student body is fraught with tension and underlying currents of resentment as different organizations and clubs vie to be the best. It is true that historically, YC has been the stronger school. They have the larger student body, better facilities, a wider variety of talent. It is also true that until recently, SCW clubs, societies and organizations like the dramatics society and newspaper were usually not up to the YC standard. Certainly YC had the advantage of being the older school. However, as YU evolves, grows and changes, the tone and temperament of its colleges also needs to change.

Last year, several issues arose which only served to exacerbate tensions between the two campuses. Most visibly, the Clarion, the political science newspaper, fell apart because YC and SCW students could not get along. Later, a fight ensued between SCDS and YCDS over the scheduling of plays, serving to expose a long history of competition that has existed between the two societies.

Other organizations also suffer from this lack of compatibility. Stern students complain that most events are YC oriented and that they are excluded because they are downtown and do not have constant access to the uptown campus. YC students complain that SCW students are late meeting deadlines and do not always finish the job. The underlying theme is that we seem to suffer from an inability to co-relate well as co-eds.

Unfortunately, the experience and respect that students gain by working together is not often available. YC and SCW students rarely collaborate over an extended period of time. The result is that neither college is able to grow comfortable with the other. The difficulty confronting YU remains the lack of integration between campuses.

SCW is fast growing into a strong academic institution. "Eventually, the impression (of SCW) will catch up with the reality," as Dr. Lamm put it at a recent meeting with student leaders. Unfortunately, the steps to changing the impression are not so easy to enact. Students and faculty must attempt to break down certain accepted attitudes. The impression of one college contributes to the reality of the other. If SCW is seen as a lesser institution, and YC treats it as such, then this directly affects student productivity and involvement in both colleges.

Before deciding to go ahead with the joint issue, we spent hours on end discussing and deliberating over its possible ramifications. It was a risky decision because although other student publications are co-ed, THE COMMENTATOR and THE OBSERVER have always been entirely separate publications. This division has in the past been clearly delineated, often to the exclusion of any form of communication and collaboration between the two.

In the end, we decided that while we serve different campuses, we recognize that there is a unifying thread that joins us in the University. Our commitment to the student body and the bettering of the institution are aims that both THE COMMENTATOR and THE OBSERVER share. More importantly, we felt that breaking down the invisible barriers separating the two papers was the best way to show our mutual respect for each other's workmanship and capability.

This type of integration allowed us to explore and analyze in a worthwhile fashion, a mutual issue of interest. Social life was the easiest topic to choose as the subject for this issue. Indeed, social life is the single most talked about subject within the University. In the classrooms, hallways, dorm rooms and cafeterias there is constantly talk going on about dating, going out, friends, and marriage. Moreover, the topic necessarily involves both YC and SCW.

THE COMMENTATOR and THE OBSERVER still fill very different roles in the institution. However, we certainly hope to collaborate in the future on common issues of concern. We also hope that this joint effort can serve as an example of worthwhile integration between the sexes and help foster a more mature and productive attitude between the two schools. ■

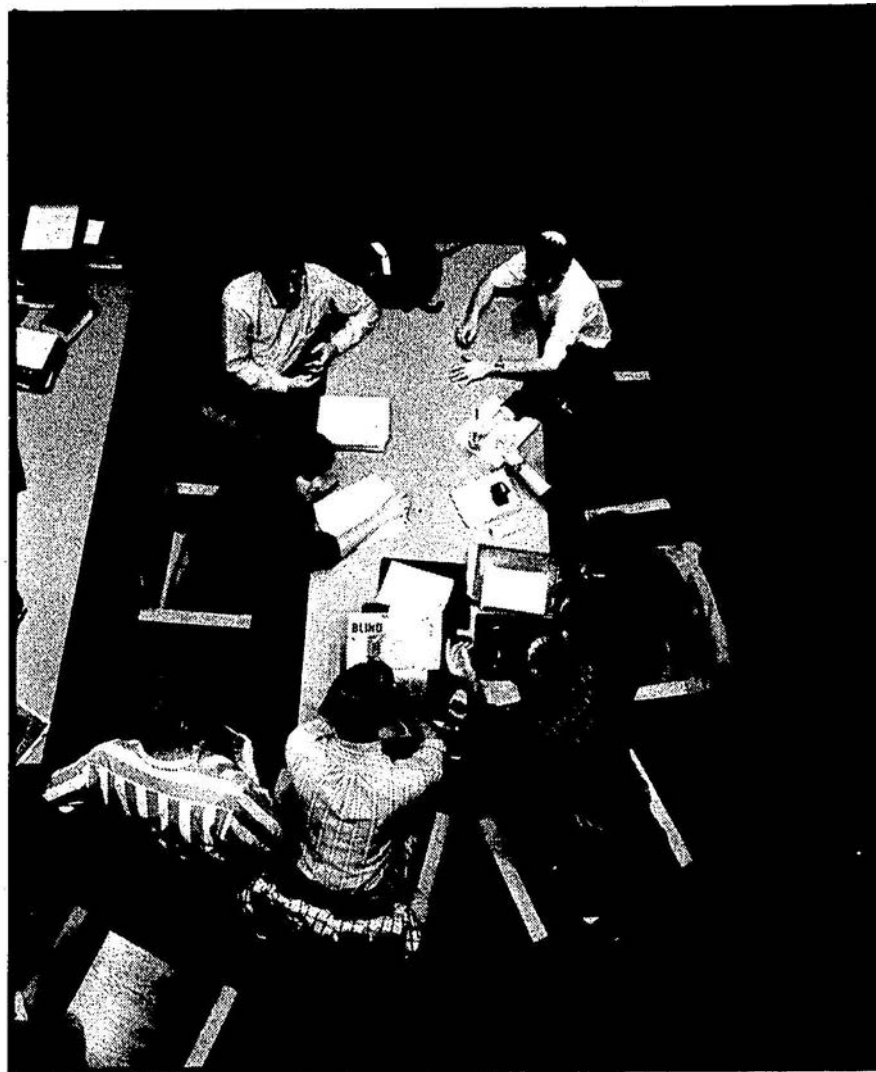


Photo by Josh Sindler

Collaborating on the joint issue. Clockwise from the top left: Jon Adler, David J. Kay, Mindy Spear, Shoshana Levine, Jay Bailey, Hayyim Angel, Daniel Oshinsky, Nechama Goldman.

