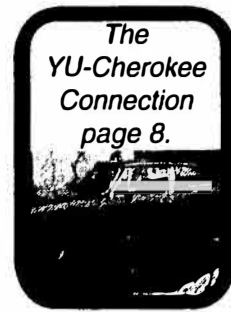


# Yeshiva University Commentator



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The Official Undergraduate Newspaper of Yeshiva College

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Dr. Cwillich and Dr. Ottway and the famed telescope. The long awaited for classes that were supposed to have incorporated the newly acquired telescopes have yet to become a reality at Yeshiva College's uptown campus.

## Observatory Purgatory

BY DAVID MIRSKY

This year, looking up at the heavens was supposed to take on a new meaning at Yeshiva College. Unfortunately, the astronomical observatory that was slated for placement atop Belfer Hall by the fall of last year has been held up by numerous logistical and financial problems.

Last year, the estate of the late Mr. Abbosh, an avid amateur astronomer, appropriated funds for Yeshiva University to purchase a telescope and dome. The \$25,000 donation was set aside by Mr. Abbosh's estate specifically for the purchase of a telescope and any accompanying equipment needed. An advanced digitally controlled refractor telescope was purchased, along with a dome to house the equipment.

Over the summer, YC Physics Professors Cwillich and Kaplan assembled the telescope and tested the digital controls, readying the telescope for its expected installation. They intended, along with Dean Adler, to have the telescope up and running by the Fall Semester, with hopes of offering an introductory Astronomy class utilizing the telescope for lab sections. The College prominently featured these intentions in a pamphlet of upcoming attractions at YU.

These hopes slowly dissipated as it became apparent that the installation of the telescope on the roof of Belfer Hall posed daunting engineering problems. Because of safety concerns, it would not be possible for students to have direct access to Belfer's roof where the dome and telescope would be situated. This problem was meant to be solved with the use of a remote control device, allowing the telescope to be partly controlled from the confines of a room on the 16th floor, where the captured images would be displayed on computer monitors.

Dr. Cwillich noted, however, that certain operations, such as rotating the dome, could only be done on the rooftop, severely limiting student control. In addition to this, Cwillich explained that a wall surrounding the roof of Belfer would necessitate the construction of a suitable platform on which to rest the dome. As of yet, no plan for such construction has been devised.

Contributing to these problems facing the observatory, are financial concerns that arise from the legal constraints attached to the donation. The Abbosh estate insists that the donated funds were only to be used for the purchase of telescope equipment. This means that the money can only be used to fund any necessary construction for the installation of the telescope. In compliance with the estate's guidelines, a telescope was purchased with the whole of the Abbosh endowment. This left no funds for other expenses of installation and has further delayed telescope operation. Until sufficient funding is available for the construction complications, the working telescope will remain without a home.

According to Cwillich, the technical work to get the telescope in operation has been completed, but the last remaining step of proper installation poses a barrier preventing the implementation of Astronomy as a course in the YC curriculum. With hopes of possible joint ventures with other observatories in the area, the observatory project stands as an exciting possible addition to current YC course offerings. Cwillich and other faculty involved in the project remain confident that a solution will arise and additional funding will become available. Until then, however, the telescope will continue to collect dust on the floor of a Belfer Hall lab, waiting for the opportunity to open up the skies above Washington Heights.

## SECOND CONFERENCE ON FEMINISM AND ORTHODOXY

Over 2,000 People in Attendance

BY NOAH STREIT AND  
DANIEL EHRENREICH

On February 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, the Second International Conference on Feminism and Orthodoxy graced the facilities of Manhattan's Grand Hyatt Hotel on Park Avenue. The conference, hailed as "historic," aimed at "expanding religious life for women not in a revolutionary way but through education and the study of the possibilities within Jewish law," explained the planners.

Over 2,000 people attended the conference, twice the number in attendance at last year's inaugural conference. The demographics were quite surprising, as the conference drew both men and women of all ages and from different nations. There were high school, college, and graduate students, business women and men, executives, mothers and retirees.

Among the many topics discussed were solutions for *agunot* - women whose husbands refuse to give them a *get*; expanding

roles for women in the synagogue, and in particular rabbinic ordination; issues concerning women's public devotion, such as prayer groups and recitation of the *megillah*; and issues of private devotion, such as *kiddush* and *zimun*. Additionally, the conference addressed personal issues such as domestic violence, infertility adoption, and concerns of single women in the Orthodox community.

Just as the conference attracted a diverse group of attendees, the speakers were a diverse group as well. Featured lecturers spanned the spectrums of Orthodoxy and Judaism, with Reform and Conservative female rabbis, together with "Ultra-Orthodox" women and rabbis addressing the crowd.

Many of the participating rabbis were educated at Yeshiva University, both at an undergraduate and graduate level. Rabbi Saul Berman, Director of Edah, is an Associate Professor of Jewish Philosophy at Stern College and previously served as the Chair of the Department of

Judaic Studies; Rabbi Shlomo Riskin received both undergraduate and rabbinic degree at YU, and the controversial Rabbi Irving Greenberg studied and later taught at YU.

Other prominent lecturers at the conference who received their ordination from YU were, Rabbi Adam Mintz, Rabbi of the Lincoln Square Synagogue, Rabbi Emmanuel Rackman, Chancellor of Bar Ilan University, Rabbi Charles Sheer, Jewish Chaplain at Columbia University, and Rabbi Avi Weiss, Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale and longtime Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies at Stern College.

In contrast, there were few female lecturers who hold graduate degrees from YU or undergraduate degrees from Stern College.

Another notable theme characterizing the conference was a clear demarcation between Halachic and social issues in approaching the issue of

*continued on page 5*

## YU Denies Red Sarachek Bids to Conservative High Schools

BY ADAM MOSES

The Yeshiva University Red Sarachek Memorial Tournament, widely considered to be the pre-eminent Jewish high school basketball tourney in North America, is to be held at the Max Stern Athletic Center this March. The tournament, which is conducted under the aegis of the Office of Admissions, will feature seventeen secondary school squads from diverse geographic locales in heated competition for the trophy which effectively confers Jewish national high school championship status on the victorious team. Despite expressions of interest on the part of local Solomon Schechter high schools, YU declined to extend these Conservative Jewish institutions invitations to the competition.

This development comes in the wake of the clamor generated over a recent decision by the "Yeshiva League," a loose association of centrist Orthodox high schools in the metropolitan New York City area that coordinates joint athletic competition, to reject Solomon Schechter's bid for a league entry. The Conservative schools indicated that they would prefer to compete in a league comprised of other Jewish teams rather than enter

one dominated by non-Jewish parochial schools.

Meryl Wiener, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Solomon Schechter High School of New York, feels that her school's exclusion from the Red Sarachek tournament is unacceptable. "If you are not inviting us because we are a Conservative school, then that is shameful...Who are you hurting by doing this? A ninth grader who has to give up his basketball career because he goes to a Jewish school."

YU Director of Admissions, Michael Kranzler, emphatically denied that the decision not to invite Solomon Schechter was directly relevant to that school's denominational orientation. "We invite the schools that traditionally express interest in sending us their students." Kranzler explained that the objective of the tournament is to recruit high school students for eventual University attendance. Since Solomon Schechter has not sent, nor in Kranzler's estimation, encouraged many of its students to enroll in YU, the school is "not of value recruitment wise" and was on these grounds not invited.

Kranzler acknowledged that Bialik High School, a non-denominational institution in

Montreal with perhaps a handful of Orthodox students, was invited to the Red Sarachek Tournament last year. He asserted, however, that Bialik was for his purposes distinguishable from Solomon Schechter in that the administration of the Canadian school expressed an "interest in sending students to YU and having its students exposed to an Orthodox environment." Not so Solomon Schechter, according to Kranzler, who noted that the Conservative school did not ideologically align itself with YU.

A solitary Bialik student is currently enrolled at YU. A *Commentator* interview revealed that his decision to attend the University was not influenced by his high school's participation in the Red Sarachek Tournament.

Wiener observed that the Conservative movement's decision to pursue day school education more vigorously was intended to result in the creation of more Solomon Schechter high schools. She wondered why "the Orthodox, who came up with the idea for day school education - a wonderful idea - are not supportive of our efforts to further Jewish education." With the emergence of more non-Orthodox high schools on the horizon, current concerns are not likely to soon disappear.

EDITORIALS

# The Folly of our Ways

Once again Yeshiva University has the opportunity to assert itself for the benefit of Judaism and failed miserably in the process. Instead of attempting to create peace and equanimity, YU has only furthered the rift between the Orthodox and Conservative movements.

This year several Solomon Schechter highschoools, Conservative highschoools, requested entry into YU's Red Sarachek Tournament. YU said no and cited a simple cost benefit justification - YU utilizes the Red Sarachek tournament as an admissions recruiting event and very few Solomon Schechter students have attended YU, so why invite them to participate in an event that is aimed at garnering admissions?

Error number one: thus far, YU has only admitted one Conservative highschoool, for one year, to its tournament, and cites this as evidence that students of these Conservative schools will not attend Yeshiva University. Is it truly possible to extrapolate a general assumption from this isolated event, that students of Conservative highschoool will bear no interest in YU? Perhaps if we invited them and showed them Yeshiva University, they would change their minds and decide to attend YU. Just imagine the kiruv opportunities (please note the sarcasm).

Error number two: even if there was no possibility of a single student, from these Conservative day schools, attending YU, the administration should attempt to widen their extraordinarily narrow vision and see this opportunity for what it really is. This is a possibility for reconciliation. There is a great rift within Judaism and it only becomes larger as time continues. The Conservative and Orthodox movements only grow away from each other and now YU has an opportunity to lead Modern Orthodox Jewry in the attempt, albeit in a small way, to bridge this gap and create harmony by extending a simple invitation to the students of these Solomon Schechter highschoools.

The time has come; an unparalleled opportunity has presented itself. No more rhetoric, no more apologetics, stop paying lip service to the problems. Seize the opportunity, extend an invitation to these students and begin the healing process.

# The Commentator

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## MESSAGE FROM THE YCSC PRESIDENT SRULI TANNENBAUM

It has been an action packed February for The Yeshiva College Student Council. March promises to be even more exciting with class events and YCSC sponsored programs.

Congratulations to the Junior and Senior Classes on the sold out trip to The Diary of Anne Frank. This coming Sunday, the Sophomore Class is sponsoring a trip to Skirmish and a limited amount of space is still available, so sign up now. On Sunday, March 8th, The Zachor Club of YCSC and SCWSC is sponsoring a trip to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, details will be available shortly. Also in the coming month look for more class events including trips to the Broadway hits, Mindgames and The Sunshine Boys. We are also planning another outing to Yankee Stadium come April. So keep watching the bulletin boards for more info on future activities.

This past Wednesday the Macs held their last home game entitled, Senior night, honoring all graduating players. To commemorate the

evening, YCSC gave out over two hundred water bottles. Special thanks to food services for sponsoring the gift. Oh, and for those of you who took in the game, there will be a written final at the end of the semester, counting towards one of your gym requirements.

Next week Student Services is sponsoring a trip to X/S, a virtual reality experience. Look for more info and how to sign up in the coming days. Also next week, yes we've been saying this for months, but we mean it this time, Morg Mart will officially open. Also be sure to check your mailboxes for YCSC's registrar survey and take a few minute to fill it out and return it to help us make some much-needed improvements. Finally, I know midterms are approaching so I would like to wish everyone good luck on their exams.

Sruli Tannenbaum  
YCSC President





## FROM THE EDITOR

### NOAH STREIT

Two weeks ago I attended the Conference on Feminism and Orthodoxy, and I came away emotionally torn: jubilant and inspired, yet morose and alarmed. I felt the first two positive emotions because I knew that I had attended a historic event, one that has and will alter the face of Modern Orthodoxy as we know it. Already women have initiated changes that have allowed them to participate within Orthodox Judaism on a plane far closer to the level of participation afforded to men. I believe this phenomenon will continue, though I do not know until what end, however I believe my lack of foresight is shared even among the leaders of this movement as they too are unsure what constitutes their final destination.

But as I stated, my happiness is of a tempered sort and ironically, for the same reasons I'm happy, I weep. I am scared and saddened by what I see as the outcome of this powerful and dynamic movement.

Incidentally, I know there are those who shudder at the word "movement" used in conjunction with what this conference represented, because they see the situation as one that needs healing from within, not one that needs an external "movement" to cause change. Nevertheless, I think this attempt at change is generally perceived as a movement and perhaps because of this factor will cause a rift in Orthodox Judaism within the next 20 to 30 years. The rift will be created, because Haredi Orthodoxy, which is to the right of Modern orthodoxy, will never truly allow women a role in Judaism equal to the role that men currently play.

Dr. Sylvia Fishman an Assistant Professor of Contemporary Jewish Life/Sociology of American Jews at Brandeis made a chilling point during her speech in the session entitled "Kol Isha." She stated that the Orthodox world is gripping onto women's issues with such vehemence because they see it as representative of modernity, something they do not wish to integrate into their live styles. Paradoxically, modernity has already infiltrated into many of these circles. Cases in point: The music of Mordechai Ben David and Dedi - two examples of rock music, modern rock music, that has made its way into Haredi circles; within the haredi circles, women are assuming a more prominent position in providing a livelihood for their family by working and the list goes on. Therefore, the fight against integrating women as equals to their male counterparts in terms of religious practice is the last symbolic stalwart in the fight against modernity.

Realizing that there are other sociological aspects involved and perhaps halachic issues as well, though the latter is the source of debate, I still believe that Dr. Fishman is correct and I do not think

that this problem will disappear. Our world of technology makes it so difficult to shelter ourselves from modernity and thus the issue of the changing place of women in Orthodox Judaism is a great place to set up a battle fort.

