

Yeshiva University Commentator

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Dorm Room Keys Access Sensitive Belfer Hall Areas

BY YOSSI BLUM

In recent weeks, *The Commentator* has learned that several students' dormitory keys effectively serve as pass keys which afford them access to various rooms in Belfer Hall including professors' offices, computer centers, and laboratories containing hazardous materials. According to campus security officials, this finding poses a significant security concern. Don Sommers, Director of Security, has even considered restricting student access to Belfer Hall entirely during the night - a measure that would inhibit study during reading week and finals.

Certain students, who spoke on condition of anonymity, informed *The Commentator* of how they came to the realization that their dormitory closet keys open a great deal more than just their dormitory closets.

According to one of the students, a Yeshiva College professor recounted to his class how he had once, absent-mindedly, successfully used his house key to open his University office door. The profes-

or proceeded to inform the class that he has since discarded his office key and has been using the house key for both his home and his office.

Several students in that class, curious to see if other keys could be used to gain access to Belfer Hall rooms, tried using their dormitory room and closet keys to open the classroom door. They

COMMENTATOR Probe Uncovers Breach in Belfer Hall Security

soon discovered that certain students' closet keys not only could open the classroom door, but could also be used to gain entry to rooms throughout Belfer Hall.

One student was motivated to explore the extent to which his key provided access in order to evaluate campus security. Initially motivated by sheer curiosity, he became interested in the risks posed to student and faculty safety.

"I was absolutely astounded that students would have the abil-

ity to open rooms all over Belfer Hall," the student asserted. "Remember, we're not just talking about professor offices and storage closets; we're also talking about laboratories and stairwells which contain toxic materials."

The ability to open stairwell doors with the pass keys would enable a potential burglar or vandal to reach many of Belfer Hall's floors after they are closed for the evening.

Yet, the "interchangeability" of various campus keys is by no means a new phenomenon. For years, many YU students have complained that certain closet and drawer keys can be used to open closets and drawers in other dormitory rooms. Furthermore, according to one of our sources, a certain senior professor remarked that the use of "outside" keys in Belfer Hall is "by no means a new discovery."

However, the Department of Safety and Security and the Department of Facilities Management vehemently claim

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EMPLOYEES CHALLENGE "UNFAIR" UNIVERSITY PAYROLL PRACTICE

BY MORDECHAI FISHMAN

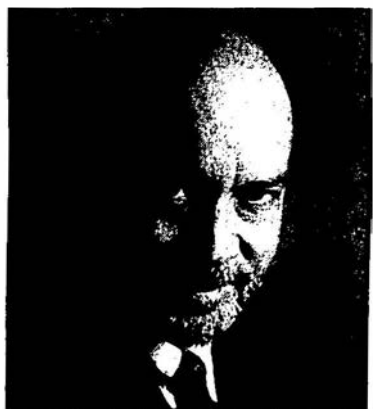
Unionized and non-union employees of Yeshiva University have begun to question the accounting methods used when calculating their paychecks after discovering apparent discrepancies between what they assumed their annual salaries were and what their pay stubs actually totaled. The mathematical formula used by the payroll department to compute biweekly salaries is the focus of employee resentment, and YU workers have been organizing to demand an explanation of the method, and if need be, financial compensation.

What the workers term "disparate treatment of University employees" arises from the fact that there exists two separate pay schedules for various YU employees. Faculty and senior level administrators receive their pay on a monthly schedule, or twelve checks a year. The other employees of the University, ranging from maintenance, housekeeping, and cafeteria workers to secretaries, librarians,

and administrative staff, receive their pay on a biweekly basis, or every fourteen days.

In a letter addressed to Sheldon Socol, Vice-President for Business Affairs, and signed by the entire unionized workforce of YU, the union members spell out their grievance and demand action and rectification. The letter states that "The Payroll Department of Yeshiva University issues paychecks on biweekly and monthly bases depending upon an employee's classification. The policies determining the biweekly payroll calendar issued by the Finance Department and implemented by the Payroll Department

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Course Guide Alerts Professor Arluck to his Dismissal

BY CHANAN HOSCHANDER

The administration of Yeshiva College has decided not to renew the faculty appointment of Dr. Gregory Arluck, a professor in the economics department. Sources in the Office of the Dean suggested that Arluck's termination was the result of negative student views of his instruction. Additional questions have arisen concerning the manner in which the instructor was informed of his unfortunate situation.

Dr. Arluck, who teaches various economics courses including introductory ones, has been a professor at YC for two years. His most recent instruction appointment was for a single year and is scheduled to conclude following this semester.

When faculty members are

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750 Jam Weissberg Commons For Yom Hazikaron/ Yom Ha'atzmaut Function

BY JOSHUA LANDA

Wednesday April 29th marked the annual Yeshiva University Yom Hazikaron Program and Yom Ha'atzmaut Festivities. The large crowd experienced a night that began with solemn speeches and heartfelt prayer and then continued with enthusiastic dancing and a *kumsitz* on Dancziger Quadrangle.

The evening began with rolling bass drums piercing the silence in Belfer Commons. The solemn rendition of *Balad LeChovesh*, the Medic's Song, which is a staple of Yom Hazikaron programs in and out of Israel, moved the 750 attendees of YU's Yom Ha'atzmaut ceremony. The *Hatikva* was then recited.

The program, held each year to commemorate the day of remembrance for Jews who perished in the various Israeli wars and the Holocaust as well as the founding of the state of Israel, was effective in awakening many of the deep feelings and emotional ties of YU students to their homeland and to their history as a nation generally. One student commented that he "was moved by the event, and hidden feelings

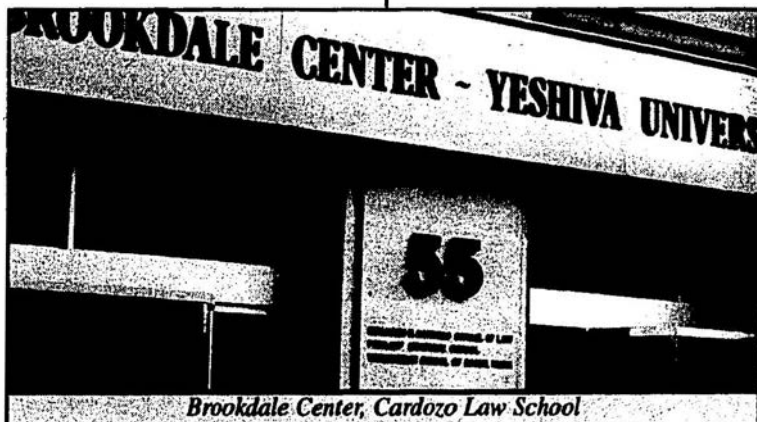
of love for his country were awakened by what took place."

A candle lighting ceremony in honor of the fallen soldiers was led by YU students who have served in the IDF. Each person lit their candle in memory of a different Jewish tragedy, from the six million that perished in the Holocaust to Jewish soldiers that had fallen in various Israeli wars.

The candle ceremony was followed by a rendition of *Magash HaKeshef*, an Israeli poem recited by Nealy Klein, a SCW junior, and Hadar Weiss, a YC junior, in Hebrew and English, respectively.

After the poetry reading, Daniel Kutner, current Israeli Consul of Academic Affairs to the

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Brookdale Center, Cardozo Law School

University Unveils Joint Program Between Cardozo and YC/SCW

Students To Shave Year Off Law School

BY AARON KLEIN

A joint program between Yeshiva University's Cardozo School of Law and the University's undergraduate schools has been developed by YC Associate Dean Michael Hecht and administrators at the law school. The program will allow undergraduate juniors to enroll in

Cardozo and complete their first year of law school the summer following graduation from either YC or SCW. The joint program, which is slated to begin in May of 1999, is open to students of Yeshiva College, Stern College, and Sy Syms School of Business.

Students will begin the program by taking courses at Cardozo during the summer following their junior year. One law course, which will meet on Fridays, is then taken each semester of their senior year. Students in this program will complete the first year of law school during the summer following college graduation. Academic credit for all courses taken at Cardozo will be granted in both the undergradu-

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EDITORIALS

Perhaps You Do Give a Damn

Greeted with the efficiency of a bank, uptown undergraduates welcomed the sweeping reforms undertaken by the Office of the Registrar to ameliorate the registration ills experienced by students during past semesters. While registration for the fall 1998 semester was not free of glitches, students were treated to an enlightened registration experience befitting any fine institution.

Instead of the usually crowded wait in the hallway of Furst Hall, registration took place in a spacious room on the fifth floor of Belfer Hall. Advisors were mere feet from the registering students and were readily available to approve course schedules and answer questions. Deans were present in the room at all times, relieving students of the often frustrating wild goose chase to track down administrative authorities for signatures. All of these improvements, along with the additional computer terminals and operators, ensured a smooth and speedy registration process.

We acknowledge the effort of the Office of the Registrar to alleviate this point of past difficulty and are optimistic that it will continue down the path of progress. Successful implementation of online registration by the Spring semester would signal the seriousness of the Office of the Registrar's commitment to improve its service.

The improvements achieved in registration also mark a victory for student activism. Students, under the leadership of this paper, unleashed a torrent of opposition to Registrar ineptitude that qualitatively transcended the conventional petty complaints that have proven ineffective in forging policy adjustment. The administration could no longer afford to turn a deaf ear on student interests. Let this success herald the commencement of a new era of student expression that engenders policy innovations that benefit student interests.

To Serve and to Protect, Not Repress

When does the repression end? It is time for the students of this institution to demand their right to express. On the anniversary of the single greatest event in Jewish history this century, students took it upon themselves to display their festive mood. In the late night hours of Yom Ha'atzmaut, more than one-hundred-and-fifty students convened in celebration on the lawn in front of the Max Stern Athletic Center. This territory is known to be off limits to students.

On this evening, the Yeshiva University Department of Security did not recognize the students' contention that for one night collective celebration must be permitted. Security officials were unwilling to relax their rigid regulations for this rare display of spontaneous expression. When many wished to sing in honor of Israeli Independence, security and maintenance personnel were vigilant in their effort to crush student joy. Surely, the consequences of this gathering did not merit the presence of Burns Security. The thought that the perfectly manicured grass might have been harmed is just not an adequate justification for repressive security measures. Yes, if there truly existed the possibility of disturbance to neighbors, security intrusion would have been legitimate. However, no such possibility of disturbance was posed by the student singing.

It is fairly clear that the issue here was merely the ability of the University police apparatus to control and repress any independent effort on the part of its students. Is Dancziger Quadrangle our Tiannamen Square? It would appear so. But it need not be any longer. Let us escape our shackles and make ourselves heard.

Ethics Should be Academic

That repeated employee treatment injustices prevent the University from formally aligning with the American Association of University Professors, an organization concerned to maintain fair employment standards for professors, is a sufficient affront to decency to merit our censure. Unfortunately, Yeshiva University's expulsion from the AAUP was only a single occurrence in an ignominious legacy of professorial mistreatment. Dr. Gregory Arluck's recent dismissal is the most recent manifestation of an ongoing trend that we feel must be reversed. For a professor to first learn of the termination of his appointment upon glancing at a student course guide for the subsequent semester is not simply a violation of AAUP guidelines, but a humiliating, demoralizing experience for which there can be no justification. It would appear that the University simply cares not at all about the treatment of its professors. Such mistreatment cannot help but reduce faculty morale and level of performance. The consequences of this state of affairs are felt by students as well. If faculty performance is adversely affected, we suffer. We are no longer willing to countenance this University's willful disregard of the needs of its professors. We do not demand the unreasonable. We simply insist that this University adhere to the standards for professorial treatment widely embraced by virtually all American universities.

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MESSAGE FROM THE YCSC PRESIDENT-ELECT

DROR BARBER

It is with great enthusiasm that I write this letter to you. Yeshiva College Student Council has always been the eyes and ears as well as the voice of the students in this University. It is in this tradition that I would like to continue, bringing new and exciting ideas and events to this campus. However I am just one man and it can't be done alone. Thankfully, I have a wonderful board next year consisting of Howard Mazin, YC Vice-President, David Neiss, Vice-president of business affairs, Hadar Weiss, Treasurer, and Shlomo Troodler as Secretary. It is my hope that the student involvement will not stop with my board but include all of the student body. There are many positions and appointments available and I trust that students will be enthusiastically involved. Currently there are positions available for Orientation staff for those who would like to get a jump-start on next years' Student Council. We have many exciting ideas and projects over the summer, one of which is the refurbishing and resurrection of the now defunct Yeshiva University radio

station, WYUR. I would also like to announce the new on-line book exchange program. Students will enter in the books they are offering for sale, the price of the book and the students telephone number and it will automatically be updated on the For Sale list. Incoming students as well as returnees will be able to obtain low cost used books right at the beginning of the semester.

I cannot conclude without a brief word about this year's Student Council. Many new changes were seen on campus this year, from the new weight room to a more efficient registration, and I would like to acknowledge the hard work of this years president Sruli Tannenbaum as well as his entire board. Finally I would like to wish all of the students a very enjoyable summer. My door is always open to suggestions and I hope that student will take the opportunity to come by and take part in all that student council has to offer.

Thank you, and have a great summer!!!!

Dror Barber

YCSC President-Elect '98-'99



FROM THE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
MORDECHAI FISHMAN

AS GOOD AS IT GETS

Ashreinu Mah Tov Chelkeinu....

I love this place. When I find the time to sit down, kick back, and truly contemplate what YU is and what it means to me, the depth of my feelings is sometimes astonishing. Having spent the last four years in one capacity or another connected to this institution, I have seen the good, the bad, and the really ugly (anyone remember the old caf?). Only now do I begin to appreciate the unique qualities that make this school what it really is.

Yeah, so sometimes we resemble a dysfunctional family on the road trip from hell. Like little children bickering in the back seat of a car, students argue with faculty, faculty with administration, rabbis argue with other rabbis, and everyone takes potshots at President Lamm, who plays the role of benevolent daddy from the driver's seat up on the fifth floor of Furst Hall. And like any father, sometimes he ignores the squabbles in the back seat, choosing instead to concentrate on the road, and sometimes he turns around and threatens to take action and discipline his unruly kids.

But that's okay. In fact, I think our disagreements are the finest aspect of this institution. And if no one has any idea when this trip ends and everyone has their own idea of what the final destination is, I can handle that as well.

There was a recent case in the news concerning a Catholic elementary school terminating a popular fifth-grade teacher. Her crime? She was divorced, and had remarried without securing an annulment of her previous marriage as per the orthodox doctrine of the Church. Therefore, the school saw her as unfit to educate its pupils even though by all accounts she was a master at her craft and an asset to the school. In the same vein, Notre Dame University recently forced out an acclaimed vocal preacher over perceived doctrinal differences.

Fortunate our we, that here in YU this is not our reality. Faculty and administration can be of any denomination they choose, and a dean can profess to be nominally Orthodox even though everyone knows otherwise. Rabbanim in the beit midrash are free to rail against various policies espoused by the school and the president, and from the other side, so are rabbis teaching in Midtown. Rav Kahn and Professor Lee can debate the purpose of YU back and forth in the pages of the Commie, each vehemently disagreeing with the other and attempting to sway students to their respective points of view, while the students themselves can choose any side of an issue without the fear of coercion.

This school is one big level playing field, and I love watching the game. Not only can I observe and heckle, but I can actively participate in the action and attempt to help my team (or whatever issue I identify with at the moment) advance further downfield towards its goaline. Nor am I restricted to just one game. At any given moment this place resembles satellite television on a Sunday morning -- hundreds of channels

and I can surf them all. All the dissension and debate, the late night arguments and impassioned speeches, the faculty rantings and rabbinic shmoozes, make me a better student, a better human being, and ultimately, a better Jew.

U'Mah Na'im Goraleinu....

If a university is the sum of its parts, then add up the individuals that compose YU and you have a school unlike any other in the world. The friends I have made here are friends like no others, and the experiences I have undergone with them will remain with me for the rest of my life. The people I have been privileged to meet; the minds I have been exposed to; the lessons taught to me by rabbis and teachers; all these are things that cannot be measured, for their value is incomprehensible.

People complain that YU is a homogeneous mass of indistinguishable fools. Granted, we are all Jewish males, many of us from similar socio-economic backgrounds. (My apologies to the women downtown.) And yes, sometimes it appears as if every person rolling down Amsterdam Avenue woke up and put on the same pair of khakis and plaid shirt. Yet there exists a sweet diversity within our student body that is unique to YU; an asset for all who study here. Case in point: I just discovered yet another ethnic sub-group in the polyglot mosaic that is our student body -- Yiddish-speaking Carpathians. Add them to the mix with the Russian mafia, Syrian boatboys, wiseguy New Yorkers, Five Towns yuppies, out-of-town hicks, and the bathrobe-wearing dudes on the eighth floor of Morg, and you get quite a bunch. Realizing that we are all talmidim of the same yeshiva and students of the same university is a humbling and edifying experience.

This diversity extends to the faculty as well. Theist philosophers, atheistic historians, accounting ethicists, biblical theoreticians, the list goes on and on. Our rabbis span the spectrum of Orthodoxy, and according to some, beyond it. They may not ever agree on things (after all, they are rabbis) but each has a viewpoint I can benefit and learn from if I take the time to listen. The administrators and deans can be infuriating and exasperatingly obstinate, but they can be amazingly helpful and educating when they choose. Even the staff, such as security guards, secretaries, facilities workers and librarians have enriched my time on campus, and I feel grateful for being able to interact with them all.

U'Mah Yafah Yerushateinu....

Being a YU student makes me the recipient of a legacy that spans three blocks of Washington Heights and three thousand years of history. I can only hope that I have the luck and privilege to continue on down the path delineated by my predecessors and guides, and in my own small way contribute to the collective wealth of this institution.



