

COMMENTATOR

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ARTS FESTIVAL 2000 Record Number of Students Attend

BY RAMI COHEN

Drawing over one thousand people, the fourth annual YC/SCW Arts Festival has come and gone, securing for itself a place in Yeshiva tradition for years to come. Despite many changes made to this year's program, Arts Festival 2000 proved to be the most successful to date. Yeshiva deans and Arts Festival directors could not have been happier with the results of the event.

Steven "I." Weiss of Yeshiva College, and Rebecca Leicht of Stern College for Women shared the burden as co-directors of the festival, as this year's festival was co-sponsored by Stern College for Women and Yeshiva College. Past festivals were sponsored solely by Yeshiva College.

Festival 2000 kicked off with a student-concert, now slated to be the perennial "opening event" due to its tremendous success. The concert attracted the largest audi-



ence of any event, with over three hundred in attendance in Weissberg Commons. Students gave powerful performances, demonstrating the wide range of musical talent in Yeshiva University.

The concert included a blend of original music and energetic performance. Hillel Glazer, a YC Junior, performed his "Jerusalem Stone," an original piece about a Russian immigrant's return to Israel, to the

outstanding harmonica accompaniment of Avidan Friedman. Other highlights of the concert included Yakov Fleischmann, Eli Kohl, and Danny Zwillinberg's performance of Hendrix's "Little Wing" and the Grateful Dead's "Sugaree." Fleischmann's melodic vocals were backed by Kohl's powerful guitar riffs. For a change of pace, Elie

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Yeshiva Chairman Resigns Encourages Others to Follow

BY AARON KLEIN

and Committees."

David S. Gottesman, who has served Yeshiva as Chairman of the Board for seven years, announced his resignation last week effective June, 2000. Robert M. Beren, current Vice-Chairman, will be assuming the Chairmanship upon Gottesman's withdrawal from office.

The announcement follows a series of resignations by various upper-level administrators, including Dr. Efrem Nulman, University Dean of Students, Dr. Paul Virkuil, Dean of Cardozo School of Law, Dr. David Nirenburg, Dean of Sy Syms School of Business, and Rabbi Mevin Davis, University Registrar.

Gottesman expressed hope that his resignation will spark other administrators to resign as well, so the University may continue to grow and promote positive change. He said, "I feel for the good of the institution a rotation of Chairmen, not only on my level, but on the level of the individual schools, is appropriate and almost a necessity in order to keep a flow of fresh ideas moving... The example I set has [already] resulted in changes at Ferkauf, Syms, Stern and Einstein with respect to the Board, Chairman, Committee Chairman

Although Gottesman stated that his decision was personal and would not list any specific tensions that exist between him and current Board members, a high-level administrator informed *The Commentator* that Gottesman "may have recently stepped on the wrong feet and is now leaving as a result." The administrator said that Gottesman last year hired an independent committee to review the balance of power within the University infrastructure, and that the analyst reportedly found that Vice President of Business Affairs, Dr. Sheldon Socol, "exercised too much control and influence over University practices and academic programs." Socol refused to comment, while Gottesman denied that the independent analyst had anything to do with his decision to resign, asserting that "the report is still a work in progress."

During his term as Chairman, Yeshiva has flourished greatly and prospered on many levels. Einstein has surged to its current ranking of twenty-one among medical schools nationwide; Cardozo has hired a new staff of renowned legal professionals and has instituted programs that have garnered inter-

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SOY/REITS Publication Causes Controversy

Facilities Removes Copies from Campus

BY AARON KLEIN

Beit Yitzchak, a religious publication of REITS and SOY which features scholarly works by faculty and students, has elicited much criticism this year after the editors decided to publish an article stressing academic talmud learning over that of a more traditionally routed system. The article has caused many Rosh HaYeshiva, including Rabbis Hershel Schachter, Mordechai Willig, and Yehuda Parnes, to publicly denounce the printed work. These contentions recently culminated in Yeshiva's refusal to finance Beit Yitzchak and Facilities' alleged confiscation of the publication.

The article in question, "Absolute Liability: Development of the Law of the Damaging Man," was written by MYP students Elli Stern and Meir Katz, and quoted several sources that Rabbeyyim found to be "problematic." Among those cited are Professors Saul Leiberman, Shamma Freidman and David Weiss



Halivni, all of whom are associated with the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Rabbi Hershel Schechter, who's works in Beit Yitzchak are said to have greatly increased its sales, told

The Commentator that he feels personally slighted by the editors decision to include the controversial article, and expressed regret over contributing to this year's edition. "Had I known such an article would be in there, I would never have written anything for them," said Shachter. "They've lost all tradition and should be ashamed of themselves. They are stealing money from the Yeshiva; this is not what they're being paid to print."

Aaron Koller, coeditor-in-chief of Beit Yitzchak, said he knew the article would generate debate, but decided to publish it

anyway, "to see what the response would be. I wanted to test the waters a little." The response that followed, he said, "was not at all

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Belz Professor Fired For Cursing

BY JASON CYRULNIK

A bizarre tenure at Yeshiva University's Belz School of Music came to an end three weeks ago, as Mr. David Feinberg, one of the institution's most multi-faceted instructors, was fired just three classes into the semester. It is the questionable set of circumstances surrounding the termination of Feinberg's stay that has evoked outcries from concerned students. Cantor Bernard Beer, Director of the Belz School, citing complaints from anonymous students that Feinberg's in-class decorum was what the administration deemed "unacceptable," informed Feinberg that his services were no longer welcome. Beer specified that Feinberg's notorious use of foul language in the classroom and dis-

cussion of inappropriate topics that had no place in a music classroom could be tolerated no longer.

Feinberg reacted to the decision with what he simply described as "complete shock." Feinberg had been teaching a similar schedule of classes at the Belz school with comparable in-class behavior for some two years; during that span of time he developed quite the following of loyal students. Feinberg's devotion to his students was described by one YC Junior as "unparalleled" among the staff of teachers that I have encountered in my college career." The understandably close-knit relationship that developed between the teacher and his students laid the ground for an open atmosphere

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EDITORIAL

Pope's Personal Pilgrimage Perceived as Productive

Pope John Paul II recently ended his six day personal pilgrimage to Israel, with some words he uttered at the Kotel, the Western Wall in Jerusalem. He said: "G-d of our fathers, you chose Abraham and his descendants to bring your name to the nations. We are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who in the course of history have caused these children of yours to suffer. And asking your forgiveness, we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the covenant. Jerusalem, 26.3.2000. Joannes Paulus II." These sentiments should be applauded by the Jewish community and should be given credit for their reconciliatory message and moving tenor. Moreover, the Pope's trip to the sites of the Bible was spiritually inspiring to much of the world.

At Yad Vashem the Pope apologized for the members of the Catholic Church who had persecuted the Jews with reference to the Holocaust, uttering the word *shoa*. There, at the memorial, Pope John Paul met a group of Jews who had known him as a young man. This trip to Israel has left warm images in the minds of some Jews, while in others' his pro-Palestinian stance drew skepticism. Nevertheless, many agreed that the Pope's personal words and interactions have gone a long way toward bettering relations between the Vatican and Israel, and may help heal some of the wounds accrued by Jews over the ages.

However, the Pope should continue further on this path of reconciliation. Though words do heal some wounds, others cannot be healed by mere rhetoric. The Vatican houses a large collection of original Jewish manuscripts, articles, and belongings. It is also believed that the holy Menorah may be housed within the confines of the Vatican archives. The Pope should return ALL these stolen articles to their rightful owners, the Jewish people. Furthermore, the Pope should not interfere in our internal affairs or meddle in such issues as the status of Jerusalem. Pope John Paul's trip to Israel has impressed us and was a seminal moment in the relationship between Catholics and Jews. But we should all remember that many wrongs perpetuated by the Church have yet to be righted, and objects taken from us have yet to be returned.



MESSAGE FROM THE YCSC PRESIDENT

JON MELL

Straight Talk

"Nothing astonishes men so much as common sense and plain dealing."
Ralph Waldo Emerson

I now write as a reminder of the power, responsibility, and associated duty that each of us has. At Yeshiva University, I have said before, we have unparalleled room for growth and improvement. Because of the relatively small size of our college, we can effect change through committees, clubs, and, of course, our newspaper. This power is great in size and quality. I think that in order to gain the most insight into these ideas, it might be beneficial to look to the great writers, philosophers, and thinkers of our time, and our forefather's times.

Gloria Steinem reminded us that it is up to us, the individual, to take advantage of the channels that allow us make change. She said, "Power can be taken, but not given. The process of the taking is empowerment in itself." Through empowerment, we take the first step toward realizing any potential that we may have.

Of course, the great James Baldwin said that, "power without morality is no longer power." And this is a good place to start. In each of our endeavors, there must be a guiding morality - a moral compass - that keeps our goal, and the means we use to reach that goal, pure. With this moral anchor, we can avoid reinforcing Henry Adams's maxim, that "A friend in power is a friend lost." This is certainly an unfortunate occurrence. When we alienate those who believe in us most - our friends and peers - we foolishly dissolve our natural power base.

With the student council elections looming, this concept of "keeping the process clean" is very important. While I wish every candidate the best of luck, I do so with an important reminder: nothing good or great can be realized by stepping on somebody else, especially when it comes to securing an office of influence. By focusing on integrity, and not negativity, one stands to gain more respect for themselves, not less respect for his opponent.

Thomas Jefferson believed, at least when it comes to government, that "the less we use our power the greater it will be." This is true to the extent that we, as students, must not fight to limit our own say in "The Process." There's no virtue in over-legislating our own college experience.

But what I want to address in this space is the concern of misusing that power that we DO already have. Unfortunately, many students operate on Saul Alinsky's, the radical activist, belief. "Power is not only what you have but what the enemy thinks you have." Very little to nothing is accomplished when we play "under-the-table" games, that try to "psyche-out" our partners. The largest problem with this is that it creates an adversarial situation, where there is a protagonist and an antagonist. If each of us - e.g both sides - can gain from dealings, then ostensibly there is no need for these mindless games.

Well, Percy Bysshe Shelley once wrote, "Power, like a desolating pestilence, pollutes whate'er it touches." Of course if this were true, there would be no altruistic representatives, officers, writers, or reporters. But there are, and that is why the messages contained herein are so urgent. We can prevent the misuse of authority, only by taking action as individuals.

Because, when it comes down to it, this campus needs leadership looking for long-lasting results, not frivolous controversy. The humorist Garrison Kellor used the newspaper as an example of this unfortunate condition, when he quipped, "A good newspaper is never nearly good enough, but a lousy newspaper is a joy forever." The pursuit of "good" is more beneficial and valuable than the slapstick absurdity of the court jester or the class clown. I wish everybody a Freilachen Purim... May Hashem help us remember that there is a time to rejoice and act frivolous, but certainly not when it comes at the expense of others and not when it comes through a loss of responsibility and integrity.



FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

AARON KLEIN

Oh. You're Just Stupid

I've been involved with *The Commentator* since my arrival here three years ago, and have since been plagued by a singular question that beckons itself on an almost daily basis: "What's wrong with some of the administrators?" At certain times I view the administration as a collective body of grumpy men who by nature dislike professors and treat students like migrant workers who happen to be passing through. They are to me an enigma of the most complex design, often acting with no regard for the interests of students or even of themselves. Sometimes, though, select administrators have been very resourceful, exercising rational behavior, interacting properly with other human beings, and occasionally initiating excellent programs that help boast our institution.

I have wondered what it is that causes administrators to do certain things, which sinuous forces are summoned to provide them with the necessary inspiration to carry out some of their often ill-advised actions. But after years of debate and thorough analysis, I am proud to announce that I've finally figured it out - some administrators are simply a few pennies short a dollar.

Sometimes the thoughts and actions of administrations have the grandeur, scope and breadth of postage stamps. Take the S.O.Y. Seforim Sale for example. Over ten thousand Jews make their way to Belfer Hall to browse the many books and religious articles. This is an incredible opportunity for Yeshiva - an institution that pours millions each year into its public relations department - to flaunt itself to the many visitors who come from all over.

The administration should be capitalizing off this event; they should use it to snatch prospective students and benefactors, influencing them with the pro-Yeshiva propaganda we have all come to know and love. Instead Facilities has interfered with every aspect of the sale, from securing the room to obtaining the bookshelves to the utilization of freight elevators - needlessly making the lives of the student organizers a living hell. Intelligent administrators would see the sale for what it is: a great service to the Jewish community that should be advertised throughout the city and glorified within the sweetened pages of "Yeshiva Today."

The administration's refusal to pay each professor a salary that is comparable to that of other universities continues to generate tension between the faculty and the administration. This is why we have been losing top-flight talent from across the board. A resign-

ing dean, who had been reportedly begged by our president to stay, told *The Commentator* he was leaving because of conflicts with the financial department. A Yeshiva College department head and one of the most esteemed professors of her subject, has recently informed this publication that she will not be renewing her contract out of continued frustration with her salary.

Yeshiva places much emphasis on its status within the *US News* Ranking system, and at the same time they aggravate those who are responsible for our University's prestige. With a total net of over one billion dollars, I find it hard to believe we can't afford to pay our professors decent salaries. The situation is indeed quite perplexing. Those accountable for this decision should be enlightened as to the fine art of administrating.

And these confiscation's? They're simply absurd. Most colleges realize it is wiser to grit their teeth and remain silent about certain things than to seize newspapers and be publicly labeled a censor. But if you people must satisfy some diabolic need to take things that aren't yours, please, at least come up with a better excuse! *Commentator's* are removed for "safety and aesthetic purposes?" Eight boxes of Beit Yitzchak's, with many Rosh Yeshiva furious over its content, were stolen from the Seforim Sales by Facilities because "they were left on a freight elevator?" Come on, my four-year-old brother can do better than that.

Stealing New York Times vending machines??? A major No, No! What could you people have possibly been thinking? This intelligent act was the brainchild of Jeff and Jeff (Socol and Rosengarten, "Dumb and Dumber," if you will) two individuals who deserve their own show on the WB.

So guys, let me give you an abbreviated list of rules that you should keep in mind: 1) When students use their own money to organize an event that draws over ten thousand visitors to the University, don't sabotage it. Instead use it to your advantage. 2) Students don't like it when you mistreat them. Students will be the benefactors in a few years. 3) Professors are the core of this institution. You want to keep them happy. This may require you to pay them. 4) Form committees so decisions are made together and not by one or two individuals who may not be "experts in the matter at hand." Finally, 5) If something isn't yours, whether it be vending machines, student newspapers or SOY publications, don't touch it. I know it's tempting, but keep your grimy hands off!



MESSAGE FROM THE SOY PRESIDENT

ATON HOLZER

The sequence of Parshiyot that we have recently concluded dealt with the construction of the *mishkan*, the Tabernacle, which served as the literal center of Jewish life in the wilderness; its heir, the *mikdash* (Temple) succeeded the *mishkan* as the center of Jewish existence in the land of Israel, situated in its capital city, Jerusalem, the heart of Israel which stands, to this day, at the center of human civilization.

The centrality of the sanctuary and that which it represents - sanctity, *kedusha*, that which is holy and imbues life with nobility and meaning - is not limited to the spatial dimension. The interweaving of the commandments of *shabbat* and the *mishkan* demonstrate a shared theme; *Shabbat* and the *mishkan* serve to consecrate human endeavor to God both by limiting it temporally - thereby demonstrating our indebtedness to God in our own handiwork - and by channeling our endeavor toward the service of the Divine - in creating the sanctuary itself, *melakhah*, and in maintaining services within it, *avodah*. *Shabbat* and *mikdash* allow us to look beyond our seemingly mundane pursuits and to glimpse the sacred which lies beneath all, to contemplate our surroundings from the *kodesh hakodashim*, the pinnacle of sanctity, and, in Rav Kook's words, *le-hashkif gam al ha-chol mi-toch aspaklarya shel kodesh*; the *mikdash* of time and place puts *kodesh* at the center of our lives and allows us to reorient our priorities and goals in light of that which is truly important.

Purim, as well, may reflect a trace of these ideas. Mordechai and Esther exemplify Jews who did not, or perhaps could not, eschew the mundane. Both are literate and worldly, and contemporary scholars note that their names are Persian, derivations of names of Persian deities, perhaps reflecting a certain degree of acculturation; the Midrash paints Mordechai as a savant fluent in seventy languages, and the Megillah itself portrays both Esther and he as protagonists who are politically astute. Wittingly or otherwise, Esther is thrust into the king's court and must adapt to Persian mores and customs. Yet, when trouble begins to stir, Esther risks every last bit for her people, and Mordechai highlights the certainty of Divine intervention - *revach ve-hatzalah ya'amad la-yehudim* - as well as that of Jewish collective destiny. The Divine Name isn't explicit anywhere in the Megillah; at the same time, *Ha-Melekh* calls out to us from the top of every column. The observance of Purim highlights this reality as well; on Purim, we are bidden to drop all

pretenses, all mundane pursuits - even to the extent of subverting them via intoxication - to get at the pure essence, which must always be *kodesh hakodashim*.

At Yeshiva University, we are afforded the opportunity to pursue many 'mundane' projects, ranging from the humanities and arts to the sciences, politics and journalistic ventures; all are legitimate applications of our talents, and we ought not forsake them. At the same time, our creativity must flow from the heart of the *mikdash*; we must not lose our perspective and neglect that which is most important - that which actually is important; we must reach toward the Divine with every article we write, every part which we act, every piece which we play, every statue we sculpt, every membrane we hybridize; we must strive for the goal of *vehayah kol sir be-yerushalayim ve-yehuda kodesh la-Hashem Tzevakot* - every cooking pot will be sacred and sanctified when we lead our lives with the aspect of *mikdash*; as the *mamlechet kohanim*, each of us wear an invisible *tzitz* proclaiming *kodesh la-Hashem* on our foreheads, the *Shekhinat Kel* that accompanies us always; may we merit to allow His Presence to guide our lives and deeds, to keep us on the path of the just by being present in our minds and hearts always.

Hakaras HaTov to my Kallah, Rachel Salamon; to the A-team, Aryeh Morris, Amichai Erdfarb, Avi Oppenheimer and Adam Scheier; to David Regev (Hamin), David Mahler (Mussar), Moshe Farkash (Refreshments), Ezra Starr, Ephraim Shapiro and Jonathan Strauss (Publicity), Yoni Sherizen and Avi Billet (Shpiel), Judah Goldberg (Special Events), Jonathan Gross (Bagels, TTL), Akiva Novetsky and Yitz Motzen (Torah Tape Library), Chaim Strauchler (Mima'amakim Journal), Ben Breda (SOY Chesed Club) and Jeremy Frenkel (SOY-Yad Ozer Tzedakah Committee). Special thanks to Dov Karoll, Ari Schick, Levi Mostofsky, Uri Goldstein, Shmuli Singer and to *The Commentator*, to Andrew Leibowitz, the Offices of Student Services, Facilities Management, Security and Housekeeping, Deans Nulman and Hember, and Jeffrey Rosengarten, Jeff Socol, Paula Baumser and Robert Valespie, all of whom helped make Seforim Sale 2000 the best in history. Our utmost thanks to Rav Blau, Rav Bronstein, Rav Charlop, Rav Goldwicht, Rav Neuburger, Rav Reichman, Rav Rapp, Rav Sacks, Rav Schachter and Rav Willig, whose models motivates us to meliorate and maintain marvelous measures of morality and *mitzvah*-observance.