Currently, though some would tell me that I'm mistaken, the umbrella of Orthodox Judaism covers Modern Orthodox to the Ultra Orthodox - perhaps I can even base this on the fact that both phrases still contain the word orthodox. Nevertheless I am given to conclude that those on the right of the Orthodox spectrum will consider the course that these women are on, not as a healing process, but as a movement that is drifting away from traditional orthodox Judaism. This "movement" will cause a break between the Modern Orthodox and those to the right of the Modern Orthodox and the constituents will have to choose sides. The rift created will be as severe as the gap that separates the Orthodox from the Conservative.

At first, I thought there might be hope, because although there were those at the conference who overlooked the texts and halacha and based their arguments on concepts of equality, there was a clear majority who were attempting to create a place for women through the confines of halacha. Nevertheless I realized that over much smaller halachic arguments there have been rifts created that have never healed, thus I'm not reassured.

One other point that I'd like to make before I cap my pen. I was surprised to see the incredible representation that YU received among the many male lecturers. Numerous Rabbis who addressed the conference were connected to YU in some manner, whether in form of their ordination, graduate and/or undergraduate education. In contrast I noticed that very few of the female lecturers had received any level of their education at YU. I'm not quite sure what to make of this.

Yeshiva University, particularly its undergraduate component, is the leading producer of Modern Orthodox clientele. It would make sense that at a conference whose proponents are predominantly Modern Orthodox and whose effects will most likely be felt upon the Modern Orthodox, that a good number of the female speakers would have emerged from Stern and other sections of YU.

However, I ask myself, is this not the purpose of the conference - awakening the latent Orthodox woman? So I wait and hope that this conference and its effects will stir the hearts of our female counterparts and ourselves as well, but ultimately I hope that this process will lead to a healing within Orthodox Judaism and not a movement which will cause a break within Orthodox Judaism.



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# YESHIVA COLLEGE



# CAMPUS NEWS

## Office of Admission's YUNMUN a Success

### Record Number of Students Participate

By BENJAMIN J. MANTELL

VERNON VALLEY, NJ - Yeshiva University National Model United Nations VIII, an Office of Admissions function, was a success once again this year. The conference took place from February 6-8 and hosted over 500 students from more than 30 yeshiva high schools from across the continent.

The official purpose of the event is recruitment. Students come, however, to partake in an educational, social, and, often-times, competitive conference.

While the effectiveness of YUNMUN as a recruiting event is difficult to ascertain, participants agree that the conference is representative of the University's *Torah u'madda* motto in the form of a positive experience. "YUNMUN definitely made me reconsider YU as a serious contender," said one student who was waiting to hear from Harvard, Columbia, Penn, and YU. "I never realized the role that Stern had under the YU umbrella until now. It's fantastic," said one young woman.

Each high school sent a delegation representing one or more countries, onto an array of committees patterned after the structure of the United Nations. The conduct of the committee sessions was also similar to the parliamentary procedure used in the United Nations. Committee issues ranged from peaceful uses of space to international problems with narcotic drugs. There were 15 committees, with Stern students serving as chairs and assistant chairs on more than half of the committees, and YC/SSSB students serving on the others.

This was the second year that YUNMUN was held at the Seasons Resort and Conference Center in Great Gorge, New Jersey. Once again, the peaceful snow-capped mountain environment proved to be conducive to both work and play.

The festivities began Sunday with the arrival and registration of each of the schools. In contrast to the disappointment with the décor of the rooms last year, most were pleased with the newly renovated rooms. Also, the catering, for which YUNMUN is well known, maintained its fine reputation.

After dinner and *Maariv*, the opening ceremonies included a *d'var Torah*, as well as an address by Roniel Weinberg, a YC senior and Secretary-General. Weinberg expressed his excitement about the event which set the tone of the conference. Traditionally, the first committee sessions are spent addressing procedural concerns. Said one chair, "Not only does this get the ball rolling, but it gets the delegates excited about discussing the topics."

Monday's schedule consisted of nonstop committee sessions throughout the day interrupted only by davening, *shiurim*, and meals. The delegate handbook includes a section titled, "Speeches, Speeches Everywhere." Indeed. Speech after speech; delegate after delegate; proposal after proposal. The conference yielded many effective and bold resolutions, each committee only to be outdone by the next.

After *Shacharit* and breakfast on Tuesday morning, delegates either had their final committee sessions or participated in the General Assembly Plenary. Final resolutions were passed in committee, while others were ratified in General Assembly votes. Upon completing final meetings, tensions rose as delegates awaited the Awards Ceremony.

While not the sole purpose of the conference, the Awards Ceremony adds a touch of competitiveness and seriousness where it might not otherwise exist. The goal of each committee session is to solve the topics at hand, not to beat an opponent. The criterion for Best Delegate and runners-up awards included speaking ability, working with others to form coalitions, ability to write and pass resolutions, and general participation. While the individual awards were generally dispersed, MTA walked away with the award of 'Best Delegation'.

YUNMUN Times, the daily paper that updated current issues on each committee, came out each day. Watching the delegates get on their buses to make their trips back home, one could see the paper clutched under each arm to be taken home. As one participant said, "The paper provided an informative and fun way to preserve YUNMUN memories."

## Yale Model Israeli Knesset

By MAURY GREBENAU

Twenty-eight student delegates from Yeshiva College and Stern College for Women represented Yeshiva University at this year's annual Yale Model Israeli Knesset (YMIK) in New Haven, Connecticut. According to Yana Dobkin, the party and committee coordinator of YMIK, as well as the co-vice president of the Yale Friends of Israel, the goal of YMIK is to "provide an intellectual and social forum for people who care about Israel."

By inviting a total of seventy-eight registered delegates from colleges across the country, ranging from UCLA, to Vassar, to YU, a group of delegates that could competently recreate the Knesset of 1949 at the birth of the state of Israel was formed. In past years YMIK has been a simulation of the contemporary Knesset focusing on current issues. This year, in honor of the 50th anniversary of the state of Israel, the 1949 Knesset was the model for the YMIK simulation.

Bills on various pertinent topics were prepared prior to the YMIK weekend. The goal was to debate and eventually ratify bills in committee sessions. The different forums to prepare the bills took the form of party caucuses, committee meetings, and plenary sessions.

To begin, each of the 78 Knesset Members were given name tags informing them of their political party and committee. The first order of business was to familiarize the party members with their respective party's overall philosophy. The delegates broke up into party caucuses to discuss their respective viewpoints. The largest political party was Mapai, the predecessor of the Labor party of today, which had 46 seats in the first Knesset. Other represented political parties were Mapam, Herut and numerous other smaller political parties. Once the basic party philosophy and political standing on a number of issues was concretized, a packet of possible bills was perused and an official party standing on individual bills was discussed and established.

The next step was to go into committee meetings, each of which had representatives from most political parties. Each committee discussed 2 or 3 bills and voted on amendments. Each party, while trying to represent its own best interests, fought for the amendments that it found to be acceptable. Parliamentary procedure was in effect for these proceedings. These meetings lasted until about an hour before Shabbat, whereupon the conference adjourned until the following day.

Plenary sessions were the final step in the passing of the proposed bills into law. Most of Shabbat was spent in plenary sessions. These sessions were the first in which all 78 delegates met as one group to finally vote on each bill. Further emendations were disallowed at this point and the only possible change to the proposed bills was a "motion to divide the question," meaning that parts of the bill could be voted on separately. Most of the 25 or so proposed bills were passed into law in some form or other.

There were bills passed on the structure of the IDF (Israeli Defense Force), the constitution of Israel, Israel's educational structure, and many other topics. The most interesting bill was probably the bill introducing a military affiliate named "Shhhhhh..." whose objective was to infiltrate Arab countries with personnel such as Pinky and the Brain, Agent Orange, the Pink Panther and the like. Most bills, of course, were of a serious nature. After all the bills were voted upon and either passed into law or voted down into oblivion, YMIK's political portion came to an end, as most of the YU and Stern delegates headed home to New York upon the conclusion of Shabbat.

YMIK met its goal of allowing delegates to gain insight into the challenges of the Israeli political climate. There was a great deal of enthusiasm shown by Yeshiva University delegates and as Elliot Lowenstein, president of the J.P. Dunner Political Science Society, put it, "YU certainly represented itself in a positive light."

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Continuing Education and Special Programs

# Conference on Feminism and Orthodoxy

Continued from page 1

women's roles within Orthodoxy. Generally, the Orthodox lecturers attempted to find solutions within a Halachic framework – they cited sources and arguments, and attempted to show possibilities other than the traditional ones. Those whose backgrounds were Reform or Conservative, in contrast, often discussed what women's roles should be without seriously addressing the Halachic texts.

## Day 1

Announcing that "we are not on the fringe," Blu Greenberg, chairing the conference, began her invocation by celebrating the successes of Orthodox feminism. She defended the movement against claims by its detractors that it would destroy the Jewish family and the fabric of Orthodoxy. In connection with the movement's advances, Mrs. Greenberg spoke of a "profound transformation" of the meaning of "kola k'vodah bat melech p'nima," (roughly translated) *the honor of the king's daughter is private*, from implying that women must remain inside the home, to celebrating their presence inside the shuls and courts.

Addressing the issue of *agunot*, Greenberg demanded an end to the man's absolute power in Jewish divorce law. In keeping with a theme that she stressed throughout the conference, she urged rabbis to reinterpret the law so it that it remains connected to the qualities of ethics, justice, and mercy.

Blu continued in this vein, stating that every detail of Halacha is part of a just system, and must be perceived in that light. In line with her oft-voiced opinion "where there is a rabbinic will, there is a Halachic way," she claimed that those who "hold the Halachic keys" have failed in their overall mission when they refuse to aid Orthodox women in Halachic distress by finding a helpful *p'sak*. She urged the women in attendance to press their claims vigorously.

Greenberg ended her opening address on a somewhat surprising note. She proclaimed a wider vision for Orthodox feminists than simply influencing Orthodox Judaism, stating that after Orthodoxy, the group's next causes should include the environment, *tikkun olam*, and peace in Israel.

A plenary session on "Gender and Traditional Texts" featured Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, Rabbi of Kehilas Jeshurun ("KJ") and Principal of the Ramaz day school; Dr. Susan Shapiro, a professor who teaches modern Jewish thought and philosophy of religion at Columbia University; and Dr. Tamar Ross, a professor of philosophy at Bar-Ilan University who also teaches at Midreshet Lindenbaum.

Rabbi Lookstein began his address by stressing the Halachic limits on changing liturgy, that he feels he has to comply with as an Orthodox Rabbi. He explained that those prayers formulated in the Talmudic era were immutable according to the halachic injunction against changing the "matbeia she-tav'u chachamim," the specific formulation of the Sages. However he suggested several possible changes: saying the blessing "she-lo asani isha" quietly, mentioning the mother's name in naming a child of either sex and in the ketubah, and women saying *birchat ha-gomel* in shul. However, he brought the crowd back to earth saying that he would never "chas v'shalom" put the mother's name in a

get, as a get is simply "too critical".

Dr. Shapiro attempted to link the Rambam's use of women as the metaphorical representation of matter/body (as opposed to the male form/soul) to his statement in the *Mishneh Torah* that a woman should be physically disciplined for not fulfilling her wifely duties.

Dr. Ross, in a complex lecture, began by admitting to a necessary lack of objectivity in the matter of changing texts to filter out "gender bias." She attributed this lack of objectivity to her "dogmatic belief in the Torah as 'd'var Hashem,'" the word of God. In addition to this caveat regarding the Torah itself, she spoke of a distaste for tinkering with liturgy that had been "hallowed with the sweat and tears" of countless generations of Jews. Ross pointed out that the language of Hebrew itself resists such tinkering, as it does not possess a neutral gender (the default gender is male). After allowing for some minor tinkering with liturgy, she concluded her address by encouraging women to realize that the language in Tanach used to describe

God is "expe-



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tial, not

ontological"

-that is to say, that it

attempts to relate an (often male) image, but this should not be confused with reality (God is neither male or female).

"Rabbinic Ordination for Women", a session many expected to stir up controversy, was viewed by many who attended as somewhat of a disappointment. Dr. Adena Berkowitz, an attorney who serves on the board of Rabbi David Weiss-Halivni's Union for Traditional Judaism, gave an overview of Jewish female leaders from Devorah the prophetess to the Ludmir Maidele (a Hasidic leader). Rabbi Adam Mintz, rabbi of Lincoln Square Synagogue, then took the lectern and explained the nature of his appointment of a woman as a "congregational intern." An interesting moment occurred at the end of R' Mintz's speech, when Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, the former rabbi of Lincoln Square and current rabbi of Efrat, asked a question from the floor. R' Riskin stated that we should be providing a training program for women that is even more intense than the programs which produce *toanot* (women equipped to argue in religious courts in Israel).

Rav Henkin, speaking at lunch, stressed the need for a strong commitment to Halacha, specifically mentioning the Halacha requiring married women to cover their hair. However, he managed to convey the genuine enthusiasm he felt for women's Torah learning and for their general involvement in Jewish life to the fullest, earning him a lengthy standing ovation at the conclusion of his speech.

He expressed his hope that next year's conference would be about "Feminism in Orthodoxy."

## Day 2

The second day of the conference opened with a plenary entitled "An Analysis of Halachic Solutions to the Agunah Problem." Hosting the sessions were Rabbis Rackman, Riskin and Berman, and Honey Rackman, Director of Agunah Inc. Also on the dais was R' Morgenstern, who presides over a controversial Beit Din that has been freeing *agunot*.

