

Holtz Named New Associate Dean; Rynhold Named Honors Head

By MATTHEW SILKIN

Effective this semester, Professor Shalom Holtz has been named the Yeshiva College Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, taking over the position

from Dr. Joanne Jacobson, who retired last academic year.

Dr. Holtz previously served as Director of the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein Honors Program, having been nominated for the position after the previous director, Professor Gabriel Cwilich, stepped

down in January 2017. Holtz also serves as an Associate Professor of Bible in Yeshiva College and was tenured by the university in 2012.

"I am looking forward to working with Professor Holtz in his new role, having had a very good working relationship with him last

year when he directed the Honors Program," said Dean Karen Bacon. "Professor Holtz likes new ideas, he enjoys thinking through problems, and he enjoys a good debate. These qualities fit wonderfully into the Dean's Office and will be invaluable in evaluating where we are at YC

and where we see ourselves going."

Holtz was chosen for the position over three unnamed finalists from a national search. The search committee was made up of faculty of Yeshiva College and headed by Provost Selma Botman. According to Botman, Jacobson met individually with all the candidates to discuss components of the position. There was also student involvement in the process, as Botman told The Commentator in an article last year announcing Jacobson's retirement. According to Yeshiva Student Union (YSU) President Nolan Edmonson (YC '19), who was one of the students involved, the group met with Professor Holtz on April 26.

"I am looking forward to working with Dr. Holtz to improve the Yeshiva College academic experience," said Yeshiva College Student Association (YCSA) president Amitai Miller (YC '19), another student who was part of the hiring committee.

"I am excited for Dr. Holtz to be our new [Associate] Dean, because

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Dean Shalom Holtz (L) and Professor Daniel Rynhold (R)

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

Israel, the Modern Era, and Market-Readiness: President Berman Discusses YU's Path Forward

By AVI HIRSCH and
BENJAMIN KOSLOWE

In an interview this past Wednesday with The Commentator and The Observer, Yeshiva University President Ari Berman and Provost Selma Botman elaborated on new programs and initiatives for YU students. One year into his presidency, Berman articulated his visions and goals for the University.

President Berman announced two main categories of initiatives for this academic year. One category, which formed the bulk of Berman's words, emphasized YU's connection to Israel, focusing on new pathway programs with Israeli institutions. The second category highlighted YU's new initiatives in YU's graduate schools.

"Israel is no longer a poor cousin," commented Berman, "but rather is a significant power in its economy and its innovation in the world of education." In this vein, Berman announced several new

pathway programs in conjunction with Israeli universities. According to Berman, YU has signed memoranda of understanding with four of Israel's universities: Ben-Gurion University's medical school, Hebrew University, Bar Ilan, and Technion. The memoranda mean that a YU graduate applying to one of these universities will be "automatically accepted into their graduate program."

Berman added that some supporters of the nascent partnerships are offering scholarships as high as \$10,000 to top students to "subsidize and help them on their journey to Israel." Berman further stressed the presence of "thousands" of YU alumni living in Israel who can help graduates "find internships in high-tech startups," as well as a recent deal signed with "Yissum, which is the start-up section of Hebrew University, to bring companies over to YU." He added that "there are a lot of other new initiatives that are going to be announced" this year.

According to Berman, these new

initiatives have led to a converse effect of Israel extending influence into YU. He specifically mentioned Israeli mathematics Professor Mina Teicher joining YU to teach mathematics and neurobiology at Stern College this spring. "The possibilities of Israeli visiting professors coming to us," explained Berman, "strengthen our product."

Asked about his stated desire last year to offer targeted scholarships to students who volunteer for the Israeli army or *sherut leumi* (national service), President Berman stated that although such scholarships are not yet finalized, they are "definitely in the pipeline."

President Berman's second category of new initiatives focused on new graduate degrees and programs created by YU. Emphasizing his desire for students to "leave here market-ready," Berman stressed new master's programs which allow students to stay for one extra year and leave YU with

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Amid Shake-ups, Julie Schreier Appointed as Interim VP of Institutional Advancement

By SHOSHY CIMENT

Julie Schreier, former Chief of Staff for President Ari Berman, was named the interim Vice President for Institutional Advancement (IA), Provost Selma Botman confirmed in a recent email. Schreier succeeds Alyssa Herman, who left the position after one year.

Schreier, who was appointed as Chief of Staff to President Berman earlier in the year, will serve in both roles until a new Vice President of IA is appointed. Yeshiva University's Office of Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) has confirmed that a search is in place for a new Vice President of IA.

Before her most recent role as President Berman's Chief of Staff, where she was the first female to ever hold that position, Schreier was the Assistant Vice President of Institutional

Advancement at YU. Prior to that, she was the University's Director of Institutional Advancement for the Long Island Region.

"According to sources familiar with the situation, the Office of Institutional Advancement has experienced a large turnover with employees recently."

According to sources familiar with the situation, the Office of Institutional Advancement (OIA) has experienced a large turnover

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

THE COMMENTATOR 2018-2019

Editor-in-Chief
BENJAMIN KOSLOWE

Managing Editor
SHOSHY CIMENT

Looking Backwards as YU Enters President Berman's "World of Tomorrow"

By BENJAMIN KOSLOWE

President Berman's message to the student body this past week (see front page article) fits an historical pattern of new Yeshiva University presidents. This pattern, which has to do with investiture speeches, interaction with students and practical innovations to the institution, all but leaps out of the oxidized papers that chart this institution's proud history.

