

COMMENTATOR

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HOUSING DENIED TO HOMOSEXUAL COUPLES

BY CHANAN HOSCHANDER

On June 24, the American Civil Liberties Union and its Lesbian and Gay Rights Project filed suit against Yeshiva University and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine for denying shared campus housing to the gay and lesbian partners of students. The lawsuit, which the ACLU claims is the first of its kind in the nation, was filed in New York State Supreme Court on behalf of medical students Sara Levin and Maggie Jones as well as Gila Wildfire in her capacity as Secretary of the Einstein Association of Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals (EAGLB).

Housing policy at AECOM's Bronx campus is administered by YU. Low cost apartments across the street from the primary educational facilities are offered only to students of the medical school and their spouses and children. AECOM housing includes studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments. There is a waiting list for each type of apartment and requests are filled on a first-come, first-serve basis. However, the policy provides that "married couples, regardless of their position on the waiting list, receive priority for studio apartments, after providing acceptable proof of marriage." Market rates for comparable housing off-campus are about twice as expensive as those offered in AECOM's "Low Housing," as the complex is referred to by students.

Sara Levin, 26, is a fourth-year

medical student who first applied for shared housing on behalf of herself and her domestic partner of six years, Carla Richmond, when she entered AECOM in 1996. Levin was told at that time that the school would not honor domestic partnerships. Since New York State law does not presently recognize same-sex marriages, Levin was not able to satisfy the requirement for shared housing. She claims, however, that she initially believed the school would change its policy if she made a reasonable appeal.

Maggie Jones, 23, is beginning her second year at AECOM. Jones

and the plaintiffs tried unsuccessfully to convince the University to reverse its policy. Finally, they filed a complaint with the New York state Supreme Court charging discrimination based on sexual orientation and marital status. The plaintiffs are seeking reversal of the policy, as well as unspecified damages for emotional distress and extra housing and commuting costs.

In a statement released to the public, Levin claimed that her decision to pursue legal action against YU and AECOM was "not one I easily made." However, she felt that if she allowed herself to be "relegated to

the closet, which has been one of the most powerful weapons of homophobia and is certainly one of the intentions of this policy, then I am compromising my integrity." She added that there have been "many gay and lesbian students before me who [have] confronted the ugly faces of homophobia while at Yeshiva University and the medical school. These students made the same appeals and received the same denials that I have." According to Levin, the message of the policy is clear: "Neither I nor my family are welcome at this institution."

Opinion on campus is guarded. A number of medical students wondered why the plaintiffs' complaint has been directed against the University, which requires proof of a committed relationship in the form of a marriage license, and not with the state which prevents gay and lesbian couples from obtaining that license.

A statement released by AECOM, explained that "It is the policy of Yeshiva University and its Albert Einstein College of Medicine to comply with all laws including anti-discrimination laws applicable to student housing. Our housing policy is applied equally to all applicants for student housing without regard to their sexual orientation." It added that "on the advice of our attorneys we will have no further comment at this time." Attorneys for the University also declined to comment.

added needed dormitory space but did nothing to add classrooms. With Manhattan property prices reaching stratospheric heights, the Stern College Board made what is collectively regarded by YU administrators as a colossal blunder. The property adjacent to the Midtown center on the corner of 34th and Lexington went on the market, but, owing to the Stern Board's refusal, the University failed to purchase the lot. Bought by the Catholic Diocese of New York instead, construction promptly began on a the future home of a religious seminary. The din from the construction has rendered the classrooms overlooking the site

Gay Einstein Students and ACLU File Suit Against YU for Alleged Discrimination

first requested shared housing for herself and her partner, Joslyn Hidalgo, last year. At Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, Jones and Hidalgo were registered under its domestic partner program which allowed them to qualify for Stanford's housing and health benefits. Both Jones and Levin eventually resorted to the rental of apartments in Brooklyn where they claim the rent is more affordable.

After having been denied the right to shared housing, Levin and Jones and EAGLB, which represents other students with similar requests, contacted the ACLU. Lawyers for the

the closet, which has been one of the most powerful weapons of homophobia and is certainly one of the intentions of this policy, then I am compromising my integrity." She added that there have been "many gay and lesbian students before me who [have] confronted the ugly faces of homophobia while at Yeshiva University and the medical school. These students made the same appeals and received the same denials that I have." According to Levin, the message of the policy is clear: "Neither I nor my family are welcome at this institution."

In Jones' statement, she stressed that because of the denial of shared housing "Joslyn and I had to contend with considerable financial and emotional expenses that other married couples are not asked to endure." She contended that "queer students' disproportionate lack of access denies us many valuable opportunities to establish ties to other young physicians and to benefit significantly from interactions with older stu-

YU Surges to 42 in U.S. News Survey

Current Rank is Strongest Showing to Date

BY ADAM MOSES

Yeshiva University surged from 48 to 42 in the recently unveiled U.S. News and World Report ranking of national universities. This showing in the U.S. News evaluation scheme is Yeshiva's most impressive to date and marks the third consecutive year the University has garnered a position in the prestigious first tier.

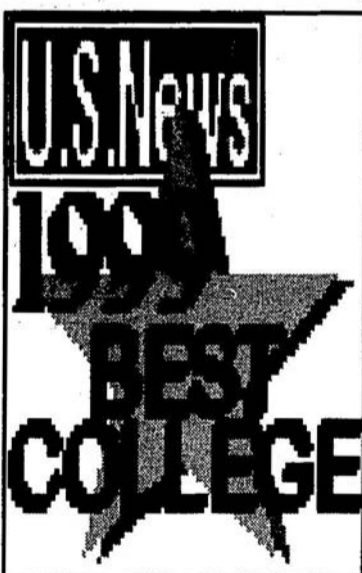
Yeshiva College Dean Norman Adler took this development in stride. "Of course we're in the first tier. Our students have a high level of intellect and are met with a comparably impressive faculty to further enlighten their intellectual growth. We don't understand how good we really are here at Yeshiva University."

Yeshiva College Associate Dean and Pre-Law Advisor Michael Hecht provided additional insight into the recent ranking successes. "The unique nature of this institution yields unique students who spend their college years in the most rigorous undergraduate program in the nation. You don't have to be Superman to excel at YU...but it helps. The strength of the student body really boosts our university."

As word of Yeshiva's performance trickled across campus, students appeared to respond with genuine enthusiasm. Ben Mantell, a YC junior, gushed, "This is incredible. Do you realize what this means? I am so happy." Mantell proceeded to call his parents in California to alert them to what he clearly regarded as a momentous occurrence. He later remarked, "It's my life goal for us to overtake Brandeis. We're almost there. Go Macs."

The desire to exact rankings vengeance against traditional adversaries Brandeis, New York University, and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute was a pervasive feature of many of this journalist's encounters with Yeshiva students around campus. The animus directed against rival school Brandeis was particularly acute. One disgruntled Yeshiva student sought to burn a Brandeis banner in protest when he learned that the Waltham, Massachusetts school was still perched comfortably ahead of YU in the U.S. News ranking. Amid the feisty inter-university contentiousness there emerged an unmistakable glimmer of school pride.

Parents of Yeshiva students



were not immune to this odd blend of euphoria and pyromania. Mrs. Shelly Schochet, the mother of a YU senior and incoming freshman, remarked, "Two of my children have chosen to attend YU. In light of the recent survey, I am even more proud they have chosen to attend this fine institution."

Some Specifics

The methodology employed by U.S. News to arrive at the published results took account of a broad array of considerations including academic reputation, student SAT

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Major Real Estate Deal Provides Stern with Sorely Needed Space

BY MORDECHAI FISHMAN

in a step intended to keep the physical facilities of Stern College in line with the increasing size of its student body, Yeshiva University has acquired effective control of a large Midtown Manhattan property at 205-215 Lexington Avenue between 32nd and 33rd streets, *The Commentator* has learned.

According to sources within the YU administration, the University has been searching for a real estate acquisition to alleviate crowding on the Midtown Campus for some time. A dire housing shortage compounded by classroom overcrowding left little space for SCW to expand. The opening of the Schottenstein Residence Hall

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S E R I A L I T Y

Giving Thanks

One of the cardinal moral tenets of the Jewish faith is *Hakarat HaTov*, graciously acknowledging those who have done us a good turn. In all matters, ranging from the inconsequential to the Divine, we are taught to appreciate and give thanks to those whose kindness we benefit from and whose munificence brightens our existence. It is especially appropriate in the period before the new year to take stock of the numerous kind deeds showered upon us by others and acknowledge them as such.

In this vein, the editors and the governing board of the sixty-third volume of *The Commentator* would like to thank the editors and governing board that preceded us at the helm of this publication. Working together enriched us all and taught us what was involved in creating a newspaper. Together we spent many a sleepless night; together we watched the sun rise over the dappled rooftops of Washington Heights; together we crafted stories while writing chapters in our own personal tales.

For all that and more, we thank you. Wherever the paths you walk may lead you; to law school or yeshiva, to the rat race or to a gentler realm, the impact of your kindness will be long felt by those of us who received it.

Uptown Attitude

The University's recent real estate acquisitions in Midtown seemingly indicate an aggressive attitude towards the future of Stern College, and should be applauded as such. Showing the foresight and financial will necessary to plan for a growing student body, the administration has made the requisite investments to ensure that the physical resources keep pace with the constantly expanding student population.

We can only hope that such attitudes are infectious and will spread uptown. While we have not suffered through ignominies the like of having eight women forced to live in the same room, there is a definite sense that the main campus is running out of room.

The Independent Housing Program is a stopgap measure at best. Yes, compared to last year's debacle the program has been running smoothly with minimum fuss. There are no irate parents threatening to lay down in the traffic on Amsterdam Avenue if their son doesn't get moved to a dorm room and students are not attempting to march on Belfer in the quest for toilet paper. Yet the arrangement is unsatisfactory from a long-term standpoint. Students are isolated from their peers on campus. Living in buildings with families and local residents, the ambience of dorm life, a critical component in the college experience, is found to be lacking. From a security standpoint, the buildings cannot be protected with the same degree of confidence that the dorms are.

The solution is obvious and must be implemented with all possible haste. A new dormitory building is needed to cope with the record enrollments that show no sign of abating. The need for the administration to start shopping for real estate uptown is just as pressing, notwithstanding the less glamorous neighborhood.

Religion and Progress

These are trying times for our great nation. We have sustained a series of troubling assaults against diplomatic installations abroad. We are pitted against a leader who, in the name of his god, commands a small army of "holy warriors" willing to give their lives for their cause. Their animus toward our country is a function of their inability to reconcile their theological convictions with the changing of the times. The result is indiscriminate, tragic bloodshed in lands for whose residents the dispute is foreign.

The mission of this University is to harmonize the values espoused by our tradition with contemporary societal mores. The success of Yeshiva is a testament to the viability of the doctrine upon which it was founded.

Our responsibility as leaders in this world of competing spheres of influence, secular and religious, is to demonstrate that the two need not be at odds. Indeed, constructive engagement, in our view, is of benefit to the interests of both spheres. If only this insight was not lost on so many.

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P I C T O R I A L





MESSAGE FROM THE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

RABBI DR. NORMAN LAMM

SOME FRIENDLY ADVICE

On behalf of the faculties and the administration, I am delighted to welcome you all -- old students and new ones -- to our undergraduate campuses. *Berukhim ha-ba'im!* Your main function is to grow--intellectually, Jewishly, academically, culturally. The program of *Torah U'Maddah* is a most demanding one, especially because it insists on the integrity of each of the two poles and expects that you will commit your every effort to excelling in your studies. If you are merely smart, you will figure out all kinds of ways, legal or devious, to get out as soon as you can. But if you are wise, you will take full advantage of the remarkable resources of both *Torah* and *Maddah* that you will find here at Yeshiva. There is no other place where you can have available for you such an array of distinguished *talmidei chakhamim* for your Jewish studies, and outstanding academic faculty for your college studies. Exploit this golden opportunity; do not neglect it!