Op-ed

Lethargic Syndrome of Dating

by David Kolb and Carey Schreiber

Bogged down with work? Not meeting the "nice Jewish girl" you thought you would? Saving money for that big date? Welcome to Yeshiva University.

It's Thursday night, and there is no one around YC to be found. Are they out on dates? No! They have all gone home to rest their weary little eyes after an intensive week of exams, papers, and other schoolwork. Is this any way to enjoy college life?

Thus begins, what we like to term, the "Lethargic Syndrome of Dating (LSD)."

At first glance, Joe Yeshiva notices the convenient location of his sister school (Stern College For Women Only), 150 blocks due south. Our weary student attempts to secure passage to this "sister school." In doing this, Joe is confronted with a major difficulty: "To van, or not to van." If Joe decides to take the van route, he must now become a linebacker attempting to secure his position in the line to the van. Failure to do so sends Joe to the safe, secure, and punctual subway.

Upon arrival, Joe is greeted with some warm and welcome stares (a.k.a. Stern Lounge). Carefully he makes his way toward the courtesy phone, to make his second voice contact with his "date." Waiting in the lounge, our hero begins to perspire at the thought of the impending evening. Should I take her to Mr. Broadway, Kosher Delight, or Cafe Wah? Wait, we might see someone we know, and feel awkward. Think quick Joe; she's getting off the elevator.

After a lovely and frugal (thrifty) time painting the town, Joe accompanies his companion to "Brookdale Hall." As he attempts to say goodnight, his voice is drowned by the bellow of the Burns security guard. "LAST VAN LEAVING

NOW. ROOM FOR ONE MORE." During the long ride home, Joe has some quality time to contemplate his evening, while other van riders contemplate aloud. Not a bad evening, considering we saw 12 people we knew, spent \$70.00, (plus tip), and met new and interesting cabbies. At least the company was good!

Joe returns home for the weekend, feeling optimistic. He spends a majority of the weekend studying for his classes. The week passes, Thursday rolls around again, and Joe is faced with his weekly dilemma. He ponders whether to go down to Stern and see his new friend, or save time and money and just rely on Ma Bell. After his conversation, Joe heads down to Morg Lounge to watch the game. After the game, he realizes that it was both fun and inexpensive to view this sporting event with his male companions, without feeling the pressure of dating. Thus ends stage two of LSD.

In our third stage, Joe has come to accept the comfort of "Thursday Night Male Bonding." In his subconscious, he realizes that he was supposed to call her at halftime . . . or at least as the post game show ends. Is 2:15 A.M. too late to call? Don't do it Joe, remember she has 6 other roommates (tight squeeze). I'll call her next week . . . Two months later, Joe asks, is it still too late to call?

With the roar of the Madison Square Garden crowd, Joe has now entered our final stage of "Lethargic Syndrome of Dating." As he rationalizes his motives for his hermit-like existence, Joe justifies his decision by saying, "It wouldn't have worked anyway."

We, the members of Student Optimism for Campus Inter-visitation and After-Class Life (S.O.C.I.A.L.), plead with you the students of Yeshiva University . . . DON'T BE A JOE, GET UP AND GO! ■

For information, call us. Please!

by Joanne Kipust and Hayyim Angel

I was on the phone with Joanne discussing our article for the newspaper. "We have to write about the social pressures at YU," I said. "But where do we even begin?" she asked. After a rather futile attempt to find an introduction, we resolved to begin our interviews. The guys in my room surrounded me and enthusiastically asked, "Do you like her? Is she shidduch material?" Flabbergasted, I responded, "Guys, I never even met her!" "So? You spoke to her," they countered. I called Joanne back and happily announced, "We have our first paragraph."

Whether it be in the dorms or the classrooms, YU students are constantly confronted by social pressures. A student who winds up staying in school several Thursday nights in a row often feels pressured to do something about his or her "plight." Members of the shrinking population of YU students not yet engaged or married must frequently be prepared to face enormous pressures to do so by the time they graduate. And those who are going out seriously? Even total strangers want to know when they are finally going to get engaged. What is the origin of these pressures? How are students to cope? A week of interviews at YC and Stern revealed the answers to these questions to be both complex and varied.

Many students claim that merely living in the dormitories forces students to contemplate going out. Laura, a SCW Senior, says that "the dorm is filled with constant reminders that you have to get engaged." One does not need to look far to find decorated doors or signs in the elevators announcing upcoming engagement parties. The cliques of engaged people can often be overheard exchanging notes on caterers, florists, and invitation designs.

"I hear those engagement parties downstairs three times a week, says Avraham, a Morg resident. "How can I not think about going out?"

Cindy, a Freshman, already knows what she will have to confront as she gets older. "The school is in a marriage mode. It's all around you. How can you not think about it?" she asks.

However, other students do not find the onslaught of engagements threatening. Sarah, an SCW Junior, points out that "there are three doors decorated on my floor, but that's three out of thirty five girls. Shouldn't that be normal?"

Yossi, a YC Junior, concurs. "It's a natural thing for guys to want to meet girls," he says. "I don't feel any extra pressure just because they already have found the right ones."

The pressures to get engaged often comes in more direct forms. "My parents ask me about every girl I meet," remarks David, a Senior. "I find it uncomfortable to keep answering them."

Tova, a Senior, feels that as graduation approaches, her friends have increased the pressure. "I get so annoyed when people hear my age and become concerned that I don't have a boyfriend," she complains.

However, before students at YU decry the pressure to get married, they should note its traditional and religious roots. A mishnah in Pirkei Avot advises one to be married at eighteen. Until recently, most religious communities insisted on marrying off their children at very young ages. Many Orthodox communities maintain this practice.

In YU, however, a conflict ex-

ists between these traditional values and modern society, where many people wait until their late twenties and early thirties before getting married. Students in different social circles will deal with these issues in different ways, but those embracing the more traditional approach must deal with the prospect of an early engagement.

Still, many students admit that they pressure themselves into getting engaged early. They feel that the opportunities to date which exist at YU will not be available later on. The prospect of living as a single on the Upper West Side of Manhattan scares many. Michael, a Senior, claims that "many people came here specifically for the social life." Michael feels that YU provides the greatest possibility for dating and marriage that religious college students could ask for.

Once students leave this environment, however, what will they do? "Here, people see me every day," says

couple of years before getting married."