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FORUM

OPINION

The State of The State

Hafez al-Assad doesn't want to talk. He won't even sit at the table unless Israel will be willing to give up the whole of the Golan Heights from the get-go. He gave the finger to Clinton in Geneva and the bilateral discussions have all but frozen over. Boo Hoo, let me wipe the tears from the corners of my eyes. This guy, he's some piece of work. He's still trying to play tough guy when his health is failing, his country is ailing, and salvation is right around the corner. It's amazing that he likens himself to Sadat. Sadat was a visionary who came to Jerusalem, spoke a message of reconciliation, and stood up to the rest of the Arab world. Assad is a goon, whose heart has been hardened by G-d. He needs us, we don't need him, so if he doesn't want peace, fine, we'll drive him into the sea, or just wait for him to die and deal with some rational people.

At the same time we must get out of Lebanon and stop fighting with Hezbollah. We want to leave and they want us out. We claim that we are there because they attack us, and they claim that they attack us because we are there. That's just plain stupid. Our soldiers are sitting ducks in indefensible positions fighting a battle we need not fight. Soon, Israel will pull back its forces to our northern border, squelching Hezbollah's mandate, and taking Syria's bargaining chip away. I believe that this will effectively stop the war of attrition in the north and will be the closing chapter in this atrocious book. However, if Hezbollah, under the tutelage of Syria, take their Jihad into our northern towns, WE will have the mandate to retaliate with extreme prejudice, and I promise, it will hurt.

Meanwhile, on the Palestinian front, we must keep on dragging our feet. Look, Arafat, is not someone I would like to invite to dinner, but I'm realistic. We created the Palestinians and we lost the Intifada, now it's time to stop the hemorrhaging. Let's sew up the final status negotiations and let this messy divorce over with. A Palestinian state is inevitable now and here is no use in fighting it. Though it doesn't always appear as such, Israel will be the big winner if this deal goes through. Think of it as an amputation of a limb; sure you lose a piece of your body, but at least you can go on to live a healthy and productive life. And that's just what we need: to go on and live a healthy and productive life, with a prosperous economy, a good living standard, and some peace and quiet in our neighborhood. Maybe then we can do some introspection and heal some family wounds at home.

Ha, a good life in Israel, what a revolutionary concept!

Now I would like to turn to a real problem which will come about if all this peace stuff actually goes through. The Army. You must realize that Tzahal is the backbone of the country, it employs a large segment of the population, it drives the economy, and most of all, it gives Israel its pride and satisfaction. The Lebanese border is the last

THE PUPIL



Yishai
Fleisher

front in which the army is truly active. The generals are quaking in their red boots because they know they will be out of a job if peace will become the modus operandi of the nation. This is not a joke, the army's function is to fight, and once that function is terminated, the army apparatus will crumble. Tzahal is already tackling these problems by cutting down on the number of people they draft, and is considering shortening the three year stint. However, these are not permanent solutions. The army has to reinvent itself if it is to maintain its respected status in Israeli society.

Therefore, the Pupil has come up with a radical idea for the Israeli Defence Force:

Remember how those bombs went off in the US embassies in Nairobi and Tanzania burying all those Africans and Americans under a ton of rubble and debris. Israeli demolition teams and medical personnel flew over there in a jiffy and pulled out men and women and rescued lives. Israel sent teams to Rwanda to help contain disease and infestation after the atrocities, and recently Israel sent teams to help with the rescue operations in Mozambique. I am proud when I see our soldiers on the TV screen helping people throughout the world, doing good in far-away places.

Tzahal can use this model to reinvent itself. Don't cut the three year stint, instead make the army a two year tour of duty in Israel, and then, ship the units intact to needy locations across the globe. For one whole year, young Israeli men and women can help build dams in Africa and help plant crops in India. Filling sand bags will fill soldiers with pride and a sense of accomplishment. It will make Israel proud of its armed forces without losing the precious military readiness that our country relies on for safety. Moreover, our God will be proud that we are finally living up to our "light unto the nations" responsibility, and the rest of the world will learn from us by example.

Many countries send their young soldiers to do UN work all over the world, and even the US has the Peace Corps. But of all these countries, Israel is in the best position to use its standing army to do good things, to truly be *Tzivot Hashem*, the army of God. A project such as this could revitalize our national aspirations and world outlook, and I believe it could do wonders for the Israeli persona which is so filled with cynicism and anger.

In a nutshell - Israel must know when to play hardball and when to cut its losses. At the same time it must remember the overarching dream and keep the hope of a peaceful tomorrow alive. Thank God, we have what to look forward to. Things are looking up in the Holy Land.

A Tangled Web of Trouble

BY CHANANYA WEISSMAN

I can think of few topics that are more commonly and hotly debated than Jewish education. Indeed, the recent spate of "troubled teens" incidents has brought more attention to the various shortcomings of Jewish education. No single factor can be held accountable for the rising percentage of so-called "at-risk" youth, as the problem has infiltrated all brands of Jewry. Nevertheless, there is this quasi-rational belief that schools should be doing "something" about it.

Driven by public relations factors and a genuine concern for their students, many schools have cracked down on student privileges to protect them from perceived dangers. While the goal is certainly noble, the rules have become increasingly extreme, to the point of counter-productivity and occasional absurdity.

A couple of examples (feel free to play along at home): a school for boys in New York has threatened students with expulsion for being caught eating lunch in a nearby pizza store. After all, females eat in the very same store. Eventually a compromise was reached, and students are now allowed to order in on Wednesday nights. Local eateries in many communities have been designated off-limits for similarly benign reasons, as students are discouraged from coming into any kind of remote contact with females or kids from less respected places. Were such a thing even possible the extremity of such a measure desirable. As it is, the kids are being prohibited from an ordinary right due to administrative panic.

This one's even better: a high school for girls threatens students with expulsion for talking to boys. Granted, dating at that age is not in everyone's best interests, but expulsion? For talking? Needless to say, involvement with such organizations as NCSY is similarly punished, as is engagement (!). Appropriate measures for talking to a boy in a pizza store have yet to be devised.

I believe many schools are more troubled than the students they seek to protect. It seems that education has been replaced by force, influence by restriction — restrictions that violate a student's right to a personal life. George Orwell couldn't have written the script any better; where a student eats lunch and who a student talks to are regulated and punishable to the highest degree.

Someone suggested to me that if one

MIXED NUTS

Chananya
Weissman

doesn't like the rules of a particular institution he should find himself a more accommodating one. I suggested in return that if one believes a certain obscure law is unconstitutional or simply illogical he should simply find himself another country to live in. He will start to run out of countries very quickly. A superior alternative would be to try to change the law. Similarly, if a student, or a parent, feels that a school provides an excellent education but comes up with some crazy ideas now and then, as all schools do, the best response is to challenge the policy in question.

Attempts to neutralize students' free choice will be temporarily effective at best, but fail to provide a long-term influence and serve only to alienate students. Intruding so deeply into their private lives is not only counter-productive, but a misuse of authority and I don't believe in the abolition of all rules, but the chains can be loosened just a little. Let the poor kids get a slice of pizza.

As part of the competitive frenzy between schools, which might be indirectly linked to the troubled teens situation, students can be turned down for all kinds of unjustifiable reasons. Some schools base their opinion of current and prospective students on superficial judgments of the students' parents. For example, the aforementioned girl's school rejects applicants if the applicant's mother does not cover her hair. Now, I'm all for encouraging people to observe Halakha, but this sort of attitude is simply perverse.

For some reason these same zealots have never forbidden a wealthy parent from picking up her child in a Lexus (let alone allowing the child to drive the Lexus) because this display of materialism sets a bad example. I find this very ironic.

Everyone who's looking for a fast-acting solution to the troubled teens situation is misguided by desperation, because it is up to each individual teen to make the right decisions. All anyone can do is set a decent example, which many teachers themselves fail to do, and try to nudge others in the right direction. Imposing sweeping, intrusive regulations only compounds the problem.

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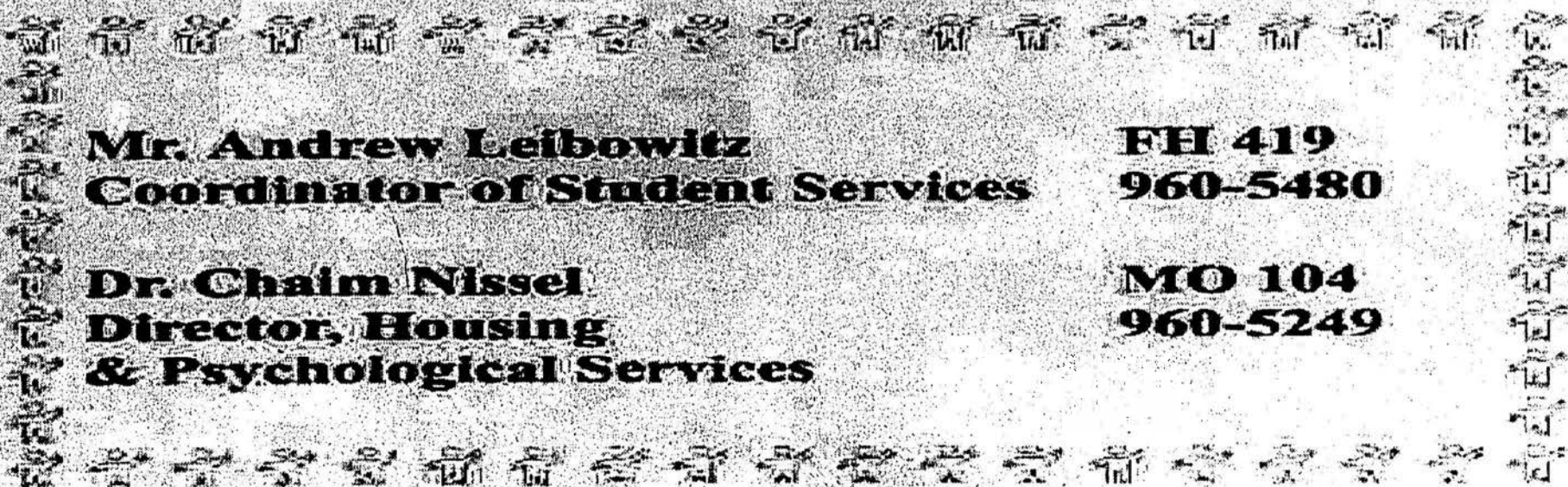
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FORUM

LETTERS

Uninformed Statements

To the Editors:

I was dismayed to see the uninformed statements that appeared in your issue of February 21, 2000 relating to the President's Circle and its historical contributions to The Commentator's costs. You seem to have been under the impression that (i) the President's Circle is obligated to continue to provide funds to particular student projects indefinitely and (ii) the University Administration has some special insight into the reasons underlying our funding decisions. Neither impression is correct.

Over the years, as your article pointed out, we have provided significant amounts of money to *The Commentator* in response to specific requests for equipment upgrades, the publication of special issues, or a specified short-term budget shortfall. By no means has this been an automatic or even an annual occurrence. Every year, we assess a wide variety of requests for funding and try to respond where we think the need is greatest or where opportunities for creativity, new projects or growth can be found. This year, your request simply stated that "this pricey operation could use additional funds to improve even more." Accordingly, as compared to some of the other projects brought to our attention, funding *The Commentator* did not engender any real sense of need, innovation or urgency. The President's Circle has the discretion to devote its funding as it wishes, and exercised that discretion.

Second, I do not know where anyone got the impression that any member of the University Administration is aware of the basis for our decisions, or that those decisions are based on the content of your newspaper. At no time is any member of the University Administration a party to our decisions. (As you know, the Dean of Students facilitates the presentation of proposals to us, but he does not participate in our deliberations.) Any views of members of the Administration that are quoted in your article are mere, uninformed, speculation.

As a former News and Executive Editor of *The Commentator*, who has been reading it for over twenty years, I can assure you that the *Commie* always has been, and, I hope, always will be, eager to embrace difficult issues and positions. Perhaps surprisingly, however, I not aware of any decision by the President's Circle on the provision of funds to *The Commentator* that was based on the content of the newspaper. Whether I agree with positions taken by the current editorial board is irrelevant to the commitment the I personally have, and I believe the President's

Circle shares, to the continued existence and independence of the official undergraduate newspaper of Yeshiva College. This does not mean, however, that the President's Circle is obligated to provide you with an annuity, and you can be sure that we will not do so. Too many other projects demand our attention. For the record, *The Commentator* has historically received more money from the President's Circle than *The Observer*, whose so-called "whopping" allocation, alluded to in your article, only begins to redress that imbalance.

Last, I am struck by the fact that no one who participated in the preparation of the article in question thought it appropriate to contact the President's Circle itself with regard to the position attributed to it. You allude to the "tight lid" kept on our decision-making process, our "failure to release an official comment" and our "immaturity." Despite the fact that we do not have any obligation to disclose our private deliberations to you, it would have been nice to note in your article that you never received any comment from us. I understand that you attempted to reach us through Rabbi Lamm's office, but we are not part of the University proper and cannot be reached through the University switchboard. I will note, with what I hope is taken as humor, that student leaders who have sought our funding in the past have had no trouble in tracking us down.

I sincerely hope that you come to understand the dynamics behind the decision we made, and I look forward to a resumption of the more cordial relationship that *The Commentator* and the President's Circle have shared in the past.

Louis Tuchman
Co-Chair, President's Circle

Editors note:

Student council was told by the Office of Student Services to "keep the outline as general and brief as possible" because it was merely to serve as an introduction, and that a meeting would be scheduled in which student council may further explain the individual clubs' need for funding. The promised meeting never took place.

However, the editors would like to thank the Circle for accepting another outline from us and for their announcement that they will reconsider donating funds to our publication. It is our hope that we can reestablish a positive relationship with the Circle so we may work together to improve our university.

Racism and Bigotry

To the Editor:

Most people don't read restaurant reviews. For the sake of Yeshiva University, I hope few read the review of Polanco, printed in the last edition of *The Commentator*. Unfortunately, I couldn't tell you what the reviewer thought of the place. In fact, I couldn't get past the first line. It read as follows: "What do you think of when you hear about Mexico? The first things that come to my mind are little men with mustaches, cheap labor and contaminated water."

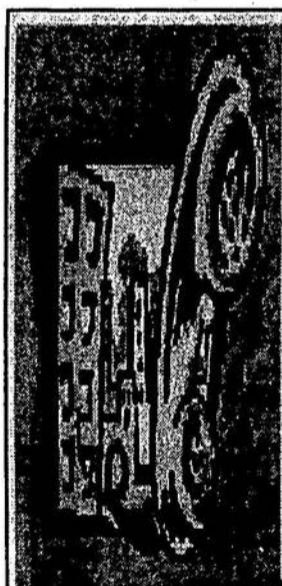
Repeating the phrase makes me ill. But there it was, staring back at me while I read a newspaper that purports to be at least minimally concerned with morality. For a paper troubled by such lofty ethical issues such as freedom of the press, it seems there is a basic decency that is overlooked, time and again. The blatantly racist word and tone of the article, seemingly benign as it is merely a restaurant review, implies that whatever embarrassment felt by the administration of Yeshiva University, at those times when its undergraduate newspaper is taken off racks and shelves, is founded in a sad reality.

If this reality mirrors a bigotry so often found in concentrated Orthodox places

(those so many of us recognize but fail to fully address), then we are all to blame. However, the article itself is not the responsibility of the general Orthodox community, rather that of a small portion of the student body at Yeshiva College. These students, appointed to inform and reflect on weekly issues and goings-on in the university, now carry with their position the shame of intolerance which should not be placed on the shoulders of the student body they are presumed to represent. I find it appalling that a thoroughly prejudiced, close-minded view such as this be held. More unfortunate, however, is that it be found printed in a newspaper, if I may use the term loosely, that is supposed to be edited, at the very least, before published.

But, you know, if I began my letter with "What do you think of when you hear about yeshiva? The first things that come to my mind are little men with long beards, big noses and money in their pockets" I'd probably get more publicity and isn't that what journalism's all about?

Rebecca Leicht
SCW '00



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FORUM

LETTERS

Not Always A Kodak Moment

To the Editors:

I have been a student at Yeshiva University for almost a full term now. The one thing I noticed most about the *Commentator* is that it is a huge advertisement for its editors. I have a hard time flipping through the pages and not finding a photo of Aaron or Alex or some other editor. There is much more to the

student body than the "all important" *Commie* staff. It would be nice to see a photo of actual campus activities. Just because you took a photo of yourself on campus doing something does not mean you publish it.

Jonathan Kraut
SSSB '03

Censorship Practices

To the Editors:

I am dismayed by the recent controversy in RIETS concerning the Beit Yitzchok. If the Beit Yitzchok is a publication of the students in SOY, then why should the Roshei Yeshiva feel that they have free reign to exert editorial control whenever it offends their sensibilities, religious, aesthetic, or otherwise?

If the current plan goes through to have the editors handpicked by the Roshei Yeshiva, then the Beit Yitzchok should no

longer be properly called "published by the Student Organization of Yeshiva," but rather "published by the Rabbeim of RIETS (with technical help by the students of SOY)." And furthermore, why should student funds be used to pay the cost of publishing a publication when it is stripped out of the hands of the Talmidim?

Jonathan Winchester
YC/MYP '97

Purim Fun

To the Editors:

Saw the issue; glad you are maintaining the traditional low standards for this once-a-year extravaganza.

Dr. Norman Adler
Dean of Yeshiva College

To the Editors:

I think this year's Purim issue is hilarious, funny and all is in good Purim fun. Anybody who does not like this either has no taste, no sense of humor of their own or just doesn't get the jokes. Anyone who complains obviously had a really bad Purim.

Simon Landsberg
YC'02

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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.

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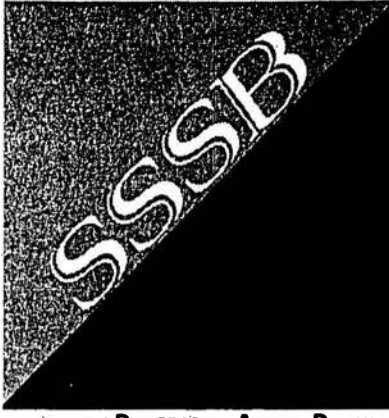
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 The Yeshiva High School – Boca Raton, FL
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 YULA – Los Angeles, CA**

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**11:00AM Ida Crown Jewish Academy vs.
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**12:30PM YULA vs.
 Akiva Hebrew Day School**
**2:00PM Shalhevet High School vs.
 Fuchs Bet Sefer Mizrachi**
**3:30PM Robert M. Beren Hebrew Academy vs.
 Block Yeshiva High School**
**5:00PM Cooper Yeshiva High School vs.
 The Yeshiva High School**
**6:30PM Hebrew Academy of Miami vs.
 Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy**
**8:00PM Ben Lipson Hillel vs.
 Columbus Torah Academy**
**9:30PM Valley Torah High School vs.
 Maimonides School**





EXCHANGE

BY PROFESSOR AARON BROWN

Over the past eighteen months, it seems that almost every article in just about every section of every newspaper features a take on either the Internet or the stock market.

