

The COMMENTATOR

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Melave Malka: An Opportunity For Unity

By Josh Blicher

As part of an effort to boost the morale of the Yeshiva students, The Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) recently hosted a “Yeshiva-Wide” melave malka (post-Shabbat meal) followed by a concert with Eitan Katz, the renowned Jewish musician. The celebration followed one of the most heavily attended in-Shabbat weekends over the last two years. In addition to current students, YU hosted a Shabbaton for prospective senior students and some 11th grade MTA students, greatly increasing the amount of spirit, or *ruach*, for all students in attendance.

Over the course of Shabbat, Rabbi Penner, Rabbi Schachter, and Rabbi Weinberger gave shiurim (lectures) on a host of pertinent issues, such as the necessity of preserving our rich Orthodox tradition in the 21st century. At the *melave malka*, Rav Schachter discussed how *ohr*, the positive awareness of G-D, generated by the study of Torah and the performance of mitzvot, can illuminate the tumultuous

“THESE KINDS OF EVENTS REALLY CULTIVATE A SENSE OF ACHDUS BETWEEN THE TALMIDIM OF THE YESHIVA AND THE REBBEIM”

- YOSEF POSTELNEK

times in which we live.

During the week prior the the eventful Shabbat, Rabbi Penner, the dean of the Judaic Studies Program, delivered brief speeches in the Glueck and Zysman *batei midrash* on the importance of *achdut* (unity) and *rachav leyv* (having a “wide heart”), togetherness and empathy, in such trying times. He explained that the planned Shabbat festivities were not only

to provide the students with a source of entertainment, but were designed to promote empathy and cohesion within the student community as well.

After an inspiring Shabbat and meaningful melave malka meal with the Roshei Yeshiva and President Richard Joel, the students joined together for a phenomenal concert with Eitan Katz. Although the Shabbat extravaganza was planned in the middle of midterm season, the fun-filled Shabbat enabled the students to take time off from their busy schedules and focus on

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Yeshiva University Mourns Ezra Schwartz

By David Rubinstein

The Yeshiva University community was shocked and troubled by an attack on November 19, 2015 near Alon Shevut in the Etzion Bloc south of Jerusalem that killed three, of which two had particularly close ties to many students.

Ezra Schwartz, 18, was studying at Yeshivat Ashreinu in his gap year between graduating Maimonides School and matriculating to Rutgers University. He was shot to death after having brought food and cheer to sol-



diers stationed nearby as part of his yeshiva’s volunteering program.

Dr. Yaakov Don, 49, was a teacher at the women’s seminary Emuna VeOmanut, where several YU students studied. He was heavily involved in Jewish education in Israel. Through his connection to Bnei Akiva, he lectured several current YU students when they visited Israel on the Mach hach trip nearly a decade ago. Dr. Don had taught in Toronto as well.

Shaadi Arfa, a Palestinian resident of He-

bron, was also killed in the attack.

After the afternoon prayers on Thursday, students on Wilf Campus gathered in the Glueck Beit Midrash for a communal recitation of psalms. Students at the Beren Campus also came together to recite psalms.

On the night of the attack, members of the YU community from both undergraduate campuses gathered in the Lipshutz-Gutwirth Study Hall (Rubin Shul) to share their thoughts and feelings on the attack. Several alumni of the Maimonides School expressed their shock and sadness that someone they once knew had been cut down by Palestinian terror. One student shared emotionally that his brother had been in the car with Mr. Schwartz when he was killed.

The event was organized by Miriam Renz, SCW ’18, who said that many students wanted to come together with their peers to reflect on the tragedy. Working closely with SOY President Tuvy Miller, leaders of the Israel Club, the Counselling Center, and Dean Nissel, Ms. Renz planned the gathering within hours of the news of the attack. The event was spread through an email from Rabbi Brander to the students of YU on via Facebook.

Rabbi Kenneth Brander, Vice President for University and Community Life and former David Mitzner Dean of the Center for the Jewish Future attended as well as University Dean of Students Dr. Chaim Nissel, and Associate Director of University Housing and Residence Life Mr. Jonathan Schwab.

SEE EZRA SCHWARTZ, CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Examining the New School of General Studies and Re-Imagined YU Global

By Yechiel Schwab

After multiple years of hundred-million-dollar deficits, Yeshiva University recently started “right-sizing” its budget. The biggest moment of this difficult process came in September when Yeshiva completed an agreement transferring financial responsibility of Einstein to Montefiore Medical Center. A myriad of other cuts, small and large, have been instituted in various areas of the University, perhaps most infamously to the academic budget of Yeshiva College and the university’s wrestling team. Despite these cuts, President Joel says much right-sizing still remains to be done, noting that Vice President Josh Joseph is spearheading a team working on efficient streamlining in thirty-four distinct areas, though he assures that the faculty and academic budgets are not on the hit list.

But even after all of these cost saving initiatives, Joel says the budget will still remain unbalanced: “we cannot cut our way to financial sustainability.” To achieve an effectively balanced long-term budget the University needs to increase its revenue-generating operations, partially through more rigorous fundraising but also largely through the University’s new School of General Studies and Continuing Education.

General Studies and Continuing Education

This new school, whose dean will be announced in the coming days, will hopefully generate revenue through career-oriented degree programs, both in classrooms and online. The school caters to professionals looking to shift their career trajectories or even to totally change careers. To this end, the University used market research and Department of Labor Statistics to identify degrees that match these needs. The findings indicated that degrees such as Speech Pathology, Occupational Therapy, and possibly Data Analytics and Health Administration are best suited for this type of program.



“IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH THIS NEW MISSION, AND INCREASE THE QUANTITY OF DEGREES, YU GLOBAL IS PARTNERING WITH AN EXTERNAL INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN COMPANY, AND ALL CURRENT YU GLOBAL EMPLOYEES ARE BEING LET GO.”

Though this school is primarily aimed at generating revenue and most of its programs are profit-oriented, or, as Provost Botman prefers, “entrepreneurial,” small segments of the school, including the new Associate’s Degree in Management, are mission-driven initiatives. Featuring face-to-face courses completely separate from courses in the other colleges, these degrees will be offered both uptown and downtown and will open the Yeshiva University experience to students whose high school performance would not earn them admission to YU’s standard college programs. After completing this

SEE YU GLOBAL, CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

The EDITORIAL

Consistency is All I Ask

By Doron Levine

The Syrian refugee crisis has divided American politics but united American Jewry. With state politicians taking strong stands on both sides, the polarizing question of whether to open our doors to Syrian refugees has created yet another wonderful opportunity for color-coded US maps (mellow yellow = welcoming refugees, orange = NOT welcoming refugees, noncommittal gray = not committing). But a similar map of American Jewry would look relatively monochromatic – for us, the notion of turning our backs to the persecuted hits too close to home.

Many have drawn parallels between the Syrian refugee crisis and Jews running from Nazi persecution, likening recent anti-immigration rhetoric to opinions expressed by western leaders at the Evian Conference in 1938. Franklin Roosevelt convened the conference in order to address the predicament of Jewish refugees, but most nations refused to rethink their immigration quotas; the Canadian representative said, “one [Jews] would be too many.” To this day, the tragic story of the MS Saint Louis echoes hauntingly in our ears.

With these events in mind, leaders of the Orthodox Union released a statement in which they compared the current situation to Jews fleeing the holocaust and emphasized that “while security concerns must be paramount, our focus as a nation should be on ‘getting to a yes.’” One writer for the Forward boldly challenged, “How can we call ourselves Jews and bar Syrian refugees?”

Fearing the resurgence of racial immigration policies, Jewish leaders and organizations the world over have jumped to the aid of the refugees. Jonathan Greenblatt, the National Director of the ADL, urged governors who oppose Syrian immigration to reconsider, explaining that “to do otherwise signals to the terrorists that they are winning the battle against democracy and freedom.” Along with other Jewish organizations, the ADL has created the Jewish Coalition for Syrian Refugees, a group dedicated to providing aid to refugees and promoting “fair and humane immigration policies.” Paul Anticoni, executive director of World Jewish Relief, appealed to the British government to accept more refugees, citing his characteristically Jewish “empathy of looking after the stranger” and “desire to assist, irrespective of the nationality of the individual.”

Here I would like to pinpoint a tension in our community’s collective thought. We seem to hold two positions that, at least on the surface, appear inconsistent. When discussing American immigration policy, many of us advocate for more open borders, especially with regards to people seeking asylum or refugee status (though of course with the necessary vetting procedures). Ourselves descendants of immigrants, we are quick to point out the odious hypocrisy of enjoying the opportunities and freedoms that America provides while denying those same rights to others.

But when it comes to Israel, our rhetoric takes a decidedly ethnocentric turn. We see Israel as a Jewish homeland appropriately dedicated to the furthering of particularistic Jewish interests. So when we discuss Israel, certain arguments that we might proffer in conversations about American politics are temporarily tabled. For example, members of our community tend to oppose racial immigration policies but rarely criticize Israel’s Law of Return.

In 1950, the Israeli Knesset passed the Law of Return, granting all Jewish people the right to immigrate to Israel and permanently reside therein. By encouraging diaspora Jews to move to Israel, this law effectively ensured that Jews would remain an ethnic and religious majority in the State of Israel. The policy accords with public opinion – a study published in 2013 by the Israeli Democracy Institute found that almost two-thirds of Israeli Jews believe that maintaining a Jewish majority in Israel is more important than Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said, “the red line for Arabs is twenty percent of the population...I want to preserve the Jewish character of the state of Israel not by name only, but also in action, values, language, and culture.”

For the purposes of the Law of Return, Israeli law defines a Jew as a person with at least one Jewish grandparent. So the basis of the law is biological – a person is a Jew if he or she belongs, at least partially, to a certain ethnicity. Moreover, the law has a religiously discriminatory aspect. A biological Jew who practices a religion other than Judaism can be disqualified from immigrating under the Law of Return. So this law explicitly favors a certain racial and religious group of people over all others, offering it

preferential treatment with regards to naturalization.

This policy seems to violate widely held conceptions of discrimination in America. Imagine if the US were to alter its immigration policy such as to provide automatic immigration and citizenship to any person with at least one white Christian grandparent. No doubt, mainstream Americans would see an immigration policy that explicitly favored white people as anathema to everything the country stands for. To advocate for such a policy would be political suicide. Why is Israel different?

Racial attitudes have also shaped Israeli attitudes towards African refugees. Sudanese and Eritrean immigrants seeking asylum in Israel from civil war and persecution in their home countries have encountered cool hostility. A poll conducted by the Israel Democracy Institute found that more than half of Israeli Jews agree with MK Miri Regev that these refugees are “a cancer” on Israeli society. Israel’s multi-faceted cure for this “cancer” has involved shipping some of these refugees back to their home countries, rounding up others in desert detention centers, and building a 140-mile fence along its entire Egyptian border. Yet this response has elicited little outcry from our community. How can we excoriate politicians who ignore the plight of Syrian refugees and yet fail to denounce similar policies in our homeland? Here, again, our views qua Americans do not square with our views qua religious Zionists.

How might we resolve this tension? Many have justified the Law of Return based on the holocaust, claiming that the Law of Return is necessary to provide Jewish people with a safe haven that is free of anti-Semitic oppression. In fact, this justification is built into the fabric of the law itself – the racial definition of Judaism utilized in the Law of Return stems directly from the definition of Judaism provided by Nazi Germany’s Nuremberg Laws. So the Law of Return was crafted as a direct response to the holocaust.

Perhaps this justification was reasonable when the law was passed in 1950. Jews fleeing the holocaust sometimes had difficulty finding countries that would agree to shelter them, so it was argued that the Jewish people needed a national homeland that would grant them automatic citizenship. But now that the Nazi government is no longer a global threat, the immediate necessity for a Jewish sanctuary seems to have dissipated. Moreover, if this law was created to protect a minority group from the most pernicious sort of racial oppression, then the last thing that this law should do is enforce a racial hierarchy.

Others have tried to distinguish between Israel and America by pointing to the original intents of their respective founders. They claim that the United States has always been a nation of immigrants, dedicated to providing opportunity to people the world over without regard for race, creed, or color. But those who make this claim revise history. In fact, until relatively recently, America’s immigration policy was overtly racial. America was originally a nation of a certain type of immigrants – the US Naturalization Law of 1790 restricted naturalization to “free white persons.” The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 suspended Chinese immigration until 1943 when the Magnuson Act allowed Asian naturalization for the first time since 1795 (albeit with an annual quota of 105 persons). Up until 1965, immigration to America was governed by a national origins quota system designed to favor immigrants from northern and western Europe. And even when the Immigration and Nationality Act was passed in 1965, Senate immigration sub-committee chairman Ted Kennedy promised that the bill “will not upset the ethnic mix of our society.”

So when people claim that America is a nation of immigrants, what they really mean is that American rightfully *should* be a nation of immigrants and that the legislation in 1965 was a positive development. We may wish that America had always been a generous host, mercifully granting citizenship to people of all colors and nationalities, but let us not rewrite history. To say that American immigration has traditionally been racially colorblind is to allow hagiography to take possession of the facts. America made a conscious move to become a more diverse nation of immigrants, and Israel has the ability to do the same.

To be clear, I am not evaluating the concept of an ethnic state. But we should not tolerate collective cognitive dissonance. If denying entry to Syrian refugees is morally repulsive, then so is shipping Eritreans back to persecution and hunger. And if immigration policy aimed at maintaining a racial enclave is unacceptable, then so is the Law of Return. Consistency is all I ask.

The COMMENTATOR

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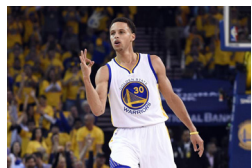
For 81 years, The Commentator has served students and administrators as a communicative conduit; a kinetic vehicle disseminating undergraduate social, religious, and academic beliefs across the student bodies; and a reliable reflection of Yeshiva student life to the broader Jewish and American communities.

The Commentator staff claims students spanning the diverse spectrum of backgrounds and beliefs represented at Yeshiva.

We are united by our passion for living the ideals of Torah u-Maddah, and a commitment to journalistic excellence.



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1 Stephen Curry

Shooting 44 percent from behind the arc to the tune of over 32 points per game, this guy looks absolutely unstoppable. Best shooter in NBA history?

2 Movember Mustaches

With the proper grooming, even the dinkiest crumb catcher can be transformed into resplendent lip foliage. We recommend Wild Willies Premium Organic Stache Wax (in a pinch, Wild Willies Beard Butter will also do the trick).

3 Thanksgetting

After all your hard work you deserve a pat on the back. While you're at it, you should thank yourself for just being you.

4 Bob Kraft

Not only did he arrange for the Patriots to hold a moment of silence for Ezra Schwartz on national television, but he personally paid a shiva call to their house. Now that's what I call a nice Jewish boy.

5 The Large Metal Rectangle

This modern art installation in Nagel Commons is radically pushing the boundaries of the aesthetic. Featuring a giant picture frame inconveniently placed in the middle of a public space, it challenges viewers to see the world from the cramped perspective of a framed painting.

6 Adele

Can she do anything wrong? She's 3 for 3 with fantastic albums. That's unprecedented.

7 Rabbi Dr. Shmuly Yanklowitz

Fox News filmed this rabbi sharing his vegan Thanksgiving dinner with a family of Syrian refugees. The lack of turkey was more than made up for by Rabbi Shmuly's winning smile.

7 UP



7 DOWN

1 Down

A layer of fine feathers found under a bird's coarse exterior plumage, this fluffy stuff is an excellent lightweight thermal insulator commonly found in winter outerwear.

2 Cranberry Sauce

Is it sweet or sour? Delicious or disgusting? You give it a shot every year, but always end up confused. Conveniently, though, it is served already partially digested.

3 Tiger Woods

I don't know about you, but I'm still upset over what he did to his wife! The Chutzpah!

4 Cyber Monday

You mean I can get all the Black Friday deals without pushing and shoving and waiting on hour-long checkout lines? Where's the fun in that?

5 A Russian Jet

With some declaring the onset of WWIII, the massive global proxy war being waged in the middle east is complicated and scary.

6 You're Welcome

"Thank You" is attracting all the attention these days, and this cordial reply is getting short shrift.

7 YU ID Inspections

If you needed another reason to dislike ISIS, you can now curse them under your breath as you fumble around in your pocket searching for your ID only to be told by security that your sticker needs to be updated.

News Briefs

By Commentator Staff

Movember Comes to YU

This past month, Yeshiva University joined activists across the country in "Movember", a contraction of Mustache November, in an effort to raise awareness for men's health. While many different events, rallies, and articles are put out during Movember, the hallmark of the annual event involves growing facial hair and encouraging others to do the same. At Yeshiva, the student council and other students have been active promoting Movember, set to culminate in a Chulent Cook-off where students will have a chance to "establish chulent dominance" according to y-studs sent out describing the event. "Chulent," the traditional Jewish stew originating in Jewish populations in Europe, is typically a mainstay of Shabbat meals but has earned special prominence in the realm of cook-off competition in recent years. Team names for the event include "Movember to Remember" and "Chulent's Angels," among others. In addition to the cook-off, students on the Wilf Campus growing out their mustaches will be given an opportunity to showcase their facial fur by submitting pics of their 'stache to the Office of Student Life. At the Beren Campus, student council have been tabling with mustache themed paraphernalia, giving female students the opportunity to show their support for men's health. For much of the month, YSU president Noam Safier could be seen sporting a specially designed Movember shirt with a Yeshiva logo sporting a 'stache of its own.



Dean Bacon Begins to Make Changes To Integrate Campuses

This year, Dean Karen Bacon became the Dr. Monique C. Katz Dean of Undergraduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences as part of a larger effort to integrate and "rightsize" aspects of the university. As dean of undergraduate programs, Dean Bacon has been working to streamline and combine various aspects of the different undergraduate schools. Mainly, as reported here, that effort involves the integration of departments on the Wilf and Beren Campuses. And, as reported in The Observer, some of these are starting to be made. Perhaps the most immediate change is reconciling the discrepancy between campuses regarding the minimum Advanced Placement (AP) score required to receive college credit. Whereas previously, students on the Wilf Campus needed a 5 to receive credit while students on the Beren Campus could receive credit for a 4, both campuses will now be accepting 4s for credit. Further, a concerted effort is being made to offer the majors that exist on one campus at the other campus. Most prominently, this will result in the expansion of computer science course offerings for Stern students. These updates will be worked into course offerings by the Fall 2016 semester. Dean Bacon has also explained that while the departments will be integrated, course offerings may remain different on both campuses due to the varying expertise of individual faculty members on each campus. It is unclear what these changes will mean for requirements on both campuses.

Yeshiva University Mourns Ezra Schwartz

EZRA SCHWARTZ,
CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Martin Galla, LCSW, and Dr. Eric Pollack, Assistant Director and Psychologist, respectively, at the Counselling Center, were present and available to talk to students, too.

Mr. Schwartz's body was returned to Sharon, Massachusetts, for burial. As his body left the Ben Gurion International Airport in Israel on Saturday night, November 21, hundreds of friends, former teachers, and others gathered to pay their last respects to the slain teenager. Among those present were many siblings of current YU students who are now studying in Israel in their gap year between high school and college.

The Boston Globe reported that over 1,000 attended Mr. Schwartz's funeral on Sunday, November 22, among them several YU students. Many members of the Schwartz family eulogized Ezra as well as his baseball coach, a family friend, high school principal, and the head of his Yeshiva in Israel.

Ezra Schwartz's murder reached nationwide recognition when the New England Patriots, a team of the National Football League, held a moment of silence in Mr. Schwartz's memory before their Monday night game. After a communitywide effort calling ESPN and requesting that the moment of silence be broadcast, the channel showed the tribute on national television. The stadium announcer called him a "huge Patriots fan" who was "gunned down 5,500 miles away from home in a senseless act of terrorism." In the lounge of the Morgenstern Residence Hall dozens of students gathered to watch the moment of silence even though they did not intend to watch the football game itself.

On Tuesday, November 24, several Yeshiva University students travelled by chartered bus to the Schwartz shiva home. Thousands of visitors came to Sharon to comfort the Schwartz family. Several dignitaries offered their condolences, including United States President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry, who telephoned the

family. Robert Kraft, owner of the National Football League team the New England Patriots, also visited the mourners.

A week after the shooting, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu spoke at a memorial in Israel organized by Yeshiva University, the Orthodox Union in Israel, MASA, and Yeshivat Ashreinu. The event was attended by over 1,000.

Mr. Schwartz's death comes as one of many since mid-September, the start of the latest surge in Palestinian violence. Widespread stabbings, shootings, and car-ramming attacks have led to much bloodshed. As of press time, 19 Israelis and at least 96 Palestinians, many of which were terrorists and attempted terrorists, have died in the conflicts.

The tragic events in Israel serve as a sad reminder for the more uplifting fact that the Yeshiva University community



Chanukah Fest 5776

By Benjamin Koslowe

This December 8, the third night of Chanukah 5776, YU's first-ever "Chanukah Fest" will take place in YU's Max Stern Athletic Center. According to Noam Safier, president of YSU, it "will be complete with real games, great food, music, and what should be an amazing performance by two acrobats." Josh Nagel, president of YCSA, said the event's idea "is to create a space where students can hang out, meet new people, and have an enjoyable Chanukah."

Ms. Aliza J Abrams, Director of the Office of Student Life and Jewish Service Learning on Beren Campus, suggested to "think the energy of Yom Ha'atzmaut, but with a Chanukah twist. We're looking forward to a large Chanukah party, a carnival full of activities, fun foods, surprise performances, and swag!"

Veteran students and faculty will recall that in years prior, the Chanukah event has been a concert. This tradition, which goes back many years, has recently brought performances by Avraham Fried, the Maccabeats, Dedi, Matisyahu, the Moshav Band, Shwekey, Judah Blue, Mordechai Ben David, Edon Pinchot, Shalshelles, Nissim Black, Shlock Rock, Benny Freidman, Yehuda!, and Alex Clare. This annual concert, performed in Lampion Auditorium, was open to all YU students and faculty, as well as the broader Jewish community. "People who attended the concerts loved them and they are a long standing tradition," noted Nagel. "This year though, we were willing to take a risk, end the tradition of the concert, and try something new. It seemed to us that the time of the concert had ended. The Welcome Back Bash and Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebration were two big examples that we wanted to model off of. Hence, our carnival idea, to spend the budget reserved on the concert on something that we know appeals more to students."