Additionally, the pressures within the dormitories are not as strong up town as they are at Stern. Yocheved comments that "since there are fewer students at Stern, and they all live in one dorm building, you experience the pressure far more than men at YC."

Is all of this pressure healthy? Many feel that it is. Religious people are given an excellent chance to meet 'the right one' before the possibilities become scarce, according to Michael. He claims he is thrilled that he has the opportunity to go to social events sponsored by YU, and meet women in a normal setting. Alyssa, a Sophomore, notes that "many students need just a little push to go out—and they would never get it in another college like they get it here."

Others strongly differ. They feel the pressure to go out forces people into unwanted relationships. Asher, a Senior, labels the strong pressure to go out "unhealthy." "Too many people are



Tova. "But once I leave, who will think to set me up? Maybe I'll just have to go to the Rebbe or have my brother daven for me at the Kotel."

Others are able to resist the temptation of the decorated door. Josh, a YC Junior, sees no reason to go out yet. "The offers of shidduchim I received have been astounding, but since I plan on being in this institution for years to come, I don't see the prospect of an early marriage," he explains. Other students fulfill their social needs by dating without any intent to get married.

Many students feel there is a great difference between YC and SCW on the issue of marriage before graduation. Despite the fact that many Stern women pursue advanced degrees and careers outside the home, they feel much more pressure to get engaged than do the men at YC. Rachel feels that since many men do remain at YC after graduation, they still have all of their social options open. Stern women, on the other hand, cannot stay at Stern after they graduate.

Rachel adds that "many women like the security of going from their parents' home to school to their married home. Men, on the other hand, do not mind living in an apartment for a

going out just to avoid the pressure, and often they are going out with people whom they probably shouldn't be going out with," he observes.

Then, there are those who are already "on the right track," and involved in relationships. However, these people find that they are even more susceptible to social pressure. Getting engaged at YU seems to be the signal of victory. On the night of the victory, friends greet you at the door. You get your door decorated. You are allowed to "bond" with the other engaged celebrities of the school. And you get a party in Morg lounge.

Because of all the greatness attached to getting engaged, many students lose sight of how personal and special engagement is supposed to be. Steve complains about the "grilling" which one receives after going out. "People who don't know me at all scream across the hallway asking me: 'so when are you getting engaged,'" he explains.

Many relationships are strained when one partner wants to get engaged, but the other is not yet ready. Morris, a YC Senior, feels harassed by the emphasis on getting engaged. Once, on a second date, his companion was already refer-

ring to her parents as "his future in-laws."

"The system is too formal," he laments. "You are expected to go out a couple of times, and by then you better get engaged. If you don't know by the first couple of dates, people tell you that you should look for somebody else."

Penina, a Junior, agrees with Morris. "I want to be able to meet a guy and go out and have fun just because I enjoy his company. Why must everybody think that I want to marry every guy with whom I spend time?"

Asher disagrees. "We must remember that we go to a Yeshiva," he says. "While a little social contact is OK, too much without a tachlit purpose will lead to much wasted time."

Gila, a Junior, also feels that 'stam' going out is a waste of time, and often causes great confusion within a relationship. "When I go out, it's definitely for tachlit purposes, and I make that clear to my date," she says. Gila notes that otherwise, "great social problems may arise if one member is looking to get married but the other isn't ready yet."

So how do students avoid the pressure? As already noted, many students capitulate, and begin asking friends to set them up, or they attend social events. However, others have different methods for avoiding the constant threat of going out. Unable to deal with such persistent pressure, Tova often leaves for the weekend on Thursday in order to avoid walking through the lobby at night and being forced to pass by the couples congregating there.

However, many students find themselves in the dormitory for those Thursday nights. Jon, a first year semikha student, catches up on parshat hashavua in addition to his normal night seder. "There is no excuse not to learn more if you're not going out," he explains.

You will also find Jennifer in the orange lounge at Stern, watching L.A. Law. "The L.A. Law club meets every Thursday night and that's our social effort for the evening," she says.

Although there are clearly both positive and negative aspects to the YU social system, one thing is evident from all

of the responses. A mature, realistic outlook is imperative when dealing with the social pressures here. Some people get engaged long before they are ready to do so, and others avoid going out entirely because there are stigmas attached to attending certain social events, and they become too cynical about it.

Michael thinks that those who avoid going to social events because of such stigmas are being unrealistic.

"If you think you shouldn't go out because people might tease you, you might end up facing the pressure of not finding anybody later. Now, you can be much more selective; later, you will have to take whatever you can."

Rachel feels that those who get engaged before they are ready are kidding themselves. "They don't know what they are getting themselves into, and a few years later, they find themselves very unhappy with their married lives," she explains.

Despite the pressures bombarding students from all sides and edging them on towards a final commitment, people will ultimately have to make their own decisions. Clearly, a mature attitude is vital when facing social pressures at YU. ■

Marriage

The Great Escape

by Richard Ehrlich and Shoshana Levine

Marriage - the word evokes feelings of apprehension in the minds of most Yeshiva University undergraduates. Dating is one thing, but marriage? We're too young! We're not ready for it! Responsibility- yikes! I'm struggling through college as it is. However, after speaking with several married students, we received a different impression. Marriage, they say, though complete with its own pressures, has relieved many of the pressures relating to school.

Interestingly, it has helped them escape the web of complexity associated with dating. Mike Appel, a senior, says he certainly does not miss having to constantly think up creative places to go on dates.

Most of the couples admit that they were not actively looking to marry at this point in their lives. "I came into school career oriented, not marriage oriented," says recently married senior Paula Berger. "It just happened."

Once engaged, many couples felt apprehensive about getting married during college. "I didn't want to even consider having to drop out," recalls senior Melissa Rayman. "I didn't want to end up being a secretary because I got married."

Ellie Kaminetsky, an SCW student, echoes similar concerns. "I got nervous because I wanted to be sure I would finish school," she said. "I didn't want to schlepp it [school] out."

The YC men, on the other hand, did not share these concerns. Their major worry was the responsibility of raising a family. "All of a sudden, the financial burden's on me," one YC student explains. "I'd be so busy worrying about making a living that I wouldn't

have time to worry about school."

Despite their preconceived concerns, the general consensus among the newlyweds is that schoolwork is no harder now than it was when they were single. "The work itself isn't harder," junior, Abby Chazoni emphasizes. "It's just not the focus anymore. When you get married and start a family, your priorities change."