But there is yet one other precious opportunity you have here for the next few years, and that is--the friends you will make, the networking of like-minded young Jews and Jewesses who are resolved to exploit the fantastic intellectual assets of Yeshiva and are determined to rebuild and enhance the Jewish world

beyond the one they find before them now. Nourish these friendships well. In years to come you will reap the benefits of this kind of social and intellectual-ideological companionship.

Immediately before sounding the shofar, we recite the words of *Tehillim* (Ps. 47:6) "*Alah Elokim bi'teruah*," which loosely translated means that God, as it were, is exalted at the sound of the *teruah* or straight blast of the shofar. Hasidim have an interesting interpretation of that verse. They say that *teruah* is derived from the word *reia*--both words from the root of *resh* and *ayin*--which means friend or friendship. (I have seen this in the name of R' Shlomo Leib of Lenchno and, a bit earlier, R' Shneur Zalman of Liady.) The love and loyalty amongst friends is important to the Almighty, and he is exalted when those who serve Him do so in fellowship and mutual love and esteem.

I hope that you will succeed not only in your studies but also in finding and holding on to these deep and mutually fruitful friendships, and that the spirit of camaraderie will indeed assist you in growing from *ve'havta le'reiakha kamokha* to *ve'havta et Hashem Elokekha*.

May you be inscribed *le'shana tovah u-shenat chayyim ve'shalom*.

Anticipation and Anxiety

BY MASHGIACH RUCHANI
RABBI YOSEF BLAU

For returning students the start of a new school year at Yeshiva is filled with excitement and anticipation. These years are a time of religious and personal growth. At Yeshiva, one has the opportunity for strengthening friendships and developing life-long relationships with mentors, while values become internalized and career plans are firmed.

Emotions are different for the beginning student. For those returning from Israel doubts exist about the permanence of changes made and how to integrate the old and new elements in their lives. Those coming directly upon graduation from high school and early admission students are nervous about the extent of the changes from high school. The anticipation of the returnees is balanced by the anxiety of the new students.

While the bulk of responsibility of mak-

ing the welcome positive and easing the tension rightfully falls on the administration and staff, much can be done as well by older students. Warmth and friendship can come from all of us. For most students Yeshiva is the largest yeshiva or school they have attended, and by far the most complex. The opportunities are not obvious to those who are overwhelmed and the demands appear to outweigh the potential rewards. A pleasant smile and a little friendly advice and support can accomplish wonders.

Perhaps balancing anticipation and anxiety would be healthy for all of us as we start the year. It is the beginning of Elul, a time for reflection. Complacency limits growth as much as fear. Let us recognize the great potential that exists for deepening our commitments while studying at Yeshiva while not ignoring the full extent of the challenge. Working together is a critical component in maximizing success.

Welcome Back Students

DEAN OF SY SYMS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
HAROLD NIERENBERG, Ph.D.

On behalf of the Faculty, Staff and Administration of the Sy Syms School of Business, I am pleased to welcome you to Yeshiva University. You are about to embark on one of the more important milestones in your life -- earning a degree at a renowned university. Your experience here over the next three or four years will have a profound effect on your lives and you should take full advantage of the opportunities Yeshiva University can offer you. These include: a world-class Jewish Studies program, outstanding secular programs, a full range of extracurricular activi-

ties, and the opportunity to develop friendships that will endure for years to come.

Those of you entering the Sy Syms School of Business will find a demanding program that will serve you well when you complete your studies. We are also extremely "student friendly" and the faculty, staff and administration are always available to meet with you and help you with your questions or problems. As for me, my office is always open to one and all and I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you should you chose to see me for any reason.

My best wishes for success, and I look forward to greeting you three or four years from now at graduation.



FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ADAM MOSES

The Opportunity Now Lies Before You: *Grasp It!*

I welcome both beginning and returning students to Yeshiva for the fall semester. Amid the euphoric clamor spawned by this University's recent surge in the U.S. News and World Report rankings, we may have lost sight of the character of the undergraduate experience we have enrolled in Yeshiva to pursue. While the aforesaid success most assuredly augurs well for our institution, we must recall that our undergraduate experience dwells not in statistical charts but in substantive educational and extracurricular attainment.

The liberal education is, to my mind, the foundational component of the undergraduate experience. It is my sincere hope that Yeshiva students will continue to accord this time honored mission the deference it has earned by taking seriously the import of its charge. Only by enrolling in demanding courses in worthwhile disciplines can we assure that our Yeshiva experience is not reduced to the mind numbing pre-vocational drudgery that the liberal education has always sought to eschew.

But alas, the liberal education conceived of as a dry, purely academic enterprise bereft of the vitality of application surely will not suffice to render our undergraduate experience what we wish it to be. Theoretical abstraction in the absence of a mode for practical expression can be as stultifying as ignorance. Oliver Wendell Holmes recognized this when he observed, "The main part of intellectual education is not the acquisition of facts but learning how to make facts live." Thus, in my view, the undergraduate experience must seek to productively engage the activities of the broader educational community in which it finds itself in order to be truly meaningful.

Fortunately, Yeshiva has an abundance of student led extra-curricular societies. Less fortunately, precious few of these student organizations are active. Among the handful of active student entities, one has consistently emerged over the course of its sixty-three years as the leader. I speak of The Commentator, Yeshiva's preeminent undergraduate student publication and the defining instrument of undergraduate student expression at this University. I believe The Commentator deserves the attention of all students who wish to play a role in campus leadership.

But why should you devote your time to The Commentator? What does The Commentator do anyhow? As I see it, The Commentator fulfills two primary functional imperatives. First, it informs. This paper keeps students abreast of the developments that matter to them in a timely and engaging fashion. The Commentator provides comprehensive coverage of what transpires on campus at the administrative and student levels. We employ exceptional vigor to uncover stories of consequence and report on them thoroughly. The Commentator's mandate to inform is not bounded in scope by this University's hallowed halls. The Commentator's coverage purview extends beyond the confines of the campus to include a broad swath of Jewish communal concerns and themes of importance to university students.

The Commentator's second obligation 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 will not permit our sacrosanct rights to be sacrificed on the altar of student silence. That is why The Commentator musters a pronounced student check on administrative machinations that would trammel our interests. In the University sea of bureaucratic moral relativism, The Commentator is 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. 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 prohibiting 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. The Commentator functions as a meritocracy. Commentator staff members are awarded positional advance in a manner commensurate to 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.

I encourage you to get involved in The Commentator this year. By so doing, you will better this University and round out your undergraduate experience. A Commentator recruitment presentation will take place on Wednesday September 2. I hope to see you there.

Interview With University Dean of Students Dr. Efrem Nulman

The Office of Student Services is located on the fourth floor of Furst Hall, but for many students it may as well be an exotic locale; heard of and spoken about, but misunderstood and shrouded in mystery. In an attempt to demystify the office, its occupants, and its mission, *The Commentator* interviewed Dr. Efrem Nulman, University Dean of Students. Nulman is a PhD. In psychology with over twenty years experience working with adolescent and young adults. His last fourteen years have been spent in various capacities at YU, while concurrently doing independent research into addictive behavior and family therapy. He spoke with an added emphasis on the incoming students who are unfamiliar with YU and may be bewildered by the array of issues they may have to contend with.

The Commentator:

The Office of Student Services is an unknown quantity for many students here at the University. What is the job of the Office of Student Services?

Dean Nulman:

First and foremost, it is to provide students with a series of services that will hopefully be useful to them throughout their college careers. Counseling services for personal, psychological, and social issues; assistance with student activities; helping students deal with the maze and bureaucracy of being in YU; housing problems; more or less anything that is outside the classroom where we can be helpful our job is precisely that, to try to help students with whatever problems they face.

The Commentator:

So any aspect of student life that is not academic falls under the purview of Student Services?

Dean Nulman:

Specific services that fall under our office include housing, counseling, international student advisement, student activities, student government, disciplinary and psychiatric procedures, medical services, and things of that nature. These are directly under Student Services. Matters such as food services and security report to different areas, but we have a close working relationship with them. If there are issues that concern students or that need to be communicated in regard to those services our office should be the place to which they would come and we would try to be helpful. Our job is to advocate for student needs, and to implement what we think and what students think is best to really improve the quality of student life on campus.

The Commentator:

You say that you and your office represent the students on a variety of different issues. Why should a student with a problem come to you?

Dean Nulman:

That is a very good question. A student should come to us because we have a staff that is competent to deal with any of the issues that they might present to us in any of the areas described in my prior answer. I also understand why they wouldn't come to us, and frankly, over the last years that I have been in Yeshiva what I view as my greatest failure has been an inability to communicate effectively to students that the real reason they should come is not just professional competence, but that we really care about them as people.

The Commentator:

Your office is definitely seen as part of the administration, and students have an us-versus-them mentality. How is a student coming to your office with problems or complaints assured that you are going to help him?

Dean Nulman:

I don't know if he should be sure we are going to help him, but he can be sure that we are going to try. But he won't know that until he comes. Now I can tell you, if I want to get into it statistically, that roughly half of the student body did come to us for something within the categories of what we do during the course of the last academic year. That has been pretty consistent throughout the years. But yet, there is still a feeling that I pick up amongst students that we don't really care, or as you said, we are

part of the administration, which is true, we are part of the administration on the one hand....

The Commentator:

Look, students in this university know that on the average the administration is far more concerned with development, fund-raising, public relations, spin, etc., then they are with student concerns. The consumer is supposed to be king, and in this university every student knows that is not true. Why should that be different in your office?

Dean Nulman:

Well, I don't want to speak to the other parts of the university in which what you said may or may not be so. What I do want to clearly speak to, is that to students the main issue is trust. And you are right, there is no way that any young adult in college is going to fully trust an administrator in a university.

That is not just simply done; we have to earn it. So part of what I am saying is come to us, and let us earn it.

Students have the impression that if they come to us with an extremely personal or serious problem, firstly, they will not have privacy, and worse yet, they are going to be "busted" for whatever their behavior is. If a person comes for me for disciplinary reasons, yeah, they are going to be "busted" for whatever they might have done. But if a person comes to our office for help, then our job is to provide within a context of confidentiality the help that they need.

Obviously, where there is a case of someone trying to harm themselves or others there is no confidentiality. But otherwise, there is. Furthermore, our job is to be helpful, not to bust students; that is not what we view our role as doing, and that is not what we want to do, period. One of the things our office handles is disciplinary problems. So when there is a disciplinary problem within the institution we will be informed about it, there is going to be a clear procedure. A student will have the opportunity to be heard. There will be a decision, and then they will have the opportunity to appeal it, usually to me. This is with non-academic disciplinary matters.

But ninety to ninety-five percent of the matters we deal with are not disciplinary in nature. They are students who are coming, or ought to feel that they should come to us for help. In those cases, a student has to be reassured that they are going to be able to do this in a context of privacy and trust; that there will be a relationship with people who truly care about them, and that they are not going to be busted if they tell us something that otherwise might come to us in a different way.

The Commentator:

So if a student comes to you and has committed what under the student code of YU is considered a disciplinary infraction, you are guaranteeing that student confidentiality and privacy?

Dean Nulman:

If they are not going to harm themselves or others, we are going to say clearly that we are not there to bust them, we are there to help them, period. That is the instructions to the staff, that is what I do personally, and that is what we will do across the board. I urge students to come and test us.

The Commentator:

How are students going to know that you are for real?

Dean Nulman:

They are going to talk to each other. I can tell you, obviously without giving names, talk to people who have been here and they will tell you that what I said has been true. You are right, students won't know it and will always have doubts, so test it and find out for yourself. If there are issues that concern you, we can help. Whether its simple stuff, such as anxiety and panic when taking an exam, or problematic study habits, to the more complex social issues that people deal with, to issues having to do

with anxiety and depression up to the extremes of drugs, alcohol and suicide. If people are having problems in these types of areas, then come to us and we will do everything within our power to be helpful to you. All I can say, is go out and ask students who have talked to us and worked with us and I think what you will find for the most part is that we do have tremendous concern for the well-being of our students. But we cannot just say it. We have to prove it each day anew. And I am asking the student body to give us that chance to try to be helpful, knowing full well that you may not trust us because we are part of the administration, I totally understand that.