Shai Berman, last year's YCSA president, along with former TAC president Amanda Esraelian, worked hard for two months preparing the concert and promoting it to the undergraduate and broader communities. "We learned what we had suspected all along," told Berman. "YU students, on the whole, are simply not interested in attending a Jewish music concert during Chanukah in YU, no matter how high the price is, and no matter who is playing. Gone are the days

of Avraham Fried, Dedi, and Mordechai Ben David, when Jewish singers could garner and very large and enthusiastic following from YU college students. Even when it comes to the most successful concert during my time in YU, in 2012, when Judah Blue, Edon, and Shalshelles performed in front of an almost sold out auditorium, that concert owed its success more to the high number of families from the community and the mass of screaming high school girls excited to catch a glimpse of Edon, than it did to the YU students who came." Berman did firmly grant that the concerts themselves were fantastic. "However," he qualified, "as awesome as the concert was, and as much as my friends and I enjoyed it, I, and many other members of student government, were left won-

"THE WELCOME BACK BASH AND YOM HA'ATZMAUT CELEBRATION WERE TWO BIG EXAMPLES THAT WE WANTED TO MODEL OFF OF. HENCE, OUR...IDEA...SOMETHING THAT WE KNOW APPEALS MORE TO STUDENTS."

- JOSH NAGEL, PRESIDENT OF YCSA

dering if [last year's] concert, which attracted only around 400 YU students (and that's a generous estimate), was really worth all the time and money that we had invested in it."

Adam Zimilover, president of YCSA the year before Berman, expressed similar sentiments. Zimilover, who was involved in planning two Chanukah concerts, "felt that the concert, while enjoyable for many students, was not the best use of the incredible time and resources (financial, hours of work that could be spent planning other events, etc.) that it required. The concert cost tens of thousands of dollars and required hundreds of hours of work. In order to keep ticket prices reasonable, it was inevitably a big financial loss for the councils as well." Zimilover as well noted the turnout

issue. "The majority of attendees," he said, "were not even YU students, so essentially we were using a large portion of our budget to fund an event that wasn't even primarily for the YU student body. I definitely feel that there can be much better uses of the student council's budget and resources that will appeal to a larger portion of the students."

Some students will inevitably express doubt or disappointment about the change in venue. "I was very much looking forward to this year's Chanukah concert," described Akiva Schiff, currently in his first semester in YU. "I remember several concerts while I was a student in MTA. There was great anticipation in the MTA hallways hearing the bands practice the day-of, and the concert itself was always exciting and uplifting. It was all around a great Chanukah experience." Akiva Marder, currently in his second year at YU, said that he "loved last year's Chanukah concert! It was a lot of fun and a really nice way for both campuses to come together in celebration." Marder added that "initially I was really upset when I heard there was going to be no concert this year but I'm sure whatever is being planned instead will be just as, if not more, amazing."

Those in charge of planning and advertising likewise maintain that the new Chanukah Fest will be a success. Rachel Rolnick, this year's SCWSC president, emphasized the goal of creating a unified campus feel. "There will be a lot going on," she described, "a great way to get the YU community together to celebrate. If you're a fan of the 'Yoms' on campus, that's the sort of feel we are trying to achieve - both campuses coming together for one big celebratory event, the Chanukah Fest." Natan Szegedi, last year's YSU president, similarly senses that this year's event will be one that is "more interactive and allows for more socializing (as far as I've heard). I think that is also a great idea (and probably less straining on the student budget) and I'm sure it will be a wonderful program as well." And Safier as well is optimistic that "the freedom that this style of event provides will be warmly embraced by the student body."

Of course, "Chanukah Fest is an experiment this year," pointed out Nagel, "to try use our money more wisely and appeal to more students. If it doesn't work, they can go back to a concert next year. If it does work, then Chanukah on campus will have a fresh feel to it for more students."

Basketball Team Kicks off Season With Win over Gallaudet

By Aaron Szydlo

The Yeshiva University Maccabees kicked off the 2015-2016 basketball season against the Gallaudet University Bison, a school designed to accommodate the deaf and hard of hearing. In an exciting game, the Macs pulled out a victory, winning 78-64, to start off the season on the right foot.

From the starting tip, until the final buzzer, the Macs never trailed the Bison. Yeshiva University started off the game on an 11-4 run which forced Gallaudet to call a timeout. After the first 5 minutes the Macs were leading 16-6. Thanks to the stifling defense of senior Shelby Rosenberg, and sophomore Judah Cohen, the Macs half-court press was in full force. The strong defense forced Gallaudet to commit

numerous turnovers, leading to several uncontested transition points.

At half time, the Macs led 40-29, and seemed pleased with their first half performance. Their resilient defense, smart shot selection and success in transition were all contributing factors to the team's first half lead. Sophomore shooting guard Jamie Cappell, who was sidelined with a knee injury, was confident of the team's prospects at half time when he said: "I think if we keep up the tough defense in the second half, then we have a great shot at winning the game."

As the second half began, Gallaudet slowly chipped away at the 11-point deficit. Gallaudet mustered up a monumental effort in the second half, at one point putting the game within four. Trey Gordon lead Gallaudet with 16 points, along

with Todd Bonheyo, who dropped 12.

Commenting on the Gallaudet surge, sophomore shooting guard Justin Hod said, "I started to get nervous for a minute. One minute we were up by eleven, and all of a sudden it was a two possession game."

By the end of the game however, the Macs held on to win it, earning themselves a well fought victory. The Macs had a very well balanced scoring game, including four players scoring in double digits. Leading the charge was Shelby Rosenberg who had 20 points, followed by Michael Berg who contributed 17, and Joseph Ammar who added 13, including multiple three pointers. If this game is an indicator of Yeshiva University's season, there is much to look forward to.

Why People Still Choose YU: A Closer Look at the YU Open House

By Isaac M. Krasnopolsky

On Sunday, November 22, prospective students and their families from across North America were welcomed to Yeshiva University's Wilf Campus to participate in the annual fall open house. College-bound students, many joined by their parents, experienced Yeshiva College life for a day by exploring the campus, attending informative events on Torah, academics, and student life and even getting a taste of Yeshiva's various culinary options.

After speaking with several students and their parents about their open house experience, I received enthusiastic feedback. Many parents are alumni of Yeshiva and expressed pride in the fact that their children were considering Yeshiva University for their own higher education. Others, however, offered a more reserved response and said they were "just checking it out." Regardless, Yeshiva's one-of-a-kind dual curriculum remains unmatched by any other institution in the United States which is a significant factor to consider.

Although prospective students were generally optimistic, many parents raised legitimate concerns regarding Yeshiva's high tuition rates as for many, tuition is a deal breaker. While speaking to a father and son at the open house, they informed me that they perceived the financial aid meeting as the most important part of their visit.

The university administration strongly feels that YU will maintain its ability to offer financial support to any

family that seriously lacks the means of paying tuition. On the day of the open house, I held a brief, yet informative discussion with President Richard Joel. During our discussion, President Joel informed me that around 90% of the students that attended Sunday's open house were either seriously considering YU or were already committed to it. For the other 10%, President Joel explained, YU did not hold a high priority. I was also informed that out of roughly 3,000 college-bound seniors attending Jewish

"THE CROWDS THAT GATHERED ON SUNDAY SERVED AS A TESTAMENT THAT YESHIVA UNIVERSITY REMAINS AN EXCELLENT CHOICE FOR MANY!"

high schools across the country, only about 650 of them (about 22%) have YU on their immediate radar.

Tuition certainly plays a significant role in these numbers, however, it's not the only contributing factor to the low percentage of yeshiva high school students considering YU. Misinformation pertaining to Yeshiva University's financial standing has been prevalent for many months and specifically escalated around the time of the Einstein-Montefiore deal. However, President Joel made

it quite clear that YU will not allow tuition to get in the way of a Yeshiva University education. Funds for academic scholarships are scarce, and the chances of YU offering any student a "free ride" based on merit is currently slim. Nevertheless, those who really need the tuition breaks will continue to receive appropriate discounts.

The financial concerns extend further than tuition. Many students and parents fear that the quality of education at Yeshiva will suffer as a direct consequence of recent budget cuts. President Joel debunked this assertion as well by stating that "there is no evidence to show that budget cuts have affected or will affect the overall academic experience of a Yeshiva University student." I can testify to that myself, as after starting at YU a year and a half ago, I have yet to see any way in which my academic experiences have suffered. The only appreciable change that has occurred thus far was the exclusion of first year seminar from the YC Core curriculum. Most people would agree, however, that their overall experience has in no way been negatively affected by recent financial events.

The crowds that gathered on Sunday served as a testament that Yeshiva University remains an excellent choice for prospective students. Our school offers something unique that other institutions cannot easily replicate. Students and parents alike continue to recognize the tremendous impact that our Torah U'Madda institution has on the greater Jewish community and consequently, many would agree that YU is worth every penny.

Standing with France and Commemorating the Fallen

By Uri Shalmon

November 13th, 2015 is a day that will go down in history. After the mass shootings and suicide bombings in and around Paris, France, which claimed 130 lives, people worldwide rose up in solidarity with France's citizens. These attacks, orchestrated by ISIL, are the deadliest France has suffered since World War Two and consequently shocked the French population.

Yeshiva University also expressed its support by hold-

ing a few events. Previously, French Muslims would take part in the conflict in Israel by expressing their opinions locally which created danger for France's Jews. Also, since people were accustomed to living with Muslims (although not in such large numbers) security was not as rigorous. Now, however, it is much more dangerous for everyone and Journo believes security will markedly increase because the thread extends beyond the Jewish community.

In the aftermath of last January's attack against the Charlie Hebdo newspaper offices and several places in the Île-de-France region, people tried to leave France. In response to the recent attack, people are trying to leave again, and many make attempts after high school. Journo says it is very difficult to enter the United States because of visa requirements though Israel is much easier to enter, especially for Jews.

Arié Barkats, also a freshman, spoke next. According to Barkats, the attacks in Paris struck Parisians much more than it affected France's other citizens. Although both Arié and Ruben are from Marseille, in the south of France, they said that "It makes you very afraid for everyone you know there because you've been there, you know the people and it could've been you." His family is still in Marseille and they are very afraid. He thanks G-d that the attacks occurred on Friday night as most Jews were not outside due to Shabbat, although it doesn't necessarily alleviate the pain felt for the others who lost their lives. Many of the previous acts of terrorism targeted Jews, explains Barkats, but it is

getting worse and worse and all of France is now afraid. For him, it is very nice to see Americans getting involved, caring about others' suffering, and lending support to the frightened French community.

The final speaker was Alex Wascher, an international student hailing from Vienna, Austria. Wascher feels that the refugee crisis is related to these acts of terror and calls people out, saying, "we must realize that not every refugee is ISIS!" Wascher continues that if terrorist attacks on scales such as these happen more often, "we must take

it as a global problem, a political problem. These attacks are not necessarily anti-Semitic, like part of the Charlie Hebdo attack in January. Seeing the solidarity the world expressed in response to the events in Paris strengthens those in Europe and reassures them. If people demonstrate that they care, it shows that we can make a change in the world".

In response to a question about the future of France, Journo said that Marseille's population is already 25% Muslim, and it is predicted that in 20 years Muslims will run the country." If we don't fight against them, if we don't make the effort", Journo says, "they will take over and we will lose".

As a solution to the terror in France, Journo cited the idea of Marine Le Pen, an extreme right-wing politician running for election, who wants to remove the concept of dual citizenship and deport foreigners who commit crimes. Before these attacks, some people thought she was too right wing, but now, more people are supporting her. Journo believes that she will win the next election no matter what, while Barkats believes differently. Barkats explained, "If the election was tomorrow, she would get in but the election is in two years. If it gets better [people] will forget her but if something happens then she will get in."

To close the event, Josh Nagel led a recitation of a chapter of Psalms as a prayer for the safety and good health of those injured and of all those threatened across the globe.



ing a few events. On Nov. 16th during the Pictures for Paris event, students had the opportunity to take pictures with the French flag. On the 17th a few European students reflected on their personal connections to the terrorist attacks at the YU for Paris event.

Josh Nagel opened the YU for Paris event by explaining that it was meant to offer perspective on the tragedy that occurred. The first speaker was Reben Journo, a freshman. Journo said that France is around 10% Muslim – that's over six million Muslims – and such a high per-



French student Ruben Journo speaks with other students about his experience and feelings after the attacks in Paris.

New Director of University Libraries: Paul Glassman

By Elie Lipnik

Early this semester, YU hired Paul Glassman as the new Director of University Libraries. He comes to the YU libraries from Felician University in Bergen County, New Jersey, where he served as Director of Library Services and as an associate professor.

Although he has just been assigned this new position, Glassman is hardly new to the University, with a fairly long standing affiliation on campus teaching architectural history and design since 1994. Glassman has a dual background in professional architecture and academic librarianship, and is “thrilled to now be able to do both in one place.” Glassman’s appointment follows a search that began with the retirement of the Libraries’ director of the past 30 years, Pearl Berger.

Glassman joins the YU libraries at a pivotal time as the renovation of the Gottesman Library building nears completion which will transform the feeling and environment of the library to a much more brighter, lighter, and transparent one. This transformation, from the viewpoint of Glassman as an architectural historian, will do a great job of preserving the original design’s essence while adapting it to the 21st century. Glassman now has a large role in making sure that the renovations stay on track and the relaunching goes smoothly. He maintains that the library will be fully up and running by the start of the next semester, although the second and fourth floor will be completed before that.

Mr. Glassman sees his role as Director of University Libraries as revitalizing the place of library services, both in the library itself and in the classroom. He intends to do this by creating a sense of openness and approachability through developing relationships with both faculty and students.

As director, he is responsible for making sure that the facility and environment is preserved as a vigorous, vi-

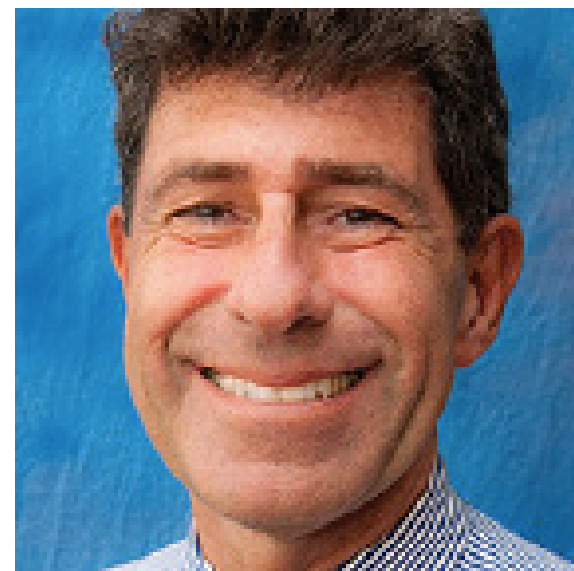
brant one in which both teaching and learning can take place. Glassman asserted, however, that this is not an issue for YU students because they are very active library users, who respects the institution’s importance. He continued by describing the Yeshiva community as one in which the

“GLASSMAN JOINS THE YU LIBRARIES AT A PIVOTAL TIME AS THE RENOVATION OF THE GOTTESMAN LIBRARY BUILDING NEARS COMPLETION WHICH WILL TRANSFORM THE FEELING AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE LIBRARY TO A MUCH MORE BRIGHTER, LIGHTER, AND TRANSPARENT ONE.”

value of books and study is readily apparent, and this is something that is greatly appreciated by the library staff.

Glassman stated that one of the most remarkable things at YU is the “Special Collections,” which are the rare books and manuscripts housed on the 4th floor of the Gottesman Library. According to Glassman, “they are exceptionally fine,” and he would like them to be better known among the students. The professional staff that work with them are highly skilled and talented. Moreover, these professionals have done a wonderful job digitizing the collection, allowing the riches of these materials to be disseminated globally.

When addressing the drastic changes going on in terms of the dissemination of knowledge and information, Glassman acknowledged that the current generation of college



students is experiencing an irreversible transformation from print media to that of electronic media. Moreover, many students arrive on campus with misconceptions that information is always available instantaneously. The notion of waiting or researching for something is becoming quite foreign to today’s college population. Glassman and his staff are doing their best to familiarize themselves with the situation, and be as sensitive as they can to that expectation. In an attempt to remedy this modern approach to information gathering, there is now 24-hour access to all of the available texts via online resources, even when the library is closed.

With over forty staff members and three libraries at two locations under his auspices, he has quite a job ahead, but with patience and elegance Glassman will see nothing but success in the future.

Interview with New Director of the Office of Student Life

By Noam Feifel

For years now, the Office of Student Life has been creating a lively campus experience at YU. Actively ensuring that students’ experiences go far beyond the classroom and Beit Midrash walls, they have proven to be the driving force behind daily activities and events around campus.

Linda Stone, the assistant director of the office, said these activities and events include “Shabbat programming, student government and club activities, student leadership training, major campus events such as orientations, holiday programs... Schrieber Torah Tours and other service learning programs.” Stone continued, “We also handle answers@yu.edu, the student information resource which responds to all questions and concerns related to campus life.” As the office tirelessly works to promote and maintain a campus vibe as dynamic as it is, the Office of Student Life continues to be one of the most indispensable assets that the university has.

The Office of Student Life has been successfully managing and enhancing campus life for years. However, this year, a new figure is debuting as the Director of the department on the Wilf Campus. Josh Weisberg, a Monsey native who received his Master’s Degree in Social Work from New York University, and earned smekha from the Ohr Lagolah Institute in Jerusalem, has plenty of prior experience in the field of directing, and is well equipped for the job.

Weisberg was most recently the Director of Operations and Programming at the Yeshiva@IDT in Newark. Prior to that, he

explained, “through my work with Chai Lifeline, as a division head at Camp Simcha, fundraiser, alumni committee member and lifelong volunteer, I have many years of experience in leadership, management and programming.” He has also previously taught in various Yeshivot in Israel for the better part of ten years. Amazingly, in his spare time, Weisberg also works as a clinical psychotherapist across the bridge in New Jersey. More than qualified for the position, Weisberg has accepted his new job in stride and now leads the already instrumental workforce that the office has been.

The Office of Student Life’s mission statement, as per YU’s website, asserts that the office, “ensures a vibrant campus experience guided by Torah U’Maddah values... We advocate and intervene on behalf of students and administrators in order to enhance campus life. We prepare our student body to be successful, active and engaged members of the Jewish community.” The office sets a high standard for excellence and expects nothing less than reaching or even surpassing their goals. Even though the new director didn’t attend Yeshiva University as a student himself, he is confident that his lack of previous association to the university won’t impede his understanding of the school’s system or inhibit his ability ensure that these goals are achieved. Weisberg noted, “any new position comes with the task of learning and understanding the organization’s culture and operations and obviously it will take me longer to acclimate than someone who attended YU as a student.”

Weisberg attributes his smooth adjustment to the Office of Student Life to the office itself and the welcoming arms that

its staff met him with when he first arrived. “Through communication, collaboration and support, my colleagues have made this period of transition smoother than I could have ever anticipated,” offered Weisberg. “I am lucky enough to have entered into a situation where everyone I have encountered in the University, staff and students alike have been eager to help in any way they can.”

While the new director may feel fortunate for the office’s warm reception, the department itself unquestionably reciprocates that feeling. Linda Stone observed, “He is already working closely with student leaders and the YU administration to ensure tremendous student programming on campus.” Ever since he has been the executive incumbent in the office, Weisberg has made a manifest impact. Since his arrival earlier in the Fall, the office has played an integral role in major operations, such as the Kumzitz in Times Square attended by hundreds, and preparing to send a delegation of students to the JFNA General Assembly in Washington DC. The office is attentive to hundreds of programs on campus and spends large amounts of time training student leaders to help prepare them for student government positions.

The Office of Student Life has been, and continues to be the backbone of YU’s student experience on campus and beyond. The office, now featuring Weisberg as director, is looking stronger than ever.

Examining the New School of General Studies and Re-Imagined YU Global

YU GLOBAL, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

two-year program, students will then be able to either use their degrees to enter into professional fields or transfer their two years of credit to a mainstream baccalaureate program at Yeshiva University. Though Provost Botman predicts that the program will serve only a small number of students (around 15 on each campus) during its first year, she remains optimistic about the growth of the new program, noting the success she saw when she created a similar model at a University she worked at previously.

YU Global

The mission of the revenue-focused school of General Studies closely resembles that of YU Global, the University's online education provider, and, indeed, YU Global will soon be subsumed under this school. Along with this organizational shift, the goals and methods of YU Global will once again change drastically -- as the online arm for the School of General Studies, YU Global will mainly focus on creating new degree programs. In order to accomplish this mission of increasing the quantity of degrees, YU Global is partnering with an external instructional design company and letting go of all current YU Global employees.

YU Global's Past

As reported in The Commentator in December 2014, YU Global originated in 2014 under the leadership of Vice Provost Scott Goldberg. The program whose staff was "a young cohort, some of them recent graduates from YU" quickly identified itself as a "startup" with a constantly-shifting mission and logistical structure. The 2014 vision of YU Global encompassed two main focuses: one was revenue-generating certificate programs, while the other offered cost-saving measures and possible educational benefits through blended learning experiences. Each represented something new and different for the University, and thus elicited fear and hesitation from the student body.

The program's revenue-focused operation sought to market online certificate programs across the world. "Much of its focus is on finding partners in China, but Dr. Goldberg and the team are also looking at potential opportunities to partner in Poland, India, Israel, and Brazil." Many questioned the efficacy of this plan, and its possible effect on Yeshiva's reputation. Will we find a market in these international countries of students searching for a YU education? More generally, many have pointed out that certificate programs, due to their limited educational and professional value, don't particularly further our mission of being a "quality University."

More immediately, many students were concerned about YU Global's venture into online education for Yeshiva College and SYMS courses. In an effort to both increase the efficiency of course offerings and improve the student experience, YU Global has helped professors integrate online components into their courses creating "blended" courses. These courses only meet once a week in a classroom, with the other class session taking place online. Despite generally positive reviews for these courses and YU Global's promise that these offerings will remain limited and partially face-to-face, some students fear that these courses signal the beginning of the end for their beloved classroom experience. With just one course in the Spring 2016 Yeshiva College scheduled listed as "semi-online," these fears appear unfounded.

Less than a year into the program, true to its startup form, YU Global changed its leadership and direction. Akiva Covitz and Lydia Lazar, two senior executives, took charge of the program from Vice Provost Goldberg, and reported directly to Provost Botman. Under Covitz and Lazar, YU

Global has moved away from certificate program offerings and focused more intensely on summer school offerings, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC's), and, recently, on creating high school courses.