FROM THE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
ADAM MOSES

AND MOSES SPOKE UNTO HIS PEOPLE

It seems that some members of the University community are not privy to an understanding of the *raison d'être* of *The Commentator*. Indeed, on the basis of my discussions with peers, I am convinced that it would not be inconsistent with truth to suggest that a sizable component of the student populace fails to appreciate the urgency of this paper's mission. Thus, a cogent exposition of *The Commentator's* aims merits issuance in order that clarity of purpose may reign where existential confusion now lurks. Toward that end, I have elected to devote my inaugural column as editor-in-chief to explicating my vision for the function and future direction of *The Commentator*.

As I see it, *The Commentator* must fulfill two primary functional imperatives. First, it must *inform*. This paper will keep students abreast of the developments that matter to them in a timely and engaging fashion. This means provision of comprehensive coverage of what transpires on campus at the administrative and student levels. Under the tutelage of the recently selected paper leadership, exceptional vigor will be employed to uncover stories of consequence and report on them thoroughly. I believe this edition evidences that commitment in tangible terms. *The Commentator's* mandate to inform is not bounded in scope by this University's hallowed halls. Or, if it has been in the past, I do not believe it should continue to be. *The Commentator's* coverage purview should rightfully extend beyond the confines of the campus to include a broad swath of Jewish communal concerns and themes of importance to university students. This year it will.

The Commentator's second obligation, one that does not appear to enjoy wide understanding, is to *advocate student interests*. This charge is of intense significance at this University in light of the dearth of structural mechanisms for preventing the administration from running roughshod over the needs of students. In the absence of an effective campaign of student activism, the onus is upon *The Commentator* to crusade for the interests of students and register objection to administrative excesses that tend to encroach upon our legitimate rights. I do not mean to suggest that the University administration is a nefarious apparatus that consciously seeks to thwart student aims. It is not. When, however, the administration is left to operate unfettered, it, not unlike any self-interested entity, as a matter of course will pursue its independent objectives to the occasional abnegation of those of others. Those others are us -- the students. Such a state of affairs is untenable. As James Russell Lowell knew, "They have rights who dare maintain them." We cannot permit our sacrosanct rights to be sacrificed on the altar of student silence. That is why it is incumbent upon *The Commentator* to muster a pro-

nounced student check on administrative machinations that would trammel our interests. I hold this truth to be self-evident. Under the aegis of this volume's leadership, *The Commentator* will exhibit a renewed commitment to advancing the interests of students. In the University sea of bureaucratic moral relativism, *The Commentator* will be the dependable vessel that safeguards students from the perils of the oft turbulent waters that swell around us and skillfully navigates our interests to fruition.

If we wish *The Commentator* to efficaciously fulfill its functional imperatives, we the students must assure that it is capable of so doing. That is why I exhort every undergraduate student in this university to contribute in some way to *The Commentator*. Only by harnessing the productive potential of the student populace can we hope to execute our designs optimally. Whether you have a propensity for writing and investigation, are possessed of keen business acumen, or have a penchant for organization, I strenuously urge you to contribute your services in order that *The Commentator* may better serve the University community.

For those skeptical would-be campus leaders who are given to conceive of *The Commentator* as an impenetrable campus elite concerned to consolidate power by restricting access to newcomers, I must forcefully disabuse you of your fallacious notion. The Governing Board of this publication does not, nor do we wish to, dwell in an ivory tower hermetically sealed off from the student populace. If we were to so act, we would fail our sacred charge to serve students and corrupt an honorable institution. This year *The Commentator* will, as it has always sought to, function as a meritocracy. *Commentator* staff members will be awarded positional advance commensurate with their demonstrated level of contribution. We are not an "old boy's club." Our ranks include a fairly representative cross section of Yeshiva College student culture. *The Commentator* can only maintain this desirable diversity if students from all sectors of the student populace continue to participate in its function.

In closing, I can without hesitation certify my optimism for *The Commentator's* future. The confluence of the existing foundation of staff talent with our renewed commitment to fortifying the *Commentator*-student alliance by drawing more students into the orbit of paper activity augurs well for this publication's prospects of qualitative enrichment. Additionally, I am confident that our will to expand the scope of paper reportage coupled with a rededication to advocating the interests of students will enable *The Commentator* to better serve the University community. Little stands between the sixty-third volume of *The Commentator* and unprecedented accomplishment.



FROM THE
EDITOR EMERITUS
ARI KAHN

Sometimes I wonder about the picture of YU painted in the pages of this paper. I search for the words to describe this complex enclave of idealism and cynicism, populated by 1100 of the greatest guys I know. Well, this is the last time I get to talk to all of you and I want to make it count.

My last and most important message to the students of YU is take advantage of all this place offers. As a lowly FTCC, I adjusted quickly thanks to an unbelievable group of friends who had taken the early admissions route. Once you get adjusted, look around, you will see all the possibilities. For the talmid who wants to spend most of his time in the B.M., the Rebbeim here are among the most diverse, learned and open people in the Yeshiva world. Learn from all of them, as you watch how they conduct themselves, whether they are teaching in shiur, handling a delicate question, or addressing a secular audience. Your learning can't only be from seforim, their experiences have much to offer.

For the student more interested in academics or grad school, if you are motivated enough, you can get into any school in the country. Find the professors here who enjoy teaching and are at the forefront of their fields. The small size of your classes makes it easy for you to get to know any professor you choose. Again, your learning won't only be from books, but from people who involve themselves in research or outside work. If the course you want does not exist at YU, design it and ask for it. Find a professor to help. I did it and so can you.

Finally, for those interested in more of an academic or extra-curricular life on campus, the administration and student council are the most accessible of any college I have seen. Walk in to Dean Adler's office and tell him what you want or what you think

this place needs; talk to Dror, describe the club or event you want, and you will be surprised at the ease of which you can get things done with just a little effort.

Whatever success I've had here is due to many people. First, a thank you to Dr. Barry Potvin who taught me most of what I know about the latest research and techniques in the field of genetics. He saw the need for an advanced course and took it upon himself to give his time to ensure that it happened.

A special thank-you to my Rebbe, Rav Tendler. He has taught me over these past three years both how to learn and how to teach. Rav Tendler put up with all my "outside" activities and was always quick to set me straight. Thanks for taking me to all those lectures and shiurim. I've tried to learn what must be said and the way to say it.

I couldn't end this column without mentioning someone whom I deeply admire and respect. Dean Hecht was one of the first people I met at YU. Over the years I have watched the menschlich way he treats students and faculty. Ask any student who they'd want to deal with, I bet they say Dean Hecht. By learning from him and talking to him, and in others ways, he has probably done more to get me into my law school than I'll ever know. For that and everything else I thank you Rabbi.

Finally, a thank you to my friends, roommates, and family who supported me and put up with all my crazy hours, hectic schedule, and minute attention-span. I would mention all of you but I know I'll leave someone out. Instead, I just want to mention my parents whose love and support I cannot describe in the confines of this paper, and my co-editor Noah. Noah, what we've been through, I couldn't have survived without you.

The Editors-Emeritus would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions to the Volume 62 of *The Commentator*:

Mordechai - News Editor: Thank you for your unique insight and your nose for a story. Thank you for the countless hours spent editing, the articles written and the countless discussions and arguments on a multitude of issues. We wish you the best of luck as Editor-In-Chief.

Adam - News Editor: You are precision personified. Fastidious, always delivering on time, everything well edited. You possess incredible drive and motivation and we wish you the best of luck as Editor-In-Chief.

Red - Features Editor: You may be a bit nuts, but you made a heck of a features editor. Excellent articles, excellent ideas we wish you well in the position of Executive Editor.

Gus/Alex - Layout Editor: The unsung hero. I don't understand why you do it, why you've spent countless hours and sleepless nights working on this paper, but when the paper comes out, it is a testament to your creativity, diligence, attention to detail and sense of humor.

Edon and Yosef - Business Managers: otherwise known as the

money men. Thank you for bringing in ads and taking care of the books.

Yishai - Culture Editor: You have made our vision of the culture section a reality.

Ben and Josh - Web Masters/Computer Operations: Computer people (we have to be careful in this politically correct time) *par excellance*. Thank you for getting us up on the web in style and thank you for humor and impromptu copy editing.

Hadar - Photographer: The photographer who did far more than take photographs. Thank you for the sleepless night, your patience, your letters and articles. You have far surpassed your call of duty.

Aylon: thank you for your services layout editor.

Nir: Thank you for your service as features editor and for the views and ideas that were uniquely your own.

And to the rest of the people that took unremunerated time out of their hectic schedules, associate editors, staff, etc., you have made us proud and you have allowed *The Commentator* to pass through another year - thank you.



FROM THE
EDITOR EMERITUS
NOAH STREIT

Conclusions are often the hardest to express. To wrap a whole year into a neat package is no easy ordeal.

It's quite ironic - so many times I wished it were over and now I wish I could turn the clock back and begin again, of course, with one minor stipulation - to return knowing what I know now. And so I hand over the title and the yoke that comes with it, and though I feel free, I also feel loss. There was so much accomplished, but so much that might have been.

The Commentator - The official undergraduate newspaper of Yeshiva University. There is grave responsibility that accompanies this paper, more than I bargained for when I assumed the title. There is great power in this paper, more than I ever fathomed when I began my tenure. Allow me to touch upon the responsibility and power, two forces that are inextricably tied to each other.

There is little sleep. There is a plethora of articles to be edited. There is the unfathomable responsibility, knowing that every word in every article must be checked for factual accuracy, grammar, syntax and spelling. Imagine, accountability for 16 to 24 pages of material almost every two weeks. There is little praise and much venom - I have been called "filthy" and "immoral;" it is always nice to know that you are loved.

Yet, there is vast power. The power to affect change. The power to provide knowledge. The power to build and the power to destroy. Do you think I'm exaggerating? I know I am not.

I suppose the proper way to close out a year as editor-in-chief is to impart a message encompassing all that I've learned in my tenure. So, I'll give it a shot.

To the administrators of Yeshiva University: Don't fight your students; work with them, work for them. Remember that you set the standards for this institution, and many of you serve as role models. Realize that people imitate those in positions above them.

To the professors: I've been a student for quite a while now. I've had professors whom I will remember for the rest of my life and pro-

fessors whom I have not considered since I've left their classes. Remember that you, the professor, can make or break your student's desire for an education. Infuse life into the material you give over; teach with fire and passion; show "the big picture" application for the information you impart and your students will not only memorize information, they will become their knowledge.

To the students: While the dual curriculum is an incredible strain, a strain which no other college places upon its students, you have chosen to come here on your own volition realizing the potential benefits and drawbacks. You are the life force of Yeshiva University and there is nothing you cannot accomplish. Remember the strength of numbers, the power of protest and the incredible might of you, the individual.

To the future editors-in-chief: You wield vast power. Use it wisely and remember that you are now part of an illustrious institution that is entering its 63 year.

And now as the 62nd year of *The Commentator* comes to a close, I'd like to thank you, the students, faculty and administrators of Yeshiva University, for the opportunity of having been able to serve you. Additionally there are a few personal thank yous I'd like to make and with that I shall bid you all adieu.

First and foremost, Ari Kahn, my co-editor-in-chief and my new lifelong friend. Ari, you are a man wise beyond your years. Quiet, never in the limelight, but insightful, analytical and I dare say, in your own way, brilliant. You have given me a new vantage points from which I can better view life. There is no way I could have done it without you.

Deans Adler and Hecht: You have served as role models and friends. I appreciate your consideration and understanding of the toll this position takes.

My professors: Without your understanding, I would have been up the proverbial creek.

My two roommates: Thank you for being my support throughout this tumultuous year.

Finally, to all my friends that have put up with my insane schedule, my crankiness, and my lack of time - you know who you are - thank you.



MESSAGE FROM THE
SSSB PRESIDENT
SIMCHA GESSENGER

It has been an eventful year for the Sy Syms School of Business Student Association. We've hosted speakers from the fields of Corporate Finance, Investment Banking, Institutional Sales, Credit Derivatives, Federal Banking, Management Consulting, Retail, Marketing, Accounting and MIS. We've also arranged an evening where professors and Rabbanim shared perspectives on the challenges confronting an Orthodox Jew in today's business world. Our Shabbaton with Rav Goldwicht was one of the largest and most successful ever.

On the academic side of things, we've arranged for an MIS exemption exam and established a Calculus for Business class to fill a void that students felt existed in their education. We've also dealt with the administration as a prelude to make the registration process more student friendly.

Campus life has been enhanced by this year's Sy Syms Tutoring Program run by Jonathon Teitelbaum, which far exceeded all expectations in truly providing for a feeling of camaraderie among students and allowing for a tremendous service to the Sy Syms community at large. There has been a trip to the New York Stock Exchange, and a Yankees game that was sponsored by SSSBSA and YCSC.

Relationships with alumni have been

strengthened by the presence of students at alumni meetings. The students were able to provide thoughtful opinions as to various ways in which the school can be improved. Due to the Student Association's work in conjunction with the Placement Office, the deans are now in the process of organizing a mentoring program between alumni and students that should allow for a practical business understanding that will truly complement the theoretical business knowledge that Sy Syms students gain in their classes.

The 1997-1998 business journal should be completed over the next few weeks. It should prove to be a true testament to the value of the Sy Syms education. We're all very excited about this year's Sy Syms dinner, which took place on Monday May 4, in the Manhattan Grand Center Ballroom. The evening served as an excellent opportunity to spend time with our friends from school as well as to meet recruiters and other professionals in the business world.

It's been a great year, and the 1997-1998 Sy Syms School of Business Student Association, composed of myself, Jonathon Teitelbaum, Josh Klaven and Michael Gewirtz would like to thank you all for giving us the opportunity to do our best to enhance our school.



MESSAGE FROM THE SOY PRESIDENT MENACHEM LUFTGLASS

In *Parshas Metzora*, during the description of the *metzora's* purification process, the Torah instructs the *Kohen* to take from the blood of the *korban* and place it successively on the ear, the hand, and the foot of the *metzora*. For what reason did the Torah single out these three organs for this specific task of purification? We know that the ear is the organ of hearing - the organ of entrance to the inner self of man. It is the subject of *Shema Yisroel*, of "*v'haya im shamo*," and similarly of reward and punishment - "*v'haya eikev tishme'un*." The *Midrash Rabbah* compares the purification process of the *metzora* to the healing of a wounded man. Once he puts salve on his wound, the entire body is healed. Similarly, for someone whose soul is ill, listening to the words of Torah [i.e. putting salve on his ear] heals the entire soul.

Just as the ear serves as the entranceway to man's inner self, so do the hands and feet serve as the outlet - the means through which his will is put into action. In terms of accomplishing ideas and actions, man's will finds expression principally through the movements of his hands and feet. Thus we see that all of man's spiritual and material activities are determined by these three limbs: the ears, hands and feet. Therefore, when one comes to be purified, as in the case of the *metzora*, or sanctified, as in the case of *Aaron HaKohen* and his sons during the inauguration of the *mishkan*, the Torah focuses on these parts of the body.

The Yeshiva experience is supposed to be one of both purification and sanctification. The Yeshiva is meant to be an oasis of spirituality amidst what at times may look like a barren wasteland of hedonism surrounding us. Thus it is the task of the Yeshiva to nurture us, secure us, and cultivate in us the necessary tools for continued growth and sanctification in our future.

Our Yeshiva, because of its complex demographic composition and its inherent competitive forces vying for every minute of our time, necessitates an extra infusion of spirituality, another means of sanctification.

This is the task of the Student Organization of Yeshiva. This year's SOY, as the Yeshiva's student organization, regards as its mandate a mission that inherently and continually promotes *harbatzas haTorah* and *achdus*. Therefore, this year we have instituted additional elements to our Torah environment in the fervent hope that they will buttress the future of our Torah institution. We began an ever-popular Tuesday night *hashkafa* shiur with R' Mayer Twersky and instituted a *Daf Yomi* shiur that began the eleventh cycle of the *Daf Yomi* this past Elul. This inaugural *Daf Yomi* shiur coincided with our subsidized and organized attendance, and thereby our Yeshiva's participation, in the 10th *Siyum HaShas* celebration. Over 250

talmidim attended what amounted to be one of the greatest events of *Kiddush Hashem* in recent memory. Our inclusion as a Yeshiva among the throngs of other *Bnei Torah* resulted in a feeling of collective inclusion with the vast Torah community, neglecting all labels and divisions in this exhibition of *kavod haTorah*.

Besides the ever popular weekly SOY *Sichos Mussar* series, we successfully organized a series of pre-Yom Tov shiurim, including a pre-Chanukkah Lecture by Rav Aaron Kahn, a three part pre-Pesach shiur series featuring R' Schachter, R' Sacks, and R' Rosensweig, as well as other successful shiurim.

But SOY's mission is not only to sanctify our Yeshiva through entering the inner self by means of words of Torah - by placing the blood on the ear of the *metzora*, our mission is also to attempt to meet the needs of the *Bnei HaYeshiva* in order to ease the hassles of everyday Yeshiva life and to simultaneously connect our talmidim to the glorious heritage that they inherit upon them entering our hallowed *Beis Medrash*.

We therefore held numerous events that combined both goals. At our beginning of the year *Seforim Sale*, which offered talmidim the opportunity to purchase those *seforim* they need for the upcoming *z'man* at substantially reduced prices, we distributed a complimentary copy of *Zichron HaRav* to incoming students. At the onset of the *Yomim Noraim*, we combined an *Arba Minim* and *Tzitzis* sale with the distribution of a biographical compendium of our former *Roshei Yeshiva* who are no longer with us. This was meant to imbue a sense of responsibility within our present-day talmidim as they gazed upon the faces that once disseminated Torah "*bein koslei HaYeshiva*." It is our responsibility to continue their efforts.