The Commentator:

What if a student comes to your offices and he does not trust you or he feels that the services that you are offering are not adequate for his problems?

Dean Nulman:

We have a panel of professional psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers, and

where appropriate, we will make referrals to those people. They are not members of the YU administration; they are not listed as part of the staff; you pay for them on your own; and your relationship in terms of payment is between you and them, ensuring confidentiality. It is a private service and we will be glad to make the referrals for the students who need them.

The Commentator:

Do you think that there is a perceived stigma within the Jewish community for anyone who cries for help or any young person who is perceived as being different from the rest of the pack of his or her colleagues?

Dean Nulman:

Well yes, I do think there is a stigma. I think the Jewish community needs to do a lot more to recognize that there are problems. And then, to limit judgmental and negative reactions to people who have problems and people who are really in pain, or experiencing loss or suffering. As Jews and as people, our first obligation is to show compassion, and to direct people to get the kind of help that they need, not to stigmatize them. I fully realize that there is within the Orthodox community more of a stigma; less than there was, but way more than there should be. I truly believe so, and this has been my experience over the last twenty years. My hope is

that people will do what is truly Jewish and have compassion. If a person is stuck with a problem in life, encourage them to get the help they need. Don't discourage them by judging them, or looking down on them in any way. That holds for any problem; from the simple to the extreme. Our job is not to judge people, it is to help them.

The Commentator:

YU is part of the modern world and in certain aspects we are no different than any other national university. There is a significant percentage of the student body that use or abuse drugs and alcohol. Drug and alcohol usage is in violation of the disciplinary code of YU, and grounds for expulsion from housing or from the university. In theory, your office is the place to turn for help, yet at the same time you can "bust" them as well. Why should a student feel comfortable turning to you for help?

Dean Nulman:

You used the word significant to describe the problem. As I said last year to *The Observer*, there is a growing drug and alcohol problem within the Jewish community in general. This obviously affects Jewish schools as well, and we are not unique in feeling this effect. I would differ with you in your use of the word significant.

Having said all that, if a student is going to break the rules and get caught, they will pay the price for breaking a rule of the school, and a very serious rule at that; something we will not tolerate within the school. On the other hand, if a student comes to us because they

want help, and they are volunteering to us that they need help, then our job is to help them. A student abusing drugs or alcohol should come to us because they are having a problem and they need help, and we care about them and we want to be helpful. Most importantly, when you are playing around with things like this you are playing around with your physical well-being, and when someone plays around with their physical (as well as emotional) well-being, we have an obligation as I see it to try and be helpful to them. That is what we will do. Our job is then, is not to "bust." It is to be helpful in that area. But if student is caught, they will be busted, and they will pay the price.

The Commentator:

So you are saying, that if you have two students in the exact same position with the same issues to deal with, and one student walks into your door -- he has your guarantee of confidentiality and will not be busted. But if the second student is caught by his dorm counselor or security on the exact same matter he will face disciplinary action?

Dean Nulman:

What the outcome is going to be you judge on a case by case and student by student basis. Even in discipline cases one is going to take a very firm stand, but one is going to make a judgement. That does not only apply to drugs and alcohol, that applies to anything. Not every student who misuses the computer room, for example, is going to be asked to leave the school even though they have broken the disciplinary code. We are going to make a judgement by taking a look at the whole person, and we will see what is the best thing we can do for the individual and for the school in these circumstances.

If a student comes to us however, and says I have a problem in any one of numerous areas, again, our job is to try to help him. Who is told about that is also dependent on the relationship we form with the student. In most of the circumstances that I have dealt with students have at one point wanted to bring their parents into the mix in some way....

The Commentator:

Even if the student is adamantly against parental involvement?

Dean Nulman:

We will deal with that depending on what the issue is. If there is a potential harm to themselves or to others, then they are going to have no choice in terms of parental involvement. If they are doing something that is clearly not harming themselves or others, then we will first build a relationship with them to see what is it that we need to do to be helpful, because you don't do the same thing every time. Yet the overall context is yes, there is privacy. How far that privacy extends depends on the circumstances of what is presented, as well as some of what a student wants as you build a relationship with them.

The Commentator:

There is definitely a segment of the YU student population, both here and downtown at Stern, that is sexually active. There is a lack of information and resources on campus concerning safe sex and sexually transmitted diseases. What does your office offer to a student walking in your door?

Dean Nulman:

The same as we offer for any problem. We also have the medical professionals from Beth Israel on campus who are knowledgeable and trained to deal with these areas, and we will ask them to be helpful in guiding students in this regard as well.

The Commentator:

Any closing remarks to the student body and the incoming students in particular?

Dean Nulman:

I am hopeful that students who are new here feel that they will have a good experience and will feel welcomed on campus, and if they do encounter difficulties, small or large, we hope that they will come in and talk to us. For students who are returning, we hope they will give us a shot and give us a chance, and will come forward when there is a problem and they need our help.

"...to provide, within a context of confidentiality, the help that they (the students) need."

"Our job is to be helpful, not to bust students."

"Good" Advice for Incoming Students

This year, September 8th is the most important date on the YU academic calendar. For incoming students, Sept. 8th serves as a day of reflection, a day of atonement, and most importantly, a day of restoration. Sept. 8th, after all, is the last day to enter a class in Yeshiva College without special permission from a teacher.

Most incoming students have registered for classes by now. I would like to think that the crucial decision of choosing a course-load was an informed one, arrived at after rigorous academic inquiry. In a way, for most students it was.

When I first matriculated at Yeshiva University, over two years ago, I didn't have much guidance (I still harbor a pronounced feeling that there is very poor academic guidance in this school). I had met a few of the professors when I first arrived at YU and I immediately knew that they were of the highest intellectual caliber, but for the most part I had very little in the way of academic direction. So I simply registered for the courses that interested me.

I got lucky. I quickly found myself enjoying my courses, doing a lot of work and getting decent grades. I discovered that the University was brimming with scholars of breathtaking dimensions. To be sure, friends of mine were languishing in terrible required courses taught by diabolically insipid teachers, and many of them were also getting good grades. But somehow, I felt more secure than my friends in the courses I was taking.

After my first semester at Yeshiva University, like most of this year's incoming class, I found myself researching what further classes to take. Naturally, I approached older students for advice. The question that I asked those older students--one that I'm sure is familiar to most--was as ambiguous as it was revealing. I simply asked what classes were "good". Furthermore, I asked which professors were "good". As you can well imagine, the question elicited a variety of responses.

Some answered: "yea, take Dr.-----, he's great. He's given the same test since 300 BCE". Other students urged me to "take Dr.-----, he's boring as death, but you never-- and I mean never-- have to show up to class." Some stu-

dents, however, were kind enough to direct me to the professors who educated with great skill and passion, the teachers who were informative creative and edifying. Nevertheless, most students assumed I was searching for the quick fix, the easy A, and the blow-off *par excellence*.

I can't tell you I was astounded. In fact, I actually valued the advice. Now I knew which classes were inane and which professors were uninspiring boobs. Now I knew where to locate the dumbed-out denizens of this University and the insidious garbage that is taught in this promising, but seemingly decaying institution. In short, now I knew which courses not to take.

This information, more than anything else, has guided me in this university. Knowing who were the "good" professors, and who were the good professors, has allowed me to shape my schedule to fit my academic needs. So take this advice: find out who the best professors are, and if you can fit them into your requirement-ridden schedule, take their courses. Your knowledge gained will be immeasurable and

Josh Abraham Columnist

your college experience will be significantly enhanced.

This advice, of course, will sound naive and irresponsible to some upper classman.

It seems that too many students in this school lose their original academic enthusiasm. After a few semesters, many students become hopelessly jaded and forget the value of college education. As a result, they dish out "good" advice. While it is tempting to follow such advice, it's ultimately ruinous.

Look around our various Jewish communities. Many students don't realize this, but once out of school, most people have precious little time for anything besides work. As a result, they are intellectually frozen in their college education; and that usually begins to atrophy after time anyway.

I was initiated into this tiresome lifestyle this summer. Every night, after my nine-to-five job, I was beleaguered and completely drained. In this condition I could only muster up the strength to eat, watch TV and hang out in the city. In fact, I discovered that Washington DC after work is a

vast expanse of people trying mindlessly to relax and salvage some enjoyment in their labor-filled day. Well, I was one of those people; and although my experience this summer was anything but academic, it certainly made me appreciate the hallowed walls of this Yeshiva and this University.

In other words, this is it. You presently find ourselves in a profoundly unique institution. It could very well be your last scholastic incubation before you enter the mundane and regimental work-force. Don't take it for granted. This is a time of unbounded academic inquiry and limitless intellectual growth. You must therefore approach your education with a sense of dire urgency. You won't regret it.

Thus, some more advice is in order: Don't waste time taking those childish high-school-level Jewish History courses where all you have to do is memorize last year's notes for last year's test. Yeah, that Stern girl has great handwriting, but it's not yours. After all, what's at stake is your appreciation and understanding of the very heritage you embody and seek to maintain. Why would you treat that lightly? There are great JH courses, taught by world-class professors that are challenging, innovative--even iconoclastic. The value of a good JH course is both boundless and enduring.

Ultimately you want to be able to write. You want to express yourself clearly and effectively, not like blundering philistine. Writing is a skill that will help you in countless ways. Take a quality English Comp. course. It will hold you in great stead.

Literature courses seem to me to be difficult to harness. Some of them, before you can say "Shakespeare," become intellectually flighty and quickly morph into reckless displays of pseudo-philosophical banter. There is nothing worse than a course with unrestrained discussion and groundless discourse. Not to worry, though. There are great Literature professors in this University that offer engaging and worthy courses. Take advantage of them.

If you enjoy poli-sci, take the best poli-sci professors. If you are interested in finance, take the best finance professors. It is not difficult to find out who they are. Simply ask your upper classman who they think is "good". And when you find out who the most qualified professors are register for their courses. If you realize that you've registered for a slew of ill-advised courses, you can drop them. But you only have until Sept. 8th.

THE COMMENTATOR

is looking for students interested in contributing to the most powerful student voice at Yeshiva University.

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YESHIVA COLLEGE

CAMPUS NEWS

Swelling Student Population Sets New Enrollment Record

Independent Housing at Full Capacity

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

Continuing the recent growth trend at Yeshiva University, undergraduate enrollment at both the men's and women's campuses has reached a record high. The burgeoning ranks of new students have the university's housing operating at maximum capacity, including last year's newly inaugurated Independent Housing Program.

Enrollments are calculated by the office of admissions and are projected on a sliding scale, from a conservative to a maximum estimate. Undergraduate men's enrollment for the Fall '98 semester had been projected between 1110 and 1150 students, in comparison to the Fall '97 enrollment of 1104. As of press time the actual enrollment was 1132 and counting.

"We expect the men's enrollment to reach the higher end of the scale," said Dr. John Fisher, the newly appointed Director of Enrollment Management, "while the women's enrollment should fall somewhere in the middle of our projections."

Undergraduate women's enrollment at Stern College was projected between 871 and 895 students, in comparison to the Fall '97 enrollment of 847.

"We have become more selective while at the same time accepting more people," said Michael Kranzler, Dean of Admissions. "I think this reflects the higher caliber of student Yeshiva University is attracting."

The incoming class on the men's campus is approximately 375 students, with 270 of those returning from Israel and 105 fresh out of high school. Roughly 235 women are returning from Israel, with another 85 neophytes joining them from high school as freshmen for an incoming class total of 310.