Summer school at Yeshiva University this past summer featured ten fully online courses offered through YU Global. Enrollment in summer school nearly doubled this year, including an increase in students from other institutions. These online courses allow students much-needed flexibility -- many students spend their summers outside of New York, but through online courses they can nonetheless enroll in YU's summer classes. In addition to fully online courses, some of these summer courses featured blended learning experiences, also provided by YU Global. These summer courses are perhaps YU Global's greatest accomplishments during the 2015 year, with some of the courses receiving awards for excellence in online education.

In addition to creating and offering online courses through YU's summer school, YU Global established a partnership with Coursera this year, a platform for MOOC's. Coursera houses almost 1500 online courses and through this platform students around the world can enroll in high quality and extremely inexpensive online courses from many colleges, including Yale, Stanford, Penn, and now Yeshiva University. Working with Dr. Steven Fine, YU Global created a course about the Arch of Titus which they take great pride in and which will be offered on Coursera. Dr. Covitz presented a lecture at a recent Honors luncheon along with Dr. Fine detailing and explaining the process behind this course. In many ways, this course reflects the change of vision for YU Global from 2014 to 2015. In 2014, YU Global focused on creating certificate programs and generating revenue, with limited regard for these programs' benefits or how they might reflect negatively on the University. In contrast, this course, and much of the work done in 2015, sought to generate profits while spreading both the YU name and YU values through quality courses. Dr. Fine's course focuses on Judaism and Torah, allowing YU to further spread these values and ideas throughout the world. In line with this course that involves Jewish education, YU Global also received a grant from the Avichai Foundation this year to create online courses in Judaic subjects for high school students.

YU Global's Future

Over the last month, with the creation of the new school of General Studies, leadership and direction changed again for the "start-up" YU Global. Mirroring the mission of this new school, YU Global's focus now lies in revenue-generating degree programs. Contrary to YU Global's original vision of international certificate programs, Provost Botman emphasizes that the new School of General Studies will focus on degree programs. Further, despite YU Global's title, the targeted market now seems more nationally focused, with some reliance on Yeshiva's brand-name within the Orthodox Community itself.

Though YU Global will not completely abandon its other programs, its increased attention to revenue-oriented courses represents a significant departure from its emphases in the past few months, both in the structure of its staff and in its programs. In terms of MOOC's, Provost Botman noted that

while they might do another MOOC at some point, the main focus and goal will shift towards non-MOOC, regular online education within degree programs. Similarly, YU Global's role in blended courses, based on the limited offerings in Spring 2016's schedule and Provost Botman's attention to the revenue-generating sections, appears to have taken a backseat role as well.

In terms of staffing, the current model features a team of in-house employees, always available to talk with faculty and students, who coordinate heavily with faculty in creating courses. This ensures that courses easily reflect the wishes and ideas of faculty, an idea which Botman pointed out when distinguishing between two types of online education. The first resembles this model and focuses on faculty content. The second model focuses on the way students learn, specifically the process of online learning, and ensuring that students meet those goals. Though all attempts at online courses obviously involve a mix between the two, the staffing switch to an external instructional design team represents a shift further towards this latter model.

Beyond a shift in the method of learning, the courses also necessitated a change in staff. Provost Botman noted a need to "scale up" and produce more revenue-generating degrees. President Joel mentioned a similar urge, pointing out the important role that YU Global and the school of General Studies play in the YU budget, and how they must contribute significantly and quickly. While the current staff produced one such online degree program in the last year, Provost Botman wishes to increase that number to three. Achieving this goal requires firing the current staff, even though Botman and Joel expressed appreciation for their work. This new external staff will produce degrees quicker, while also focusing greater efforts on revenue programs instead of mission-driven programs.

Various concerns arise with this new shift in tone and focus. Some are curious why YU Global will seemingly abandon effective mission-driven initiatives, like MOOC's. Others worry about the quality of these new degree programs. Though Botman assures these degrees will maintain their excellence, speeding up production process and increasing the quantity of degrees often coincides with a decrease in quality. Most troubling to many, employees from outside the University will now play a large role in creating Yeshiva University education.

Yet the goal of the School of General Studies, and YU Global specifically, lies in strengthening Yeshiva's core Torah-U-Madda mission. In a narrow sense, this mission

remains the undergraduate dual curriculum education, so if this new model produces greater revenue and helps sustain and strengthen this curriculum, many of these concerns will disappear. Its success in this area remains to be seen, though it may prove vital to our University's survival.



Melave Malka: An Opportunity For Unity

MELAVE MALKA, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

their personal development, preparing them for another successful week of university and growth in their *avodat Hashem* (service of God).

Reflecting on the success of the Shabbaton and the concert, Shimon Niren, a sophomore student, stated that he

"definitely felt uplifted by the strong feelings of *achdus*" at the event. He added: "I heard about these Shabbatons and experienced one in 12th grade, I really wanted to attend YU. This concert exceeded my high expectations."

Another pleased student, Yosef Postelnek, a senior, remarked that "these kinds of events really cultivate a sense of *achdus* between the talmidim of the yeshiva and the rebbeim," attributes which are necessary, especially in the

tumultuous times in which we currently live.

The event was a great success, for it enabled students from various social circles to join together to show support for each other and demonstrate a sense of pride in their Jewish heritage and identity in a safe, positive environment.

YU Roshei Yeshiva Address the Topic of Women Rabbis

By Darren May

The Rabbinic Council of America (RCA) passed a resolution on October 30th stating that they are against the ordination of women rabbis, sparking controversy in the Orthodox Jewish world.

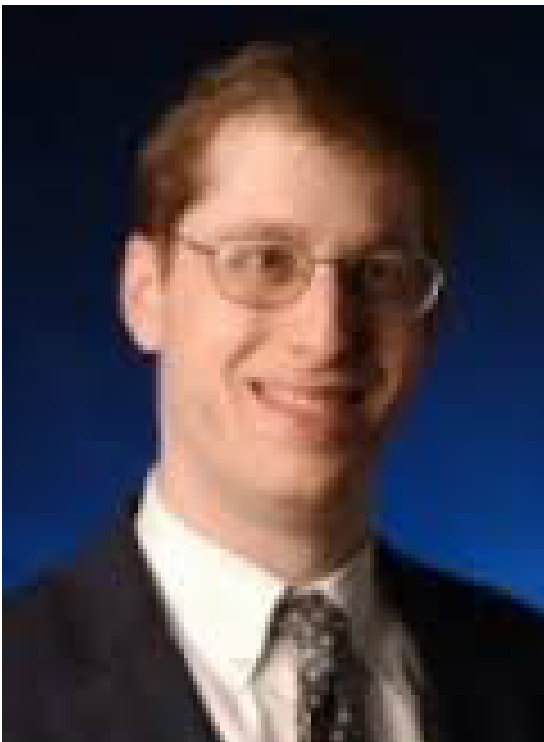
Many people opposed the resolution, feeling that previous resolutions stated almost the exact same thing, and therefore the redundancy of a new resolution would cause unnecessary controversy. Others in the RCA felt that it was important to restate their firm opposition to women rabbis, especially in light of a number of Orthodox Union Shuls who have hired female clergy. Lastly, there is a small minority within the RCA body that is for female ordination, and therefore opposed the resolution on principles. This new resolution elicited a number of varying responses amongst the YU Roshei Yeshiva, most notably a shiur on the topic given by Rabbi Jeremy Wieder.

Rabbi Wieder started the shiur by quote Rabbi Naftali Berlin, who said that when you are causing communal controversy, your intentions must be 100% pure in the pursuit of the service of G-d. He then went on to say that there are three areas to contemplate when considering the proposition of female rabbi. One must consider it from a legalistic point of view, a practical point of view, and a philosophical point of view. In terms of jurisprudence, Rabbi Wieder talked about a number of issues involving female rabbis, and concluded that none of them compellingly bar women from ordination.

One issue he discussed was the importance of tradition, and whether the idea of female clergy goes against Jewish tradition. He said that “there is a stream of Jewish tradition in halacha (Jewish law) and it is important to follow the stream in order to follow Jewish law, but in terms of women rabbis, the stream only started ninety years ago, so there is not mesorah (tradition) to talk about.”

What this means is that following stare decisis in Jewish law is essential if one wants to be an orthodox Jew, but in the case of women rabbis the issue could never of been brought up until the feminist movement started to pick up steam in the 1920’s. Therefore there is no stare decisis regarding the issue of women rabbis because there was no opportunity to have a precedent in the first place.

He also talked about the issue of modesty, stating that in Modern Orthodox communities where it is commonplace



Rabbi Jeremy Wieder

for women to speak in public, it is not an issue to have women talking in front of the shul. On the other hand, in communities where having a women talk in front of people is generally taboo, a woman rabbi would be a breach of modesty.

Concerning the practicality of women rabbis, Rabbi Wieder talked about the many roles a rabbi plays that a women could not do. Actions such as being a witness in

Jewish court or for a marriage, leading prayer services in shul, reading the Torah in shul, and serving as judge on a court are prohibited for a women to do within the current framework of Jewish law. These are jobs that many rabbis are expected to do, and therefore Rabbi Wieder said that if a women was to be a rabbi, she would have to go into the job knowing that there would be serious practical obstacles to her acting in the roles that rabbis are normally expected to fill.

Lastly, Rabbi Wieder talked about whether we should philosophically be for or against women rabbis. He said that it could be good for the Jewish people to increase the pool of rabbinic students, as this could, through supply and demand, lead to better rabbis overall. Rabbi Wieder added that in light of the success of the yoetzet halacha program in increasing overall observance in the communities that he has observed, it may be very beneficial to have women rabbis.

He ended the shiur by saying that if people want women rabbis there must be an investment in female Jewish learning. Just as in RI-ETS, most men who become rabbis spend a number of years learning many hours a day, so women rabbis must have a framework where they can learn many hours a day over a number of years in order to be qualified for the job.

At the end of the shiur there were a couple of interesting questions. One person asked “when you (Rabbi Wieder) say that there could be very positive outcomes from having women rabbis, does it bother you that no major authority in Jewish law has come to a congruent opinion to yours?” Rabbi Wieder said he was not bothered by this. Another question posed was “how do you feel about the fact that many of the people who are pushing female ordination seem to be people who are not themselves 100% committed to doing what is best in G-d’s eyes, and many of the people in communities who want women rabbi are very lax vis-a-vis religious observance.” Here, Rabbi Wieder said he wants to give people the benefit of the doubt that they are acting with the right intentions in regards to this issue unless knowledge comes to light to the contrary.

Another rabbi who addressed this topic on campus

"WHEN YOU (RABBI WIEDER) SAY THAT THERE COULD BE VERY POSITIVE OUTCOMES FROM HAVING WOMEN RABBIS, DOES IT BOTHER YOU THAT NO MAJOR AUTHORITY IN JEWISH LAW HAS COME TO A CONGRUENT OPINION TO YOURS?"

was Rabbi Hershel Schachter, considered by many to be the most senior of the Roshei Yeshiva. Citing a number of reasons, he said that it is against Jewish law to have women rabbis. One reason he mentioned was that there is an obligation to act like G-d, and G-d is very modest. Rabbi Schachter said “G-d is so modest in fact that many people don’t know he’s there at all.” He went on to say that really no one should be a rabbi, as this is by its very nature a breach of acting like G-d, namely being modest. “However, since there is a need for someone to be a rabbi” Rabbi Schachter said “we should choose the men since in Jewish law the value of modesty is much more stringently applied to women than to men.”

Another reason one could not have female rabbis he quoted in the name of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik. He said the source, the Shach on Yoreh Deah 1:1, which says that tradition includes much more than just the law itself,

also includes the way the Jewish people have acted in the past. Therefore, allowing women to be rabbis would be a serious breach in the Jewish imperative to guard and transmit the tradition that we have from Sinai, as there never were female rabbis in past generations.

In a private conversation, another Rosh Yeshiva, who preferred to remain anonymous, mentioned a number of reasons why he, and the majority of YU’s Roshei Yeshivah



Rav Schachter

have taken and continue to take a stand against women rabbis. The first reason was similar to Rabbi Schachter’s interpretation of mesorah. He said that Nachmanides on the Torah comments that Jews must guard the Torah by observing its commandments and transmitting the Torah to the next generation. The way Torah has always been transmitted from rabbi to rabbi has been through men. “Moshe received the Torah from Sinai and gave it to Joshua who gave it to the elders. (Pirkei Avot 1:1)” This Rosh Yeshiva was cautious, pondering who we are to say that the only reason that Torah was transmitted through men was because the world at large hadn’t reached a point where they could contemplate the idea of a female rabbi. He said “we don’t have the audacity to assume that we know why G-d set up the system of Torah the way that he did, and therefore we can’t say that we should change it.

He continued wondering what the repercussions of women rabbis would be for the Modern Orthodox, and Jewish communities at large? Therefore, in his opinion, “it’s better to play it safe and stay with the status quo.”

The last point he made was that if there were to be women rabbis in Modern Orthodox shuls, it would cut the Modern Orthodox community off from other orthodox Jews throughout the world, many of whom think female ordination is heretical. This he said would be disastrous for both Modern Orthodoxy and the Jewish world at large. Women rabbis have been a topic of debate since the reform movement started discussing the idea over 100 years ago. Since then there have been debates and polemics back and forth about the subject. YU is a place where many interesting and conflicting opinions reside under one roof, leading to a multitude of views about women rabbis within the same institution. Only time will tell what the Modern Orthodox stance on women rabbis will be, but one thing is for sure, this debate will continue in one form or another for generations to come.

What are you doing at 5:46 AM?

By Noam Feifel

At 5:45 in the morning, the average YU student is still sound asleep from the past night's slumber. The mere thought of getting out of bed is terribly disconcerting. Either nightmares are haunting him of performing poorly on his midterm later that day, or he is blissfully dreaming of the steaming cup of coffee that he will soon consume for breakfast. But these average students can wait, because neither of those scenarios will transpire for hours to come.

Simultaneously, a small group of not-so-average YU students experience a very different reality during these premature hours of the day. The men's basketball team, now under the direction of Coaches Elliot Steinmetz and Yogev Berdugo, have adopted a completely new schedule and clock to revolve around. The team practices six times per week, with weekday installments commencing at 5:45 in the morning. When practice draws a close over two hours later, and other responsibilities become more difficult to manage, the players quickly learn just how valuable time is. One of the captains on the team, senior Shaje Weiss, offered how the strenuous schedule has affected him. "Waking up that early is hard enough and both Coaches expect 110% effort every time we step on the court. The day is much harder because you are that much more tired throughout the day. On top of that we have to get our schoolwork done and try to be in bed by 11, so there is basically no free time beyond basketball and school." Sophomore Judah Cohen, playing his first year on the team, echoed that exact sentiment, "Because of the early practice, it's rough to rush back, shower, make it to Shacharis, and then Seder at 9. After that, a full regular day."

To some, it appears bewildering that college students, already combatting a challenging dual curriculum, would under their own volition sign up for such a vigorous, demanding program. But others, like senior captain Shelby Rosenberg, see matters from a very different vantage point. "I play basketball because I love to compete. I've been playing basketball my whole life and there's no thrill that com-

pires to the thrill of competition." For Rosenberg and the rest of the team, the love of the game undoubtedly trumps the extra stress or lack of sleep that accompanies the basketball schedule.

Moreover, according to Rosenberg, the game actually

"THE TEAM CHEMISTRY IS FANTASTIC. ON THE COURT WE ARE ONE OF THE BEST PASSING TEAMS AND LAST YEAR WE WERE NATIONALLY RANKED IN ASSISTS IN ALL OF DIVISION 3."

adds valuable elements to his life that would otherwise not exist. For Rosenberg, the intense schedule instills in him core values, such as, "keeping to a strict commitment and learning to be prompt." Another sophomore in his rookie season, Jamie Cappell offered insight congruent with that of Rosenberg, and explained that being on the team promotes "working hard, helping each other, and learning your role." While participating on the team has proven to be a difficult, enduring task, the players have discovered ways to maximize their gains from the sport, rather than sulk in the stress and fatigue that consequently stems from it.

Beyond the virtues it oft instills, perhaps the most gratifying aspect of playing on the basketball team at YU is the chemistry and camaraderie that it develops amongst the players. Throughout a long, trying season, players share all kinds of experiences together. Overcoming failure, celebrating success, and merely making it through the gruesome daily routine with one another are only some of the countless situations that build relationships inside and outside of the locker room. Regarding these inter-player relationships, Weiss commented, "The team chemistry is fantastic. On the court we are one of the best passing teams and last year

we were nationally ranked in assists in all of Division 3." Rosenberg added, "the guys are close and I think that's why we can be so unselfish and communal on the court."

Excellence on the court is obviously imperative and is the reason why students elect to play in the first place, but when the final whistle blows, the relationships formed from the team experience is what remains, and what ultimately reigns supreme. Weiss elaborated on how the players interact beyond the court. "Our chemistry off the court is so great. We are a very tight group and love each other uncon-



ditionally and are always there for each other. That is one of our keys to success: how well we mesh together."

The men's basketball team invests countless hours everyday at perfecting their craft in hopes of ultimately winning the Skyline Conference playoffs and earning a trip to Yeshiva University's first NCAA tournament in school history. Unwilling to relent, the team is determined to accomplish its goals, no matter what is entailed. Regardless of the turnout, though, the players have transcended being just a sports team. In much more profound terms, they have matured into a bonded, cohesive unit, who find meaning in the game, and who dwell on the values embedded within it.

Book Review: The Grownup by Gillian Flynn

By Rachel Okin

Gillian Flynn has done it again with her strange and macabre new novella, *The Grownup*. Born in Kansas City, Missouri in 1971, Flynn worked as feature writer at Entertainment Weekly magazine as a television critic before publishing her three best-selling books, *Gone Girl*, *Sharp Objects* and *Dark Places*. Her novels usually include themes of dysfunctional families and crimes. Her most popular novel was *Gone Girl*, her third novel, which has been a bestseller and had been made into a blockbuster film starring Ben Affleck. It was one of the most talked about novels of recent years. *The Grownup*, Flynn's newest endeavor, was originally published last year in George R.R. Martin's (The author of the wildly popular Game of Thrones series) anthology series under the title, *What Do You Do?*

In the novella, the unnamed narrator works at Spiritual Palms, a psychic shop with a rather unusual addition. The store is meant to scam its customers, and our narrator knows the ropes when it comes to deception. The narrator is a typical character in a Gillian Flynn novel, a woman with a bitter and cynical world view due to a less than easy life. The character takes aspects of *Gone Girl*'s Amy, *Sharp Objects*'s Camille, and *Dark Places*' Libby while at the same time having characteristics all of her own, like a deep passion for reading (The novella mentions classics such as *The Haunting of Hill House* and *The Turn of the Screw*).

While her outlook on life is less than cheery, and what she does is not particularly admirable, the narrator does have a few saving graces in her personality, and the reader can relate to her unease with her situation. Enter Susan Burke, a highly strung woman who claims that her house is haunted, and that it is affecting her fifteen-year-old stepson, Miles badly. The narrator, hoping to deceive Susan, offers to "cleanse" the house of whatever is causing the unrest, claiming to be a master at reading auras. What then occurs is a wild twist and turn of dramatic and strange events.

The narrator goes to Susan's house, a gloomy Victorian that came with the equally creepy and gothic name of Carterhook Manor. She finds the house to be very unsettling, and notices that something is not quite right about Miles either. His behavior is dangerous and threatening and not at all like the average fifteen-year old guy. The narrator does think that there is something unusual about the Burke's house, but she soon wonders if it is the house that she must worry

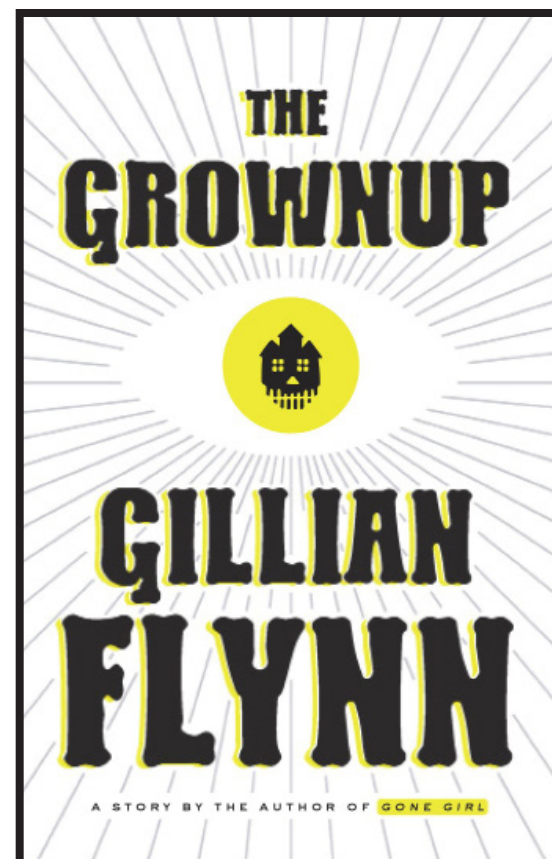
"FLYNN ONCE AGAIN MANAGES TO SURPRISE HER READERS WITH HER BOLD AND OFTEN TIMES SURPRISING WRITING STYLE AND HER FAST PACED WIT."

about after all. Flynn's novella is a strange, roller coaster ride of emotions. All at once, the reader will be scared at the house's creepy encounters and will wonder, "who can be trusted" due to the unreliability of the characters.

Flynn's short novella acts as a sort of place holder until her next novel comes out. After the success of *Gone Girl*, her fans eagerly awaited Flynn's next novel. Her novella, while short, (Only sixty-two pages) stands alone as a strong, grisly, ghost story. Flynn once again manages to surprise her readers with her bold and often times surprising writing style and her fast paced wit. She is a master at digging deep into the psyche of her readers, as seen in her other novels.

However, while the novella was a good read, it was slightly too short to accommodate all the information it tries to squeeze in. Had it been slightly longer, the reader might have been less overwhelmed by all that was happen-

ing as it would have been explained more thoroughly. One example of this would be the background of Carterhook Manor, which could have remedied with more information said about its history. Also, the ending seemed to be quite abrupt, leaving the reader wanting more, and feeling slightly unsatisfied at how rushed it seemed. Other than that, the novella was a riveting read and is a satisfying pick-me-up while waiting for Flynn's much anticipated next novel.