Individually, the two areas of interest are portrayed in a positive light. The Internet is ushering in a new age of ideas, to which people can connect without regard to location, schedule or social class. The stock market continues to rise to that point that everyone can become rich without having to work.

When the two areas intersect, however, excitement rises to a fever pitch and a dangerous edge emerges. There are two popular "combination" stories that have surfaced. First, we find continued focus placed on the performance of Internet stocks. Investments in the stock market have historically doubled in value every six years on the average, but investments in Internet stocks seem to double every day. On the other side of the equation stand stories that feature the rise of on-line investing. Stock investors flock to the Internet for ever-wilder trading, culminating in an incestuous cycle. Investors look to the Internet, pushing up the value of Internet stocks, causing people to invest in those rising stocks, thus leading even more people to turn to the Internet to invest.

Traditional investors buy stocks for the earnings and assets that these securities represent. In light of this simple fact, turning our attention to internet stocks reveals a surprising fact. Most internet stocks have negative earnings (i.e. they lose money) and negligible tangible assets. Accordingly, we find that investors are discarding the traditional sources of value and are turning to Internet stocks for their revenues. In truth, however, the revenues do not belong to shareholders. Worse yet, most Internet companies generate their revenue from other Internet companies making the whole thing seem like a shell game.

Stripped of the excitement, the picture is not so wild. There is a group of Internet companies with little economic substance and high stock prices. But these are small companies, a minor froth on the market. The Internet companies with large total market values are substantial companies, despite the fact that many of them generate negative earnings. Amazon.com, for example, loses a lot of money, but they also sell a lot of books, collecting real revenue from real people. Instead of their losses resulting from their primary industrial goal — book sales — they result from Amazon.com's constant expansion into new realms. It is a risky bet that they can turn these new areas of businesses to profitability, but such success is not out of the question and sometimes worth the risk.

On-line investing is also less exciting than it is usually portrayed. There are a lot of wild daytraders, scams and investment nonsense on the Internet. But, the total dollar volume of these things is modest. Overall, the Internet has served as an enormous advance for serious investors with large amounts of money. It is the fundamental investor — one who is concerned with earnings, cash flow, assets, real people doing real work earning real cash — who

takes true advantage of the Internet. Four hours on the Internet today can yield the kind of information about a company that, in the days of old would have taken weeks to gather. True, there are further steps that need be taken in responsibly investigating a company for investment. Potential investors often need to meet with various streams of people — management, suppliers, customers, competition, other investors and experts. And admittedly, this step still takes weeks or months. But, the amount of time that the entire process requires has been significantly reduced in this new age. I, for example, typically follow a company for six to eight months before deciding to buy, whereas the period was eight to twelve months before the advent of the Internet.

About a year ago I started my own Internet company. This was partly the product of the professional instinct of a Finance professor; if everyone says Internet stocks are overvalued, then business sense would dictate that we create more Internet stock. But, the deepest motivation behind my decision was the hope of packaging (for a profit of course) the good and useful aspects of Internet investing that are all too often overlooked in all the hype. Hundreds of companies were spending billions of dollars to chase small amounts of money, and in some cases no identifiable amount of money at all. But, no one was serving the big money on the Internet, serious investors looking for serious help.

Before going any further, I must include an important disclaimer. My company involves a public mutual fund. It is a completely inappropriate investment for any student. It is intended for experienced investors with high-risk tolerances and long-time horizons. In addition, it is a new fund. If it succeeds, it will be around in three years and will have a track record, at which point it might be a sensible consideration as an investment. Finally, public securities can only be offered by prospectus. One should never make an investment decision on the sole basis of a newspaper article.

For almost twenty years, I have invested money for myself and for wealthy clients in small companies. I quietly purchase a small percentage of the company, and then introduce myself to management. I offer lots of advice. Sometimes management is glad to be counseled, and other times they are barely polite. But I always remain patient and the advice remains valuable (in my opinion anyway). Eventually we develop a conducive working relationship that helps the company prosper. One of my wealthy clients is Dr. Martin Stoller of the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern. Marty founded Plextel Communications for \$30,000 and sold it three years later for \$52 million. He is my partner at eRaider and brings invaluable experience in managing a small technology company. Also, his specialty is crisis management; he is often called in by the largest corporations when

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their oil tankers run aground, someone poisons their products, or several top executives are killed in an airplane crash. We complement each other nicely — I specialize in patiently giving long-term strategic advice, while Marty is the guy who goes in fast and hard to yield short-term results.

I think active oversight is the only consistent way to beat the stock market. Years of academic research shows that if you hold stocks passively, it is extremely hard to beat the market at all, and impossible to beat it by much. No passive investor has ever compiled a long-term record that beats an index fund. It is mathematically impossible for an average investor to beat the market, for any money they make must come from another investor who loses to the market. The index-beating professional investors of recent years, like Warren Buffet, Michael Price and Peter Lynch, were not passive investors. They improved the companies they bought. It is far easier to pay a fair price for a company and fix it than to find a company selling for substantially less than fair price.

The problem, of course, is that none of these investors groomed successors. Their track record was due to their particular talents, something that could not be taught. The Internet creates the opportunity for thousands of intelligent people to pool their skills. None of them has to be as talented as Warren Buffet for the group to be as successful as Warren Buffet. That is the idea behind my company, eRaider.com Inc. I have a web site (eRaider.com, of course) and a public mutual fund, the Allied Owners Action Fund. The Fund will quietly acquire 5% stakes in companies that I feel can be improved by aggressive shareholder oversight. These will be companies without much ownership share by management, insiders or institutions and some valuable asset, franchise or expertise that is not being fully exploited.

Once the Fund gets its 5%, I will announce the company at the eRaider website and invite all target company shareholders to come to my message boards and discuss the company. I will publish a full professional analysis of the company at the site, and I have hired 36 expert moderators (business school professors and experienced takeover professionals) to add content and participate in discussions.

I believe that I can get between 25% and 40% of the shareholders at my message boards, while management, insiders and institutions will hold less than 15% of the company stock. Of course, the posters will not be an organized block; they will have disagreements about what the company should do. But, if an idea clearly increases the value of the stock, it should rally quick support on the message board and become irresistible.

Some people object that the armchair amateurs who own the stock cannot know as much about the company as the managers that have been hired to run it. Of course, that's true. But the goal of the mes-

sage board will not be to run the company, but simply to ensure that management is running it for maximum economic value. You don't have to be a mechanic to drive a car, and you don't have to be an expert to tell when someone is doing a good job.

Also, every company can benefit from outside review. Not only does eRaider have 36 expert moderators, I hope to attract thousands of serious investors with business or professional experience. For every specific decision facing a company, one or more of these people are likely to have precise expertise, more than the generalists running the company.

Finally, eRaider will help management's motivation. Everyone treats things more efficiently when the owner is watching. Think about the difference between renting a car from Hertz and driving your neighbor's car with your neighbor in the passenger seat; or between efficiency in an office when the boss is away versus an environment where the boss constantly supervises his staff. eRaider's target companies have no large shareholders to oversee performance, and management has only a small personal stake in the company. That's precisely why these companies are so cheap. I hope to buy them, then make them expensive.

Business students should come to eRaider.com for a great free education. They shouldn't invest a dime, just come participate on the message boards. See what a professional analysis is like, the sort of thing serious investors use when they are considering buying a company as opposed to the sell-side blather brokerage firms put out to encourage retail customers to trade back-and-forth. Learn from expert moderators and experienced wealthy investors about how to oversee a real company. Ask questions and advance opinions on the public message boards to test your reasoning in the real world, not a textbook case.

I believe eRaider points to the future of Internet investing, and the future of small company investing as well. Large corporations are followed by hundreds of analysts and financial institutions. They have oversight at many levels. But they also have layers of inefficiency, and all that oversight makes them slow and clumsy. A disciplined, nimble small company with lean, motivated management and intelligent, committed shareholders is my idea of where the money will be made in the future. The Internet can provide small companies with expertise, oversight and motivation without the overhead that large companies carry.

That doesn't mean eRaider will account for 100% of the change. It will lead the field, but if it is successful our company will attract lots of competition. We have fifty new ideas, it is impossible that all of them are good. Some second-round company that learns from our mistakes may end up being more successful; that is often the case in business. But, I have given a lot of thought to competition and we have a few surprises of our own. Anyway, I think the idea is good enough and big enough to support several companies. So please come to the site and contribute your brains (but not your money) to an exciting new idea.



Yeshiva University Teams With On-line Job Sources

BY AVI BOSSEWITCH

To further aid the student body of Yeshiva University in their collective job hunt, the Office of Placement and Career Services has teamed up with Jobtrak.com, the largest and most popular online job listing service in the college market. Yeshiva University is now one of the many well-respected institutions to become a part of Jobtrak's database system, which is used by many of the top firms for recruiting purposes.

Currently, Yeshiva University Office of Placement and Career Services coordinates on-campus interviews for its graduating students, bringing employers to campus to conduct recruitment interviews with qualified candidates. Students can obtain assistance in identifying interest areas in their chosen career, learning about career options, obtaining general information about a variety of specific careers, identifying potential employers, learning about positions available in specific geographic areas and preparing for on-campus interviews.

Jobtrak.com is an Internet company which provides a job posting and resume database service accessible to its students and alumni 24 hours a day via the Internet. Jobtrak is used by over 400,000 employers and is accessed daily by over 35,000 students and alumni. Unlike other job listing websites, Jobtrak.com has a password-protected database that can only be accessed by students and alumni of partner schools. This security allows employers to target their recruitment efforts nation wide, assuring them a highly

qualified, extremely motivated pool of candidates. The service is provided for free to students and alumni while employers pay a nominal fee to post their positions.

"We are thrilled about partnering with Jobtrak.com," said Robert Lubin, Assistant Director of Placement and Career Services at Yeshiva University. "Utilizing our Jobtrak.com database will give our students many job opportunities, access to more career resources and will make them more marketable for the new millennium."

In addition to the job listing and resume database, other features of Yeshiva University/Jobtrak.com systems include Career Forums, where students can post questions to college counselors and employers; the Career Contact Network, which allows students to find mentors in a diverse number of career fields; and the Job Search Guide, which includes tips on everything from how to write a resume to negotiate a salary.

The students of Yeshiva University are also very enthusiastic about this new opportunity, as Jeremy Frankel, an SSSB student stated: "The OPCS has always done a great job finding students both internships and permanent jobs, however, they can only do so much. Now, with Jobtrak.com, students such as myself who are currently in the process of looking for the right job, will have many more opportunities and choices." All of Yeshiva University's students and alumni are strongly encouraged to use the site. For more information about Jobtrak, and help in accessing the site, please contact the Office of Placement and Career Services.

Israel Career Night Mixes Economic Policy With Aliyah

BY VAIR OPPENHEIM

In what was sure to be a sigh of relief to start the night off, guest speaker of the Israel Career Night, Daniel Schwartz, the Director of Trade for the Government of Israel Economic Mission said: "The Israeli economy is doing very well." With a Gross Domestic Product of \$100 billion, its economy is doing very well indeed. Such was the beginning of Yeshiva University Israel Career Fair, jointly sponsored by Yeshiva College and Stern College Israel Club, along with the Office of Placement and Career Services.

The economy, according to Schwartz, has been healthy for a variety of reasons. The nation has a flat 6% growth rate, and has curbed inflation down to a modest 10%, a long way off from the catastrophic 185% in the 1980's. The shekel is now fully convertible. As for its long term goals, the Government is interested in cutting its deficit in half from \$14 billion. Their exports have also shifted to match world trends. The high-tech arena is the source of growth now, as opposed to agriculture, a mere two decades ago. The reason for the shift, Schwartz explained, was twofold: Firstly, there has been a rather successful transition for people who worked in the military, who, with knowledge of electronics and encryption, end up working on tech startups. Secondly, the influx of immigrants with a strong trade background and experience in science and engineering has given the economy a much needed shot in the arm to advance into the next millennium. The statistic is that of every 10,000 people, 135 are scientists or engineers, a ratio twice as large as that of in the United States.

The role of the Israel's Economic Mission is to attract capital, stock exchange involvement, and United Nation procurement from countries around the world, including the United States. Strong relationships are established between North American firms and Israeli companies, and each new success makes it that much easier to bring in more foreign investment. Companies such as Johnson & Johnson, Motorola, Volkswagen, and Intel have offices in Israel, assisting the already growing industries of software, Internet, telecommunications, and biomedicine.

In terms of statistics, there have been rather dignified figures to support these successes. The peace process in Israel has calmed the fears of countries hesitant to invest in Israel due to fear of constant Arab-Israeli strife. As a result, Jordan has teamed with Israel in a \$50 million joint venture, and Japan has also recently shown its interest in injecting capital into Israel's economy. Exports, which range from one half to two-thirds in the technology field, along with the remaining percentage in industrial goods, remain an operation to be admired. New York is the fifth ranking purchaser of exports, totaling \$1.5 billion, with New Jersey following behind with \$100 million. Foreign investment in the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange makes up \$3 billion, which is close to 23% of its total makeup.

All of these details were quite relieving for students, who soon began asking more specific questions about the job market before making their way to the numerous Israel representatives. Close to one hundred people showed up to the event, which Robert Lubin, manager of the event for the Office of Placement and Career Services, describes as: "an idea that I had, and wanted approval by the Israel Club at the beginning of the year. It was a great opportunity to have a multi-faceted event, of not only bringing economics issues to students, but in also helping them find practical information on aliyah, summer programs, science research and business, and this event was able to culminate these points."

Among the representative organizations were Hebrew University, Ben-Gurion University, the Aliyah Center, Yavneh Olami, and Tehilla, all of which provided information on job, scholastic, and living opportunities in Israel. The event was hailed a success from all who attended. "It was great to see how so many YU students are really tied to Israel," noted Jason Orenstein, YC President of the Israel Club. Others reflected on the University's accommodation for aliyah-oriented students, as Shira Graber, a senior at Stern College said: "The fact that YU recognized how a significant number of students are seriously considering aliyah and brought in a number of different career options and summer programs for graduating seniors and current students was appreciated by the everyone."

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SSSB EXCHANGE

Posman's vs. The Dot-Coms

BY JOEL R. FOGEL

Tens. Hundreds. Thousands. The number of Internet booksellers has expanded at an exponential rate. While only time will tell who will survive, the advantages to the consumer are readily apparent. A veritable price war has been taking place to weed out the weak, mom-and-pop type Internet sites and leave only the online behemoths such as Amazon and Barnes and Noble. The question is no longer whether or not one will save money by purchasing books online, but how much? Where can a student go to get the cheapest prices on textbooks? How do the online prices compare to our local Posman's Bookstore? What emerges is a battle that pits the brick and mortar store against the multitudes of online book sites. Who will emerge victorious is more than a battle won. It is a matter of survival of the cheapest.

With the onset of Internet commerce, many online retailers have felt it necessary to offer significant money saving incentives to lure customers on the Web. These incentives have commonly included prices cut below cost, offers of free shipping, no taxes on purchases, free gifts, gift certificates and significant discount offerings for those who know just

the right code to enter into the online checkout form. This price slashing has resulted in some sites shutting their virtual doors before completing even one fiscal year of business. The remaining sites continue to offer these allures and are succeeding at keeping prices significantly below anything a physical store could ever hope to sell its books for.

This has resulted in a unique opportunity for the consumer, more specifically, the student. The cornerstone of universities has always been the campus bookstore. It was a place where students would gather to purchase school paraphernalia, to buy textbooks, and to peruse through the latest popular book offerings. With the evolution of dot-coms, this is no longer the case. Students have realized the exorbitant prices they are paying at the local campus bookstore. If one can save \$40 online on a single book, what is to stop him from doing so? The result is an ominous one indeed. If the local bookstore cannot sell textbooks, how will it keep its doors open?

Those who are familiar with e-commerce, will recognize the name MySimon.com. MySimon is a comparison shopper on a variety of product categories with the goal being to find the lowest price on any product online. There exists a textbook specific site with the same function as MySimon. The Web site is called Addall.com. One can enter any information about a textbook and can receive the prices on that book from a variety of book sites online. This enables the student to comparison shop using just one site, saving hours that would have been spent searching individual sites. It is here that a net-savvy student's money saving activity begins.

Let us chart the path of a single textbook required for any student taking Accounting I or II. Introduction to Financial Accounting, Seventh Edition. One student purchased this book used at Posman's, our friendly campus

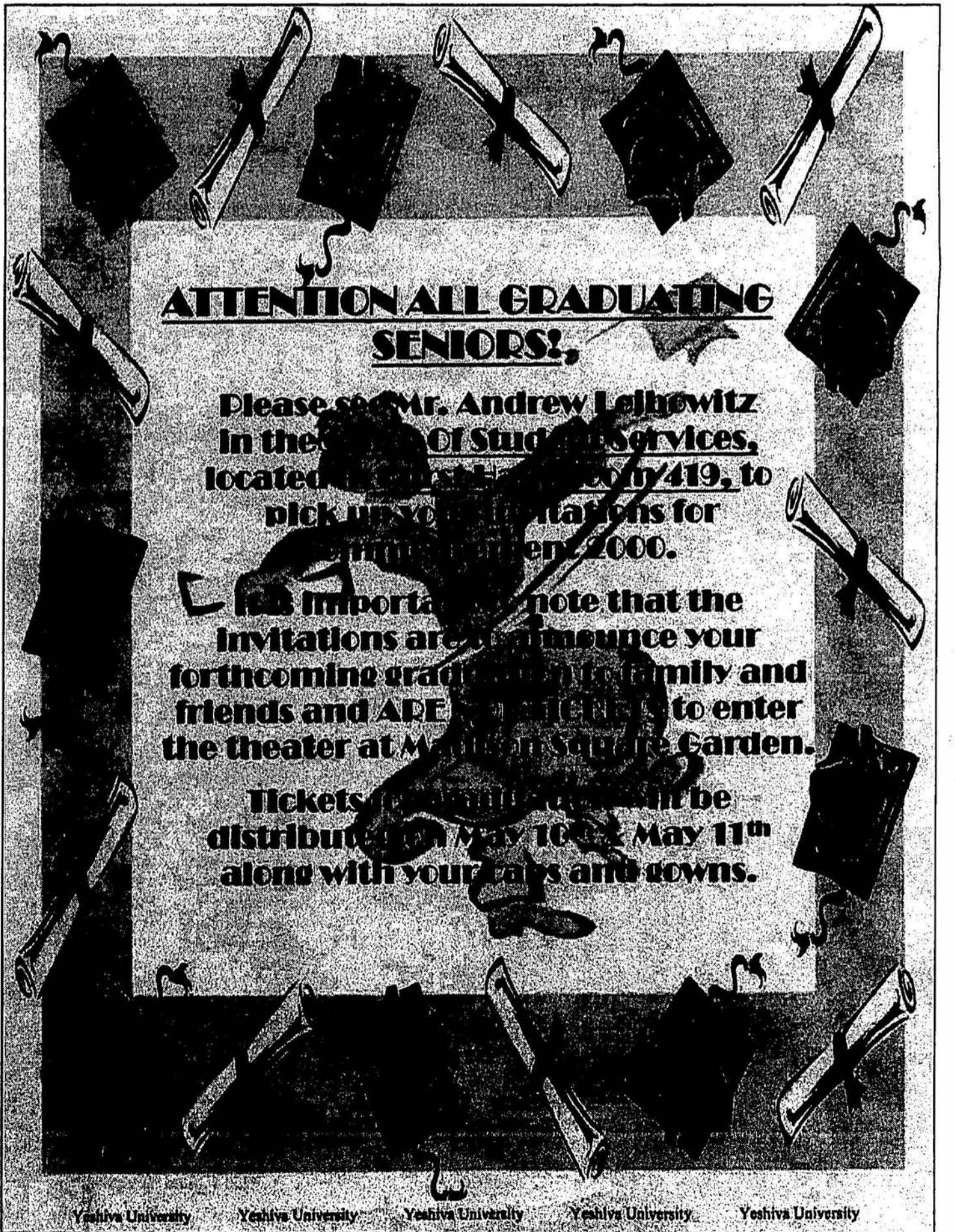
bookstore, for \$66. It is offered new at the bookstore for \$90. How much would he save online? Enter Addall.com. The site asked to enter a shipping destination, currency to quote the price in, and one of four search methods: Author, ISBN number, Title or Keyword. For this text the student entered the ISBN number (found on the inside cover and on the back of the book) and hit enter. Addall.com then searched 34 different online book sellers and churned out for him, in price order, the offered price for the text, broken down into the text price and shipping, told him if the text was in stock and how long it would take to ship. The student found the lowest price NEW was \$57.65, including ship-

ping! A savings of over \$30 off the new price and even \$8.35 less than the used price as offered by Posman's! Addall.com also offers a search for used books, but generally turns up older, outdated editions of the text.