The discussion that ensued centered around different Halachic justifications for freeing *agunot*. R' Rackman explained that he has merely extended the allowances made by R' Moshe Feinstein, who would annul marriages on the basis of mental illness. He also pointed out that the Halachic dictum which states that "a woman prefers to be with another than by herself," was a sociological phenomenon, and is no longer applicable today. He

asserted that three conditions

must be fulfilled

for women

t o

achieve equality in marriage: There must be relief to *agunot* without a reduction in their benefits, *batei din* must achieve equality, and marriage should no longer be considered a business transaction in which the woman is "sold."

R' Riskin mentioned several ways in which *agunot* are currently freed from their marriages, and that "there is a history of compassion" within the laws of divorce.

R' Berman began his lecture by asking how many people in the audience belonged to Modern Orthodox congregations, and of those people, how many knew of *agunot*? A resoundingly large number of people raised their hands in answer to the latter question. He stressed that changes take a long time to occur, "50 to 100 years" and that "we must bring the *rabbanut* along with the process, not leave them behind."

After the morning plenary session, eight parallel sessions were offered. R' Saul Berman, recipient of Yeshiva University's Samuel Belkin Award for Distinguished Professional Achievement, and Dr. Sylvia Fishman, Assistant Professor of Contemporary Jewish Life/Sociology of American Jews, in the Near Eastern and Judaic Studies Departments at Brandies University, hosted a lecture titled "Kol Isha: The Sounds of Silence." Berman, known for his leniency in matters of *kol isha*, explained the progression of rulings on *kol isha*, beginning with the *Rishonim* who discuss whether or

not the voice is distracting, to the *Achronim* who tried to "objectify" behavior in terms of what causes lack of concentration and arousal. The *Achronim* thus stand in stark contrast to the *Rishonim* who were willing to leave the decision up to the worshipper. He summed up the question of *kol isha* saying, "The real issue, is how functionally to achieve Halachic goals in the context of social instability."

Dr. Fishman began her portion of the lecture by "deconstructing the Rabbinic Language." She explained that if you analyze the Rabbinic language you will find that it is the men who are depicted as possessing a low threshold of arousal, as opposed to women being depicted as temptresses and seductresses. She then discussed the "silencing of women" as a symbolic attempt to strip women of their soul. Fishman also pointed out that women's issues are a symbolic attempt by the Orthodox to fight modernity.

Lunch began with a panel of several international women from London, Geneva and Zurich addressing their status within their respective Jewish communities. Rabbi Daniel Sperber, Chair of the Talmudic Studies at Bar Ilan University, exclaimed to the crowd's delight that "these problems are not Halachic, they are sociological," and went on to give several examples of Halacha changing in response differing sociological phenomenon. He explained that most Halachic literature provides the final Halacha without an explanation of the "external forces" that caused the Halacha to evolve. However, Sperber warned, "sociological changes are quicker than the responses to those changes" and the response to those changes must be "reflective, and preserve that which is precious to us." He summed up his lecture with a simple equation: "innovation, equals change plus preservation."

After lunch, eight other sessions were offered. Dr. Deborah Weissman addressed the attendees in a lecture called "The Synagogue: Expanding Women's Roles." She explained that Kehilat Yedidya, a synagogue she founded in Jerusalem, tries to integrate Halacha and feminism. In Yedidya, they attempt to provide the female congregants with a greater role in the services; for example: the Torah is either taken out or returned to the ark by women, little girls lead the congregation in post-prayer hymns (e.g. *yigdal*), women make *kiddush*, men are called up to the Torah with the names of both their father and mother, and some women wear *talit* and *tefillin*.

Dr. Weissman expounded the synagogue's stance in four points. First, that man and woman were created equal – "zachar u'nekevah bara otam." Second, that Halacha is a dynamic process which is subject to history and sociology. Third, feminism is a value *lechatchila*, and fourth, Halacha will catch up with religious pioneers. Nevertheless, Weissman pointed out that the main point of contention is the method through which Yedidya makes it Halachic decisions. She explained that they ask questions to a group of 10 rabbis, and then decide what to incorporate.

The final plenary session was entitled, "Feminism as Tikkun Olam." As the title intimates, the speakers articulated their beliefs that equality for women within Orthodox Judaism will provide a method for the rectification of the world's evils.



# Sachs Delivers Brody Lecture on Economics

By JESSE MENDELSON

Jeffrey D. Sachs, director of the Harvard Institute for International Development and Professor of International Trade at Harvard University, delivered the Alexander Brody Distinguished Service Lecture in Economics at Weissberg Commons on Tuesday night, February 17, 1998. The New York Times Sunday Magazine called Mr. Sachs "probably the most important economist in the world," and the sparse crowd of thirty faculty members, students, and guests was therefore quite surprising.

Sachs' topic was "Fostering the Rule of Law in Transition Economics." He has traveled around the world advising governments on how to change their economies from Socialist to market structures. Sachs argued that not only is there a need for a new economic framework in these countries, there is also a need for the Rule of Law, which he defined as the framework for politics and power where state and executive authority live within and are restrained by the law. Factors affecting implementation of the Rule of Law include history of the particular society, the country's geographic location, economic policy, national resources, and the culture and character of the country. "One interpretation may seem odd but key," Sachs explained, "and that is the role of geography in any economy, and therefore, its reaction to the Rule of Law." Dr. Sachs stressed the importance of international trade in any market economy. He noted the importance of a coastline to cheaply transport goods. An example of the effect a coast can have on an economy, Sachs contended, is evidenced in the difference between Bolivia and Chile. While Bolivia has no coastline, Chile enjoys quite an expansive one. This allows Chile access to port cities with a gateway to the Pacific Ocean, while Bolivia is a landlocked country with no such access. Even if the same exact economic policies are put into effect in the two countries, the results will be vastly different.

Another example given by Sachs was that of Poland and Russia. He enumerated the problems that each country faces based on their respective geographic locations and histories. While Poland enjoys a long coastline, it was unable to utilize it for many years as it was mired in the conflicts of Germany and Russia - two nations that have spent much of the last hundred years fighting with each other. This all changed, however, in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent end to Communism. Due its close proximity to Western Europe, Poland has been able to utilize its ports, and in fact has become the fastest-growing country in all of Europe.

Interestingly enough, Sachs commented, Russia has experienced great difficulty even though it has virtually the same economic policies as Poland. Although most of the cities across Europe were built with interregional and international trade in mind, Russia's cities were built as fortresses for the czars. As Sachs put it, "Russia's inward-oriented economy largely cut it off from international, and even inter-regional trade."

Dr. Sachs showed charts and statistics demonstrating the lawlessness and illegal economic activity in Russia and suggesting the difficulty in fostering the Rule of Law in a country that had become accustomed to a totalitarian system. The same principle holds true for other transition economies.

Although few attended the lecture, those in attendance seemed to enjoy it immensely. Dr. Ross Zucker, Professor of Political Science, commented that "Dr. Sachs levied great importance on the role of the state in the development of post-Communist states and the fact that they have been very much underestimated in their attempts to foster the Rule of Law." Students also derived pleasure from the lecture, including Kenneth Sicklick, YC '00, who exclaimed, "It was very interesting to hear exactly how the former Communist countries stunted their past and future economic growth."

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# Men in the Middle

## Second Semester Returnees from Israel

By: CHAIM WOOLF

"I couldn't stand Israel any longer," explains Eli Scheiman, a student who left Neve Tzion, a yeshiva in Israel, after a year-and-a-half. "I wanted to get an education, and there I could not. I just wanted to be comfortable, drink a Snapple, and learn while getting an education."

At the start of the spring '98 semester, about sixty new students arrived on the YU campus. Many of these students, like Scheiman, returned from Israel after a year-and-a-half. Thus, they are neither in the *shana aleph* class (first year) or *shana bet* (second year) class. What compelled these students to separate themselves from their fellow peers, and leave Israel smack in the middle of the year? Why would a student not wait till the following fall?

Though some motivated students decide that one year is not enough and they need two years, the year-and-a-half class of young scholars is separate from this breed. They are of the Goldilocks philosophy. They believe that one year is too little, two years is too much, but a year-and-a-half is just right.

The students interviewed for this article represent a gamut of reasons for why a student would leave Israel without completing the second year. There is the, "I've had enough of Israel" group, "the year-and-a-half was just the right amount of

time" group, and the "my parents forced me to come home" group. Although each student has his own reason for coming back at this strange time of year, they all collectively feel the pains of adjusting to a new environment.

In December, Ari Rascus was in Jerusalem, attending Yeshivat Hakotel. Now he is attending YU. But Ari says that he left Israel with no hard feelings. For him the year and a half were just what he was looking for. "I wanted to learn more in Yeshiva, but not for a full intense year" he explained.

Moreover, as for the adjustment to coming to a new school in the middle of the year, Rascus added, "I knew how it worked here, and that if you had friends it's O.K. to come back in the middle."

There are new students, however, such as Charles Wizenfeld. Wizenfeld attended Mevaseret Zion, and would much rather be in the Holy Land than in Washington Heights. "I can't deal with it here," he cried.

Wizenfeld did not opt to leave Israel for YU: his parents made the decision for him. He explained, "My parents made me come home because they didn't believe I was doing anything in Israel." Yet, Wizenfeld is defiant: "I'll show them," he said, "I'll become a Rabbi!"

The decision of when to come home is often a source of conflict between many

children and their parents. Often the child wants to stay in Israel to learn, while his or her parent wants him or her to come home. In Mr. Wizenfeld's case, he was allowed to stay in Israel only for another semester, not another whole year. Ultimately, it is the student with his or her parents that makes the decision concerning how long to stay in Israel, but the rabbis in Israel do their utmost to try to persuade the students to stay a full second year. These students are the rabbis' best and brightest, and are just beginning the process of being molded into Torah scholars. Therefore, it is easy to see why the rabbis do not want these students to leave. Rascus and Scheiman both were told of their bleak futures if they were to leave in the middle of the year. "All the Rabbis thought that if I didn't stay a full year my religious level would go down. So far that's not the case, at least for the next few weeks," said Rascus.

Scheiman told a much harsher story. "My yeshiva is very 'anti' this place," he said. "They told me that if I went here it would be spiritual death. But they don't know anything about this place."

Now that the new students have begun to settle in, they are beginning to take advantage of what YU and New York have to offer. Rascus commented on his new cosmopolitan way of life, saying, "There are much better facilities here than

in yeshiva; for example the swimming pool. Also, the pizza is much better here." Scheiman spoke further about how comforts are greater here in America, than they were in Israel. "I'm comfortable here," he said. "In yeshiva there was no heat, here there is heat."

Even Wizenfeld feels that there are certain benefits that YU is offering him in the dormitories, which he certainly did not experience in Israel. Speaking about his eclectic new bunch of friends he has made on the seventh floor of Rubin, he said, "Here, I feel like I'm the US ambassador on my floor."

It is always difficult to adjust to a new environment. For the students who return from Israel after a year-and-a-half, this is especially true, since they have to deal with the trauma of registering and reacquainting themselves to life in America at the same time. Phillip Witner, now a lower senior at YU, who, similar to Rascus, Scheiman, and Wizenfeld, left Israel to come to YU in the middle of the semester, remembered how difficult it was to come to YU in the middle of the year. He said, "I was so scared when I first came, but due to the guys in my shiur, who kept me on my toes, I have been very successful ever since." Other students in Witner's predicament, even if they would rather be in Israel, can only hope that they will be as fortunate.

# Yeshiva University

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On behalf of the Office of the Dean of Students, and student services, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome our returning and new students for the Spring 1998 semester.

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# Yeshiva Battles Cherokee for Parking Spot

By AKIVA HERZFELD

"The school assumes that that they own everything in the neighborhood," says Ed Rice. "But they don't own my property, and they don't own me! That's where the conflict began."

Members of the YU administration say that Ed Rice is "dangerous" and a "psychiatric case," who ought to be "institutionalized." They want him forcibly removed from campus.

In pending litigation, YU lawyers will ask the court to do just that. A high-ranking member of the administration, who requested anonymity (for obvious reasons) said, "I want nothing to do with that dangerous son-of-a-bitch," and explained that lawyers would argue that "Ed Rice is a persistent danger to the students of Yeshiva University."

Ed Rice vehemently disputes these charges made against him by the Yeshiva University administration. He asserts that he is a "normal" person, and he responded to Yeshiva allegations by saying, "They are full of (expletive deleted)." He continued, "They (the Yeshiva administration) think that the spot is theirs, that this house is theirs - hell, they think that I'm theirs . . . Let's see them try to take me!"

Mr. Rice lives directly across the street from Furst Hall, at 519 185th street. His house and his parking spot are highly conspicuous.

His house is sand-colored, four-stories tall, and has a quaint little gate in front of it. From the side of the house hang three flags: an American flag, a flag of the US Army, and the flag of pirate ships - the skull and crossbones. Large crucifixes and other mysterious objects are visible through the windows. In bold black print, two wooden signs posted on his second floor porch read, "WALKING HAWK," and "OMEGA I." Often, especially during the summer time, hard rock music blasts out from within the house. A sign on the inner door of the house advises people not to trespass: it says, "Anyone Violating The Peace Will Be Eaten."

But Ed Rice's house has not angered Yeshiva University officials as much as his car has. Ed Rice's car, a 1972 red Stag - a British sports car made by the makers of Jaguar - is parked in the middle of parking lot A of Yeshiva University! It is set off from the other cars in the lot by bright yellow paint, a pile of yellow bricks, and several wooden barrels. YU officials claim that the whole lot is theirs. One official said, "This guy woke up one morning - probably was having a bad day - and he decided to set up a garden in our parking lot. It is not his property." Mr. Rice says that it is his property. And he added that when YU set up barriers along 185th street, thus eliminating all the parking spots, they made an agreement with his mother that her family could use parking lot A. "I used to have several cars and trucks parked there," Mr. Rice says, "but when my mother died, they reneged on the agreement."