Alumni Association Revamping Activities

New President Announces New Initiatives

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

In what is intended to mark a new era in its history, the Yeshiva College Alumni Association elected a new leadership team at its annual meeting in June. Led by its new president Stuart Verstandig '80Y, the association is planning to expand the programs and services it provides to the more than 7,000 current and former Yeshiva College students throughout the world.

Traditionally underutilized, the alumni associations have been "slumbering giants" according to Robert Saltzman, Director of University Alumni Affairs. "Our goal is to revitalize the alumni associations and take advantage of the wealth of experience and resources that they offer." Saltzman stressed that Alumni Affairs is becoming far more involved with undergraduate life, and programs are in the works involving networking and mentoring as well as job placement. He cited the placing of Alumni Association-sponsored phone cards into the orientation packets as "merely the beginning" of the expansion of alumni activities.

One of the Alumni Office's recent initiatives was the first ever summit meeting of the presidents of Yeshiva University's three undergraduate schools' alumni associations. Notwithstanding the obvious common ground between the three associations, joint projects involving all three have never been a concrete reality.

Verstandig met in August with Yonina Langer '71S, president of the Stern College Alumnae Association, and Elizabeth Naor '94S, president of the Sy Syms School of Business Alumni Association, to discuss common needs and opportunities of students and alumni. The three leaders agreed to form joint committees to look into such areas as mentoring, career development, student relations and programming.

Both Verstandig and Saltzman stressed that a vital component of their activities is student feedback, and requested that students with ideas or proposals contact them.

Any students who wish to get involved with alumni-student relations, can contact the office of University Affairs at 317 Belfer Hall, or call at (212) 960-5373, or e-mail at alumdesk@ymail.yu.edu.

Housing Situation

The growing student body has forced the administration to find creative solutions to the housing shortage on the uptown campus. With only 846 beds available in the three existing college dorms, a glaring shortfall was revealed in the weeks leading up to the Fall '97 semester. The administration responded by creating the aptly named "Independent Housing Program" in two apartment buildings adjacent to YU. Ill-prepared and caught off guard, the university was reduced to arbitrarily forcing unwilling students to move into unprepared apartments that lacked basic necessities of student life, such as toilet paper. Ultimately, over eighty students were placed in the IHP in order to alleviate the housing crunch.

For Fall '98, the projections were known well before the start of the semester. The administration prepared 120 beds in the two IHP buildings by moving all the semikha students to Laurel Hill Terrace, and attempted to iron out many of the previous year's problems by soliciting volunteers. Thirty-four additional beds were prepared in Strenger Hall, the high school dormitory, if the need would arise.

Sixty spots in IHP were filled from the returning student body. The University decided to fill the rest of the beds with Shana Bet returnees from Israel, creating a cohesive unit of students with shared experiences and backgrounds. Yet according to Dean of Students Efram Nulman, as of the beginning of orientation, the IHP is filled to capacity and is populated exclusively by volunteers; no student was placed in the apartments against his will.

Nulman also stated, that barring any unforeseen changes in the housing situation there is will be no necessity to resort to the beds in Strenger Hall.

Spruced Up Main Campus Welcomes Students

Ambitious Renovations Undertaken by University

BY AARON KLEIN

Students arriving at YU this semester were greeted by a host of renovations made throughout the Main Campus. These upgrades, carried out by the Department of Facilities Management and Supporting Services, are considered by some to be among the most ambitious facility enhancement efforts ever undertaken by the University. Improvements have been made to classroom buildings, dormitories, the library and the public areas of the Main Campus. Various technological and safety upgrades were implemented over the summer as well.

The Morris and Celia Morgenstern Residence Hall was the site of numerous major renovations. Additions to the *beth medrash* in the basement of Morgenstern Hall include the installation of new heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems. Upgrades to the Burdick Lounge adjacent to the *beth medrash* were also made. Shower rooms throughout the building have been refurbished and a new roof was added.

At Leah and Joseph Rubin Hall, a new ventilating and air conditioning system was installed in the Furman Dining Hall, new closets were purchased for the dorm rooms and the elevator was upgraded. These improvements complete a renovation project that began a year ago with the objective of upgrading the ambience of the building.

New tables, chairs, bookshelves and furnishings adorn the *Beth Medrash* in the main building, providing for the first major renovation to the Main *Beth Medrash* in over 15 years. New lockers and coatrooms are part of this project as well.

Elevators are currently being upgraded at Furst and Belfer Halls and extensive progress on both buildings has been made in the ongoing effort to cable offices and computer rooms with Internet and University-system access. The air conditioning and heating systems in Furst Hall will be enhanced by a major re-piping project that is still in progress.

Outdoors, an expansion to the University parking lot at 185th Street and Audubon Avenue has doubled the spaces available and improved the general appearance of the vicinity. Also, in coordination with the New York City Department of Transportation, the intersection of Amsterdam Avenue and 185th Street has been repaved. The outdoor furniture and greenery of the pedestrian mall along Amsterdam have been upgraded and renovated as part of an ongoing project to rehabilitate the mall area, which is now 10 years old. New security surveillance cameras have been installed outside the Main Campus facilities, strengthening YU's comprehensive security/safety program.

Many enhancements have been made to the computer services offered to the

students, faculty, and staff of the Main Campus. The Department of Management Information Systems installed 51 new Pentium 360s in the Mendel Gottesman Library, all connected to the main computer network. The department also created a new computer classroom on the eighth floor of Belfer Hall. Additionally, four state-of-the-art multimedia carts have been assembled. These carts provide a self-contained portable technology resource center that includes built-in computers, large display screens, audio systems, and a VCR.

"Each project is part of an effort undertaken by the University over the years to upgrade and renovate its facilities," said Jeff Rosengarten, Director of Supporting Service Administration, whose duties included responsibility for this project. "This is necessary work aimed at providing an enhanced environment in which to live and learn."

"All of these upgrades reflect the administration's commitment to continually improve the ways in which we deliver services and the facilities available to students," said Arthur Myers, director of MIS and academic computing. "I think it's safe to say that the University is up-to-date with current technology, and we are laying the groundwork for the future."

Major renovations to other YU campuses have been made as well. Some enhancements to the Midtown Center include a newly erected air conditioning cooling tower at 245 Lexington Avenue, an additional computer classroom in that building, a new kitchen facility and convenience store in the dorms, and new dorm rooms at the Jerome and Geraldine Schottenstein Residence Hall. A project called Chemistry 2000 was started this year at Stern with the intention of renovating an entire floor of labs in the chemistry department.

Many students salute the University's efforts to enhance the general atmosphere and appearance of the Main Campus. Jake Weintraub, an SSSB/MYP Sophomore said, "I am impressed by the many renovations I have seen. It shows that the administration is trying to improve the quality of life for the students." Ben Franz, a YC/MYP Senior who saw the new changes said, "I must say, they have lovely taste for color."

Meanwhile, some students noted the many changes that can still be made on campus. For example, with the move of the Yeshiva University Museum, a large space will become available in the Gottesman Library. Students asserted that they would like to see this area used for the construction of an activities center or some student recreation facility. Also, many students expressed hopes that the dorms will be wired for Ethernet capabilities during the school year, a promise that was already made last May by certain elected Student Council officials.

NEW YEAR, NEW FACES

Nissel, Leibowitz Assume Student Services Posts

BY SHMUEL CAHN

After 37 dedicated years as Director of the Main Center Residence Halls, Rabbi Joshua Cheifetz has stepped aside to assume the new position of Coordinator of Guidance and Student Life. Replacing him as Student Services Director of Housing and Psychological Services is Dr. Chaim Nissel. Also departing from the Student Services staff is Rabbi Adam Miller. Miller has been replaced by Mr. Andrew Leibowitz, the new Coordinator of Student Services for Undergraduate Men.

Nissel, who has taken over the administrative functions of the residence halls, received his Psy.D. in School and Clinical Psychology from New York's Pace University earlier this year. Previously, he attended SUNY Purchase while learning at Yeshivat Sha'arei Torah in Monsey.

Prior to assuming his current position, Nissel was the MTA school psychologist and supervisor of its dormitory, Strenger Hall. In explaining why Nissel was chosen for this post, Dean of Students Dr. Efrem Nulman said, "He took a dorm not running well and improved it significantly." Additionally, having already been on campus for two years prior to assuming this position was a positive factor, as Nissel is no longer a newcomer to the Yeshiva University community.

Among Nissel's goals for his new job is to expand the psychological services within YU as a means of promoting the overall well being of the student population. One of his main accomplishments at MTA was, in his words, "Providing a safe, nurturing, and supervised environment for the students." Although conceding that his new post does have greater responsibility, as administrator for all of the university housing on this campus, Nissel feels confident in his ability to meet the challenge. As Nulman stressed, "He's a darn good administrator," and gets along very well with the student body.

Among the challenges of administering the university housing is its ever increasing population. For this year, the total YC and RIETS residence hall population has grown to approximately 960 students, up 6.7% from last year. Among these students are 120 who will be living in the apartments of the Independent Housing Program. Although originally given a lukewarm reception, Nissel judges the IHP to be a success since 60 returning students specifically requested to be placed in the apartments.

Long a fixture on campus, Rabbi Cheifetz has been running the residence halls since

1961. A graduate of Yeshiva College, The Wurzweller School of Social Work, and a *musmakh* of RIETS, he has been instrumental in "being able to read the pulse of the student body," said Nulman, "for which the administration is grateful." In his new position, Cheifetz will continue to coordinate special programs, such as the successful Shabbat Enhancement Program and the acclaimed Dorm Talks series. He will also be maintaining his apartment in Rubin Hall.

Cheifetz declined to discuss his experiences in managing the dormitories for nearly four decades, calling it premature. "I'm not feeling nostalgic right now," he said, pointing out that he will continue on in his new position for at least a year. Additionally, he will be available to assist Nissel in adapting to his new responsibilities, since in the words of Dr. Nissel, "I have a very good relationship with Rabbi Cheifetz."

Also joining the Student Services staff is Mr. Andrew Leibowitz. A recent graduate of Yeshiva College, Leibowitz received his M.Ed. in school psychology from Long Island University. Before returning to YU, Leibowitz was a teacher and psychologist at The Salanter Academy of Riverdale, and he continues to be the Youth Director at Manhattan's Congregation Ohab Zedek. He has replaced Rabbi Adam Miller, who is pursuing his doctorate at YU's Ferkauf Graduate School.

Leibowitz was recruited by Nulman because he was held in high regard at SAR by both the students and the parents. His appointment is part of what some see as a new strategy by the Office of Student Services to be more in touch with the student body. Nulman sees as one of Leibowitz's main assets his desire to be, "very much out there," attending events and interacting with the students, not just residing behind a Furst Hall desk.

Among his goals for improving Student Services is being very visible by being out and about among the student body, and through that getting to know students on a personal level, and thus, "Letting them know that I care." Leibowitz stressed that the Office of Student Services exists not just to coordinate with student leaders, but also to assist students in dealing with teachers, administration, and personal problems. Along these lines, he said that he wanted, "To let the students know that there is a place to turn to..." Although this seems like a tall order, considering a student body of over 1100, Leibowitz feels excited by the possibilities, stating that, "I love challenges."

U.S. Missile Attacks Felt at Yeshiva University

BY AARON KLEIN

U.S. Strikes Back

On Thursday August 20, 1998 the United States fired 76 cruise missiles at two target locations connected to exiled Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden. American Intelligence officials had already concluded that bin Laden was the mastermind of the Aug. 7 bombings of two American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. They had also learned that he would be meeting with associates at a base in Afghanistan on August 20 and a successful missile attack on that day could cripple many suspected terrorist organizations at once.

The missiles were launched following a direct order by President Clinton, who said the United States had "compelling information" that the bin Laden network was planning other attacks against Americans and was seeking to acquire chemical weapons. Moreover, Clinton said that bin Laden's associates planned to blow up six U.S. 747s over the Pacific Ocean and to assassinate the president of Egypt and the Pope. Clinton proclaimed, "We will help people of all faiths who want to live free of fear and violence."