Featured Faculty: Professor Jamie Aroosi

By Arthur Schoen

What did you study in undergrad at University of Toronto? Where did you earn your PhD? What (and where) did you teach in the CUNY system before coming to YU?

JA: I studied Political Science, but mostly, I was taking classes in Political Thought. I also minored in both History and East Asian Studies. I earned my PhD at The Graduate Centre, City University of New York. And before that, I earned a Master's Degree from York University, in Social and Political Thought. I primarily taught at Hunter College, teaching classes in political thought and American politics. *I know that one of the thinkers you like to reference most is Soren Kierkegaard. What is it about Kierkegaard and his thought that particularly resonates with you?*

JA: Well, for one, Kierkegaard just might be the best writer in the history of Western thought, and if not the best, right up there. He's a real pleasure to read. He's funny, ironic, clever, sophisticated, provocative, and even though he's writing about some of the most esoteric topics out there, such as the nature of religious faith, he's extremely down to earth. But more than that, the purpose of his writing really struck a chord with me. Rather than a "speculative philosopher," who is interested in offering a theoretical account of an issue that reveals its truth, be that issue politics, religion, ethics, or what have you, Kierkegaard was not interested in capturing the truth within his writing, but in using his writing to provoke his readers into seeing it for themselves. In other words, reading Kierkegaard is like having a dialogue with him, where's he's constantly trying to provoke you into seeing something that you don't yet see.

Ditto with Karl Marx

JA: Unfortunately, Marx is possibly the most misunderstood philosopher in the history of Western thought, but also one of the most important to read. A lot of people have the mistaken belief that Marx spent his time writing about some "utopian" communist society, in which we would all live bleak lives mired in grey, but he spent almost no time talking about the future. In fact, for all intents and purposes, he loved many of the wonderful things that capitalism had been able to produce, because capitalism revealed to us what human beings were capable of creating. You just have to look around this wonderful city, with skyscrapers seemingly built overnight, helicopters and planes zig-zagging across the sky, subways gliding by beneath our feet, and all of the people from all corners of the world intermingling with one another, to really marvel at what human ingenuity has been able to bring about—and Marx knew that it was capitalism that helped us do so. In fact, Marx is often at his most poetic when he's talking about the wonders of the modern world.

But what Marx didn't like was the inhumanity of the way in which these things were produced, nor the inequality in how they were distributed. So Marx turned to the study of political economy, because he thought that both of these problems stemmed from the very nature of capitalist production. Moreover, Marx also noticed the way in which individuals had to conform themselves to the needs of the economy, instead of having an economy that changed itself to meet human needs. For example, for a long time the United States has been suffering from a loss of manufacturing jobs, leaving many here unemployed, while many of those jobs have moved to China, where people work in often horrendous conditions. And most people feel bad about these types of things, but we also feel helpless about changing them. But this is symptomatic of the way in which we take the economy for granted, allowing it to shape our lives, while we feel powerless to shape it. Marx spoke of this, noting how it's like the story of the Sorcerer's Apprentice, as with every day, the world seems less and less under our control—and this is often true of both the poor and the rich alike. But Marx also thought that if we understood the economy, and if we took democratic control of it, we could use its productive potential to serve our own human needs, rather than having to conform ourselves to the needs of our economic system. So, rather than looking to the Soviet Union for an example, which Marx would have been the first to criticize, if we look to the social welfare systems of Western Europe, and to the improved quality of life they have been able to provide, we can see something of which Marx would approve. He'd think they haven't gone far enough, but he'd

approve of the direction.

And like Kierkegaard, Marx didn't lecture or moralize to his readers, prescribing certain ways of life for them. Instead, he offered a number of sophisticated critical and philosophical tools, so that we, his readers, might better understand our world, so that we might also be able to change it. There's therefore something very empowering in reading both Kierkegaard and Marx, precisely because they are uninterested in telling their readers what to believe, and are instead interested in helping their readers learn to navigate the world for themselves. And I find that very appealing. *Have you noticed anything in particular that distinguishes the YU student from students you have encountered in other settings? How has your experience teaching in YU differed from what you expected coming in?*

JA: Well, I honestly didn't quite know what to expect before I started teaching here two years ago. I myself am Jewish,



but I wasn't raised in the Modern Orthodox community, so it was pretty new for me. I knew about the dual curriculum, and was curious about what that might mean in my own classroom, but I wasn't quite sure what to expect.

What I've found is that YU students are extremely well prepared for what takes place in many of my classes. Not all students might think of it in these terms, but YU students have been studying philosophy for years. It might primarily take place within a Jewish context, and so students might not have a familiarity with the canonical thinkers of Western thought, but when it comes to thinking philosophically—using abstraction, analyzing and making logical arguments, etc.—YU students are wonderfully prepared. So, when students read Kierkegaard in my Religion and Politics class, for instance, the content might be new, but their ability to analyze and understand the text is already quite sophisticated. This makes it a real pleasure, as we can often jump quickly into very high level conversations, whereas I might have to lay more groundwork at another school.

Beyond that, I think the general thrust of my research (and hopefully my life too) is something that I share with our students, and that's led to often fascinating conversations and classes. Specifically, in my work, I explore the relationships between faith and ethics and politics. Ultimately, like most of us here, I'm trying to think about what it means when a faith based ethics has to confront social and political issues. I approach these questions from within the discourse of Western philosophy, and YU students are usually thinking about these questions from within Judaism, but it's been really nice, and intellectually rewarding, to be involved in a parallel project to that of so many of our students. Even though we might approach these issues from different perspectives, I've found that this has only added a richness to our conversations, as I get to provide students with a perspective they might not yet have, while I've also found myself learning quite a bit from them too. In many ways, YU was a perfect match for me.

Could you tell us briefly about the classes you will be teaching next semester?

JA: I will be teaching American Constitutional Law, which takes both a philosophical and historical look at Constitutional Politics, and which leaves students prepared to think more deeply about the relationship between ethics, politics and the law. I'll also be teaching my Core class, Cultures of Revolt, which is a lot of fun. In it, we read works of psychology, philosophy, politics, literature, and drama, and we explore what oppression, emancipation, and freedom look like, but from the point of view of the individual experiencing them. So, we get a really intimate look at what these look like, but from the inside out, so that we might better understand some of the pressures that weigh down on all of us, but also, some of the possibilities that are open to us too. *Your classes - even those not offered as part of the YC Core curriculum - are remarkably interdisciplinary. You bring in political science, classical philosophy, psychology, history, political philosophy, sociology, and literary analysis. The reading lists for your classes very much reflect this diversity. What do you see as the advantage of bringing in so many different approaches, including such unconventional moves as assigning students in a political science class to read multiple plays?*

JA: One of the reasons I fell in love with political thought is that I think I was always motivated by an interest in exploring some of the more fundamental questions of what it means to be a human being. And political thought is really motivated by an interest in asking a couple of questions: What are we? And how should we live? There's quite a lot more to it, but at base, those are the fundamental questions of the discipline. And while political philosophy is excellent for providing an intellectual structure for thinking about these questions, we look for insights everywhere. And poets, playwrights, novelists, filmmakers, artists, music composers, and the various forms of popular culture, are often extremely insightful in exposing new dimensions of the human condition. So, we like to grab these insights wherever we can. The challenge, then, is to take something like a novel, which isn't necessarily concerned with offering explicit answers to these questions, but is instead interested in telling a story, and extracting the philosophical truth. I think it's very rewarding to read these types of works in conversation, so that we don't get lost in the abstract accounts we often find within philosophy, nor in the specific examples we find within the world of art, but that the truth really emerges when they're placed in conversation. But more simply put, our questions don't always fall within neat disciplinary boundaries, so we shouldn't force our answers to.

You have been known to laud the Canadian healthcare system in class. Could you say a few words about what you see as the advantages of that model over the American model?

JA: Well, if I was being brief, I could sum it up like this: in Canada, everyone has access to healthcare, our life expectancy is several years longer, and the quality of those years is also better. It's hard to argue with hard numbers, right? I joke with my students that in moving to the United States, I've shaved three years off my life expectancy, only that it's not so funny, when you actually think about it. Unfortunately, over the past years, all of the empirical studies have been indicating that not only are things like life expectancy lower in the United States than in almost all other Western countries, but that the number of "healthy" years that people live in the United States is far lower than they would live in other places. Interestingly, this is true for both the poor and the rich alike—being rich certainly offers individuals better healthcare, yet you'd still typically be better off if you lived in Canada.

But beyond this, the level of worry that the average American has about healthcare is staggering, at least from a Canadian point of view. And I'm not talking about those without healthcare, or with inadequate healthcare, but even those with a good plan have many worries regarding their coverage. Co-pays, deductibles, coinsurance, in-network vs. out-of-network, benefit maximums, premiums, denial of coverage, and unfortunately, the potential loss of a job. In Canada, though, the only healthcare related worry is this: our health. We never have to worry if something is covered, if a doctor is in our network or out, if we'll receive a bill, if we'll lose coverage if we lose our job, if we can afford a procedure, or anything else, and this is tremendously liberating, because it frees us to worry about the only thing we

SEE AROOSI, CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Featured Faculty: Professor Jamie Aroosi

AROOSI, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

should have to worry about when it comes to healthcare, which is the state of our health. I also think it gives Canadians a great sense of pride, because it honestly feels pretty good to know that I live in a country where part of my tax dollars are being used to ensure that no one that I pass in the street will ever go for want when it comes to medical treatment. I could certainly think of worse ways for my tax dollars to be used.

That said, there's a lot of things that I wish Canada would learn from my adopted homeland of the United States, not least of which is the vibrancy and vitality of American political culture, but I'll save that for the next interview.

I have heard you speak many times in appreciation of Dr. Bevan's work, both in terms of what she does on behalf of the political science department specifically and what she

has done for the university more generally. How has your experience been with the political science department at YU?

JA: Well, I have to say that without a doubt Professor Bevan has been the main reason my time at YU has been so wonderful, notwithstanding my many other wonderful colleagues, not to mention my great students. But not only has she made me feel like YU is a real home for me, but she's done the same for our students. Over the past few years, we've all been through some difficult times, but rather than seeing the Political Science Department suffer through them, we've really been thriving! And it's really her work, optimism, and steadfast leadership that's led to the creation of a stable, welcoming, rigorous, and not to mention a fun, department. It would have been so easy to despair, but instead, she came out with initiative, hard-work, and creativity, offering a number of programs and ideas to help build

the esprit de corps of the department and of the school, and both the school and our department are so much better for it.

You can see this at our regular end of term Political Science Soiree, which have become a welcome tradition in our department. There, after all the hard work of the semester, we all get together to enjoy one another's company, and to share a nosh and a laugh. But aside from the fun we have (and I do think that having fun is part of what makes intellectual life so wonderful), I think you'd also see a department built on honesty, integrity, camaraderie, and hard work, which are values I see in so many of my students, but that I think Dr. Bevan really instills as a department wide ethos. I'd encourage everyone, both Political Science students and those who are not, to drop by for our next Soiree on December 15, and you can see for yourselves what our department is all about.

A Brief Conversation with Marco (God Bless)

By Max Shulman

In honor of Marco's homecoming, his grand return to the newly renovated Nagel Bagel, we decided to sit down with him for a chat. Here is a brief glimpse of the Man Behind the Counter, a small but illuminating window into life and times of a local legend.

Marco, thank you for taking the time to interview for the YU Commentator. Nobody actually knows your last name so let's start with your full name?

Marco: (answering abruptly) Marco God Bless.

Okay, cool. So, we will refer to you by that. You've been here a while. When did you start working at YU?

MGB: I started at YU in February 1998 - so I've been here 17 years and a half.

Wow, that's a long time. You must have some great stories. What's the funniest thing that has happened to you while working at Nagel's?

MGB: Two MTA students came and it was a Purim. That's like Halloween right?

Yeah.

MGB: They came and held up the store. I opened the register for them but I only had a quarter so they ran the heck out of the store. That's gotta be the funniest thing that has happened to me here.

That's pretty funny. How about the craziest day on the job?

MGB: That's a tough question, man, I don't remember. Oh I got one. One day in the kitchen. I'm like 'Oh my god, what's that?!' It's a raccoooooon. So here comes my supervisor. He puts on a helmet, go gets a bat, runs toward the thing. The thing is cornered. He's like "I'm gonna tackle you." He went like this with a broom (makes of motion of sweeping it into a bag). Caught him like this (demonstrates holding a raccoon by its tail). And that was it. It was a done deal. It was greaaaat. Sam Chesson is a

nut job. He's a complete nut job.

Yeah I'm sure that's not going to make students want to eat in the cafeteria. What's your favorite part of working at YU?

MGB: Students' smiles and their goodness.

Nice. Switching focuses here, rumor has it that you ran four hundred miles this summer. Is that true?

MGB: Just about, man. I have it here on my phone. Even today I did five walking here and five running back. I'm not gonna jog it in the morning because I don't want to come in too sweaty.

Wow that's a lot. Any marathons?

MGB: Haven't done marathons. I've done 5Ks 10Ks but I want to train for a marathon.

So you are commuting five miles. Tell us where you live.

MGB: I live in Mosholu Parkway in the Bronx.

Did you grow up there?

MGB: No, I'm from Queens -- Flushing. I'm a Cuban descendant. Came when I was three. Greatest thing that ever happened was coming to America. Gave me opportunity in life, so thank God.

You are always studying for something...

MGB: I'm studying to become a nurse. Right now I'm in my second-to-last class. I have to take something called the TEAS test. And then I go into my nursing program.

So are you ditching YU?

MGB: After I become a nurse, yeah.

Will you visit?

MGB: Oh absolutely. One thing about YU -- once you come here, you really really never leave after so many years. Yeah, I ain't going nowhere.

So Nagels just opened up recently...

MGB: Re-opened re-opened.

Right, re-opened. What do you think of it now?

MGB: It's very nice for you. It has more space, more variety of foods. Now you have Chop Chop and sushi and it's spacious and it's there for you and I think it's convenient for you. It came out nice.

Do you think they should have renamed it Marco Bagels?

MGB: (laughing) Oh god bless no. I don't donate 150 million dollars. Noooo. God bless.

Who's your favorite student?



MGB: Besides yourself. I try not to say "favorite" because we are all one here. I may have more familiarities with others but I really try to treat everyone the same. I may have more of a personal connection with them but being fair to all I want to be fair to all. We are all special people.

That's fair. And finally, everyone here knows you are a big NBA fan. Favorite NBA player? And who's winning the championship this year?

MGB: Favorite player is Tim Duncan and Tony Parker. I am a Knicks fan but Spurs.

Not warriors?

MGB: No, basketball is a big man's game. Curry is good, but Spurs have 4 big mans. I'm going with the Spurs.

Thanks again, Marco.

MGB: God Bless.

Halachipedia: Publicizing Halacha, One Byte At A Time

By Ike Sultan

Can you imagine being able to google your everyday shaylos and find reliable answers within seconds? Halachipedia might be your answer. Halachipedia.com is aimed at providing thorough, clear, and elaborate answers to all of the practical modern-day halachic questions. It has the organized look of Wikipedia, is clean of ads, and has close to 500 pages with over 10,000 footnotes. The site gets an average of 500 hits a day, peaking at 2500 on Erev Pesach or before other holidays. As one user puts it, "Citations to all the sources on every issue related to the topic make it like a Kaf HaChaim with a search button. It truly is Kaf HaChaim." The core energy for the site starts right here at YU with its students and teachers.

YU's Halachipedia club is focused on expanding and refining the content already online while simultaneously enabling students to write and edit exciting halachic articles on practical issues. In the last two years, we've published 8 packets, producing them twice a semester, under the guid-

ance of Roshei Yeshiva, Rav Schachter and Rav Willig.

To illustrate, last year, spearheaded by previous club president Jeremy Perlow (Syms '15), we were involved with holiday topics, including Brachos for Tu BiShvat. The most recent packet, produced at the start of the year, was the Practical Guide to the Yamim Noraim. Currently, we are working on a Practical Guide to Travel.

"THE SITE GETS AN AVERAGE OF 500 HITS A DAY, PEAKING AT 2500 ON EREV PESACH OR BEFORE OTHER HOLIDAYS."

In preparing the general topic for the next packet as well as the individual articles, Russell Spiewak (YC '16), President of the Halachipedia Club, organized a club meeting which gathered a modest crowd of a dozen students for a

productive discussion. Russell looks forward to a productive year and has already expanded the club to the Stern campus. Ahuva Motechin (Stern '17) is the Beren Campus Head Coordinator and began organizing writers and editors for the next Halachipedia packet. Our other veteran editors include Ariel Schreier (YC '16) and Dubbin Hanon (YC '15).

Recently, upon suggestion by Mordechai Djavaheri (YC '17), we've added dynamic links to Sefaria.org to enable users to easily see the sources by simply scrolling over the sources.

Another development initiated by YU student, Ben Kean (YC '19), is our Spanish section. It has a strong start with 5 translated pages and hopefully this will grow further. This initiative has been met with a warm reception and there is still more demand for the further expansion of translating Halachipedia more extensively and into more languages.

Altogether, Halachipedia is expanding rapidly. What will be the next major development on Halachipedia? Take a tour of the site and give us your suggestions!

99% of Yeshiva Faculty Political Donations Go to Democrats, Analysis Finds

By David Mehl

"Diversity of gender, ethnicity, and orientation are important," former New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg told Harvard students in his much-commented-upon 2014 commencement address, "But a university cannot be great if its faculty is politically homogeneous." If Federal Elections Commission data on campaign contributions are any indicator, Yeshiva University falls far short of fulfilling this criterion for greatness. An analysis of FEC data from the past several years shows that an astonishing nearly 99% of current undergraduate faculty's partisan political contributions went to Democrats or Democratic organizations.

The data surveyed covered donations made from 2011 (the earliest time from which information on small donations is publicly available) until the most recent filing deadline in October of this year. Seventeen current faculty members donated a total of \$8,080.10 to political campaigns or organizations during that period, with all but \$100 of that amount (from a single professor) going to the Democrats.

The Democrats' overwhelming edge holds steady when contributions from non-faculty employees are considered as well. Of the 1,163 partisan political contributions, totaling nearly \$58,000, made by people who listed their place of employment as Yeshiva University, 1,151 - all but twelve - went to Democratic politicians or groups, and the ratio of total amount of money given was greater than 11 to 1 in favor of the Democrats.

These massive discrepancies echo those reported at other universities. The University of California, Yale University, and Penn State were among several schools whose faculties' donations were found to have heavily favored the left.

Nevertheless, the disparity at Yeshiva is still remarkable because it stands in contrast to the image of Yeshiva that many - including its students - hold. It is little wonder, for example, that liberals win a majority of donations at the University of California, where administration instructed the faculty that phrases such as "I believe the most qualified person should get the job" are microaggressions that must be avoided, and where the student government passed a resolution demanding divestment from the American government. Yeshiva University, however, has attained something of a popular image as - at least by college standards - a bastion of conservatism, and not just religiously. The archives of the Commentator and the Observer from the past few years record multiple students (and at least one professor) referencing the politically conservative views of many within the student body. This point is accentuated - if unintentionally - by the strikingly defensive tone of the Yeshiva chapter of College Democrats' promotional email (as well as its candid opening question: "Do you feel all alone

as the only Democrat among your friends?"). Furthermore, Yeshiva is regularly described as "the flagship school of the Modern Orthodox movement," and a 2013 Pew Center study revealed that 56% of Modern Orthodox Jews identify as Republicans or lean Republican, compared to 39% of the general public.

Why, then, do political donations by Yeshiva University faculty and staff lean left? A single, definitive answer is impossible. Instead, we should consider several factors, all of which combine to create the current reality.

First, the explanations given above for Yeshiva's conservative image are much more applicable to the student body than they are to the faculty and other staff. Try as I might, I couldn't find any Commentator or Observer articles describing the Yeshiva professorate as inordinately conservative, and the demographic observation (the association with Modern Orthodoxy) applies much less to the faculty, which is exponentially more diverse than the student body.

Second, the field of academia in general is overwhelmingly the domain of the left. A 2012 study showed that

"WHY, THEN, DO POLITICAL DONATIONS BY YESHIVA UNIVERSITY FACULTY AND STAFF LEAN LEFT? A SINGLE, DEFINITIVE ANSWER IS IMPOSSIBLE."

62.7% of professors across America identified as liberal or very liberal, while only 12% described themselves as conservative or very conservative. Political contributions by professors skew even more consistently in the direction of the Democrats. Liberal arts professors, who make up the majority of Yeshiva's faculty donors, are the most liberal cohort among an already liberal professoriate.

Anecdotal evidence from other students, as well as my own personal experiences, indicate that in this regard Yeshiva is certainly no exception. From the biology professor who urged our class to "fight the big corporations" to one who described the Washington Post as a conservative newspaper (though it has never endorsed a Republican for president) to the one who tried to use a Sarah Palin quote as an illustration for "stupidity" (though the joke was on the professor - it was actually a Tina Fey quote), my professors have shown an aptitude for revealing their political tendencies in subtle - or sometimes not-so-subtle - ways. Tellingly, though he was once the Democratic Party's nominee for the vice-presidency, former Senator Joseph Lieberman was by far one of the most politically conservative teachers I have had in Yeshiva College.

Third, political spending data is an indication not just

of political leanings but of enthusiasm and level of engagement - it takes quite a bit of both to donate to practitioners of such a widely-maligned profession as elective politics. Thus, the only segment of the faculty in which Yeshiva College students seem to regularly detect political conservatism - the faculty of the various religious studies departments - barely register at all in the FEC data. This is likely because the Orthodox rabbinate, from which the RIETS and UTS faculty and staff are largely drawn, has traditionally taken a restrained approach to political activism, focusing most of its energies on pro-Israel activism and matters which directly affect the Jewish community. (Their non-Orthodox counterparts have adopted a wide variety of causes such as environmentalism and social justice activism, and accordingly are much more politically active, partisan, and likely to donate.)

Fourth, like any institution, Yeshiva must draw the majority of its employees from its geographic surroundings. Yeshiva's home, New York City, has not voted for a Republican for president since Calvin Coolidge and its registered Democrats outnumber registered Republicans by roughly six to one. As a result, Republicans are rarely competitive in local elections. (This helps explain why the Democrats' edge holds even among Yeshiva's administrative staff and other non-professors.)