Perhaps a few quotes can begin to illustrate some similarities:

"It is our intention to give to secular education a higher purpose and make the Yeshiva and Yeshiva College a living symbol of intellectual and moral activity." (—Belkin; May 23, 1944)

"We are committed both to unfettered scholarship, and to the quest for transcendent values, norms, and the wisdom of tradition." (—Lamm; November 7, 1976)

"The time is now to re-emphasize our commitment to quality and excellence in education, sacred and secular, to challenge the Yeshiva, the undergraduate, and graduate schools to take ownership of Torah Umadda." (—Joel; September 21, 2003)

"We know that there are great truths to be discovered in the study of the human mind, the physical world, literature, legal interpretation and more. Our belief in the higher purpose of education is true for all of humanity." (—Berman; September 10, 2017)

The above words from the investiture messages of Rabbi Dr. Samuel Belkin, Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, Dr. Richard Joel, and Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman are, no doubt, intentionally and conveniently-selected lines from much longer speeches. But the entireties of the four speeches, even when read only surfacely, beg any reader to associate them together in one set.

The connections are both thematic and rhetorical: Four afternoons in the history of Yeshiva University when a new president addressed an overflowing audience from Lamport Auditorium's podium for his first time. Four presidents, each expressing awe at the heavy burden bestowed upon his narrow shoulders by preceding giants, as well as confidence with his abilities to carry the institution forward to a more promising future.

Each new president articulated his vision of what Yeshiva University stands for. Each discussed tensions between conflicting modern and Jewish values. Each invoked iconic terms—a call for "synthesis" of secular knowledge with sacred wisdom, a fervent proclamation for the virtues of "Torah Umadda," an ethos to "ennoble and enable," or an outline of "Five Torot," five values, that personify Yeshiva University—each vision as career-defining and as perfectly hard-to-precisely-explain as the next.

But the presidential similarities run deeper yet.

In 1944-45, President Belkin's second year as YU's second president, he announced a major university expansion of new graduate and undergraduate programs for the university, financed by a \$5,000,000 drive. That same year, after a gaffe where the administration banned all Yeshiva College dramatic activities, Belkin responded to student

complaints by penning a nearly 1,500-word prospectus in The Commentator, articulating a vision and rationale for the administration's actions. He discussed Yeshiva College's growth, pointing to a strong budget, a growing faculty and efforts to "add more fundamental courses."

President Lamm met with student leaders for formal discussions and interviews on several occasions in his first year as president. In late 1977, at the beginning of his second year, Lamm appointed new deans to several of the institution's undergraduate and graduate schools (including Dean Karen Bacon, who remains at YU these four decades later). At the time, Lamm explained that his appointments were part of "an intensive effort to keep pace with the rapid changes taking place in higher education." YU's third president also addressed problems of declining enrollments and inherited fiscal problems by closing the Belfer Graduate School of Science.

In President Joel's first few months in office he offered an interview to the undergraduate newspapers as well as a town hall meeting where he announced a strategic plan for the undergraduate schools. In 2004, at the start of his second year, Joel hired 15 new professors, raised *roshei yeshiva* salaries, and renovated several Yeshiva University buildings. That same semester YU saw the appointment of a new chairman of Yeshiva's trustees (Mr. Morry Weiss), a new dean of Yeshiva College (Dr. Fred Sugarman), a new Advisor on Israel Affairs (Mr. Howard M. Weisband), and a new dean of the newly-established Center for Jewish Future (Rabbi Kenneth Brander).

In short, YU's presidents—to some degree in their first years in office, but certainly by their second years in office—established themselves as engaging leaders for students and strong edifices of innovation for the institution.

The year is now 2018. Students find themselves once again on the cusp of a nascent new president and, perhaps, even a new era, of Yeshiva University. Is the man of the hour living up to earlier models?

Consider first the realm of interacting with students. Like his predecessors, President Berman has been a presence on campus. Like President Joel, President Berman lived in Manhattan during the months leading up to his presidency to familiarize himself with student life. President Berman spent several *Shabbatot* last year at both the Wilf and Beren campuses. He also showed up to student activities, such as Swag Day and a Project

START! Science module, and opened at *yemei iyun* and other Torah events on several occasions.

The new president was at times reserved with his potential authoritative voice. In his first year, Berman discontinued town hall meetings and spoke only once on record to a student newspaper. Readers of YU student newspapers will recall that the president's shyness was a topic of considerable student criticism by the end of Spring 2018. President Berman's recent interview, of itself, along with his apparent openness for more discussions over the course of the year is a positive development. It fits the pattern of YU presidents who offer students the transparency and interaction that they deserve.

And finally, there is the realm of practical institutional changes. For what it's worth, President Berman has now announced the formalization of new educational pathway

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*The Commentator is the student newspaper of
Yeshiva University.*

For 84 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 Umadda, and a commitment to journalistic excellence.

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Continued on Page 3

President Berman's recent interview, of itself, along with his apparent openness for more discussions over the course of the year is a positive development.



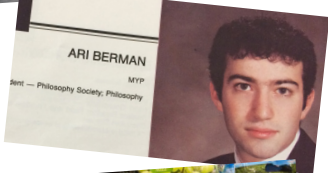
1 First Year Students
Masa backpacks, Poland sweatshirts and the sweet, sweet smell of post-Israel religious ignorance passed off as piety.



2 Yanny/Laurel
A modern day *Shamor* and *Zachor*. Finally, the Mount Sinai reenactment I've been waiting for.



3 Gush Wedding Dance
The epitome of Gush; a bit nerdy, well-planned, poorly executed and I'm still a little jealous I'm not in it.



4 Dr. Berman Yearbook Photo (1991)
A major in philosophy, Editor of *The Philosophy Journal*, VP of the Philosophy Society and a member of the Philosophy Review Club? I'm sensing a trend.



5 Key Food Grapes
The perfect gift for FTOCs to give their Shabbat hosts once they realize they can do better than the Caf.



6 16 Handles In the Heights
Geshmak! Now I can go on my *shidduch* date and make the 10:00 pm *Maariv!*



7 LeBron to the Lakers
Analysts predicts that he will have to wait at least two years before he gets a chance to lose to the Warriors in the Conference Finals.