There is an added twist thrown in by larger online booksellers. Discount codes. Varsitybooks.com is an example of a larger online bookseller that is geared toward the college student. They offer a number of promotional codes that a customer can enter to receive special discounts, including free shipping and \$20 off of a purchase of \$50 or more. These discounts seriously increase a student's savings. According to Joshua Rosman, Varsity's Campus Representative, "We can provide savings of up to 40% off the distributors suggested price because of low overhead. Because we are on the web, we

don't have the high costs of a conventional bookstore."

With the explosion of e-commerce, these discount textbook vendors will not be fading away into the night. They are a real force that all campus bookstores, Posman's included, must reckon with. While Posman's has spent the past two semesters expanding into a larger campus presence here at YU, students in universities across the country have discovered the pleasures of buying their textbooks online. Whether through Bigwords.com, Varsitybooks.com, Textbooks.com, or even Barnes and Noble.com, the dot coms have flown out of nowhere and are threatening to knock out the venerable campus bookstore. Who will emerge victorious is more than a battle won. It is a matter of survival of the cheapest.



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SSSBSC Presidential Candidates

Marc Cohen

Marc Cohen is a finance major at SSSB, with an expected graduation of May 01. He currently attends class full-time, 2 days a week and is employed by some Syrian guy selling professional digital equipment. Additionally, he is actively involved with an Internet start-up company, Digithrill.com, as a strategy consultant. Marc's ultimate professional goal is to be involved with a

venture capital at private placement.

His immediate concerns are for the improvement of the Sy Syms School of Business. While able to recognize many strong qualities of Sy Syms curriculum, Marc notices a lack of practical experienced offered by the school. He hopes to solve this problem through various workshops and seminars encouraging on-site work at major firms, class activity and through promoting even minimal work experience throughout the academic year.

Ari Kellman

I have long prioritized the value of experience. As students become better acquainted with the system, they come to recognize the importance of a thorough understanding of the inner workings of the University and the way in which improvements can be brought about most effectively. It is for this reason that I have worked hard for 3 years, first as a concerned student and now as the Vice-President of the business school to learn the ways of this University and the most effective methods of accomplishing my goals. Aside from the experience, I

believe what will make me a good President is my indisputable desire to work toward the universal goal of making Yeshiva University, and more specifically the Sy Syms School of Business, a true 'Top Tier' school. I do not need this position, and I am not looking for a title to fill my resume. Rather, I seek synthesis of our student voice to achieve those deeds that we all require for better student life. There is no reason for the divisiveness that currently permeates our campus. We can work as a cohesive unit, SSSB and YC students together to make YU a place that you would recommend to your friends and a place where you would be proud to say you are matriculated.

Dorian Levy

People ask me why I decided to run for Sy Syms' President. What they are really asking is if I am looking to pad my resume or if I actually might have another reason to run. Those students who do not know me often don't believe me when I tell them that I actually am running because I like YU and I would like to improve it. The mere fact that people are so taken aback by such a statement is one of the things that I would like to change. The idea of having school pride or school spirit seems to be a foreign one to many students here. I feel that with just a little more enthusiasm by the student body, YU can offer more than a convenient place to graduate in two years and hopefully pick up some Dougie's along the way.

School spirit is why I have been involved in the extracurricular life at YU to the degree that I have been. I've served on various committees (Orientation, Open House, school tours to name a few) for no other reason than it helped the school. I do the sports

editing for the paper because I am usually at most of the games and I felt that I could transmit a little of the spirit of the games to others. I am chairing the annual Sy Syms dinner because I feel that it is an important event and I would like to help make it even better any way that I can. I serve as the Junior Class President because I feel that I can relate to many of my classmates and if I can be of service to them, I feel obliged. I painted my face and got ejected from the YU Macs playoff game because, all right, I really don't have a good excuse for that, but I meant well.

On Thursday, the SSSB student body has a chance to pick a president that will hopefully be able to lead them as well. I feel that I am the best candidate for the job. In terms of a platform, I hope to bring academic advisers to Sy Syms, a prominent senior and freshman/sophomore counseling/guidance system, and a streamlined recruiting process. But the main thing that I want to bring to Sy Syms is a little more school spirit for a school and student population that deserves it. On Thursday, please give me that chance. Please vote for Dorian Levy for SSSB President.

Zohar Azolay



Everything I want to do is for the benefit of all the students in this university. Although I am an IBC student, my philosophy is to be available for every student need, no matter what program he is in. I am running for the position of YCSC President merely to serve the interest of my fellow students.

I think there are a few issues that are important for all students, and they were never addressed before. The university should help students feel more connected to both the yeshiva and the university. It needs to be more open to serve the students and to provide us with our needs. In the cafeteria issue - we deserve a variety of better food with cheaper prices, which can be achieved by making the meal plan optional. We need to cut the lines and the bureaucracy in the registrar and deans' office and deserve to see the teachers' evaluation forms in order to make better academic decisions. We also deserve new opportunities to hear interesting speakers. This wonderful place combines the light of Torah with college education. This is a combination that does not exist anywhere else in the world and many times the administration is not aware and does not understand our special needs in this unique place.

Our true desire is to be all part of one place. Every student deserves to have an opportunity for individual development in the program that fits him best. On the other hand we all want to feel part of one place. In order to achieve that, I want to offer a few things for all the students of Yeshiva. New classes about the history of the State of Israel, for example, are a necessity in this Jewish school with all the potential candidates for Aliya. Joint events with Jewish students from other universities such as NYU and Columbia can also help achieve the same goal of unifying the student body while helping the social life as well. We should have more events that enrich us.

I am aware that my column space is limited; still I would like to finish with what I have opened. I live in two worlds: in the United States, among my friends in Yeshiva, and in Israel, where I grew up. I have the good things of both of these worlds. I want every student to feel comfortable with what I do and with the fact that I represent him. This is what I am asking to bring to this place and I will act in the best way I can, to make sure that students will benefit from it and that we will make "mekadesh shem shamaim" in our deeds.

Adam Cohen



As a member of various extra-curricular activities, I have had the chance to meet many people. Often times, as I would talk to these new acquaintances, the conversation would shift to how we don't like a certain thing in this school. As the list was quickly growing, it finally dawned on me: to effect change I was going to have to do it myself, by becoming President of YCSC.

Many of you may find my campaign ideas appealing, and that's because it's you who asked for them. You see, as the people I spoke to complained, I mentally took note of their complaints. The suggestions that I thought were most feasible became my campaign promises. That's why I can promise you that I will replace the lousy TVs in the lounge with new HDTVs. There is no reason in the world why I can't start a new YCSC newsletter to let you know how hard I am working for you. Similarly, I can set up a YCSC web site that will be updated often to give you up-to-date news of current events, as well as help me get a feel for what the students are feeling. I can promise to work on the parking predicament in this school, because anyone with a car knows that finding parking under the current circumstances is a very arduous task. I can work hard with the administration with the goal of improving the areas of education that have suffered recently due to the lack of sufficient funding to the various departments. The list goes on, and I am willing to add to it.

I will truly be a president of the people. You can be assured that I will live up to my campaign promises for two reasons: First, when these promises come to fruition, they will make not only your lives better, but mine as well, and that can serve as motivation. Second, I will not be graduating for another two years, so even after my term expires I will still be able to enjoy the fruits of my labor. Hey, I'd like to get new HDTVs in the lounge, and if I get them I'll be able to use them not for one year, but two. As a voter, this can give you confidence that I will accomplish all of my goals.

If you have any questions or comments for me, I would really like to hear them. Remember, my entire campaign is based around listening to what you, the students, have to tell me. You can e-mail me at CohenYCSC2000@aol.com, or check out my web site at www.Cohen2000.homestead.com. That's why I can call myself the candidate who does what the students want.

Aryeh Goldberg



I don't just promise change, I bring about change. Since arriving at YU I have made a difference in almost every area of student life. I founded the Out-of-Town Residence committee to meet the previously unaddressed needs of the out-of-town students and under its auspices I have successfully arranged to have the computer labs in Belfer Hall open on Saturday nights as well as the library open on Saturday nights during midterms. I also started a website (www.enayim.org/yutaveler) that brings together students looking to share cabs to the airport. Working together with the food service committee I brought about many changes in the Caf including longer Caf store hours, wider variety, and slightly higher quality. More importantly we set to work on a major overhaul of the program which includes an audit of the food service records. All this is in an effort to bring about real change in the food service program. Ethernet in the dorms has been a big issue that I have pushed for and the University is about to announce that they will be wiring one of the dorms for Ethernet over the summer. Student entertainment and recreation is also important and that is why I have been a staunch supporter of the clubs. Additionally, I started the Annual YCSC Bowling Tournament with free T-shirts, free pizza, and free bowling. The event has become the single most popular event of the year. All my efforts have been solely for you, the student body and I want to continue doing what's best for the students.

Before you go to vote, ask yourself the following questions:

Do you want more active and better funded clubs? Do you want Ethernet in the dorms? Do you want more free bowling? Do you want an improved WYUR with better equipment and better facilities? Do you want free shuttle service to the airports? Do you want the library open on Saturday nights? Do you want longer weekend hours in the gym? Do you want more Midtown shuttles on the weekends? Do you want a candidate who is there to serve the students and not himself? Do you want real change in the Caf? Do you want a better YU?

If you answered yes to any of these questions than ask yourself one more question: Who is the one candidate who will bring all this to you?

The only answer is the candidate whose record clearly displays his ability to do this - and much more, if you allow him...ARYEH GOLDBERG.

Albert Palacci



A vote for Albert Palacci is a vote for a more exciting YU and a more fun college experience. My campaign and strategy suggest the following: WE enhance the torah values here at YU while drastically improving the YU college experience. Sure we go bowling once a year, and what could be more fun than going to the circus? Sure the average JSS and YP guy pass each other in the Caf and flash each other a courteous smile, but we all know what they're really thinking: THE FOOD SUCKS!!!! On a serious note, the school lacks unity. We do not participate in enough activities together. We don't voice debate. Instead, we avoid interaction. So what am I going to do about this?

I plan to create events and activities held on a consistent basis. Tournaments in various sporting events, and intellectual debates against other Hillel Houses at Penn, Columbia, Rutgers and the like. Kiruv Programs with other universities. Weekend retreats, white water rafting and/or skirmishing, travel program visiting out of town communities. Not to mention the trips to basketball and hockey games, Broadway shows, museums or jazz clubs (separate seating of course). Wouldn't it be nice to have a student-run Internet cafe on campus? I have the perfect spot for it. Wouldn't it be nice to receive a year's subscription for each student to a magazine of his choice sponsored by the YCSC? I have a plan where we could do this for less than an order of poppers for each student. How about poppers instead of wings? What about getting food from a restaurant other than Dougies? All these dreams can become a reality with your support. Vote ALBERT PALACCI 4 YCSC PRESIDENT.

Pinchas Shapiro

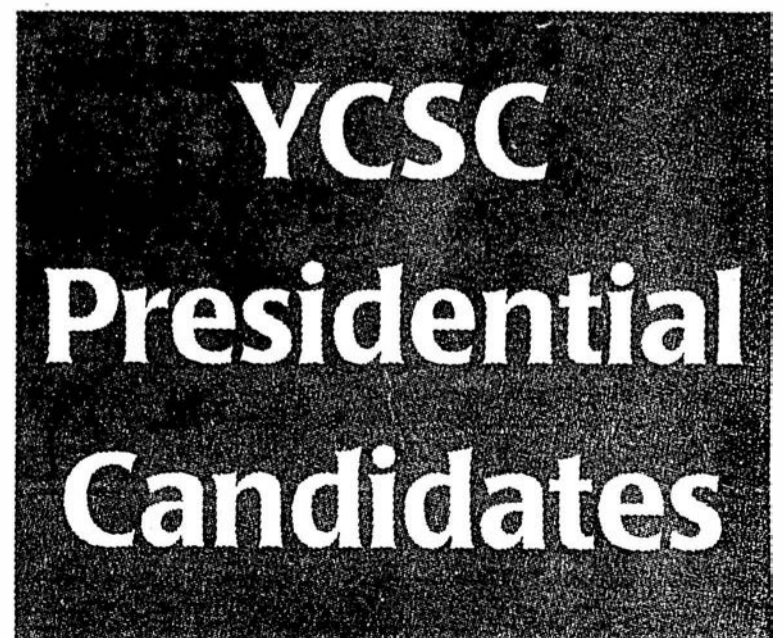


I would first like to thank my opponents for what has been a good, clean campaign. Many important issues have been brought to light this past week, and their discussion will only serve to benefit you, the students.

The election we now face is an important one. It will decide the direction this university will take in the coming year. We can not accept the status quo. "More of the same" is not an option. It is finally time for the student council to meet the students face to face, and to bring positive change to our university. Fresh, pro-active ideas must replace the mindless excuses we have all been subject to. The student council should not react to the whims of the administration. Rather, it must act on behalf of the students.

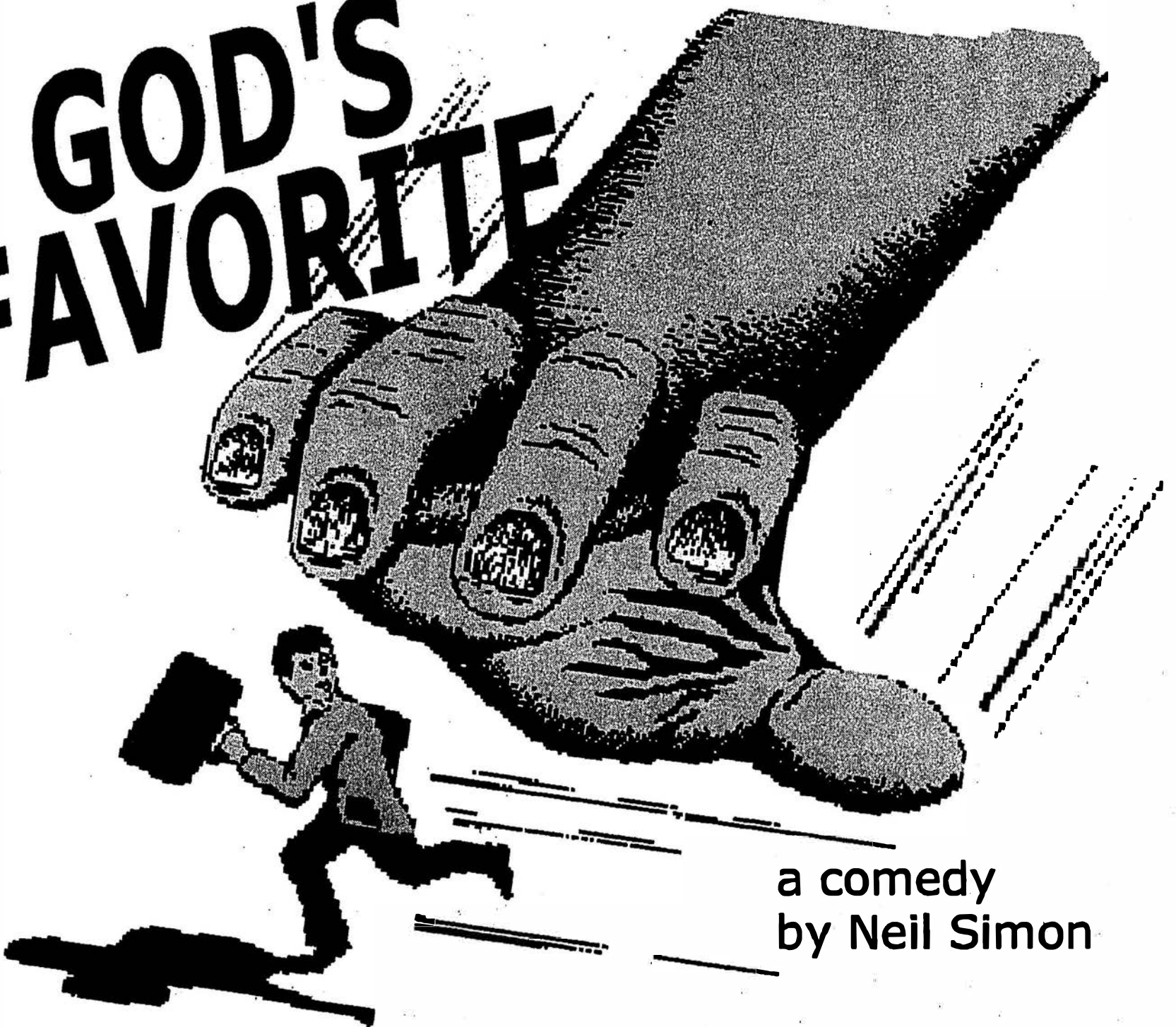
My involvement on campus speaks volumes of what dedicated students can accomplish. Before and after my year in *Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh*, I worked for the SOY seforim sale, and the annual Chanukah concert. I am a WYUR radio personality, and I am executive editor of this important publication. In addition, I have worked tirelessly as a member of the Academic Standards Committee to make the educational experience of you, the students, both tolerable and positive. My efforts expended on the Summer School Committee to expand Yeshiva's summer course curriculum will benefit all of the students. I am an active member of the dramatics society, an honors student, and the first junior to be the editor of the senior yearbook.

This election is about the future. Candidates who bring weak or negative pasts can not be expected to implement the future we all deserve. This Thursday, cast a vote for experience. Cast a vote for a better future. Cast a vote for the students. Cast a vote for Pinky.



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Interview With Ben Younger, Director of "The Boiler

A Up-and-coming talent Ben Younger, the writer/director of New Line Cinema's hit film "The Boiler Room," has become the object of much attention in Jewish circles in recent weeks. His new release, which stars Giovanni Ribisi, Vin Diesel, and teen heart-throb Ben Affleck was well received by audiences, and served as a major step in Younger's continuous trek onto the Hollywood scene. Below is an exclusive interview conducted by *The Commentator's* Senior Film Correspondent, Yair Oppenheim.