Yoel Fuld, a YC student, pointed out that the pressures of school have lessened because "before marriage, life revolved around school, but after being married and having a child, school is more trivial."

For Rayman, marriage improved her concentration in school. "I was more distracted during my engagement," she says. "Now that I'm settled, it's easier."

"I see people around me just as distracted, if not more, by dating," claims soon to be married, Yael Slurzberg. "It's harder for those who are still unsure and confused about their future. The stability and security of being married eases school pressure."

A major complaint among married couples is the inconvenience of living off-campus. "The commute is awful," says junior Michael Reichel who travels daily to Washington Heights from Queens. "I have to wake up much earlier than I did at YU."

SCW women complain that after "schlepping home on two subways and a bus," they are too exhausted to begin preparing dinner. "My husband is close to home because he's learning at YU," a Washington Heights based woman says, "so I let him make dinner."

Another disadvantage of being married during college is the inability to "pull all-nighters." "I can't stay up till 4 AM writing my papers," says Gila Weinstein, an SCW psychology major. "I have no choice but to become more organ-

ized. I use my time better now."

Aharon Haber, a computer major at YC feels that "the long hours required for writing programs just do not seem to be there." He decided to drop his second major, English, because of time constraints.

Kaminetsky generally avoids bringing schoolwork home. "My time is much more productive now that I'm married," she says. "If I have an hour of free time between classes, I'll head straight for the library instead of going shopping or just sitting around wasting time like I would have done last year."

Even those times when she is forced to study at home, she feels that she works better there than she did in the past. "I don't have a million outer distractions like I did in the dorm," she explains. "Supper at home takes twenty minutes, whereas in the dorm, the entire production used to take me one and a half hours." "I'm more motivated now," agrees Berger, "because I know my time is limited." For Berger, working at home poses no difficulty. "My husband is still in school, and we both have to study, so we encourage each other to work."

Haber feels that "a major incentive for continuing to work hard in school

ate, claims that he has become a Yeshiva University version of Dr. Ruth. "The guys come to me for advice," he says with a smile. He enjoys answering their queries and advising the single men about what he went through.

All agree that they miss dorm life, and being surrounded by friends. They have trouble keeping in touch with even their best friends. Real world considerations, such as earning a living, occupy their minds. "I don't have room for my friends' passing dilemmas," explains one woman. "Financial and emotional pressures are the focus of my attention."

Mike Appel speaks about the difficulties in relating to peers and the new gap that exists between himself and his friends. "The guys are talking about things that no longer interest me." Recently married Joey Goldstein goes so far as to say that, "the fun is taken out of school."

Weinstein, however, feels that being married has not affected her friendships significantly. "Because I'm still in school," she says. "I see my friends all the time. Being around Stern, I still feel a part of things."

A major issue of concern for the married women in school is the additional pressures that develop during pregnancy. "Sitting in class feeling a baby kicking your stomach, can be kind of distracting," one woman said. Going into labor during class, or worse, during a final are also real concerns. "It's hard enough being married and pregnant in school," explains Rayman, seven months pregnant. "But it'll be ten times harder with a baby."

The overall feeling of the married students is that married life and academic life can comfortably co-exist. Most couples stress the importance of keeping the two worlds of school and home apart—a task difficult to accomplish at first, but made easier with time. Aharon Haber advises: "school is like work; you don't want to bring home the anguishes, pressures, and tensions that are a part of it."

"Don't let school, people, finances, or fear stand in the way," SCW junior Abby Chazoni suggests. "I recommend marriage to everyone." ☎



after marriage is the increased financial pressures that exist." Others agree. "I have to do well now," says Gila Weinstein. "I need to support myself."

Married students seem to have little trouble coping with school pressures, but how do they manage with fellow students?

One part-time YC student still fulfilling general requirements to gradu-

Engagements

Richie Broth
Cheryl Umlas

Marc Fries
Rachel Lampert

Steven Hirschey
Devorah Maltz

Marc Kaye
Genene Hartstein

Ari Berman
Anita Ash

Jeremy Magence
Shawna Bergel

Josh Mark
Beth Sirote

Elly Miller
Penina Schechter

David Neustadter
Leah Hoffman

Stuie Nussbaum
Tzippy Bienenstock

Larry Portal
Andrea Rubenstein

Eyal Rosenthal
Rachelle Zauderer

Lance Taxer
Tema Levine

Avi Tuchman
Elyse Epstein

Kenny Waxman
Michelle Morgan

Dating in the Dark

by Avrum Aaron
and Deborah Aharon

Why do they call them blind dates? Because when you see your date you say to yourself, "Gee, the person that set me up must have been blind!" So goes the old joke.

For centuries blind dates, or shiduchim, have been a social reality. In the past, most Jewish young men and women have relied on this method of meeting for the lack of an alternative, or simply because it was tradition. Since most religiously observant men and women did not socially interact as freely as they do in our day, it was necessary to rely on an outside party to make marital matches.

To this day, the 'blind date method' is still used by many orthodox people for basically the same reasons. However, there is a new development. Many young people in the orthodox community prefer to meet their match on their own rather than via a friend. Now that society provides many more opportunities than before to meet people

sult of upbringing, or past experiences with the system.

Those opposed to the system voice dissatisfaction with the entire process, from the initial arrangement via friends or family to the post-date analysis with the people who set you up.

The blind date is usually arranged by friends, but occasionally relatives try to play their hand at the shiduch game. "Once this girl I didn't even know came up to me and asked me if I wanted to go out with her brother," complains one SCW junior. "I didn't even know her, why would I want to go out with her brother?"

At the YC campus, one student comments, "I only let my closest friends set me up because they know me best."

The details that make the date a blind one are also a cause for apprehension. There are certain questions that cross one's mind when someone sets you up. Very often, the primary question pertains to appearance.

"I never ask what she looks like because whether she looks like an ele-



"I also hate the small-talk although I know its kind of necessary."

Since the main purpose of the call is to set up a meeting place, the obvious next source of tension is the meeting itself. While some may feel comfortable meeting right in the lobby of Brookdale Hall, most of those interviewed preferred to meet in a less conspicuous location. "Usually the guy says something to the effect of, 'I'll meet you across the street from Brookdale Hall. I'll be the one wearing the paper bag over my head,'" admits one generally timid young YC man. "I'd rather meet her on the corner," says another. At SCW, one woman had a different experience. "You can't win," she says. "I asked a guy to meet me on the corner and he got insulted." Others, however, did not mind getting away from the lobby scene to meet their date. As one woman says, "It's no one's business who I go out with."