Two years ago, the squabble between YU administrators and Mr. Rice over the parking lot exploded into a forceful confrontation. The Dean of Libraries, Pearl Berger, parked her car near Mr. Rice's. Her windshield was smashed by a rock. A YU security guard said that he saw Mr. Rice throw the rock, and YU officials alleged that Mr. Rice was angered by the proximity of Pearl Berger's car to his own.

the article. The majority of the information for the article was provided by YU Security Chief Don Sommers. He characterized the "vandal" as "emotionally disturbed," and then he went on to say that Mr. Rice has been a danger to YU, ever since his mother passed away and stopped giving him his medicine. "With this guy, you never know what to expect," Sommers declared.

Ed Rice was charged with criminal

security guard over a "tennis ball." In another incident, he reportedly chased a person down 185th street with a machete. In addition, YU employees who park in parking lot A have complained that he videotapes them from the roof of his house. Yeshiva Security Chief Don Sommers warned all students to "stay far away" from this man. And a rumor circulating among YU employees says that Jeffrey Socol, Associate Director of Facilities Management, never parks his car in parking lot A, because he is afraid of the next door neighbor. An official described him as, "totally crazy . . . an absolute danger to the students and society . . . unpredictable . . . and definitely not a good neighbor."

Mr. Rice denied the veracity of the charges leveled against him, and he said that he is not even excessively "upset" at YU for attacking him. In response to the rock-tossing incident, he said, "Kids throwing rocks broke that lady's windshield . . . Dominicans have rock fights." (YU students support Ed Rice's claim that Dominican kids do have rock fights. A RIETS student even said that he has seen kids tossing rocks down from the elevation above parking lot A.) "Does it make sense to you," Mr. Rice asked, "that I would break a woman's windshield on my property? The kid who wrote that article spoke to everyone but me."

It was because YU officials made him pay for the damage done to Pearl Berger's car that Mr. Rice put up barriers in the parking lot. "After that," he said, "No more Mr. Nice Guy!... What is it they say? High walls make good neighbors?"

Mr. Rice also defended himself against other charges. "I'm the nicest guy you ever met in your life, [Red]," he said, "but I live my life not to offend anyone; in return, I don't want anyone to offend me." He continued, asserting, "What they said I am, I am not. It's a propaganda campaign against me; the incidents were perpetrated by them against me to make me seem crazy . . . I am not upset. I very well understand the students. But, if the administration wants me to go, buy the property from me and I'll leave . . . they don't want to come and legitimately negotiate for it, so they resort to this."

## Ed Rice - The Man Behind the Stories

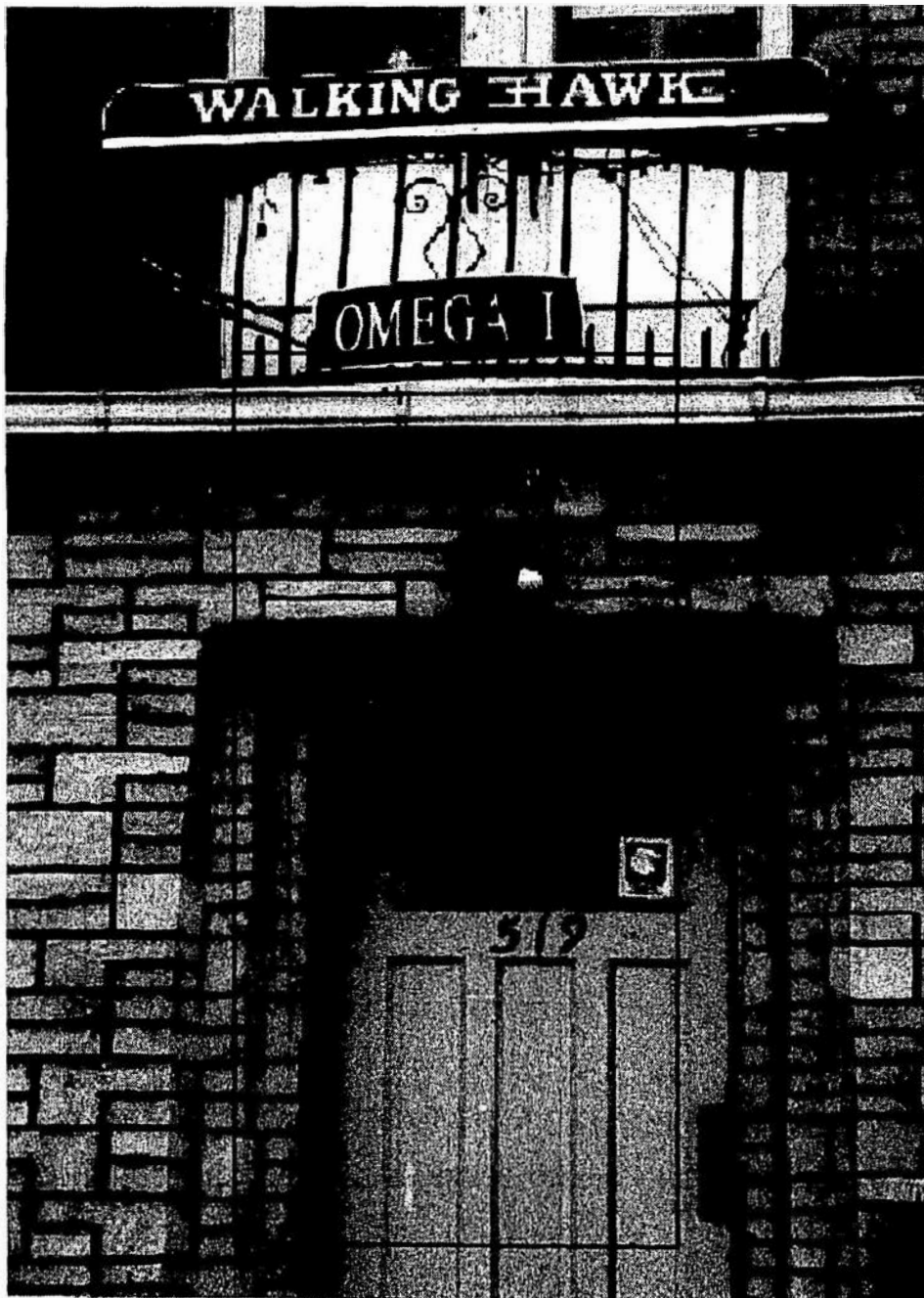
In interviews with this reporter, Ed Rice denied what he termed "malicious slander" hurled against him by the Yeshiva administration. He was deeply offended, and said that he was completely "normal."

Ed Rice, in addition, did not want this article to go to print. It is not that he so greatly feared the Yeshiva University lawyers that he did not want to add material to their case. ("You see me here on my land," he said, asking wondrously, "how are they going to take this away from me?") Rather, Ed's main concern over the printing of the article was not for himself. He urged that the article not be printed because he

Continued on page 10



Ed Rice's 1972 red Stag has made itself a fixture in Parking Lot A



Ed Rice's Castle

The incident made news in *The Commentator*. This newspaper ran a headline proclaiming "Police Arrest Crazy Vandal." Ed Rice's name was not printed "as per request of the authorities," but a photograph of Mr. Rice being led away from his house in handcuffs was displayed next to

mischief, and officials say that he was ordered to pay for damages done to the car.

Officials at YU said that numerous other confrontations have erupted because Ed Rice has disturbed YU employees and students. Two years ago, he supposedly fought with a YU



## Professor Profile

### Who Says There Are No Miracles? Nebraska Theist Philosophizes At YU

BY JOSH ABRAHAM

"Let us not have a Balkanization of this classroom."

Talking in class usually elicits this response from Dr. David Johnson, a professor who delights in provoking philosophical discourse with his students. "Philosophy is about all of us focusing together on the problem at hand." While Dr. Johnson is correct regarding this point, it is remarkably difficult to refrain from speaking with other students during one of Dr. Johnson's lectures. It is hard not to share one's thoughts with another classmate when the issues under discussion are of such eminent importance. It is equally difficult to remain silent when Dr. Johnson meanders into class, usually clutching a cup of hot coffee and with unabashed candor poses one of the following questions to his complacent students: How exactly does Divine Foreknowledge interfere with free will? Why is the pervasiveness of evil a theological problem? Can you find fault with my ontological proof for the existence of G-d? How do you know that all green things are green? Go ahead. Try and remain silent.

If Dr. Johnson, professor of philosophy at Yeshiva University, won't get you speaking, at the very least he will get you thinking — and if you're not careful you might find yourself brooding pensively over the issues that he raises. That, in fact, is what Dr. Johnson can be seen doing every early afternoon in front of Furst Hall. Invariably dressed in black and delicately cradling his exquisite Honduran cigarettes, Dr. Johnson passes the time until the start of his afternoon classes casually brooding over philosophical conundrums. More often than not he can be seen patiently speaking to a student about a paper or a variety of philosophical issues. He is an extremely approachable professor and is profoundly generous with his time. He is willing to speak to students about class over the phone late into the night and has a penchant for giving students an ample response to in-class queries. In truth, he is one of Yeshiva University's best kept secrets.

An up-and-coming professor in Yeshiva University, Dr. Johnson's popularity has grown in each of his four semesters teaching here. Since his first semester on campus his average class size has almost doubled and a greater variety of students have registered for his courses. This, indeed, is a strong testament to his worth, since there are only about a dozen students majoring in philosophy in the whole college. He is slowly developing an enthusiastic following as more students begin to take him for a second time.

#### History

Dr. Johnson grew up in Lincoln, Nebraska and attended the University of Nebraska as an undergraduate. His early interests were in history and math. This course of study was to lead Dr. Johnson into the study of logic, which in turn spurred his interest in philosophy. One of the greatest influences on Dr. Johnson was his brother, Edward, who is currently the chair of the Philosophy Department at the University of New Orleans. Edward Johnson, who is exactly two years older than his brother, left a thick trail of books around the house for his younger brother to follow. The two would grow up sharing an extraordinary proclivity for philosophy, although they would later diverge in their philosophical leanings. Dr. Johnson strongly believes in G-d and is politically conservative, while his brother does not believe in G-d and is politically liberal.

At the University of Nebraska, Dr. Johnson went on to major in philosophy and studied under Professor Robert Audi, who is better known as the editor of *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. (Dr.

Johnson can be found in that work as the author of the entry entitled "Grue-Paradox," a version of the problem of Induction.). After studying philosophy at the University of Nebraska, Dr. Johnson continued as a graduate student at Princeton University. There, Dr. Johnson worked on his dissertation under the guidance of Gilbert Harman and was strongly influenced by Saul Kripke, who Dr. Johnson commonly refers to as the greatest living philosopher. Since leaving Princeton, Dr. Johnson has taught at Ohio State, the University of Connecticut, Wesleyan, William and Mary, Syracuse University - where he taught with Peter van Inwagen, and UCLA, among others.

While Dr. Johnson has taught numerous students throughout his itinerant teaching career, he is quick to point out that his YU students have been among his best. Their theological and religious inclinations coupled with their ability and willingness to think abstractly (undoubtedly the result of years of Talmudic study) have made YU students prime candidates for Dr. Johnson's teaching style. He enjoys teaching at here and his long daily commute to campus is telling. Dr. Johnson resides in Tottenville, Staten Island, (or what he mockingly calls "Deathville!"). Since Dr. Johnson does not drive, he has to travel by public transportation to Manhattan and back. His commute is nearly three hours each way! However, while the commute is indeed long, it does have its benefits. It is reliable, and it grants Dr. Johnson sufficient time to reflect on the enigmatic and enticing world of philosophical arguments.

Dr. David Johnson

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#### The Religious Philosopher

Dr. Johnson is somewhat unique as a philosophy professor. In a field stigmatized by rampant atheism, he is a theist; or in layman's terms, he believes in G-d. Dr. Johnson is a refreshing surprise and is a welcomed addition to the Yeshiva University Philosophy Department. He is passionate about philosophy and religion in way that is easily recognizable is class. When asked why he ultimately decided to enter a career in philosophy, he responded that it was not much of a choice and that "It infects you." But his passion for religious and philosophical issues is further evident in the way he spends his time. He spends a good part of the weekend reading and writing about age-old philosophical problems and his dedication has yielded important results. For example, Dr. Johnson has discovered a workable ontological proof for the existence of G-d. As sure as two plus two equals four, Dr. Johnson is able to logically demonstrate that G-d exists -given some chalk and twenty minutes of your time.

Dr. Johnson has also just completed writing a book which he has titled *Hume, Holism and the Holy*. In it, Dr. Johnson critiques David Hume - whom he has termed the greatest dead philosopher, for his views concerning belief in the occurrence of miracles. David Hume, and others who have attempted to articulate Hume's argument, held that there is no good reason to believe reports concerning the occurrence of miracles, and thus, no good reason to believe in the G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In contrast, Dr. Johnson, in his new book, demonstrates that Hume's argument is severely mis-

guided. Dr. Johnson claims that "there is no good argument against the credibility of the miraculous, even if the miracle is based on solitary testimony." Thus we are justified in our religious beliefs.

#### Personal Reflections

Taking a philosophy course with Dr. Johnson is an enlightening introduction into the world of philosophical argumentation. Philosophy, according to Dr. Johnson, is the study of the logical validity and soundness of arguments. All arguments must first be evaluated using the rules of logic. Once deemed logically valid, the "truth value" of each premise must be assessed to determine the soundness of the argument. This exercise is repeated in class with the claims of both renowned philosophers and aspiring students.