With all of these combined factors - demographic, professional, and geographic skews - it becomes clearer why Yeshiva's professors are in political lockstep. Yet despite Mr. Bloomberg's warning, this need not be the insurmountable barrier he describes. If professors take care not to craft their lessons within the blinders of political ideology - and more importantly, if conservatives among the student body can speak up for their principles unafraid of potential reprisals, including lowered grades, from their professors - then classroom political discussion can be vibrant, balanced, and truly edifying.

A note on methodology: All campaign contribution data come from beta.fec.gov. Campaign donors are legally required to accurately represent their current place of employment, and campaigns are legally required to submit donor data to the FEC. Undergraduate faculty donation data were compiled by comparing the names of donors who listed as their employer "Yeshiva University" (or one of its variations, e.g. "Yeshiva Univ") with the list of undergraduate faculty available at yu.edu/faculty. For reasons of methodological consistency, I did not include the donations of former Senator Joseph Lieberman, who holds a chair in Political Science at Yeshiva, because he is not listed in the online faculty directory and he did not list his employer as Yeshiva University. From the time of the announcement of his employment at Yeshiva, he donated \$2,250 in 3 separate donations - all of it to Democrats - bringing the faculty total up to \$10,330.10 and the Democrats' share above 99%.

Should You Go Gluten-Free?

By Kochava London

This past September, gluten-free Cheerios appeared on grocery shelves across the country. In an attempt to boost cereal sales, General Mills rebranded one of their most popular products, and to great success. According to an article in Fortune magazine, sales rose 3.6%, a significant increase. Food manufacturers are not the only ones who have caught on to the latest food trend. The popularity of gluten-free products, cookbooks, and blogs have skyrocketed. The gluten-free cookbook "Bread-Free Bread" offers recipes for muffins, pastries, and breads that "look and act like bread." Sales of gluten-free products are projected to increase 10.4% every year for the next five years (Markets and Markets). Many people transition to a gluten-free diet because they believe it is an important step toward leading a healthy lifestyle. What exactly is gluten, and is it really so deleterious to our health?

Gluten is a naturally-occurring protein found in wheat, rye, and barley. Gluten's nutritional profile is hotly debated by scientists, doctors, and the public at large. Wheat Belly, written by cardiologist Dr. William Davis in 2014, attributes asthma, schizophrenia, and even multiple sclerosis to the consumption of gluten. In Grain Brain: The Surprising Truth about Wheat, Carbs, and Sugar - Your Brain's Silent Killers (the title is somewhat of a spoiler), the neurologist Dr. David Perlmutter blames gluten for causing

depression, obesity, ADHD, and dementia. Dr. Perlmutter even goes as far as to call gluten a "threat to humanity." A paper written in 2014 by Dr. David Nash and Dr. Amy Salutzky criticizes Dr. Perlmutter's work for disregarding the vast majority of empirical evidence, which fails to support his claims.

One argument against gluten is that our immune systems have not yet developed to tolerate wheat. The people who support this idea claim that humans used to subsist solely on what they could hunt or gather, and did not begin to eat

"IN ADDITION, SIMPLY ELIMINATING GLUTEN DOES NOT TRANSLATE INTO AUTOMATIC WEIGHT LOSS AND IMPROVED HEALTH. MANY PRODUCTS LABELED 'GLUTEN-FREE' ARE ACTUALLY QUITE UNHEALTHY."

bread until agriculture developed. However, the discovery of barley and millet seeds at Ohalo II, an archaeological site in Israel, provides evidence that people have consumed gluten for over 20,000 years.

In addition, it is certainly possible that our bodies have

adapted to the consumption of wheat like they did to drinking milk. When people began drinking animal milk beyond infancy, the lactase enzyme that digests milk sugars adapted to remain during adulthood. (People who have lactose intolerance are unable to digest milk because their bodies do not produce enough of the lactase enzyme.) People began drinking animal milk around the same time they began consuming wheat, which shows that it is certainly possible for our bodies to have adapted to wheat over thousands of years.

Unlike the arguments above, which are not supported by research, there is still the matter of the increasing prevalence of Celiac disease, an autoimmune disease in which consumption of gluten damages the small intestine. Celiac disease affects only one out of every 100 people, yet it is four times more prevalent today than it was in 1950. However, people today are much more sensitive to allergens in general, so it is possible that the real problem is the immune system and its increased sensitivity, not gluten itself.

Assuming one does not have Celiac disease, dietitians generally agree that there is nothing wrong with consuming gluten. In fact, by eliminating gluten, people actually miss out on fiber and essential vitamins and minerals that are found in whole grains, like vitamin B12, folate, and phosphorus. In addition, simply eliminating gluten does not translate into automatic weight loss and improved health.

SEE GLUTEN-FREE, CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

Diamonds in the Rough: YU's Transfer Students

By Avi Strauss

For many students, choosing a college to attend is a one-time deal. After a rigorous application process, students, compelled by acceptance deadlines can only enroll in one university to further their education. However, according to the National Association for College Admissions Counseling, nearly 1 in 3 students who enroll in a two or four year college transfer at some point.

For its part, Yeshiva University has a freshman retention rate amongst the highest in the nation at 91% (69th overall according to US News), which is on par with large state universities like Michigan State and Texas A&M. But what this number doesn't represent is the significant portion of the Yeshiva student population that are transfers into the university. Each year, disaffected students from across the country reconsider their original decision and transfer to Yeshiva.

Although precise numbers were not available to us at press time, most students know several friends or peers who have joined the YU community during their college careers, all for different reasons or because of changed perspectives.

For Josh Wildes an SSSB senior majoring in business management and minoring in marketing, Boston University just never felt right. "From the moment I stepped foot into Boston University, I knew something was missing. Part of me just simply did not feel right."

Like many Yeshiva students, Josh spent a year abroad, a "gap year," prior to starting college. "After living in Israel and attending Bar Ilan for one year after high school, I felt like it was important for me to further explore my true identity. However, at such a big school, it was too easy to just fall into the mix." Boston University, like many of the secular universities modern orthodox Jews attend, is among the biggest universities in the country, is home to 30,000 students and can have classes and lectures with hundreds of students. "Everyone there is a little fish in a big ocean."

According to Director of Undergraduate Admissions Geri Mansdorf, this is common in many students at Yeshiva. "Students are motivated by many things when they make their decision to apply to, and later accept an offer of admission at a college. About 75-80% of our cohort, is going to spend anywhere from one to two years, on average, in Israel post high school." She continued "this translates into more time for them to develop and consider options they might not have considered as seniors in high school." After experiencing what other colleges have to offer, they realize that it isn't possible to get everything they want out of college at their original choice of institution. "Overall, most transfer students are looking for all the unique opportunities only found at Yeshiva" Mansdorf added.

Justine Englanoff, a junior at Stern College majoring in biochemistry, reacted similarly to the immense size of Maryland University, where she was an engineering student for one semester after her gap year in Israel. "The classes were much larger and less personal than I would have liked" she said, often a particularly acute issue for students pursuing degrees in the natural sciences.

But the sheer size of campus life at other universities isn't the only reason Englanoff cited for transferring. "The [Maryland University] Jewish community, while great, was not comparable to being in a naturally all-immersive Jewish community like I knew it would be at Stern" she said.

Maryland, for its part, has one of the largest, (if not the largest), orthodox Jewish communities at a University outside of Yeshiva, with approximately 400 orthodox students who are a part of the Hillel.

For the most part, the Jewish communities on secular campuses are run and sustained by a campus Hillel, which provides kosher food, houses prayer services and plays host to commu-

nity events. Many campus Hillel's have orthodox divisions--in Maryland, "Kedma" is responsible for orthodox life, with a board that coordinates communal activities and events. Together, with a Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus (JLIC) couple, often a recent RIETS semicha graduate and his wife, they manage modern orthodox life on campus, giving shiurim and serving as the spiritual leaders there.

Jasmine Razi, a finance and marketing double major at Syms, described a successful Jewish community at UCLA, her former school. "At UCLA, there was a really nice Jewish community and a wonderful Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus (JLIC) run by Rabbi Aryeh and Sharona Kaplan (both YU and Stern graduates) but I always felt that I needed to go to Hillel or specific Jewish events to see my friends and be part of the community."

Several students interviewed for this article reported similar experiences, having to go out of their way to participate in communal activities or see their friends, more so than they had to back home in their high schools or during their year abroad.

Wildes described a smaller and somewhat complex Jewish community at Boston University. On the one hand he reported "it is thriving with people who are Jewish and it has a beautiful Hillel building right on campus." Yet, he continued, "the religious aspect of the Jewish community is almost non-existent." Although students there may find it difficult to get a seat at Shabbat dinner, there is rarely a minyan (quorum of 10 Jewish men) for davening. Additionally, Wildes described the absence of kosher food on Sundays as being particularly difficult. However, despite its inadequacies, he insists the Jewish community's deficiencies were not responsible for his transfer.

Another transfer student on campus, Josh Lankin, a senior in YC majoring in biology and minoring in math and computer science, only had words of praise for the community he left at Brandeis. "The Jewish community at Brandeis is spectacular. I have the utmost respect and admiration for the Jewish community at Brandeis, and I smile everyday seeing the flourishing of BOO (Brandeis orthodox organization) under the incredible leadership of Rabbi David and Ariel Pardo and the student leaders."

Since transferring, Lankin's married his "amazing wife" Jennifer Lifshutz (SCW '16), who he said "supported me through the entire transfer process, and continues to do so as we approach 9 months of married life together."

Other transfer students, however, described their experience with their former university's community as "battle for survival". Sam Apple transferred to Yeshiva from Binghamton University, a popular destination for modern orthodox Jews from New York communities. Apple, a Biology major and English minor, described his year at Binghamton as "an atypical Shana Bet". (Shana Bet usually refers to an additional year of studying abroad in Israel, which several students opt to participate in, prior to attending college).

"After a tremendously impactful year on a secular campus, I was proud to say that my Judaism, so to speak, survived outside of 'the bubble'" he said. "Then I realized I wanted, and needed, more than mere survival. I came to YU because I viewed it, then as now, as a place where I would not have to sacrifice one identity at the expense of the other."

This is not to say Apple doesn't think highly of the Jewish community at Binghamton. He described the community there as "unbelievably welcoming and warm" and "perhaps the greatest deterrent for my transfer... It was inspiring to witness those who took it upon themselves to become leaders for the Jewish community there."

However, he made sure to note "it would be a lie to leave out the fact that there is no paucity of lurking spiritual dangers." He did not elaborate specifically what those "spiritual dangers" were, although for many students at Yeshiva, it means situations that challenge their orthodox strictures, be it with

the opposite gender, Shabbat observance or with kosher food.

When speaking directly about his transfer and experience at Yeshiva, Apple said "I am not sure if I could be more satisfied." When asked to discuss his favorite part of Yeshiva, Apple was torn between choosing his shiur and the Cross Country team, of which he is a member.

And it seems being active on campus and directly involved in YU's extra-curricular activities is a theme amongst transfer students. In addition to joining the Israel club and assorted science clubs, Englanoff is the current treasurer of the Stern College for Women Student Council and Razi, a member of the Israeli consulting group Tamid. Wildes, who served on the board of the College Democrats last year, started the "Humans of Yeshiva University" Facebook page, modeled after the world famous Humans of New York page, which spotlights individuals and gives them an opportunity to speak about a life experience or comment on any subject of their choosing, usually with some profound insight.

This isn't to say the decision to transfer isn't complex and fraught with challenges. As Lankin made sure to note, "the decision to transfer is a very personal one, and can be extremely complex. There are a myriad of reasons to stay, and there may be just as many to leave too, but it really comes down to what feels right for each person."

But perhaps what's most interesting about the transfer students currently studying at Yeshiva is their unique perspective on campus and university life here. While it's easy for students to discuss their experiences on campus—the good and the bad—hardly any Yeshiva students have the luxury of being able to compare it to the experiences of attending a different college.

Wildes seemed acutely aware of this when he said "I think a lot of students at YU like to complain that the grass may be greener on the other side. However, this blinds them to the amazing things that they have right in front of them. Knowing what another college is like, I can tell you that YU offers amazing things that other places don't."

And Englanoff went as far as suggesting that transferring be a compulsory part of education at YU. "I think everyone should be required to spend a semester elsewhere before they come to YU. Myself, my sister, and our best friend all started off at other colleges-- and while our other friends may like or even love YU, they will never have the same appreciation for it that we [transfer students] do."

Most students studying here grew up in Yeshiva day schools and high schools, never being exposed to studies in a completely secular context.

Short of such a full scale transfer operation, it seems many students will never have such an experience, which leaves many wondering if the grass is in fact greener on the secular college side. And it is the transfer students, our diamonds in the rough, that serve as bastions of optimism here.

Lankin used the unique faculty at Yeshiva to illuminate an important contrast many students often fail to appreciate. "There is no other place in the world where your biology professor will spend a week of classes giving an in-depth analysis of the Torah sources on the theory of evolution. It was truly a remarkable experience."

Perhaps most importantly it is these perspectives and the way transfer students actively participate in a multitude of activities on campus that could serve as a warning to those students who think it might be better elsewhere.

"Being open-minded/embracing is key" Apple advised current, non-transfer students. "Recognize that nowhere is perfect that everything you deem inadequate is also an opportunity for you to effect change and improve the system."

With perspectives like these, our university is thankful these students were willing to take the risky leap and transfer.

GLUTEN-FREE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Many products labeled "gluten-free" are actually quite unhealthy. For example, many candies and sodas are gluten-free, but they still contain added sugars that can lead to weight gain.

When choosing grains, the general recommendation is to pick the least-processed ones that exist in their most natural state. The current U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend that at least half of grains consumed should be whole-grain, meaning that all parts of the wheat kernel (bran, germ, and endosperm) are intact. Whole-grains contain more vitamins and minerals than grains that have been processed and



stripped of the bran and germ. Sprouted grains are another healthy alternative, in which the grain is soaked in water until it sprouts, at which point it is ground into flour. The sprouting process produces enzymes that break down the protein and carbohydrates of the grain, making it easier to digest and increasing nutrient availability. Research has shown that sprouted grains contain more Vitamin C, fiber, folate, and essential amino acids than regular grains.

Before committing to a gluten-free lifestyle, one should explore healthy alternatives like whole and sprouted grains, which contain important vitamins and minerals and can be included as part of a healthy diet.



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Torah u' Madda: It's Time for a Female President of YU

By Yadin Teitz

In May of 1908, seven students of a small school in New York City went on strike. They were fed up with the limited and unsatisfactory nature of the curriculum being offered at their seminary and the lack of study options made available to them. They wanted to enrich their knowledge through a rigorous, multi-disciplinary educational system; they wanted to be forced to think critically about their lives and to be challenged. Said one of the students, "...The school does no good. We can enter when we please; go out when we please. Nobody seems to care. We want a programme. We want to know where we are going and when we will get there. We want to study philosophy, and history, and languages..." It would take the school's leaders nearly twenty years to respond to these students' protests. But when they finally did, a wholly new institution was born. It was to be called "Yeshiva College," or colloquially, "The Yeshivah".

The 1920s marked the inauguration of a new and expanded home for the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. The new college would be more than a rabbinical seminary: it would offer secular training as well. The establishment of a liberal arts college attached to the seminary was perceived as a response to the growing desire of students to attain scientific knowledge as a way of supplementing their study of Jewish texts. It was also seen as a critical endeavor key to the survival of Jews in America. If one peruses the pages of *The New York Times* in the late 1920s (alas, the *Commentator* was not yet in print), one begins to uncover what must have been a major crisis for American Jews at the time. One headline blares: "Education Association Finds 72% of Jewish Children Get no Religious Instruction;" another heralds "Education is Hailed as Hope of Judaism".

Explaining the phenomena, a noted scholar quoted in the *Times* hypothesized that "Jewish culture has really begun to take root in this land," and as a result of this assimilation, Jewish traditions were being forsaken. Reflecting on this point, Dr. Bernard Revel, the President of the Faculty of the College, remarked that "In an age of general ebb of idealism, we have neglected our children and abandoned them spiritually. In return, many of them have abandoned us...It is the immediate and superlatively important task of American Jewry to evolve as system of education creating a truly invincible Jewish life, strengthened by the teachings of the Torah, by the traditions, aspirations, and hopes of Judaism in harmony with the forward influences of the age."

The newly inaugurated college was designed to do exactly that: it would expose students to the wonders of the secular world while keeping them firmly grounded within the limits of Torah Judaism. But it was clear which of the two components would receive a greater emphasis. Said Rabbi M.S. Margolies, President of Yeshiva College and of Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, in 1929: "If we are to succeed, we must give our utmost attention to the very life of our historic mission, which is the study of the Torah." The introduction of liberal arts as a response to the allure of the outside world was only intended to enhance the world of divinity and spirituality within the walls of the Yeshivah.

As an institution, Yeshiva College was envisioned to serve another important purpose. The Yeshiva University prototype saw itself as an accepting, loving educational home for all Jewish students. Here, students could openly embrace their religion and celebrate their being Jewish. Dr. Revel remarked, "There are still among our American-Jewish youth natures that are deeply spiritual and keenly sensitive to matters spiritual. Thrust into an environment that is not altogether sympathetic, these students fail to respond.... In existing colleges and universities Jews are either lost sight of or, in mistaken efforts at adjustment, they are led to efface

their Jewish character..." Yet the irony of this statement is shocking when considering the YU of today. Modern Orthodox young adults are venturing away from Yeshiva in favor of other universities and seminaries, precisely because these other institutions are far more religiously accepting and open than our own school which was founded to attract these very students. The once -radical idea of combining Torah with secular studies has become extremely mainstream, and YU is threatened once again with being too static and traditionalist.

Where did Yeshivah go wrong? How did the college go from being a trailblazing, innovative entity that would save the future of American Jewry to becoming a virtual pariah in the Modern Orthodox world? How did our leaders, once seen as so progressive and forward-thinking, become perceived as timid, conservative, and backwards-minded? How did what was once the flagship institution of the movement become a marginalized, much-ridiculed school of the politically old-fashioned?

Part of the problem seems to be that we have forgotten our guiding principle of Torah u'Madda. To my understanding, Torah u'Madda, as initiated by Dr. Revel, is not merely a

been strong, too. For example, consider the unequivocally supportive language of the Rabbinical Council of America's October statement regarding the ordination of women: "In light of the opportunity created by advanced women's learning, the Rabbinical Council of America encourages a diversity of halakhically and communally appropriate professional opportunities for learned, committed women, in the service of our collective mission to preserve and transmit our heritage." It is clear that our women are urged to aim higher, to achieve more, and to play a consequential role in society.

Yet while the RCA members (and proponents of the statement at YU) seem content with allowing women to aspire and achieve greatness, they contend that women are still forbidden to assume the highest and most respected position for Torah scholars. I do not subscribe to the belief that our rabbis are antiquated and stubborn, holding on to the last vestiges of tradition and trying desperately to let their voices be heard while the world around them crumbles. If one believes, as I do, that there is no intrinsic halakhic problem with women becoming rabbis, then it is time that we begin preparing to integrate them into our synagogues. It is time for YU to once again innovate, and gather and shepherd all the elements of Modern Orthodox society into a new institution that is committed to Torah values and to championing the cause of women.

But, as many will point out, accepting the above position is unfortunately not clear cut nor agreed upon collectively. By catering to the more liberally minded elements of Modern Orthodox society, YU could potentially alienate its traditionalist stalwarts and risk spawning yet another institution to seize upon our failures. So until all elements of our society are ready to accept female rabbis, YU must innovate in a realm of universally acceptable halakha.

A wonderful opportunity presents itself at this particular juncture. As University President Richard M. Joel prepares to vacate his position after three terms, the question of new leadership for the university has become a widely publicized and highly speculated-over issue. Although a number of the articles delineating candidates have halfheartedly included female candidates, it appears that these inclusions were more for the sake of being politically correct or on the basis of hopeless optimism rather than pragmatism. But I would like to formally call for a female president. Appointing a woman to the highest university position we have will send out a powerful message to our entire community that we stand behind our women and that we support them wholeheartedly in their endeavors. A new generation of

young Jewish women can grow up aspiring to be more like this particular woman and like the other role models in their lives who have attained remarkable success in their fields of work. But this cannot be a token individual who has been selected solely based on her gender. She must be a true model of a G-d fearing woman, one who displays a firm dedication to Torah and Mitzvot, to halakha, and to the Jewish people. She must be exceptionally intelligent and totally capable but also an example of modesty, compassion, and understanding. Most of all, she must be able to assume the difficult role as a living symbol of Torah u'Madda.

In 1929, *The New York Times* praised Yeshivah's leadership for founding the new institution, hailing that "Far-seeing leaders and educators came to the realization that an outstanding institution must be erected if traditional Judaism was to be preserved in its new milieu." Today, in 2015, the same must be done. If Yeshiva University wants to safeguard (or reassert) its position as the flagship institution of the Modern Orthodox community, it must respond to the needs to the community. This can only be done through innovation and positive change, through understanding the needs of its constituents and addressing issues in a way that is cutting-edge and yet molds perfectly within the realm of our Torah values.

"WHERE DID YESHIVAH GO WRONG? HOW DID THE COLLEGE GO FROM BEING A TRAILBLAZING, INNOVATIVE ENTITY THAT WOULD SAVE THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN JEWRY TO BECOMING A VIRTUAL PARIAH IN THE MODERN ORTHODOX WORLD?"



synthesis of two distinct ideals. Torah u'Madda is a solitary, uniform whole that is much greater than the sum of its parts. It is the coalescence of these two values that leads us towards the ultimate source of truth in our lives; it is this combination that dictates our Judaism and our beliefs. As Modern Orthodox Jews, we believe that without Madda, there can be no Torah; without Torah, no Madda. And thus, Torah must be able to reflect Madda, and our Madda must be able to align with Torah values. But if we become too cautious and wary, and convince ourselves to overlook or ignore Madda, we risk alienating the Torah within us. We cannot afford to allow ourselves to be stolid and reticent. We must be active in championing our causes and in campaigning for what we believe is right.