Whatever actually happens on the date, one can be sure that both will reveal their complete life's history in the

period of a few hours. Equally as certain is the inevitable evaluation and report of this evaluation to the party who initiated the meeting. "That's the worst part," says one YC senior. "I'm always apprehensive about what will be said."

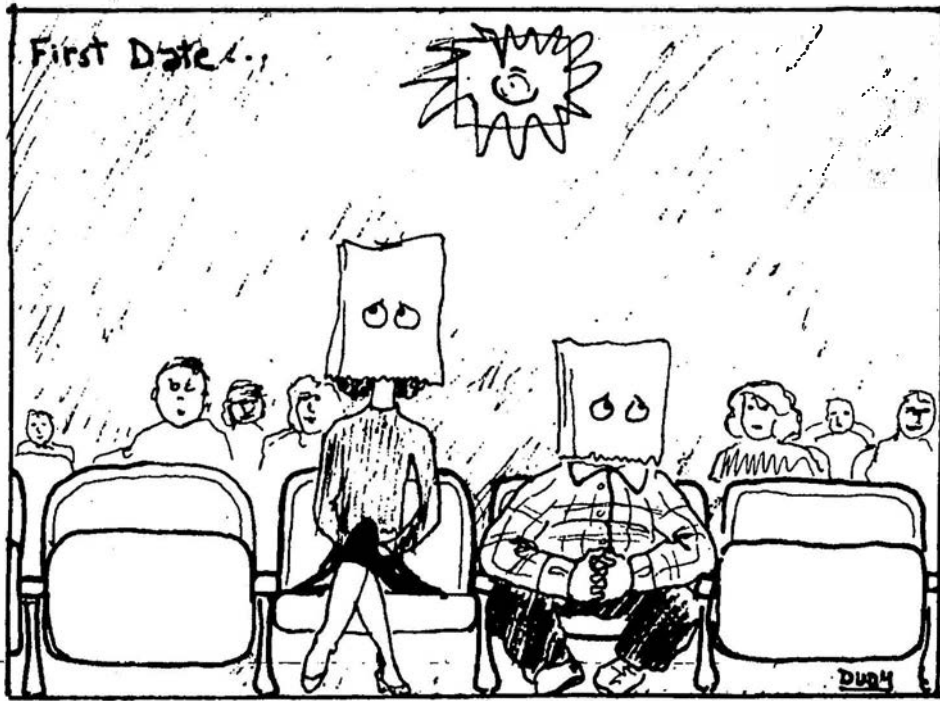
As intricate and detailed as these problems may be, there are still many who resolve themselves to making the best of blind dates. "It's a fact of life," remarks a YC sophomore.

"It's like applying for a graduate school or med school," muses an SCW student. "You may not like studying for the entrance exams, but the only way to succeed is by working hard to prepare for them. While studying for them one may take many practice tests in order to succeed by the real one. Dating is the biggest test of all."

Proof that many YU students do make use of the 'blind-date method', whether due to genuine initiative or peer pressure, is the YCSC sponsored "blind date" that occurs once or twice a year. While participation is low, some students have enjoyed them. "I got to meet some really interesting people who I would never have gone out with on my own," asserts one SCW sophomore.

"It wasn't so bad," agrees one YC senior. "I might even go again."

These people seem to recognize the faults in the system, yet despite all the uncertainty, apprehensiveness, dread, and unpleasant psychological preparation which goes into the blind date, they also recognize the fact that many people have been known to meet their match in this manner. And, even if the night goes poorly, it's a valuable experience about which you can speak...on the next blind date!! ☎



in a more 'natural' setting, they have begun to frown upon the old-fashioned method. Hence, multitudes of YU students are divided in their approach.

Blind dating still has many adherents, even among modern YU students. "It's the way to go," admits one SCW student. "How else will you meet a certain type of guy?"

"Why mess with something that has history on its side?" comments another SCW student. "My parents met that way!"

Despite undeniable success stories, many students express discomfort or even abhorrence towards the blind dating system. "I hate it," says an SCW student emphatically. "It has gotten to the point where I will refuse dates even if they 'sound good' because I can't stand the pressure. Your every move is under surveillance."

"I don't enjoy them," says another. "I guess if I would, I'd be married."

Further questioning revealed that positive or negative attitudes towards blind dating are usually the re-

sult of upbringing, or past experiences with the system. phant or is gorgeous, they always say she's fine," disagrees one YC student. Young women at SCW also admit they are concerned about looks.

Other aspects that one wants to know about are personality, sense of humor, level of religious observance, education, age, tastes and interests, intelligence, background, and what the parents do. One Smicha student wanted to know such specific details as whether her mother covers her hair and whether her siblings go to Yeshiva. "The problem here," notes a YC senior, "is that after all the questions and answers, exaggerations, embellishments, half-truths and down-right lies, you still have little knowledge about your date!"

Once these preliminary questions have been asked, someone has to take the initiative and usually it is the man. "The most awkward situation is calling up the girl for the first time," says one YC junior. "It's definitely worse for the guy."

An SCW woman felt differently. "I usually don't know what to say especially if he's not forthcoming," she says.

RESUMES

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Stats Tell All

by Tommy Weinberger

After correlating data from over 270 completed COMMENTATOR - OBSERVER Social Life Poll forms, it is evident that attitudes towards dating and social interaction reflect the diverse groups that form the YU community. Although comments and opinions beyond the scope of the questionnaire were not requested, many students surveyed felt the need to exercise their First Amendment rights. Responses ranged from the enlightening to the amusing, and from the abusive to the thoughtful.

Of the 276 questionnaires collected, 193 were from Yeshiva College and 83 were from Stern College. Seniors formed the largest group of respondents followed by Juniors and Sophomores, with a substantially smaller group of Freshman and a number of Smicha students also replying. Augmenting their surveys with humorous and offcolor comments, the Freshman provided many interesting case studies.

Contrary to popular opinion, most YU students are not engaged by the time graduation rolls around. In fact, a significant proportion of students rarely date. Interestingly enough, Sophomores date more often than any other group in YU. Furthermore, this class in SCW feels the greatest pressure to date. Figures for the Freshman class in Yeshiva College are somewhat skewed. While one would expect to find a standard probability distribution when compiling the number of dates, students in the Freshman class either marked 0 or 20 plus. Despite this statistical anomaly, the remainder of the data is not out of line with YU as a whole.

