

COMMENTATOR

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NEW ACADEMIC VP APPOINTED GELMAN NAMED ASSOCIATE VP

BY MORDECHAI FISHMAN

Filling the vacancy created by William Schwartz's resignation, Dr. Morton Lowengrub, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Indiana University, has been named Yeshiva University's vice-president for Academic Affairs, effective September 1, 1999. Accompanying Lowengrub's appointment is that of Dr. Sheldon Gelman, dean of the Wurzweiler School of Social Work, to the post of associate vice president for Academic Affairs. Gelman will continue to serve as interim academic vice president until Lowengrub's arrival on campus in the fall.

A graduate of New York University, Lowengrub holds a master's degree from the California Institute of Technology and a doctorate in mathematics from Duke University. After teaching at Duke, North Carolina State, and Wesleyan Universities, Lowengrub joined the faculty of



Dr. Morton Lowengrub

Indiana University in 1967, and quickly rose through the academic ranks. Following stints as the director of mathematics graduate studies and chairman of the Mathematics Department, he held a series of upper-level administrative positions, including those of dean for research and graduate development and director of the Institute for Advanced Studies, and ultimately became dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in

1988.

Lowengrub brings with him a distinguished list of published research in the field of applied mathematics, including five books and monographs and some two dozen scholarly articles published in various mathematical journals. He has held several prestigious fellowships, and has won awards for excellence in teaching and research. Additionally, he has the rare distinction of having an asteroid named after him by the International Astronomical Union for his contributions in the planning and design of the WIYN 3.5-meter telescope.

"Yeshiva University is a unique institution with an excellent reputation," said Lowengrub. "Building on its solid foundation and track record of success, it has the potential to achieve even more in the years ahead. I look forward to working with Dr. Lamm, Dr. Gelman, the deans of the individual schools, faculty members, and administrators to attain this goal."

In theory, the vice-president for Academic Affairs is one of the most important and powerful figures in the YU administration. Almost every aspect of education falls under the rubric of Academic Affairs. Curriculum for the entire University, including new programs or degree tracks, and any modification involving academics

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Student Council Elections: The Bold and the Boring

BY JESSE MENDELSON

After a week of furious campaigning, the Yeshiva College General Elections for the 1999-2000 academic year were held on Thursday, April 29, 1999. The tight races saw candidates advertising signs throughout the campus touting past accomplishments and plans for the future. Although many of the future plans will go unaccomplished, it is encouraging to know that the student body should be well represented next year by dedicated individuals.

The race for the coveted position of Yeshiva College Student Council President saw Jonathan Mell, a native South African and Los Angeles resident, emerge victorious over Daniel Drabkin and Simcha Fuld. Upon victory, Mell commented, "The support for my Agenda 2000 shows that every student will work to truly improve student life on campus. I look forward to working with the administration to realize these important

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MTA's Administrative Void Filled with Appointment of New Principal

BY JASON CYRULNIK

Continuing on a quest towards excellence, The Marsha Stern Talmudical Academy has found a new soldier to drive the once unsteady high school on the road back to stability. On Friday, May 7, Rabbi Michael Hecht, the new Dean of MSTA announced the appointment of Ya'acov Sklar to the post of Principal, a position that has remained vacant since the school's decision to forego the contract renewal of current Principal Rabbi Michael Taubes. Sklar is slated to assume the role as principal effective July 1.

Sklar, a Yeshiva College alum, brings to MSTA an unparalleled reputation in the local educational community. Sklar currently serves as Principal at The Academy of Future Technologies, Intermediate School 162 in the Bronx, a position he has held for 12 years. Under his outstanding leadership, the academy has been designated as the "Number One School of Choice" in the district, an honor attesting to Mr. Sklar's superb capabilities and unique vision.

"Mr. Sklar has a deep understanding of our community... I envision a true partnership as we work together to restore MSTA to its position of greatness," affirmed Dean Hecht. Both Sklar and Hecht

share a similar vision targeting an increasingly selective admissions process, and a better focus maintaining the weapons MSTA now possesses. "I am committed to ensuring that MSTA be recognized as a school of true excellence in both *limudei kodesh* (religious studies) and general academic studies," explained Sklar. "Together with Dr. Hecht and our outstanding faculty, we will recruit first-rate students and faculty to remain ahead of the growing competitive field of Yeshiva high schools in the tri-state region."

YU Alum Ya'acov Sklar to Join Dean Hecht at Helm of MTA

According to University officials, Rabbi Hecht has officially changed his title from "Acting Dean" to "Dean," in a permanent attempt to fulfill the promise made to remain with MSTA "as long as it takes" to realize his goals for the school. Insiders inform *The Commentator*, that Dean Hecht will have the final say in high school matters, but the pair will primarily split administrative function with Hecht supervising religious study and Sklar managing secular academia. Regardless of the actual division of responsibility, Yeshiva University President, Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm

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RIETS MUSMACH ANNOUNCES HIS HOMOSEXUALITY YU RABBEIM ARE APPALLED

BY AARON KLEIN

Rabbi Steven Greenberg, a graduate of Yeshiva College and YU's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) has become the first Orthodox rabbi ever to publicly announce his homosexuality. Greenberg disclosed his sexual orientation in interviews with both *The Forward*, a contemporary Jewish-American newspaper, and an Israeli publication, *Ma'ariv*. *The New York Times* will be publishing a feature article on Rabbi Greenberg as well. Some interpret his move as a sign that Orthodox Judaism will soon need to respond to the conflicts of religion and homosexuality, while many YU rabbis are disturbed by Greenberg's actions and claim that his announcement profanes the Yeshiva University name.

Greenberg, 42, is a Teaching Fellow at CLAL - The National Center for Learning and

Leadership, where he heads many programs, classes and shabbatonim throughout North America. Greenberg has been instrumental in the establishment of Jerusalem's Open House, the first Gay and Lesbian Center to be built in Israel. He is currently completing a book exploring the subject of homosexuality from the perspective of Jewish theology and personal experience.

Greenberg relates that he first started to deal with his own homosexuality after his sophomore year at YU, when he decided to attend Yeshivat Har Etzion. There, Greenberg sought the advice of Rabbi Yosef Shalom Eliashiv, a respected scholar in Jewish law and a world-renowned *posek*. Greenberg claims that after he informed Eliashiv of his supposed bisexuality (Greenberg later admitted that he was completely gay),

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MESSAGE FROM THE YCSC PRESIDENT-ELECT JONATHAN MELL

Dear Fellow Students,

As you take this break from cramming for finals, I would like to take a moment to express my gratitude to you, the student body, for granting me the opportunity to represent you and your ideas to our administration as YCSC President. I feel compelled to acknowledge the hard work of this year's outgoing Yeshiva College Student Council. The tireless efforts of Dror Barber and his entire board have produced many great events and programs, and have laid the foundation for an even more successful future.

In order to accomplish the objectives that I have set forth in our Agenda 2000, which entails efforts to improve both accommodation and convenience on campus, I will have to solicit the help of many people. Thankfully, I will be privileged to have the opportunity to work with an extraordinary board next year consisting of Dov Brandstatter, YC Vice President, Yossi Knoll, Vice President of Business Affairs, Aryeh Goldberg, Treasurer, and Chaim Schneider, Secretary. Despite the competence of my board, we cannot achieve our goals without the help of the other student organizations on campus, as well as the most powerful voice of all, the student body. Please remember that there are many positions to be filled and countless missions to be accomplished; the opportunity for you to help is just a phone call away.

A great addition to Orientation '99 will be the reestablishment of WYUR, the official undergraduate radio station of Yeshiva University. After a three-year hiatus, with the help of many hard-working individuals, particularly Hadar Weiss, WYUR will be broadcasting again next year, promising to be better than ever. In addition, our Orientation staff will be working hard this summer in order to inaugurate next year in style. The Guide to the Perplexed, with new and improved sections and content, will hopefully make living and adjusting to life in the big city a little less stressful.

As I mentioned before, Agenda 2000 sets forth a plan to improve campus life. Some of the larger issues that affect our daily lives include improvements in the cafeteria, installing ethernet in the dorms, and creating a closer connection between us, the student body, and our administration. We hope to work diligently to achieve these goals as swiftly as possible.

Good luck on your finals; don't forget that vacation time is just around the corner. Have a wonderful summer, and see you next year.

Jonathan Mell

Special Thanks

As the Commentator progresses into our sixty-fourth year serving the student body of Yeshiva, it is important to note that the success of each year's staff depends heavily on the path sailed by the previous volume's governing board. With this in mind, it is especially appropriate for us to take stock of the numerous kind deeds showered upon us by others over the course of the past year. Adam and Mordechai, working together enriched us all and taught us the difficult and often unappreciated processes involved in creating a newspaper. Together we spent many a sleepless night, begrudgingly watched the sun rise over the rooftops of Washington Heights, crafted stories, and engaged in heated intellectual discussions while writing the chapters of our own personal tales. All this in an attempt to give back to the university that has given so much to us.

For all that and more, we thank you. For the friendships and the priceless memories, the lessons learned and the wisdom imparted, we thank you. You will always remain close to our hearts, as we can only hope to match your myriad accomplishments as our predecessors. Wherever the paths you walk may lead you; to law school or yeshiva, to the rat race or a gentler realm, the impact of your kindness will be long felt by those of us who received it.

Apathy and Indifference

We would like to inform the student populace that elections did in fact take place on Thursday, April 29th. Further, many candidates actually developed platforms that advertised their campaign objectives. Believe it or not, these candidates voiced their plans for improving student life at a debate that was open to all students. The attendance was not quite standing room only, as hundreds of unoccupied seats were readily available for anyone who actually cared.

Elections found students voting blindly, their decisions swayed by either their sweet tooth or their growling stomach. Could you imagine if "Clinton versus Dole" was reduced to a decision between lollipops and bourekas? What if Rudy Giuliani won office by promising Burger King for everyone? Should students with a propensity for video games be more equipped to choose the most qualified campus leaders?

It evidently takes a great deal of effort to float into Morg and take part in our microcosm of democracy by casting a vote. This process is obviously quite strenuous; otherwise it is hard to understand why only a small percentage of the student body made the grueling trek to the elections.

Those who were present might have noticed that a piece of paper (commonly referred to as a ballot) contained unusual looking words that learned people call Roman Numerals. Believe it or not, the administration was issuing this ballot in an attempt to amend the YCSC Constitution. Yes, we do have a constitution. How many students could actually claim that they knew what they were voting for when they hastily checked yes next to "add amendments"?

It is patently evident that there is a lack of regard for the important process of voting, and on a larger scale, taking initiative to change anything that affects student life. It is disheartening that students are unaware of the issues for which they have the opportunity to vote, and take the entire voting process in jest.

Students should have taken the time to discover for themselves what was known to a select few - that the amendments were grossly unconstitutional, and the manner about which they were presented was both devious and immoral. It is extremely disappointing that students would thoughtlessly vote for such obviously unethical amendments simply because they agreed with one, or trusted that they would have a positive effect on student life without even reading them. It is clear that students must pay more attention to their own actions, and speak out when they feel an injustice is being made.

For many, college is a time when students become more politically active. We realize this may be too much to ask from most of our student body, however, a minimal amount of commitment to decisions that directly affect student life on campus should be expected.

**THE COMMENTATOR Would
Like to Congratulate the
Graduates of 1999.**

COMMENCEMENT

**Wednesday
May 28**

**11:00 am
The Theater
Madison
Square
Garden**



FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

AARON KLEIN

I had originally planned to use this column as a forum in which to document my plans for the upcoming year, to list my hopes and aspirations for the future of this newspaper. Last week, however, I was witness to a disturbing event and have decided to write on a subject that is, in my opinion, of greater consequence. I will thus save the traditional content for a "first column as Editor-In-Chief" until next fall.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to watch the recently produced documentary, "The Lost Days," a film depicting the travels of five individuals through the Hell of Nazi Germany. I was horrified to see footage of piled bodies, starved and faceless, being shoved by bulldozers into mass burial pits. They showed an actual furnace where Jews were reduced to piles of Jewish ash, and I realized that I was staring at a monument to the infinite inhumanity of man and society gone insane, a monument washed by millions of gallons of human blood, a monument engraved with the ghosts and memories of Jews and Germans trapped in a drama so horrible and so unreal that the world would never again be the same.

Now, allow me to change the scene a bit, create one of my own. A group of American college students, sitting comfortably in a heated room, are expressing their opinion that it is not the moral obligation of a country to end foreign genocide. "The humans that are suffering and dying are not our people, not our concern," they say. "If another country would like to kill its own people, that's their business," they assert.

Frustrating, isn't it? If only those individuals knew what it was like to suffer, to watch as family and friends are killed before their very own eyes. What if I now tell you that this conversation was real? That it did not take place in the dark and caliginous years that were the 1940's, but in the modern, historically-aware year of 1999? What if I inform you that this was not the communal discourse of a group of ignorant WASPs, but the mundane discussion of a classroom filled with Yeshiva University boys talking about the crisis in Kosovo?

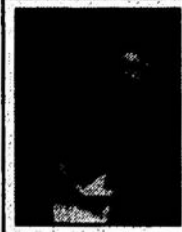
That's right, these remarks were made by students in one of my classes (Jewish History class, ironically). I sat astonished as most students agreed that we, as Jews and Americans, should not be interested in the ethnic cleansing that is currently taking place overseas. They went further to attack Israel for its recent decision to send aid to the refugees in Kosovo.

It wouldn't be so frightening if their statements had been politically motivated, if they had merely felt that the US and Israel were handling the situation incorrectly. But their contentions were not followed by suggestions of more tactful military strategies. They merely stated that we should not be morally concerned with a nation that isn't our own.

How easily we forget. It was only fifty years ago that our people were in the gas chambers, that our grandparents were starving, degraded and pathetic. After the *Shoah*, the Jews arose, and in unison we declared, "Never again!" This expression has gradually become our silent anthem, the battle song of a nation almost obliterated by one of the most extreme and unpredictable events in the history of civilization. It seems as though we must qualify those famous words a bit, change them ever so slightly, so that our anthem flows contemporaneously with our actions. "Never again - to us!" we should say, because evidently we aren't so affected by the suffering of other groups.

We use the word "Holocaust" to our advantage so frequently that it's slowly beginning to lose its power. Whenever a public figure makes an anti-Semitic remark we cry Holocaust, like an old lady complaining of a bad back so that she can guilt her children into visiting more often. Whenever the Jews are being blamed for something, we tactfully remind the world of the gross suffering that took place in the middle of this century. Yet when another ethnic group is being singled out and murdered, we don't even blink twice. We haven't forgiven Roosevelt for not bombing the tracks that led to Auschwitz, how then do we have the collective nerve to state that the United States should not involve itself in this recent holocaust?

We must learn to separate the political components from those which are basic and human. Suffering is still suffering, regardless of race, sex, nationality or creed. The events taking place in Kosovo should hit each and everyone of us in the most sensitive of spots; it should alert our senses, trigger an indigenous response, one of reason and rationality. Jews should have been the first to speak out, but we weren't - and this truly scares me. Whether we agree with NATO's or Israel's specific military actions is irrelevant. It is essential, though, that we feel a strong sense of moral obligation to help any nation that is suffering so grandly. Let us not forget the heat of those furnaces, those monuments, because if we do: who will help us next time?



FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ALEX TRAIMAN

Well, we have survived another year at Yeshiva University. Who would have imagined? The year flew by like a car on Amsterdam Avenue, but it has been a truly successful year on many fronts despite certain speed bumps along the way. Hopefully we have all done well for ourselves, be it good grades, a nice job, or priceless time spent with terrific friends.

As this year comes to a close, we say goodbye to a class of journeyed individuals and prepare to usher in a new crowd representing the next YU generation to take their place. Friends will move on to start their promising lives and inevitably new friends fill the somewhat empty voids. While the goodbyes will be rough and the new screening process will seem frustrating, as is always the case, these things manage to work themselves out.

And as we shepherd in the new crowd of Yeshiva students, let us realize that we are on the brink of something great.

We are about to conclude a progressive year at Yeshiva University. Student activism is on the rise, and the overall indifference regarding our stay at this hallowed institution is fading. Many of our goals have been accomplished, and we have made the necessary steps to ensure our unfulfilled goals will soon be successfully addressed.

Our multi-faceted university is anticipating the welcome of myriad valuable additions. An Honors College is sitting at our doorstep, waiting to be the essence of secular scholarly thought. WYUR is equipped to return as a genuine sounding board for students to voice their opinion in a forum once a vibrant entity on our esteemed campus. Noticeable improvements have been made throughout beautifying our campus and simplifying our college experience, in an attempt to thrust Yeshiva into the twenty-first century as one of the foremost centers of learning in the country, and many more changes have passed the planning phases.

Our Student Councils have done a superb job keeping us afoot in addition to setting the groundwork for major future reform. An expanded depth of coverage and readership have assisted *The Commentator* in reaching new heights, positively affecting students, alumni, and the entire Jewish Community. *Hamevaser* and *The Masmid* have established new traditions of excellence as have many other student publications and organizations.

Overall, we have done tremendously well for ourselves. However, while we congratulate ourselves and the supporting administration, our job is far from over. In fact, our work has merely begun. As we usher in the new academic year, it is important that we realize our potential and recognize the significant assets we as a student body have to work with.

As is the case with every new year, we are fortunate to have a new collective student leadership at the steering wheel. Our newly elected representatives have promised to work diligently to achieve the goals of the students, and now they are implored to do so. Additionally, Student Services is continuously committed to working alongside students to improve our respected institution in accordance with the manner we see fit.

As your official student publication *The Commentator* will remain committed to upholding excellence and journalistic integrity in an enterprise operating solely for the benefit of the student body. But while promises have been made and groundwork has been set, it is initially up to each and every student to take on the responsibility of moving Yeshiva to the next level.

It is ultimately up to you to make things happen. It is your duty to get the ship sailing again next year in the right direction. It is your job to jump start the effort promoting student activism. Do not take this charge lightly. There is serious responsibility lying on your shoulders. The same responsibility is lying on mine.

The cause is obvious; the foundation has been set; it is up to us to complete the building process. I look forward to a good year, a progressive year, and let's not forget a fun year. I hope that one year from now I will sit back with the knowledge that we have truly made a difference here. That difference will be appreciated by current students, past students, and those future YU students with absolutely no idea what they are getting themselves into. And as I watch the next car travel Amsterdam Avenue, I can only hope that eventually it will meet its ultimate destination.



MESSAGE FROM THE YCSC PRESIDENT

DROR BARBER

Dear Fellow Students,

I am sure that we are all finally thankful that the end of the year is upon us, and that the summer is once again here. We will all be going our separate ways, spreading out to our respective homes and all hopefully enjoying some hard-earned rest. For some, Yeshiva College will be their home for the coming year and for others it will become our beloved Alma Mater. However for all of us it will be a place that we cherish as the wellspring of our education and the source for long time friendships. I could go on here about the accomplishments of YCSC, and all the fun that we had over the years, but that would serve no immediate purpose (and I have a separate article in this issue that gives a brief synopsis of our successful year).

There is a Mishna in *Pirkei Avot* that states, "Azehu Chochom Halomed Mikol Adam" - "Who is a wise man; one who learns from all people." I think that this is a very appropriate statement to sum up my year as President. I worked with many people on numerous projects, and from all of them I learned valuable lessons. I wish I would not have to bore you with all the thank you's but I feel it would be unfair to those who truly deserve mention.

honor to call you a friend. As a student leader I know the proverbial hell that you go through in going with your gut and doing what you believe is right, and for that my hats off to you. Adam, your hard work and devotion did not go unnoticed. I am confident that next year's Editors-in-Chief, Aaron Klein and Alex Traiman will do an incredible job.

Dr. Nulman and Dean Himber, your office has been a bastion of advice and help both in regard to student council, and in dealing with the presidency. You have a way of putting things into perspective and I thank you for that.