Students are encouraged to offer arguments, and those claims are then examined by Dr. Johnson and his class. The give and take of classroom discussion is usually colored with outrageous and outlandish scenarios, which makes class all the more entertaining and enjoyable. But what makes Dr. Johnson's classes most enjoyable, is his overwhelming confidence in the rules of logic coupled with a sincere and humble pursuit of truth. "Many famous arguments are bad. You can count on two hands the philosophers who were careful." With great respect and enthusiasm, Dr. Johnson loves to expose bad arguments and to propose good ones. Notwithstanding what he says about David Hume and Saul Kripke, Dr. Johnson is undoubtedly one of the best

# Cherokee

*continued from page 8*

thought that YU officials might try to "ruin" this reporter's life. He said, "Do not print the article [Red] without first asking for your father's permission."

The following information was gathered through personal interviews with him, from information provided by the company overview of Walking Hawk, Inc., and from information about Ed Rice on the Internet at [www.catchafire.com](http://www.catchafire.com).

Ed Rice is a remarkable man. Dark-skinned, he says he is a "rich mixture of African and Cherokee." Of his Native American heritage he said, "We were here 400 years before the revolution." Standing over 6 feet tall and possessing striking features, a female employee on campus described Mr. Rice as, "very handsome." He is eloquent and well educated, possessing, he claims, a DDS, a Masters degree in art, and a doctorate in electrical engineering. He maintains that he is a "Blackfoot Cherokee Indian Chief," who can "both speak and write the language." In his house, a large collection of bow and arrows are a strong testament to his feelings for his heritage.

Ed Rice has a long interconnected history with YU students, who, he finds, can often be eccentric. Ed recollected that at the same time when he went off to serve in the military, there was a problem with overcrowding in the YU dormitory. YU officials approached his mother, and she rented out his room to dormitory officials; YU students actually used his "quarters" as a dormitory.

Since he and his mother lived in the Washington Heights community for such a long time — since the 1950's — Ed is well acquainted with YU history and with the history of the general community. Ed said that in the 50's, all the houses on 185th street used to look like his, and they used to extend all the way down to the Harlem River. On Amsterdam Avenue, town houses stood where Belfer Hall, Rubin Hall, and Strenger Hall, now are built. "The Heartbreak Hotel," a hotel featured in a famous song by Elvis Presley, according to Ed, existed two blocks up from Furst Hall. "YU," Ed said, "used to have a policy of incorporation into the community, rather than separation . . . then, it was a local neighborhood, with families and kids; very vibrant, multicultural — Jewish, German, Irish — it was a little UN, very quiet and safe."

Currently, Ed said that he is at work videotaping a documentary about the community. "It is about my mother — a famous missionary who created a college fund — and how she lived and interacted with the community." Because of his mother, "a lot of students were able to attend college in New York, and they lived in this house."

This is not the only project that Ed is currently "shooting." "I'm a shootist," he

said, "I shoot anything, I use bows, rifles, bullets, rocks, basketballs, watercolors, and anything."

He described himself not only a "shootist," but also as, "a pirate, a fine artist, a lettered athlete, a military veteran, a famous musician — the dean of every audio-engineer in America, a Blackfoot Cherokee Chief, and the CEO and chief engineer of Walking Hawk, Inc." These titles help explain some of the oddities adorning his house, and they help explain who exactly Ed Rice is.

One thing that is certain about Ed Rice is that he is a talented artist. The room in which we sat inside his house was littered with fascinating marvels, but the most wonderful aspect to the room was the art that adorned his walls. There were oil paintings, watercolors, and stain glass windows, with the subjects depicted varying from self-portraits to illustrations of family members. More of Ed's artwork can be seen on the Internet at [www.catchafire.com](http://www.catchafire.com).

The site labels itself, "The Choice for the Progressive Urbanite: The First Black Web Station." Ed's works at this site include "Unca Shilo," a stark painting of an Indian in deep contemplation, wearing the traditional headdress. In his painting, "In The Moon Glow," a dark-skinned woman, with a single breast exposed, sits shrouded in darkness, as a beacon of light shines onto her face casting brightness onto her countenance and onto the verdant grass and yellow flowers behind her. Other works by Ed at the site include "Mountain Muse #1," "Mountain Muse #2," "Peace On Earth," and "Art. Ti. Facts."

Nevertheless, while Ed Rice's claim of being a "fine artist" has been verified by *The Commentator*, his assertion that he is "a famous musician" has yet to be confirmed. Ed said that his music company is Walking Hawk, Inc., and Omega I is a subsidiary of Walking Hawk. "We are the next wave. Whatever it is you are dancing to or singing today, we have produced . . . rock and roll, R&B, we either produced it, or worked on it. . . (In) Any record store, you can still get the music." Ed added, "Ten Wheel Drive is a concept that we helped create, a revolutionary blend in rock and roll."

For his audio-visual achievements, Ed says that he has won an "Emmy" and many "Cleo" awards. Material received from Ed reads as follows. "In 1963, Mr. Rice went to work for Gotham Recording Corporation as Vice-President of Engineering . . . Gotham Recording Corporation at that time was the largest independent production facility on the east coast . . . he was also its chief music mixer and recorded everyone from Count Basie to Little Richard. He holds the distinction of being the only audio engineer to receive an 'Emmy' for his work as a technical consultant on a project called 'Multiplication Rock,' an educational program still running on ABC-TV. He has won many 'Cleo' awards for his work in advertising. The one he is most proud of was for work done on the New York Coalition for 'Give a Damn.'"

## Debate Team Victorious at Cornell

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

On September 24, 1997, at a late-night meeting, the Yeshiva University Debate Society (YUDS) officially came into existence. Since its inception, the society's members have accomplished much, building upon past victories and learning from their experiences. With four tournaments, two training sessions, and eleven victories under their belts, the society's executive leadership decided at the end of last semester that the time was ripe for a real challenge; this challenge was to be a tournament at Cornell University. This February, fifteen students expended much time and effort in preparation for this event. The results were favorable with YU debaters garnering a first place victory in the competition.

YCSC and the Office of Student Services assisted in funding YU participation in the tournament.

The team spent an enjoyable shabbat at the Young Israel House of Cornell. "It was fantastic, the people there were so nice to us," remarked one member of the team. The team participated in regular shabbat services held at the Young Israel of Cornell and ate their shabbat meals at Cornell's Kosher Dining Hall with a crowd of over one hundred-and-fifty Cornell students.

The topic of debate at the tournament was whether or not Western demand for Asian economic reforms as a condition for assistance is culturally imperialistic. Beginning with registration at 8:30 A.M. and ending with a playoff round at 5:30 P.M., the debaters were in for an endurance test. Tensions and stakes were running high as team members set out for their assigned debating rooms poised to take on their opponents in the first round of competition.

The results of the tournament were impressive for the YU team. Elan Weinreb, the society's Executive Officer, and Greg Samuels, an up and coming star

of the debate team, faced off in a playoff style round to determine who would claim first prize. By a narrow margin, Weinreb emerged victorious. This did not overshadow the more than superb effort set forth by the till then undefeated Samuels, who claimed the tournament's second prize. Weinreb also went on to win the first place award for speaking. Pinchas Shapiro was awarded second place for his speaking abilities and came in on the heels of Weinreb and Samuels taking third place overall. Yehudah Rosenblum took fifth place in debate and sixth place in speaking. Finally, Yariv Frenkel, the society's Secretary, Steven Bernstein, the society's Assistant Executive Officer, and Greg Samuels all placed in the top ten for speaking. When all was said and done, YUDS debaters received ten total prizes, an overwhelming fifty-five percent of the tournament awards, crushing its competition comprised of seasoned Ceda (a major international debate circuit) debaters.

When asked what his feelings were about the tournament, Elan Weinreb responded, "Baruch Hashem. Our performance at Cornell was an amazing victory for the society. Never in my wildest dreams would I have expected such an outcome. However, were it not for the financial support of the YU administration, the overly generous hospitality of the Young Israel House of Cornell, and the guidance of our faculty advisor, Mr. Laurence Schwartz, our success would have been an impossibility. I must also commend all the dedication, perseverance, tenacity, and endurance of the society's debaters and judges."

With two upcoming tournaments at Queens, YU's first college debate tournament scheduled for the middle of this semester, and other events on the calendar, the society will have its hands full. The competition will be especially tough at these events because YUDS is no longer

"In 1970, Mr. Rice formed Audio One Recording Corporation . . . Audio One was neatly closed down in 1981 . . . Mr. Rice is at present the President of Walking Hawk Inc., a music and art company involved in the fine arts and audio-visual production arts." The Company Overview says that "The company has produced and aired" a number of different works. They include, "The Adventures of the Black Man in America," which centers around "significant men and women;" and "The Music Tree," a show prepared for radio and television, that "embraces the very heart of American music. The Company Overview also says, that "We are currently in production on the first book of the Bible, 'Genesis,' narrated by the ubiquitous 'Rosco' Bill Mercer and America's foremost voice-over stars." Ed told this reporter that he is also working on a "rock opera." He added, "There is a special song on that gnome, Socol."

Ed says that he has proof of his awards. However, Elise Danson, of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, said, "I have no records of either Ed Rice or a show called 'Multiplication Rock.'" An operator at the New York branch of the National

Academy, after doing a search for Ed Rice, said, "This is strange; he is not showing up."

As proof to his musical prominence, however, Ed provided a letter from David C. Levy, Executive Dean of Parsons School of Design, inviting Mr. Ed Rice to teach "with us in the New School's new bachelor degree curriculum in Jazz and Related Contemporary Music." The other proof to his musical talent, of course, is the music that we all can sometimes hear as we pass his house.

Certainly not lacking a quirky side, Ed Rice is a baffling mystery. A talented artist, an eloquent orator, and a musician, what Ed seems to like most is to entertain others. In a series of interviews, he showed sincere interest in the daily lives of YU students whom he knew. However, his love for the "right to bear arms" — he had a rifle and crossbow on the floor to his left during the interview, his ostentatious decoration of his house, and his willingness to voice his opinion, all are frightful matters to the YU administration.

Is he a "crazed vandal" who should be extracted from the land he inherited from his mother? Is he a "danger" to YU students? The courts will decide.



## All the News That is Fit to Print: The Commentator Online

BY JOSHUA U. KLEIN

As long as there has been a Yeshiva College, there has been a stereotypical Yeshiva College student. This YC Everyman has endured a myriad of indignities and affronts. However, one characteristic that the YC student has never been accused of lacking is a tenacious willingness to express a personal opinion.

With this consideration in mind, it is not at all surprising that the newest addition to *The Commentator* website ([www.yucommentator.com](http://www.yucommentator.com)) is a message board. Brainchild of Co-Editor-in-Chief Ari Kahn, the message board was created in order to provide a medium for students to easily and publicly express their assessments of classes and professors they have taken. Nevertheless, since its inception on February 12, the messages posted have occasionally crept outside the bounds of mere course evaluation.

*The Commentator* site was developed, and continues to be maintained by webmasters and YC computer science majors Ben Sandler and Josh Yuter. They explained that having a *Commentator* online is important not only in order to expand readership; it also acts as a vital complement to the official Yeshiva University website. "For someone searching for information about YU," Sandler said, "the [newspaper] site probably has more useful information than the official website does."

Since its introduction in November 1997, the virtual home of the newspaper has proven to be immensely popular. Total monthly hits hover around 4,000. As can be expected, peak visitation occurs on the days immediately following the "publication" of a new issue. For the first day alone of the last issue, the site registered 544 hits. Additionally, the online version of the paper is complete and available to its readership earlier than the printed version, as it is spared the time associated with physical printing. This benefit is enhanced by the recent introduction of a *Commentator* mailing list - members are notified via e-mail as soon as a new issue is introduced.

Webmasters Yuter and Sandler have access to a wide variety of statistics regarding how many hits the site gets, where they are coming from, and when they are received. They report that *The Commentator Online* entertains numerous guests from other colleges with large Jewish communities, including Columbia University and the University of Pennsylvania. Many other visitors find *The Commentator* through search engines such as Yahoo and AOL. These include computer users from Israel, Canada, Hungary, Belgium, Germany, and Italy. Nevertheless, most of the hits originate in the various computer labs on-campus (i.e. Gottesman Library, Belfer Hall, etc). This occurrence, Yuter explained, is due to a lack of publicity: "The only people that know about the website are either people who found it by accident, or who get the printed edition of the paper, where it is adver-

tised." *The Commentator* staff is presently exploring the possibility of advertising in Jewish community newspapers, such as the *Jewish Week* and the *Jewish Press*.

One is tempted to predict that the new message board will help stir up some additional hype. During its first ten days of existence, almost forty messages have been posted. The self-description offered by the message board reads "This is an open forum for YU students to post their opinions of courses and professors at YU." Questioned as to how this arrangement differs from the evaluations conducted by the Dean's Office at the end of each semester, Sandler explained that the "Scantron" evaluations purposely avoid asking 'dangerous' questions. The message board, on the other hand, allows more freedom for students to fully express their opinions. Sandler also raised the benefit of widespread and immediate availability to the student body, as opposed to the secrecy that shrouds the official evaluations.

An interesting feature of the message board is that it offers the option of posting messages anonymously. Although the 'anonymous option' may help contribute to the honesty of the evaluations posted, the webmasters acknowledge that it also facilitates the posting of "some pretty colorful stuff." Some of the evaluations have been rather brutal and even vulgar, with references to various professors' sexual preferences. In fact, the crudeness of the material posted caused one visitor, who identified himself only as a "former student," to question whether the students posting some of the messages are truly "Torah Jews." Nevertheless, the webmasters explained, there is no real way to force people to reveal their identities. Even if a name was required, people could post messages using other people's names. Curious messages have been posted under the names of Rabbi Lamm, Sy Syms, and Dean Jaskoll. When asked if he was surprised by the seeming impropriety of some of the messages, Yuter replied, "I am annoyed that it happened, but not surprised that it did."