Despite the direct missile attack on his organization, bin Laden is still at large and is believed to be hiding in Afghanistan.

Mad Man on the Loose

Bin Laden is America's terrorist nightmare come true: a multimillionaire militant with connections on every continent who can harness high-tech weaponry to strike throughout the world. Bin Laden has already admitted to using his estimated \$300 million fortune to finance terrorist attacks as part of his personal campaign against the United States for its support of Israel.

In February, bin Laden issued an edict for all Muslims to kill Americans and plunder their money everywhere. During an interview in his Afghan mountain hideaway in June by ABC News correspondent John Miller, bin Laden scoffed at American efforts to capture him, and vowed to continue killing Jews and Americans.

The State Department said that bin Laden has been involved in terrorist activities throughout the world, including the Aug. 7 bombing of the U.S. embassies; the 1996 bombing of a U.S. barracks in Saudi Arabia; the shooting of two U.S. helicopters in 1993; a bombing in Riyadh claiming the lives of U.S. service personnel; and a Somali attack on U.S. troops in Mogadishu.

He is alleged to have supplied rocket-propelled grenades and expert instruction to clan fighters in Somalia. Intelligence experts believe bin Laden had a hand in the World Trade Center bombing in 1993 and that he is capable of striking within the United States again, possibly using chemical or biological warfare.

What This Means for Us

Experts throughout the country have

mixed opinions as to whether the U.S. bombing attacks against bin Laden will result in less or more terrorism. Some feel that the attacks could prove devastating to tightly-knit terrorist networks and any further violence against Americans and Jews would have already been carried out.

But many counterterrorism experts say that bin Laden and his fellow operatives are not likely to be impressed by a few cruise missiles because bin Laden is ideologically devoted to Islam and the cause of ending the United States' support of Israel. The greatest dangers now, some officials and experts say, may be attacks on vulnerable U.S. allies or targets within the United States. "The prospect of retaliation against Americans is very, very high," a senior intelligence official said.

Some U.S. officials think terrorists may switch from attacking U.S. embassies or military posts to softer targets such as American schools, businesses, or airlines. Universities across the nation are already heightening security measures. Because bin Laden is intensely anti-Semitic and has sworn to continue attacks on American targets everywhere, it is appropriate for high profile Jewish-American institutions such as ours to take precautions.

Accordingly, certain actions are being taken by the Yeshiva University Department of Safety and Security. General upgrades were already made to the YU security system during the summer, including the installation of new surveillance cameras placed throughout the Main Campus. While the security personnel are always on the alert, they are aware of the situation and have been told to take certain additional precautions.

Students have been given a memorandum asking them to assist the security department in their safety efforts by following certain procedures. Students were told to carry their ID cards at all times, especially when on campus. If a student observes anything out of the ordinary they are asked to report to security immediately. Students have been asked to report any unusual packages or individuals on University premises, being particularly alert in public restrooms and hallways. Students should not leave keys where unauthorized individuals may find them. When needed, a Security Supervisor can be contacted 24 hours a day at (212) 960-5200.

While the security department would not comment on the existence of any current threats, Don Sommers, Chief of Security said, "This situation is one that requires cooperation between the students, the YU Security Department, and the New York City Police Department. Students are asked to report anything out of the ordinary...students should, however, realize that there is no reason to be in fear. The situation is under control."

THE COMMENTATOR

welcomes letters from its readers.

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

Students should also include the school in which they are enrolled and date of expected graduation.

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

The Commentator

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U.S. News & World Report Rankings

Continued from page 1

performance, Institutional financial resources, distribution of class sizes, relative selectivity, graduation rate, alumni giving rate, and other considerations.

In four ranked categories of analysis, Yeshiva had either the highest or lowest level of accomplishment among the nation's top fifty universities. This uneven performance revealed some lopsided figures.

Of first tier universities, Yeshiva boasted the lowest proportion of courses with enrollments of over fifty students. On the flip side, Yeshiva's reputation rank, the average rating of the quality of a school's academic programs as evaluated by officials at similar institutions, was a meek 3.0 on a five point scale. This number lagged behind all other top 50 universities. Yeshiva's selectivity rank and the corollary rate of acceptance were both also the least impressive among first tier schools. Yeshiva was only the 83rd most selective university in the country with an acceptance rate hovering around the 84% mark.

A number of robust performances in

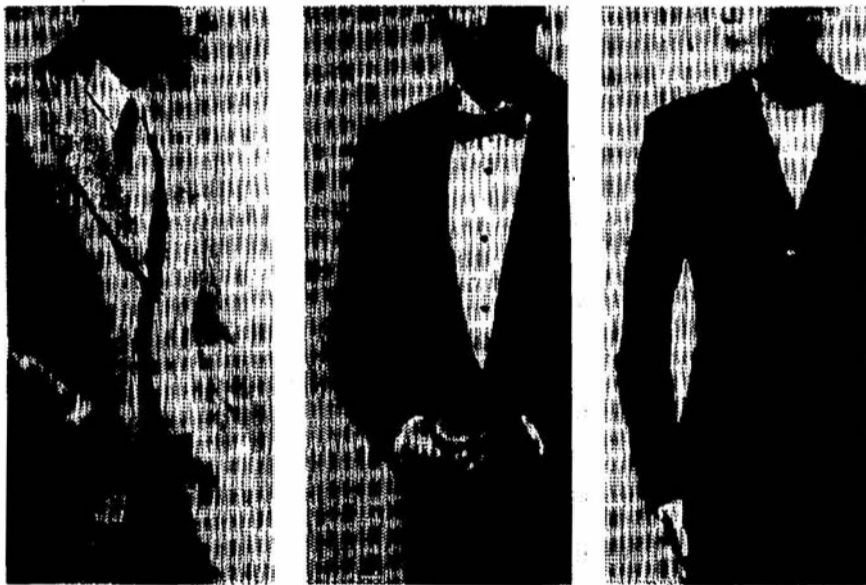
select areas, however, salvaged Yeshiva's top tier placement. Yeshiva's financial resources rank landed it in the 13th slot nationally, tying it with Duke and placing it squarely above Princeton, Cornell, Brown, and Dartmouth. The financial resources rank considers a university's total educational expenditures per full time student. Yeshiva's success in this category is thought to be advantaged by its dual faculty of both secular and Judaic instructors.

Yeshiva's alumni giving rate of 39% was 13th best in the nation. In this category, Yeshiva outperformed such schools as Stanford, Cornell, Duke, and Columbia.

Yeshiva's 12th ranked faculty resources level also merits attention. This figure considers a university's faculty compensation level, proportion of faculty members with Ph.D. degrees, proportion of full-time faculty members, student/faculty ratio, and class size distribution. Yeshiva tied Stanford and eclipsed Brown, Columbia, and Dartmouth in this area. (SEE FULL TABLE AT RIGHT)

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1	Harvard University (MA)
1	Princeton University (NJ)
1	Yale University (CT)
4	Massachusetts Inst. of Technology
4	Stanford University (CA)
6	Cornell University (NY)
6	Duke University (NC)
6	University of Pennsylvania
9	California Institute of Technology
10	Brown University (RI)
10	Columbia University (NY)
10	Dartmouth College (NH)
10	Northwestern University (IL)
14	Johns Hopkins University (MD)
14	University of Chicago
16	Emory University (GA)
16	Washington University-Saint Louis
18	Rice University (TX)
18	University of Notre Dame (IN)
20	Georgetown University (DC)
20	Vanderbilt University (TN)
22	University of California- Berkeley
22	University of Virginia
24	U. of North Carolina- Chapel Hill
25	Carnegie Mellon University (PA)
25	Tufts University (MA)
25	Univ. of California-Los Angeles
25	University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
29	University of Rochester (NY)
29	Wake Forest University (NC)
31	Brandeis University (MA)
32	Univ. of California- San Diego
33	College of William and Mary (VA)
34	Case Western Reserve Univ. (OH)
35	New York University
36	Boston College
36	Lehigh University (PA)
36	Tulane University (LA)
36	University of California- Irvine
36	Univ. of Wisconsin- Madison
41	Univ. of Southern California
42	Univ. of Illinois- Urbana- Champaign
42	YESHIVA UNIVERSITY (NY)
44	Pennsylvania State Univ.
44	University of California- Davis
46	Georgia Institute of Technology
47	Syracuse University (NY)
47	Univ. of California- Santa Barbara
49	Rensselaer Polytechnic Inst. (NY)
50	George Washington University (DC)

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Academic Computing Center in the Works

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

Starting later this semester, Yeshiva College will be home to a new computer center that promises to be as unique as all the other facility upgrades from this past summer. The new Computational Center for physical sciences, which will provide students access to powerful new computers, is designed to perform the complex manipulations needed in the realm of theoretical science. For those students interested in mathematical simulations, it will finally give them the tools to do them.

Late last June, Professors Gabriel Cwilich, Raji Viswanathan, and Thomas Otway received word that their grant application to the National Sciences Foundation, who they hoped would finance the new computer center, was approved. With YU willing to match the nearly \$75,000 in grant funds, they set out buying both personal computers and specially designed workstations that could support the tedious mathematical manipulations they planned to perform. To date, they have almost a dozen PC's housed on Belfer's 16th floor, and expect higher-end computers to arrive in the next few weeks.

The brainchild of three professors with varied research interests, the computational center will be a unifying factor, of sorts, in the area of physical sciences. Common to all of them was their use of theoretical modeling to test their predictions. As such, they needed a way to perform their calculations. At YU, though, the computers were too slow and, sometimes, just not powerful enough. Beyond their own work, they wanted the new computers for student use.

"To apply competitively to graduate school, we must train students how to program, run simulations and analyze the results from a scientific perspective," explained Dr. Cwilich. The new center would serve as a training site for students in what is now considered an entirely separate branch of science, computational analysis.

The new computational center will focus on achieving three primary goals. First, it

will allow teachers to integrate mathematical modeling into their basic courses. Dr. Cwilich plans to do this for his Intermediate mechanics course, and Dr. Viswanathan plans the same for her molecular dynamics course. "Simply creating a stronger computer presence enhances the courses and allows them to work more effectively in teaching students," Dr. Cwilich explained.

Besides improving existing courses, the new computers will allow for the development of new courses that can more fully take advantage of the available computing power. In particular, courses that exploit the physical sciences' use of simulations will benefit. By exposing the link between hard sciences and computers, "we open up a world of new possibilities."

The most important benefit of the computer center is that it will permit professors to set up independent research projects for students. Dr. Cwilich emphasized the importance of such opportunities. "Working beyond a classroom setting develops skills needed in the modern scientific world, as well as skill that employers look for." Select students will be given private access to the room, allowing them to work on their own time and at their own pace. "It is this particular type of experience that graduate schools look for."

Beyond physics and chemistry majors, the center promises to open up new roads for computer science majors. Previously, computer science majors, well-trained to enter the business world, had no program to develop computer scientists. "Now we have one," explained Cwilich. Additionally, the center hopes to attract new YC faculty and is the first step towards developing a program to provide undergraduates with postdoctoral-level experience.

Simply, the new, state-of-the-art computer facility promises to be a beacon for advanced scientific work among students and faculty. Through computer modeling, real life is imitated and new avenues of research open up. For interested students, the developments are important and exciting.

Private Ryan Continued from 15

had the sound level raised, the battle scene unscored and the colors in the film stock filtered to remove their glossy, commercial look. Bullets whiz by - a simple, yet final touch in this tour-de-force of filmmaking, whose genius in conception and execution is enough to teach a film class.

In comparison to war films of the past, there is much to discuss yet little to disagree with. Classic war films, or any war film for that matter up until the late 1960's, simply never had any realism to them. The heroes' triumph is usually glorified, and never put in context of the complete war or battle. The good soldiers always lived, and the traitors were killed (unless depicting a historically lost battle). Even if some realism existed (as in a film like *All Quiet on the Western Front*), the censors rarely permitted gritty portrayals of truth, and much rather preferred death sequences in which a character announces that he has been shot, or those in which a soldier falls to the ground without screaming crying or dutching insides that have ventured outside.