It is impossible to mention the Office of Student Services and not recognize the administrations Rookie of the Year. Andrew, you have done it all. From booking rooms last minute to planning events, and from being the listening ear of the administration to the counseling voice of the students, you have done a spectacular job and for that the entire Yeshiva owes you a debt of gratitude.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of all the students, past and present, to wish a hearty *Tzaischem Lisholom* to Rabbi Cheifetz. Many people don't realize the commitment both Rabbi Cheifetz and his wife have made to Yeshiva stu-

Firstly, I would like to thank the Editors-in-Chief of *The Commentator* for their hard work in putting out this year's issue. Mordechai, you have done an outstanding job, your sleepless nights and long hauls down town have not gone unnoticed, and it is truly an

dents over the years. Rabbi Cheifetz's instituted such programs as Dorm Talks, and worked hard to make the Shabbat program what it is today.

Achron, Achron Chaviv, is my board. Howie, Shlomo and Hadar, your tireless efforts on behalf of the school require a lot more thanks than one person can give. It is easy for those not involved in student council, the bystanders and onlookers, to belittle the work that you guys have done. However, they have not stepped up to take on the onus, and they do not know what tremendous behind the scenes work you guys do. You are truly worthy of the brocha given to those who are *Oskim Btzorchei Tzibur Be'emunah*. It was my honor to work with you and call you lifelong friends.

Last week we celebrated Yom Yerushalayim. Many of us weren't around in 1967 when the entire Jewish world prayed in unison for our friends and families in Israel. There was no other time in this century when the Jewish people were as united behind a single cause. In our fight to defend Israel we captured our most prized jewel, the capital city of Jerusalem. This is the city that has seen our entire history, from *Akeidat Ytichok* to the two *Batei Mikdosh*. It has been burned to the ground but has always risen from the ashes. Our hopes and dreams are in it, and it is the resting-place of the *Shechina*. It is the city of which every Jew vows, "If I forget thee Oh Jerusalem may my right hand be cut off." Yet now, that is exactly what is expected of us by the world. They wish to sever our right hands, and in doing so take away our precious city. There are few things in this world that truly unite our people. Jerusalem is one such thing.

Dror Barber



FROM THE EDITOR EMERITUS

ADAM MOSES

Reflections, the Pursuit of Truth, and Sunscreen

To the class of 1999: If I had one piece of advice for you, it would be sunscreen. The long term benefits of sunscreen have been scientifically proven while the advice that I here tender is nothing more than the reflections of my own meandering experience.

WARNING: The following piece rambles in the way only a very personal expression can. There are, however, some invaluable kernels of truth nestled within the sentimentality.

Well, it's been one hell of a ride. I can say with sincerity that my time here was well spent.

I believe the sixty-third volume of *The Commentator* has met with a substantial measure of success. I am heartened to have had the opportunity to serve the University community as the paper's editor during the course of the preceding year. Despite its incomprehensibly taxing demands, my *Commentator* experience has afforded me much fulfillment and it is with acute reluctance that I depart my present post. I extend my gratitude to my fellow editors and the dedicated staff members without whom the effectiveness of this enterprise would have been a mere fantasy. The back-to-back all night layout festivals punctuated by occasional debate, incessant obscenity, and unmistakable camaraderie will not soon leave my consciousness.

To next year's *Commentator* team: As this venerable paper enters its sixty-fourth year, make certain to take seriously the magnitude of the responsibility you have assumed. Yours is an important mission whose effectiveness is nothing short of a requirement for the health of this institution. Whatever the impediments, the threats, the administrative obfuscation, you must persevere in the interest of students and the genuine needs of this university. I trust you will do just that.

To the Yeshiva administration: I advise you to recall that the quality of the students at this university is what has earned it the favorable regard of *The U.S. News and World Report* rankings deity in recent years. Students on this campus do not organize demonstrations and issue thoughtful critiques merely to satisfy a diabolical need to complain. In many respects, the Yeshiva house is not in order. If for no other reason than self-interest, heed the call of concerned students for reform. Continue to

ignore the plight of students at your own peril.

To the students of Yeshiva: You are among the most capable men and women in this country. The rigor of your training here will afford you competitive advantages when you leave the hallowed academy for other experiences. Always trust in the sanctity of your dreams. Pursue your ambitions with alacrity. You cannot be defeated so long as you believe in yourselves and the value of the missions you choose to undertake.

But alas, I'm not George Santayana—yet—and you probably care less for my epiphanies than I do, so I will turn to more mundane reflections. I will take with me many a fond memory of this place and my years here. The eclectic personalities that populate the Yeshiva sphere, that perform in this awkward institutional conflation of oft disparate notions are the source of the University's identity, what keeps it real, what lends it its enduring character. These actors, more than any incoherent institutional slogan, will serve as the basis for my lasting memories of Yeshiva. My Yeshiva is an unparalleled inner circle of quality people. I consider myself truly privileged to call you my friends. Thank you for extending your wise counsel to me and lending me a great deal of undeserved patience. Your support, more than anything else, has propelled me through my undergraduate years more or less intact. My Yeshiva is Dean Rabbi Michael Hecht's quirky journey through American Constitutional law amidst a fierce battle with his bedeviled eyewear. His is an edifying world in which Chief Justice Marshall professes *Brisker* leanings and the *gemora* and case law know no division. Dean Hecht's enthusiastic support for students who have elected to embark on law school odysseys, his lectures fraught with amusing anecdotes, his uncanny ability to cut directly—at times brusquely—to the heart of matters under discussion (i.e., "the ultimate fishing expedition" and supplemental commentary on *Bowers v. Hardwick*) are hallmarks of Yeshiva. But of greater importance than his jocularity, candor, or professorial prowess is Dean Hecht's genuine concern for the students to whom he has devoted his professional life. For his contributions, Dean Hecht has earned my deep respect.

The *Commentator*, of course, has been but one element of my time here at Yeshiva.

The experiential mosaic of my Yeshiva days, with its rich depth, may not be justly distilled to a single pithy column. Nor do I have the sort of creative hubris required to attempt such a construction. But I believe some general observations are in order.

I arrived at Yeshiva almost three years ago jetlagged with a post-Israel consciousness overlay, what I might at present characterize as an intuitive confidence in the possibility of discovering convincing meaning. While I will leave this university without my erstwhile existential naivete, having sharpened the sophistication of my thought considerably, I maintain the same sort of unfettered sanguinity that characterized the blissful hopefulness of my less thoroughly examined youth. This disposition to optimism despite apparent obstacles is, perhaps, the essential paradigm my undergraduate years at Yeshiva have yielded: Seek and actively confront life's challenges. Let not

the challenges that will surely beset your path be a source of consternation to you; for in the challenges reside the only possibilities for fulfillment. It is the engagement, the process, the dialectical exchange—not the answers—that afford a fleeting glimpse at ever-elusive meaning.

But alas, I'm not George Santayana—yet—and you probably care less for my epiphanies than I do, so I will turn to more mundane reflections.

I will take with me many a fond memory of this place and my years here. The eclectic personalities that populate the Yeshiva sphere, that perform in this awkward institutional conflation of oft disparate notions are the source of the University's identity, what keeps it real, what lends it its enduring character. These actors, more than any incoherent institutional slogan, will serve as the basis for my lasting memories of Yeshiva.

My Yeshiva is an unparalleled inner circle of quality people. I consider myself truly privileged to call you my friends. Thank you for extending your wise counsel to me and lending me a great deal of undeserved patience. Your support, more than anything else, has propelled me through my undergraduate years more or less intact.

My Yeshiva is Dean Rabbi Michael Hecht's quirky journey through American Constitutional law amidst a fierce battle with his bedeviled eyewear. His is an edifying world in which Chief Justice Marshall professes *Brisker* leanings and the *gemora* and case law know no division. Dean Hecht's enthusiastic support for students who have elected to embark on law school odysseys, his lectures fraught with amusing anecdotes, his uncanny ability to cut directly—at times brusquely—to the heart of matters under discussion (i.e., "the ultimate fishing expedition" and supplemental commentary on *Bowers v. Hardwick*) are hallmarks of Yeshiva. But of greater importance than his jocularity, candor, or professorial prowess is Dean Hecht's genuine concern for the students to whom he has devoted his professional life. For his contributions, Dean Hecht has earned my deep respect.

My Yeshiva is Dr. Ross Zucker's ability to awaken in me an appreciation for scholarship while equipping me with the resources necessary to undertake meaningful academic work. Dr. Zucker was something of an academic savior during my formative first year here. His skillfully woven lectures, bountiful base of knowledge, and insistence on serious student contribution were the rudder that directed me away from the quagmire of undemanding pseudo-courses for the path of academic productivity in the tradition of liberal education. Dr. Zucker is also a man of principle whose compassion and warmth have inspired my admiration.

My Yeshiva is Rabbi Willig and Tendler

(chronological order) who, through their *shirim*, have shared with me their devotion and dedication of purpose. They are both men of sterling integrity whose sincerity impresses me.

My Yeshiva is Stan Watson's unbridled joviality. This man's pharmaceutical-free joy ride over the pratfalls of angst-ridden New York City has proven to me that the constricting shackles of this great town need not bind us unless we permit them to do so.

My Yeshiva is Dr. William Lee's unending classroom tirades against *The Commentator* for its (read: my) "pompous writing." Dr. Lee, your intemperate sniping was the catalyst that drove me to previously unattained, previously unimagined levels of bombastic pretentiousness. I thank you for being a man and confronting me directly with your weighty aesthetic concerns rather than deprecating me in the privacy of your classroom.

My Yeshiva is Dean Norman Adler's fixation with bondage and the Internet's erotic possibilities. Perhaps most impressive though is Adler's belief that any thesis may be convincingly proved by appeal to the behavior of rats.

My Yeshiva is President Norman "I am far too important, I mean, busy to interact with students" Lamm's aloof indifference. I must, however, acknowledge an abiding appreciation for your favorite word *weltanschauung* and two hours of amusement with your creative work of short fiction entitled *Torah U'Maddah*.

My Yeshiva is the settler zealots for whom the "sandals and jeans but no deodorant" thing still seems to work even though they are in Israel no longer. For these righteous post-*Hesderites* in need of a legitimate purpose and some reliable Middle East scholarship, Arik is one level below God, surrendering an inch of West Bank territory is akin to inviting apocalypse upon the world, and the development of Tsomet *grama* products represents an impressive theological accomplishment.

My Yeshiva is the neo-*Haredis* among us whose machine washable white shirt-white socks ensembles would earn them the scorn of any self-respecting Moe Ginsburg *hocker* within a ten mile radius of Brooklyn's Avenue J. These men of valor are among the unheralded saints whose valiant efforts saved the University from the possibility of fraternities and sundry other forms of student enjoyment. I applaud your principled resistance to social progress. May your battle continue to bring meaning to your lives.

I love all of you! We may scarcely find ourselves in agreement, but your presence at Yeshiva has enriched my experience here immeasurably and contributed to a campus culture rife with possibilities. I sampled some of these possibilities while at Yeshiva and I am the richer for it.

But don't forget the sunscreen.

Volume Sixty-Three: Last Will and Testament

As the school year comes to a close, we would like to raise a glass (or twelve) and pay homage to those hardy souls without whom this volume would never have gotten off the ground. Putting out a newspaper is a near-impossible task, and without the assistance of various people throughout the University community, it never would have happened.

Therefore, we the Editors, being of sound mind and body, hereby bequeath the following to the individuals who are the integral foundation of this paper and deserve recognition and thanks as such:

TO ALEX: A tank of gas for all the car rides to the West Village at strange hours of the night; the entire Lynyrd Skynyrd box set; a computer that doesn't crash whenever you forget to save; and a Gripe from Gus box for all your whining and complaining as you poured heart and soul into this paper while enduring both of us shouting orders which you blithely ignored. Thanks for the best looking paper ever, be sure to top it next year. Guess what Gus? It only gets worse from here. Good luck with Volume 64 as you're definitely going to need it.

TO AARON: A vat of hair gel; your very own Serbian cousin; and a front page piece in *The New York Times Book Review*. Thanks for the effort and dedication, the dogged tenacity, and the nose for a high quality story. Whatever happens next year, don't let the bastards get you down. Good luck on the big six-four.

TO CHANAN AND YOSEF: The ancient *Commentator* chalice inscribed with age-old *Commentator* toast to those entering the ranks of the married ones: "May your mistresses never meet your wives."

TO JOSH AND BEN: Official recognition as the two cra-

ziest Gush boys to ever roll down the pike, subversive views and all; Bill Gates' severed head in a gift box; passwords to the US nuclear arsenal; and web hits, web hits, web hits. Not for the fabulous success of the net, not for the crazy hours attempting to fix all the hardware and shake the kinks out of the software, not for the stories written and the columns cranked out last minute – for true friendship, we thank you.

TO YEHUDA: Sealed ballot boxes; a respectable MTA kid to run the paper; and a lifetime supply of blue starched shirts. You brought another viewpoint into the madhouse known as the office. Thanks for always being you.

TO YISHAI: Sanity; a ban on Bible professors; rolling meadows; and your very own Ben and Jerry's flavor – Potent Poetry. We love you man – what else is there to say?

TO WALLS: Your very own dunk tank.

TO MIRSKY: A new laptop that writes the really long articles for you.

TO HADAR: A pillow; a lifetime supply of washing cups; a Sony Playstation; and your very own *snif* of *B'not Tzion*. Thanks for keeping the couch warm.

TO SHAPIRO: A muzzle; the money owed for film developing; all the summer courses your little heart desires; and a hearty wish of 'Happy Chanukah' with all the extra emphasis. Thanks for keeping us up to date and on our toes at six in the morning.

TO LEVOVITZ: All the berets in France; women on the YCDS stage; and your very own Stern College for Women Tabernacle Choir.

TO ASPIR: Levine's personal checkbook.

TO CYRULNIK: Humility and your brother's secret files on the MTA faculty.

TO ALL THE WRITERS: Instructions for using Spell Check.

TO BIGBADKAHN: A new chair. Buddy, the legend lives on.

TO NOAH: A helmet, bulletproof vest and an endless supply of toilet paper. Trust us, you're gonna need them. Thanks for blazing the path.

TO DROR, HOWIE, TROODLER, AND ALL THE YCSC DUDES: A textbook entitled "Creative Accounting – How to deduct Dougie's."

TO DEAN NULMAN: Lifetime Allman tickets; dress-down Fridays; a Supercuts gift certificate and new glassware.

TO DEAN HIMBER: A Harley tattoo.

TO LEBOW: Something to do.

TO DAVID ROSEN: A tenure as long as Sam Hartstein's; more Tachlis Committee meetings; and a Pulitzer for exposing Deep Throat.

TO JOE THE PRINTER: Vodka, cigarettes, and Zip disks that actually have the entire paper on them.

TO ALL THE REST OF PR – HEDY, JUDY, DONNA, JUNE, NORM AND THE PHOTO GANG, DES, AND THE DEERING FAMILY; TO ALL THE SECRETARIES WHO REALLY RUN THE SCHOOL – MADELINE, SHARON, SHIRLEY, CEIL, PHEOBE, MYRA, NATALIE, JOAN, BOBBIE, AND THE REST; TO DEANS ADLER, HECHT AND J; TO DON AND ERNIE FROM SECURITY; TO MR. BLACKMON FROM FACILITIES; TO DR. ZERNECK FROM ATHLETICS; TO THE ENTIRE OPCS; TO ALL THE BURNS SECURITY GUARDS; AND TO THE REST OF YOU WHO KNOW WHO YOU ARE: Our sincere gratitude and eternal thanks, as you were the ones who made all the difference. We drink to you and wish you the best; God bless you all.



**FROM THE
EDITOR EMERITUS
MORDECHAI FISHMAN**

I have always hated the maudlin process of saying goodbye. Knowing all too well the futility of attempting to say all that needs to be said, I usually never try. It has always seemed wiser to just turn and walk away, rather than expose the inadequacies of human expression trying to convey the indescribable.

What words can exist to illustrate my sense of privilege at having merited to lead this publication? What literary constructs can I create genuinely expressing what *The Commentator* and Yeshiva University have meant to me? How can I sum up an era of my life in a measly couple of column inches? I cannot, and folly would be the only word to describe such an attempt.

But I would like to comment, albeit briefly, on few matters. It has definitely been a long and strange trip, so much so, that I am absolutely sure Papa Jerry is up there smiling in the heavenly abode he shares with Reb Shlomo and the Baal Shem Tov. Come to think of it, I think they all would have enjoyed hanging around our office on layout night just to watch the show unfold. I know I have, and the sweet memories of those crazy nights, coupled with the glorious colors of the innumerable sunrises I witnessed over the rooftops of Washington Heights, will remain with me until the end of my days. The sense of mission and responsibility, combined with the power to actualize a vision and act as a catalyst for change, has always been at the core of this institution and its staff. Being a part of this grand tradition has enriched my stay here in YU beyond measure, and I feel confident that the sixty-third volume of *The Commentator* has been able to uphold, expand upon, and strengthen the successful efforts of the generations that came before myself and my colleagues.

That said, I have the utmost confidence that the incoming editors and staff have been exposed to this hallowed tradition in full and will do a stellar job. Working with them, as well as with those staffers who are moving on to greener pastures, taught me over the duration of this year more than all the textbooks in the world. The only regret I have is an quixotic one – I only wish I could do it all over again knowing what I know now. Unfortunately, as is with life, love, and Mexican food, there is no going back, no second chances. I can only try to impart the meager wisdom garnered in the process to those who follow my footsteps.

In life, as with working on *The Commentator*, you will learn all sorts of crazy things. Being editor of this paper has entailed accumulating vast knowledge and reams of information. Yet knowledge is a double-edged sword, and while there is much that I have found to be enlightening and edifying, I have become much more of an embittered cynic in the process. Individuals I had the highest respect for I can no longer stomach, having seen them for what they truly are. Digging beneath the surface does not always uncover gems; on the contrary, it often reveals the slimy underside of things best left in the dark. But to accumulate gems one must dig, and dig deep. Do not, however, become so mired in the muck that the priceless jewels you can collect no longer radiate any brilliance, for that would be tragic. Try to remember that even with all the dirt swishing around, this University is still fundamentally a wonderful place, and although the filth may reach Augean proportions, despair not.

The professors, rabbis, students and staff compose the heart of this institution, but the subtle flavors and spices of the school and neighborhood are part and parcel of the totality. Do not let the petty bureaucratic infighting, the onerous requirements and drudgery, the "stable muck," obstruct the mad beauty of

the Yeshiva University experience. Live it fully and embrace it completely. Inundate yourself with intellectualism and Torah; interact with every lunatic and two-bit crackpot you meet in the hallways or on the street (Lord knows we have our fair share); seek out disciplines that nourish your mind and soul; shop in bodegas for weird root vegetables; audit classes for no credit; take long walks in the park. Then you will have extracted some of the golden nuggets YU has to offer.

Administrators and faculty need to rise above the slime as well, as we enter a transition stage during which YU will undergo monumental changes defining the very fabric and character of the institution for the next era. The average age of a Board of Trustees member is seventy-one, and there exists an entire generation of faculty and administrators, including our president, may he live and be well, who are even older. A new academic vice president has just been appointed, a new honors college has just been created, and new classes, professors and subjects are cropping up as fast as we can make room for them. The student population is burgeoning while it changes demographically.

Old standards and entrenched bureaucratic customs are not going to cut it anymore if YU wants to compete in the vaunted rankings upon which it puts so much misplaced focus. The YU family method of treating people like gutter trash because, hey, they figure everyone besides the students is here for life, is both disgusting from a standpoint of human decency and *halakha* and is causing us to lose top-flight talent across the board. From the top down, a changing of the guard is imminent. What will take its place?

Whatever issues arise, it is incumbent upon the entire YU community to ensure that they are not decided upon in the backrooms according to the old imbecilic and destructive system. They need to be debated, discussed publicly, and in order to arrive at an intelligent conclusion, input must be solicited from all segments of YU. What is required is clarity and vision – neither of which will be found if the substantive matters are buried under the slop.

Let's face it – sometime in the near future, it is entirely conceivable that President Lamm will want to leave office and enjoy a well deserved retirement. or that circumstances beyond his control will force him to do so. Who will take over? Better yet, upon what model will his successor be chosen? President and Rosh HaYeshiva? Or do we split the two offices and create a new power structure? What happens when Dr. Socol vacates his chair? Is Dan Forman going to run the school? How is the relationship between Syms and the College going to look in the future? Are we going to broaden our enrollment to include Solomon Shechter and non-denominational kids, or are we turning our backs on them as well? What does the future hold for the Beis Medrash and its Rabbeim?