7 UP ↗ ↘ 7 DOWN



1 Westworld Season 2
I have not seen such convoluted storytelling since *The Commentator* was blamed for quoting a *certain rosh yeshiva* who said "you can quote me on that." #throwback



2 No Investfest
No curtain call for PRDAB's first anniversary? Like the Yom Haatzmaut BBQ without Zionist fervor and the "Welcome Bash at Wilf" minus its ancient name, the "Yeshiva University Welcome Back BBQ" was as awkward as you'd expect.



3 Muss Hall
But have you seen the showers?

4 Movie Pass' Bad Summer
Despite all this, *The Meg* still opened to \$45 million. THIS IS WHY WE CAN'T HAVE NICE THINGS!



5 Ariana Grande's "God is a Woman"
Looks like someone hasn't fulfilled her BIB requirements yet. So much left to learn.



6 Subaba Closing
Were they ever really open?



7 Silence
It's been 262 days since a woman last spoke at Klein@9 and my *yiddishkeit* has never felt stronger! Thanks YU!

Vows

The Commentator Editorial Board extends a Mazal Tov to former Features Editor Eitan Lipsky (YC '18) on his marriage to Tehilla Berger (SCW '19)! *Ya'aleh hazivug yafeh veyivnu bayis ne'eman beYisrael.*

LOOKING BACKWARDS,
continued from Page 2

programs that he called for in his investiture. This is certainly something. And there is the optimistic "market-ready" attitude that the president strongly emphasized, which, although not particularly tangible—it isn't backed yet by much—is no small matter to scoff at, either.

So, on the eve of a new president's second year for the fifth time in Yeshiva University's history, the community should read President Berman's words once more. They should evaluate them carefully in themselves and assess them in historical context. Then, the question may be repeated: Is President Berman living up to earlier models?

This broad question entails derivative questions, too: Is the new president beginning to instantiate abstract ideas and philosophy into real, practical, necessary change? Do the president's appearances at events and discussions with student newspapers suffice, not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of quality, as substantive interactions with students? If those topics that the president articulated are real changes, are they of the variety that Yeshiva deserves to see? How exactly will YU in the "world of tomorrow" resemble and stand up to the institution's impressive past? Are these even fair questions to be asking?

Are students, faculty and alumni witnessing the beginnings of a strong leader who is articulate in action and in vision?

Time, if it has not already begun to do so, will surely soon tell.

JULIE SCHREIER,
continued from Front Page

with employees recently. In addition to Herman, sources estimate that as many as 13 people in the office have left within the last few months.

Among the recent departees from OIA is Paul S. Glasser, who departed his position as Associate Vice President for Institutional Advancement at Yeshiva University and was recently named Vice President of Institutional Advancement at Touro College and University System.

CPA declined to comment on the recent staffing changes.

The Office of Institutional Advancement is responsible for large-scale fundraising efforts including the annual Day of Giving and the Hanukkah Dinner. This past year, the Hanukkah Dinner raised \$4.3 million, which marked an increase of 10% over the previous year's event and constituted the largest sum in at least five years. The second annual YU Giving Day campaign raised \$4.5 Million, a smaller sum than the more than \$6 million attained at the first annual Giving Day in 2017.



Julie Schreier
YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

SHALOM HOLTZ,
continued from Front Page

I know from my encounters with him as a professor and as a leader that students are his priority," added Ben Atwood (YC '19), who was also on the hiring committee. "He knows the YU system inside and out and will be able to hit the ground running with his moves as Dean."

Dr. Daniel Rynhold will succeed Holtz as Honors director. Rynhold is a professor of Jewish Philosophy and director of the doctorate program in the Bernard Revel

Graduate School of Jewish Studies.

"I'm excited to take on the role and to build on the excellent work of my predecessors Professors Cwilich and Holtz, who have established such a vibrant and exciting program," said Rynhold. "The Honors program obviously runs hand in hand with

the undergraduate program, and its direction and success is therefore bound up with the faculty and the resources of Yeshiva College more broadly. The continuity of having Professor Holtz as the new associate Dean who obviously knows the Honors program intimately—and values it—can only

be helpful. As to my own ideas, rather than making bold claims in a vacuum, I'm initially very interested in speaking to the various constituents—primarily the students and also the faculty, to canvas their views and try to make the Honors program the very best it can possibly be."

"Dean Bacon and I are delighted that Professor Rynhold has accepted our offer of head of the Honors College," said Botman. "He is a scholar, a teacher, and a great role model for students."

"I am proud that a professor of his caliber was chosen for the position," said Holtz.

"Professor Holtz likes new ideas, he enjoys thinking through problems, and he enjoys a good debate."

Dean Karen Bacon

PRESIDENT BERMAN,
continued from Front Page

a master's degree. He highlighted new collaborative master's degrees "between schools, whether it's Cardozo and Einstein, or Cardozo and Katz." Throughout, Berman expressed an ethos of interdisciplinary collaboration. "That's the world of tomorrow," reflected Berman. "That's why we're building the world of tomorrow, today."

President Berman explained that his new initiatives are a product of much "listening and learning" during his first year, as well as "market research" and "bringing in data." As of the time of publication, The Commentator has yet to learn the exact methodological details of this research.

A major theme reiterated several times by President Berman was the disciplines and skill sets characteristic of the modern era. "We're thinking a lot about science and technology and math and innovation and entrepreneurship," Berman said. He articulated that industry is no longer thought of as "separate from the educational experience," but

rather as "part of the education experience." He also mentioned new "innovation labs" and reinvigorated career services within YU. Students leaving YU should know that "they will have a network of incredible life-long support that will help them in their professional careers," he explained. Berman several times conveyed confidence in YU's "leaders of tomorrow."

"It's a very exciting time for Yeshiva University, our community, our students, and our future."

President Ari Berman

Berman also mentioned the virtues of social sciences and humanities and how they fit into his vision. "A core strength for us," explained Berman, is to "think deeply about the deep existential questions." He noted that this thinking is "very important" and can emerge from "new technologies and innovation in the changed world."