The Commentator: What led you to do write the script for the "Boiler Room"?

Ben Younger: What led me to write the script was that I interviewed at a "boiler room." I thought it was a legitimate brokerage house. It turned out that it was a real boiler room. That's sort of how I stumbled upon that world; I didn't know about it beforehand, and I didn't have friends working in the business. I didn't know what a subculture it was, that it existed as its own entity. From when I did that interview until the script was actually completed, it was close to four and a half years - It took a long time. I had already graduated and I had quit my job at the comptroller's office; I was in politics, working for Alan Hevesi, and then I just decided to try something different. I decided to become a grip, working as a film technician. But I had to make a living, so I interviewed at this job, and that's how I found this world.

Commie: What did you do to substitute for not going to film school?

BY: By gripping. I've always preferred the experienced route as opposed to the academic one. I learn better when I get my hands on something, as opposed to someone telling me "Let me teach you how to do it in theory - look at all these other people who did it, and then you can go and try it." I had no preconceived notions of how to be a filmmaker; I knew nothing. So the only actual education I had, was going to the video store and renting movies - it's very liberating because you have no structure - you say: "I want to tell a story" and you seem to feel your way through it and you make some mistakes, that perhaps some film school graduates wouldn't make, but they're minor and it's worth it because you really gain a fresh perspective.

Commie: Did you have any sort of a mentor along the way?

BY: I didn't have any mentors that were really "hands on," because I didn't know anyone, so there was no one who could say "You're doing this wrong, you're doing this right." The one writer whom I got to know after I had written a script, who had helped me through some revisions, was a guy named Rick Dahl, John Dahl's brother. He wrote Red Rock West, a great script, the one with Nick Cage and Dennis Hopper. Rick helped me with the revisions, but I had no mentors when I was going through the process, because I came from the yeshiva world - there were no filmmakers - there was no one I could look up to, and Hollywood was as inaccessible as could be; I knew no one there, it seemed like some mysterious place - that I didn't know even existed.

Commie: How did you get from that point to acquiring an agent?

BY: Well, by working as a grip you meet a lot of producers, or it's up to you to do that. Rather than just do your job, you can also "schmooze" with them during lunch. I definitely did the latter. I talked to every producer on every job. I wasn't shameless about it; I had tact when I did it, but I definitely made a connection, an impression, got a phone number and said: "I'm going to be sending you a script." What was funny, was that in the end, with all the connections that I had made, it turns out that this guy I met at a restaurant I was waiting at, Steve Kerper, a writer, was the one who ended up helping me out. He just asked me if there was anything I could show his agent - and the X was this short film I had made during my years as a grip. I sent it to him, and he showed it to his agent, who is now my agent.

Commie: Is there a reason why you shopped your script around to the major studios? Did you want to shop it around independents in order to obtain more control over the film?

BY: It's not that simple - If you want more control, you go to the independents, and great, the odds are that ten people are going to see your movie, because they aren't going to have the power of distribution that a studio is going to have. I found some sort of a middle ground. New Line Cinema is a studio, no question, but they give the filmmaker a lot of creative control. So it depends where you are making your movie - which studio. The studio at New Line happens to be one of the best. If I had done this at Good Machine, By Any Other Name, or The Shooting Gallery, any one of those, yeah, they have

great producers. I know Ted Hope, and I'm friends with those guys. But you know what? They wouldn't have had the movie get released on 1300 screens; they wouldn't have spent the money that New Line did on advertising, so it's a real give and take.

Commie: Was there anything in particular that caught the eyes of the studios? Was it the Wall Street angle that it had? Was it the fact that certain actors were committed to make the movie before it got into production?

BY: We did have some actors attached once it got to New Line, so that definitely helped. Apparently they liked the script; they thought it was interesting. They get excited when you show them a new world, and we did that here. It's a combination of the two and having actors attached is a huge help.

Commie: Did you have difficulty in getting yourself in the role of a director. Did you have to convince anyone of your skill?

BY: If you've read the press on the movie, there was one offer for \$800,000 for me to sell the movie and walk away, and thank G-d I didn't do that, because I'd be shopping myself around as just a writer, which would kill me, as I'd have to start all over again. It was hard, but if the property is good and people are attached, it's all about leverage. If they want the property badly enough, the script, and you have some actors attached, they have less to say. If you're truly willing to walk away, that gives you some power. I was willing to walk away; I knew I was going to direct this, so I just said basically to take it or leave it, that either I'm directing or I'm taking this somewhere else. That's how it went down. And the truth is that I wasn't afraid to make this independently. If we would have had to, we would have made it for \$2 million. Thankfully it didn't work out that way.

Commie: Though you started out working as a grip, were you comfortable working behind the camera and with a crew?

BY: No, being a grip is what gives you experience behind the camera. The only thing difficult is dealing with the actors, which is what gripping doesn't prepare you with. But in terms of composition, the technical side of filmmaking, you see everything as a grip. You learn a lot if you're keeping your eyes open. But in terms of dealing with the actors, that's something you're going to have to learn, because you're dealing with different people, different personalities. It's about communicating and getting along with people. Technically, in terms of gripping, you just do your job and you're fine.

Commie: Did you find it difficult dealing with people, especially actors who have had more professional experience? How was it like working with Giovanni Ribisi, Vin Diesel, and Ben Affleck?

BY: They were good to me. They could have given me a hard time, with me being a rookie, but they didn't. Then again, I inserted myself in a position of power, I didn't pretend, so if I didn't know something, I made it clear that I didn't know, but if I did, I made that clear as well. It also helps if you have a vision. I knew exactly what I wanted, and writing a script is a big part of that. If you're the writer and the director, you really have a complete vision, or you should, because you wrote it, you started it, you created it from nothing. So you know exactly what you want - you have a vision because when you wrote it, you had an idea in your head of what it looks like. When a separate director comes on, he may have a totally different vision of what the script should be like, visually, than the writer does. When the actors see that you have that strong vision,

they respond to it, and there's no way do deny that, even if you're a rookie. They say: "He knows what he wants, and we're going to give it to him."

Commie: I noticed something interesting about the soundtrack for the film. There are certain moments when the rap and hip hop songs act as the "sound" and the score to the film. Was it your idea, or something you worked on with the composer?

BY: That was me. That's a good point. The music holds up for me very well. I listen to hip hop a lot myself, so it came pretty naturally. And then the fact that these guys listen to that music in reality, perhaps more mainstream type rap, but I wasn't going to let the viewer sort of suffer through that, so I figured I'd keep the genre but give the viewer something interesting to listen to. So yes, it was very much my idea.

Commie: In terms of the Jewish content on the film, did you feel it was essential to the story, or did you feel that it was just a way to "let loose" some jokes and references for those who would appreciate them?

BY: I mean, nobody laughs at "F-n Moshe," outside of New York, which is true. I put it in because it was true to the story. I wasn't trying to make a comment. There's no social commentary about the Jewish community, about anything. I'm not saying I won't do that; I think I will at some point, but in this movie, I was more of a documentarian. It was more like: here's what I saw, this is what goes on. It was more about staying authentic to the characters. They're not supposed to be good Jews. I guess it's important for me to say that. I'm not trying to portray these Jews as being all Jews, either. Some of their ethics were questionable. Some of their language as well. It's certainly not what being a Jew is about.

Commie: Thus far, it difficult being Jewish in the industry?

BY: Yeah. It's rough trying to keep kosher. Well, not trying - it's rough keeping kosher, which I do, and it's rough sometimes, seeing people who are Jewish, yet have no connection to their heritage. People can question my levels of observance, but in terms of how I identify myself, being a Jew is so much of my identity, it's so much of who I am, and I walk around with that every day. It's very important to me. You see a lot of people who don't appreciate their heritage. They're just trying to assimilate.

Commie: Do studios have expectations of you because they know you're Jewish?

BY: No. A friend of mine once asked me: "Oh you're Jewish, so that must help a lot out there." But, no, it doesn't help at all. They have no expectations; they don't care. Yeah, there are a lot of Jews out there, but they're not interested. You know how two Orthodox Jews can make a connection so quickly just by saying: "Oh, what shul do you daven at?"; "What Yeshiva did you go to?"; There's none of that. You think there's going to be something like that, you hope for something like that, but here's nothing, there's none of that. Being Jewish doesn't help at all. It's not even a card you consider playing.

Commie: Are there any goals that you aspire to reach? Any projects you'd like to do, or people you'd like to work with?

BY: Yeah, I have tons of projects for tons of people. I've got my next movie, which I'm already working on. I've sold a pilot to ABC, so I've got to write the pilot for that. I've sold a pitch so I'm writing a television show now. And for my next movie, I'm twenty pages into it, so I've got to bang that out, so yeah, I've got a lot of stuff coming up.

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ARTS & CULTURE

FILM REVIEW



The Boiler Room

Starring: Giovanni Ribisi, Vin Diesel and Ben Affleck

BY VAIR OPPENHEIM

With the flurry of hype hovering over the rising Dow Jones average, along with the onslaught of on-line trading, the world of money is looking better than ever in the jaded eyes of greedy youth. And what better to introduce them to the evils of money than a contemporary film to take hold as the new "Wall Street"? Such begins this new 90's morality tale, as Giovanni Ribisi takes the reins from Charlie Sheen, in the role of a man who gets caught in a web of intrigue that gets easier to stick in, and dangerous to escape from.

Throughout his young life, Seth Davis (Giovanni Ribisi) has tried to make it his way, even if it didn't mean earning an honest buck. So when dropping out of college and starting an illegal casino operating out of his basement doesn't jive too well with his father, who also happens to be the local judge (played by Ron Rifkin), Seth, to placate his father, decides to clean up his life by getting a respectable job. Little does he know how exponentially complicated his life has now become. Money is clearly an object, as his supervisor Jim Young (played remarkably well by Ben Affleck) says: "After your third year in the firm, you will be a f—ing millionaire." Not to mention that the pressure is high to "always be closing" deals with potential clients. After finding a niche and taking big steps by closing large accounts, it suddenly seems to Seth that the stock he is pushing may be worthless, and that some of the companies behind them don't exist. And if the pieces of evidence weren't compelling enough to make

him quit, Seth's father finds out, and soon the matter takes on legal and financial grounds that even honest people can't escape from.

The film puts the "boiler room" operation in a realistic light, pairing its visceral reality with its harsh consequences, leaving its protagonist once again trying to judge what's wrong with a little more money, a little more lying, and a little more insensitivity. The ethical/moral dilemmas abound as Seth tries to make sense of it all, never understanding the ramifications as he should. There are memorable scenes involving the consequences which result from an average family man's purchase of worthless stock, something which hits home more than the cold, unsympathetic dealings made by Michael Douglas in Wall Street.

The acting in the film is due praise mostly because of the perfect casting for the many roles involved. By far, the most entertaining character in the film is Ben Affleck's Jim Young, who, in one of his best roles to date, perfectly encompasses the "cussing, nouveau-riche Long Island white trash" persona, that is a Michael Douglas (of the film Wall Street) wannabe. Vin Diesel's role as Seth's mentor/friend Chris is electric as he nearly steals the show every scene he's in. Notable is Giovanni's Ribisi's performance as Seth, which, though may seem unconvincing, of how such a mild-mannered boy could possibly transform into a powerhouse over the phone, seems perfectly in sync with how he truly must become someone else when making a call.

Written and directed in style by newcomer Ben Younger, Boiler Room offers a welcome return to a genre absent for so long from the cinema, and is a welcome treat after a nice cold call.



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An Interview with the Editors-in-Chief of *The Commentator*

AUTHOR'S NOTE—The following is a special external contribution to *The Commentator*. The concept, content, editing, and question selection are the sole work of the author, who is not, nor has he ever been, a staff member of *The Commentator*. The only part played by the newspaper itself aside from the actual publishing was the agreement to the interviews, which took place separately, to ensure accuracy of responses.

BY ERIC GUTMAN

EG: Do you feel a newspaper should be objective?

AK: Define objectivity.

EG: Without personal opinion.

AK: I don't think it's possible for a paper to be one hundred percent objective. Personal opinions are always insinuated into the articles, whether by the editors or by the writers themselves. I think you shouldn't use the word 'objective,' but 'responsible.'

AT: In general, I think a newspaper should be objective, however, sometimes when the paper has an agenda, it is important to be able to get its message across.

EG: Do you think the lack of objectivity is good, or just incidental?

AK: There is no such thing as objectivity. The word isn't real, it doesn't exist anywhere.

EG: It's not the ideal goal of a newspaper?

AK: You try to be as close to the communal standards of 'objective' as possible.

EG: That's the next question. Do you make any attempt whatsoever to keep your newspaper objective (as a whole), or is it merely a forum for you and the rest of the governing board to express their opinions?

AT: No, we go in with a fairly objective approach. However, we do take a subjective stance on many occasions.

AK: Absolutely not. One of the problems here is that there are a lot of details in each story that we know about that the general student body does not. There are so many different sides to each story, so many behind-the-scenes things we see that people don't. So when we angle a story a certain way, people think we're inserting our own political views, but we're really drawing a lot from what we can't put into print.

EG: How much do you think a writer's slant affects an article?

AT: A writer's slant affects an article one hundred percent.

AK: The job of a journalist is to look at and sum up a story, see what happened and synopsise, so if the writer knows what he's doing, then his angle is going to be the 'correct' angle. It usually affects a story greatly, because we're looking at the situation through his eyes, not our own.

EG: When you are deciding which articles to put in the paper, do you specifically look for controversy, just to make *The Commentator* more "juicy"?

AK: No, not at all. We don't look for controversy, it comes to us. As the situation is, it tends to come a lot.

EG: With an interview of Benjamin Netanyahu under its belt, and a couple more [interviews of other major figures] hanging in the balance, it is probably safe to say that in the major-story department, this year's *Commentator* is quite strong. So why, when the paper reaches such heights of journalism in one area, does it stoop so low in another, namely "digging up dirt" on the administration? Doesn't this ruin *The Commentator's* otherwise good name?

AK: I think it's because of our reporting on those issues that we're second to none this year. The administration has been previously trampling on student rights, and this year we're taking a stand, and saying they're not going to get away with it. It's the first time in recent memory the administration has ever had to answer to *The Commentator*.

EG: During dorm talks, Rabbi Lamm made the strong point that *The Commentator* does not reflect the ideas of the whole student body, but rather just those of the few students in charge of the newspaper, none of whom were elected by the student body. Why do you feel that you represent a student body that did not elect you?

AK: Any newspaper has this problem. How do the writers of the *New York Times* represent the American population? I, like the rest of the *Commentator* staff, am very in touch with the student body.

EG: You still speak for a lot of people who did not elect you.

AK: And so does every newspaper on the face of the earth, technically. It could be a problem if the editors of a newspaper don't factually report on issues, but I think we do.

AT: I was appointed, in the usual fashion, by the staff of *The Commentator* that was here before me, and had to go through the approval of student council, which is the elected body of the students. Since I am the representative of student council to run the paper, that means I represent the student body.

EG: So you feel that gives you the right to speak for all of us?

AT: I do feel that it is my responsibility to speak for the students, but we also speak for ourselves, we speak for the paper as an entity.

EG: Similarly, why does the paper constantly claim to be "the most powerful student voice on campus?" Perhaps it's just a strong medium that a few students got a hold of and are there by voicing their negative opinions through, much like a child playing at the controls of a broadcasting studio while the broadcaster isn't looking?

AK: There's really no better venue through which the students may voice their complaints than the *Commentator*. A student can't walk into Dr. Lowengrub's office or Sheldon Socol's office and voice his complaints, but our newspaper finds its way into their offices, and voices the students' complaints for him.

AT: We are the broadcasters, we aren't children, this is our forum, and student council continues to fund our paper in spite of what we print. They're in support of us all the way, and as long as we have to go through their approval, we really don't absolutely control things.

EG: Rabbi Lamm, at the same now-famous dorm talks session, said that his main objection to *The Commentator* is not what is written, but how it is written, that is, without *derech erez*. Response?

AT: Rabbi Lamm, unfortunately, was getting a little sensitive about very isolated cases, and I believe that on the whole, we try to do everything with a sense of *derech erez* and with respect.

EG: Being the erudite scholar that he is, don't you think that he would be an expert on *derech erez*, and would therefore know what is not it?

AT: I feel that many times, Rabbi Lamm is a little too sensitive on issues. When you are a figure of such high stature, sometimes

yeshiva?

AT: I do because I feel the yeshiva community needs to react to pop culture, and needs to cope with it, and figure out how our lives differ from it. I think it's important that the student body is able to recognize what goes on in pop culture, and make the differentiation between what goes on in our lives, and the lives of many others.

EG: Wouldn't you classify going to such an event as participating in pop culture?

AT: We got to look at it as outsiders, we went as representatives of *The Commentator* and Yeshiva University, and we got a first hand look at what goes on in modern pop culture.

EG: Many complain that *The Commentator* is far too left-wing, religiously speaking. Has any attempt been made to make it more central? Since you claim to represent the student body as a whole, shouldn't the paper be more central religiously to represent more of its constituents?

AT: Unfortunately, a paper can only be as central as its staff. We constantly try to recruit members from all corners of the yeshiva community, and we would love to be able to bring in more members from the right-wing section to balance out the paper. I'm sure you'll see within a year or two the paper will move to the right, as its staff does as well.

AK: I don't think we're left-wing at all. I think we are centrist.

EG: Doesn't it bother you that *The Commentator* is hated so much by the administration and many students?

AK: I think that if we're hated by the administration this year, we're doing our jobs. As far as the students are concerned, they love us.

EG: What has the newspaper, with you at the head, accomplished this year? What has it done for the student body of which it is so proud of proclaiming itself the strongest advocate?

AT: We've shown that we're there to defend the students when they have a problem with the University. We've gone to bat for student rights, especially freedom of speech.

EG: Is that doing more for the student body, or more for *The Commentator*?

AT: Both. With the student soap boxes, we really provide a forum for students to stand up and speak their opinions, which happens to be a rarity on this campus.

EG: You have completely alienated the administration. Wouldn't such alienation produce only a strong negative backlash from the administration, which would hurt student life?

AK: I don't think we've alienated the administration. What we did this year has helped to raise the spirit of the student body. The students can now walk around knowing that their voices can truly make a difference.

AT: While the administration has gotten defensive, nothing that we've done has negatively affected student life. I think the administration has reacted positively to our issues.

EG: How does exposing the administration help the student body?

AT: I don't think we've ever truly exposed the administration. We certainly never exposed any of the private practices of any of the administrators. We wrote mainly about public issues, the disappearing *Commentators*, *New York Times* boxes, etc. We're not exposing anything. These are things students have raised complaints about, and we're just putting them into print.

EG: Don't you feel that it is at all hypocritical that while *The Commentator* is so fond of exposing corruption within the administration, both its editors-in-chief are juniors, while the YCSC constitution clearly states that "The editor-in-chief of *The Commentator* must be a senior?"

AT: Both myself and Aaron have spent more than a number of semesters on campus, and our experience is equal to that of a senior. I feel that Aaron and myself are far and away the most qualified people for the job, despite our junior status.