These are the issues I know the next volume of *The Commentator* will tackle (along with caf food, idiotic student bickering, administrative bungling and other personal issues. Hey, it's part of the job.). But if the only voice crying out is that of the *Commie*, it will sound all the more shrill reverberating in a vacuum. Don't allow that to happen.

I expressed in my first column as editor a sentiment I feel as strongly today as the day I wrote it. Being a YU student makes me the recipient of a legacy that spans three blocks of Washington Heights and three thousand years of history. I thank God that I have had the luck and privilege to continue on down the path delineated by my predecessors and guides, and in my own small way contribute to the collective wealth of this institution.

FORUM OPINION

Sun Rise, Sun Set

It's warm outside, baseball is on the TV, and the local flowers are in full bloom. I sit in Time Out and look at the many people that come and go, the whole spectrum of YU. I become nostalgic thinking about the passage of time that is so blatantly evident at the end of a school year. One suddenly realizes that old friends are leaving to start the next phase of their lives and new faces will soon arrive to take their place. Though summer is my favorite season, I recognize within it the element of sadness – for summer's arrival laments the end of a year, and within summer's very renewal is the inevitability of its demise. In short, I would like to thank all the outgoing seniors and recognize their accomplishments. I will remember many of them as people who have touched me deeply. When you leave, may you have fond memories of this place, and may G-d bless you with the means to one day give back to the school that gave so much to you.

That being said, we who are staying here must now look to the future and see how we can improve our fine institution for next year and for generations to come. So the following are some "fool proof," "heavy duty," "better tasting yet less filling" ideas that will make this century seem like the ice-age.

Do you know what "S1K" is? I didn't, until I went down to NYU for Shabbat. They were holding a "Shabbat For A Thousand" (hence S1K) for people from all over the tri-state area. So it got me thinking, what if we could have one great Shabbat where we reach out to the extended Jewish community and bring in Jews from all walks of life to share in our Shabbat experience? We could dance and sing and have a real impact on them, and at the same time, we could shed the shockingly insular attitude that we display in regards to our fellow Jews.

Internally, YU should have a Beit Midrash Day where everybody in the school, teachers, administrators, religious guys, non-religious guys, Sefardim, Ashkenazim, black-hats, sruggis, Russians and Lubavitchers, all come together for a day of learning in the name of Jewish unity. A day in which the Beit Midrash opens its arms to everybody in our little community is easy to do. However, its impact will be felt and its precedent remembered.

While on the topic of Beit Midrash, here is some advice to the rabbis of this school: don't forget to have close relationships with your *talmidim*. Though it is important to discuss the gemara, debate Halacha, and rail against a social injustice with your students, don't forget that it is equally important to

THE PUPIL Yishai Fleisher

talk with them personally about issues in their own lives. Give them guidance and an open ear for questions. Your job is not only to pass forth the blue-print of Judaism to the next generation, but to also pass on the heart and soul of what it is to be a Jew.

Dr. Bevan had a great idea. Students need some place to hang out outside of school. A place where ideas can be exchanged and conversations had in a fun atmosphere. A franchise like a kosher Starbucks in place of the now-defunct and YU owned Yum-Yum store could easily serve that purpose. We could have a stage in the back where open-microphone nights and poetry readings would be a regular occurrence. People would chat over a Moccachino or something, and plan the next revolution. It would brighten up the campus a bit and make it more fun. Ha! Who needs Columbia, we can have a Starbucks, too!

Honors College is here! What it needs now is some student input that will let the administration know what we want to learn. Here is some of my student input: 1) An interdisciplinary Holocaust class, taught by a team of Rabbis and professors that will deal with the theological and philosophical implications of what actually happened. 2) An interdisciplinary class about sex that will discuss the issue through the lenses of science, literature, history, sociology, and Torah. 3) A think tank class that will give students credit to debate and research issues of their choice, be it public policy, YU politics, or foreign affairs. The Honors College will only prosper from creative thinking at its onset.

Since I have last written about the park which exists behind Rubin and Morg not much has happened. So let me reiterate: YU should try to annex and rescue this area to create a lush riverside haven for the whole community. Next semester, student council should sponsor a barbecue and other events in the park in order to spread awareness to the students and put pressure on the administrators to do something about this beautiful natural resource. (If we ever get a park then we should start a Frisbee team! I've got a name for it already: "THE YUFO'S - The Yeshiva University Frisbee Organization." Not to be confused with the Star Trek Club)

Behazlocha in the summer and thank all of you for a great year.

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ASSUME YOUR PLACE IN YU HISTORY!

FORUM

OPINION

yucommentator.com: A Look Back

People often ask me, "Why should *The Commentator* be online?" After all, this is a YU paper, written by and for YU students. What purpose is there in making it accessible to the entire world? And furthermore, should we be, as people say, "airing our dirty laundry in front of the world?" These are important questions, and ones I would like to answer as I and my colleague, Josh Yuter, prepare to leave the helm of yucommentator.com and watch *The Commentator* enter the third millennium.

The Commentator is a newspaper, of, by, and for the students of Yeshiva College. It aims to represent the views, concerns, and interests of the students of this great institution. Even if there are people reading this paper halfway around the world, the content of

the paper is directed entirely towards the student body. However, despite this, people around the world are reading every issue of the paper online. And the reason is that people want to know what is going on here. It's sounds pretty simple, but it goes much deeper.

Yeshiva University, and Yeshiva College in particular, represent the ideals of *Torah Umadda* and Modern Orthodoxy. Leaving out the debate as to whether this is still the case, it is incontrovertible that YU students go on to leadership positions in Jewish communities around the world, and decisions that YU makes affect the community at large. Witness the recent controversy surrounding the proposed closing of MTA to see how central YU is to the greater Jewish community. And not only do people want to know what the school is doing, but people want to know what YU students are doing. When a so-called "South Park Minyan" was featured on the front page of the site, *The Jewish Week* quickly picked up the story. Whether or not this was for the better, the point is that the eyes of the world are upon us.

If this is so, people suggest, we should really be much more careful about what we print. After all, we don't want people to

know what we at YU are really like, do we? I have always asked, why not? If we are ashamed of who we are, what is the proper recourse? To hide ourselves from the public eye, and only allow the public to see a carefully screened variation of ourselves, *a la YU Today*? Rather, we should accept the fact that people are watching, and yes, looking up to the students of Yeshiva College, and try to live up to the lofty expectations of our brothers and sisters around the world.

Many have suggested that a major problem in the *Haredi* world is that due to their self-imposed enclosure and ghettoization, they do not feel the pressure to maintain a

moral society the peering eyes of the world encourage. Modern Orthodox Jews generally see themselves as part of the society at large,

and are therefore more conscious of how they appear to others. In YU, although we subscribe to Modern Orthodox ideas, we are nonetheless secluded from the eyes of our non-Jewish peers, much unlike our coreligionists at other institutions. But in this digital age, we cannot shirk away from our ennobling position in the global Jewish community, nor should we be ashamed for the world to see who we are and why we are what we are.

Since Josh and I put *The Commentator* online last year, we have been privileged to participate in the process of bringing YU to the world. We have received lots of feedback from people who only since the paper went online were able to keep up with the latest happenings at this school, and we found that many people who would otherwise have no contact with YU now took an intense interest in the well-being of our school. I believe that this has greatly benefited both us and the community at large, and I am proud to have been a part of it. I wish the best of luck to our successors as they prepare to take over the job of not only coding HTML and uploading files, but representing the future leaders of Modern Orthodoxy to the communities which continue to look up to them.

BEN SANDLER
OUTGOING
WEBMASTER

I'm Just Rambling...

BY EPHRAIM SHAPIRO

We live in a sick world. We gasp when crazy things happen and question how such atrocities could ever occur in a modern civilized world. When the dust settles, we return to our daily routines until sirens wail, or the news ticker clicks away, and the gasping start all over again. Where did we go wrong? Anybody have a clue what measures can still be taken to halt the downward progression of a decadent society which has become everyday normalcy?

Clarence Thomas, Pac Man and Friends
"Good evening, our top story tonight..."

All any human being has to do is take a cursory glance at the six o'clock news and not be affected by the quick tongued yapping of reporters who are so adept at reporting stories of sheer horror as naturally as they can say "we'll be back right after these messages."

Day after day, year after year, the past decade has brought the most perverted, most horribly upsetting "news" directly to American dinner tables. It's no wonder that names like William Kennedy Smith, Joey Buttafuoco, and Cathleen Willie all became everyday household terms, as people often discussed the latest issues deemed most important by the perverted media.

"In Other News..."

The rapid decline in the quality of what is important to people in this country is staggering albeit disheartening to say the least.

Imagine if dinnertime had never been bombarded with the Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas hearings. Imagine if the front page of your local newspaper did not contain graphic descriptions of William Kennedy Smith's late night escapades at the beach. Now imagine again.

Think about life today if the network news people and newspaper giants had never considered those accounts worthy or appropriate headline news that people simply must be aware of.

Take a look at the world today as if these events and many others like it had never become the casual talk of the day, top story, or otherwise information so vital to the existence of all Americans.

Would the full version of the infamous "Starr Report" in all its pornographic glory and sickening detail ever have been broadcast on television, let alone at eleven o'clock in the morning for anybody of any age to see? I don't think so. (Disclaimer: Most of us were listening to the sound of the *shofar* at the time.)

Its not entirely the fault of the media, heck no.

"Hey Macarena..."

The entertainment industry itself is smothered in nothing but sexual exploitation with no boundaries whatsoever. The advertising industry seems to be lowering it's standards of decency daily. Even children's games, videos and movies have lost all dignity and consideration for anything that should be of value to the normal flow of human life - just to make a quick buck.

And we wonder why increasingly high numbers of young high schoolers are battling pregnancy/abortion/AIDS dilemmas. And we wonder why little kids shoot their siblings heads off while playground children kill their playmates and seemingly normal teens become bloody murderers.

"I'll be there for yooo..."

Turn on a television, you'll see why. Open a comic book - the answer is in front of your nose. For more information, get some quarters and go to the video arcade.

"Uppercut! Uppercut! Left!"

There is a big difference between *Frogger* and *Street Fighter M16 Bikini Mud Wrestling*. There is a world of variance between the comedic genius of *I Love Lucy* and the sickening raunchiness of Al Bundy.

There has got to be something drastically wrong with humanity when the story line of *"Dawson's Creek"* mimics the insane story being reported on the evening news. Would the writers of *"Saturday Night Live"* twenty years ago ever have even entertained the possibility of airing the toilet bowl humor it does today? Who lowered the standard? What supreme being came down from the sky and suddenly declared it all good, without regard for consequence?

"Talk shows hosts who have run out of themes, next on Oprah."

The answer doesn't lie in condom distribution at high school orientation. The answer won't simply come by cancelling the Jerry Springer show. *What needs cancelling is the material.* Imagine if that show had no possibility of future guests! Hard standard to work up to? Sure, considering how long it's taken for us to get down to the embarrassing level we wallow in today. (And anyone who claims that our community is immune, is living in bitter denial and better come sniff the maxwell house coffee bags real soon).

Gun control laws, background check legislation and waiting periods are all great precautions, but it obviously isn't enough. Kids will always have a way to get guns. Racism will always exist. Promiscuity and perversion of humanity will always be a sad fact of life.

We need to stop them from wanting it! Sure, all kids wish they could kill a teacher - but none would ever do it, unless something told them its okay. Contraception for high school children? There should not be a need for it!

"I did not have relations with that woman, Ms. Lewinsky. Not one time. Not ever."

How ignorant can our nation's government be as to the very root of all that is evil and wrong in our insanely corrupt society? One would have thought that by now, *somebody* would have at least put an end to the fake whitehouse website. For Bill & Hill, please visit www.whitehouse.gov.

"You've got mail..."

The Internet, or World Wide Web (yes, *techies*, I know they are two distinctly different terms) in all its magnificence, avails *anything* to *anyone*, at *any time*. It's no wonder there are so many laws that simply don't exist yet because the rapid progressive pace of technology cannot be kept up with by old geezer politicians panting far behind. If only the standard had not been lowered in the years prior to the time everyone went online. If only the levels of dignity morality and respect for humanity had not been flushed before the great space age that enables any seven year old kid to learn to build a bomb while surfing pornography and how to obtain the latest in handgun accessories.

Anything, Anyone, Anytime. What a scary thought. Yesterday, the Doomsday Cult. Today, the Trench Coat Mafia. Tomorrow?

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FORUM

OPINION

Student Soap Box

Deep Thoughts from a Philosophy Major

BY JONATHAN GORDON

By now the winners of the student council elections have been chosen and another blissful year in this esteemed college of ours is set to begin. I'd like to offer my observations, perhaps as an outsider on the inside of YU. If I've learned one thing in my two years here, it is that those who can complain often do. Yes there are many things wrong with this school, but it is my belief that if we truly treated this as an institution of learning, then it would become one. We can blame the administration and faculty until we're blue in the face, but all that shows is each person's inability to look within themselves for answers. What I hope to show is that perception is warped by judgment, but true introspection is steadfast.

Your actions influence how this institution acts. Each time you register for classes based on the easiest teacher, you are telling the school that you value incompetence. Every time you go into our library only to use AOL or to check the latest stock quotes - you are telling this institution of learning that furthering your mind beyond school-work is not important to you. What would happen if people didn't register for those easiest classes each semester, or if we actually read the secular books for leisure?

The school treats us like we treat it. The administration knows that there are those of us who only care about getting the degree as soon as is humanly possible. So

what do they do? They institute rules that keep those students who don't care about the school anyway, here a little longer. I don't think their main intention is to get extra money out of us; what I do believe is that they want those students to feel like they actually were in college those few years. I believe YU wants the students to have fond memories when looking back. Granted, alumni benefactors are always important, but I can't imagine that the administration is trying to punish us for this reason. They are merely trying to keep us from rushing out of here too fast, and then regretting it later on. Do you think YU makes money on keeping us a fifth year here for free? If you do, I'd like to hear how.

I pose a test for all of you while you go on toward improving your resumes this summer. Try and think about what really motivates you in life. Does knowledge just for the sake of attaining it mean anything to you? Granted the almighty dollar drives every one of us, admittedly even us lowly philosophy majors. But the fact of the matter is that ambition is no excuse for apathy. I challenge every one of you to start taking responsibility for yourselves a little. Try to further your mind where possible, read for enjoyment. Nothing is going to change in the administration unless the attitudes and perceptions of the students change first. The burden of the school, and future of YU is in your hands. Do with it what you may. Remember this school will only become an institution of learning if you treat it as such.

Oh City, My Classroom

BY BEN FRANZ

It is really rare when someone has anything praiseworthy to say about the school, or the selection of courses, or anything that we as students have to deal with on a regular basis. However, I have something to tell you all, something that was truly incredible and every single person would be remiss if they didn't take this single course. It's entitled Art in New York. The idea may sound somewhat pedantic, but it's really an incredible course. Enough blind praise, let's get to the point, shall we?

This course meets every Sunday morning around 11:00 am. The instructor is Cris Cristofaro, and let me tell you, if there is one course you should take with Cristofaro this is it. Sculpting is from what I hear a great class, but in this one you get to fully appreciate other people's work in ways you've never imagined. First let me tell you about Cris. He's one of the really cool teachers in this school. An artist in his own right, Cris has been teaching sculpting and collage here for a nice long time. He is of Italian descent and is one of the nicest, friendliest people you will ever meet. High praise cannot be sung enough to do the man justice. Besides being a really great guy, Cris is also a very knowledgeable man from a historical point of view. Throughout the semester, he will fill you in on all major periods of the twentieth century. From Sanford White to Jackson Pollock this man knows his stuff.

As if this wasn't enough encouragement, the class is generally scheduled to hit every major art exhibition occurring in the City at the time the course runs. Unfortunately, we missed the Jackson Pollock show at the Museum of Modern Art, but we hit virtually every other one. Here's a sampling of the stuff we saw:

1. DWAIN HENSON@THE WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART. - This show was really wild. Dwain Henson was a sculptor who started at the age of 13 or so, and proceeded to work until he recently died in his mid 80's. His sculptures were of real people. They showed people with all their bumps, contours, and individual forms. The sculptures were extremely realistic in appearance. The really shocking ones were of a motorcycle wreck, and a police officer who looked like he was standing on guard. He was so realistic that we were waiting for him to reach down and pick up his walkie-

talkie. It was really cool.

2. PABLO PICASSO: CERAMICS@THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART. - This show was simply wonderful. I mean, everyone knows that Picasso was a great impressionist painter, but what about the fact that he was a sculptor? Or that he painted these incredible ceramic pieces? Each piece was lovingly decorated. The ceramic pieces ranged from jugs and vases to pots and plates. He did everything from make the ceramic pieces to resemble animals, women, and wondrous little bullfights. Just as he was really prolific with his paintings, so too was he with ceramic pieces. I think there were several thousand on display. It was really fabulous.

3. ISAMU NOGUCHI MUSEUM/SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK. There is a small Greek community on the west shore of Queens. Near there is a wondrous museum dedicated to the work of the celebrated artist, Isamu Noguchi. Isamu Noguchi was a Japanese-American Artist who lived a highly conflicted life. A life that revolved around his love of America and his love of Japan. Isamu was a sculptor who specialized in rock. As such, the majority of pieces give you the impression that you are wandering through a magnificent rock garden. Mostly because you are. A good portion of the museum is outdoors. This explains why it's only open six months out of every year. Besides Sculptures, Isamu also created set pieces, parks, playgrounds, and magnificent public works. His work is viewed all over the world. If you have not studied this man, do so - soon! The Socrates Sculpture Park is a place where artists erect and exhibit sculptures of all types for six months. Then the exhibit is removed and a new batch is started. It was a really neat place.

I firmly believe that there's an art lover in virtually everyone, and to not display it at least once in your life is to deny the imagination you were born with. I loudly and vigorously applaud the Dean's Office for allowing this class to exist, and fervently hope that it continues to do so. There are just some experiences in life which are too precious to ignore, and learning about yourself through expression and art is definitely one of those said experiences. Thus I implore you once more to take the course when it's offered again. I guarantee you'll love it.

Missing Hecht

BY ZEV SAFRAN

M.T.A. is exceedingly fortunate to have Dean Michael Hecht assume the deanship of its school for the upcoming academic year. With his hands on the reigns, they are sure to boast a school filled with Torah learning and academic success.

M.T.A.'s gain however, is Y.U.'s loss. For Dean Hecht, who balances a dual role of being a phenomenal highschool Rebbi and a proficient dean, retains an unparalleled sensitivity and appreciation for the students. Further, he is committed to Torah-learning and is diligent in his college studies. Dean Hecht has proven that he is a most

befitting leader of Yeshiva College, and serves as a powerful paradigm of Torah Umaddah, committed to the ideology of this institution.

Dean Hecht is extremely in tune with the student's challenge of juggling Torah Umaddah, and is an established talmud chacham and erudite world scholar. Therefore, on behalf of the entire student body, it is my fervent hope that Dean Hecht will be reinstated as Yeshiva College Dean following the upcoming academic year. However, should Hecht's leadership continue to be needed at M.T.A., a dean who is of equal caliber in his commitment to Torah and Madda should be installed.

THE COMMENTATOR

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FORUM

LETTERS

Dr. Zucker Continued...

To the Editor:

I write this letter on behalf of Dr. Ross Zucker, assistant professor of political science at Yeshiva University and Stern College for Women. He did not suggest that I write this letter, nor did he even encourage it. Instead, I do so of my own volition and desire. I felt it my duty to write a letter behalf of the single greatest professor I have had.

Due to my great desire to learn as much as I possible can while in college, I have had the privilege of studying with many different professors. Dr. Zucker is excellence personified. Not only is his knowledge of political science unparalleled, but his presentation is exciting, informative, and extremely interesting. I have never seen him back away from a lively discussion, nor have I ever witnessed him skirt an issue posed by a student. He has great control of the class, due in part to the enormous respect his students have for him. They realize they are in the presence of greatness.

I have taken three classes with him, one in my freshman year, one in my junior year, and one currently, and have loved them all. His ability to quote sources and produce

bibliographies on the spot is one of the most remarkable things I have ever seen from any professor.