In addition, the pressures to date and find a mate are not overbearing. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the least amount of pressure), the average Yeshiva College student feels a pressure of 4.3 to date and a pressure of 3.6 to marry. The women from Stern averaged slightly higher stats. The average pressure to

date is 5.6 and the average pressure to marry is 5.8. Interestingly enough, according to respondents most of the pressure is self imposed. In fact, of those reporting more than average pressure to date or marry, over 73% noted that they themselves were the source of the pressure. One SCW student noted that the pressure stems from the fact that so many people are getting married. One YC student added YU as the source of the pressure. Parental pressure was cited by 37% of those polled. A number of respondents claimed, most notably SCW Seniors, that the pressure to get married is substantially higher than the pressure to date.

One glaring difference between the sexes shines through with respect to dating. Three times as many women as men stated that they were involved in serious relationships. Since a significant number of those polled are involved in intercampus relationships, it seems that YC men do not regard their relationships as significantly. (On the other hand, they are men and are thus unable to be in touch with or communicate their true feelings. See Chani Hook, "Big Girls Do Cry," Observer November 21, 1990.)

On the issue of meeting people of the other sex in YU, there was a much broader consensus. On average, students felt somewhat negative about the prospects of meeting people of the opposite sex. However, there was a strong correlation between those who responded negatively and those who have not dated. While many students noted that with effort it is not that difficult to meet people, others cited separate campuses as a strong barrier to normal interaction.

Although the statistics provided keen insights into social interaction, the comments volunteered from those polled further illuminated the findings. Many students felt the need to rename the survey the "No Social Life Poll" or the "Social Life or Lack of it Poll."

More comments follow to the right.

Survey Sampler

"Stern College is 150 blocks downtown, Barnard is only 70."

"There should be more events expressly for the purpose of meeting people of the opposite sex to make it easier to take the first step towards getting to know a total stranger."

"I strongly believe that YU has a superb social life and I must admit that the 7th floor shower events meet any collegiate standard."

"There is a social life but its muted. The two campuses ruin any chance for regular casual interaction. Yet another Torah U'Madda dichotomy."

"It is easy to meet people if you try. Should one have to try?"

"The attitude around school is that meeting people is a sin. There has got to be something wrong with him if you can meet him."

"It is easy to meet people if you try. But, it doesn't mean that you will meet the types of people you want to meet."

"The events held are either purely academic or purely social. A middle road must be found."

"When I came here I lost my social life. I now date my Bio lab teacher."

	Number of Dates	(from 1 - 10) (10 the highest) Pressure to Date	(from 1 - 6) (1 strongly agree) Pressure to Marry	(from 1 - 6) (1 strongly agree) You can meet people
FRESHMAN* (SC)	1.00	5.23	4.33	3.63
FRESHMAN (YC)	6.10	3.30	2.88	3.42
SOPHOMORE (SC)	7.36	6.14	3.66	4.30
SOPHOMORE (YC)	4.17	3.00	3.14	3.50
JUNIOR (SC)	4.50	5.67	4.75	4.17
JUNIOR (YC)	3.00	4.60	3.89	4.22
SENIOR (SC)	5.00	5.86	4.86	4.86
SENIOR (YC)	5.00	4.60	3.70	4.29
SMICHA	2.00	5.00	4.00	3.00

The staffs of The Observer and The Commentator would like to thank their Editors-in-Chief for the opportunity to work with one another on such an innovative and creative project. Staff members and editors from both campus gained from the experience.

With this landmark step, the competition between the two papers will come to an end. In its place will stand an era of cooperation, a spirit that will improve all campus publications.

Through the Eyes of a Blind Dater

A Parody by Elizabeth Botterman

"He's an amazing guy, you'll have a great time." These words echoed in my head as I stepped into the crowded elevator, and descended eighteen floors to the Stern lobby to meet my blind date. Once again, I was subjecting myself to Yeshiva University's favorite pastime. By this point in my Stern career, I felt like I was playing "Let's make a deal", with Monty sending me rejects from behind door #3.

I quickly checked my pocketbook and made sure that my \$20 bill was tucked neatly away in the zippered side pocket, just in case my date really turned out to be a disaster, and I found myself an hour later stranded in the midst of Harlem.

The elevator stopped abruptly on the 10th floor. Six more girls and six more pocketbooks piled into the two by four box. For a second I thought about paying one girl to take my spot and running back up to my cozy room on the 18th floor. I could send my roommate down with an excuse like "She was all ready when she suddenly came down with a mysterious sleeping disease of the North African Tse Tse fly."

Before I could make a move, the door slammed shut. I felt like I was back in Disneyland, strapped into cold steel seats on Space Mountain. I wanted to get off, but the ride had already started, and I had entered the point of no return. My car was about to crash.

There was no hope for a good date. They all followed the same map: awkwardness and small talk, dinner, and then more small talk. I was already trying to figuring out if I would make it back for LA Law at 10:00 PM.

I hate the fact that I never know what my date will look like. Why couldn't he wear one of those blue and white tags that says "Hi, my name is Eugene. I'm your date for the evening." I did not relish the thought of having to stand there, trying to figure out which was the guy that had just called and said, "I'm here."

As the elevator continued its descent, I braced myself for that noxious mix of Lemon Pledge and Old Spice which would soon fill my nose. Someone would call my name in a high-pitched, squeaky voice. I would turn around and find him. He would be a troll, wearing a pair of worn tattered Levis, and a white gap sweatshirt. That wouldn't really bother me so much. What would bother me would be the National Wrestling Magazine, all rolled up and hanging in his back pocket.

The evening would go something like this:

"Debbie?"

"Hi! I guess you're David."

"Yeah, sorry I'm late, but I took the van up and it got caught in traffic. What do you want to do?"

"Oh, I don't know, what do you want to do?" I'd be thinking that it's 8:30, and dinner would sound like a viable option.

"Well, how about dinner?"

"Good idea." Look at that - a mindreader.

We would walk to Mr. Broadway while engaging in mindless small talk.

"So, you've lived here all your life, how do you stand it?" "Oh, I don't know, I kind of like it." Silence. I would

decide to play it safe. "What are you majoring in?"