In addition to his primary messages, Berman highlighted new faculty

hirings, various awards that current YU faculty have received, and interdisciplinary faculty discussions that he coordinated last year. He further discussed the importance and relevance of the Five Torot to all Yeshiva University students. Regarding YU's vibrant student life, Berman stated, "Our market research has shown that we're high in Jewish communal life,

and we're thinking about how we can move the needle further. It's very important." He expressed particular interest in the YU Shabbos experience, an area he is "thinking about deeply" so as to create an "environment that would excite our student body."

President Berman did not elaborate on YU's finances but promised that he has "a clear understanding of our financial situation and clear pathways of how we're on a path of growth."

"It's a very exciting time for Yeshiva University, our community, our students, and our future," reflected President Berman. "That's what energizes me and I'm excited about looking ahead with you."



President Ari Berman

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

16 Handles to Open in Washington Heights in the "Very Near Future"

By **LEIB WIENER**

16 Handles, a franchise chain of soft-serve frozen yogurt stores, will be opening a branch in Washington Heights, offering another food option in the vicinity of the Wilf Campus.

"...while there is still no projected opening date, chain officials stated that they hope to be open in 'the very near future.'"

More than a year ago, a 16 Handles store was set to open in Washington Heights. The proposed location was 400 Audubon Ave., according to Sean Gunner, a spokesman for 16 Handles. As of April 23, 2017, there had been no updates on the new store. This

year, the store is set to open at that site, according to a 16 Handles representative. However, while there is still no projected opening date, chain officials stated that they hope to be open in "the very near future."

There is currently a 16 Handles location near 3rd Avenue and East 30th Street that students at the Beren Campus frequent. "The 16 Handles offers a social outlet as well as excellent frozen yogurt for the students in Midtown," said Alyssa Wruble (SCW '19). "I am sure it will be the same case uptown."

The 16 Handles store near Wilf Campus will add a new dairy option to the variety of kosher restaurants around the Wilf Campus providing a dessert or snack option for hungry students. The new store "could add a new social setting to the Heights, that people will be definitely be going there because who can say no to frozen yogurt, and that it will add a lot to the overall atmosphere," said Josh Aranoff (YC '19).



16 Handles will be located at the corner of 185th street and Audubon Avenue

YOSSI ZIMLOVER FOR THE COMMENTATOR

University Completes Renovations, Touch-Ups to Start Semester

By LEIB WIENER

This summer, renovations began on the Wilf Campus of Yeshiva University, most notably to Furst Hall.

According to Randy Apfelbaum, Chief Facilities and Administrative Officer at Yeshiva University, the Yeshiva College Honors lounge is being moved from the basement of Furst Hall to Room C-10 of its cellar. The now-vacated basement area will be used for a new Incubator Lab. This lab will be used to further the goals of the Israel Business Incubator Project, an idea formulated in 2016 by Dean Strauss and the General Counsel's office. The project will use the lab space to create offices for Israeli startups and allow student interns to run the offices with oversight from Sy Syms faculty. The Incubator Lab and Israel Business Incubator Project were given a major push forward last year with a \$350,000 grant from New York State Senator Todd Kaminsky.

Additional renovations to other parts of campus are also being completed. The

Danziger Lawn, which over the past year lost much of its grass due to heavy rain and snow, is now being re-sodded. There is now a new walkway which cuts through the lawn in order to improve foot traffic to Rubin Hall and the Max Stern Athletic Center. Additionally, all buildings on Wilf Campus now have Con

"The project will use the lab space to create offices for Israeli startups and allow student interns to run the offices with oversight from Sy Syms faculty."

Edison gas installations to improve heating and the audio-visual equipment in many classrooms has been upgraded. In Furst Hall, urinal wall dividers have been installed in the bathrooms and lights have been replaced in classrooms.

The dormitories on both Wilf and Beren campuses have had an improved Wi-Fi system known as Privatel installed since August 27, 2018. For the past five years, Yeshiva University had a contract with Verizon and each dorm room had its own individual Verizon Fios router. This system led to spotty service and required a student to enter in a new Wi-Fi password for each dorm room they entered. Privatel solved many of issues posed by the old routers by having a singular Wi-Fi network with the same login credentials as a student's YU Wireless account and providing 24/7 support staff. Jonathan Schwab, Director of University Housing and Residence Life, noted that "this new system is way easier to navigate" and "it makes housing into one big network which adds another communal aspect to housing on campus."

Additionally, the television screens on the second floor of Glueck are in full working order and will show an image of whoever is giving a *sicha* or shiur on the first floor of Glueck.

Besides for its basement, the Furst Hall lobby has also had some new additions added

to it. A replica of the Arch of Titus Menorah Relief Panel, which in the beginning of the year was located in the Yeshiva University Museum and then moved to the Heights Lounge, is now permanently residing in the lobby of Furst Hall. Dr. Steven Fine, Director of the Center for Israel Studies, stated that the relief panel "reflects YU innovation and scholarship at its most colorful," and "it pushes forward both Torah and Maddah, and I am glad that our president and his team have decided to preserve it for years to come." The Relief Panel will be officially inaugurated on Chanukah with a menorah lighting ceremony.

The work done to Yeshiva University this past summer shows the efforts being made to fix up the campus over the past 2 years. The construction of a new plaza between Furst Hall and the Glueck Center and Gottesman Library, the repair of the hot tub in the Max Stern Athletic Center and the refurbishing of the Belfer Hall lobby with a new paint job, tiled floors and TV screens are features of improved campus facilities.

Betty Sugarman Joins as Pre-Law Personal Statement Writing Coach, New Faces in YU Offices

By YITZCHAK CARROLL
and BENJAMIN KOSLOWE

Yeshiva University hired several new staff members for the upcoming academic year to fill vacancies and bolster departments.

Samantha Hitt, who previously worked as the Executive Assistant to the Head of School at MTA, will be joining the Dean's Office as the new Senior Academic Administrator, starting this week. She replaces Yehudis Isenberg, who joined the Drisha Institute as Director of Operations after working in the Dean's Office since 2012 and in YU since 2005.