In addition to his obvious mastery of the subject matter, he is most helpful to students. I have yet to meet a nicer or more helpful man than Dr. Zucker. Like many other professors, he gives his home phone number to students on the first day of class with encouragement to call any time. At many points during research or studying, I called Dr. Zucker and he helped me greatly. I have never asked him a question he could not answer, and he always seems to have all the time in the world to help.

I am not normally given to hyperbole, and I do understand that some of what I have said in this letter could be dismissed as exaggeration. I assure you, however, every word I have said is the absolute truth. Therefore, I believe that for an institution constantly striving to improve academically such as Yeshiva University, not giving Dr. Zucker tenure would be an egregious error.

Jesse Mendelson
YC/IBC '99

Dr. Zucker/ Elections Fiasco

To The Editor:

I would like to address two matters. The first issue, which I wish to bring to light, is that of the voting irregularities that occurred in the senior class race. I approached the polls to cast my ballot, but much to my dismay, I was told that I had already voted. To say the least, I was shocked and aghast. I told the attendant that it was not possible that I had already voted, and I could account for my whereabouts from the moment the polls opened until that very minute. I was told there was "nothing that could be done." At that point I was beside myself, and after much time arguing back and forth citing that this was an apparent act of election irregularity, I was allowed to vote. Mind you, this was only after the attendants became nervous at my response. I later found out that this same event hap-

pened to many people, but unfortunately those people were denied voting privileges and turned away. I would think that in such a high moral institution such as ours that this sort of asymmetry would not happen.

The second is the irony that I am observing in the university. Dr. Ross Zucker was just elected the "Professor of the Year" by the students of the senior class. Yet, at the same time the administration has elected not to grant him tenure. The election shows the obvious affection that the students have towards Dr. Zucker. Why this obvious discrepancy between students thoughts of a professor and the "powers that be?"

Scott Nadel YC 00'
SBMP Vice President
SBMP President-Elect

Thefts are Shocking

To the Editor,

I've read the recently published article, "Wave of Thefts Sweeps Campus" and I think it's unfortunate that YU students lost their belongings after leaving their dorm rooms for only two weeks. It should be the case that the YU security is responsible for the loss or damages of the articles of the students. Even some of the staff of the security office itself may be responsible for the theft. I did not expect this to happen at a university, especially a good one. Further measures

should definitely be taken to search the guards for the belongings or to tighten security during the vacations. However, if this cannot be done than the students should be told at the beginning of the semester that no personal belongings, such as money, labtops, computers, watches, jewelry, etc should be left in the room. I hope that YU security department changes its policies.

Joey Vogel
Signed: YC 04'

FORUM

LETTERS

Parting Words

To the Editor:

I am not writing this letter to attack anyone, but as someone who has been on campus for the last seven years, I believe that it is my duty to voice my opinion on matters that have disturbed me lately. For starters, I want to address the issue of one of the letters that was published in the last issue of the Commentator regarding the bowling tournament. Although the Commentator is a place in which students can and should voice their complaints and ideas, it is not a place for petty personal demands for honor, especially for such an insignificant achievement.

This leads me to my next and more important point. As president of IBCSC, I (and apparently many others who reacted to the empty ballots "Is this a joke?") was disturbed by the fact that all of the incoming IBCSC and SBMPSC candidates ran unopposed (I did not write this earlier because I felt that it would be unfair for those students who declared their candidacy in the correct fashion). I don't blame the students for not running for office, but I do believe that this reflects a major deficiency in respect and appreciation for YU. There are about fifty clubs (give or take a few) that exist at the Uptown Campus. Out of these clubs, maybe half are active on a regular basis. To me this indicates that many of these clubs simply exist to build resumes for students who don't have enough work experience and couldn't care less about this institution. It's just ironic that many of these so called "student leaders" are the ones who complain about how terrible YU is in relation to other universities. Granted, YU has its flaws, and too many of them, but it can become a better place for all students to excel, regardless of what they expect to gain from their experience at YU, if they were more active in solving the problems about which they complain. It seems to me that YC and SSSB Uptown have become vocational schools that students view selfishly as either obstacles or stepping stones

for a more lucrative career instead of seeing them as life-molding institutions. YU's philosophy of Torah U'maddah is not only a catchy and theoretically perfect dicotomy, but rather, it is a philosophy that should guide students through their lives. Apparently, the ramifications of which undergraduate institution a student chooses to attend is an essential component of the undergraduate experience that many students seem to neglect.

Next, over the course of elections, I kept hearing complaints about the English Lit. requirement at YU. As an English major, I found this quite disturbing. Instead of encouraging students to benefit from a very strong YC department, some of the candidates seemed to complain about the burden of one or two English classes on the student who chas v'shalom has to suffer more than five semesters at YU. Obviously such an attitude is detrimental to future success of YU as a top-tier university that has to compete with institutions in which students take courses in their home schools. To give credit where it is deserved, I commend the candidates for addressing the issue of YU's virtually nonexistent summer program.

At this point, you're probably bored by my ranting, so I will make my final request to you. Please try to encourage students to become more active in YU student matters instead of printing sensationalist jargon just to fill space. *The Commentator* is a forum for student awareness and condition improvement, not only bathroom reading material. Try to keep this in mind. *The Commentator* possesses what I believe is incredible potential for student life improvement, both directly by informing students of new occurrences and indirectly, by increasing student involvement. Please put this great potential into beneficial action.

Matithyohu Balas
YC/IBC '99

THE COMMENTATOR

welcomes letters from its readers.

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

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

THE COMMENTATOR reserves the right to edit all letters for syntax, content, and length.

The Commentator

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FORUM LETTERS

Eizehu Chacham?

To the Editor:

A few points on the recent column by Ms. Hadar Weiss in the Commentator.

1) *Eizehu Chacham - Halomed Mikol Adam*. Not *Mikol Isha*. There is a reason we make the *brachah* of *Shelo Assani Isha* every morning.

2) There is a good reason why we Frummies won't come to the play. It is *ASSUR* for boys to watch girls put on a play, even if there is no singing. Is that substantial enough for you?

And a little friendly advice - the only reason you are in Stern, is to get the best possible *shidduch*. Boys like their wives to be *aidel*. Girls are supposed to be sugar, & spice, and everything nice, not bitter and confrontational. You shouldn't waste all the money your parents spent on tuition, just to get a little attention.

Shmuel Kadosh
Mesivta Yeshivas Rabbi Chaim Berlin

Hadar Weiss replies:

I thank you for your kind words in response to my column in the last issue of *The Commentator*. However, I do feel a need to reply in kind to your missive, if only to correct what I feel are a few misconceptions on your part.

1) In learning, the term "ish" is used to describe a man, "Isha" a woman, and "Adam" to describe a generic anyone, either sex, that is a human being rather than an animal or a plant or some other object. Therefore my original statement of "Halomed Mikol Adam" still applies.

2) The only reason that I could think of to declare that it is "ASSUR" for men to watch women act if they do not sing, is because of

Kavod HaTzibbur, the same reason that women do not receive an aliyah to the Torah in shul. Not because it is assur, but because it casts the rest of the male tzibbur in an embarrassing light for not being up to par with the woman receiving the aliyah. So, if we were to say that the men at Yeshiva University were not up to par with the women, then perhaps because of Kavod HaTzibbur we would not be permitted to attend. Paradoxically, this would mean that since you do not believe that the guys have anything to learn from the girls, you actually could attend, as Kavod HaTzibbur does not stop you. Yet I, if not for the fact that I find Kavod HaTzibbur utterly inapplicable here, would have a problem attending the Stern play, as I believe the guys do have a lot to learn from the women. By making such a bold declaration that it is "ASSUR" for us to watch women perform, you almost force me to liken you to a chassid shoteh that is machariv haolam, delaying the coming of Mashiach by increasing sinat chinam, if I would care to go to the extremes that you do. Thankfully I do not, so don't worry, you aren't responsible for our remaining in galut. But your misinterpretation of halakha and halakic terminology does lead you to a misinterpretation in thought.

As to your last point, that I am enrolled in Stern College only to find a shidduch and I should be *aidel* and sugar and spice, etcetera, I can only laugh. As I clearly signed that column Yeshiva College '00, and I referred to the guys up here as "us guys" repeatedly, I do not understand how you could believe that I attended Stern, but I'm willing to overlook it.

Thanks again for the quick response, and, I must add the entertainment: being 6'5" and not shaving for sefirah, I don't usually get called Ms. Weiss.

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THE YEAR IN REVIEW

FAREWELL MESSAGES FROM YOUR STUDENT LEADERS

YCSA PRESIDENT DROR BARBER

The Yeshiva College Student Council has always had many different functions on campus. Our overall goal is to improve student life. However, such a task falls into many different categories. There is the onus upon us to make sure that students' voices are heard. This is accomplished through hours of meetings with the administration, as well as through publications such as *The Commentator*. Another responsibility is to create and implement programs that allow students to sit back and relax every once in a while. This goal is realized through the many functions and events that the Student Council sponsors. Finally, there is our civic duty to the YU community as a whole. This is accomplished through the various blood and bone marrow drives that we have sponsored over the years.

The year started off with a plethora of events. Orientation consisted of our extremely successful cruise, our trip to "Stomp," and to a Yankee's game. Throughout the year the various class councils ran programs such as paintball, scavenger hunts, the Late Show with David Letterman, X-S New York, IMAX movies, and bowling at Port Authority. The Sophomore class, led by Aryeh Goldberg, ran the first ever YCSA Bowling Tournament. Additionally, the newly established Student Activity Club, headed by Moïshe Singer and Shlomo Herman, successfully ran trips to see "Visiting Mr. Green," "Footloose," and "Les Miserables." The second semester saw the formation of the innovative new Tuesday/Wednesday Movie night.

There were also our big bash events this year. Students were treated to Dougie's and Gotham Grill while watching the World Series, the Super Bowl, Midnight Madness, and the NCAA Championships. Once again we ran a very enjoyable Chanukah Concert, as well as the first ever Yom Haatzmaut Carnival (I apologize to all those who had to sit in the frigid dunk tank). Concerts were abounding this year, as the students had the pleasure of hearing Chaim Dovid and the Diaspora Yeshiva Band live on campus. Yeshiva College Student Council was also proud to sponsor the Dramatic Society's production of "Lord of the Flies."

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Daniel Drabkin and his staff for their hard work on this year's yearbook. It has been two years since a Yearbook has been published, and I am proud to say that through their tenacity, we are going to be able to bring the seniors a Yearbook that they can be proud of. Additionally, I would also like to thank Moïshe Schmerler, Jennie Weiss, and their entire Senior dinner board for the

tremendously successful job of planning, fund raising (via Intercampus Mishloach Manot), and implementing what promises to be the most successful senior dinner ever.

The discussion must now turn to our accomplishments in the everyday quality of life, specifically on campus. If I would have to narrow it down to one specific accomplishment in this area it would have to be the refurbishment and restoration of WYUR. Over the entire year, through the hard work and tireless efforts of the student council, led by Hadar Weiss, we can honestly say that next year the students' voices will not only be printed, but will be heard over the air waves in our dormitory rooms as well. For the Sephardic minority who aren't always heard as loudly as all of us screaming Ashkenazim, we have secured and installed air conditioning in the Beit Midrash. Another convenience that was instituted as promised was subsidized car services to the airports on behalf of the out-of-town students. Led by Aryeh Goldberg, a rebate program was set up to reimburse students for their cab fares to airports. Additional improvements that will be seen around campus next semester include a new and improved game room, as well as 24-hour access to the TV lounge in Rubín Hall.

Academically, YCSA played an instrumental role in the hiring and establishment of a fully functional Academic Advisement Center. In addition, I would like to thank Nachum Stollman for supervising the four very successful blood drives that took place this year.

At this point it would be unfair to conclude without thanking the entire Office of Student Services for their continued support in helping us with all our endeavors. Their office has been a bastion of goodwill and assistance in implementing all that we toiled to achieve.

Finally, I would like to thank those who have helped out the Yeshiva College Student Council in all of its capacities. It is the individuals who incessantly take the initiative to help their fellow students and their school who truly receive a rewarding college experience. It is easy to be a nay-sayer, critical of others; however, it is truly noble to step up and take on additional responsibilities to help out and work on behalf of what you believe in. I wish Jonathan Mell and his council much luck next year. I am sure that they will put in all the effort necessary to have an even more productive year than this one. It has truly been an honor to serve as President of the Yeshiva College Student Council, an experience that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

SSSB PRESIDENT DAVID NEISS

With finals upon us and the end of the year not far away, the time has come to look back at all that has taken place. Recently, we have instituted an Entrepreneurship Club on the main campus. I hope that you students will take advantage of this great opportunity to get involved with student activities. As Sy Syms School of Business Student Association President this past year, I welcomed the opportunity to serve you and hope that I have been worthy of your trust. Many changes and innovations were introduced which hopefully made your academic

burden more bearable and enriched your social life. Let us acknowledge our debt of "hakarot hatov" to Yeshiva, our Rabbeim, and professors for the long hours and timeless efforts on their parts to help mold us into individuals who will hopefully be a credit to our people and our professions. Furthermore, I would like to thank the 1998-1999 Sy Syms School of Business Student Association Board for all their help in making this year the success it was. Last but not least, I would like to congratulate the graduates of the class of '99 and wish them the best of luck in the future.



IBC PRESIDENT MATITHYOHU BALAS

One of the most profound demonstrations of the *Torah U'Madda* philosophy of Yeshiva University is the Isaac Breuer College of Hebrew Studies. The IBC ideology is to integrate *Torah* into the everyday life of its students without limiting its focus on just Talmud. Particularly impressive is the addition of new courses to the Judaic Studies department of IBC, especially those dealing with Medical, Legal, and Business Ethics, as well as those dealing with specific aspects of Judaism, Halakhic texts, and daily life.

IBC's strong Hebrew, Bible, Talmud and Jewish Philosophy departments accord with IBC's general philosophy, teaching these subjects on a university level in an environment that does not restrict rabbeim and professors to teach them as courses. Halakhic digressions are commonplace in IBC classes and add tremendously to the real-life applications of what is taught in class.

However, IBC must continue to grow in order to develop into a school that exists for a greater purpose than just to fulfill Judaic Studies graduation requirements. IBC has about two hundred and twenty students, of which very few graduate from IBC, and even less graduate with a degree. It seems to me that most IBC students don't take advantage of

the great resources that the IBC faculty provides its *talmidim*.

I do not mean to say that IBC students are to blame for this fact. Although IBC supplies its *talmidim* with a perfect *Torah U'Maddah* balance, it does not offer enough course choices for students to feel the need to stay in IBC. With only a very limited amount of Advanced Talmud courses, one or two Jewish Philosophy courses, four Jewish History courses, and very few elective courses offered each semester, it seems obvious that there isn't much room for growth in learning beyond the basic requirements. It is therefore not very surprising that many IBC students turn to MYP or SBMP to further their learning.

On a final note, I encourage *talmidim* to become more involved not only in IBC affairs, but also in YU affairs as well. With the requests of *talmidim*, I am sure that IBC can grow into a school that will no longer be seen as a two-semester solution to the Jewish History and Bible courses that otherwise don't fit into students' six semester schedules. IBC has the potential to develop into an all-around *Torah U'Maddah* ideal on all levels, from the beginner to those with many years of Yeshiva experience.

SOY PRESIDENT MICHAEL GEWIRTZ

I was asked to write a year in review for SOY, but instead of elaborating on the renovated Beis Medrash, Seforim Sale, Chagigot, *Hamevaser*, *Enayim LaTorah*, or numerous shiurim, I have decided to thank those who made this year possible. More importantly, I will address a fundamental problem that is currently facing Yeshiva University.

First and foremost I would like to thank the SOY Executive Board for sacrificing hours of their lives to make sure that the Yeshiva ran smoothly. I would also like to thank the entire staff of the SOY Seforim sale whose tireless effort and dedication helped to produce the most successful Seforim Sale ever. Additionally, the staff that worked on *Hamevaser* and *Enayim LaTorah* deserves a huge *Yasher Koach* for upgrading their publications to a standard that Yeshiva University and SOY can be proud of. Lastly, I would like to thank the Office of the Dean of Students and the Office of Student Services, specifically, Dean Efrim Nulman, Dean David Himber and Mr. Andrew Leibowitz. Without their advice, support and friendship little would have been accomplished this year. Without them there would not have been a Seforim Sale, or Chagigot in the Beis Medrash. Thank you.

Over the past few years I have been perplexed as to why this Yeshiva is called Yeshiva University, and why the mantra of *Torah U'Madda* was chosen as a representation of its goals and philosophies. Perhaps, University of Yeshiva and *Madda U'Torah* would have been more appropriate.

Why do I say this? What could I have seen to make me believe this?

I remember sitting in an administrator's living room earlier this year and hearing him explain that in order to reach the highest levels of *Torah U'Madda* you need the best Rebbeim and professors. I fully agree with that sentiment. However, the administrators above the teachers, the ones setting the curriculum, fielding the students questions and deciding what is best for the student body, need not only to have an understanding of what *Torah U'Madda* means, but to let *Torah U'Madda* guide their decisions. There is a reason why Yeshiva comes before University, and wisdom in placing *Torah* before *Madda* - the two are not

equal. *Torah* will always be more important. However, from what I have seen as a student, experienced as President, and have heard numerous times from my peers, this does not seem to be the case.

I am proud that Yeshiva University is ranked 42nd on *U.S. News and World Report's* list and hope this position will continue to rise. However, when I impart what makes Yeshiva University special I look to the Rebbeim, Beis Medrash and Seforim Sale. Yeshiva University should be a Yeshiva with an excellent university at its *talmidim's* fingertips, not a University that makes the Beis Medrash available to its students.

When SOY wishes to run the Seforim Sale, so that thousands of Jews, from every walk of life can build and expand their Judaic libraries, the answer should never be "NO," because giving up the 5th floor is inconvenient, rather, "YES how can we help?"

YU should not have further limited the number of credits that students can take outside of the University. It will only lead to students being forced home after only their Shana Aleph year in Israel, because partially making up for Shana Bet during summer school is no longer an option. Both my learning skills and religious devotion are much stronger because I spent a second year in Israel. Doesn't YU want to afford students the strongest foundation possible?

I think the problem is that while the goal of YU is and should be *Torah U'Madda*, YU has to realize that this goal is only fully obtainable by a small percentage of its students. The ability to substantially gain from both *Torah U'Madda* is achieved by a select few. The majority of the students should be and are striving for *Torah Im Derech Eretz*, the acquisition of skills to be a successful *Torah* Jew in a secular society.

Yeshiva University, being a small institution, must help each student reach their individual goals, Yeshiva University should continue to strengthen its *Madda*, both for the students that are able to strive for *Torah U'Madda* and for the students that are in Yeshiva University to achieve *Torah Im Derech Eretz*. However, no matter if *Torah U'Madda* or *Torah Im Derech Eretz* is the goal of the student, the *Torah* half of the formula must be both understood and accepted as superordinate.

SBMP PRESIDENT ELECT SCOTT NADEL

For the past several years, the student body of SBMP has steadily enlarged and we are hopeful that this trend will continue. This year we expanded from four Shiurim to five. For those who are unfamiliar with our daily schedule, it's as follows: A Halacha/Machshava Shiur which begins at 9:00am followed by Seder in the Morg Beis Medrash until 11:30, and the day concludes with a Gemarah Shiur until 1:00pm.

At present, we have some exciting activi-

ties planned for the next academic year, and hope to make your time at SBMP enjoyable both in and out of the Beis Medrash. You can be assured that your choice to enroll in SBMP is the correct one. I welcome anyone interested in the program to speak with me or any other SBMP student leader. If there are any suggestions for next year, please don't hesitate to tell us about them! Have a great summer and see you all next year.

A Tribute To Rabbi Cheifetz

BY RYAN HYMAN
Head Resident Advisor,

Rubin Hall 96-97/Morgenstern Hall 97-98
Its Wednesday at 12:00 pm and the head resident advisors meeting with Rabbi Cheifetz has just begun. The topic for discussion is storage rooms being cleared out before the summer. A debate ensues, and by 12:30 consensus has been reached on how to effectively conduct this project in the midst of finals, causing minima disturbances to the student's delicate psyche at this stressful time of the year.