The work of the *Beis Medrash*, the "*ameilus*," and the Torah learned therein can be best appreciated by the outside world through action - expression through the movements and the accomplishments of the hands and feet. This year, SOY began several projects that attempt to forge tangible and meaningful links with our surrounding Jewish community. SOY began to sponsor a series of projects aiming at bringing our students to the forefront of *chesed* projects throughout the area. Although SOY has always been a tremendous supporter of such causes in the form of *tzedakah* contributions, this was the first time that such projects as *Bikur Cholim* for sick children came under the direct sponsorship and coordination of SOY. In an attempt to help our immediate community of Washington Heights, SOY donated a giant menorah to the Jewish Community Council of Washington Heights thus enabling our community to more greatly participate in the *mitzva* of *pirsumei nissa*.

But what more contribution to our



MESSAGE FROM THE YCSC PRESIDENT SRULL TANNENBAUM

When I was first asked to write a year in review I thought about all the different projects and events that YCSC had worked on. I soon realized, though, that if I had to name every event and forum that we sponsored through the year, then we didn't accomplish our goal.

YCSC is not an organization that needs to boast of its accomplishments; they are all around for everybody to see. Of course there are the big events like the Chanukah Concert and the Super Bowl Party which everyone knows are YCSC events. Practically every week however, there are club events, lectures and outings sponsored by YCSC. Our purpose is to make sure that the quality of life for the students on the Main Campus is above par. Whether through class events, such as Chicago City Limits and The Diary of Anne Frank or club events like the Ping Pong Tournament, YCSC is there to help. We have worked hard with the Office of Student Services and other administrative offices to better campus life within existing structures. This year's newly refurbished weight room and the spring semester's improved registration are just some of the noticeable outcomes. Of course nobody can forget what an important role "Dougie's" played in YCSC's year. Whether it was for the Final Four Party in Weissberg, a floor party during the year, or for a break during finals, there were always plenty of wings to go around.

We haven't been perfect, and I'll be the first to admit to that. There have been projects which we planned on finishing this year but were unable to. WYUR and Morg Mart are two projects which, thanks to the effort and work put in this year, are closer to opening on a more permanent basis. This year was one of innovation, in which events like the Orientation boat ride, paintball outing, and X/S-Virtual Reality were welcome additions to the YCSC repertoire. All in all I'd say that this has been a very exciting year for YCSC, due to the hard work of a lot of people.

students, alumni and the entire Jewish community can we offer than the Annual SOY *Seforim Sale*. This year's sale, the most successful to date, attracted close to 10,000 visitors to our campus. The Sale's tremendous success was a result of the tireless efforts of our *Seforim Sale* Committee and its Chairman, vice-president Josh Muskat (*Mazal Tov!*).

While twice during the year we gave our talmidim the opportunity to gorge themselves on *seforim*, we also made sure to give them the chance to gorge themselves on *gashmius* as well. This year, our Chanukkah and Purim Chagigas attracted many from outside our Yeshiva and featured a traditionally popular University delectable delight. While *Mishmar* featured late night sustenance, our Rosh Chodesh program provided our students with the most important meal of the day. Similarly, our many SOY-sponsored Shabbatonim provided all the day's meals as well as intellectually stimulating hot-cholent tishes.

SOY's initiatives were not limited to food alone.

Our multiple publications made their way throughout the global community on-paper and on-line. On the occasion of the anticipated 30th annual publication of our *Beis Yitzchak*, a thorough index of the past 29 issues made it to hardcover. Our weekly publication, *Enayim L'Torah*, surpassed previous readership with its marvelous web site and booming e-mail subscriptions, thanks to its Editor-in-Chiefs, Shelly Stohl and Menachem Schechter. Other SOY publications included the occasional *Hamevaser*, the up-and-coming *Bein Koslei HaYeshiva*, and the RIETS Guide.

Finally, the revamping and restocking of the *seforim* in our several *Battei Medrash*, a project that we began last summer, is on the verge of completion. With the help of Facilities Management we hope to

provide a coat and locker room for the main *Beis Medrash*, thereby allowing for much needed space for *seforim*.

None of these activities could have come to fruition without the inspiring effervescence of Ephraim Shapiro and the precise accounting of Daniel Kaminetsky. Their constant twenty-four hour support made my job all the more interesting.

All our activities, spiritual and material, comprised the bulk of one exceptional year. It is my hope that future SOY administrations will continue SOY's mandate of providing a true Torah atmosphere both inside and outside the walls of the *Beis Medrash*.

**Congratulations
to all Graduating
Seniors on their
Successful
Completion
of the
Requirements
Set Forth for a
Degree from
Yeshiva
University**

YESHIVA COLLEGE CAMPUS NEWS

YUPR HAGGLES WITH SOY'S ENAYIM L'TORAH OVER WEB PAGE

WEEKLY TORAH SHEET MAY MOVE TO INDEPENDENT



Wildman received a small response. "It is true that unauthorized electronic publication of this journal but with certain provisos with which you are no longer in compliance."

Rosen went on to explain that his objection was twofold. First, a fundraising subscription appeal appears on the page in violation of University rules. Secondly, the presence of a banner which reads "A publication of the Student Organization of Yeshiva" appears across the top of the page. University rules state that no student publications are allowed on the university site.

BY JESSE WENDLSON

Enayim L'Torah, the student Organization of Yeshiva's compilation of *divrei Torah* on the weekly bible portion, is in danger of being removed from Yeshiva University's World Wide Web site by the Department of Public Relations.

Yeshiva University Public Relations, the overseer of the University site, recently engaged in a round of correspondence with *Enayim* webmaster Tom Wildman. Although *Enayim L'Torah* has been on the site for over three years, the University alerted Wildman that the publication's new design created by student Azriel Shels and put into use at the beginning of this school year, had three minor problems that had to be changed in order to prevent YUPR from pulling it from the University site. This move has caused Wildman and the *Enayim L'Torah* staff to seriously consider moving their site to the Yeshiva University Computer Society server which is independent of the University's.

The correspondence began when Tom Deering, an MIS employee currently on loan to the Public Relations department sent an e-mail to Wildman on Wednesday, April 29, stating that he needed to know "who authorizes the *Enayim* site]. All YU pages must be authorized by a faculty member or administrator...I need this information in the next few days, or I will remove these pages from our website."

At that point, Wildman called Deering and explained to him that George Sullivan, another MIS employee, had allowed him to put up anything on the site. Deering answered that students have no right to put anything on the University site, but allowed this academic year's final issue of *Enayim* to go up as a courtesy to Wildman.

Wildman investigated the history of *Enayim* on the web and found that it had originally been given the approval of Rabbi Hirt and Rabbi Charlop. With this faculty authorization, David Rosen, head of the YUPR, allowed *Enayim's* placement on the web.

Upon querying David Rosen for the reason why *Enayim's* appearance on the web has suddenly become a problem,

Ephraim Shapiro, SOY secretary and supervisor of SOY publications, responded to this rule saying, "These protocols and rules have mainly caused students to distance themselves from the school. Almost every university not only furnishes the student publications with links from the main page, but also affords their students the ability to create their own website. Here everyone must find independent means including official publications such as *Enayim*."

Eventually, Rosen, Deering, and Wildman came to an agreement as to what changes must be made to the *Enayim* site. According to an e-mail that Rosen sent to Wildman, the changes are as follows: 1) "Masthead should state this publication of Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary and YU seal should be removed or replaced with RITG seal." 2) "Remove meeting band at top of first page that advertises subscriptions and donations." 3) "Remove all references to donations or providing financial support for the publication. Reference may be made to the availability of free subscriptions."

Wildman made the suggested changes and thought the affair had come to a close. But then Tom Deering sent him an email that stated, "I am removing the links to SOY on the *Enayim* pages as we discuss." According to Wildman, however, he never discussed anything about that.

Deering also explained that next year it is likely that each page will need authorization on a weekly basis by a faculty member or department head, and information on the University server will have to be uploaded from a University machine, i.e. a computer connected to the University network.

When these new provisions came to light, Wildman along with Shapiro and others, began to seriously consider the possibility of moving *Enayim* to their independent student server. Although it was recognized that moving the page without warning might inconvenience some people, SOY leaders judged that the bureaucratic red tape they were likely to face next year justified considering a move. Wildman said that *Enayim* would probably be moved sometime in the summer or early fall.



SOY presidential candidates Michael Gewirtz (left) and Chaim Hirschander (right)

SOY EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTIONS HELD

Gewirtz to Serve as President of Newly Modified Board

BY CHAIM HIRSCHANDER

On Wednesday, April 29, elections for the 1998-1999 Student Organization of Yeshiva Executive Board were held. The positions which were filled included that of the president, vice president, vice president for business affairs, secretary, and treasurer. The elections capped a week of fervent campaigning by the candidates. The polling station in the lounge of the Morgenstern Residence Hall opened at 12:00 PM to a lunch time flood of voters. SOY, which represents all students in the Mazer Yeshiva Program as well as the Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (ITC) including the *shikha* program, is the second largest student organization at Yeshiva University. Votes were accepted until 5:00 PM.

The most heated of the races was that for the office of the president. By the end of the day, Michael Gewirtz had emerged as the new SOY president after defeating his opponent, Michael Erdfarb. Gewirtz will succeed Menachem Luvglass as the new SOY president. Gewirtz was pleased with his victory and wished to "thank everyone who voted for me." He emphasized that "in cooperation with the rest of the Board, we do our best to make next year a productive one in the ongoing improvement of the Yeshiva. We are really looking forward to serving the Yeshiva students' interests." In addition, Gewirtz disclosed the fact that plans are already being made to improve the *Shikha* program by reorganizing and adding sections for the fall

semester. The position of the vice president, formerly held by a single officer, has this year been divided into two separate offices in order to lessen the pressure on both the president and the vice president. The primary responsibility of the holder of this office will be to assist the president in running the organization's general affairs. Four candidates sought this office and the victor, Mark Weissman, will be the first student to hold this position.

The other vice presidential office is vice president for business affairs. The major task facing the holder of this office is running the *sporim* sale, SOY's most ambitious annual endeavor. There was less student interest in this office. In the end, Chaim Boike ran unopposed, and won this position.

The office which was most highly sought after was that of the secretary. Six candidates vied for this position. Eliezer Schnap, specifically targeted the oft forgotten *semicha* constituency to defeat his five opponents.

Aviav Goldwicht will round out the 1998-1999 SOY Executive Board as treasurer.

Head of the SOY Canvassing Committee Dov Greenbaum commented, "Even though there were many candidates, I believe everything went smoothly. I was very pleased with the turnout of the student body and I am sure that next year's Board will do an excellent job."

THE COMMENTATOR congratulates
this year's valedictorians:

Yossi Ziffer

Yeshiva College

and

Seth Poloner

Sy Syms School of Business

Rav Lamm Announces Appointment of Talmud Instructors

Rabbis Adler, Wieder, and Berman to Begin Duties in Fall of 1998

BY AARON KLEIN

Three rabbis have received appointments from University President and *Rosh HaYeshiva* Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm to teach, beginning with the fall semester of 1998. Rabbi Ari Berman will join the faculty of Stone Beit Midrash Program as a Talmud instructor. Rabbi Jeremy Wieder and Rabbi Elchanan Adler will teach Talmud for the Mazer Yeshiva Program.

Rabbi Berman graduated magna cum laude from Yeshiva College and went on to earn a master's degree in Jewish Philosophy from Yeshiva University's Bernard Revel Graduate School. He is currently a fellow of the Caroline and Joseph S. Gruss Kollel Elyon, the prestigious institute of advanced rabbinical studies at the rabbinic seminary from which he received his ordination, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS). Rabbi Berman is also the assistant rabbi at the Jewish Center in New York City. He is the recipient of awards for excellence in Talmudic studies and philosophy and is also the editor and founder of *Shem v'Yefhet*, YU's journal of philosophy. Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, who announced Rabbi Berman's appointment, said, "Rabbi Berman is a rising star in the firmament of Talmudic scholars and rabbis. His talents are enhanced by an attractive personality and a sterling character, and we, therefore, are delighted with this appointment."

Rabbi Adler, appointed MYP *Rosh Yeshiva*, has been affiliated with YU for ten years—first as a fellow of the Gruss Kollel

Elyon, and more recently in the capacity of *Sho'el U'Meishiv/S'gan Mashgi'ach* (mentor/counselor to students). He has also served as adjunct instructor of Talmud in the Isaac Breuer College and has substituted for various *Roshei Yeshiva* in RIETS. Before joining YU, Rabbi Adler, well regarded as a Talmudic scholar, studied for years at Yeshivat Beth Joseph, Novhardok, the Mirrer Yeshiva, and Mesivta Tiferes Jerusalem where he received his rabbinic ordination. As part of the Gruss Kollel Elyon's lecture series, Rabbi Adler has spoken in communities across the country on diverse topics within Jewish thought.

Rabbi Jeremy Wieder will also serve as a *Rosh Yeshiva* in MYP. Since receiving rabbinic ordination at RIETS in 1994, Wieder has been an instructor of Bible at Yeshiva College and has held the post of counselor and mentor to the students of the MYP. A doctoral candidate in Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University, Rabbi Wieder received a master's degree in American Jewish History from BRGS and a bachelor's degree summa cum laude from YC in 1991. "The breadth of Rabbi Wieder's knowledge in Talmud and his powers of analysis greatly belie his young years. He gives promise to grow to the challenge of greatness of learning which has been the constant hallmark of Yeshiva University," emphasized Rabbi Zevulun Charlop, Dean of MYP.

All three rabbis will assume responsibilities as *maggidei shiur* in the fall semester.

Joint Cardozo and YC/SCW Program

Continued from page 1

ate college and the law school.

Acceptance into this program is contingent upon superior academic performance as evidenced by an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.3 and superior LSAT results, with a minimum of 160 (84th percentile) suggested. Students would be expected to take the LSAT by February of their junior year. Anyone accepted into the program without LSAT results would be required to take the test no later than October of their senior year. Students who achieved superior grades in the summer session might be allowed to continue even if their LSATs fall below 160.

Applicants for this program are first reviewed by Dean Hecht. If they receive his recommendation, they are then considered for admission by a committee at Cardozo Law School. Hecht emphasized that he does not have the final say in the admissions process and can be outvoted by the Cardozo committee. However, his approval of an applicant is extremely influential.

The tuition for the program is still undetermined but will probably be the regular cost of taking courses at Cardozo. Financial aid is available. Dean Hecht remarked that "Dr. Lamm has raised substantial funds for YU graduates continuing on to Cardozo...Clearly the students in this program will be strong candidates for these funds."

Many consider employment during the second summer of law school to be critical because those students are later favored by hiring law firms. Students in the joint program have this summer open, so they can obtain summer employment and fairly compete with other law students for jobs after gradu-

ating.

Other universities have a dual admissions program in law in which the students attend two years of undergraduate studies and then go on to law school without completing their bachelors degree. Dean Hecht believes that Yeshiva joint program, believed to be unique among American universities, is superior to other programs because the student's undergraduate years are not sacrificed. Hecht said "the years a student spends at Yeshiva University are invaluable...This program saves a year of law school but does not affect the time spent at YU."

Starting salaries at many law firms are estimated at \$80,000 and higher. The year of law school that is saved is therefore financially advantageous to the graduating law student.

One concern that students may have is that courses taken through this program are only transferable to Cardozo. If a student later opts to attend another law school, he will not be accepted with advanced standing. Pre-Law students aware of this program, however, are very excited about the new option. Jake Weintraub, a Pre-Law YC/BMP Sophomore said, "This new law program is an inspiration and motivation to students who want to attend law school...I think it's an excellent opportunity."

Hecht asserted that Cardozo's summer school is among the best in the country because unlike other universities, summer classes at Cardozo are taught by full time faculty. Hecht is very excited about this new program and calls it a "Win, win situation. Win for the students, win for YC, and win for Cardozo."

Galileo Project Continues with Berger Lecture

Talk Features Jewish Attitude Towards Natural Sciences

BY JOSHUA LANDA

On Tuesday, April 21, the latest of the Galileo Project lectures was held. The title of the talk which featured Dr. David Berger, Visiting Professor of Jewish History at the Bernard Revel Graduate School, was "The Jewish Attitude Towards the Natural Sciences: From the Middle Ages Through the Scientific Revolution."

The lecture, prefaced by a dinner of coldcuts and fruit, was well attended with Furst 501 was at near capacity. All in attendance were eager to hear what Dr. Berger had to say in this follow-up speech to previous lectures such as "Galileo Galilei, Man of the Millennium" and "The Jewish Response to the Copernican System Reconsidered."

The keynote speaker was introduced by Rabbi Shalom Carmy, who described Dr. Berger as a man "who, in addition to being a man who's integrity I respect, also seemed to be more of a role model... who has a sense of humor and a knows a lot about baseball and basketball."

Dr. Berger opened with an allusion to his interest in sports and then proceeded to discuss the Jewish attitudes towards science in the Middle Ages. While he maintained that many foreign philosophies were conceivably harmful to religious individuals because they were superfluous and possibly heretical, he emphasized that natural science was considered neither at the time. Most Ashkenazic Jews had no inhibitions with regard to the study of science. Dr. Berger described their approach as "acutely curious and unselfconsciously pursuing."

In the Sephardic orbit, however, a few apprehensions existed among scholars. This was mainly because natural science in their area of the world was often a part of a general preparatory study which also included more controversial disciplines such as math, rhetoric, and music. The connection between science and philosophy made it religiously significant.