"Accounting, I want to work for one of the Big 8."

"That's interesting." (Isn't that the Big 6?) "I'm majoring in PoliSci."

"So, you're going into Law?"

"I'm interested in International Law. I hope to eventually make Aliyah, what about you?"

"I don't know, I haven't really thought about it." Silence.

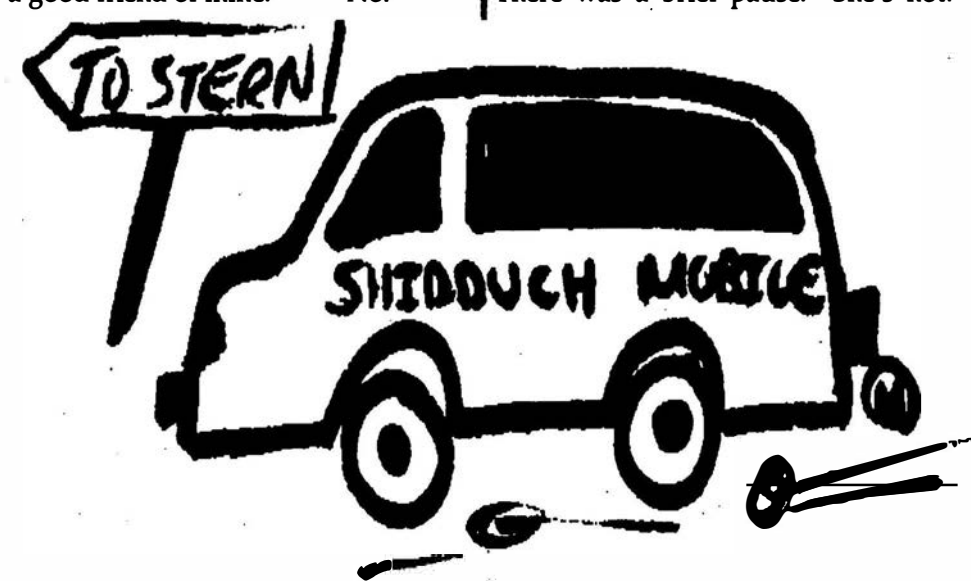
I would then begin to count how many couples there are around us, how many of the men are in black suits, in blue sweaters, how many tables?

I'd try another topic. "So, what do you think will happen in the Persian Gulf? Do you think that the continued economic sanctions will squeeze Iraq dry, or do you think we should go to war?"

There, that ought to make for some good conversation.

"I don't know," he'd answer. "I haven't really thought about it lately, although I did hear Phil Donahue building a case for war."

I would make another attempt at conversation. "Do you know Amy Schwartz, she's also from Detroit. She's a good friend of mine." "No."



We would walk back to the dorm and, desperate for conversation, he would tell me of the latest football game he had seen and the details of the touchdowns or is it homeruns?

Suddenly, the long, blue canopy reading "Brookdale Hall" would appear, an escape from this date.

"Well, I had a nice time," he would say.

"Thanks for tonight. Bye."

I was suddenly awakened by the doors of the elevator sliding open. I didn't move my feet, but was carried out with the wave of girls exiting. This is it. I looked straight ahead.

There was a guy standing by the phone. Wow, he looks normal, I said to myself. His white yarmulke rested on the side of his head. "David", it said.

"Hi, I guess you're Debbie," he said.

"Yeah, hi."

"How does dinner at Hunan's sound to you?"

"That's great."

"Great, listen, do you know where I can get information about the rally for Soviet Jews, I saw the poster."

"Sure, my roommate has all the info."

As we walked out of Brookdale Hall, we saw the last stragglers coming off the van. I couldn't believe it. Maybe this blind date would be my last. ☘

A Parody by Jonathan Tropper

"You'll like her, I'm telling you. She's really nice."

Warning bells went off in my head at the word "nice". I wasn't thrilled with the prospect of a blind date (who ever is?), but it had been a slow, dull semester, and I figured, when Dave brought it up, that I really wouldn't mind meeting someone new.

I was quite sure, however, that I didn't want to meet someone "nice". "Nice", in the dating scene, just doesn't cut it. "Nice" means that Slim-Fast was ineffective. Or, that she's seven feet tall. Or, that she's just not intelligent enough to be anything other than nice. I have no doubt that for women, the word summons up equally negative images when used in that context. A blind date requires more than personality. Sad, but true.

"What's this nice business?" I asked my buddy Dave, my reservations showing.

"Oh..." he stammered. "Did I say nice? I didn't mean it. Really, I didn't. It was a Freudian slip. What I meant was that she's... pretty and intelligent, uh, with both inner and outer beauty." There was a brief pause. "She's hot.

smile that radiated male bonding, but all I saw was supercilious condescension. I prayed for his car not to start. No such luck.

My date came out a minute later. To her credit, she was a pretty good looking girl, and to my credit I tried really hard to stop comparing her to the vision of beauty that had preceded her a minute before. Introductions were made. I remembered Dave's warning and tried to avoid small talk.

"Hi."

"Hi."

"How are you?"

"Fine." Pause.

"So... this is my car." Sheer genius.

"It's very nice."

"Thanks." We got into the car.

"You hungry?"

"Sure."

"How does Chinese sound?"

"Nice." Pause.

"So... You're very friendly with Dave?"

"Yes. He's a really nice guy."

I started to count the number of times she said that awful word, 'nice'. I was beginning to see why it had been the first word to pop into Dave's mind when he was describing her. I was also beginning to see the value of pre-arranged marriages.

At the restaurant I found out that she had nice roommates, nice friends, a nice family, was having a nice time in college, and had an all around nice life.

When our food was served, whatever minimal conversation there had been stopped, as we dug into our Mu Shu Veal and Lemon Chicken. When we had eaten all we could, I suddenly became certain that the uncomfortable silence would never be broken. We would leave the restaurant in silence, drive back to her dorm in silence, and silently nod goodbye to each other as she got out of my car.

"So, what's your major?" I asked her. It was a last ditch effort.

"Psychology."

"Oh. That's nice." Now she had me doing it.

When the bill came I broke open my fortune cookie. It read: "This Date Is Going Nowhere. Confucius Is Bored To Tears."