The head resident advisors meet every on Wednesday from 12:00 to 1:00 pm, to discuss any problems or issues that have come up in the past week or may arise in the coming days. Most students may not realize the great importance of these meetings in ensuring the smooth running of the three dormitories, as well as the independent housing program, at Yeshiva University. And at the helm: Rabbi Joshua Cheifetz.

Rabbi Cheifetz joined the YU community some 38 years ago and has faithfully served its student body. It was sad, indeed, to hear of his retirement from his position of Director of Residence Halls.

It's truly rare to see a person so devoted to the well-being of each and every student, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I clearly remember being called at 2:00 am one morning toward the end of December, during finals, to a student's room in Rubín Hall. The student was not feeling well and it's the head RA's responsibility to make sure the student is taken care of. However, when I arrived at the room Rabbi Cheifetz was standing outside. He had heard that a student was not well and had come upstairs to see if there was anything he could do to help. And this is only one of the many incidents where Rabbi Cheifetz was there for the students.

Rabbi Cheifetz, who has his degree in social work from the Wurzwiler School of Social Work, was also the creator of the popular Dorm Talks program. From start to finish



of each program, through the myriad details, Rabbi Cheifetz ensures the smooth running of the program designed to be of interest to every student.

Another one of Rabbi Cheifetz's crowning achievements is the Shabbat Enhancement Program. Through his leadership and close work with the Yeshiva College Student Council, staying on the YU campus for Shabbat has become the rule rather than the exception. Rabbi Cheifetz has created a Shabbat atmosphere that makes the Yeshiva campus feel like home. Speakers have to be booked months in advance, flyers have to be posted informing students of the various Shabbat events from shiurim to nursing home visits. And who can complain about \$5 for an entire Shabbat, including a hot cholent tish on Friday night?

I have had a unique opportunity - I have worked with Rabbi Cheifetz as a resident advisor, and more recently, in my capacity as Assistant Director of Admissions. Having worked with him in both offices, I have always found him to be professional and courteous, always putting the needs of the student first.

Rabbi Cheifetz: A void will be left in the heart of the entire Yeshiva University community as we say farewell to a man who has devoted so many years of his life to each of us.

YESHIVA COLLEGE DEAN DR. NORMAN ADLER

I send you these end of the year greetings from YU's office in Israel. This is perhaps fitting since many of you will be trading places - some coming here (or there) this summer, or next year, or thereafter - for a brief visit or perhaps a very long stay.

While we close this year's chapter in your education at Yeshiva College, I look at the Israeli actions, toward the growth of the *Torah* community world-wide, and the events in the College. I realize how pervasive is the influence

of your College experience - and hope that you have enjoyed as well as profited from the past year's education. We have seen institution of the Honors Program the completion of the Book Project, the Arts Festival, the Athletic competitions and victories - and seen how one can lead a fully Jewish life while attaining the highest levels of intellectual activity.

I feel energized by a of these events - and hope that you share these feelings. I wish you all a wonderful summer.



ARTS & CULTURE

STERNBUCKS REVIEW: QUEENS OF THE STAGE

BY MORDECHAI FISHMAN

A truly magnificent piece of theater has to connect with its audience on a visceral, emotional, level while taking into account the sensitivities and sentiments of the assemblage. A truly callous heel, a man who aspires to be crowned with the title (in modern-day parlance) of a "player," needs to be a shallow, cold-hearted cad who cares not a whit for the feelings of those he uses and abuses. Rarely do the two go together, but the Stern College Dramatics Society's production of "King of Four Hearts" managed to pull off the feat – a phenomenal play about four women and the conniving man who plays them all.

Student written, produced and performed, the production was part of the annual "Stembucks" and highlighted the theatrical talent contained within the student body of SCW. Written by S. Kim Glassman, "King of Four Hearts" was a one-act play comprised mostly of one constantly interrupted monologue directed toward the audience by four different twenty-something women in various phases of the exact same relationship. Only one woman speaks at a time, each picking up the where the preceding left off while the rest of the cast freezes, leaving the viewer with the impression that only the speaker inhabits the stage. What becomes immediately apparent is that they are all in love with, and being strung along by, the same man, who is consistently using the same lines on each gullible female. The method never changes, only the victim. We never get to meet this Lothario, but his personality and actions influence each of the ladies being jerked about on his emotional puppet-strings.

Adrienne Segal played the tempestuous Joan, the fatalistic femme who has finally seen our hero for what he truly is, but can't get over him. She carries herself with the bitter knowledge of the junkie who knows the habit is killing her, but still needs the fix. "I came to the conclusion that I was over him," she says. "I was pleased." But then comes the capitulation to the inevitable. "And then I suddenly realized that my need to say that I'm over him only announces how much I'm not." Her bitter tone serves a foil for the other women still enamored of, and deeply in love with, Mr. Slick Dog. Even though she knows he has moved on to other conquests, "speed dial number thirty-seven or something," she still cannot refrain from obsessively sitting by the phone waiting for him to call. As she puts it, "Chalk up one more on the Joan-was-stupid-again chart."

In contrast to Joan's jaded manner is that of Jenny, played with flighty aplomb by Shifra Chana Rothstein. Jenny has just fallen under Sir Bedroom's charming wiles, and is still in the first stages of love, when the world looks brighter, flowers smell sweeter, and all the bells in heaven ring at the sound of his voice. She brings a ditz, love-struck vitality to the stage that is all the more touching knowing that she is ultimately fated to end up with her heart shredded into hamburger by his emotional meat-grinder. Jenny is every girl who swears not to act like a giddy twelve year-old, but when the thunderbolt strikes, proceeds to act exactly like the "swoning moron" she promised herself never to be. Rothstein's performance hit home with her audience, with many nodding their heads in identification or recognition as she said her lines.

The third woman in this four-part passion puzzle is Joanne, the thoughtful law student slash bank teller. Portrayed by the soft-spoken

Marina Klochan, Joanne seems to be a down-to-earth, sensible-shoe-wearing type of gal. Yet Joanne, despondent over her loneliness, is sucked in by our protagonist's pickup lines as well. "I know, I know," she murmurs, "he's not the best for me, the greatest, the most supportive or attentive in the world, but he makes me 'two,' which keeps me from being 'one.' It's awful being 'one,'" she says plaintively, even as she hopes for the best.

Sipporah Weissman and Susan Wohlgelemtter distinguished themselves in their respective supporting roles as Michelle and Melanie, those in the know who attempt to counsel their friends against their emotionally self-destructive behavior. Coming from opposite viewpoints – Michelle with her long-term (read: life sentence) and adoring (read: whipped) boyfriend, and Melanie, with her serial dating lifestyle ("That's the great part about being single. Every new guy you go out with, boom, instant new beginning!") – the two actresses provided depth in the script and serve as barometers of their friends' love-struck desperation.

But the real star role of the show is that of June, as played by Sarah Harris. June is torn by her indecision and doubts. She already has the premonition that something is seriously amiss, but she still finds herself drawn to this man, even while trying to break free of his specter. "A part of him follows me wherever I go," she says, "but where am I going? Back to him?!! This indecision is driving me crazy, and I hate it. I hate not knowing."

In the most memorable monologue of the play, June compares a girl's heart to a fine glass vase placed right in the very center of a basketball court for all to trample upon come game time. And what do you know, there is almost always a game going on. The vase gets trampled and kicked, smashed and shattered. Repair after repair, sloppy glue job after sloppy glue job, and still, the vase takes its place once more at center court. All it wants if for a player to stop, see its "inner brilliance and beauty," pick it up and take it home (and maybe buy it an engagement ring). All she wants is her "basketball man."

The plot built up to the fated climax, and as the story reached its denouement, the viewer could not help but watch, mesmerized, as it all came together. Dramatically, the script did exactly what a good play should – it reached into the hearts of its audience, grabbed the emotions that they are intimately familiar with, and displayed them on stage for all to see.

Glassman's script was beautifully directed by Eric Parness, a recent graduate of Brandeis University and a student director here in New York. Parness' minimalistic stage settings gracefully complemented the script by imparting a shared sense of space, alluding to the women sharing the same man. "King of Four Hearts" was co-produced by Deborah Cenko and Celia Sporer, while Liz Renna served as stage manager.

Overall, the production truly was a magnificent piece of theater, while the fellow it was written about (wherever you are, there are some boys here who would like to shake your hand) must truly be a rolling stone like no other, a real down-home, game-playing, bird-chasing hound. As the lights fell, the audience gave the actresses a standing ovation (while the fifteen or so men in attendance eyed the exits, ready for a quick getaway should the need arise). "King of Four Hearts" was a smashing success, and a tribute to the talents of all the students involved.

Sessions at West 54th

BY ELI GUROCK

Wipe a tear, grab a tissue, and blow your nose, unfortunately our school year is over. Classes are a distant memory and you've forgotten most of the information for half of your finals already. It's a sad time. Some people are graduating, some are sticking around next year, but most people are going home...home, outside New York City. I feel bad for you people, going to places like Indiana, Memphis, and LA, the once vibrant and exciting night life that you knew is being replaced with a town that watches 60 Minutes and goes to bed by 10. What kind of life are you going to have without New York's bars, clubs and parties? Well, don't fret just yet. As a parting gift for those of you in this situation, I will fill you in on a little secret about what you can do on those long, boring, Saturday and Sunday nights at home.

On one of these two nights, at either 11 or 12 o'clock at night (depending on the city and station), the best ever live music show is on the air. Sessions at West 54th has been critically hailed as just that. With performers from just about every genre of music, this is a must watch for all of you who love music but only have AM stations at home.

In this, the show's second season, they have filled each show with great and often unknown artists. Diverse artists from Ozomatli (August 14) to Bela Fleck and the Flecktones (June 26) fill the show each week with their own distinct blend of music. On the relatively unknown side of the spectrum, I would advise you not to miss the Beth Orton's (August 7) show (who I covered in a previous article), Vic Chestnut's (August 24) show, and the Cowboy Junkies (May 29) show. All three of which are pretty mind-blowing.

But don't think that Sessions has just "soon to be cool" artists on their show. Artists as big as John Mellencamp (July 24), Tori Amos (July 31), and Phish (July 10) also play. Each puts on the kind of show that they've performed all throughout their careers which has gathered them the sort of recognition that are left to the music elite. As is expected, the Phish show is of some higher quality, and as such, should not be missed.

Other shows, which I highly recommend, are Lucinda Williams (August 28), PJ Harvey and Chocolate Genius (July 24), Liz Phair and the Lounge Lizards (July 3), and Elvis Costello (May 22).

Most of the shows have two artists playing songs coupled with interviews from ex-Talking Heads lead singer David Byrne. It is truly a special evening of television, reminiscent of the old time live music television shows.

The Show airs on PBS affiliates in over 130 markets all across the country, so just check their website:

www.sessionsatwest54th.com

On Stern Girls, Star Wars and the Bedazzler

BY DEBBIE SHOFET

Is it so wrong that I'm more excited about the *Austin Powers* sequel than the *Star Wars* prequel? Let me explain myself to the hardcore "if I don't see *Star Wars* the first day it comes out" superfreaks. A big chunk of this movie is digital and, yes, you know what, I'm not that impressed. Personally, I feel *The Matrix* preview was more exciting, it could be all that black leather. In fact, men should wear more tight black clothing. Speaking of tight things, Stern girls need to understand that bra straps are not meant to be worn on the head unless you're Anthony Michael Hall in *Weird Science*. I understand that they are comfortable, but do they need to strap on rhinestones as if we were living in 1984-86? Unfortunately, rhinestones and puffy paint are now obsolete. I know it's hard, I too was a

big fan of rhinestones and was jealous of all who had the *Bedazzler*. (For all you people who were asleep during the 80's, the *Bedazzler* would affix rhinestones to everything and anything including your mother). My point is if your going to wear the bra strap head wrap, have the decency to hide the rhinestones because I'm still not over the whole *Bedazzler* thing and it brings up bad memories.

As I was saying before, *Austin Powers* looks so "I'm going to pee in my pants funny," I can't share my excitement with *Star Wars*. Does *Star Wars* have a miniature doctor evil clone that's a quarter of his size?...I don't think so! Any movie that appreciates ideas from the *Island of Doctor Moreau* needs to be loved.

I'm ready for school to be over and summer to begin, but I must confess - I will miss Stern. I'll miss the days when I would throw

turkey slices on the cafeteria walls with my friends. The times we would play Mission Impossible on the rooftops and watch the oh-so-precious dating seen on Thursday nights at Brookdale. I will miss Stern girls and all the craziness that has ensued over the years like the cat fight over watching 90210 or Dawson's Creek, and the time I got trampled by 30 stern girls trying to get free Dougies when the elephants came.

Let's not forget all those *Niddah* classes. Can any other school claim to have so many classes on marriage and menstruation? I don't think so. As much as people including myself dog on Stern, I feel a lot of love for this school and want everyone to know how precious Stern is. I mean the corned value alone is priceless. In terms of summer movies I will see *Star Wars* but my heart will belong to *Austin Powers*.

THEATRE REVIEWS

VIA DOLOROSA

BY MORDECHAI LEVOVITZ

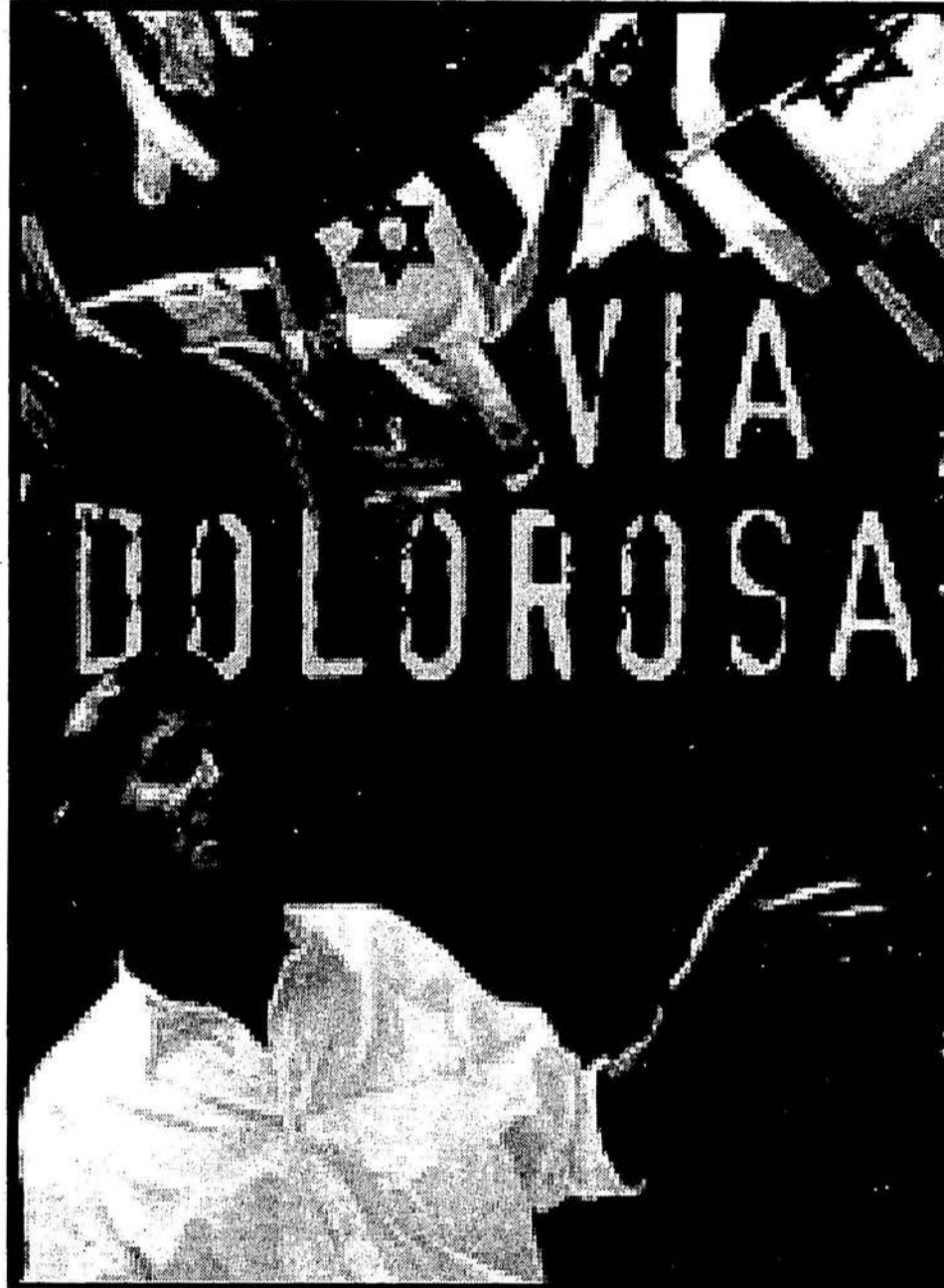
Much like the famed street in Jerusalem, its namesake, I found New York's *Via Dolorosa* to be a small, seemingly out of place attraction that humbly thrives amongst its overbearing and more exciting counterparts. This one-man play, written by and starring the famous British playwright David Hare (*The Blue Room*, *Amy's View*, *The Judas Kiss*) tackles with the issues, characters, and lessons pertaining to the recent Israeli-Arab Middle-Eastern crisis.

It is a two hour monologue, a journal (if you will), recalling with great detail and sentiment Hare's recent trip to Israel and the Palestinian territories. His natural story telling talents and flair for the poetic and sometimes hysterical verse makes this play move with uncommon ease. At times the mood is that of a private dinner conversation with Hare, yet at other moments the tone changes to one that is more theatrical; the audience relives the experience with Hare.

The intimacy of the performance gives way to a surprising sense of manipulation. One finds him or herself laughing and crying with Hare, sharing the author's emotions out of sheer social etiquette, not necessarily because the facts themselves are so emotionally persuasive. However, this is part of the brilliance of the play, being that, when it comes down to it, the whole production is really just an elaborate expression of one person's point of view.

The show is about the universal significance of individual opinions. In this case the audience is privileged to hear and experience a British Christian artist's introduction and reaction to Israel, Judaism, and the Palestinian question. Here, honesty and reality take precedence over popular theoretic. This is what makes Hare's subjective response to the situation so endearing. The result is a night of provocation and intrigue. For a Yeshiva student the monologue poses a challenge to open his mind and revisit the injured dream for peace in the Middle.

Hare begins with reminding the audience that Theodore Herzl was first a playwright. The harrowing last words of Hertzl's final play were "I want to get out of the Ghetto!" The Israeli-Palestinian conflict makes for great subject matter in theater simply because, as Hare puts it, "these people have a cause, a fighting belief." Their artistic appeal is not totally complimentary; Author Philip Roth told Hare that he must meet the Jewish right wing settlers because, "they're so crazy, there's room enough for all of us." However, the immediate impetus for his trip to Israel was a conversation Hare had with his Jewish friend Mr. Grossman. Grossman told Hare that it is not necessary to have G-d in ones life to be Jewish; that religion only started playing a major role in the Arab-Israeli crisis after the six day war, when the religious Jews saw the Bible as a "contemporary operations manual." Grossman felt that it is "un-Jewish" to need to own things, only ideas. This dialectic between owning rocks and owning ideas fascinated Hare. Hare saw this struggle to be very far reaching. It reminisces the greater mans' strife between mans' inherent physicality and his need to transcend from his corporeal existence to one on a spiritual or theoretical plane. At the notion that the Middle Eastern crisis may represent a universal human conflict, Hare packed up his bags and headed to Heathrow for the next flight out to Tel-Aviv. Personally, I would have told him to stay home and get a copy of the Rav's *The Lonely Man of Faith*, which deals at length with Judaism and this dialectic.



But like a *Brisk Rebbe* determined to fit his *Chakira* into every possible Gemara, Hare had his heart set on explaining every instance of the Arab-Israeli story with this stone idea theory. The task proved harder than it first seemed.

Hare hysterically mocks Tel-Aviv and it's people. He pokes fun at the city's need to be recognized as an extension of the western world. He ridicules the residents' overt insecurities that force them to be so proud of such foolish things like Tel-Aviv being the 'sex capital of the world'. The secular Israelis are introduced as quite frustrated people. Every conversation Hare spoke of concluded with the secular Jew blaming all of Israel's problems on someone else, whether it be the "Yeshiva students that rob the country blind" or "Natanyahu's right wing fundamentalist government". Thus, the attitude of Israel's left wing constituency seems helpless, for they feel so held back by the alleged wrong doings of others. It's always "they who have held us back" or "them that need to change".