Moving on to the Renaissance and Scientific Revolution, the lecturer explained how the weakening nexus between philosophy and science permit-

ted religious people to study in a manner which was quite detached from philosophy. After introducing the heliocentric theory adopted by Copernicus, Dr. Berger shocked his audience by asking a surprisingly simple question that Norman Adler, Dean of Yeshiva College, later described as so elementary that it required a "a simple minded genius with a deep knowledge and brilliance" to answer. The question posed by Dr. Berger was "Does any-



one know where the Bible contradicts the Copernican system?" The relatively intellectual audience was left searching for answers until one student quoted from the Book of Joshua saying "sun, stand still upon Giv'on."

While Dr. Berger admitted that in the eighteenth century the Scientific Revolution led to skepticism and Deism, he maintained that these philosophies did not significantly penetrate most Jewish communities. He attributed this relative

safety to the fact that most Jews of the time lived in Eastern Europe and were therefore removed from the hubs of scientific progress.

Prior to the conclusion of his speech, Dr. Berger broached some new halachik issues that have arisen from scientific advances. He mentioned that some preexisting beliefs might have to be reconsidered in the light of recent scientific discoveries, such as the permissibility of killing worms previously thought to have arisen via abiogenesis on Shabbat.

Dr. Berger seemed to take a favorable view with regard to the study of secular science and cited a Rambam that permits such study even outside of traditional religious texts. He did, however, also quote a lesser known opinion of the Rashba who placed a *cherem* (excommunication) on scientific study by anyone under the age of twenty-five. He noted that this was obviously not the policy at YU.

Jeff Bander, a YC Junior in attendance, commented that "It's always nice to have the opportunity to learn from scholars such as Dr. Berger and those who allow us to increase our awareness of the history and policies of our people."

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RABBI CHAIM BROVENDER ADDRESSES YC STUDENTS ON FEMINISM AND ORTHODOXY

BY MAURY GREBENAU

After a brief introduction by Rabbi Yosef Blau, Rabbi Chaim Brovender delivered a presentation entitled "Feminism and Orthodoxy" to an audience of some fifty YC students on the evening of Monday April 27.

Rabbi Brovender began by endeavoring to define Orthodox Judaism. He decried the misconception that there are in fact different types of Orthodoxy. According to Rabbi Brovender, the term "Modern Orthodoxy" implies that there is also a "retarded" type of Orthodoxy. He explained the fallacy of a "modern" type of Orthodoxy by challenging those present to try and pick out individuals in Jewish history who were "Modern."

Rabbi Brovender explained that although some individuals during the course of Jewish history have done things that "in the strictest sense of the word, weren't *Talmud Torah*," this perceived modernity was in reality accidental. "The modernity is kind of accidental...the real essence of all these people is their tie to Judaism," he explained. Even those who had a measure of dedication to Science, such as the Chazon Ish, had a dedication to Torah that was incomparably greater.

Rabbi Brovender then described the type of individual that one should look to for *halakhic* leadership. "As a general rule...go to people who practice *Talmud Torah* the best...those who are the *Roshei Yeshiva*, the *Rabbonim*," those who are well known as special, and learn "all the time."

About halfway through his remarks, Rabbi Brovender finally breached the topic of feminism. Women are obligated to fulfill less *mitzvot* than men, he explained, citing Rav Moshe Feinstein, as a result of a *Halacha L'Moshe MeSinai* which we do not understand. Rabbi Brovender cited a passage from the *Rambam* that put men and women on different levels in regards to the *mitzva* of *Talmud Torah* as a result of a man's obligation. He said that the *Rambam* "doesn't seem to mean that the best woman is under (obtains less reward than) the biggest jerk in

the Yeshiva."

Rabbi Brovender's explanation of the *Rambam* was not readily accepted, and after it came under fire from a couple of students, he admitted that it was only a possible explanation. Rabbi Brovender then explained that women have demonstrated a spiritual strength by accepting *mitzvot* upon themselves that they were formerly not obligated in, such as *Shofar* and *Sukkah*. Rabbinic authorities seem willing to accept these additional obligations.

In summation, Rabbi Brovender said, "Once the gates of Torah are open to women, I don't believe that one can argue that there is a spiritual lacking...passed on to them from their great grandmothers." He explained that the perceived hierarchical system of Judaism is simply a categorization with no implied restrictions within the study of *Torah* itself. Rabbinic authorities, he explained, have limited objection to women learning.

Rabbi Brovender ended with a short discussion of women's prayer groups. He mentioned that it is important to note that the *Gedolim* are against such institutions. However, he also mentioned that it would be a shame for women to battle against the rabbinic authorities regarding this matter. The essence of prayer is intent, he explained, and there should not be such battles over, "what seems to me to be quite incidental."

Rabbi Brovender's talk was met with mixed reaction. Most seemed to feel that Rabbi Brovender spoke well, but there were certain complaints. Shlomo Hubscher, a YC Sophomore, believed that Rabbi Brovender, "spoke very well on Orthodoxy, but he seemed to avoid the issue that most YU guys came to hear."

"I didn't know what to expect," said YC Sophomore and devoted feminist Chaim Wolf, "but I wasn't shocked by anything Rabbi Brovender said." Whether, Rabbi Brovender was slightly evasive or slightly bland, the general consensus of the YU students present was that Rabbi Brovender's viewpoint was well presented.

Master Keys Threaten Security

Continued from page 1

that it certainly is a new discovery. Mr. Sommers, when informed by *The Commentator* of these recent findings, reacted with astonishment and subsequently told his men to "get on this immediately."

Mr. Sommers emphasized that the Department of Facilities Management, not the Department of Safety and Security, is responsible for assigning keys to students and is fully accountable for matters concerning campus locks and keys. Repeated efforts to interview Facilities Management officials were denied.

Given the severity of the situation, Sommers emphasized that the Department of Safety and Security is doing all it can and expressed a commitment to quickly rectifying the situation. He emphasized that "due to the fact that laboratories containing hazardous materials are involved, this is a very dangerous situation and a serious security issue. The last thing we want to see is students getting hurt."

According to Sommers, it is likely that a few master keys were given out by mistake to these students. Had it not been for their professor's anecdote, though, the

students most probably would never have found out the "scope" of their keys usage.

The Commentator has also learned that a Macintosh laptop computer was stolen this week from the Belfer Hall office of Dr. Wayne F.K. Schnatter, Assistant Professor of Chemistry. When asked if this theft could possibly be related to the fact that dormitory closet keys have been working in Belfer Hall, Sommers replied, "there might very well be a connection. However, we won't know until we get to the bottom of this."

Meanwhile, until he does get to the bottom of this issue, Sommers has threatened to heighten Belfer Hall security measures. Options he is considering include completely shutting down the building at night. This prospect alarmed many of the students interviewed as they had intended to use the Belfer Hall academic computing centers to complete course work during reading week and finals.

One thing is for certain, though: The Department of Facilities Management will be under pressure to more carefully monitor the distribution of keys to students early next semester.

Rabbi Rosensweig Speaks on the Interaction of Halakha and Society

BY CHAIM STRAUHLER

On Monday April 27, RIETS *Rosh Yeshiva* Rabbi Michael Rosensweig addressed a crowd of over 50 YC and SCW students on the topic of "The Interaction of Halacha and Social Reality: Implications and Applications" in the Rubin Shul. The lecture was part of the Spring 1998 *Torah u'Madda* Lecture Series.

Rabbi Rosensweig discussed how law shapes society and how society influences law. He contrasted secular law's potential for external adjustment with the immutability of Divine law. Rabbi Rosensweig described Halakha's centrality to Jewish society based on the fact that Torah knowledge and performance have defined Judaism through the ages. According to Rabbi Rosensweig, a Jew can approach God only through the acceptance of the revelation at Sinai and the obligations that it entails. In his view, in engaging social reality, the Jew must view the world from the prism of *Halakha*, and not allow soci-

ety to define his relationship to the Torah.

Rabbi Rosensweig asserted that the challenges modern social reality create can serve as a means for religious growth. He explained that religious greatness does not arise "in spite" of external pressure but "because" of that pressure.

In addressing societal influence on *p'sak*, or normative rabbinic interpretation, Rabbi Rosensweig suggested that society could give rise to a reevaluation of *Torah* issues but that final decisions would always be decided by considerations internal to *Halakha*.

Rabbi Rosensweig had delivered this lecture earlier at the Orthodox Forum. Joshua Cypess, the organizer of the *Torah U-Madda* lecture series, asked Rabbi Rosensweig to deliver the lecture to the wider student body of Yeshiva. Cypess was pleased with the turnout and the questions students raised after the lecture. The lecture will be printed in the forthcoming publication of the Orthodox Forum.

Yom Hazikaron/Yom Ha'atzmaut Event Well Attended

Continued from page 1

United States, gave a quick, dramatic speech that summed up the recent history of the Jewish people in the state of Israel and our obligations as American Jews to Israel. He spoke about the "personal commitment to Israel to ensure the unbreakable link between Jews in the Diaspora and Israel". The Consul also praised the University, noting that "in 1991, when many left Israel, we saw many Yeshiva University students stay." The speech climaxed as he described the current situation in Israel as a time when "we Jews stand proudly, on our own two feet... when the swamps have been dried and the Hebrew language has been reborn, and the Kingdom of David has come alive."

The final speaker was Rabbi Goldwicht, *Rosh Yeshiva* and *Maggid Shiur* in JSS, BMP, and MYP. He explained the significance of the *Karbon Ha'omer* and *Sefirat Ha'omer*. He also discussed the importance of realizing that G-d has given us everything, from the simple meal of the *Karbon Ha'omer* to the great State of Israel. Jeff Kohn, a YC junior, reflected the sentiment of many students when he remarked, "Rav Goldwicht's speech was excellent."

Next on the agenda was a *Ma'ariv* that lasted nearly an hour. The prayer service followed the custom in Israel and included a wide variety of additions to the traditional liturgy including excerpts from Psalms, the *Ani Ma'amin* and a *Shir Hama'alos* sung to the tune of the *Hatikva*. The shofar, or ritual ram's horn, was blown, marking the end of the Day of Remembrance.

An enthusiastic display of dancing ushered in Yom Ha'atzmaut, sharply interrupting the seriousness that preceded it. Belfer Commons was filled with a celebratory feeling. The *chagiga* included students from both Stern and Yeshiva Colleges separately circling around several Israeli flags in dance.

Ending it off was a rare sight on Yeshiva campus. At around eleven, a small group of students gathered around a guitar to sing songs in praise of their homeland. Within an hour, the group grew to about a hundred-and-fifty participants, including five guitars, five bongo drums, two saxophones, two harmonicas and a recorder. Although the large group was eventually interrupted by security, their cry was heard - and signaled that the affair had served its purpose.

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THE COMMENTATOR
wishes a Hearty Mazal Tov
to Captain Jose Morales
on his recent engagement

Arluck Dismissed Without Warning

Continued from page 1

eligible for reappointment, they are usually made aware of their status prior to the conclusion of their current contract. Dr. Arluck, however, learned of his fate through an indirect and embarrassing source. A student approached him with the coursebook for the Fall 1998 semester and asked Dr. Arluck why he was not listed as the instructor for any courses. The professor soon confirmed his impending unemployment.

According to faculty sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, failure to rehire the instructor and notify him of this decision has left Dr. Arluck without a way to sufficiently support himself for the upcoming year. Academic positions in the New York City area are difficult to obtain and it is unlikely that Arluck will be able to find a new post for next semester at this late date.

Dr. Arluck, who is still in contact with the administration at Yeshiva University, declined to comment on the situation.

Much confusion surrounds the details of the discontinuation of Dr. Arluck's contract. Although *The Commentator* was unable to ascertain the exact procedure by which an instructor is evaluated, it is apparent that Professor Arluck was the subject of intense student dissatisfaction. Student opinion on the matter suggests that the instructor's tendency to give out a disproportionate amount of low grades figured prominently in the malcontent of his pupils.

Some students, however, believed that Dr. Arluck was difficult but fair and treated students based on quality of performance.

Norman Adler, Dean of YC, explained that it would be inappropriate for him to comment on the record of any individual student or faculty member.

Among the University's faculty members, there is discontent with the way the current system deals with faculty evalu-

ation and dismissal. There are various associations which maintain guidelines for the treatment of faculty within academic institutions. However, their standards are not binding.

Dr. Joan Haahr, who is the president of the Yeshiva University chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), explained that the practices followed by YU do not comport with the requirements of her organization. The AAUP requires that faculty members receive notice of nonreappointment no later than December 15. According to the Yeshiva University Undergraduate Faculty Handbook, there is no requirement to notify faculty of their status. This was apparently the procedure followed in Dr. Arluck's dismissal.

Additionally, no system of appeal is in place at YU. Therefore, dismissed faculty members such as Dr. Arluck have no recourse against the administrative axe. This too is in violation of AAUP regulations. For these as well as other infractions relevant to faculty treatment, YU has been on AAUP's list of censured institutions since 1982.

Dr. Haahr, who has been fighting to have YU removed from that infamous list, claimed that nearly one-hundred percent of the nation's universities adhere to the standards set by the AAUP. She also referred to the treatment of faculty as it occurred in the case of Dr. Arluck as a "severe violation of propriety."

However, Dean Adler emphasized that the "AAUP is only one organization and [YC] is not a member." He concluded that "we were lucky to have Dr. Arluck with us for a number of years and hope that he will continue his association with Yeshiva College."

The nature of Adler's hopes for association, however, remain unclear in light of his failure to reappoint Dr. Arluck.

Feit Delivers Lecture on the Prospects for an AIDS Vaccine

BY AARON KLEIN

On Wednesday April 22, Dr. Carl Feit, YC Professor of Biology, delivered a lecture entitled "AIDS: The Prospects for a Vaccine" as part of the Spring 1998 Academic Colloquia Series. Dr. Feit explained the way in which the HIV virus infects the immune system and then pointed out the major difficulties confronting the creation of a vaccine that could provide complete resistance to the virus.

When HIV is introduced into the bloodstream, it circulates throughout the body but only attaches to CD4+ T cells. CD4+ T cells are integral to warding off infections and assuring proper immune system response. The virus gains entry by using a protein that fits into the T cell surface which works as a key to enter the T cell. Once inside, the HIV particle deposits its genetic material and later inserts it into the T cell's chromosomes. The virus then takes over the host cell, directing it to produce many copies of itself. These copies of the HIV virus are then introduced into the bloodstream where they infect other immune system cells, multiplying throughout the body.

There is a strong possibility that mutations will occur within the HIV

virus, therefore many strains of the virus exist. This makes it extremely difficult to inoculate a patient with a weak HIV strain, because it is not certain which strain the individual is infected with. Many vaccines that have been developed for other diseases such as small pox and polio, were synthesized by first studying patients who were infected with the disease and then for some reason survived and warded off the infection. To date, no individual who has contracted AIDS has fought off the virus completely, so it is hard to isolate a natural mechanism capable of destroying the HIV virus.

There is, however, an extremely small group of individuals who have contracted HIV and have not developed full blown AIDS after long periods of time. There are also rare cases of individuals who for an unexplained reason may not be able to contract HIV altogether. Scientists are aggressively studying these individuals and they are hopeful that one day a successful vaccine will be developed, ending the epidemic that has been responsible for millions of deaths worldwide. Dr. Feit, who was involved at the periphery of HIV research since the discovery of the virus, says he too "sees the glass as half full."

For Arguments Sake: YU Hosts First Debate Tournament

BY DAVID MIRSKY

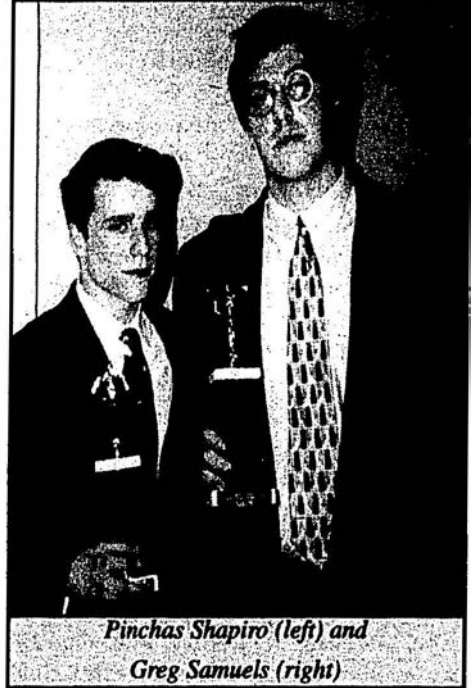
Rapidly gaining status as one of the most active clubs in YU, the Yeshiva University Debate Society (known as YUDS) hosted its first on campus debate tourney on Sunday, March 29. The debate society chose the Stern campus as the venue for the 11:00 am-7:00 p.m. event. Participating in the event were SUNY Binghamton, SUNY Morrisville, Rockland Community College, Queens College, and YU.

The participating universities are all part of a relatively new debate format called the Public Forum Debate League (PFDL). The league purports to provide an "audience centered intercollegiate debate league devoted to making debate accessible to as many college students as possible." Included in this format are Impromptu, Limited Research, and Team Limited Research Debate. The March 29 tournament included both Impromptu and Team Limited Research debate rounds.

The Impromptu format prohibits the use of any researched evidence during the switch side debate. Common knowledge, however, may be used to support debaters' arguments. Each side is given a mere five minutes at the beginning of each round to contemplate a never before seen scenario. The new Team Limited Research Debate format provides debaters with evidenced research, in the form of e-mail packets, and a general idea as to the subject of the resolution, two weeks in advance of the tournament. Contestants are divided into two-on-two teams that may use common knowledge, in addition to the provided evidence, to back up their arguments. However, no outside research is allowed.