We must recognize that the Madda of today is not the same Madda as in 1929. Granted, our modern-day society has many negative values that Yeshiva University rightly should distance itself from. However, living in this age has yielded a full host of exciting advances and discoveries in many fields which have significantly impacted our lives in countless numbers of ways. One area where modern society has evolved and taken great strides forward is in its embracing of increasingly varied roles for women. The backing for this movement within the Modern Orthodox world has generally

Will the Real Jews Please Stand Up

By Aaron Kohn

My story begins as a young child studying in a Jewish private school. Here, Jewish foundations were instilled and accepted unquestionably by the students. My rabbis and teachers taught me right and wrong and many other various 'truths' which I eagerly adopted. As I got older, I started to develop my own thoughts and became the 'troubled' teen who would ask too many questions in class. My rabbi, would often dismiss me mockingly, along with my opinions and my ideas, claiming that I didn't want to accept the objective 'truth' he was proclaiming, and implying that something was wrong with me for asking. Yet those conversations always ended with a heartfelt "Judaism loves questions" or some jargon similar to that. With enough time and too many questions, I started feeling on the outskirts of my Jewish community and life as I started to see more grey while everyone around me was seeing black and white.

Though the gap at first wasn't large, it gradually increased. I was questioning more, while those around me were questioning less. At this point, I stopped asking questions since the unsatisfactory answers I had received too many times weren't good enough for me. I started to keep all my philosophy and theology to myself, afraid to openly go against the tide since I was surrounded by many close minded Jews, and my entire life was just that: Jewish friends, Jewish school, Jewish synagogue, and Jewish neighborhood. It was my only way to stay somewhat connected to those around me, even though I didn't see things in the same way as the people close to me. But as I got older and more self-reliant, I was able to find friends and a community outside of my religious identification, though mostly for my hobbies and interests. I realized that only I could provide answers to the questions that I had been asking. Only I could form a structure and foundation for how I view the world.

I tried desperately to bridge the gap between my own ideas and Jewish tradition, to create an appealing synergy that everyone could appreciate. But as the gap widened, the breaking point became more and more obvious. Certain ideas that had been eagerly dismissed and glossed over by my high school rabbis, like evolution, David's sin with Batsheva, homosexuals and gender roles were now more viable and clear to me. Sometimes I was able to blend my thoughts with Judaism, and often found various ancient sages supporting the same ideas. But those rabbis

and teachers had insisted on maintaining their monopoly over 'correct' Jewish thought. Their disciples and followers only continued in their blind and intolerant footsteps, only seeing one opinion as true while negating all the other opinions of the debate. If anyone disagreed with the accepted commentary or anything taught within their framework, they would likely find themselves labeled a heretic.

And it happened. During the most recent Sukkot holiday I was home in Lakewood with my family, and in conversation I mentioned that I didn't believe that Jews are elite to our gentile neighbors. My cousin in his 30's was hysterical and immediately shut down the conversation. He told me I was a heretic, and refused to even bear the fact that two opinions could persist on the subject. Why is it that many Jews that find such ideas so threatening and controversial?

"WHETHER WE AGREE OR DISAGREE, OUR DIFFERENCE OF OPINION IS THE BEAUTY OF OUR TRADITION. THE ABILITY TO ARGUE WHILE FULLY RESPECTING AND UNDERSTANDING THE BELIEFS OF THE OTHER SIDE IS WHAT ULTIMATELY ALLOWS US TO GROW AND PROSPER."

A similar episode happened to Rabbi Natan Slifkin when his book, "The Challenge of Creation," was banned by several notable rabbis. It was deemed too controversial and heretical to highlight and prove how science and Judaism aren't in opposition. What makes this even more remarkable is that Rabbi Slifkin quoted several ancient sages who supported his ideas. These rabbis act that as though by refusing to acknowledge the grey and multitude of opinions in Jewish controversy, they will somehow further their own black and white storyline.

But in fact, Judaism is a religion that cultivates free thought. Differences in Jewish thought go back as far as the Twelve Tribes, and the two kingdoms of Israel. The Dead Sea Scrolls and archaeological findings show us how other sects of Jewish thought lived and argued during the Temple eras. Nothing is, was, or will be clear-cut in Juda-

ism. It is only through arguments, intellectual conversation, and the free market of ideas that we can advance and better ourselves. Because for an idea to stand true, much like a building, it needs to resist the forces and challenge of opposition and nature.

I beseech you, my fellow students and Jews, to embrace difference within Judaism. We need to start appreciating and helping men and women find themselves in our community, rather than pushing them out when they don't fit in the line. We are all members of one nation, and we all have something we can add to the marketplace of ideas. Don't be afraid to have an opinion or do something that hasn't been tried before. Permit yourselves to ask questions and and to explore fully what it means to be Jewish. Granted, it's difficult for me to be absolved in the Jewish community with the ideas that I have, and the ideas others have about me. But I won't stop; I never have and never will surrender my mind to satisfy a dream. I will never believe or feel something is right just because someone tells me it is. Whether we agree or disagree, our difference of opinion is the beauty of our tradition. The ability to argue while fully respecting and understanding the beliefs of the other side is what ultimately allows us to grow and prosper. The challenging of ideas is what enables us to evolve and become better individuals and a better people.



How Terrorists Defeat Themselves

By Joey Chesir

Over the past two weeks, the worldwide community has had to witness horrifying atrocities. In Paris, ISIS terrorists murdered 130 civilians, and in Israel, Palestinian terrorists have murdered dozens of innocent people, including Ezra Schwartz, a Modern Orthodox student spending the year in Israel. Although both crimes were committed by members of different factions, and were much different in terms of execution and scale, they are noticeably similar in terms of ideological causation. Both of these terrorist attacks, as well as any other wanton violence perpetrated by terrorists, may seem political in nature, but upon further examination, have little to do with politics. Furthermore, while these attacks may provide their perpetrators with exposure, they don't really provide their perpetrators with any real gain.

The attacks in Paris were totally shocking and seem to have changed the atmosphere in Europe just as the 9/11 attacks changed America. As per its probable intention, ISIS has become a major talking point in media and politics, and many citizens are afraid of a similar attack happening in their country. On a technical level, however, what ISIS gains from butchering innocent civilians seems unclear. ISIS doesn't gain any land, power, or resources from the killings in Paris. The little quantifiable gain ISIS receives from their crimes in the form of exposure doesn't

really help them in a tactical sense. In fact, now that ISIS has kindled the wrath of France, a powerful Western country, it might soon have to face off against a host of French ground forces. This will further compound any difficulties ISIS may have already had in the region. In addition, every Western country, including the US and Britain, now knows that ISIS is willing and unafraid to attack them. This knowledge makes these countries much more likely to engage

"BOTH ISIS AND PALESTINIAN TERRORISTS REPRESENT ONE OF THE DEFINING STRUGGLES OF WESTERN SOCIETY IN THE 21ST CENTURY, BECAUSE WE ARE FORCED TO COMBAT INDIVIDUALS WHOSE ONLY REAL OBJECTIVES ARE MURDER, DESTRUCTION, AND OTHER ACTS OF EVIL."

with ISIS directly to prevent an attack. So, by deciding to commit atrocities in Paris, ISIS has surely made itself a target for France, and probably other Western countries as well. One has to wonder why ISIS would bother to even commit these crimes, because in the long term, it could not be less in their best interest. The answer is simple: ISIS is made up of some of the most vile, horrible people in the world, who would rather kill innocents for the sake of killing them than actually achieve their long-term aims. ISIS is not a political organization, because political organizations have ideologies, agendas, and goals. ISIS has none of these, because it sabotages itself with its homicidal tendencies. ISIS members may have no regard for human morality, but they also have zero regard for their own future. If ISIS had avoided any ground confrontation with Western countries, it might have had some chance at domineering the parts of Iraq it's succeeded in conquering. Now that ISIS has France to deal with, its plans are infinitely more difficult to enact. Frankly speaking, ISIS is literally too hateful for its own good.

The Palestinian terrorists who took it upon themselves to murder American 18-year-old Ezra Schwartz, as well as many other civilians, may not be affiliated with ISIS, but in a motivational sense, they are similar to those who

SEE TERROR, CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

The Republican Candidate

By Daniel Luxenberg

As a college student in New York City, I am surrounded by liberal ideologies. I adhere to most of them. However, I do not take part in, and am fundamentally opposed to the movement that bullies those who believe otherwise. The party that prides itself on its 'open-mindedness' and 'respect,' I feel, has been guilted the more conservative youth, calling for them to 'change their views,' or risk being labeled as bigots. What I try to convey to my peers is that those on the right are not the enemy.

I am beginning with this anecdote in order to better define where I stand: conflicted.

The Republican Party has gotten enough (mostly deserved) flack from the media because of the outwardly racist comments of some of their members. To write further on this issue would be an incredible waste of time, as all you have to do for that is turn on MSNBC or CNN. Since I have set the stage of my inner conflict, I will now tell you that the conflict has been somewhat resolved in the recent months. The solution: Governor John Kasich.

Governor John Kasich is running for President of the United States on the Republican ticket. Kasich has an excellent track record as the Governor of Ohio. He has not only decreased the deficit from a potential eight billion dollar hole, but has flipped it to a two billion dollar surplus. Gov. Kasich has expanded Medicaid in his state, yet cut its growth from 10% to 2.5% without taking coverage away from one person or cutting any benefits. "You just need to know how to fix things, reform things, change things," Kasich preached at a pre-debate rally, "We don't have to abolish them!" Prior to his governorship, Kasich was one of the few conservatives who successfully worked with Democrats. As head of the budget committee during the Clinton administration, Kasich balanced the budget. Kasich has experience in both the public and private sector, working for Lehman Brothers in the early 2000's. Although for some that may be a point of criticism, Gov. Kasich is the only candidate that knows what's up on Wall Street and can combine his experiences there with his knowledge of politics. Socially, Gov. Kasich remains the sole GOP candidate who will not be forced to change his views come the general election. When asked for a response to the Supreme Court's ruling on same-sex marriage, Gov. Kasich did not demand a Constitutional Amendment like his opponents, he responded realistically, "The court has ruled ... and I said we'll accept it...Issues like that are planted to divide us. I think the simple fact of the matter is...we need to give everybody a chance, treat everybody with respect, and let them share in this great American dream." Governor Kasich does not want to get bogged down by issues that prevent equality within America. I can go on about Kasich's social agenda and fiscal accomplishments, but the goal of this article is to send you out there to become a more informed voter. While you may think that the debates are there for our better understanding of the candidates, they in fact only allow for ten second sound bytes, and are not sufficient to help us choose our President.

In a fiery pre-debate speech delivered on October 27th, Governor John Kasich revealed that he, along with most of us voters, was tired of hearing the other GOP candidates offer absurd rhetoric. He's had it with these

people! After campaigning above the fray and strictly promoting his policies, Gov. Kasich realized that this election cycle was about more than policy- it was about Donald Trump. Indeed, 'The Donald' is the objective of this race. Take him down successfully, and you'll win. Take him down unsuccessfully, and you're Jeb Bush. Instead of directly attacking Trump, Gov. Kasich left out Trump's name in his speech and went after policy, something he is fluent in. "I've heard them talk about deporting ten or eleven [million] people and pick them up...take them to the border and scream at them?!" - of course, a reference to Trump. Governor Kasich continued arguing against other candidates' policies. "We got people proposing healthcare reform that's going to

a first term Senator; he has no leadership skills, and his record does not compare to that of Governor Kasich's. If a Democratic Senator, in his or her first term, was running for President, would you (as a conservative) not think twice? For confidence and public speaking will only get this country so far.

In a recent State of the Union, Dana Bash interviewed Gov. John Kasich, and the headline read, "Conservatives attack Kasich." All things considered, that's not a bad thing. Rather, it is the hope that if elected, Governor John Kasich will progress our country! The conservative movement is moving further to the right, to the point where Speaker of the House emeritus, John Boehner, has resigned. Boehner mentioned a comment he made about Senator Ted Cruz, calling him a "jackass." His words, not mine. But let's ponder that for a moment. Generally, the Speaker is aware of the goings-on within the Senate; how Senators interact and so on. Boehner is not exactly the Democrats' snuggle-buddy, so if he refers to Sen. Cruz as a "jackass," one would have to assume Cruz is not a man willing to work with the other side. It's obvious that the further the parties split, the less our government can accomplish. So Kasich as a moderate conservative voice would be an ideal choice.

On the other side, Senator Bernie Sanders and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton do not get off the hook. Hillary Clinton, too, is an offender of partisanship in our country. In the recent Democratic debate, Hillary Clinton 'jokingly' cited the Republican party as one of the enemies. How is our country supposed to progress if our President is not able to work with Congress? Senator Sanders, I believe, has already won. He entered the race and put issues he believed in at the forefront of Democratic debates: free education, restructuring of Wall Street, and Washington DC's corrupt ways. He's The Donald of the Democratic party, but way more qualified.

I conclude with a few notes to the Republican Jewish Council and to the voters of the American public. Electing Governor John Kasich to the general election will secure Ohio. It will secure those who are center-left and do not want Hillary Clinton in office. It has been suggested that if Kasich were elected, the conservative base would not come out to vote in the general election. However, in my opinion, those base conservatives will vote for anyone to ensure there will not be another four years of the current administration. The issue at hand is the primary election. Ironically, this base is on track to elect an un-electable candidate. After reading this article, you must decide for yourself whether you want a President who will accomplish in the White House, or one who won't. A fellow Kasich supporter, in an attempt to rationalize why Kasich is not leading in the polls, told me that people tend to vote with their hearts, not their head. Let me make clear that along with my head, my heart is very much into Kasich's candidacy; I believe Gov. Kasich will secure our nation, strengthen our economy, and fulfill the idea of 'hope' implanted in us by our sitting President. This will not happen if one of the other GOP (or Democratic) candidates are elected. Gov. Kasich has entered the GOP-filled-net in order to unite this country. He entered so the country can work together and once again, accomplish. We must elect someone who has proven that he or she can work with the other party and exceed our expectations.



**"AFTER READING THIS ARTICLE,
YOU MUST DECIDE FOR YOURSELF
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THAT WILL ACCOMPLISH IN THE
WHITE HOUSE, OR NOT."**

leave, I believe, millions of people without adequate health insurance," (Carson). "One of the candidates said he's known as Veto Corleone. He's so proud of the fact that he vetoes everything. You know what vetoes are? Vetoes are a sign you can't get what you want," (Jeb!). Following this pre-debate speech, Gov. Kasich soared to the cover of CNN.com. The New York Times tweeted about Gov. Kasich. Jake Tapper, Megyn Kelly, Rachel Maddow, all talking about Governor John Kasich. Kasich's fiery speech paid off, as people began Googling his name during and following the debate. But at this point he must make it through the sea of candidates.

As a side note, the fad of wanting an outsider as President boggles my mind. Why would we want someone with no experience in this industry, to hold its highest office? Moving on. Senator Marco Rubio is hot right now. I can only assume that is due to his favorability with Latinos, his young appeal, and fundraising abilities. Because it can't be his record. According to Philip Bump in the Washington Post, Rubio has missed 23 out of the Senate's 29 votes since the first Presidential debate. He was elected to do a job, and not only is his performance slacking, it seems that he is not even showing up! In response to an attack on this point at the third GOP debate, Rubio cited other Senators with similar track records. I do not think that vindicates his attendance, or lack thereof, but supporters are nonetheless coming out by the millions (of dollars). Senator Rubio is serving his country, and I salute him. But he is

Netflix and the Illusion of Freedom

By Hillel Field

The End of the Tour, a film based on a series of interviews with the late acclaimed author David Foster Wallace by Rolling Stone journalist David Lipsky was released this past summer. Wallace made for a particularly fascinating interview subject, especially in light of his unexpected suicide about eight years ago. The movie has sparked a renewed interest in his work, which covers a virtuosic range of styles and content, including short stories, novels, and essays on contemporary issues. One of the most common themes throughout his body of work is entertainment's subtle yet powerful effect on society, especially that of television.

Wallace's most celebrated work was Infinite Jest, released in 1996. This novel became notorious for its page count of 1,079, including almost 100 pages of endnotes, which contain important plot elements. To put it mildly, this book is not light reading. Also notable is Wallace's 'maximalist' attention to detail in the novel, which expresses itself in rich explorations into the streams-of-consciousness of multiple characters, and brings his vision of an alternate version of contemporary American society to life. According to Wallace's retelling of American history, television was eventually replaced by what he coins as the "Interlace TelEntertainment" system. This technology "pulses" programs to viewers' watching devices on demand, taking the passivity out of the TV watching experience.

When I first came across Wallace's description of this system while reading the novel, I realized his words were eerily prophetic. Pioneered by Netflix, streaming entertainment has become a major player in the entertainment business, and for the typical middle class high school or college student, has basically replaced television as the quintessential leisurely pastime. The recently popular phrase, "Netflix and chill," requires no elaboration, but crassly shows the centrality of this medium in our culture.

Current college students are in an interesting transitional position, having spent their childhood watching TV, and may have wasted obscene amounts of time in high school streaming TV shows and movies on Netflix or Hulu. At first glance, we might consider these experiences as seeming fundamentally different. The classic portrait of a TV watcher is the couch potato, hypnotized by whatever he or she is watching, most likely while munching on something grossly unhealthy. Us Netflix users might feel an air of superiority over those who watch TV because of the technological sophistication we associate with streaming, and more importantly, it just feels more per-

sonal. Because we get to choose to watch what appeals to our ultra-refined tastes, the entire streaming process becomes one of self-validation. This element is missing from the experience of watching TV, an activity so simple that its futility is more obvious to us.

"BECAUSE WE GET TO CHOOSE TO WATCH WHAT APPEALS TO OUR ULTRA- REFINED TASTES, THE ENTIRE STREAMING PROCESS BECOMES ONE OF SELF-VALIDATION."



This isn't an earth-shatteringly new phenomenon. The culture of consumerism has slowly but surely become entrenched in American society over the last century. Typical advertisements rarely emphasize the functionality or necessity of a product, but are more likely to persuade you that you should buy something because it will deeply and powerfully affect you as an individual. When was the last time you saw a car commercial that focused on the vehicle's ability to get you from point A to point B, instead of something along the lines of how it can help you embrace your adventurous side?

While these kinds of products claim to appeal to who we are, they don't actually help us build character in any substantive way. They merely make sure that you wear your identity

loudly and proudly on your sleeve, guaranteed to make others realize your value. The cultural obsession with services like Netflix has shown us the harsh reality that not only do we have to express ourselves to others, but to express ourselves to ourselves.

The desire to recreate a world in our own images extends beyond the political boundaries we draw for ourselves. Starbucks caused a major uproar in right-wing circles when their annual holiday themed coffee cups failed to be "Christmassy" enough for Christian customers' likings. Regardless of the fact that most of the symbolism we see around Christmas time was conceived as a secular marketing tool, the fact that people could feel so personally threatened by the imagery that adorns their coffee cups is frightening. We can probably learn more about people's fixation on consumer products from this affair than anything valuable about religious liberties.

On the other side of the political spectrum, around this past Halloween, primarily liberal college campuses were bitterly divided over the issue of regulating students' Halloween costumes, out of concern over racist or offensive caricatures. Although it goes without saying that it's wrong to wear something you think others may be offended by, the outpouring of outrage calling for administrative action seems to be rooted in the same issue. Personal integrity and self-confidence have fallen by the wayside to a desire to see the world presented to you as your personal utopia. Of course, having deeply rooted values means that you may have to fight for them at times, but this doesn't mean you should expect them to be reflected towards you by default.

With this palpable sentiment in our cultural climate, it would be wise to take heed to David Foster Wallace's keen insight into what the future could bring. Infinite Jest's numerous twisting and turning plotlines revolve around a single film so entertaining that it entrances viewers to the point of utter dysfunction. Because the film's "victims" experience the greatest imaginable pleasure by watching it, they become totally disinterested in anything else, including performing basic life functions. Services like Netflix provide us with the similar illusion of total control and freedom. Not only do they subtly wrap the same old unproductive behavior in a sleek new package, but also give us false expectations of reality. Getting too comfortable with the immediate gratification model of Netflix will result in action paralysis when we realize that the real world doesn't work this way. We shouldn't mistake the appearance of the accomplishment of our goals with the patience and hard work it requires.

Get Rid of Political Debates

By Avraham Eisenberg

The CNBC Republican presidential debate on October 28 sparked some soul-searching among the campaigns. They felt collectively embarrassed, and sought to prevent another shaming from reoccurring. Whether their woes were a result of their bad policies or the moderators' biases is a function of your political beliefs. Compare, for instance, NPR's roundup of pundits' reactions entitled "5 Headlines: Media Consensus Is That CNBC Was GOP Debate's 'Biggest Loser'" with Ezra Klein's take that "the problem for Republicans is that substantive questions about their policy proposals end up sounding like hostile attacks — but that's because the policy proposals are ridiculous, not because the questions are actually unfair." Several of the campaigns formed an alliance to influence future debates, issuing a list of demands to the networks. If control over everything from candidates' displayed biographies to the temperature in the room was not ceded, they would not participate.

Despite minor complaints like these, both parties generally benefit from debates, at the expense of the public. Although every party has some undefendable positions, the establishment much prefers a platform from which the public chooses between candidates based on eloquence or attractiveness over one where politicians might be penalized for incorrect or misleading statements. This model also prevents non-mainstream candidates from even reaching the public eye. As George Farah, director of Open Debates, notes: "... the debates' rules of order have been hijacked by the two main political parties. The result? Moderators can't ask followup

questions, important issues are never raised, and credible third-party candidates are excluded from the proceedings altogether."

Fine-tuning debates, as the Republican establishment now wants, can only go so far. Ensuring the moderators are friendly (and the temperature adequate) does nothing to address the fundamental problems with the structure of debates. They systematically degrade the quality of the political discourse in a number of ways: incentivising glib talking at the expense

"INSTEAD OF DEBATES, WHY NOT HAVE EVERY CANDIDATE WRITE A SERIES OF ARTICLES EXPLICATING THEIR POSITION ON KEY ISSUES?"

of accuracy, highlighting "gotcha" moments instead of ideas, and allowing candidates to get away with tactics that would never work outside of a debate setting. The "winner" of a debate is often the person who spoke best, as opposed to the person with the best ideas, or even the best defense of their ideas. Arguments need not be consistent, correct, or on topic, as long as they are presented convincingly.