After meeting with former Minister of Science and Arts, Shulamit Aloni, his impression of her is of a defeated angry woman. "Her world was destroyed with Rabin's assassination". She rants and bickers about how her country is moving backwards and how there is nothing she can do about it. Hare has had quite enough of Tel-Aviv and makes his way down to *Sharei Tikva*, a Jewish settlement in Palestinian territory.

As Hare recalls his trip to the settlement, perhaps the most unsettling revelation is made. After seeing hills and hills of Arab country, Hare confides in the audience that he for the first time began to feel a truly awful thought, "Jews just don't belong here". This seemingly prejudice thought scared and embarrassed Hare, yet he felt it nonetheless. Through sharing this, Hare establishes a rare kind of trust with the audience that is seldom seen in theater. We feel as though we know exactly where Hare is coming from. It is this kind of honesty and

brutal realism that sets this production apart from other shows.

The Settlers Hare stayed by in *Sharei Tikva* are described as nice but utterly confused people. They speak of love, peace, family and religion, but fail to see the obvious contradictions their lifestyles create. They have no answer to the charge of deliberate provocation; they swim in their swimming pools while the Arabs below them carry drinking water in jerri-cans. The settlers will boast about how they stand in silence for the fallen Israeli soldiers on Memorial Day, but don't seem to care that it takes 4000 soldiers to ensure the safety of these 500 settlers. What was most disconcerting to Hare was the settlers' desire for peace but refusal to offer any way it could possibly be attained. On this, Hare so poignantly put it, "there is a difference between saying *this is how we want to live* and saying *this is how we want to live so f\$@% you!*"

Although Hare tries to steer away from the intricacies of religion, there are points when Hare can not help himself. This is the only tragic mistake in the monologue. When Hare comments on the customs and rituals of the orthodox settlers he sounds like a foolish ignorant bigot. In one instance he announces to the audience that for some 'secret' reason men have an extra eighteen minutes to work before the Sabbath begins, while the women are restricted from doing such work. The audience laughs as if to say they get Hare's pathetic inference that Judaism is inherently chauvinistic. Another more disturbing moment was when Hare began to poke fun at a heated Sabbath table discussion concerning whether Rivka was three or fourteen. Hare cackles to the audience in his upper class British accent, "Did it ever once occur to them that maybe the story is just wrong?...It's just wrong!" Upon hearing this, the audience roars with applause. A friend of mine rightfully pointed out that if anyone should appreciate rigorous exegesis and respect for original text,

it is the playwright. How sad that the same man who could learn so much from a specific wording in one of Shakespeare's dialogues, can only mock when others try do the same with G-d's literary work. I must say that I was slightly offended by these comments and Hare's obvious lack of judgment, but this by no means is a reason not to see this otherwise insightful piece of theater.

The lights begin to dim as Hare describes his trip into Gaza. He depicts a desolate third world country where half the population still lives in refugee camps and people earn eight percent of what citizens earn in Israel. The sewers wash out into the streets where young boys dressed as policemen are unanimously ignored. Hare relays how Palestinian community leaders have little hope or trust in Arafat; they claim that hundreds of millions of dollars have disappeared due to carelessness and corruption. Hare goes on to describe Arafat's stunning seaside villa. A Palestinian mother on the street complained that there are more people in prison under Arafat than under Israeli rule. The conclusion: society is not functioning and civil war is inevitable. One UN volunteer living in Gaza actually told Hare, "If the Israeli's were smart, they would give it all back and watch as this society would f\$@% it up".

Before returning to England, Hare visits Jerusalem. He quotes Melville saying, "the air in Jerusalem is so saturated with prayers and dreams that it is hard to breathe." He visits Yad Vashem, the Kotel, the Dome of the Rock, and finally the Via Dolorosa. Walking down the narrow street where Yushkah once marched to his death, Hare realizes the surprisingly small impact of Christianity on the city and state. The few Christian pilgrims, coming to Jerusalem expecting the equivalence of universal studios, are instead greeted the humble Via Dolorosa, itself a stranger in a strange land. Ultimately, Hare feels like the Via Dolorosa; he will always be an outsider and consequently he (ironically, much like the secular Jew, the settler, and the Palestinian) feels like he is helpless regarding the future of this great country. The only hope now is the passage of time.

The audience comes out of this play thinking, which is a novel concept considering the other stuff that is currently on Broadway. The play is a wonderful springboard for even deeper and more stimulating conversation concerning topics like the separation of church and state in Israel, or the future of Palestinian-Israeli relations. The production was lacking in the energy and emotion that comes along with characters and story line, but made up for it with its unique sense of intimacy and honesty. I didn't feel as though I was introduced to a brilliant new encounter to the Middle East Crisis that somehow sheds more light on the topic, however I felt that I gained something through the mere understanding of how someone different from myself approaches these familiar issues. I highly recommend *Via Dolorosa* to students, who with a valid student ID can get any seat in the house for twenty dollars. The student tickets can be bought the day of the show at the box-office. Unless money is not an issue, if one does not have a student ID, I wouldn't spend more than thirty dollars to see this show (regular price seats range from \$20-\$65). Buying the script is also recommended and should be available at bookstores. The play contains no music or singing and is an excellent idea for a *Sefirah* Thursday night. Remember, the run ends June thirteenth- so hurry up!

Via Dolorosa

Playing at the Booth Theatre 222 W. 45th St.
Tues.-Sat at 8; Wed at 2; Sun at 3
Tele-Charge (212) 239-6200

A R T S &

LITERARY REVIEWS

Idealism, Humanity, and the Spanish Civil War

BY MORDECHAI FISHMAN

Comrades: Tales of a Brigadista in the Spanish Civil War

by Harry Fisher

Foreword by Pete Seeger

Hardcover, 211 pp.

University of Nebraska Press

Harry Fisher is a piece of living history. The eighty-eight year-old activist, idealist and self-proclaimed "Communist with a little 'c,'" is one of the last of the one hundred and thirty or so surviving veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. The Lincolns, as they were known, were the American contingent of the international volunteers who fought with the Loyalists against Generalissimo Francisco Franco's fascists in the Spanish Civil War. As one of the earliest to enlist, and one of the blessed few to survive all of the war's major campaigns, including the bloody Battle of Jarama, unscathed, Fisher is uniquely qualified to recount the events of a conflict that most

Americans know little, if anything at all, about. In his book "Comrades: Tales of a Brigadista in the Spanish Civil War," Fisher tells of his war experiences in heartfelt and simple tones, yet his brutally honest look at war is a valuable lesson for all of humanity and an important addition to the histories chronicling the conflict.

The Lincoln Brigade was a unique group of individuals brought together by their desire to fight fascism. Of the nearly three thousand Americans who volunteered, nearly one third were Jewish (old school - with first names like Isadore and Morrie, and last names like Kauffman and Goldberg), while the remainder spanned ethnic and class lines. The Lincoln Brigade was also the first racially integrated unit in American military history. And while their dedication and ideological steadfastness kept the Lincolns going, it could not protect them against the bombs and bullets of the fascists. The majority of those who enlisted ended up as casualties, with over 900 killed and nearly ninety percent of the survivors wounded at some point during the war.

Fisher's narrative shines as it lays the ideological groundwork for comprehending the motives that drove him and his comrades to sail off and fight a vicious war in a foreign land. He recounts growing up in the Hebrew National Orphan Home in the Bronx, a poor, disenfranchised Jew, who saw and felt social injustice in a way we modern-day Jewish



youth cannot even dream of. He recounts the hardships and rampant poverty of the Depression years, families being evicted and tossed on the street like human refuse, breadlines stretching for blocks, and children begging for a bite to eat. His social sensibilities forged by the suffering surrounding him, Fisher joined the Communist Party, because "They didn't just talk politics, they actually did something." He tells tales of forcing landlords to reaccept their indigent tenants with his Communist cohorts, and organizing labor unions all across the Midwest. "I never went to meetings," writes Fisher, who never claims in his book to be a deep political thinker. "I just wanted to help others."

It was this highly developed sense of right and wrong that led Fisher to "hate fascism, Hitler, and all he stood for," and ship off to fight a war, that in historical retrospective, was the prelude to the horrors of Nazi Germany that engulfed Europe soon thereafter.

Fisher writes as a simple soldier, and he eloquently and passionately describes the brutal carnage of war. He describes his feelings and longings, the camaraderie and friendship that bound his fellow combatants together, and the daily deprivation and indignities visited upon those who

toiled and died in the Spanish mud. He describes the bravery of those who marched off to gruesome, horrible deaths with the "Internationale" on their lips and a sense of destiny upon their shoulders. Fisher is most effective when recounting the indiscriminate suffering visited upon both sides by the barbaric savagery of war. In one of the most touching narratives in the book, he describes finding a family portrait jutting from the pocket of a dead fascist, a young man like himself, caught forever by the cruel hand of war. "They were just kids who happened to live in territory controlled by the fascists, kids who would surely have preferred soccer games to war," is how he describes the illiterate Spanish peasants fighting on the other side. Fisher saved the photo, and the picture in the book drives his tale home with a poignancy that would shatter any mother's heart.

He is equally unflinching when describing the shortcomings of the Communists. Fisher writes of atrocities and injustices inflicted by his own comrades and commanders in the name of a just cause. The end result is a despondent view of war - albeit a morally justified one, but horrific and barbaric nonetheless.

The book's strongest point is also its biggest flaw. Harry Fisher never purports to be anything else but a simple idealist who was willing to die for what he felt was right and good. The plainly written story hammers home the uselessness of war in a way that no history textbook ever could, but the lack of a broad-based historical and global political view may leave the reader wanting to know more. Yet the simple words, human emotions, and day-to-day experiences of Harry Fisher put a human face on a forgotten war, and create a personal contextual framework that puts the conflict into its true perspective.

Speaking to Harry Fisher is pleasure onto itself. His wry humor, innate grace, and finely honed sense of social justice impart to his listener a feeling of hope for a gentler, kinder world. After Fisher recently spoke here at YU, students discussed his story and life long after he departed the campus. He never tries, in person or in his book, to make excuses for or whitewash his support for Stalinism and its policies, saying "I am not a scholar, I am not an intellectual." He merely imparts a historical truth - war is hell.

Summing up the experience of the Brigadistas, Fisher quotes the American activist and poet Genevieve Taggart. "They were young, there was much they did not know, they were human." His book is a shining testament to the enduring good of human nature and the senseless butchery of war.

C U L T U R E

A Night at The Oscars

STEVEN I. WEISS

On a memorable April evening at MoMA, through the providence of the accidental gods, I was privileged to attend - for free - the Student Academy Awards Regional Finals. The Student Academy Awards is the student division of the famous Academy Awards. You may have seen it listed in various areas where such events are listed (*Time Out New York*, *The New York Times*). If you did show up, you would have learned what I learned - that it was not supposed to be listed, and that, in fact, it was supposed to be a private screening. All was not lost, as the dude at the door offered myself and my companion, roommate and friend Michael Zlatin, free admission to the open-to-the-public screening, taking place on Sunday in Queens at the American Museum of the Moving Image.

Having phoned a number of people to inform them of this happening, I felt it my responsibility to wait outside and apologize to said people upon their arrival, but my roommate and friend didn't seem to mind. Sure enough, along comes good friend Nikki Paley. Nikki was very understanding, and went inside to get her free admission on Sunday, and to ask them more about this event. After only a few minutes, she was waving to us through the glass door that we should come in. This is evidence of the cardinal rule for

attending any event: always have a classy lady around, just in case you can't get in.

After being given permission to enter, we sat down to see *Siesta*, a film by Julia Solomonoff of Columbia University. An interesting flick, which dealt with the juxtaposition of childhood fantasy and adult reality, it was immensely entertaining. My only regret is that I didn't know Spanish in order to follow along in the language in which the movie was crafted.

The second film, *True Confessions of A Sushi Addict*, by Kimberly Harwood of NYU, was immensely funny. Properly employing the steps towards and influence of addiction, it was hilarious to see sushi used as the object of the addiction.

Fishbelly White, by Michael Burke of NYU, was a true coming-of-age film, dealing with some real issues that come up with adolescents. The search for a sexual identity, the conflict within the male teenager between aggression and affection, and other such trials were dealt with in a manner which was mostly truthful, but placed in a way that was just unbelievable enough to make one able to sleep at night. Whether you really care about these problems or you just want to see a chicken's head get bitten off, this is a movie that will leave you satisfied.

Apparently, back in '67, Sweden chose to switch the driving-side of the road from the left to the right, implementing this change overnight. This period, and

the romance it helped influence between an engineer's wife and a bicycle-riding priest, was the subject of this film. This was a film that I had a hard time understanding though, as the priest wins the heart of the engineer's wife before he gets the shiny-red car.

Last, but not least, is a term used to make sure it is understood that the final slot was not given to a performance that is of the lowest quality. Such a phrase did not apply here. *Twin Cousins*, by Rod Gales of NYU, was by far the worst movie of the evening, with bad acting, editing, and a not-too-understandable story line. It's too bad that it had to be so, as it was the only film dealing with black life and culture.

In the end, the three of us - myself, Mike, and Nikki - understood that we had been truly privileged to see such a great array of student work. To be shown works on such a high level of quality, knowing that they were made by graduate students not much older than we are, is truly an awe-inspiring experience. Many other events of similar caliber take place all around the city; most are not, as this one was, restricted private screenings, and many of them are free or discounted for students.

You can find your own fun, low-priced event to go to. Comprehensive listings of events like this one are available in *Time Out New York* and its website (www.timeoutny.com), Yahoo's "Local" area, AOL keyword: Local, the Arts & Leisure section of the *Times*, and many more online and print publications.

FILM REVIEWS

The Matrix



BY YAIR OPPENHEIM

Starring: Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne, and Carrie-Anne Moss

In what may likely be the Nth time in the past decade, audiences have been subjected to an innumerable amount of technological backlashes in cinema. From *Terminator 2* to *Virtuosity*, films have constantly placed technology in a bad light, even iconicizing its anthropomorphisms in world class villainy. *The Matrix*, shall have its own notoriety as a film completely focused on "beating the computer".

The Matrix sets up a 23rd Century earth run by a computer that is enslaving mankind (sound familiar?) for the purpose of harvesting the human life essence to be used as a substitute for electrical power. Most humans aren't aware of this, and are instead living a virtual existence that subconsciously satisfies them and keeps them in the year 1999. The ones who are aware fight the war for mankind, in their search to fulfill a prophecy of finding "The One"; the person able to defeat the Matrix and save humanity. Laurence Fishburne, in a very solid leadership role, plays Morpheus, who heads a band of fighters taking on the Matrix, while searching for their savior. Fishburne believes Neo (Keanu Reeves) may in fact be this person. Against them is the Matrix's security proponent, in the form of Mr. Smith (played freakishly well by Hugo Weaving), who tries to stay two steps ahead of the team in hopes of finding out where the other non-subdued humans live. All the while, Reeves is forced to absorb as much as he can (even fighting techniques), in order to beat the Matrix.

The Matrix, is surprisingly original, and yet unabashedly a knock-off. What separates this film from other notable cinematic rip-offs (examples of the *Rambo* and *Scream* franchises come to mind) is that this film manages to have no shame in cutting and pasting from so many films, because after it gets mixed together, it becomes a fluke that no longer resembles any parent. Yet it maintains the suspense or ingenuity of each and every scene it is derived from. This film does not pay homage to its predecessors; it assimilates scenes, situations and concepts from other films in their entirety, yet plays off each lift with conviction as if it were done for the first time. The *deja vu* one may feel has origins from films such as *Aliens*, *Total Recall*, *Dark City*, John Woo films, and most notably *Terminator 2*. Gluing the coolest scenes from the coolest films isn't such a bad idea at all. This brings up a new issue, that being the surreal resonance which this film gives off. The film is undeniably exciting and worth watching for the visuals alone. The action sequences are hyperkinetic; a mix of Bruce Lee Kung Fu with John Woo's gunplay direction. It's nothing short of innovative, but more correctly, an innovative combination. People dodge bullets and defy gravity. It may not be original, but it hasn't been seen in a while. Audiences are bombarded with one type of action sequence after another so the drool quotient will leave any testosterone bearing gentlemen begging for more. It is quite an accomplishment for writers/directors Larry and Andy Wachowski who were able, after previously writing and directing the lesbian crime-thriller *Bound*, and co-writing the action film *Assassins* to create such a fine piece of entertainment. Qualitatively, the film's script isn't much to talk about, it being a rather inconsistent mesh of camp and cool. Credit should be given to the actors, who manage to find conviction in the ideas to express them in a manner that overrides its pretentiousness. The art direction, cinematography, and martial arts choreography is all notable. It is a successful expression of the comic-book mentality that has permeated cinema of late, and it should be hoped that this repairs the damaged name of blockbuster.

The Mummy

BY YAIR OPPENHEIM

Starring: Brendan Fraser, Rachel Weisz

The period adventure genre, consisting mostly of tales of white heroic men out to exploit people or land, has been untouched for years. The exception being *Indiana Jones* and its cinematic clones, which have never been able to stand on their own. *The Mummy* attempts to lift the curse, by trying to display something old mixed with something new. This is not simply an adventure film, it also serves as horror. Needless to say it is not quite similar to its predecessor, the 1932 Boris Karloff film.

The film's plot (give credence to its existence, let alone its originality), resorts to the typical list of people, places, and scenarios: a hero, an archaeological dig/treasure hunt, a villain, a curse, a damsel in distress, booby traps, expendable secondary characters, and special effects.

The film begins with a visually stunning sequence in ancient Egypt, revealing the mummy's origin. The time shifts to approximately two thousand years later when Rick O'Connell, an American hero played by Brendan Fraser, accidentally discovers Hamunaptra, the city of the dead, buried beneath the sand - its location undiscovered for a millennia. We then meet a stereotypically vulnerable feminine librarian whose brother is supposed to represent a comically bumbling epitome of everything wrong with Britain (and these banalities don't end there). The two come across an ancient map that should lead to Hamunaptra where the famed book of incantation is to be found. The book of the dead is also coincidentally (of course) located in the city. During the trip they encounter a rival group of Americans who are after the vast treasure to be found there. Soon somebody accidentally unleashes the mummy, and the havoc begins. The sands rise, the plagues begin to spread, and soon enough the logic starts flying away as well.

This film is amazingly ignorant of logic. Why the librarian character played by Rachel Weisz suddenly does not need glasses later into the film, is ridiculously unexplainable. The fact that she is able to read hieroglyphics is made known, yet she accidentally reads from the book of the dead absent of consequence. Perhaps the chapter should have read: If you can read this, you are raising the dead. What the mummy had to do with the ten plagues God unleashed on the Egyptians to save the world, is inconceivable to even correlate. This is not a cheap list of potshots. Rather, it is an indication of the lack of thought brought to its presentation. Even though the film involves the supernatural, viewers always want the 'down-to-earth' to retain the movie's sensibility. The idea behind the special effects to point out that as long as a creator can make something believable (remember that word), the audience will permit its intrusion into their private escapist world. When a movie does not seem believable, the audience never grants it credibility.

The film itself encounters an immense presentation problem. The film is seemingly split between being an adventure and a horror film, and even the adventure aspect is riddled with quips and a plethora of one liners. As an afterthought, one may wonder what the film was trying to accomplish. Was it a spoof of the genre? An imitation of *Indiana Jones*? A horror film? Those who expect only one and not all of the aforementioned types of films may not enjoy this movie. Others, will be thoroughly pleased, as the film through all of its flaws and characters is incredibly entertaining. The film is extremely predictable - one knows that the mummy will be unleashed and that the heroes will win, but the film tries to very effectively visually deceive the audience (courtesy of Industrial Lights and Magic) into thinking that this film must be different on the grounds that it is a mummy movie. To say that the cast's acting is cartoonish would be doing the film a favor. However, to its credit, not one of the jokes falls flat. As a production, there is nothing awkward about the film's design, photography or action sequences. The movie even includes a propulsive score from Jerry Goldsmith, giving it an epic feel. Brendan Fraser can give a sigh of relief, as he is extremely bankable as an action hero. He's no Harrison Ford, but he isn't given much time to develop, and when he tries to spread some talent, the other cast members resort to quips reminding us of their emotional maturity or lack thereof. Stephen Sommer's writing and direction are impressive, in comparison to his earlier work which has been regarded as compost. The film is a popcorn film, and that's all it'll ever be.