In reaction to flagrant abuses of the message board, Editors-in-Chief Ari Kahn and Noah Streit have created an official set of guidelines. In brief, students are asked to provide constructive criticisms and praises of professors. Any vulgar or insignificant statements will be deleted before they have an opportunity to enter the webpage, as all messages will be seen by the webmasters before they go up.

"I am disappointed that such a useful opportunity has already been maligned by students exercising their destructive natures," said Streit.

What else is in store for *The Commentator Online*? Possible future enhancements include an expanded message board, perhaps linked to specific articles; a chat room; a search engine for the *Commentator* site; and in the very near future, public opinion polls on issues relevant to Yeshiva University students and the Jewish community at large.

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# ENTERTAINMENT

## Versace at the Met

BY MORDECHAI LEVOVITZ

"The time that we have at our disposal is elastic; The passions we feel expand it" -Marcel Proust

It is this quote that is displayed on the entrance to the new exhibit, at the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It sets the tone for what lies ahead, for within moments after entering the exhibit, one is bombarded with color, music, power, sex, and emotion. Upon wiping his eyes and regaining focus, the viewer comes to realize that the room is just filled with a bunch of faceless mannequins wearing second hand frocks. However, there is something different about this wardrobe; it is something vulgar, yet beautiful, disturbing, yet wonderful. It is Gianni Versace.

The Versace exhibit is a tribute to the slain designer, who was a frequent visitor and generous patron of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. This is in no way an advertisement or campaign of any sort, it is instead a display of art for the purpose of study and enjoyment. It calls for an analytic examination of Versace's most famous works. The museum treats Versace as they would any other artist. What was most striking for me was the realization that fashion is one of the most basic forms of expression, and consequently, certainly worthy of intense research and introspection. Not only does it express the emotional needs and intellectual creativity of the mind, as other arts do, but it also is the primary form of bodily expression. We introduce our bodies to the world through our clothing, thus the art of fashion gives us unique insights into the delicate relationship between our minds and our bodies.

The horseshoe shaped exhibition hall is divided into six sections. The first is the landmark collection. This includes famous pieces that were exposed to the world due to their being worn by celebrities or models. Here they stand without being inhabited by the most beautiful and most famous; there are no pictures of the celebrities wearing the outfits, in fact, the faces of the mannequins are covered, all in order to enforce a new and sustained examination of the clothing itself. We are first introduced to Versace's famous silk print gowns, and it is here where we see the audacity of Versace's taste. He deliberately takes two seemingly opposing patterns and in full force imposes one on the other. He combines a zebra print stretch shirt with a hot golden

leopard skin draped skirt. Versace prefers the surprise, even the initial dissonance and unexpected forensic combinations. The idea of extremities colliding seems to be a common theme among Versace's clothing.

In the next few dresses, he combines a strong, confident punk look from the lower class streets with the glamorous and decadent formal look of the upper class society balls. It is like Versace to ignore the middle class, or as he called them, the bourgeoisie. As a designer and as a human being, Versace never sought the middle road or the middle class. This may explain why it is the middle class alone that still withholds its approval from Versace, often distancing itself from his purported vulgarity and his unabashed embrace of consumption. Nevertheless, the jelling of the spirit of the rich with the indomitable power of the poor forms a new and breathtaking creation. This is the inspiration for the trademark oversized punk safety pins on fancy evening wear, and the combination of draped silk with shorts, jerseys and leather. In an evening dress made famous by Madonna, Versace merged sweeping second empire silhouettes with the practical stitching and pockets of blue jeans. Perhaps the most amazing aspect is that in no way do these seemingly contradicting styles take away from each other, on the contrary, they come together to create a truly unique beauty.

One of the most important characteristics of Versace's evening wear, is that the dress must honor the voluptuous primacy of the body. Clothing, according to Versace, is the celebration of the body and its desires. He accords fashion with desire rather than decorum. This is exemplified by Versace's transfiguration of Chanel's "little black dress" of the 1920's, into what is now known as the famous Elizabeth Hurley dress (a black dress held together loosely by large golden pins worn to the premiere of Hugh Grant's film "Four Weddings and a Funeral"). This version, triumphs over all other reincarnations of the Chanel dress, not in decorum, but in desire, bringing glittering metal together with bare flesh. In my opinion, the most beautiful pieces were the satin draped evening dresses. The material drapes so naturally over the body, it seems to take the form of liquid. The dress is alive; it moves and sings. The dress actually worships the body, and by so doing turns the

## The New Era Of Art

BY YISHAI FLEISHER

This is a great city; I will dispense with the usual clichés and metaphors that describe it. This is a great time; that is, our youth. Combined, these two factors yield a wonderful opportunity and outlet for that innate human need of exploration. Through exploration and experience one grows in knowledge and wisdom, and knowledge and wisdom are ends unto themselves. The goal of the new Arts Section is to be the means, to facilitate the reader with the tools and knowledge that will enable him to harness his adventurous yearnings advantageously.

Our aim is to expose the YU student to the wide variety of events and sites that are accessible and are of value. By value, I mean to say those things, which stimulate thought and growth and do not lend themselves to the stagnation of the mind. Though movie reviews will still maintain their traditional place, the reader of the Arts Section should expect to see articles discussing architecture, theater, classical music, and museums. In addition, we plan to include information as to the host of interesting cultural events that can be found in, and around the YU campuses.

It is my firm belief that the Commentator is a wonderful forum to herald the almost endless amount of cultural activities to be taken advantage of. It is my sincere hope that the Arts Section will become the catalyst and impetus for those who choose to seize the day.

lucky wearer into a goddess.

Versace is also famous for his combination of the extremely provocative and formal wear. Many of his gowns are made of black see-through lace and may have multiple leather straps or outer corsets. Symbols of prostitution and sadomasochism, as well as undergarments, are common themes amongst Versace pieces. Believe it or not, this idea actually has deeper meaning. Modern art found a great ideal in the prostitute. Toulouse-Lautrec (1880's) prized her unlikely virtues and ambivalent freedoms. Versace located the prostitute as the last unexamined figure in fashion. He saw her as the symbol for the confident, gender proud, and sexually liberated. No one had taken the prostitute into fashion as Versace did. He seized the streetwalker's bravado and conspicuous wardrobe along with her blatant sexuality and introduced them to fashion. He represented her glamour, as he supplied her with a new suppleness that made the body clinging apparel work in the same classy manner as 1920's Madame Gre's styles worked. He dressed her in rich silk and a long gown with a train, a cross between Cinderella and Delilah. The strength of the free woman is such a strong force in Versace's style that it seems as if the gowns hide all aspects of female vulnerability.

There is a separate history section, showing how Versace was influenced by different eras: the Greeks and Romans inspired goddess-like drapery; the Byzantine era sparked styles representing intensity and mosaic, while the French revolution kindled the beginning of the sexual revolution in Europe. The opulent 1920's styles of Madame Gre's symbolize posh and glamour. Following the history section were two abstract costume sections entitled "Art and

the Dream" showing the full breadth of Versace's talent.

The last section was the men's collection. Versace describes in his book "Men without Ties" how men can be just as sexual as women are. He insists that the man too is a sex object, thus the style of clothing should follow. Versace shirts are usually draped or bloused, and accentuate the upper torso. The male wardrobe may have brilliant colors, dashes of lace, or sexy straps. Much to my surprise, the resulting look is very different from the Versace clad female. While Versace's style accentuates a woman's strength and power, the Versace clad man actually looks more vulnerable, and seems more subservient than the regular Chaps-wearing gentleman. This phenomenon might be a ramification of the different roles that sexual expression take on in man and woman. Either way, fashion alone can tell us a lot about the psychology of expression.

Recognizing Versace as the first post-Freudian designer, is honoring the truthfulness and utter lack of shame or guilt within him. The moral, religious, or decorous reticence and remorse of other fashion designers about sex is lacking in Versace. He accepts sex not merely as a fact of life, but as a celebration of life. The long tradition of fashion's coy expressions of sexuality, alluding as by metaphor to sex, is ultimately grounded in the conventions of refinement. By those conventions, Versace is raw and impudent. But Versace, not being a particularly religious man, felt he had no reason to succumb to the taboos and sociological moral pressures. This does not make him right, but it does make him an important innovator and a creative genius. He shall always be remembered in the way he said he wanted to be, as the man who broke the fashion barrier.



Music, Theatre, Restaurants, Cinema

## ENTERTAINMENT

## The Oscars: Rules, Predictions, and Commentary

BY YAIR OPPENHEIM

As most people every year watch the Academy Awards telecast and try to see if their favorites win, I thought I might try to explain a bit about how things work and give my predictions along the way.

**Voting:** The first thing people need to know is how the voting works (a significant majority of people have no clue as to how this is done). The members of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, a roster of about 6,000, collectively choose the nominees for Best Picture and get to vote for the winner. In all other categories, the nominees are chosen by members who are specialists in their respective categories and the winner is chosen by all members of the Academy.

This accounts for one major phenomenon: the sweep of a movie. In many cases a movie can take home a handful of awards, some of which it does not deserve, by riding a wave of momentum. An example of this can be found at last year's Academy Awards telecast, where the English Patient, winner of nine awards, took home awards for best costume and best set design. Now, I don't know about you, but I saw Hamlet that year and the detail and originality that went into that film in those categories was far greater. Why did it lose? Simply because ALL of the academy members (including many non-specialists in those areas) were able to vote.

**Snubs:** The most interesting topic and conversation starter when the awards are announced revolves around who got snubbed. This year's popular snubs were Donnie Brasco and The Ice Storm, both early releases. Fargo, and Silence of the Lambs, are amongst the few notable movies to have survived the "early release date syndrome;" both endured only due to the help and pushing of the studios and critics. This brings us to the next topic:

**The voting members:** Most people should remember that these voters are not gods. They see the same movies you do, which means for the most part, they only see the more commercially successful ones. Due to this fact, studios push for people to remember their films; sometimes making private video pressings given to academy voters specifically for the purpose of hinting that their film is worthy of a look.

**First time nominees and "old-timers":** Just because an actor or actress who is an old favorite was nominated for the first time does not mean that he or she will win. Sure, many years are marked by familiar comebacks, such as that of Clint Eastwood with Unforgiven in 1992, and this year's resurrection of Burt Reynolds and Peter Fonda. Yet viewers should keep in mind that anything can happen. An example of this was seen last year, when Juliette Binoche won for her performance in The English Patient, even though Lauren Bacall, an old favorite who was nominated for the first time and had won the Golden Globe, was expected to win.

**The Sweep and Best Picture win:** There is often a film that gets more nomi-

nations than one can count on two hands. There can also a film that may have been lucky enough to be the year's box office smash as well. What does this mean? It means absolutely nothing. People tend to have that odd feeling that the "biggest" movie will win. Their more knowledgeable friends can tell them that Star Wars never won Best Picture, and neither did Raiders of the Lost Ark or E.T., all top moneymakers and critical successes of their respective years. The only film of late that has achieved this dual status has been Forrest Gump.

So now that you know a bit about the process, let us move on to the main event, the nominations themselves.

**Best Actor in a Leading Role:** Matt Damon (Good Will Hunting), Robert Duvall (The Apostle), Dustin Hoffman (Wag The Dog), Jack Nicholson (As Good As It Gets), Peter Fonda (Ulee's Gold). Out of these actors, the notable snubs were the entire male cast of LA Confidential (Russell Crowe and Guy Pearce), Kevin Kline from The Ice Storm, Leonardo DiCaprio from Titanic, as well as the cast of Donnie Brasco (Johnny Depp and Al Pacino). In my opinion the choice is between Peter Fonda and Jack Nicholson. Both actors have won the Golden Globe award, and both gave what will be among the top performances of their careers. Fonda has a nostalgia push going for him, while Nicholson was the performer who stole his movie in a role tailor-made for him. It'll be a tough draw, but my money is on Fonda.

**Best Actress in a Leading Role:** Helena Bonham Carter (Wings of The Dove), Julie Christie (Afterglow), Judi Dench (Mrs. Brown), Helen Hunt (As Good As It Gets), Kate Winslet (Titanic). Kate Winslet's performance was lacking, and otherwise dry. Helena Bonham Carter was the likely pick, given the numerous critics' awards given to her, though her chances lost steam as she didn't pick up the Golden Globe (Judi Dench did). Helen Hunt did pick up a Golden Globe, and since As Good As It Gets "needs" to win in a category, this is the likely giveaway, though Helena Bonham Carter may make a surprise acceptance speech.

**Best Actor in a Supporting Role:** Robert Forster (Jackie Brown), Anthony Hopkins (Amistad) Greg Kinnear (As Good As It Gets), Burt Reynolds (Boogie Nights), Robin Williams (Good Will Hunting). It's a fairly solid category this year. Robert Forster's nomination is a surprise, as his performance didn't garner any rare praise. Worthy of note is the absence of the supporting cast of LA Confidential (Kevin Spacey, and James Cromwell). Burt Reynolds dominates this category, with a surefire win based on his brilliant performance and much heralded resurfacing in the acting world. For his efforts, he has been rewarded with a glut of supporting actor awards from major critics' circles. If not for Reynolds, Robin Williams and Greg Kinnear may have had a chance to get an award, more for their movies rather than their performances.

**Best Actress in a Supporting Role:**

Kim Basinger (LA Confidential), Joan Cusack (In and Out), Minnie Driver (Good Will Hunting), Julianne Moore (Boogie Nights), Gloria Stuart (Titanic). In this category, the only performances of note are those of Gloria Stuart, an extremely old contender who along with her age, may ride the Titanic wave to win the award. The other is Kim Basinger, who did not shine as brightly as the other stars of LA Confidential, yet delivered her best performance to date. To her luck, the Academy may choose to honor LA Confidential through her. The only significant omission here is for Sigourney Weaver, who did an outstanding job in The Ice Storm.