The debates often matter significantly more than other political events, because they get mass exposure. Seemingly trivial mistakes, like Rick Perry's infamous "Oops" moment, can and do ruin candidacies, even though they arguably matter little to expected Presidential performance. Those kinds of mistakes happen because debates are aired live; in gen-

eral, edited media is of higher quality. People make mistakes that they can't undo when their remarks air unedited, and fact-checking is a lot easier to get right when you have more time to research, instead of needing to formulate your answer within a handful of seconds. And why care about facts, when the overwhelming majority of your audience will never look up the truth? Factcheckers like Factcheck.org and PolitiFact get nowhere near the reach that the debates get, limiting their impact. This shows: pretty much every major candidate has at least one "Pants-on-fire" rating from Politifact, and/or several "Falses;" clearly there's little incentive not to lie.

Instead of debates, why not have every candidate write a series of articles explicating their position on key issues, the process they use to come up with positions, and arguments against their opponents' previous articles? If this was the primary way their views were disseminated to the public, they would presumably get high readership; perhaps not as much as the debates, but close. Then, getting the facts wrong would be met by a devastating rebuttal in their opponent's next articles, instead of on little-read blogs and fact-checkers. Candidates would have more time to compose and edit their arguments, and so mistakes made due to pressure would disappear. If they want to appeal to the public, they'll need to be clear, and so misleading and illogical arguments would be easier to notice. And, of course, we won't have all this drama whenever a moderator asks the wrong questions.

In short, I am advocating that politics adopt the model employed so successfully by academia. We do not decide scientific disputes by getting people in a room to compete for the best performance. Why should that decide who the most powerful person in the country will be?

Anti-Israel Pacifism

By Jonathan Livi

I would like to propose a rather unique explanation for the growth of anti-Israel sentiment around the world. Before I do so however, one thing must be established. It has become undeniable that the growth of dislike for Israel is coming predominantly from the left. It is in the University, one of the preeminent left leaning institutions in the world, that anti-Israel rallies are held most often. Of the two major parties in U.S. politics, it is the Democrats, the representatives of left-leaning Americans, who have wavered most in their support for Israel in recent years. And finally, of the major American news outlets, it is the center/left ones that portray Israel most negatively during times of conflict- it is not Fox News.

Is this just a coincidence, or is there something about the left's thinking that produces such a dislike for Israel? I think there is. And believe it or not, the culprit is of a most unexpected nature. I think the culprit is pacifism. I believe that there has been an increase in pacifistic sentiment among the political left, causing much of the growing distaste for Israel around the world.

What exactly is Pacifism? Pacifism is an absolute opposition to war. Period. The basic assumption here is that the world can achieve "peace" if countries (usually the one the pacifist resides in) would simply refuse to fight. This makes sense, ostensibly. The problem, however, is that it necessitates an extremely rosy view of the world, to an extent that it is not at all realistic. Take the following quote for example. It was written by a quasi-pacifist Bertrand Russell, a 20th century British philosopher:

"When disarmament is suggested, it is natural to imagine that foreign conquest would inevitably follow, and would be accompanied by all the horrors that characterize warlike invasions. This is a mistake... Probably, if we had neither armaments nor Empire, foreign States would let us alone. If they did not, we should have to yield without fighting, and we should therefore not arouse their ferocity."

It is astounding how trusting he is of the basic goodness of humanity. The excerpt displays a drastic distortion of reality; to the point that it is practically satirical. But assuming this is not the case, why would someone think this way? What would bring someone to engage in such fantasy- to think that he could remain safe by refusing to defend himself? Does such a person not realize that there is such a thing as evil- that there are people who will seek to harm you whether you fight for yourself or not?

The answer to this question is difficult. Suggesting that pacifism stems from a psychological neurosis would obviously come across as arrogant, but it is probably the closest thing to the truth. Pacifism may simply be a strong manifestation of "wishful thinking"- the psychological need to see difficult problems as easily surmountable. Pacifists, in seeking the most elusive achievement known to mankind-"world peace"- resort to proposing that it can be achieved easily- by putting down weapons and surrendering.

Such pacifistic notions have infiltrated the modern left. I can go through a long litany of examples where our current president has denounced the use of force and blamed America for the aggression of foreign religious extremists, but that wouldn't be necessary. I don't think it even has to be argued that Democrats are less hawkish than Republicans. But, just as a sampling, one (very egregious) example of left

"PACIFISTS, IN SEEKING THE MOST ELUSIVE ACHIEVEMENT KNOWN TO MANKIND-"WORLD PEACE"- RESORT TO PROPOSING THAT IT CAN BE ACHIEVED EASILY- BY PUTTING DOWN WEAPONS AND SURRENDERING!"

leaning pacifism is called for. After the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, the liberal website Salon tweeted the following: "Real terror unfolds in Paris. Perhaps this will convince the right to tone down their incessant violent rhetoric." After you finish reeling in shock, take a moment to notice how he/she places the blame squarely on the right, and completely forgets to blame those who actually committed the terror, aka the terrorists. Seemingly, he/she believes that the incident could have been avoided simply by making sure not to anger the terrorists who were involved! He/She naturally assumes that the terrorist attack on the West was caused by the West, or its "violent rhetoric." That is the essence of pacifism- the hopeful delusion that others will only be as bad as we cause them to be.

How does this all connect to Israel? It is very simple. Since pacifists believe that all the aggression directed to-

wards an individual must have been caused by that individual, they believe that all the aggression aimed at Israel must have been caused by Israel. And since Israel is recipient of a gargantuan amount of hatred from Muslim countries, it follows that Israel must have done some pretty egregious things to foment that hatred.

Of course, there are other factors in play. Nobody can seriously claim that old-school Anti-Semitism doesn't play a role in the world's hatred of Israel. But anti-Semitism cannot be the only cause. How then would you explain the incredible fact, as attested to by Alan Dershowitz, that overwhelmingly, people who hate Israel also hate America? Perhaps it is second degree anti-Semitism (because America supports Israel), or perhaps it is something more. Maybe people see how both of these countries unabashedly use military force to fight evil. Maybe they see how both of these countries take pride in their militaries, and see them as a medium for peace and order.

And then maybe the pacifists in the crowd see the exact opposite. They see two countries that are always at war, constantly causing deranged people to engage in violent activity. They see the two countries as chronic instigators, and as obstacles to a peace that would be so achievable, if only they would just put their weapons down. But then, in self-defense, these countries refuse to stop fighting, and while at first the pacifists only resent them for their aggression, this resentment quickly turns to hatred. Add this hatred (in Israel's case) to the already extant anti-Semitism that is systemic to so many cultures around the world, and you have a putrid concoction of Anti-Israel/Semitic sentiment that is so virulent, it is making Jewish college students across the Western world fear for their safety, just for being Jewish.

If you think this whole theory is farfetched, just think of this for a moment. In 2003, a survey was taken in the European Union asking Europeans what countries they thought are the greatest threat to world peace. The top two responses in the survey were, you guessed it, Israel and America.

Feel free to respond: onlivi@yahoo.com



TERROR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

carried out the attacks in Paris. These terrorists, like most other Palestinian terrorists, chose to murder random Israeli civilians. The latest victims of Palestinian terror were not soldiers, politicians, or even affiliated with any of Israel's policies. If the Palestinian terrorists who committed these recent murders have a grievance with Israel's policy, their grievance was not addressed by murdering innocent civilians, and whatever they were upset about will surely continue. Ezra Schwartz wasn't even an Israeli! In other words, the terrorists who killed him weren't actually killing him because they dislike the Israeli government, because if they did, they would've made sure their killings actually had something to do with it. These killings had absolutely nothing to do with Israel's government, the Israeli settlements in the West Bank, the treatment of Palestinians, or any other topic that American media attempts to use to slander Israel. These killings simply happened because some Palestinians hate Israelis on a psychological level, and wanted to kill anyone even remotely associated with Israel. These killings could not have less to do with Israel's treatment of Palestinians, because if these

terrorists actually wanted to improve their own situation, they would've tried doing something constructive, instead of literally killing at random. Murder is all that these terrorists want, despite their claims otherwise.

Both ISIS and Palestinian terrorists represent one of the defining struggles of Western society in the 21st century, be-



cause we are forced to combat individuals whose only real objectives are murder, destruction, and other acts of evil. Like other evil people throughout history, their only real goal is committing atrocities for the sake of committing them. But terrorists are their own worst enemy. ISIS terrorists will never achieve the domination they want, because they would rather kill at random than actually bring themselves closer to that goal. Even though they have a stated goal of destroying the West, their murderous tendencies keep them from achieving that end. Their desire to commit terrible crimes is their biggest saboteur; they knew that attacking France would make France their permanent enemy, and they did so anyway. Palestinian terror will never unseat the State of Israel, because the State of Israel isn't afraid of murderers who would rather kill American teenagers and other civilians than actually achieve anything real in a political sense. Instead of even attempting to better their situation, Palestinian terrorists just kill any Israeli or Jew they see, even though doing so accomplishes nothing for their cause. Terrorists like these will never be victorious, because their own actions are the biggest thing keeping their cause from being successful. On an ideological level, terrorists value violence more than actually achieving their aims, and that is why they will always fail.

Ride On If You Dare

By Benjamin Zirman

As the winter approaches, people's excitement to hit the slopes and start skiing and snowboarding again grows tremendously. A new Israeli startup has developed the first ever augmented reality goggles that promise to drastically change the experiences of the 16 million people who participate in alpine, free skiing, snowboarding, or cross country. These new goggles have three really cool new features: interaction, gaming, and play! Though consumers spent over 4.5 billion dollars last year on apparel, equipment, and accessories, this augmented reality technology might be the most exciting and interesting thing to ever hit the market.

RideOn was founded in 2013 by three friends, software engineer Alon Getz, entrepreneur Zur Erez, and computer programmer Ori Kotek, with all three sharing a background in the aerospace industry. "We've been doing augmented reality products since 2002, to assist pilots in orientation and navigation. We know how to build AR products, and love skiing and snowboarding, so it felt natural" said Ori Kotek. Getz is the CEO while Kotek is the CTO, and they run a small team containing just three other members. The company had created a prototype and then turned to crowdfunding from February to March 2015 to raise a goal of \$75,000. They ended up raising over \$113,000 and are ready to start developing their final product. They are offering a pre-order price of \$599 for the

"WITH A DEVICE THAT COMBINES THE FUNCTIONALITY OF A GPS WITH FUN FEATURES FOR GAMES AND COMPETITIONS, LOOK TO RIDEON TO POSSIBLY REVOLUTIONIZE SKIING AND SNOWBOARDING."

goggles which will retail for around \$899. They hope to start shipping their product sometime in December 2015 or January 2016.

What is augmented reality? One way of putting it is: gluing a phone to your face. The basic idea of augmented reality is to superimpose images, audio and other sensory enhancements on a user's view of the world in real time. Augmented realities as well as its little brother virtual reality are becoming buzzwords in the tech world. Investors are pouring money into the industry, and companies are placing bets on augmented reality to be the future. The possibilities of this technology could help one learn things about a city, park, or artwork just by pointing your AR-enabled phone at it. Doctors could add digital images of an x-ray onto a mannequin so patients could understand their injury better. Construction can use virtual markers to designate where a beam should go or which structural support to inspect.

RideOn has used this technology and applied it to skiing and snowboarding. RideOn goggles project augmented reality images and features on the snow, so they look as if they're floating 15 feet in front of you. This allows you to interact with the floating images using head movements without any

external devices such as voice activation or wrist watches. You just stare at icons appearing in the sky, your friends, or points of interest, and are able to access information all while keeping your hands warm and gloved, and your phone securely in your pocket. Its software consists of three main modules. The first module is focused on location and orientation fusion, which works by mixing and processing signals from the goggles' various sensors and GPS. The computer graphics rendering module enables the seamless augmented reality by providing fast-updating, crisp, and rich graphics in real-time. Lastly, the communication module connects with the outside world using Bluetooth and Wifi.

The first main feature of RideOn's new goggles is interaction. You are able to see your friends around you and interact with them using audio and video. There are options to call friends or send pre-set text messages without moving your hands. You can post videos and stats for anyone who you might have left back at home so they can feel like they are there with you. Even better, you can annoy friends by sending them virtual snowballs! It has never been easier to communicate on the slopes and these new interaction features will allow family and friends to stay even

closer connected, putting worried mothers at ease and making friends who are sidelined from injury even more jealous. The days of getting lost on the slope and fumbling with ski maps will be a thing of the past. With RideOn goggles, by simply looking around the screen in front of you will tell you how to get to red, green, black or blue trails. It also has the ability to navigate you to the nearest ski lodges, bars, and restaurants in addition to checking queue wait times and finding ski-lift positions. While shredding the slopes themselves, you will be able to navigate and see your location on a virtual map. RideOn has partnered with a chief ski-mapping database that contains 95% of worldwide major ski resorts. Any holes in the maps will be filled using data from users sent by the goggles so that smaller resorts and ski sites can be included. All of this allows skiing and snowboarding to become safer and easier.

For all the advanced skiers and snowboarders, the last feature of gaming will make the ski and snowboard rides even more fun. You can now chase a shadow of your favorite ski or snowboard athletes down the mountain. In addition, you can ride through a virtual slalom track that only you can see allowing you to compete against your own records and friends' records for time, accuracy, and skill. This will bring an added element to more advanced winter sport athletes and bring greater competition even on casual runs.

With all these features, safety concerns were raised especially with new skiers and snowboarders. RideOn recognized this and programmed the goggles to recognize a rookie user. The goggles automatically detect motion and switch to an extremely minimal riding mode for those with less experience on the slopes. Even better, your concentration won't be disrupted by every text messages, calls, and virtual snowballs as they will be waiting for rookies when they have fully stopped and are safe.

The goggles hopefully will be safe for users, but unfortunately can't truly be tested until riders start using them.

On the technology side, RideOn's goggles are powered by a battery that has more than 8 hours of battery life. Even in the brightest sunlight the display is readable and there is no glare. The goggles have anti-scratch, impact protected lens, water-resistant, and anti-fog technology and will be replaced if they do incur any scratches. You can record Point-of-View video clips of your ride with the built in camera that has HD video recording. These videos can easily be uploaded to social media to make sure everyone know just how much fun and how good you are on the slopes. Also, you can listen to your favorite music with a hands-free interface connected to your phone. A 3G connection isn't even required as many of the features are stored in the memory of the goggles, including ski resort navigation and orientation, games & challenges, and video

recording. Features that will be coming soon are turn-by-turn navigation, various in-ride stats, video chat, video clips with embedded in-ride stats, and more games and challenges. Other new features and algorithms will be added constantly. Additionally, the goggles can work from -4 to 100 degrees Fahrenheit and will protect wearer's eyes from



sun rays.

When the goggles are released, they will be accompanied by a mobile app for the iPhone and Android. The app will add a whole new dimension to the experience by creating contact with riders in your vicinity and your social media friends back home. Furthermore, it allows you to receive data from the App's online servers and makes it extremely easy to upload stats and videos online. So before you hit the slopes this winter think about ordering RideOn goggles to experience skiing and snowboarding like you never have before.

A small number of companies have already released connected goggles, such as the Oakley Airwave and Zeal Optics Z3, these only give users' heads up displays in one section of your peripheral vision. "What distinguishes RideOn is our delivery of a true Augmented Reality experience, derived from a see-through display that projects data onto the center of your field of view, not on the side," explained Alon Getz. RideOn is ready to hit the market and totally revolutionize the snowboard and skiing experience.

RideOn's product has been getting attention at various conferences and competitions recently. In October 2015, the company was named one of 8 finalists out of 150 companies at EY's The Pitch in Tel Aviv. They also showcased their product at the Journey conference, Israel's most prestigious business conference later in October. This shouldn't come as a surprise, since augmented reality is one of the most exciting technological breakthroughs of the current age and RideOn is bringing what looks like a tremendous product to market. With a device that combines the functionality of a GPS and sites that can look up different slopes, with fun features for games and competitions, look to RideOn to possibly revolutionize skiing and snowboarding.

Senator Lieberman Addresses Syms

By Adam Kramer

The Syms School of Business community was fortunate to hear from Senator Joseph Lieberman on Tuesday November 17th, where the former Senator from Connecticut and current occupant of the Lieberman Chair of Public Policy and Public Service at Yeshiva University spoke on the topic of "Why American Business Needs a Strong Federal Government, But Not Too Strong."

Syms Dean Dr. Moses Pava introduced the Senator and noted his years representing Connecticut in the U.S. Senate, and prior to that as a state Senator for, and Attorney General of, Connecticut. In describing Senator Lieberman, Dean Pava cited the words of Pirkei Avot that say, "In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man." Pava concluded by

remarking that on a personal level, Senator Lieberman is a true role model.

Senator Lieberman began his speech with a few light-hearted moments, remarking that the university created the Lieberman chair and then surprised the senator by choosing him for it—much like the way that Dick Cheney was running a committee that was tasked with finding a vice president for President Bush, and Cheney ended up choosing himself for the position. Senator Lieberman added that the university is maximizing his time at YU, allowing him to address different portions of the school in public lectures, and teach various classes.

Introducing his topic for the evening, Senator Lieberman emphasized that the government has an important, albeit limited role in our lives, and that this is something that

the founders wanted. Since then, people have maintained a healthy skepticism about their leaders.

In another funny moment, Senator Lieberman relayed a joke initially told by President Reagan that the most terrifying words in the English language are "I'm from the government and I'm here to help." To further prove this point about the limitations of government, Senator Lieberman cited a story about an official from the department of agriculture who saw his colleague crying. When he inquired why he was crying, the colleague replied that his farmer had died—implying that the man was only responsible for one actual farmer.

In today's political climate, people have a lot of anger towards government, according to Senator Lieberman. While

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The Executive Series

By Raymond Cohen

About The Executive Series:

Through 'The Executive Series', The Commentator provides its readership with access to the thoughts and experiences of highly accomplished individuals in the business world. The column has a conversational style and expresses the unique story of each business leader, including their motivations, struggles, successes and failures. 'The Executive Series' also serves as a forum for a broader conversation about leadership in business and in life.

About Mr. Daniel Posner (Adapted from Golubcapital.com)

Mr. Posner is President and Chief Investment Officer of GC Synexus, the event-driven credit hedge fund manager of Golub Capital, and leader of the firm's Opportunistic Credit business. Previously, Mr. Posner was a Managing Director of D. E. Shaw & Co., where he was the global head of the firm's Credit Opportunities and Distressed Investing Unit as well as head of the firm's Portfolio Acquisition Unit. He also served on the investment committee of the firm's Global Direct Capital activities. Prior to joining D. E. Shaw, Mr. Posner was a Senior Vice President at Intermarket Corporation, a hedge fund manager specializing in event-driven strategies. His earlier professional experience included distressed investment and advisory roles at UBS, Deloitte Consulting Group and Goldman Sachs. Mr. Posner holds a BA in Economics from Yeshiva University, magna cum laude, with awards in Economics and Literature; and an MBA from the University of Chicago, where he was a Geshar Fellow and received a Bridge Fellowship.

Mr. Posner is heavily involved with the Jewish community, serving as President of Manhattan Day School and on the board of RIETS. He also serves as an adjunct professor of accounting at Yeshiva University's MS in Accounting program where he teaches a course on Hedge Fund Investing.

This interview was conducted by Raymond Cohen.

Raymond Cohen: What were some of your formative business and leadership roles?

Daniel Posner: From my day school and high school years, I was always thinking about business. When I was in third grade I brought candies to school and sold them to fellow students. I was also active in student government, both in high school where I was student council president, and throughout my years at Yeshiva University. I think that learning how to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, was critical in my leadership roles and has served me well throughout my career.

Raymond Cohen: How did you know you wanted a career on Wall Street?

Daniel Posner: When I was at YU, I was a double major and was thinking about medical school and Wall Street. I became enthusiastic about the markets after the "flash crash" in the late '80s. Principal investing was the area that ultimately excited me most. While at YU, I made it my business to speak to as many people as I could about a career on Wall Street, a number of them said to me: 'Wall Street is a wonderful place to build a career'; I ended up landing a job at Goldman Sachs. And it wasn't until I went to the University of Chicago where I started taking courses in bankruptcy and restructuring, and on the principal investing side where I really got excited about financial theory, that I became enthusiastic about finding value where others didn't see it.

Raymond Cohen: What are some of the reasons why getting an MBA was beneficial to you?

Daniel Posner: I always knew I wanted to go to business school after YU; I took my GMAT's before graduating. I thought it to be really important to build out the breadth of my experience and knowledge base. But I also wanted to develop a network of people who were going into the business world. People that go on to a variety of different careers in different areas, in different locales that are your network; they're your peers, and whichever organization they work for, they can be a great source of knowledge and a source of ideas.

Finally, being able to do a summer internship in between your first and second year really helps you think about the possible professions that fit your skill set and excite you.

Raymond Cohen: Who were your role models or

mentors as a developing leader, and how did they influence you?

Daniel Posner: Probably my biggest mentor on Wall Street is David Shaw. David is one of the founding members of D.E. Shaw. When I joined the firm, the firm was only about \$2 billion AUM and when I left it was about \$40 billion AUM. He taught me about three main things: 1) surround yourself with the best and brightest people 2) communicate with your team to ensure that each member understands their role in accomplishing the larger goals and objectives 3) always send a clear message to your investors and all of your stakeholders.

Raymond Cohen: In your experience, what intan-



"FOR JOBS ON WALL STREET, WHILE IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT TO BE SMART, WHAT DIFFERENTIATES THE SUCCESSFUL AND THE UNSUCCESSFUL IS A GENUINE PASSION FOR INVESTING."

gible qualities separate the successful from the unsuccessful?

Daniel Posner: You've got to go into an industry for the right reasons, not just because you think you are going to have financial success. If you're passionate about an industry and find a lot of self-fulfillment in that area, and are really good at it what you do, then you'll be able to find ways to make it work. For jobs on Wall Street, while it's really important to be smart, what differentiates the successful and the unsuccessful is a genuine passion for investing. Because there are times on Wall Street where things are going great and everybody's going to be happy and there are times when things aren't as great. And it's those people who can stick it out, who think of Wall Street as a marathon and not a sprint, are the ones who achieve success. Those that are looking to cut corners, those who are looking for immediate, quick success, generally burn out more quickly.

Raymond Cohen: Tell me about a time when you failed. How did you deal with it and what did you learn from the experience?

Daniel Posner: One of the acquisitions we made when I was at D.E. Shaw. We bought a company called FAO Schwarz, the famous toy store in New York City and we thought about really building out a brand and building out content. I think that one of the areas we underestimated was the amount of involvement that we would need to have in the business, and how difficult it is in a business that has thin margins and isn't really scalable given the overhead. That learning experience made me more self-aware and I realized that there are things that I do really well and I'd like to focus my energy on those areas. With the answer to that question I was able to make more strategic acquisi-

tions; we subsequently got involved with a number of other situations in similar industries which were successful

Raymond Cohen: How have you been able to balance the Wall Street life with the Orthodox lifestyle?