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ARTS & CULTURE

HASHKAFI VERSUS ART: SHAVUOT, INCEST, GENTILES, AND THE MESSIAH

BY MORDECHAI LEVOVITZ

Okay, so you can listen to a woman sing, so you may find *Heterim* to see movies, plays, or exhibits at the Met, but do these leniencies really address the larger issue here? How does the *Halakhic* Jew approach secular culture and the arts? This question is inextricably connected to how we are supposed to view the non-Jewish world; in particular, how we see our gentile brethren, our fellow man that just happens not to be Jewish. Do they just have a peripheral existence with respect to the major scheme of things? Is the gentile cursed in that he could never attain the level of spiritual and moral accomplishment that a Jew can? We know that there is wisdom among the nations, but does that include virtue and ethics? Are sociological mores like civil liberties, feminism, welfare and pluralism nothing more than meaningless guesses as to what may be aesthetically pleasing, or does modern man really have a natural intuition concerning moral righteousness in the eyes of the Lord? One can not deny the holiness found in the basic love between parent and child or the greatness underlying every act of human kindness, but how are these seemingly universal religious ideas manifested in Judaism? In an attempt to deal these problems, I'd like to share my understanding of Rav J.B. Soleveitchik's *hashkafa* concerning Judaism's relationship with the *goyim*. The following is my personal retelling (in mostly my own words) of the basic concepts taught in a *shiur* given by the Rav on May 25 1974, entitled "Shavuot Motifs". The *shiur* examines the role of culture in *kaballas ha Torah*, *galus*, and *Moshiach*.

The Rav addresses four questions regarding the reading of *Megilat Ruth* on *Shavuot*. The first, being the most common inquiry, 1) What does *Megilat Ruth* have to do with *Shavuot*? The second and third questions are based on the *chazal* who learn that Ruth is read on this holiday simply due to the fact that the last *posuk* gives the lineage of *David Ha-Melech*. The questions arise, 2) why is this particular ancestor of King David important? And, 3) what is the connection between David and *Shavuot*? Finally the Rav was bothered with, 4) why God chose a former Moavite Princess over one of the many *bnos Yisrael* to be grandmother of the Messiah?

Rav Soloveitchik begins by asserting that the most plausible interpretation amongst various hypothesis is the *Vilna Gaon's* learning of the story of Ruth. It is the story of *geyrus*; the courage of a young Pagan princess who joins a strange people. The story of *Shavuot* is the conversion of an entire people. The *Gemara* derives from *matan Torah* that *geyrus* requires *tevilla*, *Millah*, and *kurban*. From Ruth we learn another prerequisite for conversion (without which *geyrus* would be meaningless), *kabbalat ol mitzvot* (accepting the yoke of God's commandments). Using a typically Jewish approach, an individual is equivalent to a whole nation. *Shavuot* is a celebration of both historic conversions.

On Mount Sinai, the Torah was given to the chosen people who were charged with a certain responsibility. What about the rest of the world? Surely it is absurd to think that God abandoned the nations! God said, "You are the

treasure of all nations but My relationship with the world will not disintegrate." Originally God did not want to give the Torah to only one people but as the *Gemarah* in *Baba Kama* explains, he approached the *goyim* before he gave the Torah to the Jews, but they said that it was in conflict with reality. The Jews finally accepted it, but what about the original plan? Did God just give it up?

The Rav insists the original intention of Hashem, that the Torah should be the property of every human being is steadfast and has not been terminated. The tactics have changed, not the goal. The Torah was not given to the non-Jewish community directly, but it was given indirectly to the entire mankind as an eschatological reality. The ultimate destiny of human fulfillment in the messianic age is for everybody to embrace the Torah, our faith. Our task as Jews has been and still is to teach the Torah to mankind, to influence the secular world and by that, save the world from profanity. We are the executors and messengers vis-a-vis the entire world; our task, to represent the moral outlook on life to which the Jew has committed himself. The gentile world should be able to watch the Jews and admire our way of living, for we bear witness to the unique relationship man has with God.

Contrary to what many might think, the Jew has a mission. Since we have not yet perfected ourselves, it is inappropriate to act on our mission, but the idea of this mission is still correct. We must be a "beacon of light" for all the nations to follow. This mandate, however, can not be attained in terms of teaching or writing Judaic philosophy; the mere publication of ethical books, no matter how brilliant, will not bring the world closer to God. People are not attracted to abstract morality. Traditional Judaism says we do the teaching by example.

It is now clear how the redemption of the world (Messianic age) is connected to man inheriting the Torah. *Matan Torah* initiated the Messianic process of universal conversion. Judaism predicts that at some period in the future all man kind will not only come close to God and embrace or faith, but also join the sacred community dedicated to the service of God!

Har Sinai represents the private covenant between the Jew and the almighty, while King David represents the Messianic age, where *matan Torah* is a universal affair. David will fulfill what was anticipated by the Almighty at Sinai. The full realization of *matan Torah* will be achieved at the time of the Messiah. It is no wonder we read *Megilat Ruth* on *Shavuot*, announcing the birth of Dovid and the realization that the Torah will be the property of all mankind.

It is no coincidence that on *Shavuot* we are introduced to Dovid through Ruth. The *Megilla* provokes us to ask if it is right that the King Messiah should circulate the blood of a pagan princess. A Moavite girl should be the mother of eternal kingship? Certainly a nice

Jewish girl could have been introduced to Boaz instead. This phenomenon only begins with Ruth...how many Pagan mothers did King David have? Remember that Dovid's grandmothers also include the daughter of Lot and Tamar, Judah's daughter in law/bedfellow. *Chazal* even learn that God was thinking about Dovid when he sent the angel to save Lot. Why did God consistently look outside of the Jewish nation, when compiling the gene pool for our savior?

"We should follow the perfect example of our maker and instead of ignoring "Goyish" Arts and Culture, embrace and cultivate it's many virtuous attributions."

What was Ruth doing in the field of Boaz? She was performing *Leket*, gathering ears of corn. She gleaned and picked up. *Leket* is a *halakhic* and metaphysical institution, Hashem gleaned and gathered beautiful inclinations and virtues from people all over the world in order to weave the soul of the king

Messiah. God was preoccupied with the Messiah's personality. He disregarded race and religion and instead looked through all of mankind to find special qualities and capabilities. This is the Almighty's approach to culture, to sift and glean through the nations of the world noting outstanding moral traits and ethical accomplishments.

Ruth was chosen because of her unique heroism. She came from pagan royalty, a life intoxicated with orgiastic pleasures and unlimited luxury. Ruth sacrificed all this to identify with a strange and mysterious people, to adopt a religion that demanded superhuman discipline. The heroism manifested itself with her joining a people she didn't know and separating herself from the outside world; she chose loneliness, over sociological acceptance.

Lot's daughter was indeed a primitive idol worshipper. She committed incest with her father! And from that carnal copulation came the mother of the Messiah! Yet, God saw an incredible character trait in this young girl. *Chazal* learn that her intentions were truly sincere. She was determined to rebuild the world and raise a new humanity. Lot's daughter was willing to forgive her own cleanliness, to per-

form the ultimate sin, in order to save the universal community. While Ruth abandoned the world to help her own life, Lot's daughter in effect corrupted herself in the name of human kind. This very dialectic reflects the typical life of the Jew, concerned on the one hand with a private somewhat secluded existence, on the other hand he is concerned with his relationship with the entire world, as a teacher. We withdraw then move forward, then move back once again.

Tamar was also from a pagan background. She was the daughter-in-law of Judah and a great grandmother of Boaz. She waited all her life. Judah told her to remain a widow until *Shelah* would grow up, but *chazal* said that he never actually thought to marry her off to *Shelah*. She was left to wait and was eventually forgotten until finally she re-met Judah. Her virtue was the ability to wait and keep waiting. She is the personification of *Kneset Yisroel*. We've been waiting for *Moshiach* through the most trying of circumstances ever since *Matan Torah*, and while waiting derived laughter and derision. We inherited this ability from Tamar. The Messiah is also waiting, waiting for the sinner to come back. He will patiently wait for the nations to do *teshuvah* instead of killing them off first.

The Rav has taught us the proper approach to non-Jews and their culture. We must view the gentile as a potential and impending Jew. They are still Hashem's precious children and were created in the same image of God that we were. Furthermore, our treatment of secular culture should imitate that of God's. To right off secular culture as being devoid of any moral, ethical, or religious value would be ungodly. Hashem took the time to glean, sift and gather positive qualities from worldly culture. How much more so should we follow the perfect example of our maker and instead of ignoring "Goyish" Arts and Culture, embrace and cultivate it's many virtuous attributions. Secular culture offers so many wonderful and beautiful ideas; granted there's a lot of garbage out there too. The task of the *YU Commentator* Arts and Culture section is to sieve through the artistic expression of the nations and to reap what we can for the betterment of Judaism.

Void Filled with New Principal Continued from page 1

expressed a deep-rooted confidence in deeming Hecht and Sklar "an excellent team." Lamm is convinced that "under their leadership MSTa will further strengthen its already outstanding Torah U'madda program. We are fortunate, indeed, that two capable individuals with complementary backgrounds have agreed to serve." In addition to support from Lamm, the newly refurbished MSTa administration has gained full support of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, an MSTa affiliate, and Dr. Felix Glaubach, Chairman of MSTa's Interim Steering Committee.

MSTa administrators harmoniously welcome the recent additions to their staff, and momentarily greet the renewed commitment Yeshiva has expressed towards its feeder high school. "The team that the

University has assembled is going to turn the school around," emphasized Dr. Seth Taylor, Director of General Studies at the high school. Taylor sincerely believes that the once lost vision shared by the faculty and administration can now rapidly begin to take shape, due to the enthusiastic support of Yeshiva University. After a faculty meeting with Sklar, it was soon apparent that the entire MSTa staff shares Taylor's sense of hope and optimism.

Mr. Sklar has earned dual Master's degrees in both Educational Administration and Supervision, and Science Education from City College. The Sklar name is one very familiar to the Yeshiva University administration. Sklar's wife, Harriet, currently serves as Assistant Principal at The Samuel H. Wang Yeshiva University High School for Girls.

Academic VP Appointed Continued from page 1

or courses, are the central concerns of Academic Affairs. The hiring and firing of deans, department heads, and even graduate school deans, as well as the granting of tenure to or disciplining of faculty and administrators, are all done by the Academic VP.

One of the many monumental tasks facing Lowengrub upon his arrival in YU is shepherding the University through the upcoming Ten-Year Middle States Review in 2001. The once-a-decade accreditation process is exceedingly demanding, and involves all segments of the University including its three undergraduate and six graduate schools. Lowengrub expressed confidence in his ability to guide the school through the arduous process, noting that his prior experience with accreditations should help the school pass with "flying colors."

Lowengrub stressed that the focus of his tenure at YU will be "academic excellence. My goal is to help the students be most productive in all that they do." He stated that he hopes to use his background in the sciences and mathematics to enhance those disciplines in YU, and help to bring the beleaguered astronomy program online.

The new vice president, who will turn sixty-five next March, strenuously denied that Indiana's policy of forced retirement for administrators at that age was involved in his decision to come to YU. "That's not why I'm coming. Yeshiva is a unique place that poses interesting challenges. And although I'm sixty-four, I'm a young sixty-four. I still go running every day."

He also rebuffed any insinuation that his time spent at YU will merely be transitory. "I will be there for as long as everyone will have me." Sources within the administration have informed *The Commentator* that Lowengrub's recently signed contract is for three years.

Gelman, who has served as interim academic VP since the departure of former VP Bill Schwartz, has been dean of the Wurzweiler School of Social Work since

1990 and is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, where he earned his MSW. He received his doctorate from the Florence Heller Graduate School at Brandeis University. While on sabbatical in 1978, Gelman earned a Master of Law degree from Yale University, because he felt "it would aid my research and studies in the areas I was interested in."

Gelman has conducted research and published articles in topics related to social policy, liability issues in non-profit organizations, human service delivery systems, developmental disabilities, ethics, and child abuse. He is a Fellow of the American Association on Mental Retardation, and recently completed a three-year term on the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education. Gelman was also recently elected to the position of vice president of the National Association of Social Work Deans.

"I look forward to working with Dr. Lowengrub on enhancing the University's academic standing," said Gelman. "I am pleased with our efforts in this interim period, and I hope that we can complete some of the initiatives that we started."

"We are fortunate, indeed, to have found two such extraordinary individuals to serve Yeshiva University," said YU President Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm. "We now have in Academic Affairs a dynamic team with complementary strengths that will propel our University to new levels of excellence in the 21st century. Sheldon Gelman has demonstrated his skills and dedication during his tenure as dean of Wurzweiler and during the past year as interim vice president for Academic Affairs. Mort Lowengrub comes to us with extraordinary breadth and depth of experience in higher education administration and has already demonstrated an appreciation for the history and mission of our institution."

"I want to give something back to my heritage," said Lowengrub, who grew up in a traditional Jewish household in New York. "Coming to YU gives me that opportunity."

Kaplan Library at YU Continued from page 20

dently, the addition of the library is a great asset to the students in the course. There are currently forty YU students enrolled in the Kaplan course, divided into two classes. They attend classes from 2-5pm every Sunday in Furst Hall. Susan Schroeder, currently an NYU Law student, teaches one of the Kaplan classes at YU. She had her LSAT score raised by six points with the help of her Kaplan course and spoke of the virtues of the Kaplan way. She said, "Half the value of the course is outside the class, and with the limited resources we can provide, you have to try and get in the head of the test-maker. That is what Kaplan enables its students to do."

With the resources so easily accessible, YU students in the course are more able to avail themselves of the necessary materials and they find it easier to devote the necessary time to the important independent study. David Hain, a junior currently enrolled in the Kaplan course commented, "Though I am a bit nervous as the test day (June 14th) approaches, Kaplan is certainly helping to build my confidence. I am especially happy we were able to get the library up here on campus." John Moryl, head librarian, assured *The Commentator* that there would be no strain on the library staff. He added that all of the information is contained in one file cabinet. The resources are available on reserve only and are not allowed out of the library.

The Kaplan library holds twenty-seven

practice LSATs with full explanations of all questions. Also on reserve are video workshops with Kaplan instructors teaching the course's test-taking strategies. Students who miss classroom sessions are able to make-up the lost class sessions by watching the classes available on tape. In addition to the materials available in the library, Kaplan also offers some of its resources on the internet. Kaplan members can access these materials through America Online at AOL Keyword: "Kaplan" from either their own computers or those located in the library.

Hecht spoke about the presence of the Kaplan resources in our Pollack library. He said, "This is one of only a few locations that have such resources. I am happy for our students that they get this improved access to resources." Hecht wanted to be sure to commend Pearl Berger, Dean of Libraries, for her "enthusiastic support and help, and her immediate reaction that this perfectly fits the role of the library." He recalled Berger's comment on her view of the librarians' role at YU. She stated simply, "If it will help the students, that's what we are here for." Hecht noted that for years Kaplan did not want to provide resources for the YU members of the course even though YU consistently supplied students. "This is further testament to the fact that we [at YU] have really arrived on the scene," Hecht said, "and I am really proud of YU, the students, and the reputation we are gaining."

Student Council Elections Continued from page 1

goals that we have set as our agenda for the next millennium." The rest of the 1999-2000 YCSC board is made up of Vice President Dov Brandstatter, Secretary Chaim Schneider, and Treasurer Aryeh Goldberg. Brandstatter has served the YU students before, as Sophomore and Junior Class President, and hopes his accomplishments at YU will someday lead to a front office job with the New York Yankees.

Atop the Sy Syms School of Business, Yossi Knoll will sit as President. After a successful campaign, Knoll stated, "It was a hard-fought election and I am happy to be given the opportunity to do what I can to assist the students of Sy Syms." Knoll will be joined by Ari Kellman, winner of the hotly contested Vice Presidential campaign. Steve Fuchs and Rich Frolich will preside as Treasurer and Secretary respectively.

The Senior Class board will be headed by student council journeyman Alex Teichman, who defeated Moish Schmerler in an extremely close race. The victory stands pending a decision from the usually inactive Student Court, as questionable procedures may have taken place on election day. Schmerler believes election results may have either been rigged or miscounted and plans to plead for a recount or a new election. Teichman will be joined by Vice President Joshua "How Swede It Is" Swedarsky and Secretary/Treasurer Joshua Hersch.

The race for Junior class President was another hotly contested battle yielding a write-in candidate as victor. Dorian Levy successfully pulled off what was seemingly impossible, defeating five legitimate candidates. Eric Distenfeld, the latest in a long line of distinguished Distenfelds at YU, will serve the junior class as Vice President with Mikey Butler serving as Secretary/Treasurer.

Current Senior Class President Aton

Holzer emerged victorious on the quest for president of the Student Organization of Yeshiva. Familiar with the inner workings of student leadership, Holzer is expected to do a phenomenal job planning assorted SOY events. Speaking about plans for the upcoming year, Holzer stated, "I hope to implement many new and innovative programs over the course of the coming year and I call upon my fellow *talmidim* for any suggestions or advice to help make Yeshiva a better place for Torah study." Holzer will be joined by Vice President Aryeh Morris, Secretary Adam Scheier, and Treasurer Avi Oppenheimer.

The Stone Beit Midrash Program watched current Vice President Scott Nadel take the seat of President. Mark Tenenbaum will take over as Vice President, and Alaine Zeytouneh will serve as Secretary/Treasurer.

The Isaac Breuer College board will feature fifth year-senior Eric Schubert as President, Abraham Lavian as Vice President, and third year-sophomore Steve Mellner as Secretary/Treasurer. Upon election, Schubert commented, "I have been in IBC since I entered Yeshiva, and I would like nothing more than to help put the RESPECT back into IBC, because that is what it means to me."

Surprisingly, the board of the James Striar School will once again feature no Sephardic members. The 1999-2000 board will be comprised of President Fred Kreizman, Vice President Jonathan Finkelstein, and Secretary/Treasurer Eric Norman. Apparently, there is still an unwritten rule against having an all-North American Jewish Studies college board. Maybe next year. The victors of each race appear to be enthusiastic of their triumphs and look forward to responsibly serving the student body in the academic year to come.



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YUDS Triumphs on Verbal Battlefield

BY GREG SAMUELS

You slowly walk into the room. Two people anticipate your arrival - both wearing suits. One is your enemy; the other is your judge. A quick look at your adversary tells you that he's playing for keeps. He's not smiling, and the overly firm handshake he gives you comes close to shattering every bone in your hand. Somehow, you manage to grasp your opponent's hand with the same level of firmness, look into his face, and then smile - because you know that he is a dead man. Intimidation tactics will not work against you, for you are more than merely a speaker. You are a YU Debate Society debater who does not know the meaning of fear. The judge signals that he is ready. You stand up, glance one last time at your opponent, and begin to let loose the passionate verbal firestorm that will soon cause the melting of his heart when he realizes that he cannot respond to your arguments. The third and final preliminary round of yet another debate tournament is under way, and you are on the road to victory...

Over the course of this semester, seventeen YU students have found themselves in this exact position of triumph. Four first-place victories, seven second-place victories, and six third-place victories made spring 1999 the best semester ever experienced by the members of the YU Debate Society (YUDS).

YUDS' first major competitive event this semester was an Impromptu debate tournament held at SUNY Morrisville. On Motzei Shabbat, February 28, 1999, Zev Katz, Ilana Barkey, Matityohu Balas, and Elan Weinreb departed the Big Apple at 12:45 A.M. After traveling for close to five hours on a Greyhound bus, the weary students finally reached Utica, NY. Four hours later, the YU delegation managed to arrive at the SUNY Morrisville campus. After a brief nap in the student lounge, the four YUDS competitors engaged students from Rockland Community College and SUNY Morrisville in three rounds of Impromptu debate. Although the YU students were severely fatigued and almost "running on empty," Elan Weinreb, Executive Officer of the Yeshiva College division of YUDS, still managed to receive a third place award in debate and a first place award in speech. Zev Katz and Ilana Barkey also received second and third-place awards in speech respectively.