Dr. Betty Sugarman is joining the Academic Advising Department as a Personal Statement Writing Coach. According to a recent email from Wilf Pre-Professional Advising Director Lolita Wood-Hill and Beren Academic and Pre-Law Advisor Ilana Milch, "Sugarman has been hired to assist students applying to law school in the 2018-2019 cycle with their personal statements. She will be available to work with applicants on an individual basis starting in September."

Sugarman joins the staff following the departure of Wilf campus Pre-Law Advisor Dina Chelst and the subsequent promotion of Ms. Wood-Hill, who previously served as the pre-health advisor for many years, to serve in an advising role for both pre-med and pre-law students.

Dr. Sugarman previously served as an independent consultant in various capacities, and currently teaches leadership and strategic communications graduate courses at Columbia University. She will work with pre-law students from both campuses.

Erika Shechter was recently hired as an Academic Advisor in Yeshiva College. Shechter earned a bachelors from SUNY Binghamton and a masters of social work from Columbia University's School of Social Work. She has spent the past seven years in Israel working in both government and non-profit social service agencies, in addition to working as an 'Eim Bayit' for a post-high school yeshiva. She is "absolutely thrilled to be joining such an inspiring team of people at YU."

Mechal Haas was recently appointed Senior Director of

Communications. She has nearly twenty years of experience in public relations, including a senior leadership position at Edelman and Weber Shandwick. Most recently, she worked with non-for-profits, serving as the chair of the communications committee of the Advisory Board for Mount Sinai's

"My door is always open and I would love to hear from you."

Mechal Haas, Senior Director of Communications

Adolescent Health Center and leading communications and strategic marketing for Seleni Institute, focusing on maternal mental health.

"As an alum of Stern College for Women," wrote Haas, "I am very excited to be back at YU and am inspired by the work being done under Rabbi Berman's leadership." She added, "I am excited to learn more about your experiences as well. My door is always open and I would love to hear from you."



New Faces in YU (left to right): Erika Shechter, Samantha Hitt, Mechal Haas (Betty Sugarman not pictured)

RIETS Hires New Undergraduate *Rabbeim*

By ESTHER STERN

This year, RIETS hired three new undergraduate *Rebbeim* to supplement the existing Undergraduate Torah Studies staff as well as to take over some responsibilities held by former Mashpia Rabbi Moshe Weinberger. Rabbis Mordechai BenHaim, Dan Cohen, Ari Zahtz and Yehoshua Rubenstein commenced their new roles in the University at the beginning of the semester.

Each new hire is intended to fill a specific niche within the University. Rabbi BenHaim will be teaching the first Mazer Yeshiva Program (MYP) shiur specifically catered to the Sephardic population at Yeshiva University, that will be taught in English. Rabbi Cohen, who had previously taught classes in Isaac Breuer College (IBC), will

also be catering to the growing Sephardic population in Yeshiva and will be teaching a Stone Beit Medrash Program (SBMP) shiur. Rabbi Zahtz will be teaching a MYP shiur that caters to students seeking skills development.

approach to learning any page of *Gemara* through the lens of *Rashi's* interpretation.”

Rabbi Rubenstein will be giving *chaburot* and meeting with students on Tuesday nights, a role originally filled by Rabbi Weinberger. However, Rabbi Rubenstein

Rabbi Weinberger will be coming to Yeshiva monthly and will be present for a minimum of one Shabbat this year. He will also continue to lead many of the major events, as he has in the past. The biggest change will be the many hours that Rav Weinberger spent every week meeting with students.

Regarding both the new hires of RIETS and the shifting of responsibilities since the leaving of Rabbi Weinberger, Rabbi Penner has said, “It is our responsibility to provide pathways for as many of our Talmidim as possible with *Rabbeim*, *Mashgichim* and others who they can relate to.” He further explains that RIETS “will continue to provide an even wider variety of role models and teachers from whom our precious *Talmidim* can learn.”

“It is our responsibility to provide pathways for as many of our Talmidim as possible with Rabbeim, Mashgichim and others who they can relate to.”

—
Rabbi Menachem Penner

In talking about his new position, Rabbi Zahtz explained, “I look forward to creating relationships with my talmidim and working together with them on developing an

will not be assuming the position of Mashpia, and RIETS “will continue to look for those who can assume different parts of [Rabbi Weinberger’s] role.”



RIETS *Rebbeim* (clockwise from top left): Ari Zahtz, Moshe Weinberger, Dan Cohen, Mordechai BenHaim, Yehoshua Rubenstein

Yeshiva College Institutes New Valedictorian Policies

By **BENJAMIN KOSLOWE**

As of this Fall 2018 semester, new policies for determining the Yeshiva College valedictorian have been officially introduced into the updated Academic Information and Policies of the Yeshiva University Undergraduate Catalog for Men. The changes follow a Commentator investigation last semester into policies and processes that determine YU's nine yearly undergraduate valedictorian awards.

Last year, as in several previous years, the Yeshiva College valedictorian selection process began in March, when 11 finalists were announced via an email from Dean Fred Sugarman, the

Yeshiva College Associate Dean of Operations and Student Affairs. In the weeks that followed, a selection process by Deans and professors narrowed down the set and eventually culminated in the final decision in mid-April.

As per the new de jure policies, the Deans plus one member of the Executive Committee (which last year included Professors Shalom Holtz and Aaron Koller) vet candidates on the basis of academic criteria. These candidates shall consist of up to 15 students who have the highest GPAs amongst graduating seniors and have at least 94 credits in residence. Any student with a W or Incomplete grade is not considered for valedictorian. This process leads to the

selection of 3-5 students for the next step in the determination.

"The policies for designating the YC valedictorian have been in place for some time," said Dean Karen Bacon, "but were not known by everyone. It therefore was sensible and appropriate to include them in our catalog." She added, "I appreciate the input of the students in motivating this change."