Daniel Posner: Often you get projects, especially earlier in your career, late Thursday night or Friday, where you know that the expectation is for you to be there on Shabbos. One of the things that I've done in my career is to, first of all, be upfront and let them know about Shabbos to set expectations. However, it's all the more important to make up for it. And so, when I got that project on Friday afternoon I worked until I could, left for Shabbos, and the minute after Shabbos I was back in the office working Saturday night and all day Sunday.

It's important for YU grads to know that getting a job on Wall Street is extremely competitive and those that do get jobs need to go the extra mile and make sure that he/she is the first person in the office every day and the last one to leave every night. Showing everyone that you are willing to go the extra mile is critical.

Raymond Cohen: How do you compare serving as the President of Manhattan Day School to the hedge fund life?

Daniel Posner: They're very different. Hedge fund life, finance, that's my career. I'm also incredibly passionate about Jewish education. In my view, Jewish education is one of the most important areas to our community. In thinking about Jewish education, we need to examine how we can deliver an extremely strong Jewish and secular education so that our graduates can be successful in today's economy. At the same time, we need to figure out how we can provide an education at a cost that is reasonable for the typical family in our community. If we can solve for both of these areas, we will have an education system that will yield the results that we can proud of.

Raymond Cohen: How have you been able to use the skills you've acquired as a hedge fund manager to approach Manhattan Day School?

Daniel Posner: What I do professionally as a manager and a leader is outline goals and objectives for my group and for my organization. Every year we go into the year knowing the key goals and themes that we focus on in our organization. We may have 100 great ideas, but at the end of the day we can only really implement and execute on four or five of them. Focus is key. We've used that same approach at Manhattan Day School. Over the summer I sit down with my Executive Committee and Board and we outline our goals and objectives and discuss how we are going to implement them. For example, do we want to have better governance and create a whole new set of by-laws for our school? How could we create better communication with our parents and with all of our stakeholders? How can we optimize fundraising? What are our infrastructure needs? That planning process is key to what we do.

Raymond Cohen: After leaving D.E. Shaw in 2011, there were rumors that you were going to start your own fund; why did you instead decide to join Golub Capital?

Daniel Posner: In effect I really did start my own fund; Golub Capital is my seed partner. I got to a point after a decade at D.E. Shaw where I wanted to do something more entrepreneurial and start my own fund. I thought I would have the best of both worlds - of having the platform of a Golub Capital, a \$15 billion credit asset manager, along with having a hedge fund that I could call my own, that I could be an equity owner, which was something I was excited and energized by.

Raymond Cohen: How do you compare the experience at D.E. Shaw to the more entrepreneurial experience at Golub Capital?

Daniel Posner: At D.E. Shaw, we had incredible growth; between 2002 and 2008 the hedge fund industry was probably one of the fastest growing industries in the world and we were one of the beneficiaries of that. Post 2008-2009, the mindset of investors shifted, especially in the credit world. The enjoyment and excitement I've had about building something that's more entrepreneurial, that I own, has given me great satisfaction. I love the industry I'm in, I love investing, and so being able to have been doing that for the last 20 years is like eating chocolate ice cream every day.

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this is understandable, there's also a risk that the anger will blind people from the benefits that the government provides, and the way it protects our freedom and economic prosperity. So while Republicans say we need more growth and Democrats say we need more government to keep Wall Street under control, Senator Lieberman believes that there are ways in which the government has reached too far and has hurt economic growth. That being said, the need for some amount of government is clear. Senator Lieberman quoted Rabbi Chaninah, "pray for the welfare of the government, for without fear of government, people would swallow each other alive," and added that centuries later, Madison talked about this same idea in Federalist Papers 51, that "if men were angels, no government would be necessary." Senator Lieberman concluded this thought by saying that the Jewish people were freed from Egypt to live under a system, not to be totally free.

Senator Lieberman then enumerated four ways that a strong American economy depends on a strong American government. First is the idea that our respect for the rule of law is a comparative advantage for our economy, since it provides the stability and predictability for those who want to begin a business or invest in a business, whether they're from the U.S. or not. Our system of law gives people the confidence that a dispute will be adjudicated fairly by a court of law, and it gives investors in America confidence that the government will never nationalize businesses, something that happens in other countries.

The second way that a strong American economy depends on a strong government is that the government's regulations help consumers. People would be hesitant to buy large quantities of items, or wouldn't buy items at all, if the government didn't set standards ensuring quality and safety in the marketplace. Additionally, people have the ability to sue the maker of a product if they feel that they were

cheated. Third, is the establishment of a national marketplace by Commerce Clause in the Constitution, which was something that wasn't guaranteed by the Articles of Confederation when states had their own marketplaces.

Lastly, is the global security and stability that the American military provides, allowing Americans to import, export, tax, and build. Over time, this has helped build the American middle class and has brought people out of poverty around the world. While one might think that in a day and age of amazing technological advancement global commerce is no longer conducted through actual shipping of goods, an enormous percentage of commerce is still global trade by ship. As a result, if the U.S. wasn't able to keep the Straits of Hormuz or Malaka open, the consequences for the economy would literally be disastrous. On a more micro level, the U.S. military has at times had to help American merchants abroad. Marines were first brought into foreign engagement in 1801 when they went to Tripoli to free a crew of an American merchant vessel that had been taken by pirates.

Additionally, the U.S. has led global trade agreements, which have been critical in establishing world marketplace. By helping create the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization, the U.S. has created a world economic order of free trade.

Senator Lieberman went into great detail on this fourth reason why a strong economy is dependent on a strong government, remarking that while around election time how the U.S. might take advantage of trade can be controversial, he finds it very simple. The United States' population is five percent of the world's population, so we can't just trade with ourselves; it's imperative that we trade with others and have them trade with us, even if many of the countries that we trade with have higher trade barriers than us.

Up to now, Senator Lieberman presented compelling arguments as to the need for strong government. But, he also cautioned that strong government in moderation is ideal. Since people run the government and regulating the

economy is a human exercise, there's room for human error. Writing legislation is difficult, and people get the short end of the stick sometimes. Senator Lieberman provided three examples of regulatory imperfection.

The first is the well-known Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, commonly known as Dodd-Frank. This act aimed to reform banking, and attempted to do so by stipulating what seemed like a logical requirement that banks had to have more money in reserve to back up what they were doing in their business. As a result though, banks have only been lending to the actually rich, which has hurt the economy since people need loans and banks haven't been willing to give them. The second way that legislation has hurt the economy is through legislation that has dealt with ethanol, which has actually been worse for the environment than the recently rejected Keystone Pipeline would've been.

Finally, while the government is in charge of implementing laws and regulations based on the legislation and instruction that Congress gives them, they don't always do such a great job. Congress themselves have come back to override or rewrite legislation that hasn't shown its intended results, and though the courts have the right to review legislation, because of presumption of constitutionality, courts rarely overturn congressional legislation. As a result, the government's laws and regulations sometimes didn't accomplish their intended goal or were otherwise ineffective. In 1980, the government created an Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) to review regulations before they're put into place, ensuring that the regulations are the best way to accomplish the goal set by Congress with its legislation.

Senator Lieberman closed his speech by quoting the same quote he used earlier from James Madison in the Federalist Papers, "If men were angels, no government would be necessary." Senator Lieberman wanted to emphasize how critical government is both for the macro economy, as well as for all of us as consumers of goods.

Hostile Takeovers: The Battlefield of the Finance World

By Michael Klein

"What do you do for a living?" "Hostile takeovers." One would expect the respondent to be a black ops unit leader or some other esoteric military operator. However, there was a time that some of the leading Wall Street investors would have given this answer. Some of the greatest corporate raiders (those who do hostile takeovers) include Carl Icahn, Asher Edelman, Victor Posner, and Bill Ackman, just to name a few. Hostile takeovers defy the stereotype of finance jobs. Most people picture a businessman in the finance world as someone who spends countless hours analyzing reports and in boring business meetings. But being involved in a hostile takeover is fast-paced, requires quick decision making, a ruthless strategy, and enormous risk.

What is a hostile takeover? When a company wants to acquire another company they have two options. The more common, peaceful one involves mergers and acquisition (M&A), where one company buys the other at an agreed-upon price. This calendar year has been full of M&A deals. In the United States, M&A deals in 2015 total so far a record \$1.97 trillion, 43% higher than the previous record in 2007. In fact, according to Forbes, 54% of CEO's in the U.S. plan to complete an acquisition deal in 2015. However, when a targeted company does not want to be bought (they may feel they are being undervalued or that their business would not mesh well with the acquirer), the acquiring company is forced to either give up, or engage in some form of hostile takeover. Meaning, the acquirer will attempt to forcefully wrench authority of the company from the hands of the board of directors. The acquiring company would do this if they felt that buying such a company could complement their products and significantly improve their balance sheet.

Hostile takeovers differ from activist investing in that they involve purchasing a company, rather than influencing its decisions and direction. When it comes to activism, contemporary corporate raiders often agitate for change and push shareholders to fight their board, even if it won't result in a takeover. Activist investors can coerce the target company to negotiate with the acquiring company and result in a beneficial

outcome for the acquiring company. Hostile takeovers on the other hand, are utilized as a more aggressive technique to achieve a controlling stake in the target company.

Hostile takeovers in a sense benefit the market, as the external pressure it produces incentivizes the board to keep the shareholders' interests in mind at all times. Furthermore, a hostile takeover attempt puts the fate of the company in the hands of the shareholders. The number of hostile takeovers launched by U.S. companies in 2015 has doubled the total for the same period in 2014.

There are two methods of conducting a hostile takeover-tender offers and proxy contests. The more common method nowadays is tender offers. In a tender offer, the acquiring company will attempt to garner a controlling percentage of the target company by offering to buy stock from stockholders at a premium to the market price. Often, for the purposes of mitigating risks, the acquiring company will offer to buy stock at this higher-than-market-value price with the condition they are able to reach their goal. The amount required to take control of a company ranges from 90%, to just having the majority, 50.1%, depending on the State of incorporation and corporate structure. In Delaware, where most public companies are based (due to friendly regulations), the law changed in the past few years to only require a majority stock ownership in many circumstances to be able to squeeze out the rest of the stockholders and buy all of the company. In most cases, once the acquiring company has obtained the required percentage to take control, the board of the "victim" company will work together with them to reach their goals. This is a basic overview of a tender offer. However, as I will discuss below, since the heyday of hostile takeovers in the 1980s, companies have erected defenses to prevent takeovers without the approval of the Board of Directors.

The second method is a proxy contest. In a proxy fight, the acquiring company does not attempt to become the majority stockholder - rather they appeal to the current ones. In order to achieve their goal, they attempt to get control of a majority of the board of directors in the target company. The members of the board are elected by the shareholders so the shareholders can decide to replace them. The acquiring company attempts

to convince the current stockholders that the acquirers' vision for that company's future will give stockholders the highest returns on their investment. If they are successful in persuading the shareholders, the shareholders can influence the board to follow the acquiring company's plans. If they do not listen, they face the threat of being replaced by someone who will. Proxy contests are more expensive than tender offers, as they take more time, effort, and resources to persuade shareholders, as such they are the less-preferred method. The advantage of a proxy fight is that it can be more direct to win and gain control of the target company, as once you have the majority of the board on your side, it's game over. However, in a tender offer, you may need more than majority stocks since you still have to contend with the dissident minority.

To clarify, here is an example illustrating hostile takeover methods. In a hypothetical situation, Company A (acquiring company) is a global, well-known, and internationally connected company specializing in selling ice cream. They are looking to acquire a company which produces the highest quality milk to enhance their ice cream. They discover Company T (target company), which produces exactly the kind of premium milk Company A is looking for, while being publicly traded, smaller, and more local. Company A projects that acquiring such a company and using its milk in their ice cream can greatly improve the demand for their products and triple their income in just two years. Company A offers Company T \$100 million to buy them out and incorporate them into Company A, but the board of directors at Company T refuses. They are happy in their niche market and aren't looking to expand. Plus, they feel that they are being significantly undervalued. Company A decides they will not take no for an answer and determines to forcefully take over Company T. At first, Company A offers all stockholders 1.5 times the current trading price of Company T stock on the condition that they receive tenders from shareholders holding enough stock to guarantee control of Company T. This is a small price to pay considering the fact that they expect to triple their income within just a couple of years. Company T is based in Delaware, so all Company

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A Rare Discussion With The Syms Departmental Chairs

By Etan (Alex) Neiman and Raymond Cohen

In the spirit of presidential debate season, The Commentator, for the first time ever, sat down with each of the five Syms departmental chairs for a group discussion. The Accounting, Finance, IDS (Information and Decision Sciences), Management, and Marketing department heads each offered their viewpoints on the highs and lows of the academics and job markets related to their programs. While we could not accumulate as many zingers and scandals as a traditional presidential debate, we did have a meaningful dialogue about the state of Syms' five programs.

The Panel:

Avi Giloni: Associate Dean, SSSB; Chair of The IDS department

Tamar Avnet: Chair of the Marketing department

Archishman Chakraborty: Chair of the Finance department

Joel Hochman: Chair of the Accounting department

Steven Nissenfeld: Chair of the Management department

Neiman: Thank you all for coming. Let's start off with discussing what types of skills a student will acquire in your program.

Nissenfeld: Management provides a strong foundation in helping students identify their strengths as future leaders, opportunities for growth, and a framework to continuously develop these leadership skills.

Chakraborty: Everybody should come out of the Finance program with a strong math and quantitative competence; the goal is also for students to learn how to think like an economist.

Hochman: Accounting students will gain a tremendous understanding of how the business world operates. They will learn how businesses analyze transactions and what they do with that information.

Avnet: Upon their completion of Marketing, our students will be able to work effectively in the marketing industry. They will gain that understanding of what triggers people to buy products and why they are willing to pay the price that they pay for a given product or service.

Giloni: The IDS department, in conjunction with the Marketing department, developed a new major in Business Intelligence and Marketing Analytics (B.I.M.A.). In B.I.M.A., students will learn the hot tools in data science and data analytics, as well as how to take those techniques and apply it to solve real business problems.

Cohen: Can you clarify the difference between B.I.M.A. and Marketing?

Avnet: When our students go out to the market with a B.I.M.A. degree, employers will be very impressed, as this type of combination is usually not offered on the undergraduate level. The B.I.M.A. major puts a focus on a statistical coding language called 'R'; an applicant knowing what 'R' is, combined with the business and marketing knowledge they attain as part of the major, will stand out from the pack.

Giloni: That's exactly why we designed this major. We wanted to give every advantage that we could to that marketing major who wanted to work on the quantitative side of things.

Avnet: However, if you are not sure if you are interested in doing data analysis in the business environment, then a marketing major makes sense. You will gain the general marketing knowledge that will enable you to work in many areas like consumer behavior or brand management.

Neiman: Why do you think such a high percentage of Syms students choose the Accounting major?

Hochman: Accounting is one of the safer majors in terms of getting a job after college. It is a rough job market in today's economy and accounting remains a relatively reliable job option.

Giloni: Students need to decide, however, what is important to them. As Professor Hochman discussed, we have amazing placement in the accounting firms, so I understand that many students want to do the accounting CPA track. However, you need to like what you do. If you don't like accounting and do the CPA track, you are doing yourself a disservice. If you want to use accounting in your general job as a skill-set, a great option is to do a minor in accounting or the non-CPA accounting major with a minor in one of the other functional areas.

Avnet: Especially if you want to be a lawyer later. That's a great combination.

Neiman: In selecting his or her major, is a student making a firm commitment to a career specializing in that area?

Avnet: The students need to understand that the difference between the majors is only the four to six required courses. So even if they choose marketing or finance as their major, they still can take electives in other areas.

Giloni: Precisely. It's the business core that is really the essence of Syms. Any business school is only as strong as its core courses. The better business schools offer only a few courses in a major or concentration and then a broad range of core courses. If you want to have more technical skills, you can learn these on your own or go to a Master's degree in a particular area such as finance, accounting or marketing.

Cohen: Should a student do a double major in lieu of a Master's program?

Giloni: We do allow it, but it is tough. Many students cannot finish a double major in three years on campus.

Avnet: In the sense of finding employment, I do not think a double major gives a student much of an advantage. If as a result of doing a double major, one was to graduate in four or five years, then it is better to take those years and do an undergrad and a Master's instead.

Also, because we are a small school, our system is built well for one major, not for a double major, which can cause a conflict in scheduling classes.

Giloni: Right. However, it is very easy to take a major and a minor. It's only three additional courses to add a minor and one of them can be double counted as an elective.

Neiman: Can you talk about the increasing class sizes?

Avnet: When looking at the class sizes, yes, there was an increase from a few years ago; however, we are still considered small. In other undergraduate schools, you have 100 to 150 students in some of the core classes. From a professor's perspective, up to fifty is still considered small. The professor can still know each and every student.

Giloni: The students who are really interested in having a connection with their professors will have it whether there are twelve students in the class or fifty. The only difference is that you are able to hide with fifty students in the class, while it is a bit harder to hide with twelve.

Hochman: Nobody goes into teaching unless they want to be helpful for the next generation. However, it is up to the student to form a relationship with a professor, if that's what he is seeking. For students taking a course relevant to their career, I recom-

mend making a point of talking with their professor outside of the classroom. You never know what type of recommendation or suggestion it could lead to.

Cohen: What are some examples of the types of jobs Syms students go on to?

Hochman: Obviously, most accounting students go on to firms and specialize in either the tax or audit side of accounting. For those students who are unsure or indifferent about which path to pursue, I recommend audit. There is no more detailed or sophisticated way to learn about business than to get into the heart of a company and how it operates by auditing it.

Nissenfeld: There are four typical career paths for a Management student: human resources, management consulting, a broad range of careers that demand management competencies, and entrepreneurial ventures.

Avnet: Some of the students choosing a marketing major become entrepreneurs. For example, I have a former student who created his own coat line and is doing very well. Others go on to more traditional marketing positions, such as branding, social media and promotion. Some of our students decide to apply their marketing knowledge in the finance industry; for example, one of my former students now markets venture capital to potential investors. The point is that a marketing major allows you to work in a variety of areas and industries.

Cohen: If you could dispel one misconception about your program to a prospective student, what would it be?

Avnet: That marketing is another word for sales. I always advise my students to avoid taking an internship in sales. Marketing is about business strategy and business thinking. Another misconception about marketing and also management is that they are soft majors, the easier alternative to the math-based accounting or finance. To succeed in many areas of marketing today, you need the quantitative skills.

Nissenfeld: People generally perceive management as something that comes naturally. The fact of the matter is that management competencies and expertise are a competitive advantage for those entering the workforce. No matter what industry you are in, the marketplace is increasingly calling for strong leadership and management skills that are acquired in the classroom in order to compete and succeed.

Giloni: People tend to assume that the technology sector is a 'man's game'. Truthfully, the market is very favorable right now towards women in technology-based degrees. I wish more of them would choose B.I.M.A.

Neiman: Professor Chakraborty, is the notion true that if you major in finance, you are signing up for excellent money but crazy sixteen, seventeen hour workdays?

Chakraborty: The work hours are typically hard, yes - but only if you work as an investment banker. You can major in finance and not necessarily work in finance. Even if you work in a hedge fund, they do not always work crazy hours. You can also get jobs in big corporations in business strategy. Majoring in finance tells the employer this is a smart person with a good business foundation.

Giloni: The company does want to see that you know what you've taken. Students who get high GPA's and can't show they know the material covered on their transcripts will have trouble in a job interview.

TAKEOVER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

A needs is 50.1% to buy all of the company. This is a tender offer. But let's assume that Company A could not get enough shareholders to sell them their stock, so they move on to a proxy fight. Company A demonstrates to the shareholders of Company T that allowing Company A to buy them would be beneficial for both companies. Therefore, Company T shareholders would receive a higher return on their investments. If they succeed in convincing the shareholders, these shareholders would now pressure the board of directors and demand that Company T accept a merger offer from Company A (perhaps at an even lower value than they were originally offered). If four of the nine board members still refuse (which is rare), the stockholders can vote two of the current board members off the board, and replace them with new members who are supportive of selling themselves to Company A. Company T has become a victim of a hostile takeover and would have been better off accepting the original offer proposed in the first place.

Hostile takeovers are a board member's worst nightmare as it will force the Board to go in a direction they vehemently protest. In most cases, companies subject to hostile takeovers

have previously rejected an offer by the acquirer, so being forced into a situation they objected to is very unpleasant, to say the least. It is for this reason that most companies have put defense strategies into place, to protect themselves from these corporate raiders. Some of the most common protections are known as poison pills, staggered boards, golden parachutes among others - continuing the trend of having cool battle field names in the finance world and transforming the mundane into the fascinating.

The most prevalent defense installed in companies is the poison pill. What this means is that if any one shareholder obtains a certain percentage of stock (generally 10-20%), this triggers the right of the company to take action. A typical reaction is to issue a large amount of stock to every other stockholder other than this individual, thus diluting his ownership tremendously. The second defense mechanism mentioned, the staggered board, lengthens the takeover process to the point where most activists would not have the patience or resources to follow through with the takeover. The target company does this by making company policy that only a third of the board can be replaced in a given year. If shareholders are convinced to try to overthrow

the majority of the board, with this barrier, it would probably take two years to obtain a majority, which is impractical from a corporate raider's point of view. The third method is known as the golden parachute. In this system, top-level executives protect themselves from being thrown out by giving themselves contractual severance packages worth obscene amounts of money. In this way, acquiring companies will be deterred from taking over and firing those that oppose their goals, as this would turn out to be extraordinarily expensive. These are just a few of the defenses companies can erect to protect themselves. Others include the lobster trap, the search for a white knight, and a crown jewels defense.

Due to the prevalence of corporate defenses from hostile takeovers, a complete hostile takeover is both difficult and rare. Takeover attempts fail often, and the outcome can be costly. Take the recent failed attempt of Mylan to acquire Perrigo this past month as an example. Although traditional hostile takeovers are not the same as when Carl Icahn was heavily involved with them, they are still a significant power in the finance industry. Hearing the term "hostile takeover" can still instill fear in any company's board, no matter how big they are.

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