Motivated by the Morrisville victory, YUDS students proceeded to vanquish their next wave of opponents on March 24, 1999, when Queens College hosted an Impromptu tournament. Approximately fifteen students from Rockland Community College, Queens College, and NYU competed in the tournament - and they all went home disappointed. For the first time in YUDS history, debate team members took back every single award offered - an accomplishment informally known as a "One-hundred percent take-back." Newcomer Sarah Friedman, the first-place winner of the tournament, impressed competitors, judges, and coaches with her dazzling rhetorical abilities, consistently scoring 29 points (out of a possible 30) in each of her three rounds of competition. Elan Weinreb, the second-place winner, and Aura Brandwein, third-place winner and Stern College Executive Officer, also performed impressively with speaker point totals well above 80 points, averaging at least 26 points per round.

YUDS' next big event was a combined debate Shabbaton/tournament weekend held over April 23-25, 1999. On Friday night, April 23, approximately forty YUDS mem-

bers gathered down at Stern to hear Dr. Harris Schoenberg, Director of United Nations Affairs for Bnai Brith International, speak about the importance of communication in advancing Jewish interests in the United Nations. In addition to Dr. Schoenberg's presentation, Ms. Dvora Weinreb, an attorney in Cooper City, Florida, presented a comprehensive analysis of the controversial issue of gestational surrogacy. Both lectures were well attended and heartily enjoyed by all.

Sunday, April 25, 1999, capped off the weekend with YUDS hosting its second annual Public Forum Debate League spring tournament. Elan Weinreb, Aura Brandwein, and Greg Samuels, YUDS' President, organized the tournament and served as its officials. Two divisions of debate were offered: Limited Research Debate and Impromptu Debate. The topic for the Limited Research Debate division was "Resolved: That, with regards to human cloning, an individual's right to reproductive freedom should be viewed as paramount." Topics in the Impromptu division included gestational surrogacy, academic integrity, and priest/penitent privilege. Three schools - YU, Rockland Community College, and SUNY Binghamton - competed in the tournament.

Once again, YUDS' "take-back" percentage was pretty impressive: sixty-six percent. Matityohu Balas, the society's Assistant Executive Officer, won a second-place award in Limited Research Debate, and Uriel Cohen won a second-place speaking award in the Limited Research division. In the Impromptu division, Ilana Barkey, one of the society's most enthusiastic members, received a third-place award in speaking. Edmundo Rosenberg, the society's president-elect, won a third-place debate award and second-place speaking award. Yariv Frenkel also picked up a second-place debate award and first-place speaking award in the Impromptu division. Finally, newcomer Jonathan Gordon managed to defeat ten other competitors to receive a first-place award in Impromptu debate.

YUDS' last major event of the 1998-1999 season was its most glorious to date. For the first time in YUDS history, YU was invited to an Impromptu debate at Columbia University against thirteen students from Rockland Community College, NYU, Columbia University, and Queens College. After a kosher pizza dinner, courtesy of Columbia's hospitable tournament staff, YUDS members were eager to crush the competition. By the end of the night, YUDS members had once again distinguished themselves by triumphing over their opposition. Newcomer Jack Almo, Greg Samuels, and Sarah Friedman took back second, third, and fourth-place awards respectively in debate. Both NYU and Columbia ended the night finishing behind YUDS.

YU's debate society is no longer considered a fledgling organization but a powerful force to be reckoned with on the highest levels of collegiate competition. At the same time, YUDS has continued to maintain its reputation of being an open club. Most of the awards won over this semester went to newcomers, not veterans. Experience is thus not a prerequisite for attaining victory. Anyone, with enough practice and motivation, can first learn how to defeat one's opponents on the verbal battlefield. YUDS' administration is always ready to welcome new members and encourages all interested students, regardless of experience level, to sign up at their website, <http://surf.to/yuds>, for the upcoming 1999-2000 academic year.

YUCS PROTESTS LAB FEES

BY BEN SANDLER

Voices of protest have been raised among computer science, math, and pre-engineering majors regarding the levying of lab fees for courses that do not have labs. While this sounds like a simple oversight, it has actually been common practice for many years. Every computer science course which a student takes incurs a \$50 lab fee tacked on to the tuition bill for the semester. This fee is charged regardless of whether a lab is scheduled. Similarly, a \$40 fee is charged to all students registered for Calculus. These courses also do not have labs.

There is precedent for these lab fees being refunded. Two years ago, one student petitioned the High Tech Committee for a refund of lab fees for one course which did not use the lab. The Committee discussed the issue, and all the students in that course received refunds. However, the general policy was never changed. The issue was raised again at a recent meeting of the Student Life Committee. A senior administrator at the

meeting said he would look into it, but later reported that there had been no movement on the issue. He surmised that the reason for the charges hearkened back to the days when computer science students made use of the single YU computer, housed at Einstein, and were charged for their use of the computer.

Students, many of whom had paid as much as \$500 over the course of their careers in lab fees, noted that the fees are charged indiscriminately. Theoretically, as some administrators have noted, computer science students should require use of the computer labs more than other students. But in practice, students have noted that this is not the case. As one computer science major noted, most CS students have their own computers, and the labs are mainly used for word processing, AOL, game playing, and other persuasions. In addition, other courses which use the lab, including Sy Syms courses which take place in the labs, are not charged labs fees. Students expressed the hope that the issue would be resolved favorably by the start of the next semester.

RIETS Musmach Continued from page 1

Rabbi Eliashiv replied: "My friend, my dear one, you have twice the power of love. Use it carefully."

In 1993, Rabbi Greenberg published an article in *Tikkun* magazine under the pseudonym Rabbi Yaakov Lavedo. In "Gayness and G-d: Wrestling of an Orthodox Rabbi," he called for a "deeper understanding of homosexuality within the Orthodox world." "How can *halakhacists* possibly rule on a matter so complex and so foreign, without a sustained effort at understanding?" he wrote.

He refers to Leviticus 18:23, the verse in which the Torah instructs: "Do not lie with a male as one lies with a woman, it is an abomination." He says that "for the present, I have no plausible *halakhic* method of interpreting this text in a manner that permits homosexual sex." He does, however, describe various levels of homosexual activity, and lists some as being less of a violation to the Torah law. He states, "in regard to sexual behavior, I personally have chosen to accept a certain risk and violate the *halakha* as it is presently articulated, in the hope of a subsequent, more accepting *halakhic* expression. I realize that this is a 'civil disobedience.' It is not the system itself which I challenge but its application to an issue that has particular meaning for me and for those like me."

His recent move to declare his sexuality follows a series of events that have taken place in the more liberal Jewish movements. Last year, the Reform movement debated whether to endorse officiation at gay weddings. At the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary, students have petitioned the chancellor to reopen the question of admitting gay students into the rabbinical programs.

"While Rabbi Greenberg is considered to be the most prominent symbol of gay Orthodoxy thus far, he is certainly not alone in his struggle," said Simcha DuBowski, a film maker who is currently shooting a docu-

mentary about gay and lesbian Orthodox Jews. "I've spoken to hundreds of gay and lesbian Jews over the past four years, many totally hidden, who want to lead lives of Torah and *Mitzvot*, serving Hashem in the fullest way they are capable. They want to be a tangible part of the Orthodox world, living in it, loving it and building it."

Many YU Rabbeim, however, have been appalled by the conduct of Rabbi Greenberg. "Being an Orthodox Rabbi and actively gay is an oxymoron," said Rabbi Moshe Tendler, Rosh Yeshiva and Professor of Biology. "It is very sad that an individual who attended our yeshiva sunk to the depths of what we consider a depraved society," Rabbi Tendler continued. Tendler said that Rabbi Greenberg's announcement is "the exact same as if he said, 'I'm an Orthodox Rabbi and I eat ham sandwiches on Yom Kippur.' What you are is a Reform Rabbi."

In the December dorm talk series, Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, President of YU, discussed the inherent conflicts of homosexuality and religion. While Lamm didn't address the issue of being a gay Rabbi, he did say that "a gay teacher should not be permitted to discuss morality in the classroom." He further stated that in order to preserve self-respect, homosexuals should not talk about their orientation openly.

Rabbi Greenberg explains that he decided to make the announcement "in order to help the great number of people who are in distress while dealing with their sexuality." He encourages the Orthodox world to not reject the "testimony of humans. The openness that is so evident in the Torah has evidently been lost by the advancement of modernity. It seems as though the Orthodox world can't respond to growth and independent thought, so they just shut down." He thinks the solution is to "listen to the people, because when you don't listen, you lose authority over them."

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Tennis Team Continues to Impress with Seven Wins

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

In the past, the Yeshiva University tennis team has been used to winning, as the last four seasons' tennis teams have not lost a match. Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end. For the first time in five years, YU's tennis Macs suffered the anguish of losing- three times

The top four ranked players on the undefeated teams of former years were no longer on the team this year. Additionally, this year's team was filled with a whopping seven first-year players. The team was no longer able to keep the streak alive.

Most teams would be proud to boast a 7-3 record, but for the tennis Macs, that is just not acceptable. Shai Samet, one of the team's stars during its undefeated streak, expressed his "disbelief" when he heard of the first loss, and said that he was unable to sleep that night. One former player recently remarked, "It was understood. We were going to win. Losing was not an option."

Is all hope lost? Can the tennis team recover? Many say yes. While 7-3 is definitely not as impressive as the traditional 10-0, the team's accomplishments this year should not be overlooked. The team's co-captains, Steve Langer and Jeff Taub, fared extremely well in the number one and three slots, despite having played the five and six slots

last year. The number two position was filled in by Micha Porat, who surprised everybody with his emergence as a dominant player, losing only two singles matches.

Ari Ellenberg and Adam Cohen, two first year players, have steadily improved this season in the fourth and fifth positions. Other team members this year included Yonatan Bendheim, Joseph Weilgus, Adam Aftergut, Jonathan Kestenbaum, Edo Jacobowitz, Eric Taub, Jon Laoui, and Dorian Levy. Though most of these players did not see much competition this year, their steady improvement was noteworthy. In fact, in the last match of the season, against Bard College, Levy and Eric Taub dominated their opponents in the fifth and sixth slots respectively. Coach John Bandler was extremely pleased, remarking after the match, "Dorian, you're going to play next year!"

While a 7-3 season may seem bleak in light of the successes of previous seasons, YU tennis fans should not despair. This season indicated that much can be expected from next year's team. While the team will lose its leader, Steve Langer, as well as Bendheim, and Weilgus to graduation this year, nine players will be returning next year, with five of them coming back the year after. This promises to keep the flame of YU tennis burning strongly, and hopefully allowing Samet to sleep soundly once again.

VARSITY AWARDS 1998-1999

The Commentator would like to congratulate all our varsity athletes for representing our school in competition with honor and dignity this academic year. We would like to recognize the following standouts upon receipt of their respective awards.

COACH'S AWARD

BASKETBALL -

David Neiss,
Beth Wolfson,
Blima Sasson

CROSS COUNTRY -

Joseph Zimbalist

FENCING, (EPEE) -

Hadar Weiss,
Yedida Goldman

FENCING (FOIL) -

Lisa Kaplan

FENCING (SABER) -

Avraham Goldberg

GOLF -

Avi Karesh

TENNIS -

Steve Langer,
Heidi Baker

VOLLEYBALL -

Ruslan Kimyagarov

WRESTLING -

Avi Golden

NORMAN PALEFSKI MEMORIAL AWARD

(The most outstanding Senior Male Scholar-Athlete)
MARC NADRITCH

EMILLE OFFENBACHER MEMORIAL AWARD

(The most outstanding Senior Male Athlete)
RUSLAN KIMYAGAROV

SCW/SSSB ATHLETIC AWARD

(the most outstanding Senior Female Athlete)
STEPHANIE TURETSKY

THE BERNARD "RED" SARACHEK AWARD

(excellence in basketball)
MARC NADRITCH

THE ARTHUR D. TAUBER AWARD

(excellence in fencing)
STEVE MELLNER

THE HENRY WITTENBERG AWARD

(excellence in wrestling)
ARYEH SHILOH

THE ECAC MERIT AWARD

(most outstanding graduating scholar athlete)
SHIRA HECHT

Yeshiva Sports

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If you are interested in working on the Medical Journal for the 1999-2000 academic year, please contact Daniel Greenspan at yupremed@yahoo.com. Contact ASAP as topics will be assigned before the summer break.

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students of **ALL MAJORS** to tutor at the writing center. Salaries begin at \$7.50/hr. For more information, please Dr. Lauren Fitzgerald or Steven Torres at the writing center, second floor, Furst Hall ASAP.

6:45 MINYAN-Are you a working folk? Do you want to put in an extra seder in the morning? Planning on pulling an all -nighter for that paper? (Maybe you just want to avoid the lines in grandma's or time out.) Join us for the Daily Minyan at the crack of dawn-6:45AM, Monday through Thursday in the Morg Basement. Membership is FREE!

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The Campus Bulletin Board and the Student Awareness Committee of *The Commentator*, wish everyone *Hatzlocha* on finals and a great summer!

LAMM TO DELIVER KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT GRADUATION EFFORTS FOR STUDENT SPEAKER DENIED

BY DOVID MENCHEL

At the university's upcoming commencement exercise, Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, President and Rosh HaYeshiva of YU is slated to deliver the keynote address. The ceremony, marking the graduation of over 2,200 undergraduate and graduate students, will take place on May 26 at The Theatre at Madison Square Garden. This year's graduation is the fiftieth anniversary of Lamm's commencement, at which he spoke, representing his class as valedictorian.

Lamm's address is expected to discuss the state of both Yeshiva University and the Jewish community at large, as we approach the close of the twentieth century. Lamm will confer the graduates' diplomas, as well as five honorary doctoral degrees to individuals who have distinguished themselves.

However, the decision for Lamm to speak was replete with controversy. YU has not had a valedictory address from a student since around 1980, according to Dean of Student Services Dr. Efreim Nulman, but recently the issue has become a student concern. Many students feel that they should have one of their own to represent them at their graduation, as most universities do. *The Commentator* printed an editorial earlier this year advocating this interest, but to no avail.

According to outgoing YCS&C president Dror Barber, there has been a year-long effort orchestrated for this cause. The push for change was induced by last year's graduation, in which the main speaker's address consisted of his doctoral thesis, which many found far too lengthy and unengaging.

After a meeting of a focus group from all the colleges, all representatives were in favor of an undergraduate speaker. However the Office of Ceremonial Occasions responded from the board of trustees and president that there was no way a student would be allowed to speak. The reason given, according to Barber, was that the administration "did not know what the student would say, and there was a possibility that students would misbehave or not represent the institution well."

Barber was miffed by this response, saying, "It's a little hypocritical and upsetting for Dr. Lamm to think he was fit enough to speak as valedictorian, but today's graduates are not."

The next plan students initiated was to at least have a renowned speaker from outside of the university who would be interesting to the students and public. This also is common practice at many universities,



according to Barber. There was talk of bringing in Joe Torre or Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, which even resulted in tentative plans for Giuliani to speak. However, those were eventually nixed for an unknown reason. No further effort was made to find another speaker from outside.

Barber expressed the perspective of a graduating senior when he said, "Graduation is there for the students. It's our day, after we've finished four years of college. The school should put someone up there who represents us, and if not, at least provide someone who is uniquely of interest to graduates and guests." Barber contends that students can hear their university president speak several times per year, and graduation should have something fresh and unusual.

Barber did not want to incriminate the whole administration for the authoritarian stance which has been taken. The Student Service office has been supportive of the students' interests, he said, "they're the only department that sees graduation as being for the students." Both David Rosen of the Public Relations office and Dr. Efreim Nulman of Student Services declined to comment for *The Commentator* on the situation.

Though this year's YC valedictorian, Yosef Blum, thinks the students should have a representative speak for them and address the class at graduation, he claims to see both perspectives. "I think the valedictorian should speak, but I don't see how it could be pulled off given time constraints and the amount of schools being represented." Blum suggested a separate graduation for the undergraduates, apart from the graduate school commencement.

Unfortunately, it does not seem that what Blum stated is the reason for the administration's obstinacy. The focus group from the different schools had already devised a plan to rotate YC, Stern College, and SSSB valedictorians by year. Representatives in the focus group from YU's graduate schools recalled that at their undergraduate graduations, the address was given by an undergraduate valedictorian, and they concurred with implementing that practice here.

Many students feel that the upper administration has thwarted student efforts for something of meaning to them. Though a change could not be made for this year, many are still satisfied that at least with Dr. Lamm, there is a distinguished speaker for graduation. When asked about coming years, Barber showed hope, saying, "I have faith in the Office of Student Service that they are working hard on our behalf to make a change."

Danishefsky, Zucker Elected Professors of Year

BY MIKE ZAIDEL

On May 29th, while Student Council hopefuls campaigned for their positions with video games, candy, and bourekas, a different election was underway. The candidates for this ballot did not campaign; they were unaware that they were even in contention for any position. About eighty graduating seniors cast their votes on that day for Professor of the Year.

Yeshiva University's Canvassing Committee headed this election and after several meetings with administrators an election format was determined. Judah Burns, a member of the Canvassing Committee, felt that Professor of the Year was a distinction that should be chosen "through complete student body involvement". For this reason any student had the ability to nominate any professor simply through a suggestion. After all nominations were collected, voting ensued.

Professors Kenneth Danishefsky and Ross Zucker garnered the most votes, and both received the honor of Professor of the Year. While Mr. Burns would not disclose the specific number of votes candidates received, he did state that Dr. Danishefsky and Dr. Zucker received "the exact same amount of votes".

Dr. Danishefsky, a professor in the Biology department saw the award as "a great honor". He stressed that the most important consideration for a teacher is his student's opinion, and that this award, in a sense, is "the only feedback of students' opinion". Dr. Danishefsky is no stranger to positive student feedback; in last year's Professor of the Year election he was only a few votes shy of defeating winner Dr. Samuel Schneider.

Dr. Zucker, a professor in the Political Science department, shares this year's award. Dr. Zucker was deeply gratified to receive the award and felt that "it is among the experiences at Yeshiva that will be unforgettable to me."

Unfortunately, Dr. Zucker has been denied tenure at Yeshiva College, but found it "heartening that students of such quality responded to me in this way." Dr. Zucker also emphasized that Yeshiva University students possess a "great deal of integrity," and saw their voting him as Professor of the Year "not simply rebelliousness, but a true act of conviction". When questioned on his reflections about an institution that denies tenure to a professor that is obviously of high regard to students, Dr. Zucker refrained from commenting.

Yeshiva College students who have had Dr. Zucker as a teacher hope that this award will have an impact on administrators. Ben Franz, a Yeshiva College Senior who voted for Dr. Zucker, hopes that Zucker's distinction "will get faculty to reconsider their decision to deny him tenure."

While it is unclear how much student feedback about professors really affects administrative decisions, students see the Professor of the Year award as a strong candidate to exert influence. The Canvassing Committee sees the Professor of the Year award as a merit that truly reflects student's attitude. Since only seniors vote, it is assumed that people graduating do not have an "ax to grind" and their vote is a true reflection about a professor's ability. Many feel that this year's Professor of the Year award will determine how much influence student opinion truly produces.

Kaplan Creates LSAT Library on Campus

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

This academic year notes the addition of a Kaplan Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) Library to the Yeshiva University Pollack Library. The addition of the library has made studying for the LSATs with Kaplan much easier on YU students enrolled in the program. With the resources available directly on campus, many of the students who took the Kaplan course in the past note the great convenience the Kaplan library offers as opposed to the hassles that they had to deal with in earlier years.

Due to the fact that there are only two other Kaplan LSAT library locations in the city, it was not unusual for YU students enrolled in the course to travel upwards of an hour to obtain the materials needed for the

course. Senior Elan Weinreb who took the Kaplan course in the fall of 1998, and will be attending law school next year said, "There were three trains to take down to the center, a trip sometimes taking an hour and a half one way." He remarked that things would have been so much easier if he had access to the library on campus. "I am very happy for the current students, and a little bit jealous," he added.

Per student request, and with the help of Rabbi Michael Hecht, Associate Dean and Yeshiva College pre-law advisor, Kaplan has conceded to create a Kaplan LSAT Library directly on the YU campus on the second floor of the Pollack Library. Since the majority of the work for the course is done indepen-

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THE COMMENTATOR

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