On the day of the tournament, the resolution proposing "that the United States of America should legalize the sale and usage of marijuana for medicinal purposes" was revealed to Limited Research debaters. Consulting the evidence that debaters had pored over two weeks prior to the tournament, participants collected their thoughts and prepared to argue both for and against the proposed resolution.

Continuing the success that YU debaters have enjoyed over the last few tournaments, YUDS took home seven of the nine tournament trophies. The placing teams were Pinchas Shapiro and Greg Samuels in second, and Matityahu Balas and Jesse Mendelson in third place overall in the Team Limited Research debating division. YU captured all the Speaker



Pinchas Shapiro (left) and Greg Samuels (right)

Awards, with Pinchas Shapiro, Greg Samuels, and Jesse Mendelson respectively taking first, second, and third place. YU debaters Shaya Shtern and Adam Weider claimed second and third place respectively in the Impromptu Division.

Executive Officer Elan Weinreb expressed his gratitude to "everyone-administrators, competitors, faculty, tournament staff, and judges," in what he deemed an "enjoyable event."

Already a popular club, YUDS continues to grow with each tournament, welcoming anyone interested in improving their communication and persuasive speaking skills.

The club has benefited from continued support by the YU administration and the student councils, and has taken part in tournaments at schools such as Cornell, Queens, and NYU. With membership drawn mostly from the uptown campus, the club would like to see more Stern College participation. Weinreb says that the club would like to see the YC Speech and Communication department develop some type of forensic program or classes, as gauged by the strong student interest in this field.

With plans for a May 3rd tourney at Rockland, upcoming club elections, and increased training and events in the coming year, YUDS promises students a meaningful and intellectual activity that engages participants in inter-collegiate competition not found in YU prior to the club's formation. Weinreb hopes that "with Hashem's help, YUDS will host more tournaments like this one in the upcoming year and will continue to maintain its reputation of excellence."

THE COMMENTATOR
wishes to extend sincere
condolences to
Dr. Ruth Bevan
on the loss of her mother
and
Professor Perrie Nordlicht
on the loss of her husband

Reconstructing Honors at Yeshiva College

BY YEHUDA BURNS

Over the last two months, what has often turned into heated debates, has raged on with regards to YC's honors courses. While early accounts from students on currently offered courses vary, faculty, administration and students remain locked in debates over how to properly define an "honors-level" class. Stemming from Dean Adler's vision of Yeshiva College as a source of modern intellectual scholarship, the need for clearer guidelines has become more evident.

Dean Adler described his conception of what an honors program at YC might look like. He views a system in which there would not be an entirely separate "honors college" for selected students, rather an option for sufficiently motivated students to graduate with an honors degree. In order to attain this degree, a student would have to satisfy a more intensive curriculum involving several key factors. Aside from choosing a core number of courses from the "honors" selection, there would be independent research and opportunities for summer internships available to those taking the honors track. These opportunities would be geared towards developing "training in critical thinking" as well as proficient writing skills. Additionally, a central aspect of the program would be the requirement of a senior thesis.

Before any such program could be put into place, the more pressing issue of how to define an honors course must be addressed. To this end, the YC Curriculum Committee has served as a vehicle for facilitating faculty discussion on the issue. Discussions now center on current and proposed honors offerings, and focus on what sets them apart as "honors". Many criteria have been proposed to discriminate "honors" courses from their non-honors counterparts, including an intensive writing component, a greater sophistication and range in material and, as termed by English professor Dr. Joanne Jacobson, the "expectation of a greater degree of intellectual initiative on the part of students."

A proposal from the Honors Committee Task Force on Honors Courses, dated March 9, set forth three options to receive "honors" credit. One option would require all students in a given course to do honors work; another would give honors credit to individuals who receive a citation for exceptional work in a course; and the third option, one which has engendered much debate, would allow students to "self-select to do more and better work" than the work possibly defined by any of three subtypes. This work may include a writing-intensive option requiring additional writing assignments, a more substantive term paper, a "fourth-hour" option that will meet for an additional hour beyond regular class time, or a supererogatory independent research project.

Stemming from these criteria is the question central to the "honors" debate: Should honors courses be taught on an honors level and limit admission to honor students, or should they be geared towards average students while allowing for the submission of additional honors-level work?

Professor Alan Brill is very firm in supporting an honors-only designation. "Good honors work is not quantifiable by extra pages read or written...the mode of instruction is crucial. The quality of honors is achieved by pushing students beyond their normal scope, horizon and abilities." In a memo to the committee, Professor Brill suggested that honors courses do more than merely "walking the students through the book," rather they should deal with the core questions of the field in study. Because critical thinking and independent application of

principles is the key, Brill suggests that rigorous standards be accepted in advance.

What this idea means in terms of courses themselves is simple—courses would be open only to those students taking them for honors credit. This way, all class discussions and assignments are expected to be of a higher degree of scholarship. As honors courses would be taught differently from non-honors courses, there would be no watering down of courses to maintain the success of those not inclined towards honors courses.

These arguments are the basis for the honors-only option, one that has been endorsed by student representatives to the committee. These students maintain that the purpose of developing an honors curriculum is to increase the level of scholarship among both students and faculty. To that end, if a course were geared specifically towards "honors" students then it would be more intellectually demanding of the students. If the class included non-honors participants, the level of class discussion would similarly be reduced. This viewpoint was the focus of a student memo calling for an increase in "the level of student involvement and participation, across the board."

One suggestion made by the students was that a course can be deemed as "honors" if it includes some feature that makes it unique from more traditional courses. One student representative to the committee stressed that honors courses are not simply advanced-level courses or courses taught by teachers who demand more work. Instead, they can be those which demonstrate individuality on the part of the students and faculty. This may include in-class presentations, or, as in Dr. Joan Haahr's Arthurian Legends, a unique internet-based curriculum. Another option, team teaching, was attempted in last semester's honors course in Modernism, a course co-taught by Drs. Ruth Bevan and Ellen Shrecker. Interdisciplinary teaching, while allowing for the course to branch into different areas, does bring with it some problems. Some students noted that under such a setup, they were not always aware of which teacher was responsible for which materials. This resulted in some confusion, and the overall response was mixed.

Dr. Barry Potvin, a biology professor, offered his feelings on what would make science courses worthy of the "honors" designation. Science courses are particularly difficult to design for "honors" designation, as they are more fact-based than conceptually oriented. He suggested that students review "recent journal articles, which would be read and thoroughly discussed after students have read them on their own." Another possibility would be to open up new laboratory sections which can be designed to allow for more student planning and execution. Currently, students have an opportunity to do significant independent research in the Advanced Biotechnology course supervised by Dr. Danishefsky.

In contrast to honors-only courses, some faculty members support giving students the option to take "honors" courses for non-honors credit. Many believe that having a class in which the students are expected to do different levels of work would create its own problems. "Under such circumstances, teachers would be forced to teach to everybody, not letting those with an honors option to take full advantage." Rabbi Shalom Carmy, YC Professor of Philosophy, though, felt that having such a mixture could benefit everyone. "I believe that if a significant number of students are doing the honors option, that does effect the general level of sophistication in the class." Of course, problems may arise in the other direction, as those not taking honors credit may not be as motivated to

Students Engage in Spontaneous Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebration

Main Campus Festivities Broken Up by Security



BY CHANAN HOSCHANDER

Fifty years of Israeli statehood prompted a spontaneous student celebration in the late-night hours of Yom Ha'atzmaut, the celebration of which began the evening of April 29. A crowd of Yeshiva University undergraduate men and women gathered that Wednesday night on the grass of the Dancziger Quadrangle, the property situated in front of the Max Stern Athletic Center. There the students sat, stood, and danced as they sang songs relevant to the occasion.

Unplanned and unsanctioned student events are a rarity on the Main Campus of YU. Yet, this did not prevent a few students from taking advantage of the cooperative weather to convene a small celebration on the benches of the mall on Amsterdam Avenue as the organized celebrations began to wane. The small group that began with a few guitarists and some vocal accompaniment eventually moved to the benches just in front of the MSAC. The modest gathering attracted numerous onlookers and grew to a crowd of full participants. At its height, the celebration included two saxophonists, five guitar players, as well as three percussionists, including the lone female musician in the group on small drums. Nearly one-hundred-and-fifty additional participants joined the singing in honor of Israeli independence.

Between 11:30PM and 12:45AM, despite security's frequent demands to vacate the grass, the celebrants maintained a festive atmosphere. Just prior to 1:00AM, the quad sprinklers were activated, soaking many of the attendees. Ignoring this hindrance, the crowd resumed the celebration in the center of the lawn, safely out of the spray's range.

Security, citing numerous violations including trespassing, noise, and unauthorized gathering, increased their efforts to terminate the celebration. Although student leaders, including members of *The Commentator* staff and eventually, with some urging, YCSC representatives, attempted to convince security to allow this unusual display of student spirit to continue, the officers on duty claimed that they had to adhere to the rules. They eventually succeeded in clearing the grass.

Many of the students remained resilient and reconvened in the lobby of the Rubin

Residence Hall. By 1:30 AM, Rabbi Chaifetz, who was awakened to deal with the situation, arrived and put an end to the evening's impromptu festivities.

The crowd dissipated by 2:00 AM. The few remaining students from Stern College for Women, who had missed the last van back to the Midtown campus, returned via car service. The expenses were covered by YCSC. Outgoing-President Sruli Tannenbaum explained that such an event should represent the essence of student life at the University. Therefore, he elected to cover the expense of the remaining Stern women.

The prevailing opinion of the event, which was referred to by its participants as "the Kumsitz", was favorable. Many students simply were shocked by the scene, and were delighted to have taken part in the celebration. Stephanie Ives, the SCW student who spearheaded the planning for the organized event of the evening, was inspired to give a short speech to her fellow celebrants prior to the gathering's conclusion. She announced to the crowd, "I cannot believe what kind of *simchat chag* there was here tonight."

Another SCW student in attendance added that "it was the most ruach I had ever seen in YU." Avi Herman, one of the YC students who helped initiate the Kumsitz, commented, "It was almost like Yom Ha'atzmaut in Israel. *Gevalt* it was so holy."



participate, and may even feel out-sited by those taking honors credit.

The general consensus among faculty is that honors courses will require additional research and planning if they are to be successful. For this reason, many faculty members who have done research in relevant areas are working to prepare relevant honors courses in their own area of expertise. Some of the courses to be offered next year will include Early Jewish Biblical Interpretation, taught by Dr. Moshe Bernstein; Nationalism and Patriotism, by Rabbi Carmy; Post Modernity and Deconstruction, by Dr. Bevan; and Physics and Astronomy, co-taught by Drs. Cwilich

and Otway.

What, then, does the future hold for honors at YC? Currently, Dean Adler is putting together a proposal for the Board of Directors concerning the program. Although money is certainly involved in the setting up of and the researching of new courses, the dean is optimistic about the proposal's approval. The consensus of the Curriculum Committee is that, for now, honors courses should remain strictly aimed at honors students. While that status does not exclude the possibility of opening the courses to non-honors students in the future, it means that the focus will remain on setting the highest standards possible for YU students.

The Year in Review - A Year in Moments

BY HILLEL LEVIN

The end of every year is a time for us to reflect on the year past. It is a time to think about what interesting and important things have happened over the year and to reflect on their significance in the grander scheme of things. *Time* magazine does it, so does *Newsweek*, so why not *The Commentator*? For us, the end of the school year should be a time to contemplate the goings on in the world as well as in our own school.

So, what exactly happened? There was no Oklahoma City bombing, no Waco shootout, and no jumbo jet explosions to command our attention. There was no war to capture our interests, and there were no sensational terrorist attacks. We didn't even have some bizarre cult in California follow a man to the grave claiming that they would be transported into the tail of a comet. Hmm, has anything happened this year?

Of course, this isn't to say that we have not had our share of tragedy. All we need do is look at the children's schoolyard murder spree in Jonestown Arkansas. But is this such a consequential event for the world as a whole? Just think, Jonestown wasn't the first schoolyard killing (it wasn't even the first this year), and it won't be the last (it wasn't even the last this year). Tragic? Absolutely; but modestly so. It seems that what really typifies this year is two words: small scale.

We did have our share of the sensational. The death of Princess Diana was nothing if not significant. However, was it really the "most important death of the decade," as some pundits would have us believe? Let us not kid ourselves; it wasn't even the most important death of the year. In terms of long-range consequences Diana's death cannot be considered so important as to characterize an entire year.

Perhaps the most sensational news story of the year had to do with the alleged sexual escapades of one William "Slick Willie" Clinton and Monica Lewinsky. Now that's scandalous. But let us be honest: Clinton is no Nixon when it comes to dirty doings in the White House; he may not even be a Reagan. And Paula Jones sure went out with less than a bang. Even our juicy scandals were small scale.

In weather news, El Nino went out with a whimper. Where was the storm which was supposed to rock the world? In sports, Tiger Woods won nothing, Jordan is on his way to winning again, Agassi's comeback fell short (again), and the Devils, Rangers, and Islanders lost. Big deal. In science news - few genuine breakthroughs. In business, the Dow dropped, then it went back up, and up, and up. Small scale, indeed.

If, like me, you can't remember what happened in the world this past year you

can be forgiven; there isn't all that much to remember. That isn't to say that there weren't important things which occurred (I just mentioned several) - and may even have consequences far into the future - but rather that there wasn't anything which will make this year go down in the history books (not that this is a bad thing).

Even the controversies in Yeshiva University were small, contained and, frankly, not all that controversial. There was no threat to close down Revel to galvanize the students; there was no controversy over a credit cap for classes taken

what our president was called by a Rabbi outside of the YU family. Interesting stuff. Sad, some of it. But nothing to really get excited about.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency for us to remember the scandalous, the despicable, and the evil. But what of all the kindness in the world? Surely we cannot overlook the polite acts people have done for each other when taking stock of the past year. Just look at New York. People, obviously and unquestionably spurred on by Mayor Giuliani's politeness campaign, have actually been good to each other. Okay, maybe not. But there

bunch of weirdos/sickos to take their places next year.

In medical news, there has been cause for optimism in the field of cancer treatment in general, with particular breakthroughs in breast cancer treatment. While there is no telling exactly what the future will hold for these drugs, there is no way to understate their importance. And, to top it all off, we have Viagra! And just in time to deal with a certain side-effect of a new hair-growth drug, too.

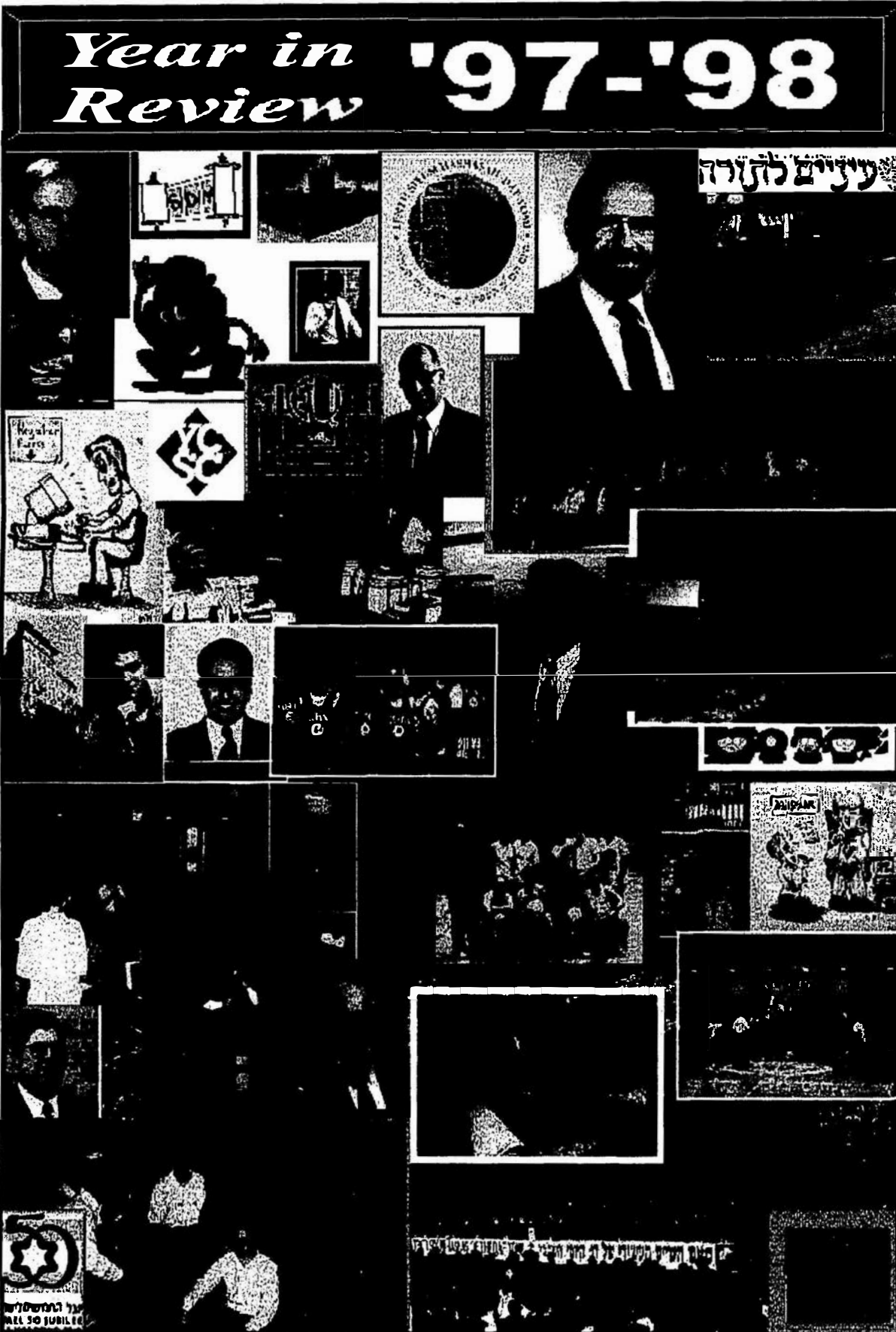
Perhaps one of the most ambiguous stories of the year deals with Israel's fiftieth birthday. Obviously this is for us a positive, momentous occasion. It is ambiguous, though, because of the way the New York Times and other news organizations treated it. While certainly acknowledging its significance as a testament to such a small nation, it treated the event more as a stepping stone for Palestinians than as an achievement for Israelis. Although we consider this the most important story of the year, we must keep in mind that to the rest of the world, it's no more than just another news story.