In *Saving Private Ryan*, war is real. The only way to present the value of life is not to cheapen it with pompous bravery, but to embrace it with the notion of mortality. Soldiers sift through piles of dog-tags, forgetting for a moment that each dog-tag belongs to someone killed. Troop members rewrite letters of their dead friends to send, since the originals were soaked in blood and would be

too painful to read. These scenes are as intense as they are honorable. Millions of people have been lied to by the movie industry; they have been viewing a rose-tinted picture of war for far too long.

A major cinematic issue that now arises is where to rank *Saving Private Ryan* amongst the war films of our time. This film gets to you; you exit feeling like a pathetic rag of a human being after seeing a film this powerful. *The Deer Hunter* and *Coming Home* show more of the aftermath of war and its effects on soldiers and their families. *Apocalypse Now* may be considered artistic, but it portrays an odd situation in an already odd war. Oliver Stone's *Born on the Fourth of July* mostly questions the necessity of war and examines the way veterans were treated. His film *Platoon*, much like Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*, is realistic and offers a snippet of what war is like. *Saving Private Ryan* surpasses the realism of the latter two films, since it doesn't simply look real; it makes you feel like you're there.

Francois Truffaut, famed film director and critic, once mentioned that the highest stature a film can achieve, true cinema (more commonly known as cinema verite), occurs when a film blends completely with reality. *Saving Private Ryan* reaches this height. It is a must-see experience, bound to win handfuls of Academy Awards and should be placed with Spielberg's highest achievements.

THE COMMENTATOR

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Dear Students,

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

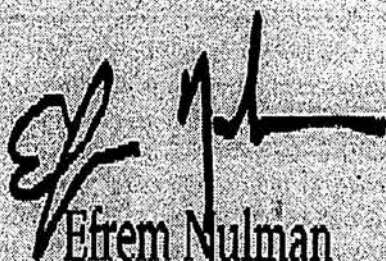
Adjusting to college life can be both exciting and challenging. The staff of the Office of Student Services is committed to helping you through these challenging times. If you are in need of counseling or even a reassuring hand, we encourage you to meet with our caring staff to discuss your needs and concerns. Our student services source book provides you with useful information.

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Best wishes for a happy and healthy new year

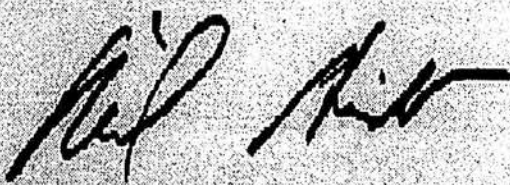
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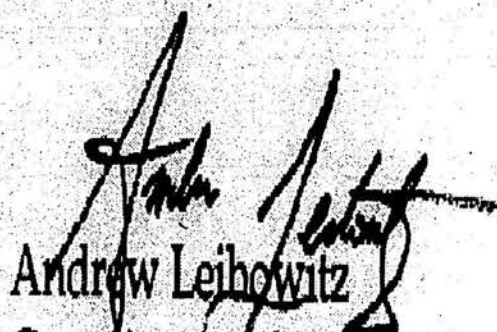
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Roth Scholars Enjoy Research Opportunities at Einstein

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

For many pre-meds at YU, the summer can be a frustrating time. While many busy themselves studying for admissions tests and filling out medical school applications, all share a common concern: finding a job to gain experience in the medical field. For a select few interested in research, this job is made easier. As in past years, five Yeshiva College students participated in the Roth Institute Scholars Program, allowing them to work on independent research projects under the tutelage of faculty mentors at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine (AECOM).

The Roth Scholars program is run as part of the Summer Undergraduate Research Program at the Sue Golding Graduate School at AECOM. After settling on an area of research interest, the students were placed in their own laboratories and were assigned to specific projects. There, they had the option to choose their own areas of research interest. The students representing YU were Chaim Herman, Chanan Hoschander, Yehuda Bums, Yosef Rudolph and Aton Holzer. Joining them from Stem College were Shiva Shifteh, Malka Skiba and Jennifer Feig.

Selection criteria for the program include grades and extracurricular experience. It seemed, however, that students with prior research experience were given preference, leaving other highly qualified candidates at a disadvantage.

One member of the selection committee explained its position. "Since the students selected would be working in an advanced academic environment, the participating labs would prefer a student who needs less train-



ing." Ironically, one of those finally chosen did not have previous research experience.

Nancy Carrasco, a researcher at AECOM who oversaw the summer program and placed students in their labs, explained the focus of the Roth program. "Simply, it's to expose students to the everyday life experience of working in a research lab. There's a big difference between merely hearing of and experiencing, hands on, the satisfaction of executing experiments and getting results."

For most participants, it was the freedom the program afforded that was the biggest draw. "I was able to work independently, making my own decisions and designing experiments," said Bums. "I think it's the freedom to work on my own that made the program enjoyable." For most of the Roth students, the opportunity to engage in novel investigative efforts was most satisfying.

The summer program offered weekly seminars in various research areas. This exposed them to the many avenues taken by researchers in the study of disease. Yosef Rudolph described them as exciting because "I got to see the things I only read about."

In addition to the seminars, most students participated as regular members of their respective labs. There, Holzer found "great satisfaction at following the scientific method and getting results." As a regular participant at lab meetings, it was easy for him to do so.

The summer program concluded with a series of presentations in which the Roth Scholars joined other summer students at Einstein in presenting their work to an audience of faculty members and fellow researchers. For some, this was their first time speaking before such a large audience.

In addition to their presentations, Dean Adler paid a visit to Einstein as well. Joined by Drs. Potvin and Feit, the students discussed their summer projects and how their work affected their career decisions. For Rudolph, it was "the development of The Discovery" that intrigued him. Using technologies taken directly from recent news headlines, "it was interesting to see how they were put to use."

The Roth program gave the participants a chance to experience life in an academic setting outside the confines of Yeshiva College's Washington Heights campus. Living in AECOM's "Low Housing," the students had access to their labs whenever they wanted, their schedules often mimicking those of graduate students.

Still, for Chaim Herman, it was just working closely with a Ph.D. that was the most fun. "My mentor always seemed to know what to do and wanted to make things easier for me. I learned a lot and had fun doing it."

A goodly number of YU students spent the previous summer in Washington engaged in political internships. Following is a compilation of the more notable efforts:

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Preston Gates Ellis & Rouvelas Meeds (top 5 lobbying firm)
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Senator Carol Moseley-Braun (D-IL)
Columnist

YISHAI FLEISHER
Intern
American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)
Arts & Culture Editor

DAVID ANZISKA
Intern
Representative Rick Lazio (R-NY)
Staff Writer

DOVID MENCHELL
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Senator John Ashcroft (R-MO)
Staff Writer

DAVID SLOAN
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Representative Charles Rangel (D-NY)

ADAM BENSLEY
Intern
Representative Gary Ackerman (D-NY)

AARON SCHLANGER
Congressional Internship

LYLE KESSLER
Congressional Internship

OFFICE OF PLACEMENT & CAREER SERVICES CALENDAR

SAVE THESE DATES!!!

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	EVENT
August 26, 1998	8:00 p.m.	Uptown campus	Placement Office Orientation I
September 2, 1998	2:30 p.m.	Midtown campus	Interview Workshop
September 3, 1998	2:45 p.m.	Uptown campus	Interview Workshop
September 2, 1998	8:00 p.m.	Uptown campus	Top Tier Accounting Firm Night
September 8, 1998	8:00 p.m.	Midtown campus	Mid-Size Accounting Firm Night
September 9, 1998	2:30 p.m.	Midtown campus	Mock Interviews
September 10, 1998	2:45 p.m.	Uptown campus	Mock Interviews
September 11, 1998	10:00 a.m.	TBA	Accounting Field Trip

Please look for notices regarding these events on the Office of Placement & Career Services bulletin boards outside our offices.

ALL STUDENTS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THE WORKSHOPS LISTED ABOVE.

Real Estate Purchase

Continued from page 1

difficult for students to use, exacerbating an already uncomfortable situation.

The new buildings are intended to provide a measure of immediate relief while ensuring growing room for the future. Consisting of two towers of twenty-one and nineteen stories respectively, the buildings have numerous long-term leaseholders, necessitating a complex financial transaction to obtain the property. As of press time, both the Office of Business Affairs and the Office of Public Relations refused to comment, but sources inform The Commentator that due to the financial intricacies involved a limited partner in the property has been obtained as part of the purchase.

The University is taking immediate control of four large floors on the lower stories of the buildings. Totalling nearly a fourth of the available space, the floors will be used for classrooms and office space, including offices for the Sy Syms School of Business. Discussions are already underway concerning the feasibility of creating a separate student entrance on the northern side of the buildings.

YU's Midtown Property Shopping Spree Continues

WELCOME BACK TO YESHIVA UNIVERSITY!

The Office of Placement & Career Services is excited about starting a new academic year. We invite all undergraduates to come and visit our expanded offices located at:

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Director

Naomi Kapp
Associate Director

Jennifer Berman
Assistant Director

Bob Bomersbach
Assistant Director

ARTS & CULTURE

The City Seen

BY YISHAI FLEISHER

New York City is *the* hub of culture and creativity. The constant change and variety in what there is to see and do far surpasses that of any other metropolis aspiring for New York's grand stature. The best way to take advantage of it all is to be informed regarding the locations of interesting venues and events that grace our neck of the woods. Therefore, I have compiled a meager list of things to check out during the precarious free time you will bask in during your stay here at lovely Yeshiva University.

Do you like motorcycles? I do! Well, the **Guggenheim (1071 5th Ave)** has decided that motorcycles should be seen as art and therefore have put on a show dedicated solely to motorcycles. Instead of trying to understand the hidden meaning behind a snooty piece of modern art you can wear leather and check out some chrome. The show runs till September 20.

Everest at the Imax (1998 Broadway) is the answer for those in search of a real adventure from the comfort of their very own cushy movie theater seat. The movie captures the life and death of a group of explorers trying to make it atop the tallest and most treacherous mountain in the world. The shocking footage in this film, its huge screen, and the bass blasting sound system makes for a hell of a ride.

For the best jazz around town head into **Augie's (2751 Broadway)** or **Smalls (183 W 10th)**. The mellow ambiance combined with the funky bands that frequent these establishments make for a great night out. Much cheaper than places such as the famous Blue Note, these little clubs offer a combination of talented jazz performers and a carefree atmosphere.

Polanco (502 Amsterdam) is a new glatt kosher Mexican restaurant. Though a bit on the pricy side, Mexican food lovers who observe Halacha will not be disappointed. An appetizer of guacamole with nachos, a Burrito Santa Fe, a coke, and *ole*, its like your

in Cabo San Lucas again.

For a short glimpse into the large spectrum of interests, places, and cultures that exist in this world there is only one place to go. The magazine/cafe section of **Barnes and Nobles (1960 Broadway)** has a gigantic array of the worlds publications ranging from gun magazines, music gossip, hiking gear, fashion and even news. Just take a handful, grab a table and a cup of coffee, and your set for a reading rainbow.

There are times at YU when one misses the very basic foundation this nation stands upon: TV. If you are tired of watching ESPN2 with everybody else in the smelly lounge, head down to **The Museum of Television and Radio (25 W52nd)**. First, you can get your own screen, and then you can take out twenty episodes of *The Twilight Zone* at no extra charge. Just pay the entrance fee and veg.

The Bronx; it just doesn't sound good. But once you reach the **Bronx Botanical Gardens** you will find that the Bronx's bad reputation is not so well deserved. Two hundred and fifty acres of exotic trees and plants, lots of benches, lots of trails, and lots of peace. For those of you pre-med people who like to stress over A minuses or those of you who just like to breath in naturally perfumed air, this is the place for you.