**Best Original Dramatic Score:** Titanic, Amistad, Good Will Hunting, Kundun, and LA Confidential. What is interesting here, is how LA Confidential managed to get its composer, Jerry Goldsmith, a nomination, though his work for this film was only average. Danny Elfman got his first nomination for Good Will Hunting, while not being one of his better works. It must frustrate him that he got nominated for this particular score, since the Academy has ignored all of his previous efforts including Batman, his best score, and arguably one of the most popular ones of the past ten years. John Williams received his token nomination for his decent score to Amistad, though his effort in Seven Years In Tibet was noticeably absent. Titanic, which was the best score of the year, and arguably James Horner's best as well, will surely win.

**Best Original Song:** Titanic, Hercules, Good Will Hunting, Anastasia, Con Air. The only memorable songs here are from Anastasia, Hercules, and Titanic. Titanic's song is breaking records (highest selling soundtrack ever) and topping the charts, giving it even more momentum, notwithstanding the fact that "My Heart Will Go On" is the best song of the year. James Horner will indeed be picking up two awards Oscar night.

**Best Visual Effects:** Titanic, The Lost World, Starship Troopers. Again, there is no contest here. Titanic was a film with so many well-done effects that masterfully created unparalleled realistic imagery. Had it not been around this year, Starship Troopers could have easily won. The omission of The Fifth Element is notable.

**Best Art Direction:** Titanic, Gattaca, LA Confidential, Men In Black, Kundun. Again, it is not going to be a surprise that Titanic will win. When a model of the Titanic was built to 9/10ths scale in comparison to the real one, with a keen eye for detail, it would be embarrassing for another winner to surface.

**Best Cinematography:** Titanic, Kundun, Amistad, LA Confidential, The Wings of The Dove. The winner in this particular category is not as clear. Kundun's painting-like cinematography by Roger Deakins is just as impressive as Titanic's, if not more so. Titanic may well have to either cheat, or get lucky in this category to win.

**Best Film Editing:** Titanic, LA Confidential, Air Force One, As Good As It Gets, Good Will Hunting. In this case,

Titanic had a much harder job of editing, with so many shots and cuts to be sewn in. James Cameron delved into the editing for Titanic himself, and it might seem possible, though not likely, that he will win for this, and be cut off for other chances that evening. LA Confidential is also a possibility, given the effort that has been made to create a coherent film. This might be the chance for LA to capture another award for the evening.

**Best Makeup:** Titanic, Mrs. Brown, Men In Black. If you remember the scene in Titanic where the corpses' hair is crystallized, you'll agree that it deserves to win.

**Best Original Musical or Comedy Score:** Anastasia, As Good As It Gets, Men In Black, The Full Monty, My Best Friend's Wedding. It is ironic how the Academy created this category so that Disney would not dominate the Best Original Score category. This category is a bit of a stumper. Anastasia may win because of a superb overall effort by Stephen Flattery. Men In Black may win so that the Academy can satisfy Danny Elfman for once. As Good As It Gets has a chance, as Hans Zimmer wrote a lovely light score, in addition, the movie just needs more awards.

**Best Director:** James Cameron, Curtis Hanson, Atom Egoyan, Gus Van Sant, Peter Cattaneo. Missing from the list is Mike Newell of Donnie Brasco, who did a superb job at showing the public that there can be more character-based stories generated from the Mafia than we thought possible. The other notable omission is Ang Lee, for providing a perfect blend of acting and atmosphere in The Ice Storm. This is one of the difficult awards to predict. It is safe to say that Cameron will have his night, however, LA Confidential has been one of the most critically acclaimed films of the year, as it brought back film noir to public attention. The usual matching award for Best Picture and Best Director may have to be split this time.

**Best Picture:** Titanic, LA Confidential, The Full Monty, Good Will Hunting, As Good As It Gets. In this category it is a true surprise to see The Full Monty here, along with its matching Best Director nomination. It was a funny film, but to say that it was on the level of greatness, greater than other films snubbed such as The Ice Storm or Donnie Brasco is going a bit too far. Titanic is the public favorite (of all time). LA Confidential is the critical favorite (of the entire year, surpassing Titanic). The better film? It is hard to say. The only way LA Confidential could win Best Picture is for it to win other supporting awards that evening, with the likely ones being Adapted Screenplay, Editing, and Supporting Actress. If it wins about three awards in those or other categories, it has a good chance to win. However Titanic was a great film and it may well end up beating Ben-Hur's record of eleven awards without having to win Best Picture.

# Editorials OPINION

## Religion Post Zionism

BY BENJAMIN BALINT

One hundred years after the birth of Zionism, and fifty years after the creation of the Jewish State, it seems wholly appropriate that we reflect on and assess the present state of the Zionist dream.

Certainly, the very miracle of a renewed Jewish homeland, Israel's amazing pace of modernization, the stunning accomplishments of its military and industrial prowess, and its arousal of Jewish identity, all attest to the fantastic success of Zionism.

In the arena of ideas, however, Zionism appears increasingly embattled and even moribund. In this country, evangelical Christians often demonstrate stauncher support for Israel than do their liberal American Jewish counterparts, for whom the spirit of '67 has long since worn off.

The Israeli academic and opinion elite seems characterized by a secularist, self-loathing post-Zionism which sanctifies Jewish disempowerment, equates Zionism with colonialist racism and IDF soldiers with "Judeo-Nazis," which debunks Zionist heroes, and regards religious Judaism as the corrupt enemy of Israeli democracy. Variations on these themes are perpetuated in much of Israel's literature (e.g. sometimes evidenced in the fiction of A.B. Yehoshua and Amos Oz), political writing (Shimon Peres' *The New Middle East*, denounces "particularist nationalism"), and newspapers (*Ma'ariv* feels compelled to report that Herzl once had a Christmas tree and was wont to visit the brothels of Vienna). The idealism of the *chalutzim* fades further into the oblivion of a no longer inspirational history. We are witness to the collapse of the Jewish nationalism which built the state, and to the emergence of a new ideology which regards Zionism as at best passé (one academic blithely announces that Herzl "doesn't speak to us anymore"), and at worst evil.

The Israeli secular right, such as it is, suffers meanwhile from a general intellectual anesthesia, and religious Zionism, "whose standard of achievement [is] an additional house built, an additional Jew moved out to the settlements," as Yoram Hazony puts it, does not fare much better in articulating a viable and relevant vision. Settlers are perceived in an editorial in *Ha'aretz* to "command no real presence in the cultural mainstream;" they seem both culturally and intellectually marginalized, and religious Zionism, when it is not pontificating on theological abstractions or engaged in synagogue speechmaking, busily proves its woeful impotence in affecting general public opinion.

We might well imagine Nietzsche's madman running through the streets of Jerusalem yelling: "Where is Zionism? Where has it gone? We have killed it! Do you not smell its putrefying corpse? For even ideologies putrefy, you know! What are Israel's cultural centers if not the tombs

of Zionism?"

What accounts for such disintegration? I don't know. Perhaps it is due to the brazen confidence of a Leon Wieseltier, for example, who on the pages of the *New Republic* declares Israel to be "fundamentally indestructible."

But whatever the cause, the effect is pernicious. A nation's strength depends not so much on the size of its army as on its inner unity, on the vibrancy and virility of its national *raison d'être*, on the depth of its historical consciousness, and on the degree to which it preserves its heritage and texts. Ideological disintegration, an absence of positive ideals, threatens the Jewish State far more profoundly than material or military weakness.

The critical void, the ideological emptiness that appears so indigenous to today's

Israeli political and cultural geography calls for a new idea capable of replacing Israeli ennui with a fresh sense of meaningful purpose. This idea, what may be

called religious post-Zionism, affirms the fundamental applicability and relevance of Torah to all issues of the modern state. Not content with an escape into eschatological speculation, nor satisfied to proclaim itself in prayers but not in actions, this Zionism of the future represents not a departure from tradition, but a return to the Halachic dynamism and ambition of the pre-exilic tradition.

Religious post-Zionism declares that Israel is holy and the beginning of redemption, because it demands our national initiative and responsibility, because it challenges us to concretely implement Halacha as a total way of life on every level, and hence allows us, in the words of R. Aharon Lichtenstein, to become "maximally Jewish." It is holy because it demands that Halacha not withdraw into a separate, autonomous "holy sphere," that it acquire a kind of this-worldly presentness. Israel is holy, in short, because it confronts us with a daunting challenge: To coax our biblical and talmudic texts to speak to and genuinely address the modern society of our own making.

As Emmanuel Levinas writes, "The thing that is special about the State of Israel is not that it fulfils an ancient promise, or heralds a new age of material security, but that it finally offers the opportunity to carry out the social law of Judaism." Through Israel, we may put an end to the uniquely horrible predicament of the galut; namely, that Jews were the only people to simultaneously define itself by a doctrine of social justice, and yet be totally incapable of applying it.

Religious post-Zionism announces that Israel should be not primarily the attainment of abstract independence, not an answer to the Holocaust, not a refuge from persecution, and not a guard against assimilation, but rather the fullest realization of Torah; an actualization which widens the range of Halacha, thus intensifying the ways in which God can be made present in daily communal and national life. The fullest realization

# LETTERS To the Editor

To the Editor:

We read with shock and dismay your article (Jewish Week 1/16/98) "Orthodox Groups Split On Pluralism" in which you reported on the vilification of Rabbi Norman Lamm by Rabbi Elya Svei at the recent Agudah convention.

Anyone even remotely acquainted with Rabbi Lamm, his work at Yeshiva University, specifically, and on behalf of *klal Yisrael* generally, knows that he is a true *ohev Hashem*, a lover of God, and one who seeks to maintain the unity of the Jewish people while maintaining the highest standards of halacha.

The disagreement over the activities of the Neeman Commission is a debate within the camp of Torah committed Jews, of which both Rabbi Svei and Rabbi Lamm are members. Such debates should be conducted within the confines of the

*beit midrash* (study hall) and not in the press. Moreover, the vitriol expressed by Rabbi Svei is uncalled for in any setting.

Agudah spokesman maintain that Rabbi Svei's status as a member of the Council of Torah Sages makes him immune to lay criticism. Even if this were correct, there are other members of the council whose silence can only be understood as acquiescence.

As officers of the Yeshiva College Alumni Association, we call upon the Agudah to disavow the extremely offensive attack upon our rosh hayeshiva and president.

Harry Peters  
Emanuel Adler  
Robert Kantowitz  
Myron Chaitovsky  
Yeshiva College Alumni Association  
New York, N.Y.

B E N J A M I N  
BALINT  
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of Torah is enabled not by freedom from the burdens of daily existence, but precisely by the shouldering of these very burdens of shared responsibility for the fate of the nation; by participating and engaging in the mundane functioning of our own society. This is how I understand the Talmudic lesson (*Chagiga* 5b) that "since Israel was exiled from its

place — there is no greater negation of Torah than this."

If, after an eventful one hundred-year lifetime, Zionism has died, its ideological progeny and spiritual heirs should eulogize it in gratitude, should build on the foundations it has with great toil laid, and should surpass it in restoring Jewish national purpose.



# LETTERS

To the Editor

## Second-hand Mussar

To the Editor:

Tuviyah Breier wrote a letter in the last issue of the *Commentator* stating that people who give mussar to smokers are mostly giving it for the wrong reasons and should stop.

I would like to address Mr. Breier's three categories of supposedly misguided mussar-givers. He claims that the first group are those who believe that they using "positive peer pressure" to convince smokers to end their addiction. He states that he "has never met a smoker who quit in order to end torment at the hands of his peers." I agree wholeheartedly. However, I continue to encourage my friends to stop smoking. How can I do such a thing? Am I relieving stress at the expense of my friends? No. I believe that even though my encouragement will not be the reason that my friends quit, it may in some small way help push them to overcome their laziness. All I hear from them is "I know I should quit, maybe next month." The goal of this mussar is not to inform the smoker of the *issur* of smoking, rather to try and motivate said smoker to action.

Mr. Breier also mentions that he, "would like to see the genuinely concerned bochur apply half as much zrizus to rebuking [negiah]." While I agree that this would be a pleasant turn of events, I think the perceived double standard is for an obvious reason. As he himself states, it is much harder to give mussar regarding an area of Halacha where the mussar-giver himself is not so careful. But do you really think the solution is to stop giving mussar entirely, because of a lack of mussar-ability in some areas?

Mr. Breier's second category is the environmental hypocrite. He mentions the fact that people who are so concerned about smoke in their air space do not seem to care about healthy eating habits, CFC's they use etc. Well in regards to the eating habits, medical conceptions of healthy and unhealthy foods seem to change almost by the minute. Additionally, most people can arrest the carbon monoxide and carcinogens entering their lungs from the smoker nearby simply by asking him to stop. Few have the ability to regulate the amount of ultraviolet rays that permeate their skin by turning off an air conditioner, or halt the destruction

of rain forests with the same ease. When I am around smokers, my clothes smell and I undoubtedly inhale second hand smoke.

But wait, you say, why don't you just leave? But is that not encouraging the exact policy you wish to abolish, smokers treated as outcasts? So I try to encourage my friend to stop inhaling toxins because I would like to keep them as friends, simply minus this habit.

Mr. Breier gives the example of a person who fails to bathe; would we not move away from him, he asks. Well, if my friend began to disturb my olfactory senses due to a lack of good grooming, I would tell him to take a shower. I would not desert him because I found one characteristic of his slightly objectionable, rather I would encourage him to change so as to overcome his problem.