After the 3-5 finalists are determined, the students, as per the new guidelines, are to be interviewed by the Deans and Executive Committee. The students will also deliver short presentations about their qualifications. "The reason we do not go by grades alone," explained Koller, "is that we see the valedictorian as representing

the graduating class, not only being a star within it. A student who has a very high GPA but cannot articulate a vision for life, Jewish

presentations allow us to identify a student who is both intellectually and academically spectacular and deeply thoughtful—and is thus reflective of the best YC has to offer the world."

After deliberations, the Deans and Executive Committee shall vote for the recipient of the award based on academic performance, breadth and an eye for a "well-rounded" student.

"I'm glad to hear that going forward there will be clarity and transparency in the process," wrote Benji Wajsberg (YC '18), one of last year's valedictorian finalists. "I think that these updates are a good thing for the university and for its students."

"I appreciate the input of the students in motivating this change."

—
Dean Karen Bacon

or otherwise, deserves to be recognized for his grades, and will be honored with *summa cum laude*, but is not what we want in a valedictorian. The interviews and



Yeshiva University Commencement 2018

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

Men's Soccer Promotes Davidson to Head Coach

By **CHANA WEINBERG**

On August 1, the Athletics Department promoted JJ Davidson from Assistant Coach to Head Coach of the Men's Soccer team. This move comes after Josh Pransky, former Director of Recruitment and Alumni Affairs in the Athletics department, stepped down from his full-time position at YU.

"I feel truly honored to be the Head Coach at YU, and I can't wait for the season to start," Davidson told The Commentator shortly after his promotion.

"My communication with the players has always been very open and direct and they can expect the same from me as the head coach."

—
JJ Davidson

Davidson faces an interesting challenge this year, as 14 of the 20 players on the team's roster have worked with Davidson in his prior role as Assistant Coach. It is possible such a promotion could spurn tension between the athletes and their new Head

Coach as they are unused to having him in such a high position. When this concern was brought to his attention, the new coach had full confidence that this would not be an issue.

"My communication with the players has always been very open and direct, and they can expect the same from me as the head coach," Davidson said. "Obviously, some things will be done differently now as I implement my coaching philosophy but I've felt nothing other than support and excitement from the team so far."

Davidson's familiarity with the team will end up being an asset, as he is a young coach with little head coaching experience. He served as Head Coach at Kushner Yeshiva High School as well as the Head Coach for the USA Under-16 junior boys team in the 2018 International Maccabi Youth Soccer Games (YUmacs.com).

"J.J. is an excellent young coach with great leadership skills," Yeshiva University Director of Athletics, Joe Bednarsh said in a statement to YUmacs.com. "His philosophy mirrors that of the department's, and he's going to bring a level of discipline and hard-nosed style of play that will be very exciting to watch."

In other YU sports news:
WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY has a new Head Coach and Assistant Coach: YU recently announced that there will be two new coaches for the Women's Cross-country

team. Rolanda Bell, a former track athlete at the University of Tennessee, will be the Head coach, and she will be assisted by Lidia Garcia. In the past, the men's and women's Cross Country teams shared coaches.

WOMEN'S TENNIS looks to repeat as champions: Fresh off an appearance in the NCAA Division Three Tournament this past spring, the women's tennis team aims to go all the way for the second year in a row. The biggest obstacle they must overcome is the loss of star player Shani Hava, who graduated last spring after accumulating numerous Skyline Conference Player of the Year Awards in her four years at YU. Tennis opens its season against Pratt on September 2nd.

WOMEN'S SOCCER aims to continue building its program under Coach Marc Zharnest: While the Men's soccer team faces a coaching transition this season, the women's team, under Coach Zharnest is looking to retain some consistency. The enthused coach told The Commentator that "there is no greater feeling than just getting back to work," especially as the team has retained its core group of players and added some "new recruits." Coach Zharnest also preaches patience in the team's prep for the season. "We need to walk before we can run," Zharnest said regarding of the work the athletes must do to prepare for the season. Women's soccer opens its season against out of conference team City College

on August 31st.

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL Coach Dalliana Toussiant looks forward to "building skills" with returning players. Last year's Volleyball team left much to be desired after finishing their season with a record of 1-19. The rough season seems to have already been forgotten by Coach 'Dalli, who described herself as "super excited" for the upcoming season. Women's Volleyball plays its first game of the season versus Lehman College on August 31.

MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY did not reply to The Commentator's requests for comments on the upcoming season.



JJ Davidson

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

Why Sam Harris Can Make Good Tea, but Only Tea

By DOVID SCHWARTZ

I enjoyed a very interesting summer. I would like to share with you my experiences. But first, a joke, or, at least, the very first part of a joke: What did the Buddhist ask for on his hotdog? Certain important questions don't bother us enough. (This is not the punchline. That will come soon.) I spent my summer thinking about them at Claremont McKenna College where, along

Morality, on this view, does not rise above the human theatre, but is instead shackled inside the fleshy matter in our skulls.

with some other students, I read an excellent and difficult book called "Natural Right and History" by Leo Strauss. Later on, in Washington D.C., I spent seven weeks studying other books — from Aristotle's "Ethics" to Machiavelli's "The Prince" — on a program called Hertog.

I pose the following question: How do you make a good cup of tea? The answer depends upon an insignificant dilemma: What constitutes a good cup of tea? This is easily resolved. "Good" here means something that fulfills its function: a good cup of tea is a cup of tea that gets the job done. When I make tea, it is simple. I like it caffeinated because I am tired and I like it unsweetened because I hate myself: a simple tea for a simple function.

I pose, now, a different question which may be entirely the same: How do you make a good society? The answer depends upon a significant dilemma. What constitutes a good society? "Good" here may mean something that fulfills its function, but it may mean something else.