Still the Bronx; it just doesn't sound good. To quote Simon and Garfunkle (Jews!) "Someone told me it's all happening at the zoo." Those brothers said it right, **The Bronx Zoo** makes the cafeteria look almost human, and with tons of crazy creatures it makes YU look almost tame. Take advantage of the zoo, it's a great Sunday excursion.

Last but not least, the **Cloisters (Fort Tryon)** is right around the corner. With its view of the river, its large grass fields, and the magnificent art and architecture, the Cloisters is the saving grace of our scenic, peace loving neighborhood. If you are contemplating homicide, come here first, take a few deep breaths and relax. Life is good.

SUMMER CONCERTS

BY ELI GUROCK

There are few constants in this crazy world of ours. Some things will never change. Summer sunsets will forever be beautiful, the sky will always be above, and summers in America will always ring money in the pockets of anyone with an idea. Corporate America realized some time ago that teenagers spend nearly double the amount of money in the summer season than any other time of the year. The music industry has picked up on this fact and has flooded the summer arenas with concerts and festivals. But now, as the summer is over, we look back and see which tours were purely hype and which were for real.

The first tour which we can easily throw into the recycle bin is the Spice Girls tour, a perfect example of hype over quality. We all know that the show in Madison Square Garden sold out in minutes and for the next few months people were in a frenzy to get tickets. But when the girls finally rolled into

town, the sold-out show was played before a crowd of ten year-old girls and their parents. But no one has ever claimed that the Spice Girls were anything more than hype, so they are excused. Other "hype over hip" concerts included the Smashing Pumpkins concert at Radio City Music Hall, and The Other Ones as headliners of this years Furthur Festival.

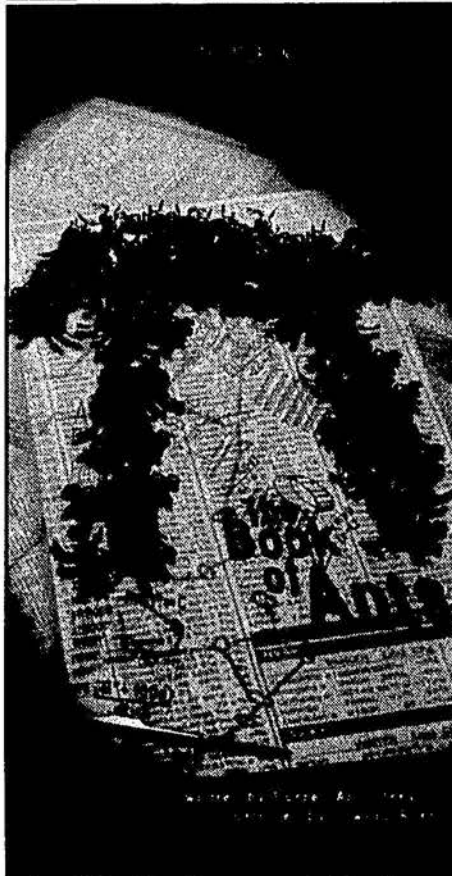
The Pumpkins, who are known as great live performers, put on one of their worst shows ever in our area. The songs they played were almost entirely from their new album "Adore" which isn't bad, but the way they played the songs sounded, well, bad. Even when they played the popular songs, they also sounded bad. There is no other way to describe them, just bad.

The Other Ones, who are most of the surviving members of the Grateful Dead plus a few extras, should have been the best concert of the summer to the legions of Deadheads throughout the country.

continued on page 15

Film Review

PI



BY VAIR OPPENHEIM

PI (3.14)
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED
BY DARREN ARONOFSKY
STARRING: SEAN GULLETTE,
MARK MARGOLIS AND BEN SHENKMAN

"The 'Jewish' science-fiction thriller." "The best use of sixty thousand dollars (the film's budget) for entertainment I've seen." If none of these statements is appealing enough, then perhaps mentioning that *PI* is nothing short of brilliant would be satisfactory.

For many a year, decades to be precise, the sci-fi movies that have dominated the cinema have commonly featured rays guns and warp engines, concepts, which though intelligent and creative are heavy on fiction side of the phrase. In fact, over 95% of science-fiction can be classified into that league. *PI*, however, is one of the rare gems; the rare accomplishments which has science embedded firmly in its roots.

The premise behind *PI* is fascinating: A mathematical genius with debilitating migraines, Max Cohen has constructed a supercomputer named Euclid that seems to be able to predict the rhythm of the financial markets. As this has potential investors waiting with bated breath to snatch it from him, a mysterious string of 216 digits keeps manifesting in its data. Max soon approaches his mentor for advice, and the advice he gets is to stick with the math, not the pattern, because if he looks for a number he will always find it "and then you will be a numerologist, not a mathematician," says Max's mentor.

His search for the meaning of this pattern leads him to a Hassidic Jew with a penchant for Jewish numerology (*Gematria*) who is also searching for the 'bug' deep

inside the number *PI* himself. This leads Max to a disturbing hypothesis for the string of cryptic numbers (skip to the next paragraph unless you wish to read this small plot spoiler): Max's invention may be the key that can unlock the grand pattern embedded in all creation -- as well as unveiling the true mathematical name of God.

The acting in this film is commendable. Sean Gullette, who plays Max Cohen, embodies the well-known icon of the "mad scientist" and uses his screen time to expose his genius and his madness. Mark Margolis, who plays Max's mentor and colleague Sol Robeson, gives a performance that is reminiscent of Paul Scofield's fatherly figure in *Quiz Show*. As for the Jewish representation in the film, it happily leaves nothing to be desired. Ben Shenkman and Stephen Pearlman who play Lenny Meyer and Rabbi Cohen respectively, are fully developed characters whose only stereotype is an understandable Brooklyn accent. These observant Jews are shown doing what observant Jews do and not the public impression of what that is (All the Judaism references are cool and accurate to boot).

Aronofsky picks the right shots as a director and doesn't waste an opportunity. While the camera is moving frenetically, observing each of Max's migraines and delusions, the shots picked aren't at random to indicate a sophomoric attempt at avant-garde filmmaking; they include metaphors and foreshadowing in reference to Max's problems. The final shot in the film, of leaves covering a bright sun, is thought provoking as it parallels the plot; it is what Max chooses to see over what truly exists.

The plot by itself is a unique achievement on its own. Aronofsky manages to engage us into thinking that math can be fascinating and dangerous. He begins by explaining simple mathematical concepts and theories to us through Max (among them are theories by Archimedes and Pythagoras) and tosses them through the scientific method to reach his hypothesis. It lends the plot substance and credibility. It dupes the audience much in the same way great special effects make the unreal realistic; it takes a few moments to realize that some elements are 100% fictitious. The film tends to spend too much time on Max's delusions and illness, but there wasn't much more that could be added to the mathematical plot to begin with, so it's negligible.

As not only a first feature for Darren Aronofsky, but also as a black and white, low budget independent film, this film exceeds all expectations, and has put this director on the map. Aronofsky has already won the Best Director Award at the Sundance film festival, which is the "Academy Awards" of independent films. Due to its limited release, *PI* is only playing at the Angelika Film Center, located on the corner of West Houston St. and Mercer St.

ARTS & CULTURE

Spiritual Uplifting The Tzfat Klezmer Festival

BY SENYA MALER

Two thirty a.m. Four pairs of muddy boots embark on a trek. Destination Tzfat. The night was electric; crisp Kinneret air filled our lungs as the buses emptied. The Klezmerim have returned.

Touched down in the land of Kaballistic rite in the middle of the hallowed night. Twisted war scarred alleys lined with glowing candles welcomed our arrival. As we trod the footsteps of legends past, we were witness to how the shells of modern steel could tear at the skin of this holy city but could never challenge the soul, and could never fully bring it down to our corporeal world.

Now floating, sleeping bags in hand, we knew those thoughts had to be temporarily put away as we looked for a soft spot to lay our weary heads, to cuddle up with the *Ari z'tl* and go to sleep. Dawn pierced the sky like a razor through black paint; the festival had begun. We didn't even begin to realize just how many people shared our journey until we ascended out of the old city to the level of the countless outdoor cafes and local shops lining the cobblestones on both sides of *Rehov Yerushalayim*. Coasting along this main thoroughfare of Tzfat looking for breakfast, we all knew that this would be three days to remember.

It just so happens to be that masquerading as hotel staff or just a very confident lost guest determined to get his complementary breakfast, one could manage to eat very well at any one of the buffets in the dining rooms of whichever modern hotel suited your preference. It was Tuesday, and therefore *Malon HaMerkaz* was offering all your continental favorites. After enough cheese to kill three horses for the reasonable bill of nothing, the odyssey continued. On account that the bands weren't due to begin playing before seven or nineteen (depending on whose watch you were wearing) that night, the day was ours to reacquire ourselves with the city and the waters of the Kinneret.

We came back as the bands were tuning up and Tzfat was getting ready to rumble. There were different stages set up in the cozy stone-clad town squares of old Tzfat, each hosting diverse Jewish bands simultaneously playing their different styles of music. As the sun set the sleepy alleys became packed with people rubbing elbows with mystics and locals, winding through the endless tables of vendors, stopping at the flaming food stalls or waiting in line for freshly squeezed juice. Crossing the old British-patrolled demarcation line between the Jewish and Arab quarters of Tzfat we had to pass a newly installed border patrol of a "spirited" group of Breslov Chassidim, whose chants of *Na! Nach! Nachma! Nachman!* echoed loudly off Her Majesty's now rusted and abandoned watch towers.

Three nights running from stage to stage on different corners of old Tzfat. We took in everything from a jam session of sixteenth century Chassidic Nigunim, a three hour Carlebach revival, the songs of Rav Nachman set to hard rock and reggae beats, and of course, Klezmer. Any description, no matter how accurate, could never come close to capturing an atmosphere that could never be laid out in words. Originally thinking it was a weak but conceivable comparison, in the end I couldn't even think of denigrating the experience by calling it a Jewish Woodstock.

From the onset, we decided to put our cameras away as they could not even attempt to capture the reality surrounding us. As the crowds were thinning out, we walked to the ancient cemetery near the *mikvah* of the *Ari z'tl* where we met an old local who told us volumes of those famous mystical "Tzfat stories."

The finale, winding up at dawn marked the end of the Klezmer festival, and as we boarded the same bus that brought us Tzfat was still glowing, glowing like the eternal memories of three August nights.

Concerts

Continued from page 14

Unfortunately, it too was disappointing. Bruce Hornsby came in to handle the keyboards and some of the singing, but their sound was missing something. The concert was entertaining in a lot of respects, but overall, the songs were lacking a special someone who can never be replaced.

Just as these concerts failed to realize their projected hypes, there were some big concerts which totally surpassed their goals. The best of these tours was by the Dave Matthews Band. Dave, who is still touring and subsequently conquering America, has put together one of the most original and talented bands in decades. He started out with a small college following, and now has sold-out an entire summer-long large arena tour. His shows, which mix violin and saxophone with some hard rock and roll, provide enough energy to power a small city and that is what makes the Dave Matthews Band so incredible. They blew everyone away at Giants Stadium, even the sound and lighting guys. Other performers who lived up to their hype were Tori Amos, Metallica, Page and Plant, and Ani DiFranco.

The last couple times Tori came to our area, her shows were lousy, but this summer she played an unbelievable one at Madison Square Garden. Touring with a backing band for the first time ever, she played with the energy and strength that has so far only existed on her albums. Metallica rode into town and did nothing different than they have been doing for the past decade or so, playing hard and fast. They do it better than anyone else. Old 'Zeppelin fans loved it when Page and Plant started touring again. They loved it even more when much of their shows consisted of the classic tunes. These two know how to rock, they've been doing it their entire careers. Much of the hype Ani DiFranco has gathered over the past year almost vanished by the time she came to play here, but some one forgot to tell her. She plays with the fight of a lion and the voice of dagger, a dangerous yet delicious combination.