One other extremely important event, though probably overlooked by the YU community, was the formal agreement that may finally end the centuries-long conflict between English/Irish Protestants (Unionists) and Irish Roman Catholics (Republicans). While this may not really hit home for us, it is more than just noteworthy. This is to the Irish, as 1948 was to us (and 1998/9 may be to the Palestinians).

I think we must agree that the most important and most sensational news items of the year happened to have been good ones. Here in YC there is cause for optimism as well. Following the horrendous process of registering for Spring '98 courses, the Office of the Registrar got its act together, and Fall '98 registration was perfectly painless. This is cause for celebration, and I, for one, think that we have a duty to heap praise on the office staff for making right that which had been wrong (and they certainly heard from us that it had been wrong).

One other piece of big news: Titanic. This is the worst, most pathetic, and most depressing news item of all. Frankly, it seems rather sad that a movie starring two actors who obviously need acting lessons from Doctor Beukas could make it so big. Unfortunately, we don't get to choose what happens; we only get to talk about it.

And so, another year comes to a close. The sensational, the bad, the scary, and the tragedy were all there, but they were miniature, and they will be forgotten soon enough. The good news is the cause for optimism, and it may prove to be what this year is remembered for after all. See you next year.



outside of YU; there wasn't even a mention of homosexual clubs at Cardozo; where was the cry for Alpha Epsilon Pi?

We did, of course, have a minor fracas over a certain op-ed column which appeared in *The Commentator* about the students of Sy Syms School of Business and succeeded in igniting a small war between students and faculty. And there was a certain Rosh Yeshiva who created a bit of a stir with a certain diatribe in the Beit Midrash. Oh, let us not forget about

were some definitely good things which happened this year.

For starters, it has been a year for putting a bunch of depraved lunatic (and I don't mean clinically lunatic - just plain loony) murderers in prison. The Unabomber, Timothy McVeigh, the World Trade Center bombers, and a girl in California who plotted the death of her twin sister (I just saw that on the news yesterday) were all sentenced this year. Hooray! Unfortunately, we'll have a

ARTS & CULTURE

Graduation and Other Apocalypses

BY YITZCHAK INSELMANN

As we approach the end of time, whether our time in this semester or this college, it is time to talk about the end of all time and the upcoming millennium. Finals and graduation are certainly apocalyptic events and so is the end of all life on earth. Although we cannot actually foresee the outcome of either one, we attempt to predict just what will happen to mankind and ourselves as we look into the distant and not so distant future of YU finals and the year 2000.

Will things continue on as before, or will nightmarish creatures descend from a dark heaving sky to smite the righteous, persecute the sinful, and award the graduating class of Yeshiva University '00 their diplomas? Who knows? The ancient seer Nostradamus wrote this prophecy describing the events that will take place at the end of time:

Grayish lumps rise and papers swirl in the winds

The places of many stools are abandoned

Red eyed creatures come from the walls

When the last man, he whom they call J will come.

—"The Prophecies of Nostradamus," #2398

The first half may very likely refer to some sort of panic in the YU cafeteria or at the IRS, depending on whether the lumps are referring to what is being served or to who is doing your tax audit. The third line certainly suggests the eyes of YU undergraduates after pulling all-nighters, but it is unclear why Nostradamus would refer to them as "creatures" (I have my suspicions) or describe them as emerging from walls. Some have suggested that the fourth line is a reference to the Christian apocalypse and the coming of Jesus Christ, however, since Nostradamus was of Jewish descent this possibility is unlikely. It is much more probable that "the last man, he whom they call J will come" is a reference to Jerry Seinfeld's upcoming Seinfeld (properly spelled "sniveled" or "sniffled" according to my spell checker) series finale.

No matter what the future holds for us, people will still write books about it, because, after all, if millions are willing to buy books about "How to organize the dinner party" or "How to find love and fulfillment in your relationship," they will certainly buy a book titled "How to survive the upcoming flaming apocalypse." As apocalyptic predictions about the final judgment abound, book publishers have something to sell and book reviewers have something to review.

Apocalypse Wow

by James Patrick Finn Garner

The author of "Politically Correct Bedtime Stories" and "Politically Correct Holiday Stories," Garner in this book turns his attention away from political

correctness and towards prophetic correctness. If the end of time is truly coming, he asks, where can I find out more about it? His search for a good prophet, answers from the beyond, and the practitioners of the once thriving art of cheese divination are the focus of this book. Garner's journey is one man's search for the truth about the end of time. The methods by which he attempts to uncover the answers to this great mystery are often journalistic, but unfortunately his subjects rarely are.

From Indian medicine men in carpeted hotel rooms to the vendors of a New Age crystal festival, Garner is willing to go anywhere and speak to anyone in his search for the truth, or at least the lies that are quite funny nonetheless. As Garner drives around the country going from encounter to encounter, he searches the annals of history delving into the mystical works of Nostradamus for inspiration and canvassing the history of the papacy for true predictions. While he does find what may be the earliest known woodcut of aerial banner advertising, he also finds that ancient sources can mean whatever anyone wants them to mean.

The barrier between truth and lies amongst the purveyors of mystical beliefs, from crystal healing to fortune telling, tends to be fairly low. So while Garner does spend money on a pair of pajamas with crystals sown into the areas of the Chakra points, he gains little but more amusing stories for the book. Throughout the book Garner projects himself as an earnest but gullible narrator simply on the road for answers. At the end, he finds those answers in a "frightening revelation(s)" about himself and the perils of operating a Midwestern apocalyptic radio station.

The core of this book, though, is the vignettes of other perspectives on the apocalypse. These range from the examination of the prophecies of the aforementioned Nostradamus to the history of the Jehovah's Witnesses, and the supposed Western European reaction to the coming of the First Millennium. Garner is a humorist and not a researcher so these chapters are far more amusing than informative, and the author's distaste for religion clearly comes through the narrator's persona. Still, any book asking you to connect the dots between a column with pictures of a lion, an eagle, and a whale, and the titles "England," "The Papacy," and "The Apocalypse," is worth a read over your next commute.

Killing the Dream: James Earl Ray and the Assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

By: Gerald Posner

With James Earl Ray's death, the controversy over who really killed Martin Luther King Jr. continues to rage, now that the one person who certainly knew the truth is finally out of the picture. Ray, Martin Luther King's convicted assassin, had alternately admitted his guilt and denied it. The doubt and confusion over the assassination, the chronological and political time period, and the questions over the real assassin, have linked the King assassination to that of President John F. Kennedy in the minds of many conspiracy theorists.

Unlike President Kennedy's assassin, James Earl Ray lived long past the crime, and shortly after, began to maintain his innocence. King's widow, Corretta Scott King, and members of

King's family stated publicly their belief in Ray's innocence, and shortly before his death he met with Martin Luther King III, who agreed to support Ray's request for a new trial. This request was later denied, and while the latest evidence continues to point to James Earl Ray as the actual killer, debate rages not only among conspiracy theorists but in more polished and upscale circles as well. Gerald Posner's book sets out to settle that controversy by claiming once and for all that James Earl Ray was in fact the one and only assassin.

Posner, who attempted a similar feat in the Kennedy assassination with his earlier book "Case Closed," does as good of a job here. However, in the end neither book is likely to set the issues at rest because it is the nature of people to prefer the fantastic to the real and everyday. Despite the best analysis that can be conducted on the known facts too many unknown facts remain. Posner demonstrates the contradictions in Ray's accounts of the event in great detail and with an extensive investigation, but little of what is uncovered is particularly new or challenging. The basis of "Killing the Dream" is a systematic collection and organization of facts about the case which makes this book an unquestionably valuable resource for those interested in the material. Yet the book lacks the sensational revelations promised by competing accounts of conspiracy theorists. In the phrase taken from the movie "Who shot Liberty Valance?" the advice of a newspaperman is: "When the facts contradict the legend, print the legend." Gerald Posner has only printed the facts."

Comic Commercialism: The State Of Comic Books Today

BY MENDEL BREITSTEIN

In a recent job interview, I found myself asked the following question: "Do you have any heroes from Jewish history?" Growing bored of the blank expression on my face my interviewer rephrased the question as: "Do you have any posters on your wall of people whom you admire?" Thinking of my latest poster acquisition, I truthfully mumbled "the Hulk." "The Incredible Hulk?" I was asked with a look of incredulity. "Yes," I murmured. Surprisingly, I do believe that I got the job.

Comic books have become less and less frowned upon over the years, and increasingly trendy. It seems more than a little probable that this increasing acceptance is due to the genre's growing reputation as being "not just for kids." Unfortunately, "not just for kids" can frequently be translated into gratuitous violence, cursing, and sexually explicit material. I think that it is probably true that the comic book industry is merely reflecting trends which can be found in the general culture; nevertheless, it pains me that a genre which once guaranteed stories of

daring deeds done for the sake of right, or at worst, fame, now brings us tales of anti-heroes who kill as much as the "bad guys." Not that I'm saying that every story needs its heroes and villains to be black and white—some of the best stories in comicdom frequently blur the lines somewhat—but the good guys should at least be somewhat good, and the bad guys at least bad enough to warrant what the "heroes" frequently do to them. And this is all the wind up to my general beef with the current comic book industry, which can be summed up in one word: commercialism.

Having been asked to write an article on comic books, I figured it would be appropriate to actually visit the local comic book store. Now, I don't want to sound like some crotchety old man—regardless of whether or not that would be an accurate representation of my personality—but the prices are astounding! When I first started buying comics they cost roughly 55 or 65 five cents. Now, granted that that was some years back, but when I was poking around the comic shop, the average price was probably at least a dollar and ninety five cents. Not

only that, but there seems to be this increasing need to have every hack story with terrible art printed on virtually laminated paper, which is probably guaranteed to last forever while definitely guaranteed to eat a hole in your wallet. Parenthetically, the real tragedy with this special paper is that it means stories which would be better off with a mercy killing will last for a painfully long time. I've even seen the same comic with multiple covers to draw kids into buying the same comic book over and over in order to have a "complete collection." Unfortunately, it's not enough that the format of the comic books is calculated purely for income, but even the content of the comics is nothing more than hollow stories churned out for big bucks.

There used to be a time when a comic was written because the writer felt the need to write it, and the artist was eager to try out his talents on a story he liked. (Or at least that's how I'd like to perceive it. I suppose that it's possible that I'm inventing a mythical golden age of comics, but I'll fight till my dying breath

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The Palestinian Problem: A Historical Review

BY JEFF BANDER

After 50 years of statehood, Israel now stands on a knife's edge. It is in the midst of an ideological battle that will shape its soul for the next fifty years and beyond. Israel can plunge toward religious fundamentalism, it can spiral downward toward tribal moralism, or it can confront its past and come to grips with the "Palestinian problem."

It has been half a century since the state of Israel was proclaimed, and it has also been a half a century of conflict between the Jews and the Arabs. The failures of the Oslo peace process onto which hopes were pinned, result not from the numerous violations of the agreement but from our fundamental lack of understanding of the basis for the conflict. If there ever is to be real peace between Israel and the Palestinians, we have to understand the conflict without the myth and propaganda. Only an Israel that can come to grips with its past can hope to achieve a lasting peace.

The creation of Israel created a moral paradox. We justly returned to a land that was ours and found another people, whom in our absence had developed strong ties and roots to the land. Many Jews closed their ears and pretended these people didn't exist, hoping that they would just go away. Even after the 1967 war, when we conquered the West Bank, Israel refused to recognize the Palestinians as a people. It was not until the Intifada, when the blood of hundreds of Palestinians flowed in the streets of Gaza and the West Bank, that we recognized the problem. It was only when blood of innocent Jewish civilians filled the burnt out carcasses of busses in our cities that we realized that there was another people living in our land. It was only from bloodshed, that we realized that we were ruling over a million people who had their own national aspirations and wanted their own freedom and self determination. Now, as Israel becomes a mature state somewhat secure and economically sound, it is time to take an honest look at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict: the Palestinian question.

Theodore Herzl modeled Zionism after the European nationalism that was so rampant in his days. Nationalism, was to Herzl a European phenomenon. He could not even conceive of the notion that the Arabs had a national consciousness. He utterly failed to see that nationalism would eventually spread out all over the globe and infect the Arab world.

Interestingly, Herzl basically ignored the Arab question. In his opus "Altneuland,"

Arabs are featured only briefly, and only to parrot Herzl saying "the Jews have enriched us." In "The Jewish State," Herzl's utilitarian essay proposing a Zionist solution to the Jewish problem, he completely fails to mention that over 550,000 Arabs were living in Palestine at the time. The Arabs simply were not there. Thus "A land without people, for a people without a land" became the cry of the early Zionists. It was important for Herzl and the Zionist leadership to create this myth if they were to be able settle Palestine on moral grounds.

Truthfully, Herzl himself was aware of this fact but chose to ignore it. He completely disregarded the report of his student and colleague, Leo Motzken, whom he had sent to survey Palestine. In his report, Motzken includes this statement: "Completely accurate statistics about the number of inhabitants do not presently exist. One must admit that the density of the population does not give the visitor much cause for cheer. In whole stretches throughout the land one constantly comes across large Arab villages, and it is an established fact that the most fertile areas of our country are occupied by Arabs." (Protocols of the Second Zionist Congress, Pg. 103).

Ahad Ha'am, the celebrated writer and Zionist, echoed Motzken's concerns in his essay "The Truth from the Land of Israel." "We tend to believe that Palestine is nowadays almost completely deserted, a non cultivated wilderness; and anyone can come there and buy as much land as his heart desires. But in reality this is not the case. It is difficult to find anywhere in the country Arab land which lies fallow..." For the most part, though, the early Zionists chose to close their eyes to the large Arab population hoping they would just go away. Propagating the myth was easier than dealing with reality.

In "Altneuland," Herzl envisioned an Israel that by 1923 would be populated by a Jewish majority. In the book he predicts that this majority would be a result of a mass influx of Jews from Europe and Russia. However, in his own personal diary, he suggests another method to achieve this majority in Palestine- the forced transfer of the indigenous population.

"When we occupy the land... we must expropriate gently the private property on the estates assigned to us. We shall try to spirit away the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our own country.... Both the process of expropriation and the removal of

the poor must be carried out discretely and circumspectly." (Complete Diaries of Theodore Herzl, Vol. 1)

Herzl's transfer ideas were prevalent among the later Zionist leadership as well. Except for men like Martin Buber and Ahad Ha'am, the idea of removing large portions of the population was looked upon favorably, while direct transfer was not the route most Zionist leaders planned. They believed in displacing the Arabs languidly, through purchase and appropriation of estates. Displacement and dispossession were necessary if a Jewish majority was to be created in Israel. All understood that it was best to create a Jewish State with as few potentially troublesome Arabs as possible.

In light of this fact, it is not surprising that Ben-Gurion and the Jewish Agency were elated by the Peel Commission's recommendation that 300,000 Arabs living in the "Jewish" areas of the partition plan be transferred either voluntarily or by force. Ben-Gurion, in his address to the 20th Zionist Congress on August 7th 1937, lauded the idea that "we must carefully examine whether the transfer is possible... In many parts of the country new Jewish settlement will not be possible unless there is transfer of Arab peasantry. The Peel commission dealt with this matter seriously, and it is important that the plan came from them and not from us." Subsequently Ben-Gurion justified the idea of transfer from a moral perspective, saying "You must remember that this method contains an important humane and Zionist idea; to shift parts of a people (Palestinians) to their own country and to settle empty lands."

The Arab world and Palestinian leader-

ship rejected the Peel Commission's recommendations in toto, and shortly afterward the commission was disbanded. Without British support, Ben-Gurion realized that transfer was an unobtainable goal. When on May 15th 1948 the UN declared Israel a state, the Yishuv did not have a master plan for expulsion, but with the hammer blows of war the Palestinians were displaced. Understanding the Yishuv's attitude toward transfer helps us fathom their decision not to allow the refugees back to their homes after the war.

The Arabs for the most were not massacred in 1948, and they were not marched out of their homes as the Palestinians would have us believe. Additionally, the Arabs did not pick up and leave on orders from the Arab League, contrary to popular Jewish opinion. It is propaganda and myth which has originated from both sides that clouds the true history of 1948. The official Israeli version claims that the bulk of Palestine's Arabs fled their homes because of orders by Arab High Command, that they fled voluntarily, and that Israel is completely blameless for the exodus. Proponents of this version of history assert that there were blanket orders issued over Palestinian radio which demanded that the Arabs evacuate. In contrast, the standard Palestinian propaganda declares that the Yishuv had long planned the expulsion, which was systematically implemented upon the departure of the British forces in 1948.

Objective history, i.e., history which is not self-serving, as so much of Israeli and

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Comic Commercialism

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that this simply isn't so.) That is when there were comics like Superman (I mean the real Superman, not some guy with weird laser powers) and Batman (before Robin was killed and every one of Batman's villains was a homicidal lunatic.) Not only that, but I also remember when the X-Men, a comic about mutants fighting for a place in the world was the only "X" title. Now, walking into the local comic shop one sees the X-Men, X-Women, X-Children, X-Fetuses, X-Zygotes, and about three hundred "mutant" titles available, all racking up tremendous income for the great comic book empire. As far as killing characters and then bringing them back to life (Superman, Moon Knight, Phoenix, and the list goes on.) let's just say that I don't even want to go there.