EG: With its articles, as well as its correspondence with the *New York Times*, this year *The Commentator* has caused the University much embarrassment, cost it a great deal of money, and was indirectly responsible for the forcing of at least one administrator to resign. Is this your job? Does this actually make you feel proud?

AK: I don't believe that our job is to force administrators out of the institution, nor to embarrass the University. I believe our job is to defend the rights of the student body, and I think that we've done that pretty well this year. Any defense of student rights, any stand that the newspaper takes against the administration is inevitably going to cause a certain backlash.

EG: Final question—what would you say to somebody who says the *Commentator's* trashy?

AT: I would tell them to open it up and read it. There are many worthwhile issues discussed within its pages, and there will never be a newspaper with which nobody takes offense to any of its articles. Over all, we provide a valuable forum for the student body.

AK: I wouldn't respond.

"Because you judged others, you shall be judged..."
—*Pirkei Avos* 2:7 (Interpretation)



Commie Editors Alex Traiman and Aaron Klein

you have to grow a little thicker skin. I think his over-sensitivity affects what his determination of *derech erez*.

EG: Last year, the then-editor-in-chief of *The Observer*, Susan Jacobs, wrote in her column that by being the official newspaper of Yeshiva College, being run by frum Jews and being mainly for frum Jews—the *Commentator*, like the *Observer*, should be held to higher standards of journalistic morality, which she clearly maintained it does not adhere to. Do you believe these standards exist at all, or is *The Commentator* simply unbound by any such principles?

AT: I believe we're certainly bound by such principles, and I think that we do our best to uphold those principles. You have to remember that *The Commentator* shifts from year to year under each staff, and unfortunately Susan Jacobs was unhappy with the way *The Commentator* was being run last year.

EG: Do you feel, in your layman's opinion, that *The Commentator* is bound by halacha?

AK: It's bound by halacha. We have one rosh yeshiva that we usually consult with on most of our controversial stories.

EG: Very interesting. So why does nobody else see all this "morality" circling around the paper?

AK: Administrative propaganda.

EG: So the student body is a bunch of sheep that is in a trance set by the administration? We have no ulterior motive to think the *Commentator's* trashy, yet most of us do.

AK: Don't go into writing, Mr. Gutman, you're not good at metaphors. I think that once something is given a public label, it's much easier for the public to then make everything fit that label. It's much the same way anti-Semitism works.

EG: Last year, a great many people were quite insulted by the infamous "Commie Sutra," *The Commentator's* Purim issue. How far, in your opinion, does the "Purim Hete" go in allowing insults and perhaps even *loshon hora* into print?

AK: Purim is our one holiday to really have fun, to actually write the things we've been holding back. We recognize the fact that the Purim issue doesn't stay within the Yeshiva University community, it goes to Mir [Yeshiva], Israel, the Philadelphia Yeshiva, so we try to keep the edition within a certain respectable boundary.

EG: In the first issue of the fall 1999 semester, there was a large article reviewing Woodstock '99. Do you honestly believe that even the reference to such an event, a reminiscence and direct successor of a gathering 30 years ago whose motto was, "Sex, drugs, rock and roll" belongs in the student newspaper of a

AN INSIDE LOOK AT GETGRADES.COM

BY JOEL R. FOGEL

By now we have all gone through the nail-biting experience of retrieving our grades online from GetGrades.com. This service is essentially YU's first student oriented initiative on the web. By posting our grades online, the school is attempting to reach out to the student body, relate to our newfound communications medium, and make our lives that much easier. This reporter recently sat down with John Fisher, Director of Enrollment Management, and Andrea Burdick, Interim University Registrar, to discuss the many aspects of GetGrades.com.

Let's start from the beginning of the grading process. How do grades get from a teacher's book to the Web? It turns out to be a three-step process. Two weeks before finals begin, the Registrar draws up scantron rosters for every class at Yeshiva. This semester there were some 313 Yeshiva College and 69 Sy Syms courses for a total of 382 courses. This tally does not include directed or independent study classes, nor does it take into account transfer credit courses for Jewish Studies credit. All faculty members receive their Scantron forms (along with explicit instruction on how to fill in the dots) and are supposed to have them submitted to Irene Lopez at the Registrars office within 72 hours of the end of finals. These forms are then scanned into a temporary database and entered into the administrative, or Banner, database. The grades are subsequently rolled over into academic history (transcripts, etc.). Finally, all new grades entered into the Banner database are sent over to Voice FX (GetGrades.com) for posting.

According to Ms. Burdick, once the grades have been handed into the Registrar's office, the entire process from initial scanning to reception of grades by Voice FX takes 2 hours for a batch of 70 Scantron Rosters. That means that had YU been a utopian society all of the

grades (based on 382 courses) could be scanned and sent in just 13.6 hours. Unfortunately, YU is far from a perfect world. The primary goal of this service is to provide every student with their grades in a timely fashion. How then do many of us, weeks into the Spring semester, still await the posting of the majority of our Fall grades?

Why do problems continue to exist in what seems to be a very simple procedure? Here are some statistics that lend themselves to a possible explanation. Within 72 hours of the end of Fall 99's final exams (the time when all grades were due), the Registrar claims to have received 58% of SSSB rosters and only 43% of YC rosters. By the following week, 39% of YC rosters had yet to be handed in, while SSSB still had a less frightening, but still surprising 12% still outstanding. By the beginning of the Spring semester, all SSSB grades had been handed in and posted while the Registrar was still awaiting 27% of YC courses. From these numbers it seems clear that the major blame for delays in receiving grades lies not with the Registrar, but in the hands of teachers.

GetGrades.com offers services other than grades, including transcripts and financial aid information. When asked why Yeshiva is not utilizing these options, Ms. Burdick responded, "we only contracted with them for the grades portion of the service. It is my understanding that to put the other services into place would be much more complex, and the effort would be more worthwhile when we have the Web Front End in place ourselves."

We cannot expect perfection. Even with a perfect system there will be glitches and problems. As Mr. Fisher, who previously headed up Internet grade posting efforts at Columbia Teachers College, indicated, there are always late teachers and inevitable delays in grade reporting. It is bound to happen no matter where you are. Perhaps this semester was worse than most, but it leaves us with only room to improve in the future.

NEW IBC/JSS/BMP NIGHT LEARNING PROGRAM SHORT LIVED

BY ALEX ALTBURG

On February 7th, a new night seder program was initiated at Yeshiva University's uptown campus. The program was established under the auspices of Rabbi Dani Rapp and the IBC/JSS/BMP Jewish Studies Office. IBC Junior Zev Stub had originated the idea for the program; after detailing a plan that was designed to facilitate a stronger night seder program for BMP, IBC, and JSS Yeshiva students, he presented his proposal to an enthusiastic Jewish Studies Office.

The learning program was scheduled to take place regularly in the Morgenstern Beis Medrash, on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nights from 8:30pm to 10:00pm. The program was to primarily consist of open seder learning for participating students. Weekly shiurim were scheduled to be given on Monday nights by Rebbeim who teach in the BMP, IBC, and JSS morning Jewish Studies programs. In addition, Stub envisioned guest shiurim on various topics to be arranged at upcoming times as well.

Perhaps most revealing was the motivation behind the program. While a visitor to the Main Beis Medrash on weeknights following the conclusion of general studies classes typically encounters a fully packed center of learning, the proportion of the participating students who are enrolled in the MYP Jewish Studies program is dominating. The modest number of students from BMP, IBC, and JSS learning at night in the Main Beis Medrash is largely due to the somewhat intimidating atmosphere that the Beis Medrash carries to those students who do not regularly learn there. BMP's students use the Morgenstern Beis Medrash to learn during morning seder, and many IBC and JSS students do not even have the opportunity to learn in a seder type setting at all during their program hours.

Accordingly, the new program was aimed at affording these students the opportunity to learn night seder in a warm and relaxed setting, and to develop in them a habit and a love for learning Torah on their own time.

"We wanted to try to help all students feel comfortable learning, whether they are wearing jeans, t-shirts, or sweatpants," said founder Zev Stub. BMP President Scott Nadel, a strong supporter of the establishment of the program agreed that "this is a way that all the students in BMP, JSS, and IBC can interact together in a more relaxed atmosphere."

The one concern that program had to field was generating interest and enrollment. Program supervisors adopted the hope that IBC President Eric Schubert characterized as, "If you get the word out that it's there, then it will be successful." The optimistic attitude, however, quickly dwindled following the February 7th kickoff of the program. An average of just ten people filled the Morg Beis Medrash during scheduled program times, and Stub and companion supervisors were faced with an extreme dilemma. Additionally, the ability to lock up guest speakers for future nights seemed to increase in difficulty after the initial surge. The program was officially disbanded less than two weeks later.

Everyone Involved has expressed tremendous disappointment in the failure of the program. They have not succeeded in pinpointing an exact reason for the lack of success. They point to either a lack of interest on the part of the targeted students or ineffective marketing of a program that required sufficient participation from its initiation in order for it to take off on a massive scale. The failure of this program to take off does raise significant concerns about what should be done to make programs of the same type succeed here in the future.

"Israel News" Hopes to Grow

BY ZEV STUB

Some of you have probably seen copies of a publication called "Israel News" around the library, or you may have picked up a copy in the library of your dorm building. Many of you, however, have not. During the fledgling newspaper's short life-span, the newspaper has gained what is best termed a cult following: a minority of students have become enamored with the small publication, while most are barely aware that such a thing exists at our university. This is a shame, because Israel News may be the most exciting new publication to hit our campus in a long time.

Israel News was created by members of YU's Israel Club less than one year ago. It was a response, in part, to the growing reality that students in Yeshiva University are not as concerned about the state of Israel as they should be. The student body was also uninformed about major events and issues that lie at the heart of Israeli society. The sentiment was that an institution that carries a Zionist connection by its very definition should provide a public forum in which such issues could be discussed. Given our close emotional connection to our distant homeland, it is important that students are allowed to give voice to their feelings about

Israel's dealings in the political, religious, social, economic, and security arenas. The passion that some (but not enough) students feel regarding the issues surrounding our Promised Land needed an outlet for release. It is hoped that the publication of "Israel News" will encourage students to approach their political views more actively, and become empowered through the strength of the written word. At the very least, students should be more aware of the details that constantly shape the future of Israel, Israelis, and Jews around the globe.

In its first year alone, "Israel News" has grown tremendously. The first few issues relied heavily on articles taken from various Israeli news sources. Today, however, "Israel News" is written almost entirely by students and faculty, although an occasional guest correspondent graces the pages of the publication. The format has been revised and updated, and new features are continually being added. Planned additions include a point-counterpoint debate column, a poll of student opinions on timely issues, and a FAQ section which would explain all those things that you know you should know about Israel but were afraid to ask. "Israel News" is published monthly. To get involved, or to request back issues online, email: yuisraelclub@juno.com.

Arts Festival continued from page 1

Rosenblatt, Gabriel Sacks, Saul Strossberg and Aaron Keigher performed several Klezmer pieces.

Yakov Fleischmann, one of the music coordinators, remarked of the concert, "The event was a huge success, and really provided a great momentum with which to start the festival."

The second event was located in Stern's, plush Ivry Student Center, for a poetry reading. Students were treated to sushi as they listened to their peers express themselves through spoken word. Yishai Fleisher, a YC senior, and former literary coordinator had only positive things to say about the reading, prefacing his own reading by exalting the works of the other readers. The atmosphere was intimate and comfortable, allowing first-time readers and accomplished poets a worthy venue in which to express themselves.

The festivities continued on Tuesday, with the first of two drama events. The first, held in Weissberg Commons, presented two student films, several monologues including the "Tuna Fish Monologue" (an excerpt from Christopher Durang's *Laughing Wild*) performed by Hadar Weiss and Shifra Chana Rothstein, and climaxed with a staged reading of S. Kim Glassman's emotional comedy, "Hillstone," to be performed by the Stern College Dramatic Society April 8-12. Students attending the event were impressed with all the creativity and talent displayed.

On Wednesday, it was back to Stern for an event titled, Kol Isha, a forum for women's singing. Twelve acts were performed, including renditions of Rent's "Take Me Baby, or Leave Me," performances by the Bells, and several others.

Thursday, February 24, a panel discussion with the Mashgiach Ruchani Rabbi Yosef Blau and Rabbi Shalom Carmy took place. The discussion opened with Rabbi Blau presenting his view on the role of art in Judaism, followed by Dr. Carmy's differing view on that same issue. After brief introductory remarks, the floor was opened up to students, who were urged to ask about any issue pertaining to art and Judaism. Rabbi Blau and Dr. Carmy presented different views on each of the questions. Although the event had to battle regular Thursday night activities for participants, the students in attendance found it compelling to hear Torah scholars like Rabbi Blau and Dr. Carmy speak so eloquently on an emotionally stirring issue that really pinpointed the message of Arts Festival 2000.

The Festival rested for the Sabbath, but

resumed Sunday, February 27 with a gallery tour of student art. Due to the recent move of the YU Museum from the main campus to a new facility downtown, students had full use of the library's main galleries.

John Kessler, one of the coordinators, said, "I was tickled pink by the quality of work submitted." After several of the artists spoke about their work, students were encouraged

to tour the gallery at their own pace.

On Monday night spectators packed into the Schottenstein recital room for Dr. "Bart" Bartholomew's Classical Music and Jazz Ensemble concert. The first half of the event, featured numerous chamber music pieces. The concert concluded with an extraordinary performance by the Jazz Ensemble.

On Tuesday, February 29, Stern's Koch Auditorium hosted "A Night of One Acts." The night consisted of four one act plays written, directed, and performed by students. The night was the only chance for students to present original drama outside their respective drama clubs. The plays ranged from Ben Franz's dark comedy, "Wet Ash," to Alana Sher's sentimental "Another Life," and included Avi Schneider's light comedy, "Do You Really Think So?" and S. Kim Glassman's surreal, existential "A Higher Place."

Wednesday night, the festival returned to the uptown campus for prose reading. Among the highlighted readers was Benjamin Joffe, last year's festival director. Although the room's ambiance left room for improvement, literature coordinators splashed up Furst 535 for the event. "We're quite happy with the way both of our events turned out," said Shira Kaufman, one of the Literature coordinators. "It's amazing how much talent there is in such a small student body."

On Thursday, March 2, the two-week long festival concluded with a formal dinner event. The event featured "The City Around Us," a multi-media presentation including a slideshow, musical performances, short stories and poetry readings. Co-director Rebecca Leicht said, "We thought it best in closing, to recognize the influences that have focused our efforts, our emotions, and our abilities, into each art discipline that has been celebrated throughout the last two weeks."

Steven I. Weiss, co-director of the festival, said that he looks forward to expanding the festival into the rest of the academic year. Undoubtedly, fans of all art forms have much to look forward to in the coming years of the Festival.

'Mentally Chill' Rocks Campus Despite Administrative Obstruction

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

"Mentally Chill." Ambiguous as it first sounds, these two words brought new meaning to the lives of hundreds of Yeshiva University students and faculty on Monday, March the 27th. Mental Illness Awareness Day, a day of disseminating information, tearing down the brutal walls of societal stigma towards the mentally ill, and the raising of student awareness by "Mentally Chill" buttons. Students looked skeptically at first upon the endeavor, temporarily confusing it for a YCSC campaign ploy. Yet, as the two student founders, Eric Rose and Ezra Levine pinned buttons to chests, and forced literature into hands, suspicion turned to arousal as enthralled groups of Yeshiva students read about the plight of the mentally ill.

The staff of the Mental Illness Awareness Society (MIAS) worked feverishly in preparation for the big day. Research, art design, and brainstorming had been going on months in advance of the awareness day. Since the club's inception in September of 1999, members have been compiling information and printing hundreds of signs on the library printers. Treasurer Eli Elias and Vice-President Heshy Lewis were particularly influential in creating a buzz amongst the student body. Particularly so with Heshy, who constantly plugs MIAS on his weekly radio show (Tuesdays at 1:00).

As the entire uptown campus went to bed the night of the 26th, members of the society hung up their painstakingly crafted

posters throughout campus. These posters were to have provided invaluable information on topics such as celebrities with mental illness (Abraham Lincoln had mental illness; Beethoven too), facts about the mentally ill, and inspirational thoughts on their plight. Sadly, however, this was not meant to be. The founders awoke to find every last one of the society's signs torn up and thrown in the overflowing university trash. Apparently, month old signs regarding January's seforim sale were considered more valuable to the campus than were those hung by Rose and Levine. Dismayed but not beaten, the society rehung what they could. Longtime MIAS treasurer Elias describes what happened only moments later, "The tape had hardly adhered to the wall when overly enthusiastic Facilities Management goons and thugs had them back in the trash, overflowing like the mighty Mississippi."

Despite all setbacks the day was still a success. Members scattered about the campus and touched the entire student body. Both students and teachers had positive reactions to the campaign. Later in the day, discussions were initiated in many classrooms. Founders Levine and Rose were smiling ear to ear by the day's end. They issued the following statement to the *Commentator* on behalf of MIAS: "We feel we made great strides in educating students about the mentally ill. Yeah, the sign thing pissed us off, but you can't let idiocy keep you down. Keep on Mentally Chilling."

Peer Counseling Continues Second Semester Successfully

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

Last semester, a group of Yeshiva University students started a student service called Peer Counseling. This service is comprised of several students who make themselves available to lend an ear to any student who needs one whether it be for social, issues, academic problems, or even just to chat. The counseling is available Monday through Thursday from 5:30 P.M. until 1:00 A.M and their office is located in Schottenstein Center, third floor, Room 314. Students can page the Peer Counselors, who return the call and arrange for a meeting place and time for their ensuing discussion.

The idea for the peer counseling emerged a couple of years ago because it was thought that there were numerous students who needed to talk and did not have the proper channels for doing so. Before the advent of the program, there were only two confidants to whom students could turn, both of whom were handicapped by their administrative duties. Dr. Nissel, Yeshiva's student psychologist, also serves as the head of the dormitory. Dean Efreim Nulman, although extremely trustworthy in his role as head of student services, has a direct connection with disciplinary action. As a result, students often feel that revealing certain information to the two administrators, as well-qualified and sincere as they are, might be detrimental to their college careers.


Consequently, the idea of peer counseling became a top priority for the '99-'00 year. With the success of the program, students can now call to talk about any problem with total confidentiality. They can even call for simple guidance in areas which they feel uncomfortable confronting. Students no longer need worry about being criticized for their views or actions or even accepting any consequences that would possibly follow the disclosure of this information into what some would deem "the wrong hands."

The counselors are usually active members of the student body and are well-known and well-liked. The students can consider the entire list of counselors in hope of choosing the one with whom he feels most comfortable speaking. The matter remains confidential even among the counselors themselves. This way, if a student has a friend on the council he can avoid contact with that friend if he so desires.

The counselors choose to deal with any issues that they feel equipped to handle. If the particular student concern is above their capabilities, they then refer the case to either Dr. Nulman or Dr. Nada Beth Glick (academic problems) without mentioning names. In extreme cases, a psychologist is recommended. The first meeting always results in a follow-up call by the counselors to make sure the students are doing okay and that the problem has been adequately addressed. In the instance of academic concerns, it can be arranged for the student to meet with a tutor periodically.

Thus far, in its first year, the peer counseling program has been highly successful. During its first semester, one hundred students out of a student body of twelve hundred contacted the service for help. The director of the program, Fred Kreizman, commented, "I am extremely happy that peer counseling has gotten off to a successful start, and I hope it continues to help students in any way it can for many years to come."