The Buddhist asks for everything on his hotdog. If you didn't get this one, here's another: The Buddhist hands the hotdog vender a fifty-dollar bill and waits for his change, but it never comes. The Buddhist says, "Hey! Where's my change?" To which

to the hotdog vender replies: "Ah, no, sir. Change comes only from within." Do we see the question of the good tea and the good society as the same or are they entirely different? Are we using "good" in the same way? Or, like the hot dog vendor, have we conflated what ought to remain separate and equated that which ought to have been distinct?

These issues lie at the center of classical political philosophy. What is "good"? In posing this question, we are not looking for a list of good things or criteria by which things

qualify to be on this list. We are looking for something more abstract. To illustrate what I mean, consider the distinction between fact and preference. When I say "Murder is bad" and then follow up and say, "Also, borscht is bad," have I used the word bad here in two different ways or one?

As *frum* Jews, we sympathize with those who draw a distinction. "Murder is bad" is a fact of the Universe, much as the equation "1+1=2" is a fact of the universe. "Borscht is bad," is not a fact of the universe. At best, we can say "I prefer not to eat borscht," which is a fact of the universe but one of a different order. Facts of the universe such as "Murder is bad" (if indeed it is a fact) are true without being contingent upon my preference. Which is to say, whether I like murder or not, it is still bad. Facts of the universe, such as "borscht is bad," are true if and only if I mean to express "I don't like the taste of borscht," and I do not in fact like it. Thus, it is contingent upon my preferences.

Is "the good" a preference or is "the good" a fact? This was one of the questions I spent my summer thinking about. Aristotle, in his book titled "Nicomachean Ethics," believes that the good is a fact. Aristotle believes that there is a way that you should live, and he calls this way of living *eudaimonia*. This word has been conventionally translated

as "happiness," but I will translate it here as "well-being." Every reasonable person believes in well-being, which is to say that certain ways of living are better than others. But not everyone agrees on what sort of word "better" is.

Sam Harris, a popular author, takes a reductive view of well-being. By this, I mean he understands well-being as a state-of-consciousness. To borrow one of his analogies, we consider health to be a state of the body. Likewise, in Harris' view, well-being is a state-of-consciousness. This state will include experiences of happiness, awe, love, etc. It will not include things like misery, pain, depression, etc. However, left out on this model is any fact of the ought sort. It relies on preference. Which is to say, we should prefer certain states of consciousness (those we identify with "well-being") to others (those we identify with "bad"). But why *ought* we prefer these things? Harris' system cannot resolve this question.

Instead, all he can do is say we do in fact prefer these things. He spends time and energy trying to think about what sort of world would be most conducive to this well-being. In this regard, his view enjoys (suffers from?)

concord with the views of John Mackie and Bertrand Russell, who believed we should express value judgments in the "optative mood." By this, I mean it is not correct to say "I ought not murder." Instead, it is correct to say "I ought not murder in order to have the state-of-consciousness I prefer."

Sam Harris can make good tea because we take "good" here to mean the tea I prefer or the tea I require to achieve something I prefer. But Sam Harris cannot *be* good in the higher sense of the word, in the sense where good transcends preference and is a fact of the universe. He can act that way, but he acts that way for something else: his preferred state of consciousness. Remove that goal, and he no longer has a reason to act that way. On Harris' view, what grounds moral claims is their consequence to our conscious. Morality, on this view, does not rise above the human theatre, but is instead shackled inside the fleshy matter in our skulls. Is this view correct?

This is what I spent my summer thinking about, and if you've made it to the end of this article, you may want to spend your next summer thinking about these things too.



Tea

My First Fight

By PHILLIP NAGLER

It was a bright and sunny day in Northern Israel. My friends and I had a vacation day from our research labs, so we decided to travel to Gan Hashlosha, a national park. The park was beautiful. We swam in various

natural springs and waterfalls and took plenty of cool pictures. People filled the park from corner to corner, both Jews and Arabs.

In the late afternoon, we moved to a new location to go swimming. We put our things down next to a group of Arabs, who were around the same age as we were. One of my friends started a conversation with

one of them, and we all introduced ourselves. He was a really friendly guy; he told us that he was from Nazareth and that he was Palestinian. He had a big scar on his back. I found out later from my friend that he got the scar from his father, who held a knife up against his back. When he was a teenager, he didn't want to be a religious Muslim anymore, and this is what led to the knife incident. He told my friend that his relationship with his father is better now.

We swam for another hour and a half. There was a large and cascading waterfall that was a 15-minute swim away from where we entered the water. After returning to shore, I was completely tuckered out from swimming all day. I decided to head to the showers and change, while the rest of my friends decided to stay in the water for a little longer.

Upon return, I saw that most of my friends were still in the water. One of my friends in the water was still talking to the young Arab man who he had met earlier that day. I had flip flops on, and I wanted to change into my sneakers. I sat down and started putting one of them

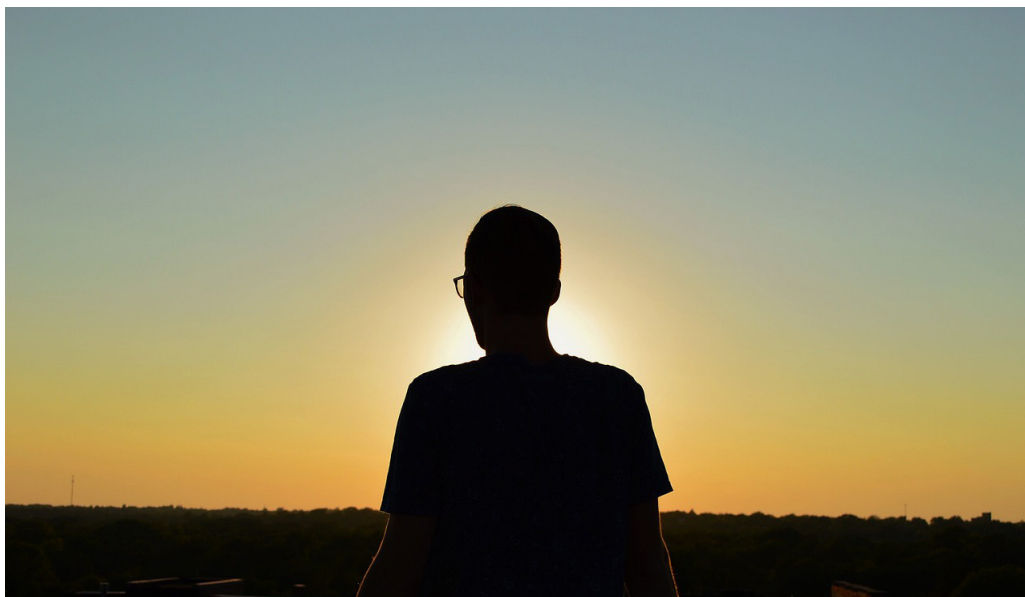
on. Before I could tie it, I heard two Arab teenagers yelling intensely at each other. They were less than 10 feet away from me. Next thing I knew, one of them punched the other in the face, and they started to fight.