I remember some years ago, standing in a comic book convention, and overhearing a comic book artist describe the rampant commercialism, but without a sense of regret. She readily conceded that her work was nothing more than *zhus* (lasciviousness), pandering as it does to the lowest common denominator. Since this is a Yeshiva, and I like to think that I'm something of a Ben Torah, I'll spare anyone who has bothered to read this far her actual language, but I'll go so far as to say that it wasn't "nice." Unfortunately, she's hardly the only "artist" whose talents have been sold to the highest bidder.

The comic industry seems incapable of viewing women as real people, and for the most part treats them the same way Hollywood treats them. Women are either beauties or inconsequential. The fact that the amount of clothing with which the average heroine is clad is insufficient at best, makes it clear that the industry is just aiming its money vacuum at young teenage boys.

Not only that, but comics which would be called obscene by the average person are, while not ubiquitous, certainly not difficult to find by any means. I even recall that while in

the University of Maryland, I was asked by a police officer if a certain store was an "adult book store." I replied that it was just a comic book store, but in retrospect, a good number of their products were, in a very literal sense, pornographic.

Likewise, the extent of violence found in many comics needs no elaboration, and is also a shrewdly calculated attempt to garner ever more money (and it is shrewd.) I can recall being in a comic store last year, which sold nothing but the more lewd and bloody titles, and asking the proprietor if he carried anything more heroic and less horrific. In a miserable sort of a voice he informed me that they simply didn't sell as well as the more violent titles, and that he hoped that a time would come when they would once again be more popular.

However, one of the reasons I went to the comic store this morning was in the hope of finding something which could possibly give this ill concealed tirade a slightly more upbeat feel. Looking around, I tried finding something to read which wasn't *zhus* or blood and gore. After looking at one publication which was described to me as "cute," and realizing that there was inappropriate material inside, I was then directed to look at *Leave it to Chance*, by Image Comics (the same people who brought you Spawn.)

Surprisingly, after reading it I felt immensely good. While it was admittedly more expensive than I would have liked, the art was extremely crisp, the story and characters a lot of fun, and there was very little I could complain about. A story about a fourteen year old girl fighting monsters is a cute idea, and it was hard to be aggravated with the comic industry after reading it. Perhaps the guy who sold me that comic was right when he told me—and this was after commiserating with me about what has happened to the genre—that the good stuff is beginning to make a comeback.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Parting Shots: Time for Administration to Change

To the Editor:

My four years have passed in the blink of an eye. When I arrived at Yeshiva University, I admittedly did not know what to expect. I had my own preconceived notions as to what college life would be like, especially in Yeshiva University. I didn't have an older brother to tell me how it "was" in YU, but I quickly learned about our school and its "system". Many students were simply going through the motions and accepted our school for what it was, while others believed in the potential of Yeshiva University. Change is not a one shot deal, but rather an ongoing process, which must be continued and nurtured over the course of many years. As student leaders we try to make immediate improvements to the quality of life on campus; very often we are successful and everybody sees immediate rewards. Other times it takes the cooperative effort of students and administration over several years to see the fruits of their labor.

I like to view Yeshiva University as a work in progress. The core problems that plague our campus all have a common denominator - the University does not listen to its students. It seems that the very tenants for whom the University is providing an education and room and board have little input into what happens on campus. YU has grown by leaps and bounds, but as a result it has lost track of its *raison d'être* - the students coming to its campuses to learn. A prime example of ignoring student input is apparent in the case of the recent dormitory lounge renovations. While we are grateful for these improvements, which are no doubt done with our benefit in mind, the school did not solicit student opinion. If the administration was planning to spend close to \$25,000 dollars for new lounge furniture, logic would dictate that an important step in this plan would be to speak to the very students who use the lounges. This it seems, is not the "YU Way."

When we express our concerns about the lack of student representation the responses are always filled with excuses and promises to change things in the future. The problem arises when the same practice is continued the following year. The student voice once again goes unheard, because, after all, didn't the Administration just spend \$25,000 for the students!?! A prime example of administrative apathy can be found each and every year when it comes to planning for orientation. Each year, student leaders request to be included in Orientation planning and scheduling from the initial stages, and each year they are promised this

will occur the following year. Sure enough our leaders are brought into the fold only after the majority of planning is completed.

But, of course, there are times when the University does search out the opinions of the students. Unfortunately, this always happens when students are backed into a corner and have no choice but to tell the administration what they want to hear. Then the Administration has its ammo, retorting, "but the student leaders agreed to it!!!" It seems that they only seek out our opinions for the sake of public relations.

A recent example is the situation regarding the BMP Beis Midrash renovation; only after the decision to relocate to Schottenstein were student leaders informed, as an apparent courtesy.

A discussion of this topic would not be complete without mentioning graduation. Graduation should be a moment of joy and happiness for countless seniors who have worked hard to attain this goal. To the University it is simply an opportunity to give honor to its many contributors and benefactors. At the mere mention of a desire to have more student involvement in Commencement, smiles break out on the face of the many administrators. "It is an issue of time" we are told, "after all, the program is long enough as is and the graduates would get upset if it was any longer." There is however, more than enough time for numerous "Doctorates of Humane Letters" to be given out to benefactors of the University. Enough of the University patting itself on the back; they have the Chanukah Dinner to do that. How about showing a little respect for the students who have put in long hours, hard work and paid their tuition?

I would be remiss if I did not point out that segments of the Administration have been making great strides in improving student life. The Office of Student Services has changed for the better in the time that I have been here. Their belief that "the students are the customers" has brought about many positive changes. But it is not enough. The University must adopt this policy in all of its departments.

In closing, it has been a long year filled with memorable events. Nothing this year would have been possible without the hard work of numerous students. For fear of leaving somebody out, I will not list any names, but you know who you are and I would like to thank you for making this year as great as it was.

Sruli Tannenbaum
YC '99
President, YCSC 97-98

Campus Failings: No Room for Student Life

To the Editor:

I'd like to preface my letter with congratulations to all student council position victors. I believe that we will all work hard and in tandem to make next year a great year. I include in this statement the winner of the SOY President's election, Michael Gewirtz, and I hope that he recognizes the students' need for washing cups now, so that next year we will have them at the fall semester's start.

I was highly involved in the Yom HaZikaron *Tekes* and follow-up chagiga, and I must say that I was overwhelmed by the student participation. After last year's small turnout those of us planning the event did not expect more than 300 students to show up and I must say that the large turnout was refreshing in renewing my faith in the Yeshiva University students' connection to Eretz Yisrael.

However, I feel that I must express my disappointment with a shortcoming, not in the student body, but once again with the inadequacies of our campus. After the chagiga ended, a large number of students gathered with their own instruments, guitars -not fewer than five, harmonicas, drums, a flute and a saxophone to jam and sing on their own in a kumzitz style comfortable to many. Eventually, upwards of 150 students gathered on the grass surrounding the benches in front of the MSAC pool.

At one o'clock in the morning the sprinkler system kicked on automatically, spraying the crowd with water in its errant attempt to water the grass and bushes while in actuality watering the sidewalks. The crowd quickly evacuated to the top of the Danziger Quadrangle (the "Keep off the Grass" grass) and continued in its festivities. This was a short-lived recovery, as Security came over and kindly requested that people be quiet before they called the captain. The crowd next attempted to move inside Ruben Hall, but as it was after one a.m. the women participating were not allowed

inside. Soon, with past YCSC President Jason Buskin's help, the Stern women were allowed to enter. Not ten minutes later Rabbi Cheifetz came out to tell everyone to stop.

This should not have occurred. I don't refer to Security's actions nor to R. Cheifetz's. I further understand that there were people who were trying to sleep and were being kept awake by those who felt the night still young. I refer to the fact that there was nowhere for the group to go to continue in their Yom Ha'atzmaut festivities. On the entire Yeshiva University campus there was nowhere for the student body to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut for themselves.

I believe I have a solution, although it may be some time in coming. As many people know, the museum that currently inhabits our uptown library is in the midst of a move somewhere downtown, and the space on the first floor that it occupies in the library building will be free for various groups to vie for. I propose that a 24 hour student lounge be opened, complete with photocopiers and other student needs, and that it be open to all students, and not just the uptown students. This is especially important, as many people feel that there is a lack of room for students to meet uptown as the women are not allowed into the dormitory buildings.

I was enormously proud of the emotional outpouring on Yom Ha'atzmaut and how everyone was celebrating together. I hope that when (not if) the same occurs next year, there will be a place for the students to celebrate, perhaps even the student lounge in the library, if necessary.

Looking forward to great things for next year,

Hadar Weiss
YC 99
Israel Club Vice-President 97-98
YCSC Treasurer Elect '98

THE COMMENTATOR

welcomes letters from its readers.

Letters must include the writer's name, address and telephone number.

Students should also include school enrolled in and graduation date.

The Commentator reserves the right to edit all letters for syntax, content, and size.

The Commentator

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rules are Made to be Broken

To the Editor:

A couple of weeks into the semester I got on the 4:30 downtown van to go to work. The guard asked me for my ID card. Upon inspecting my card the guard informed me that I had to exit the van. The problem? My ID card did not have the sticker for the current semester. I was thrown off the van and got to work 30 minutes late.

A few weeks later I was on the 4:30 van, fully equipped with my new sticker. When we arrived at Brookdale another passenger needed a favor. This passenger was an elderly woman who needed a ride to Penn station to catch a train. She was told that she could either wait an hour until the local van started, or she could walk across town. What reason did the guard give? She was afraid of losing her job.

A third incident, this time involving another student, occurred a few weeks later. Yossi Blum had just spent a long day taking an MCAT prep course in midtown. But his trip back to YU was not easy. Yossi told me that, "After spending the entire day in a class for MCATs I was exhausted and just wanted to get on the van and get back to YU. I went inside to sign up for the van. I showed the guard my ID, but since I didn't have a sticker she wouldn't let me go. She said that if she let me go her job would be in jeopardy."

These were not isolated incidents. Many other students have been denied student privileges in cases where security should have overlooked a rule. But they can't. If they don't follow the rules they run the risk of losing their jobs.

Last week two incidents occurred that should put Security regulations under heavy scrutiny. Monday morning, a YU student headed to the bathrooms to take a shower. While standing in the shower room he fainted. Luckily there was someone

else in the next room. When the student came to, he felt very weak but was able to call out to the other student for help. Before calling for an ambulance YU Security was brought to the scene. With the student lying on the floor in obvious discomfort the guard asked him for his ID card. Why? If he didn't have a card would he have been left there on the floor? So why? Because it's the rules, and if rules aren't followed TO THE LETTER the guards run the risk of losing their jobs.

The second incident is equally disturbing. Wednesday night a student dislocated his ankle while playing basketball. With the student on the ground in extreme pain (and his foot hanging off his ankle at a sickening angle) another student ran upstairs to tell the guard to call for an ambulance, before returning to the gym. Ten minutes later the guard came downstairs. Asked if he had called for an ambulance, he answered that he had to see for himself if one was necessary. The guard took a look at the student's ankle and asked, "Are you sure you need an ambulance?" Before heading back upstairs to call for an ambulance the guard asked if the injured student had an ID card. Why? Because it was the rule and he didn't want to lose his job.

There is an obvious problem here and it needs to be taken care of. YU Security guards are afraid to bend the rules (even when it is clearly necessary), because they are not allowed to. They are governed by a set of rules etched in stone, and if one of these rules is transgressed they run the risk of losing their job. Someone has to loosen up before a life or death incident is put on hold so that the guard can see an ID.

Oren Margulies
YC, '99

A Broader Vision of Israel's Significance

To the Editor:

Only we, the generation born after the Holocaust, are not forced to view the State of Israel as a savior. We now know that we can echo Rabbi Lamm's words by saying, "If only America had opened its doors earlier..." It is the generation that does not have the Holocaust embedded into their consciousness like those who lived through it, and the generation that sees Jews surviving in America too, that can deny that the mission of the State

of Israel is to insure the survival of the Jewish people. We have the privilege not to be handicapped by Rabbi Lamm's myopic vision to see that his reasoning does not give sufficient significance to the current existence of the State of Israel. We have the privilege to be forced to dig deeper to find the true significance of the State of Israel.

Jonathan Snowbell
YC '98

We Need a Man of the People

To the Editor:

As a former SCW student (I transferred out in 1996), I would like to praise Noah Streit for his gutsy critique of Rabbi Norman Lamm. I read Rabbi Lamm's book, *Torah U'Maddah*, before I attended Stern. I appreciated its principles and wanted to be in a school that used the book's title as its motto. Yet as I attended Stern, Rabbi Lamm always seemed to me like his book—a concept that I had read about. I never saw him on campus, and he always seemed like a distant mystery—unapproachable and not wholly concerned with the immediate welfare of the students.

I remember I once saw him at a YU function and took the initiative to introduce myself to him, despite the surprise and warnings of my friends who were too timid to join me. Of course Rabbi Lamm was cordial (and maybe even somewhat shocked that a Stern student would approach him in that way), but a student should not have to feel awkward speaking to him. It struck me that he did not seem to take active interest in finding out more about my or my peers' experience at Stern, which at the time was filled with questions regarding the direction of YU, particularly the direction of

Torah U'Madda (which is one of the reasons why I left.)

Of course the apparent indifference that university leaders demonstrate toward their students' well-being and concerns is not exclusive to Yeshiva University. However, as a center for religious study that grapples with critical issues such as spirituality, ethics, and the students' lifestyle, YU's leader and Rosh Yeshiva must be more accessible, user-friendly and readable. Rabbi Lamm should not be too busy to display active interest in the immediate and palpable concerns, questions, and problems raised on the YU campus. In fact, that should be his job. Probably the most grave consequence of this apparent unconcern is that his followers—students, teachers, and administrators—will take his lead, and only a few will be left to really effect change, both within the YU campus and within Judaism, when change is necessary. I only hope YU continues to mold and attract such dynamic people.

Orit Arfa
SCW, 1995-1996

*The Author is a senior at the
University of Judaism in Los Angeles.*

Publications Deserve Space on YU Site

To The Editor:

After being witness to the recent game of ping-pong between PR, MIS and Enayim L'Torah, I'd like to throw out one simple query: Why is Yeshiva's on-line exposure still dominated by the Public Relations department? Besides not knowing what is good for them, the PR department fails to realize that the current YU on-line existence is an embarrassment and we would be better off if the current YU website did not exist at all.

Earlier this year, *The Commentator* printed an article in which Director of Public Relations, Mr. David Rosen was quoted saying, "If you go to the YU web site, you'd think that the University has no students." What I cannot understand is why this "policy" is being implemented on purpose! The trivial act of erasing the header of Enayim L'Torah online was not only inane in reason but also BAD PR for Yeshiva. What is so terrible with letting the world know that it is indeed published by "The STUDENT organization of Yeshiva?"

The very fact that the Enayim's on-line presence on yu.edu was threatened, is an obvious declaration of the lack of priorities of the PR dept. The outside world looks to YU for Torah, yet the highest priority on the YU web-pages is the Galileo Project. A Divrei

Torah publication, written, published and updated weekly by students, is something of which YU has only to be proud. Too bad for us, that someone in a corner office went surfing one day and discovered something he had never seen or "approved," for unexplainable ever-morphing reasons. The end result of course, is once again, students contemplating distancing themselves from their own school. The Computer Science Society had its server shut down, so they built an independent Linux web and development server, that "have nothing to do with YU, officially." *The Commentator* online has its webpages and its own domain name on a server in Pennsylvania. There is even a website with Rav Golwicht's Shiurim in audio, set up by a former student.

The time has come for the PR department to realize that by shunning students from Yeshiva's web server, causing them to openly declare their online existence as "having nothing to do with YU," is a PR disaster. What does it look like to the rest of the world when all the YU student clubs, society's and publications' web sites include a disclaimer of proud embarrassment that they have nothing to do with YU?

Ephraim Shapiro,
Secretary, SOY '97-'98

“Unfair” Payroll Practices Challenged

Continued from page 1

requires the issuance of 26 paychecks per year. Nonetheless, the Payroll Department deducts monies from the biweekly checks issued using a divisor of 26.1 percent.”

The letter continues with a mathematical example illustrating the point. If one takes a yearly salary of \$20,000, and divides it by the divisor of 26 weeks, a biweekly paycheck totals \$769.23. If the same annual salary is divided by 26.1, a biweekly paycheck totals \$766.28, a difference of \$2.95 per paycheck. The total lost salary for one year, according to the union numbers, would be \$76.70.

“Employees receiving monthly salaries have their earnings divided evenly by 12,” says the letter, explicating the crux of the issue; “there is no extra percentage taken for these employees.”

“Repeated requests for a justification of, or termination of, this practice have produced no result,” wrote the workers. “We maintain that the Payroll Department’s use of a 26.1 annual billing cycle has no universal application or merit as an accounting procedure, and that its use of different divisors for different calendars is discriminatory against employees paid on a biweekly basis. The Payroll Department of Yeshiva University is acting in flagrant disregard for the right of University employees to be informed of its accounting policies and the right of employees to be compensated in accordance with negotiated salary guidelines.”

Therefore, the employees “request immediate termination of the unexplained deduction of monies from our biweekly paychecks by the Payroll Department and reimbursement for the monies taken plus an appropriate rate of interest.”