The Peer Counseling service does not plan to stop here. Included in its long-term goals are hopes of expansion. This year's assistant director and successor to Kreizman, Norman Shafar, stated that "the peer counseling service hopes to expand. We hope to get a bigger office with drop-in hours and a phone with the ultimate goal of attracting more and more students." Shafar also reiterated the need for counselors. In light of the uptown campus program's success, Stern leaders have initiated the process to found a similar program there.

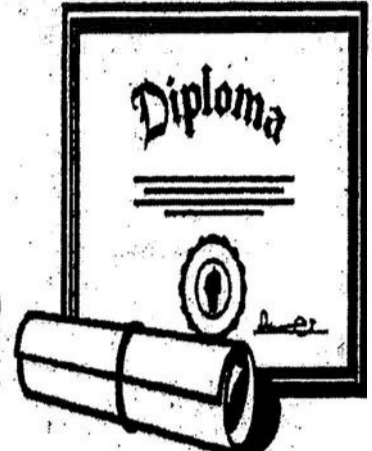


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Gottesman

continued from page 1

recognition; the undergraduate school has moved from second tier to its now-famed position among the top tier universities in America. A new honors program has been instituted at Yeshiva College and Stern; enrollment has soared at all affiliated campuses; and Yeshiva has been honored with the presence of distinguished guests and world-renowned lecturers.

Mr. Gottesman will continue to serve as a Trustee of the American Museum of Natural History and Mount Sinai Hospital, and he will remain an active Trustee at Yeshiva as well. "I will certainly help wherever and whenever I

can," he stressed.

Mr. Beren, who became Vice-Chairman in 1998 upon the demise of long-term Trustee and Vice-Chairman, Hermann Merkin, was elected to fill Gottesman's void. Gottesman says that he was involved in the selection of Beren, and asserts that Beren is expected to do an a fine job. When asked to list the contributions of which he is most proud, Gottesman said, "I will leave it to others to judge my contributions. I am just proud that, when I relinquish my office in June, the University is in much better condition than when I began."

Publications

continued from page 1

what I had expected."

Stern, in defense of his work, confirmed that "I went over the article with Shamma Yehuda Freidman, the world's leading talmudist, who found our arguments to be sound and convincing. We [Katz and I] tried to follow in Yeshiva's Torah U'madda tradition and give something positive and meaningful to our readers."

Perhaps most disturbing are reports that some eleven boxes containing the newly published sefer were removed from this year's SOY Seferim Sale. Sales manager Amichai Erdfarid, said the books were "mistakenly left in the freight elevator and taken by Facilities. When we went back for them, they were missing." At least three of the boxes have been recovered, but eight remain unaccounted for.

Facilities refused to comment on the issue, but many students were not surprised when they discovered that another Yeshiva publication had been removed. BMP President Scott Nadel, stated, "Now they're taking religious books? Where does this end?" JSS/SSSB Junior Jarred Tuchinsky, said, "It's scary that I'm not shocked anymore when I hear about these things."

The MYP/RIETS administration is also refusing to contribute to the publishing costs of Beit Yitzchak, which this year amount to about \$5,200. Administrators explain that their decision was not based on the content of the publication, but instead resulted from other complaints they had against this year's

publication - in particular its failure to pay tribute to its supporting donors.

The Scharf Foundation, a family-run charitable organization, provides yearly donations to MYP and RIETS for the financing of religious publications. In previous years, Beit Yitzchak featured a "tribute page" acknowledging the Foundation's generosity. This year, however, the page was omitted and administrators therefore refused to delineate the Foundation's money for its publication. Further, the administration expressed their disappointment with the lateness of the book, which was scheduled for printing in June, but was not published until February. As a result, the volume carries the date "5760," the current Hebrew year; the administration feels that it should have been dated 5759, the year in which it was supposed to appear, in order to keep the integrity of the series intact.

Koller explained that "the delay was caused by negligence and laziness on our part." He attributes his failure to include a tribute page for the donors to a "lack of communication between the students and the administration" although the page was included in prior years. He concedes that this year's edition, which was about half the size of those from previous years, "did not turn out quite the way I had anticipated."

Koller would not comment on Facilities' removal of the publication, but admits that "I now think the controversial article didn't belong in Beit Yitzchak."

Professor Fired

continued from page 1

that at times gave way to very candid discussions. Feinberg thought of himself as more than just a music instructor, but a devoted teacher and more accurately "a friend" to his students. Those close with him confirm that this attitude was consistent with Feinberg's personality in general and approach toward music in particular. Indeed, his students indicate that the disposition was contagious: "His love for music made it a pleasure to be his student," explained YC Junior and Feinberg student Ariel Penkower. "I sincerely feel that Dr. Feinberg was one of the best teachers I've had over my 3 years on campus in YU. His one goal was to teach the students who wanted to learn."

This unique relationship not only changed the nature of the classes that Feinberg instructed, but it also took its toll on Feinberg's schedule. He instructed weekly courses in Keyboard Work, Musicianship, Rudiments, and various other music topics. He came in Wednesday after Wednesday to meet with some twenty-five students who signed up for his various classes. While the official class hours spanned until 8 o'clock at night, Feinberg rarely, if ever, left the building before nine and often as late as 10:30. On his own time he instructed students personally, driven by the promise that he saw in each one and his love for the topics being discussed. His singular personality was what drew many of the students to carve their schedules to meet his Wednesday hours.

Feinberg, however, points to other factors that contributed to his decision to address some time off-color topics in class and use language that administrators might view as inappropriate. He did not deny the use of such language, but pointed out that it was never directed at a student, but instead a way of expressing a particular feeling that he was trying to pinpoint - a methodology that he feels is closely connected with music.

Feinberg points to the wide array of students that his classes have attracted as the most important factor in explaining some of his unorthodox teaching habits. Firstly, many MTA high school students are able to arrange for their high school schedules to designate an entire time slot to a college class; some of these students ironically attempt to use this privilege as a means of softening their schedules. Accordingly, they gravitate toward Belz classes because of their relative ease in comparison to another 3 credit Yeshiva College class.

The extremely high percentage of high-school students that Feinberg teaches, he claims, demands a different type of teaching method. He finds that they constantly raise issues in class not pertinent to music and, rather than turn them away, the committed Feinberg felt that his help in tackling these issues as a teacher was vitally needed. He cited his training in psychology as the basis for his particular attunement to various issues that the students raised; what he gauged to be sincere inquiries were asked of him on topics ranging from psychiatric concerns to sexual discussions and his concern for his students constituted the reason for his decision to address rather than turn away the issues.

Perhaps more disturbing to Feinberg is what he believes to be the true reasons behind his dismissal. Feinberg's relationship with the Belz school, and in particular Cantor Beer and his administrative officials, was "strained at best." Feinberg paints this characterization as the product of some ten years of selfless service to the school. Feinberg served three distinct times in different capacities over the past ten years

aiding the direction of choral groups at the school, constantly performing an inordinate amount of successful work, but rarely if ever receiving recognition. He composed scores of pieces for YU choir performances, but received little credit from higher-ups who according to Feinberg "had to know at least some amount of the work [he was performing]." His "behind-the-scenes" work and decision to remain unassertive demanded a reciprocal integrity from his supervisors and colleagues, who in truth failed to meet those expectations.

He points to a generation gap between himself and the older generation at Belz as the main culprit lying at the base of the rift between himself and the administration. The unwillingness of "the old-time school" to recognize a shift in modern day musical trends has from the outset built a barrier to a close relationship with the two generations of teachers. While he admits that he has "much regard" for Cantor Beer's many accomplishments, he does not deny that he was never granted the opportunity to develop a relationship with the director.

What has surprised Feinberg and his students most, however, is the quick-tempered manner with which Belz handled what they suddenly saw as a problematic situation. Feinberg's unorthodox teaching methods have been well-known for quite some time, but he has not been reprimanded by officials in the past. One student claimed that "his eccentricities made the class all the more interesting." In fact, just one week prior to the dismissal Belz administrators had asked Feinberg to consider teaching a new class in guitar playing after discovering that Feinberg's talents extended beyond the piano. Feinberg admitted that if Beer's reference to the anonymous complaints was indeed accurate, that he felt betrayed by any student who chose to bypass addressing the issue directly and going behind his back to supervisors. It is a candid reaction that his devotion to his students has at the least mandated.

Nevertheless, Cantor Beer explains that he simply could not tolerate the behavior being described. Admittedly, Beer had been aware for years that Feinberg's personality was unique, and claims to recognize that "everyone has their own teaching methods." Beer stressed, however, that Feinberg's antics have changed this semester and that his state of being was no longer fit for teaching. In addition to inappropriate behavior and open recognition of psychiatric medication that he currently takes, Beer cited ineffective teaching as another reason for his quick reaction to the complaints. "This wasn't an isolated complaint. Some eight to ten students had come" to address their concerns.

Regardless, Beer admitted that if Feinberg had submitted to demands to curb his language and selection of topic material, that he would have possibly been able to hold onto his job. Feinberg viewed such demands as uncalled for and simply ridiculous. The resulting impression that students have described is one of injustice: "Dr. Feinberg has an incredibly deep fountain of knowledge to offer his students... the vast majority of his students are very fond of him and hate to see him forced to leave because of faculty prejudices," explained aspiring musician and YC Junior David Statman. He, along with many fellow students hope that Belz reopen the Feinberg case, and redress what Ariel Penkower deemed a "great injustice which was done to him and to all of his past, present, and never-to-be future students."

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As Trading Deadline Looms, Islanders Face Crucial Decisions

BY ADAM COHEN AND MICHAEL LEVY

The once effervescent aura around an NHL dressing room transforms into one of doubtful contemplation and conspicuous silence. Players stare emptily into their lockers, their minds elsewhere, retracing the game and wondering whether their errors will earn them a one-way ticket out of town. As the trading deadline approaches, every player's future is put into jeopardy. No player, especially those who play for contenders, want to be told that they have to leave their friends and home. That they have to tell their wives that their lives have been uprooted and their children now must go to school in another climate. That they have to make new friends in a new house with new management and even new fans.

If the prototypical player gets this queasy sensation in his gut, the young stars of the New York Islanders are doubly burdened. The Isles are the only New York team with serious payroll considerations despite the fact they sport one of the smallest payrolls in the league. In fact, since the season has started, with the trading of Gino Odjick, Tony Hrkac and the release of Richard Pilon, the average age of an Islander has decreased six months from 25.3 to 24.8 years. Veterans are hard to come by on the Island; so rare, in fact, that the captain is 25 years and fresh off teen-age acne medicine. Younger players, like the emerging rookie Tim Connolly, 18, look up to these team leaders. In an interview a few weeks ago, Connolly brusquely claimed that veterans such as Claude Lapointe and Kenny Jonsson are instrumental in his development. But as March 14, the day of the deadline, approaches, these two players who have become the binding glue of a team badly in need of a strong nucleus and a concrete, identifying vision, have heard their names being mentioned repeatedly throughout the NHL rumor mill.

These rumors are linked to Lapointe's unrestricted free agent status at the end of the season. The Islanders would like to resign him, and Lapointe, who has become the closest thing that the organization has to a cornerstone player, is eager to sign. But the Islanders are only willing to offer \$1 million, and Lapointe is holding pat at \$1.2 million, a figure he feels is more than justified under the terms of modern hockey economics. Unfortunately for the team, the community, the fans and the players, those \$200,000 are threatening to destroy whatever semblance of veteran leadership this club has.

Under General Manager Mike Milbury, the Islanders have undergone a complete renovation. They have slowly built, through trades and the draft, an outstanding collection of young talent; the best in hockey, some experts claim. But an excess of youth and a rebuilding period often translates to a few lean years of immaturity, many losses, and poor attendance. This is all done in the hope of future success and the process has worked in cities such as Ottawa, St. Louis, Toronto, and San Jose.

"Our number one concern is not winning and losing," preaches the Islanders Head Coach and former Uniondale legend, Butch Goring. "Wins and losses are important, but we think in terms of development."

The young players feel that players such as Lapointe are important to this team.

"It will be extremely unfortunate if Claude Lapointe gets traded," said goalie Kevin Weeks, 23. "He has such a major impact on the team."

Goring, though, has chosen to take Management's views on this issue, and that view is not coincidentally different from the players'. He does not feel that trading away

the team's leaders will seriously affect the development of the younger players.

"Our team is close knitted," Goring admits, "But when the most popular player is traded, another player becomes the most popular. If Tim [Connolly] looks up to Jonsson and Lapointe now, if they are traded he will look up to someone else."

But this isn't just about popularity or big-brother figures - it's about learning how to play hockey on the highest level, and having those who have been in the league a long time around to teach the nuances of the game to those just arriving. It's an age-old tradition. Alongside the usual pranks played on the rookies comes a more serious responsibility of teaching the youngsters the ropes. An absence of such strong veteran leadership can stunt the development of a budding prospect and could even make the difference between an All-Star and a regular player.

Mike Keenan, a Stanley Cup winning coach with the Rangers, is now the color commentator for the Ottawa Senators' local broadcast on CTV Sportsnet. Keenan recently told the *Commentator* that he might have a different approach than the current Islander management if he were in charge.

"You can't continue to build a winning team when you trade all your veteran players," Keenan remarked. "It will definitely upset the chemistry of the group if [Lapointe and Jonsson] are traded."

When asked how important it is for rookies to have veterans to teach them the nuances of the game, Keenan answered that "it is of the utmost importance. Young players absolutely need veterans to teach them the little things, the things make the good players special."

Keenan, though, realizes that management may have no choice; if ownership puts a strong lid on the amount of spending, the Islanders may have their hand forced in the matter. "The decision is mainly a management one... the ownership needs to protect their budget and [management] may not want to do it but they'll have to if the ownership says so."

That would be a shame, though. Keenan sees the Islanders the way most of the league sees them, tough, talented, and raw. With the addition of some key pieces, the Islanders could compete among the marquee teams of the league. "There has to come a turning point in the organization in which they realize that the rebuilding is over. Development of the younger players is important, but to do that you have to get some older players." You also need older players to win, he added.

And so the saga continues. Islander fans are hoping that management decides to do what's best for the players, and not only for the pocketbook. True, Islander fans have not been doing their part, with attendance extremely sparse in the Coliseum. But they have shown they will come out for a winner. The Islanders sold out a home game against the Flyers when the Islanders legends played the Philadelphia old timers. The exit from the Meadowlands Parkway into the Coliseum was once again traffic filled as Islander fans showed up in droves to be reminded again of what it was like when the Islanders not only contended, but won four straight Stanley Cups. There was an atmosphere of hope in the air that if ownership would just be willing to spend the money now, Islander fans would surely come back to Nassau to watch their beloved Islanders.

Adam Cohen and Michael Levy take your calls and talk sports, Sunday Nights at 11-12 on WYUR 530 AM.

Yeshiva Sports

THE FAN

BY JEREMY CHERNIKOFF

"It is the stick of Marty McSorley." These words spoken by the color commentator kept fans wondering exactly how the situation would unfold. It was game 2 of the 1993 Stanley Cup finals and the Los Angeles Kings held a one game edge in the series as well as a one-goal lead late in the game. The Montreal Canadiens' miracle run in the playoffs, having seemingly followed a Hollywood script thus far, appeared on the verge of coming to a screeching halt.

Montreal fans sat on the edge of their seats, wondering how their beloved Habs would be able to catch up to the Kings when down by two. Luckily, Canadiens' coach Jacques Demers had other ideas. He requested a "stick check" to be performed on the stick of Kings defenseman, Marty McSorley.

In NHL rule 20(b) it states that the curve on a player's stick blade may be no more than 1/2 an inch. The rule also states that if a stick measurement is called, the offending player will be assessed a two minute penalty. However, if a stick check is called and it turns out that no infraction took place, a penalty will be given to the team that called for the measurement.

Much to the dismay of the LA Kings, McSorley did indeed play with an illegal stick. Montreal received a power play, scored to tie the game and eventually won it in overtime. This incident would forever be remembered as the turning point of the series as the Canadiens soon went on to win the 24th Stanley Cup in the franchise's history.

Recently, the stick of Marty McSorley has again taken center stage. On the night of February 21st, McSorley, who now plays for Boston, brutally smacked his stick across the head of Vancouver winger Donald Brashear. Brashear, whose back faced McSorley at the time, crumpled to the ice, where his head struck the surface hard enough to knock him unconscious.

The NHL acted quickly and handed McSorley a suspension for at least 23 games. If the Boston Bruins manage to make the playoffs, the league will have to determine whether McSorley will play. It all depends on Donald Brashear's ability to return. As of now, Brashear has been plagued with continuous headaches due to the post concussion

syndrome he currently suffers from. The 23 game suspension handed down by the league surpasses the 21 game suspension given to Dale Hunter in 1993 as the longest in NHL history.

McSorley admitted after the game that he had acted foolishly and that he didn't know what had happened. I think I might be able to clue him in. Throughout his career, McSorley has been notorious for receiving suspensions. Even before he entered the NHL, in 1986, McSorley earned himself a ten game suspension for deliberate attempt to injure. Between 1988 and 1994, McSorley was suspended on six separate occasions for activities consisting of spearing, punching, cross-checking, and eye gouging.

Violence has been a part of hockey since its inception. For over a century, players have been hitting, slashing, and punching each other. For the most part though, very few serious injuries occur in comparison with the amount of hits thrown. Precautions have been taken as the years have gone by. Players are now required to wear helmets, and their bodies are almost completely covered by padding. The only measure left to take is to take players like Marty McSorley and simply throw them out of the league. Many of the league's players in recent year have spoken out against violence. Early in the season, Ruslan Salei of Anaheim hit Dallas Stars' center Mike Modano from behind. Salei received a ten game suspension, which apparently did not satisfy Modano.

"Do we have to wait for someone to be paralyzed or killed?" Modano asked the general public. Former Pittsburgh Penguin Mario Lemieux, who stands at about 6'4", constantly complained about the cheap shots thrown in his direction. The major problem with all the physical contact is that it drastically reduces scoring, which is what the fans are paying a lot of money to see. If the NHL wants to gain popularity, it must continue to penalize players in the same manner in which they dealt with McSorley. As for McSorley himself, he has amassed over 3,000 penalty minutes throughout his career and at the age of 39, is of no productive use to any NHL team. In other words Marty, you've turned into nothing more than a disgrace to the league. Time to hang up the skates, I honestly believe that the NHL will strongly benefit as a result.

Go Macs!

MACS V. DOLPHINS: A RARE CLASSIC

BY BENNY ROSENBERG

The Yeshiva Macs playoff game against the Mount St. Vincent Dolphins proved to be one of the most well attended in Yeshiva history. The crowd of anxious fans certainly got their money's worth. To put it mildly, it was an exciting game. More accurately, in the words of one YC Junior, it was "the most incredible game witnessed at the Max Stern Athletic Center in years." People flooded the running track above the gym to join the capacity crowd on the floor of the MSAC to witness the beginning of what many hoped would be a tear through the playoff field.