Things were going so poorly that it shouldn't have been a surprise to get to my car and find that I had locked the keys inside -- but it was anyway. I considered ripping through the rubber insulation with a coat hanger, but I decided that it would cost me a hundred dollars or so to have that repaired, while it was only a couple of miles to Stern, and I could use the walk. When we got back to Brookdale Hall, she turned to me and said, "Thank you. I had a very nice time." I maintained the tattered remnants of my composure and we said good night.

When I got back to my dorm, I bumped into my good buddy Dave, who approached me with a knowing male smile and said, "How was your date, big guy?"

"Nice," I answered him, and then punched him in the nose, threw him to the floor, and beat him within an inch of his life. ☘

Really, she is..." Not entirely convinced, I told him I wasn't interested, at which time he threw me to the ground and beat me within an inch of my life.

"You're going to do this," he told me, "because it's fun. You're going to do this because it's good for you. And you're going to do this because I told her you'll pick her up at seven thirty tonight, and you're not going to make me look bad."

How could I argue with him when he was so honest about his motives? "One piece of advice," he told me later, draping a paternal arm around my shoulders as he walked me to my car, which I was praying would not start tonight. "Don't ask her what her major is, or anything stupid like that. She hates small talk like that." Swell.

It was not Thursday night, so Brookdale hall was not the zoo it can often be. Still, I managed to bump into the two people I least wanted to be seen by on a blind date. That always seems to happen at Stern. I waited by the lobby entrance in trepidation, fearing the worst, which is why it was such a tremendous shock to me when she finally walked out. I couldn't believe it. She was everything Dave had said, and more! She was dark and slim. She was beautiful. She was... somebody else's date.

As he closed his car door on this treasure, he waved at me and flashed a

Campus Comparisons

Views From Afar

by Elisheva Berizen and Ezra Kahn

At YU, it is a given that marriage is a topic of great concern among students. Students often complain of strong and undue pressure to go out and get engaged. What about elsewhere? Do Orthodox Jews at other schools feel this social pressure? Interviews with a variety of students on other campuses have yielded surprising results.

The group of students interviewed are all Orthodox. However, within that group, they fall into different categories of religious commitment. Many spent a year in Israel, attend a daily minyan, and have set aside time for Torah study. Other students openly admit they occasionally date non-Orthodox members of the opposite sex, and some attend "frat" parties.

Students at Columbia describe a growing sensitivity among Orthodox Jews at Columbia towards issues like dating and marriage. Jeff, a junior, explains that because of Columbia's close proximity to YU, the "pressure filters down." The pressure to get engaged is not as intense as in YU, states Jeff. However, the pressure to be "seeing" someone "seriously" can be intense.

Like at YU, dating for "tachli" purposes only, has gained greater acceptance at Columbia. However, many students at other universities see dating as something else. Michael, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania claims that at his alma mater, people do not date to get married.

"It is a social experience, and if it works out, then wonderful."

Michael has been dating the same girl for three years, and admits marriage is now of greater concern. "But the idea of looking at her when we first met, and trying to picture us married is insane," says Michael. He feels that at Penn, marriage is a foreign issue to most students.

Daniel, a student at NYU, is strongly against the concept of marriage while in college.

"Marriage requires a great deal of emotional support on the part of both people. College requires a great deal of one's time. Doing both seems quite difficult, and I feel that in the end, both the marriage and education lose out."

If the threat of marriage looms less heavily at other colleges, Jewish students on these campuses must still grapple with issues the typical YU student will never encounter. At secular universities, Orthodox students must constantly reassess their interaction with non-Jewish counterparts. Some limit their social activities to those of a similar background. However, others feel that interacting with non-Jews is an enlightening, revelatory experience. Esther, a sophomore at Rutgers, finds that living in a culturally diverse environment is refreshing and feels it prepares her for a reality that she will confront after college. She feels it is crucial that she develop communication skills in order to deal with people of all faiths and backgrounds. "I am glad I chose this [Rutger's] now," she exclaims.

This attitude prevailed among many of those interviewed. In fact, one student believes that people at YU lack certain skills necessary to deal with those outside the Jewish community.

Others, however, prefer to remain behind the closed doors of the Hillel House. "It does not come naturally to me to get involved with non-Jews socially", comments Sharon, a Freshman at Columbia. "I like to hang around with people similar to me, and there are enough Orthodox Jews here to do that."

Generally, the Hillel House or

Kosher dining hall serves as the center of focus for Jewish life on campus, be it Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform. Michael says that "for many, the Hillel House represents their first Jewish experience."

Mitchel, one of the few Orthodox students at Syracuse University, spends a great deal of time with non-religious students. "It was difficult at first being different," he recalls, "yet my friends have come to respect my lifestyle as they refer to it, and in some cases have started to become more Jewish."



Many students find that the presence of non-Orthodox Jews on campus mitigates the internal social pressure of the Orthodox community. Avi, a senior at Harvard who also spent a semester at YU, explains that the non-observant segments of Hillel "give a different perspective, because for them, marriage is not an issue." However, he did not deny that there is a growing number of married couples on campus, both undergraduate and graduate, which contributes to the feeling of pressure among the single community. Avi feels that even at Harvard, the attitude of the Orthodox community puts pressure on single students to begin serious dating in the quest for a spouse. "The community looks at older [single] guys as strange," claims Avi. He feels that people ought to realize that one does not have to be married right out of college in order to enjoy a productive lifestyle.

Students interviewed at campuses with relatively small Orthodox populations such as Harvard, Princeton, and Syracuse, find that the size of their community contributes to a casual social atmosphere. "The community is extremely small, so you get to know everyone really well," explains Rachel, a freshman at Princeton. "The emphasis is on college friendship, and community, as opposed to romantic relationships."

Anne, a Harvard senior, concurs with Rachel.

"On campus, everyone knows each other well, which makes for a nice little community."

Avi agrees, stating that even if people are not satisfied with their social life because of the "finite number of people", they are not so insistent on having one, and do not go to New York to get "set up."

So does the pressure to get married exist at other Universities? It is certainly not as strong as it is at Yeshiva, yet there are social pressures they have that we do not have. "It is quite difficult as well as emotionally stirring," says Mitchel from Syracuse, "to have to constantly check if somebody is Jewish or not. It is the one thing I envy about YU students. You can be at a social function, and being Jewish is a given, and in most cases, being Orthodox is a given as well." Maybe we do not have it as bad as some of us think. ☎

UNCOMMON OBSERVATIONS

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