I believe that Mr. Breier's mistake is in the idea of mussar. Many people do things that they know are bad; they are simply too lazy to change or to care. The mussar given is not always to inform but to motivate. Mussar is to encourage one not to give in to the thought that there is no hope, why bother; but instead to take the first step towards positive change.

I think Mr. Breier perceives evils that exist perhaps only in his imagination. Those who warn him about the dangers of smoking may actually be concerned for his health. His perception of a societal "attack on smokers" is a condemnation of the action, not the person.

Only through condemning the action can we be sure that others won't fall in to the unfortunate pit Mr. Breier and many others have stumbled into. Such a condemnation of smoking may not help smokers per se, but it may lend a hand in contributing to the death of this deadly habit for future generations.

Clearly I can not understand the exact nature of an addiction to smoking. I certainly agree that mussar should be given with the realization that "you haven't walked a mile in his shoes," and the proper tact. However, to stop giving mussar completely as you suggest is pure folly. If we do not try to help each other who will help us? So, while I appreciate your advice that I will be wasting my breath, I will continue to "waste my breath" in the hope that I can save someone else's.

Maury Grebenau YC '00

## In Dire Need of Repair

To the Editor:

Ah, the joys the end of a semester can bring: finals almost over, looking forward to a responsibility-free vacation.... and just when you think it's time to kick back, you are reminded of that one traumatic event we must all suffer through - registration, a frustrating process no YU student anticipates.

In most other colleges in the United States, the registration process is fairly simple. The student picks his courses, has them reviewed by an academic advisor (one who specializes in his major, I might add!) and then registers either by phone or the internet; either way, the actual registration process takes mere minutes.

But here at Yeshiva University we like to do things differently. Instead of taking advantage of the vast computer technology so readily available in today's society, we must register in person. Students obtain an "appointment time," are herded into a packed line like cattle, and prodded with sharp rods of verbal sarcasm from every which direction. There, we must wait for at least an hour regardless of our 'scheduled' appointment. In most cases, by the time we are actually honored with

admission into the holy registration room, half of the courses are closed and we are forced to repeat this dreadful process once more.

The last I checked, the year is 1998. Yeshiva University could set up a registration line where students can dial up, enter their social security number, and register on the phone by punching in course numbers. Similarly, YU could dedicate a website for registration using the same concept. There is absolutely no reason for us to wait in line for what seems like an eternity only to have someone else enter our data into a computer; we should be able to do so ourselves and avoid the wasted hours. Certainly this would also save the staff much time (and an attack of hypertension) as well.

Meanwhile, if students must be subjected to this extremely demoralizing process again, I do suggest that YU give out tranquilizer pills at the registration line, and please be sure that the registration staff are administered them as well.

Aaron Klein  
YC, IBC '00

## Unwarranted Criticism

To the Editor:

I recently had the opportunity to read Adam Moses' editorial opinion in the 7. Shevat 5758 issue of the *Commentator*. Let me preface my remarks by saying that I am a student of Rabbi Svei, and as you can well imagine I see the matters which you address in a somewhat different light. In addition let me say that I will do my best to respond to your article without the sarcasm and anger which lie inside me after reading your piece. If some of the emotions sneak in, I ask you forgiveness in advance.

I must begin by saying that I do not believe you have personally heard or read a transcript of Rabbi Svei's speech. You write that, "Rabbi Svei took exception to Rabbi Lamm's failure to explicitly acknowledge contributions the 'yeshiva' community has made to Orthodoxy during the RIETS address." If this statement of yours would come anywhere close to reality, I would agree with your assessment that his response was particularly contrived. In actuality, as you are in all likelihood well aware, Rabbi Svei was reacting to the infamous "caveman" portion of Rabbi Lamm's address. In my humble opinion the legitimacy of your whole editorial is wiped out by your failure to even vaguely mention this issue. Had your response to Rabbi Svei been, for argument's sake, that the "caveman" remarks were taken out of context and blown out of proportion by Rabbi Svei (an analysis that I have heard from many 'mainstream' members of orthodoxy), and therefore by no means warranted such a "repugnant outburst" from Rabbi Svei, - I for one would still dis-

agree with you - but at least you would have addressed the issue. By glossing over this issue and making it sound as if Rabbi Svei was simply complaining that he was not getting a large enough portion of candy, you have failed to issue a serious response to Rabbi Svei.

In addition, another item struck me when I finished your article. I imagine that your commentary is based on the principle of "Torah lishmah with service to the Jewish community." How ironic is it, that while your editorial is permeated with references to Shakespeare, Orwell, Kant and even a recent Hollywood release, you did not find it necessary to add one Rabbinic source to bolster your assertions that encouraging conciliatory discussions among our splintered people is an objective that is so highly held above all else. In my estimation, Rabbeinu Yonah, from whom Rabbi Svei obtained the expression "sonay Hashem," by far outweighs any popular cultural values that would dictate so-called appropriate behavior. I welcome you to join me in a "seder" to analyze this particular portion of "Sharei Teshuva" so that perhaps you might see this matter from Rabbi Svei's perspective.

I would like to add one final item. Did you really find it necessary to so personally and vehemently attack those of us who choose to follow the way of our fathers and malign us so fiercely as photocopies? Come now! You cannot possibly believe us all to be of such low intelligence. Such invective only further cheapens the substance of your article.

Very truly yours,  
Joseph Taub

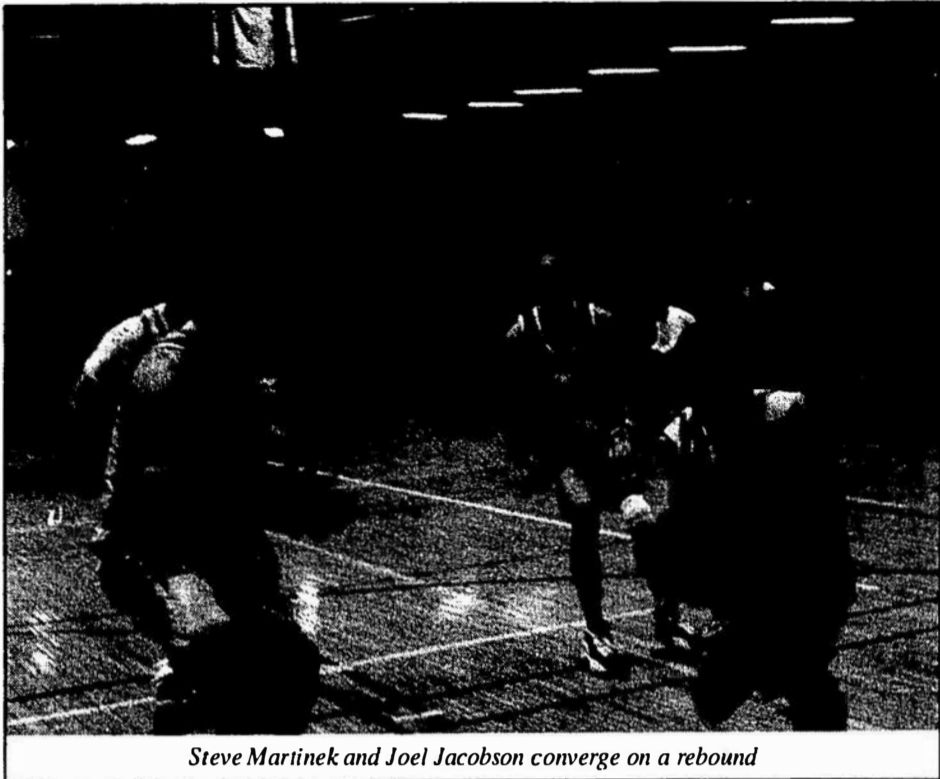
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Steve Martinek and Joel Jacobson converge on a rebound

## Where are All the Fans?

BY MICHA PORAT

The Yeshiva University Macs, with a record of 15 wins and 8 losses are experiencing a successful season. Their games have been extremely exciting as they have an interesting mix of talented veterans and promising younger classmen. The team has been improving game by game as they are getting used to playing in high-pressure situations including recent victories against highflying opponents such as Polytechnic and Lehman Universities. One might even use the word dramatic to describe these most recent victories as one player has stepped up for the team in clutch fashion to come up with the big buckets down the stretch.

All these facts bring up one disturbing and obvious question. Why is the Max Stern Athletic center practically empty when the basketball team plays? In addition, is there a reason why I'm able to have a conversation with my friend from one side of the court to the other without any vocal disturbances during a basketball game? Perhaps Yeshiva University students lack school spirit or maybe they just don't care about their basketball team and this is a major problem.

The Macabees have a better record on the road, nine and three, then they do on their own home court, six and five. Our team needs our support. The fans are the people who really motivate the players to play their hearts out and to give one hundred and fifty percent. Freshman point guard Steve Martinek remarked, "I think our fan support is pathetic. We have a dual curriculum, which, added to the several practices our team has each week really wears us out. What we need more than anything is fan support. This

gives us the adrenaline we so desperately need to forget everything, clear our minds, and give it all we got."

It is a commonly known phrase that if a basketball team has excellent fan support, the actual people attending the game are considered a sixth man. One opposing player who asked to remain nameless stated, "I love playing in Yeshiva because I don't have to deal with the loud crowds that I'm normally used to in away games, especially when it comes to free throws." This quote in itself is proof enough that your support makes a difference.

In finding the root of the problem, though, one must know what is going through the heads of the Yeshiva students who don't bother to attend these games. When YC sophomore Seth Goldberger was asked why he hasn't attended any of the basketball games as of yet, he said, "Well because they suck and they're boring to watch." Now this is an inaccurate and common misconception. In fact it is not rare to witness Yeshiva player, Brian Wein, throw down a power dunk off a fast break. In addition, you may even see a Canadian by the name of Steve Martinek hit 3 three-pointers in one half like he did against Lehman University. Now where else are you going to see a Canadian do that?

The Macs have a strong possibility to make the ECAC playoffs. However whether or they make it the team deserves strong fan support for the way they played this season. If there is one lesson that can be learned from this season, it is that YU fans play an invaluable and irreplaceable role in the success of their basketball team. If Yeshiva makes it into the tournament please be the fans that you never were. Pay the team back for all their hard work and determination by attending their playoff games and making some noise.

# YESHIVA

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# SPORTS

## Fencers Looking Forward to Championship

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

The fencers representing YU have been on a wild, exhilarating run. Over the past few weeks, the swordsmen have traveled to duel in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and in the remote and distant borough of Queens.

After a trip to Boston, where Yeshiva fenced Rutgers, Boston College, MIT, Brandeis, and Brown, Yeshiva went to southern Pennsylvania to fence Lafayette College and Haverford College. At this meet, the Yeshiva fencers exhibited their gallant, intrepid, and merciless nature. Yeshiva crushed the fencers of Lafayette, winning by a score of 20-7. Freshman fencer Ami Small had a tremendous day, as he accumulated two victories. Overall, the sabre squad went 8-1, while the epee and foil squads combined to win 12. Following the tremendous victory over Lafayette, Yeshiva failed to gain glory against Haverford, losing a tightly contested match.

The Yeshiva musketeers' next match, however, was not so close. Perhaps tired after a long trip to

Astoria, Queens, or perhaps - more likely - overwhelmed by superior fencers, Yeshiva lost to St. Johns. Nevertheless, Assistant Coach Pete Rosas was impressed with the YU performance. "St. Johns is ranked #2 in the country," Coach Rosas said, "and most of those guys were fencing before college. We fenced well." The epee squad fenced most admirably, with Steve Mellner, Hadar Weiss, and Alex Traiman all pulling out victories.

On Sunday, February 22, Yeshiva fenced Princeton University and Vassar College, in Princeton, New Jersey. Yeshiva lost. Were the *yiddish kups* outsmarted by the other fencers? "No way," said Yekutiel Sandman. He explained, "There were a lot of *yiddim* on that team."

The losses to St. Johns and Princeton do not count for the conference standings of Yeshiva University. Yeshiva is in the MACFA conference. The conference championship will be held on March 1. After a long season, in which Yeshiva fenced many first class teams outside their conference, Yeshiva seeks success in their conference championship.

## Intramurals Update

BY MARK HECHT

### 1. Bulls 51 Trotters 46

This game featured a possible preview of this semester's championship game. These two teams played a hard fought, high intensity game. At the end, the underdog Bulls were able to contain the outside threat of the Trotters. Bulls were led by David Wild who contributed sixteen points. The Trotters were led by Akiva Sausen with thirteen points.

### 2. Canes 60 Heat 38

From the start this game was a blowout. The Heat fell down early and were never able resuscitate themselves. The Canes seems to have made

a tremendous turn around from last semester, and may be a force to be reckoned with come playoff time. The Canes were led by Burry Newburg who scored fifteen points. The Heat were led by Dzik's sixteen points in the first half.

### 3. Liberty 45 Team #1 44

In a game that came down to the wire, the Liberty pulled out a gut wrenching victory. Koenigsburg collected his 41<sup>st</sup> point and the game stopped to award him the Red Sarachek achievement award for sportsmanship. Along with Koenigsburg's 28 points Abdul-Rahim-Schwartz Levy added fourteen minutes.

## This Week's Top Picks

1. Bulls - This fab five has all the tools necessary to win the championship.
2. Liberty - Koenigsburg can beat teams by himself.
3. Trotters - With 2 losses this week they are starting to falter.
4. Canes - This team has great chemistry and a lot of heart.
5. Team #1 - They should change their team name.
6. Yankees - Stop forfeiting!
7. Lakers - They need another time slot.
8. T'Wolves - Goldwicht needs to learn to stop shooting the three.
9. Macs - Give Neil Bronstein the contract he deserves.

The Commentator

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