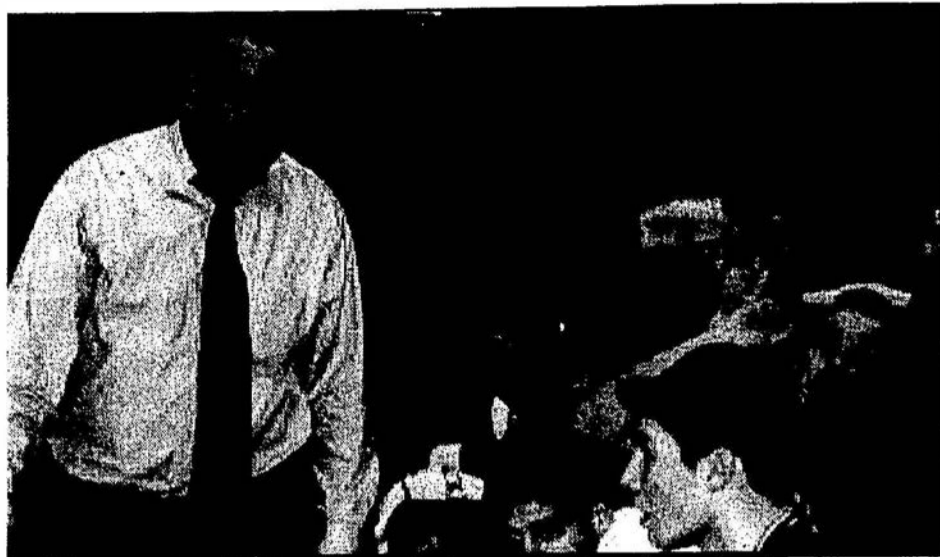
This was the type of game that we all hope to witness when we go to watch a Knicks game at the Garden. Most fans came to witness what they thought would be a dominating Yeshiva squad victory. Undoubtedly, the highflying Macs were expected to manhandle the 7th seeded Dolphins with relative ease? But, that's exactly why the game must be played. Not only did the Dolphins bring their best game to Yeshiva, but they were accompanied by a huge group of loyal fans who made the trek to the MSAC as well. Both groups of fans had more than their fair share of "complimentary" words for each other. Chants of "squish the fish" gradually soon echoed throughout the gym. To counter the presence of the Dolphin mascot, a few yeshiva students stormed into the gym without shirts on. They each had a letter on their chests, and collectively spelled out M-A-C-S.

As the soap opera continued in the bleachers, the game progressed at an exciting pace. The Macs came out shooting blanks, looking sluggish at times. The Dolphins though, flew out to an impressive lead that they refused to relinquish throughout much of the game. The only force keeping the Macs within striking distance was the incredible play of Yossi Gev. Gev went on to score 32 points in his biggest personal performance of the year. Players like Dov Welner and David Neiss wouldn't let the team lose focus.

In the second half, the game really took off. The gym filled with Mac cheers as the end of regulation neared. The announcers who called the game for the live broadcast on WYUR recall that they could hardly hear each other speak. While students had papers due the next day, and midterms to study for, the game seemed to rise to the forefront of everyone's agenda. It was a long, arduous battle. Every time the Macs came within five points, it seemed like the Dolphins would extend the lead to seven. Eventually though, the Macs cut the margin even further. As one watched this epic unfold, one couldn't help but notice that the game promised to go down in the annals of Mac history as a rare classic.

With 18 seconds left in the game, the Macs found themselves down by a mere one point, and the game seemed to hinge upon two upcoming free throws to be attempted by Yossi Gev. Naturally, Gev proved to be automatic, hitting both of his attempts at the line. With those shots, the Macs went up by one point, securing their first lead of the game. Complete pandemonium set in. Mount St. Vincent, however, committed to playing the part of spoiler, came roaring back with one last attempt. The Dolphins rushed downcourt, and with 2 seconds left, their big man was left wide open for the easy lay-up that put the game away for good. As the buzzer sounded, YU fans were forced to watch the opposing team celebrate the shocking victory. The utter silence said it all.

And so the heartbreaker ended, killing the Mac run through the playoffs in its early stages. Truth be told, however, no one seems to care about the loss anymore. Instead, accounts of the incredible game are being remembered to this day; the fans seem to appreciate the memorable game for the excitement that it provided. The fact is that this game brought everyone to the gym for one great night. Few events have ever brought the student body closer together than this exciting playoff match. On this night, the Yeshiva Macs basketball team provided a lot more than what most could have possibly imagined.



The Difference Between Disappointment and Exhilaration

BY DORIAN LEVY

As most of you already know, the YU Macs lost in the first round of the Skyline conference basketball playoffs. Many students, though disappointed, were not overly surprised. After all, this was only YU's first year in the ECAC, and that being considered they performed pretty well. A playoff run would seem to have exceeded the expectations of Mac fans. It was a close game, decided by only one point, and though it was a very entertaining game, it was obviously not meant to be. Nothing could have been done to avoid the playoff heartbreak. Nothing different could have succeeded in averting the loss to an obviously highly talented and dominating team. Right?

Unfortunately, it seems that this judgement is far from being equivocally true. Based on all of the reports of our friends who are not in YU, it would seem that "YU Life" leaves much to be desired. The idea of NYU converging on Six Flags seems to be awesome, images of swarms of college students crowding the theme park seems thrilling. Yet, when YU attempts to do the same (Orientation), the rides were high-paced, but the day lacked comparable electricity. Imagining a St. John's or Rutgers' Superbowl party, with hordes of twenty something's packed into a room and hollering and yelling with every play, really paints an exciting picture. Yet, despite a great game this year, the highlight of YU's Superbowl party would probably be the Dougie's.

Perhaps this phenomenon is not a criticism of the effort of YU administration, or even Student Services and Student Boards, but instead a reflection of the potential of a small, incredibly divided college, in which half of the student body refuses to recognize the other, and the other half couldn't care less. What type of pep rally can be organized for a lowly Division three, religious school? NYU, Rutgers, and other large schools clearly succeed in planning electrifying functions due to the large crowds to which they can appeal. More people means more noise, which means more excitement, which means more reason to come, which means more positive events. Perhaps this is the explanation for YU's failure, right?

As comforting as this would be, it is a farce. In truth, we have received numerous reminders that this hypothesis is far from correct. The playoff loss typifies the error of such a theory. Mt. St. Vincent, the winners of the big playoff match, brought with them less than 100 fans. The hosting Yeshiva team was supported by some 600 fans. Mt. St. Vincent was the seventh seed in the playoffs; Yeshiva was the second. In the two prior meetings between the two teams, YU had successfully routed the Dolphins. Yet, from the start of the playoff game until the final 3 minutes, the outnumbered visitors shamed the YU crowd, by cheering louder, longer, and more often. Mt. St. Vincent fans demonstrated that spirit and desire can conquer the obstacles of numerical obscurity and insignificance. By the time that the YU fans rose up to the challenge, and rise

they definitely did as the MSAC reached decibel levels rarely registered at YU, it was too late. The Macs were too far behind. Though they took the lead for a fleeting instant, one that would be lost seconds later on the game's final shot, never succeeding in building the type of lead that would have been secure from such a crushing defeat. One bucket. One bucket is what separated a melancholy outcome from what could have been a euphoric evening. Try to imagine the scene that would have resulted from a YU victory. Hundreds of fans jumping in unison, towels waving, rushing the court, stampeding the Burns security guards who futilely try to sustain order. A YP guy from Woodmere hugging the Russian JSS guy on his side, as the arts society and Gush guys exchange high-fives! OK, maybe this is a slight exaggeration, but no one can deny that it would have been quite the thrill to have witnessed the monumental victory.

A member of the basketball team told me that homecourt advantaged is normally considered to be a ten-point "headstart" for the home team. Unfortunately, he explained, the Macs had no such headstart. To the contrary, he maintained that the visiting fans may have served as Mt. St. Vincent's sixth man, contributing somewhat to the final outcome of the game. The Macs did not lose because of the crowd. The Macs lost because they played uninspired and they executed poorly. But, just maybe it is possible that a crowd going nuts from whistle to whistle could have inspired the team to play just a little bit better, just a little bit harder, one basket harder, to pull out the needed victory.

For three minutes, YU experienced the excitement that some people feel can only exist in "real" colleges, or campuses with many thousands of students. Though the MSAC may not be as large as the Hoosier Dome, and although it does not hold as many fans as the Wooden Arena, for three minutes it was as electric. Hopefully, YU's playoff experience, though it ended in bitter defeat, can teach us, the students of Yeshiva University, an even sweeter message. Though we may be small and we may not have the "normal" social atmosphere found in most colleges, we can have as an exciting college experience, whether it be for two, three, or even four years; we need only give that little bit more. We came just one basket short of something that would have been great. This situation can be seen to define much more than our basketball outlook, but Yeshiva life in general. The primary reason that any of us have so many complaints, is because everyone else is complaining. The only reason that we don't have what to be elated about here, is because we are not elated. If we could all just stop espousing such a negative attitude, we would probably find, in just a short time, that there would be little left to complain about. If only we could somehow start off with a little noise, a little excitement about the rest of our YU experience, we will find that bit of excitement to make all the difference between disappointment and exhilaration.

FENCING TEAM IMPRESSIVELY CLOSES SEASON

BY LAWRENCE TEWNER

You may have seen them leaving on an early Sunday morning. You might have seen them returning late on a Sunday night. Since the beginning of the semester, the members of YU's fencing team have devoted their every Sunday to compete. They also committed to an entire year of grueling practices Monday and Wednesday nights to ensure that their performance live up to expectations.

Their hard work paid off last Sunday, at Drew University. In their finest season in history, the men's fencing team stunned the Mid-Atlantic College Fencing Association (MACFA) by taking third place at the championships. Yeshiva beat many powerful teams, including Virginia Tech, Johns Hopkins, Drew, Haverford, and the University of Virginia. The MACS were only bested by West Point and Cornell University. Fifteen schools compete in the MACFA championships, and every school gets a chance to face one another. In order to expedite the process, each weapon is divided into three pools. Top fencers compete in pool A, second fencers in pool B, and third fencers in pool C. The top six in pool A, top three in Pool B, and top fencer in pool C, advance to the finals.

Akiva Hertzfeld (Sabre) and Hadar Weiss (Epee) both earned all conference honors, as both were ranked sixth place in their respective weapons. To earn the impressive honor, a fencer must place in the top six at the championships and rank among the top ten during the regular season. Weiss and Hertzfeld both entered the A pool for their weapon. Hertzfeld cleaned up with an amazing 12-2 record to easily advance to the finals. Hadar easily advanced as well, carrying an impressive 11-3 record.

The Foil team, traditionally known as Yeshiva's weakest weapon squad, surprised everyone with a powerful showing of their own, finishing fourth in their weapon, falling short of third place by a single victory. Though no one from Foil advanced to the finals, all three fencers ranked high in their respective pools. Yevgeny Pavlovskiy went 7-7 in the top pool, competing against the top



fencers in the conference. Lawrence Tewner went 9-5 in the second pool and Robert Zaretsky went 10-4 in the third pool.

Because each fencer competes alone in his pool, it was not immediately apparent to team members that Yeshiva had performed so well in the overall competition. The whole team was happily surprised when they were called up to accept the third place award. Head Coach Arnold Messing and Assistant Coach Pete Rosas were ecstatic. Both were proud of the hard work and dedication that they had witnessed from a team that succeeded in accomplishing more than any of the previous 14 teams that they have coached at Yeshiva. "Seeing one's athletes dedicate themselves and succeed is the ultimate reward for a Coach," explained Rosas. The Assistant Coach pointed to more than the MACS' third place team finish and the individual achievement of the two all-conference fencers, but also to the qualification of a record number of team members for the NCAA championships. This year, eight fencers will advance to the NCAA regionals, an event that is scheduled to be held this weekend. The fencing team competes in both MACFA and the NCAA. Unlike MACFA where the entire team enters the championships, the NCAA requires that each fencer prove himself worthy of competing in the its

regional tournament by winning a certain percentage of his bouts. These wins must come against tough NCAA schools, including MIT, Brandies, UNC, Brown, and Boston College. Akiva Hertzfeld, Micha Mandel, Steve Mellner, Yevgeny Pavlovskiy, Lawrence Tewner, Alex Traiman, Hadar Weiss, and Robert Zaretsky all qualified to advance to the fierce competition.

Though fencing is usually known as an individual sport, it was the excitement of the team as whole that inspired everyone to rise to the occasion. An important component of the team is the group of alternate fencers that did not compete much, but remained critical in ensuring the success of those who did. Fencing takes years of practice and the composite of younger fencers who often comprise the alternate squad, represent the future of Yeshiva fencing. With Hertzfeld, Weiss, and Mandel graduating this year, the fencing team can look to hear their names in the upcoming years. In epee, David Wallach and Yevgeny Veyler have both shown tremendous potential. Menachem Farber and Martin Weinheber in foil and Sabre respectively, have improved great lengths this year. Next year they will fill the spots of the graduating team members, ready to uphold yeshiva's increasingly rich tradition of fencing excellence.

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Election Fever Hits Yeshiva

BY SHMULI SINGER

As Yeshiva's annual Student Council elections approach, a frenzy of campaigning, along with a host of prognostications by erstwhile political pundits have gripped the campus. Candidates' names peer out from almost every dorm window on campus, while campaign posters, often humorously offbeat and colorful, cover bulletin boards in every building. The elections, scheduled for Thursday March 30, contest 14 positions, 8 of them for executive councils of SSSB and YCSC, and another 3 each, for junior and senior class positions.

With over thirty candidates running for various student council positions, aside from the internal Jewish program elections, the field should present students with a bewildering array of options when they come to the Morg Loungue to cast their ballots. The SSSB and YCSC presidential elections comprise an unprecedentedly large slate themselves, with 3 candidates running in the former, and a whopping 5 in the latter.

The YCSC presidential candidates are current YCSC treasurer Aryeh Goldberg, Zohar Azolay, Albert Palacci, Adam Cohen, and *Commentator* executive editor Pinky

Shapiro. The Syms race, though smaller, promises to be equally intense, with Dorian Levy, Marc Cohen, and current Syms V.P. Ari Kellman running.

The success of this year's elections depends on the efforts of the canvassing committee, which has worked tirelessly to clarify the previously arcane and nebulous rules, while ensuring a stringent level of fairness. "In past years," explains committee co-chair Shalom Schwartz, "you had one sheet with all of the rules on it, many of which were unclear. This year, we have held numerous meetings to nail down the exact rules to avoid any controversy, especially with regard to clearly defined spending limits. Now each candidate will know exactly what he's allowed and not allowed to do."

Committee co-chair Moishe Singer added "and this election will be the fairest one in years. Aside from simplifying the voting procedure, we hope to have two neutral observers, one from YCSC and one from *The Commentator*, observing the ballots at all times, especially during the counting. Of course, we also have to thank Andrew Lebowitz and Andrea Burbank for their help in making this election as successful as possible."



THE COMMENTATOR

500 West 185th Street

New York, NY 10033

YC Presidential Debate Ends In Mayhem

BY SHMULI SINGER

On Monday night, March 27, the YC Canvassing Committee and *The Commentator* co-hosted a raucous YCSC Presidential debate that mirrored the rough and tumble nature of this year's upcoming student council election. The debate, which pitted the five YCSC presidential candidates against one another, often degenerated into a strongly negative affair, with candidates questioning the sincerity and suitability of their opponents. The presence of a wild crowd intent on voicing its opinion and support for various candidates further characterized the discussion as less than cordial.

The presidential hopefuls debating included current YCSC treasurer Aryeh Goldberg, *Commentator* sports writer Adam Cohen, *Commentator* executive editor Pinky Shapiro, IBC/YC student Zohar Azolay and IBC/YC student Albert Palacci. The format afforded each debater a five-minute introductory speech, and then continued with questions from *Commentator* editors-in-chief aimed at the individual candidates. The debate concluded with open questions from the audience.

The introductory remarks, which often seemed according to one observer, a YC junior, "unfocused and rambling," were interrupted on numerous occasions by audience outbursts. Azolay began by accusing his opponents of being vague, in contrast to his definite agenda, which offered what he called "relevant solutions to student problems." These included opening teacher evaluation forms to students, as well as running joint events with Jewish communities at other schools. Azolay concluded with a veiled jab at his opponents, noting that only he was above suspicion of coveting the presidential job as a resume item.

Cohen spoke next, noting that his campaign centered on "fulfilling the students' desires," specifically referring to his plan for placing high-definition televisions in each of the student lounges.

Goldberg followed this by promising to be "an active voice working for the students," and then proceeded to list his accomplishment as treasurer. He included his organization of this year's YCSC Bowling Tournament, as well as his work on the out-of-towners committee. Palacci's intro drew wild crowd approval, after he noted that most of the student body only knew him as a "man who makes people laugh, a man who loves to joke." He continued, however, that his serious side has "a dream of a united school." Shapiro concluded the disappointing introductory remarks with a lackluster call for renewing YCSC's role as "a conduit between the students and the administration."

Taking the podium, *Commentator* editor-in-chief Aaron Klein challenged Azolay to defend his candidacy in light of his lack of experience as a student leader. Azolay riposted with the observation that YCSC president need not be a politician, just a student representative. He concluded with another attack on Goldberg, remarking that his opponents merely had experience in running a bowling tournament.

Commentator Editor Alex Traiman, sharing the podium with Klein, then turned to Shapiro, asking him how his involvement with *The Commentator*, which has been at odds with the administration over the past year, would affect his contact with administrators as YCSC president.

Shapiro responded that through his work at the newspaper, he had cultivated better relationships with administrators than any other candidate. "The administration is there for us," he explained, "we just have to know how to approach them, and I do."

Klein then aimed the spotlight on Goldberg, referring the student body's "poor opinion of this year's YCSC," and asking why Goldberg, as a member of that council, deserved another chance in office. "I feel that I gained crucial experience over the past year," replied Goldberg, "and I'm not new to the administrators, I know what buttons to push with them to get things done." Questioning Cohen, Traiman focused on his lack of experience in student government. Cohen defended his inexperience, adding that his goals were easily accomplishable with student council funding.

Many of the open questions from the audience essentially rehashed the same questions asked earlier in the debate, although the candidates did provide some new insights in their answers. One original query, asked by YC Senior Greg Samuels, required the candidates to state the most positive contribution to YU they had made. Most of the candidates ducked the question, replying in general terms. Azolay explained that he achieved "many small things, not just one large thing." Goldberg ambiguously referred to his having "made a difference by becoming involved." Cohen and Palacci both replied that their campaigns were more about what they would do, and not what they had done. Shapiro provided a specific answer in this case, describing how as a member of the academic standards committee, he had prevented measures that would have invalidated taking any core requirements at summer school.

In another question, a student asked Azolay, Cohen and Palacci what had "suddenly filled them with a burning desire" to run for student office, considering their lack of such activity in the past. Cohen pointed out that he would not be graduating for another two years, giving him incentive to improve the school, since he would reap the benefits as well. Palacci stuck to his position as an outsider, arguing that "being involved doesn't mean having a fancy title. I consider myself involved, I know everyone in the room!" Azolay again derided his opponents' experience as proof of their exclusive interest in their resumes, noting that he was "the last person anyone could call inactive on campus."

Candidates' positions aside, the overall tone of the debate did not impress some students. "Although the candidates represented themselves very well," said YC Sophomore Yonah Berman, "I felt that many members of the audience were disrespectful and vulgar. I don't think their rowdy actions had any place in a debate."