Anatomy of a Dispute

According to Marvin Resnick, Director of Auditing and Accounting, the current 26.1 system has been in use since the mid 1960’s, when it was instituted by Harold Lefkowitz, Resnick’s predecessor as chief YU numbers cruncher. Yet this was fresh news to all but a handful of the individuals whose paychecks are determined by these figures. “I have been working here for seventeen years,” said Herman Colon, who works in maintenance. “No one ever bothered to tell me anything about it. There are guys who have been working here for thirty-five years, and they ain’t ever heard the number 26.1”

The first individual in recent YU history who questioned the practice was an administrator at the midtown campus, who upon noticing that her paychecks did not add up to her annual salary wrote a letter to the Payroll Department last September requesting an explanation. She received no reply to her query, and did not pursue further action.

In an unrelated development, an administrative employee in Belfer Hall, who for the purposes of this article wishes to remain anonymous, discovered the difference in her specified annual salary and her paychecks, and called Bernard Pittinsky, Director of Finance, to ask him why. She later filed a memo describing their conversation.

“I asked Mr. Pittinsky to explain the payroll process of why employees are paid on a 26.1 weeks scale per year, versus 26 weeks per year,” she wrote. “He [Pittinsky] sighed and stated ‘that was the way it had been for years.’ I then asked him for an explanation on paper so that I could try and figure out this process. He stated that he ‘would try to find an explanation in the archives but that if he couldn’t I would just have to accept it.’”

“I then stated that I didn’t understand why it wouldn’t be written down somewhere,” the memo continues. What did Pittinsky answer her? “And he said ‘If you don’t like it then quit.’” She describes her feelings to this rejoinder commenting, “I was appalled at that statement and stated back to Mr. Pittinsky ‘Sir, I don’t feel that is appropriate to say... I am simply asking for a reason for why my paycheck is based on 26.1 weeks a year versus 26 weeks a year. I do not want to leave Yeshiva University.’ He then stated he would look into this and if he could find something he would let me know. His final comment of this conversation was ‘If I can’t find it, you’ll have to live with it.’”

Summing up the conversation, she wrote “I feel his answer was not only unsatisfactory but unprofessional as well.” A note added to the file a week later records that “Mr. Pittinsky has yet to return my phone call.”

“How the university performs and behaves” she said, “is how the students will learn to behave in the workplace.”

Employee Action

The story of the employee in Belfer and

her treatment at the hands of management soon spread through the rank and file of the YU infrastructure. All the organized YU employees are represented by the same union, the National Health and Human Service Employees Union, Local 1199. Whether in housekeeping, maintenance, food service, the library, secretarial, or other, 1199 is the labor representative of all unionized employees on campus. However, in the collective bargaining agreement between YU and the union there is absolutely no mention of the formula used to calculate salaries nor the number 26.1.

The union delegates composed the above-mentioned letter to Socol, and in the words of David Assante, a union delegate and facilities worker, “will pursue whatever further action we deem necessary.” According to Berta Silva, the union organizer assigned to YU, and Juan Vasquez, the regional vice-president of 1199, the 26.1 issue can potentially be addressed when the union open negotiations on a new collective bargaining agreement, as the current agreement is set to expire on September 30, 1998.

Yet the payroll issue has a wider impact than merely affecting the union members, because even non-union employees are paid on the same 26.1 biweekly schedule. The employee who called Pittinsky for an explanation was not union, but rather was a SAM, or “same as management,” a class of employees barred from labor organizing.

Union or not, the feelings among YU employees are similar. “What has caused this is arrogance. If they would have respected us and given a straight answer, we would not be having these problems,” said Natalie Goldman, Dean Harold Nierenberg’s secretary. “People should be able to ask questions, and feel comfortable asking questions in their workplace and not receive replies that are confusing and misleading. Now there are people that have gotten so frustrated that they will not tolerate this unprofessional behavior.”

Goldman’s co-worker Mayra Bonilla echoed her sentiments, and stressed that the problem is not with the University as a whole, but rather with this particular issue. “I love my work,” said Bonilla, whose husband is the popular Burns Security captain, Milton Bonilla. “I love

my boss and the students. This has been one of the most wonderful places I have worked in; the people here really care about me and my family. They even visited me when I was ill and bought birthday cakes for my daughters. But I just want an explanation. I want them to show me in writing the textbook or rule that says they can do this to my paycheck.”

Official Accounting Principles

When asked by *The Commentator*, Pittinsky explained that 26.1 has been the official University policy for years, and that it is a valid accounting principle used by the Federal Government to calculate its paychecks as well. Because a year has 365 days, not an even 364; and because every four years there is a leap year, eventually there will be a year in which an employee will receive an extra twenty-seventh paycheck. This bonus year occurs every eleven or so years, according to Pittinsky, with the last one being 1993 and the next one being 2005. The shortfall accumulated over the previous ten years is erased by the extra biweekly paycheck.

What if an employee arrives after the bonus year, and leaves before the next one? “Tough,” said Pittinsky. “And if a new person shows up for the bonus year, it’s like winning the lottery.”

This explanation does not mollify YU employees. “What about the interest on my money?” asks Rodney Hart, union delegate and distinguished member of the YU maintenance corps. “Who gave them permission to skim off my paycheck?”

Accounting Director Resnick had a different explanation for the uneven divisor. Due to leap years and the 365th odd day in every regular year, the actual number of workdays over a four year period averages out (after an extremely complicated and convoluted set of computations) to 1043.571 workdays. Divided by four, this gives a divisor of 26.089, which is then rounded up to 26.1. “Everyone gets their money,” said Resnick. “Even I get paid biweekly at the rate of 26.1.”

Yet employees challenge this explanation as well, and are demanding a thorough accounting with the Payroll Department. “I don’t trust them one bit,” said Bernice Katz, a senior librarian. “I want to know why my paychecks don’t add up.”

THE COMMENTATOR

Would Like To Wish All Yeshiva
University Students Good Luck
With Their Finals

The Palestinian Problem

Continued from page 14

Palestinian history is, has to be examined if a true understanding of '48 is to be realized.

A recent example of a myth debunked, or more precisely deflated, is that of the massacre at the village of Deir Yassin, which is now the Jerusalem suburb of Har Nof. For years, in an attempt to obtain sympathy, the Arabs have claimed that 250 unarmed Arabs, including women and children, were savagely murdered and raped by the Irgun and the Stern gang. After a careful review by historians, both in Israel and in Beir Zayit University, it was determined that about 120 people were killed, mostly in armed battle. While there were instances of rape and cold-blooded murder by the Irgun, by and large the entire incident was blown out of proportion. This revelation received much deserved press coverage in almost every Jewish publication, ranging from the *Jerusalem Report* to the *Jewish Press*.

Not surprisingly, or in fact quite naturally, when Israeli historians debunk Israeli myths they receive no press coverage and are completely ignored. It is much easier for us to go on living our myth instead of facing hurtful facts. Only when the "New Historians" challenged Palestinian myths did we listen. When they challenged our own, we closed our ears.

One of the greatest Israeli myths is that most Arabs left their homes on orders from the Arab High Command. To support this myth, the oft-quoted scandalous canard "their leaders told them to leave" was concocted. Assiduous research has shown this to be false. Like all successful myths it contained a kernel of truth, however small. In Haifa, which contained a sizable Arab population amongst a Jewish majority, Arab league representatives ordered the residents to leave after the Hagganah laid siege to the Arab quarter.

However, for the most part, Arab leaders in the rest of the country made relatively futile attempts to prevent the Palestinians from abandoning their homes. They did this as the refugee tide turned from a trickle to a flood under the hammer blows of Tochnit Dalet, the Hagganah code name for the operation to secure the coastal strip and other strategic areas of Israel.

For the most part the Arab leaders failed to keep their people from fleeing. One by one, as villages fell to the vastly better organized Hagganah units, Arabs fled, fearing what the Zionists might do to them. In many cases it was fear of the well-known brutality of the Irgun and the Lehi which precipitated the flight. Some villages were subject to forced evacuation by the Hagganah, especially if they were in strategic areas. But for the most part, there were no expulsions. The Arab exodus was caused by fear, both real and imagined, and not by orders from the Arab league. It was also brought about by the deliberate and systematic efforts of the Hagganah, whether direct expulsions, terrorism, whispering campaigns, or tricking the people into leaving by telling them they would be allowed to return in a few days or weeks.

A great deal of light has been shed on the causes of the Arab exodus ever since the opening of the Jewish Agency and Hagganah archives in the mid 1980's. One document in particular is an IDF intelligence report entitled "The Emigration of the Arabs of Palestine in the Period 1/12/1947-1/6/1948." The document was produced by the IDF intelligence service during the first truce

of the 1948 war. The report outlines the 11 major causes of the Arab exodus and lists them in order of importance.

Hagganah operations against Arab population centers was listed as being the primary reason, being responsible for approximately 55% of the exodus. Another 15% of the exodus is attributed to joint Irgun and Lehi operations, specifically in the central region of Gush Dan. All in all, the report concludes that the direct military operations carried out by the nascent state caused 70% of the exodus. According to the report only 5% of the flight resulted from Arab orders to evacuate and only 2% was a direct result of Israeli expulsion. Some Israelis source claim that there were significantly more expulsions than the report cited. According to Hagganah officer and military historian, Meir Pa'il, about a third of the Palestinian exodus was as a result of direct expulsions.

There is almost no credible evidence of a blanket order to Palestine's Arabs to flee. Had such an order been given, it would have found an echo in the thousands of documents produced by the Hagganah's Intelligence service, Jewish Agency Arab Department, Foreign Ministry Middle East Affairs department, memoranda and dispatches of various diplomatic posts in the area, and various radio monitoring services. In fact Israeli and Western archives refer to explicit "Arab orders" to stay put. While Arab leaders and radio stations were supposed to be broadcasting orders to the Arab population to leave, they were in fact calling on Arabs to stay put, and to those who fled, to return. Hagganah intelligence reports from May 5-6, 1948, repeatedly refer to a concerted campaign by Transjordan's king Abdullah, Damascus Radio, and Kaukji's Liberation Army calling on Palestinians to stand their ground and for those who left to return.

The myth of the radio broadcast was important to us because, if followed to its logical conclusion, it allowed all the blame to be placed on the refugees themselves. Since the 750,000 refugees simply left, we had no obligation to let them back. Furthermore, the nearly 1.4 million Palestinian and their descendants unto the third generation somehow deserve everything that has happened to them from 1948 and onward, all because of the sins of their leaders.

The myth eased our conscience; but the truth is that the decision not to let the refugees return home was a necessary evil. If a stable Jewish state was to be founded it could not be done with a large Arab minority in its midst. Once we understand that by not allowing the refugees to return we created the refugee problem, we can begin to understand the Palestinian attitude toward Zionism and the State of Israel.

If we continue to deny any legitimacy to Palestinian claims and continue to ignore historical facts, we can never hope to achieve any respite, let alone peace. It is important for us to reevaluate our image of Israel being just the innocent victim and the Palestinians the aggressors. We must reevaluate the myths we have created because, while they ease our conscience, they obfuscate our ability to analyze the situation from a political perspective. Both sides are the aggressors and both sides are the victims; that is the nature of the conflict. Resolution will only come when both sides realize that the "other" has rights.

Yeshiva Sports

Globetrotters Emerge Victorious in Intramural Championship Game

BY CARMİ GROSS

The championship game of this year's intramural basketball season showcased two great teams, the Lakers and the GlobeTrotters. In the first half, the overpowering Lakers broke away with a huge 34-19 lead. Led by Mark Hecht with eleven points, the Lakers were dominating the Trotters to the extent that the spectators expected the same pattern to continue into the second half.

The second half began with the Lakers scoring the first basket, thereby expanding their lead to 17. Slowly but surely, however, the Trotters started cutting the lead despite the fact that their big man, Russ, was resting on the bench due to foul trouble.

After a very quiet first half of only five points, Trotter Uri Yudowitz capitalized on the Lakers slouching defense by draining two big three pointers that sliced the lead even more.

The big surprise, however, came from the Trotters point guard, Ami Robinson, who is known for his slashing moves to the basket and his ability to find the open man for the easy bucket. He came up huge in the second half when he scored eleven of his game total, thirteen points.

With under a minute remaining and down by five, the Trotters had no choice but to foul, which put Laker Joey Aharon at the line for two free throws. Although he sank the first one, the point did not count because of a lane violation committed by his own teammate. Joey then missed the sec-

ond.

So as not to burn any extra time off the clock, Robinson rushed down the court to find himself wide open from three point range, and to quote Dan Patrick of ESPN, "he hit nothing but the bottom of the net." Now, only down by two, the Trotters once again fouled Joey as soon as the ball was inbounded. Joey missed the next two free throws as well allowing the Trotters to regain possession of the ball and call a quick time out to set up a last second shot.

With only five seconds left in regulation, no one knew who Coach Steve Melner would select to take the final shot. Would it be Robinson, Yudewitz or league MVP Akiva Sausen? This question would soon be answered. The ball was inbounded to Robinson and then outleted to Sausen, who only had one man to beat, the Lakers' big man Alex Shaqamurav. Sausen penetrated straight to the hoop ignoring all defenders, and threw up a prayer that was answered. "We're going into over time."

In overtime, the Lakers fell apart. After a quick three by Yudowitz, Mark Hecht and Kimelman picked up two costly technical fouls. Consequently, on free throws alone, the Trotters were able to build an eight point lead. Yudowitz shot 9-12 at the line in OT for the Trotters, a stat that contributed to the game's outcome. Before time had expired, the celebration had begun with picture taking, Captain Pinki Mickli being showered with an ice bucket, and continued fun throughout the night. Congratulations.

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Annual Athletic Awards Dinner Honors YU Standouts

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

On Monday April 27th, approximately hundred varsity student-athletes, along with their respective team coaches and academic deans, gathered in Weissberg Commons to partake in the 1998 annual athletic awards banquet. The dinner featured opening remarks from Dr. Jeffrey Gurock about the important role of athletics in Judaism, the presentation of awards by athletic director Dr. Richard Zerneck, several rounds of applause for Stan Watson, and surprisingly, a meal not from the YU cafeteria's dinner menu.

In addition to team letters, certificates, plaques, and watches were awarded to one-year, two-year, three-year, and four-year players, respectively. Each coach from the ten undergraduate teams personally handed a Coach's Award to the 1998 most valuable player on his/her team. Coach's awards went to Heidi Baker, women's tennis; Yedida Goldman, women's fencing; Shana May and Sheila Wiener, women's basketball; Avery Jutkowitz, men's wrestling; Ruslan Kimyagarov, men's volleyball; Tsvi Zilbershteyn, men's tennis; Oren Koslowe, men's golf; Akiva Herzfeld - Saber, and Shaun Azari - Foil, men's fencing; Yitzchak Motzen, men's cross country; and Joel Jacobson and Alon Zaibert, men's basketball.

Following the coach's awards, a total of eight special recognition awards, three trophies and five plaques were distributed. Of the trophies, Senior Brian Wein was given the Bernard "Red" Sarachek Award for being the most outstanding individual

in basketball, the sport that Sarachek founded at YU. Similarly, Senior Yekutiel Sandman received the Arthur D. Tauber Award in fencing for being most emblematic of the man for whom the award was named. Shammai Ellman's sportsmanship in wrestling earned him the Henry Wittenberg Award.

The remaining plaques, the most prestigious awards of the evening, were designated for five exceptional student-athletes. Josh Hasten, the number one Macs tennis player from 1995-1998 and arguably the best tennis player in YU history, received the Emile Offenbacher Memorial Award for being the most outstanding YC senior athlete. Another leading tennis player, Shai Samet, and NCAA fencing competitor Yekutiel Sandman, were co-winners of the Norman Palefski Memorial Award which goes to the most outstanding YC senior scholar-athlete. Amongst the women, Shana May, who led this year's Lady Macs in scoring and rebounding, took home the Eastern College Athletic Conference Merit Award as the most outstanding SCW senior scholar-athlete. And finally, the recipient of the SCW Athletic Award to the most outstanding female senior athlete was Shaindy Frankel, yet another tennis star.

Although only a handful of those attending the dinner went home carrying special awards, according to Dr. Zerneck, the winners included every student-athlete at YU who somehow manages to find the time, effort, and energy to participate in collegiate sports amidst the rigorous dual curriculum.

Yeshiva Sports

Tennis Team Completes Fourth Consecutive Undefeated Season

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

The YU tennis team concluded its fourth consecutive undefeated season last week, with easy wins over York College and Bard College.

The wins gave the Macs a perfect 8-0 record this year and 37 consecutive victories since 1994. Unfortunately, the final match against Bard brought to an end the college careers of three of YU's most successful tennis players; senior tri-captains Josh Hasten, Tsvi Zilbershteyn, and Shai Samet.

Hasten, the number one seed, finished with a amazing 25-3 singles record over three seasons. Similarly, Zilbershteyn, the Independent Athletic Conference rookie-of-the-year as a freshman and one of the rare four-year tennis stars, posted an impressive 18-6 record in singles. Finally, Samet, who also paired up with Hasten in doubles for the past three years, went 18-2 in

singles alone.

The team's success was reflected at YU's annual athletic awards dinner, where Hasten received the Emile Offenbacher Award for best graduating athlete while Samet took home the Norman Palefski Award for most outstanding scholar-athlete. In addition, a banner will be hung up in the MSAC to honor the tennis team's four straight undefeated seasons, 1994-1998.

In the 9-0 shutout of Bard early in May, Hasten and Samet won in singles and doubles as did Jeff Taub, Joseph Weilgus, Micha Porat, and Steven Pollack. Last month, the Macs easily defeated York by the score of 7-1.

Next year's top returning player is 1998 Rookie-of-the-Year Jeff Taub who put up a remarkable 6-0 record in his first year at YU. Other top returning players are Micha Porat, Joseph Weilgus, Ari Raskas, and David Jesselson. Good Luck.

The Commentator

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