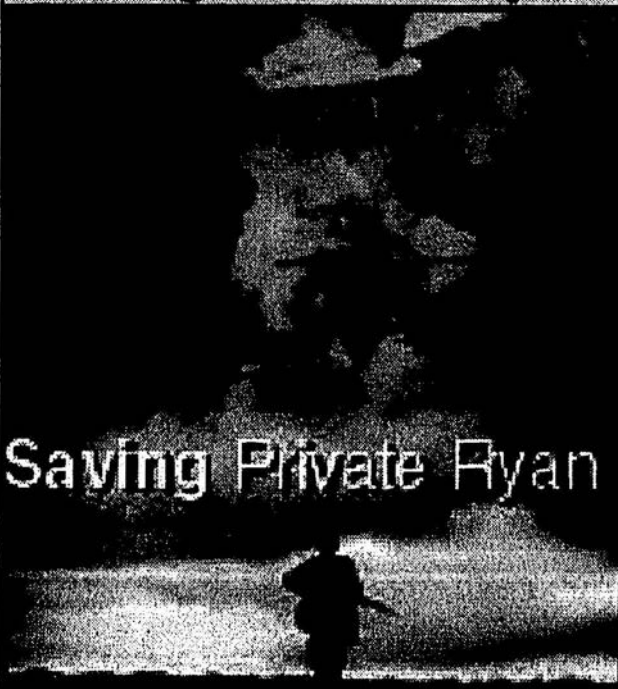
There were concerts this summer which had no hype about them at all but won the

hearts of everyone who attended their shows. The best example of this is a little Vermont band which has been doing this for years. Phish has a following that people call "Dead-like" because of the way their fans follow them around the country. Phish is one of the best live bands in the country right now. They mix jazz and blues with an improvisational attitude that turns the concert into one big dance party. If only anyone would notice this band their shows would be sold-out months in advance, but surprisingly, almost none of their shows this summer were. Other bands that unexpectedly played well, were Rusted Root at the Furthur Festival, Barenaked Ladies at the Horde Festival, John Fogerty and Peter, Paul, and Mary.

Rusted Root opened up for The Other Ones at the Furthur Festival and played better than the headliners. They played with soul and heart and anything else they had with them. Even four years after their only radio play, Rusted Root plays like they belong in the mainstream of American music. Speaking of jumping into the American mainstream, due to their amazing sets and their new album, America has fallen in love with the boys of Barenaked Ladies. John Fogerty has been winning over audiences since he started Creedence Clearwater Revival, and now as a solo artist years later he still knows what it takes to win a crowd. He mixed up his set with material from his new album and some classic CCR; the perfect combination for a perfect concert. Legendary folk musicians Peter, Paul, and Mary have been many things to present day rock-and-roll; parents, role models, and icons. Yet they have never had such a place in the present until this summer tour which has seen a new generation of fans love them.

So there you go, what really occurred this summer while you were hanging out at the beach or wearing a tie inside some midtown office building. Oh, and by the way, if you were looking for something on the Backstreet Boys or Celine Dion, keep on looking brother, you ain't gonna find it here.

Film Review Saving Private Ryan



by Yair Oppenheim
SAVING PRIVATE RYAN - DIRECTED BY STEVEN SPIELBERG
STARRING: TOM HANKS, ED BURNS, TOM SIZEMORE AND MATT DAMON

Every few years Steven Spielberg proves to audiences why he is the most influential film director alive by conceptualizing a film (the word directing doesn't do his creativity justice) in the most imaginative way possible and then translating this point of view onto the screen. He reinvents himself in front of audiences in each of his great films. He defined what a great or best film is in a particular genre with his movies; for suspense - *Jaws*, science fiction - *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, adventure - *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, fantasy - *E.T.*, the African-American drama - *The Color Purple*, and for the Holocaust - *Schindler's List*. These films resonate with a perfect comprehension of an idea; a gifted eye for seeing things as the common man perceives it. Spielberg has now turned to the subject of war, and frankly, after this film there will be no need for anyone to direct another war film again.

Saving Private Ryan is the story of how a troop of soldiers is commanded to travel behind enemy lines to save the last surviving sibling of the four Ryan brothers. This morality question, one which has seen many forms in all wars past or present, is a sharp allegory to the macrocosm of the entity that is war, which is: What is the value of life? Is a sacrifice that one may never see or weigh the rewards of, worthwhile? The focused plot delves

into the common occurrences, large and small, that present themselves in every maelstrom of carnage: the atmosphere of battle, the reaction back home, the courageous and fearful soldiers, as well as the lucky and unfortunate ones.

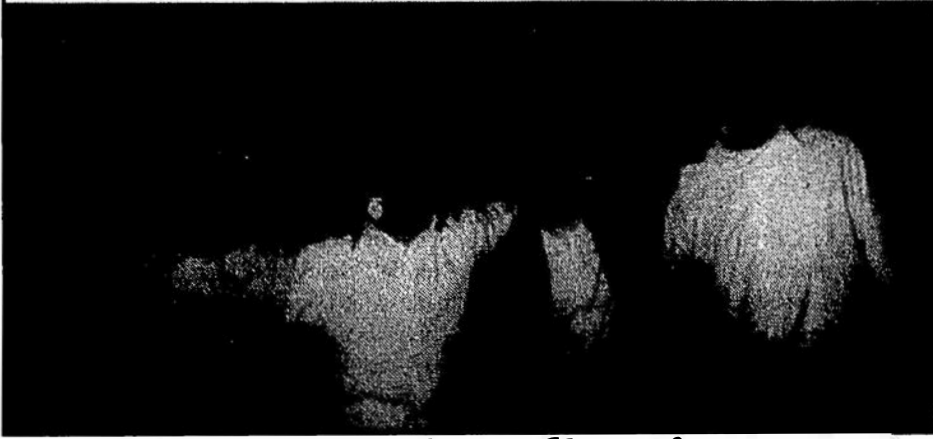
Tom Hanks gives a performance (surely one of his best) that only he could give. An every-man performance not of the "Tom Hanks persona" (which has traces of Jimmy Stewart), but of a Tom Hanks that has been through the war; a truly changed man that has acquired a grim look on his face and a war-induced condition. He plays Captain John Miller, the head of the troop searching for Ryan (Matt Damon in a short, yet solid performance), and is flanked by Sergeant Horvath (Tom Sizemore, in a memorable performance), along with the melting pot of soldiers that typically make up any unit. The story is long enough for all of the characters to develop and serve their purpose and the script teems with lines that etch themselves into people's memories.

The film as a whole, and as a piece of directing, is spectacular. The first half-hour of the film, which documents the invasion of Omaha beach in Normandy is the most riveting and breathtaking war sequence ever filmed (far better than that in *Platoon*). Spielberg, along with his cinematographer, Janusz Kaminski, sped the film up in the editing process and ran through the set with hand-cams to give the most realistic feeling possible: that of a soldier running with a limited peripheral vision. Spielberg then

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Joshua Bender A"H

To a Devoted Friend and Colleague



Personal Reflection: Looking Back at the Life of a Friend

BY JEFFERY NEIGER

SPECIAL TO THE COMMENTATOR

The huge crowd of over a thousand who attended the funeral of Elazar Yehoshua ben Moshe Yitzchok, A"H, was testimony to his unique ability to have had an impact on the lives of so many people from a multitude of different backgrounds. Josh's friends came from all around the country to say goodbye to their dear friend whose memory will never be forgotten. His entire community came out to support his grieving family. Many at the funeral did not even know Josh, yet they still felt some connection to him.

Throughout his life, Josh continuously showed a strong love and devotion for Torah. He put in hours every week as editor-in-chief of Kol Torah, the d'var Torah newsletter of his high school, Torah Academy of Bergen County. His love of Torah also led him to Israel, for a year of study after high school. Josh spent last year attending Shaarei Mevasseret Zion, where his love for Torah helped him flourish and form an everlasting connection to Torah and Eretz Yisrael. He was asophomore majoring in finance at Yeshiva University's Sy Syms School of Business.

Josh was also highly devoted to serving his community. Acting as a role model for the children of his shul, Shomrei Torah of Fair Lawn, New Jersey, he spent every Shabbos morning leading youth groups.

In order to be able to lead the groups, he gladly woke up early to attend the shul's *hashkama* minyan. Continuing in his devotion to community service, Josh participated in programs that delivered meals to needy families. Josh's primary involvement in serving the community was through his participation in Fair Lawn's emergency service department. Josh spent countless hours training to become an EMT-B and serving on the town's volunteer ambulance corps. Josh could frequently be found taking an emergency call in the middle of the night, and gave up having fun with his friends in order to help save the lives of those in need.

Even greater than any of his actions, what made Josh extra special, was the way he conducted himself in relation to others. It was not blatantly obvious to the common observer that Josh was so involved in doing *chesed*. He took advantage of every

opportunity to do *chesed* as if he were just doing what was expected of him. His friends all knew that Josh could be counted on to be there for them if they ever needed any favor, no matter how great. He would always go out of his way, inconveniencing himself, in order to help his friends and family. When something was important to Josh, and when he knew something needed to be done, he did it. And he went about it in such an unassuming way, without fanfare. One year, a local store was having a post-holiday sale in which they offered extra savings for customers who came early. Josh, in anticipation of his mother's upcoming birthday, woke up at 6 am to go to the store. When he returned, his family was still sleeping, and Josh just went back to sleep. Such actions were typical of Josh, whose utter sincerity and concern could be sensed by all who knew him well.

A Modest Person in an Immodest World

BY YOSEF LEVINE

In a society in which foul language and improper speech are to some extent a normality, Josh came to show that this is not the proper behavior for a Jew. To most outsiders Josh Bender was "the quiet kid" who always stood back and was never gregarious. However, this temperament made Josh very unique. He always knew what to say and when to say it. He was the type of person who spoke only when conversation demanded it. Whether it be to answer a question in class or in remarking to a friend, never did I ever hear a curse or negative remark from Josh.

I was not only amazed by the fact that Josh always watched his words but it was the way in which he related his feelings towards others. It was in such a modest fashion. I remember on one occasion Josh

had received his midterm corporate finance grade. He ecstatically told me that he did really well. When I asked him what grade he scored, he responded, "It doesn't matter." When I heard this, I was taken aback. My friends and I always exchange our grades when we get them back but for some strange reason Josh did not want to tell me. I let the moment temporarily pass but then later that day I overheard other students saying how Josh surpassed most stu-

dents on the test and scored second highest in the class.

Josh knew his finance cold and had a

great understanding of the business world. He never wanted anyone to think that he was special or smarter than the next student but the reality is, he was. He truly understood what it means for a *Ben Torah* to be modest in today's society.

Performing *Mitzvot L'Shaim Mitzvah*

For Josh, no mitzvah was unattainable. Let it be giving somebody a lift to shul, helping a friend in need, or helping his mother prepare for Shabbos, he was always ready to lend a hand. Many times people help others for the wrong reasons, but for Josh it was always *l'shaim mitzvah*. He was never concerned with the *kavod* or fringe benefits that often accompany a mitzvah.

When Josh was in high school, he had a bad experience and was forced to undergo surgery to correct scoliosis. After being bedridden for several months, he became infatuated with the idea of helping others to reciprocate for the communal help he had received when in need. He found his calling when he joined the Fair Lawn Volunteer Ambulance Corp. during his junior year of high school.

As an Emergency Medical Technician, Josh learned skills that he quickly mastered. He was a very diligent EMT and fit in well when working in team situations.

After several months on the ambulance corps most of his fellow corpsmen noticed that Josh was different. He was never concerned with the internal politics within the walls of many volunteer organizations. He was only concerned about one thing...the patient. I recall once having a conversation with him about the ambulance corps and I mentioned the possibility of quitting because I couldn't bear working with some of my fellow corpsmen. He was also upset with the current situation in the ambulance corps at that time but told me that if he quits, he is going to join the emergency squad in Paramus, a neighboring town. He didn't care where he worked. If it couldn't be in his native town of Fair Lawn, he would go next door just to help lend a hand.

That was Josh, he only wanted one thing....The best for everyone....



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