I thought that I would get dragged into the fight, being that I was sitting a few feet away.

Two other Arab teenagers joined in on the fight. It started to get very intense. Many people were a few feet away just watching, including me and my friend who was also out of the water. The Arab guy who my friend was talking to got out of the water and tried to break up the fight. He was not able to overpower the four of them and ran to get help.

I was petrified. I thought that I would get dragged into the fight, being that I was sitting a few feet away. One of my shoes was still untied, and the other one wasn't even on my foot. I tried moving my hands to tie

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Reflection

From the SOY President's Desk: Appreciating YU's Uniqueness as Home to a Diverse Jewish Community and Our Responsibility as the Nucleus of American Modern Orthodoxy

By **MOSHE SPIRN**

This year will be different. I feel confident in saying this before I know anything about how any of your classes will unfold, how much you will enjoy your amazing morning programs, or how many new friends you will make. I know very little of what the upcoming year has in store, yet I can assure you it will be different from anything you have experienced before. If this is your first year here, you may not be surprised by this assertion. Some of the upperclassmen, however, may be a little skeptical. Allow me to explain why I am so confident.

What is the biggest difference in the campus between this year and last? We have some new amazing teachers and *rebbeim* and many new students, but the most impactful newcomers have been the impossible-to-miss banners which now cover many of the walls of Glueck, Furst and the elevators of Belfer. These banners are a triumphant reminder about the history of this amazing institution, and

merely receiving a daily reminder of how lucky we are to be a part of it is enough to transform our year into something unrecognizably positive.

When I was a senior in high school, I, like all of you, chose to attend Yeshiva University. I didn't know much about the day-to-day life in the university and all of its intricacies, but that didn't matter. All I knew about YU was its reputation, history and legacy. My father attended Yeshiva University, and my mother attended Stern College for Women. I grew up hearing about the history and personalities of YU, including Rabbi Soloveitchik, Dr. Belkin, Rabbi Lamm and many more. I wasn't as concerned with the details of my specific YU experience because I was so excited that I would have the opportunity to be a part of something bigger, to be a link in the chain which is YU. Knowing this was all the convincing I needed that I belonged at YU..

As its banners and history can attest, YU is an amazing place. We are all blessed with the privilege of calling this place our home. Every

student has the potential to gain tremendously from all YU has to offer. However, not everyone will have the pleasure of maximizing their time here. The greatest enemy to a prosperous college experience is something with which we are all—unfortunately—probably familiar. It is the cynicism and

despondency that creeps into our thoughts, conversations and body language. As long as it exists, the student body of YU will not achieve all it can. As a member and leader of the student government, I have to fight this enemy at every opportunity. I will use this platform to begin my mission by reminding all YU students why their time here will be awesome.

The greatest enemy to a prosperous college experience is something with which we are all, unfortunately, probably familiar. It is the cynicism and despondency that creeps into our thoughts, conversations and body language.

I will first call your attention to the amazing diversity of YU's morning programs. At the end of last year, The Commentator

published an article describing the recent trends of all the morning programs. As Rabbi Kalinsky was quoted in that article, "every morning program is a *l'chatchilah* (an ideal) in its own right." Regardless of what a student is looking for in a morning program, YU has an amazing option for him. We can't

take the spectrum of programs for granted, as there is no other Jewish school in the world that has the range of students that YU does. And while such a range is not without its challenges, it presents a unique opportunity to grow alongside each other. Complementing the diverse student body is an unparalleled roster of *roshei yeshiva* and religious staff who are here to cater to every kind of student that walks into their classrooms. All of this exists in the same institution which trains and prepares us for

our professional lives. For those of us who studied in Israel, those institutions mainly had a singular focus on learning Torah. While acquiring skills for studying Torah is crucial, it is equally important to allow the words we learn to permeate the lives we live. YU, with its integrated schedule, teaches us

how to juggle different priorities and different values; how to work diligently and manage our time properly. As Rabbi Penner often says, we only get busier after YU. The skills we learn here will help us meet the challenges life has in store.

Lastly, I want to focus on something related to what President Berman spoke about at the opening *kennes* this year. YU and its

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The Ronald Reagan poster hanging outside Gottesman Library

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The Enclosure of Modern American Industry: The Death of the Yeoman Worker

By ARYEH SCHONBRUN

Over the past few decades we have witnessed dramatic events in global and domestic politics, economics and society. We have experienced the dramatic growth of tech, information technologies and the painful reminders that we still share a finite, limited world. The average global temperature has increased as much as our financial anxieties. We have seen runs on the market, downturns that left people poor and un/underemployed; bubbles form and pop and swindlers rob us (even YU!) of our billions. Politicians have privatized away much of our common resources, and the cost of living has climbed.

Though we live in a time of plenty, the middle class struggles to survive making less, working harder, and in constant battle with the headwinds of a 'freer' and 'liberated' marketplace. The middle class suffers: it has lost much of its say in politics, seen its unions disbanded and underfunded, and, though workers produce much more than their counterparts in the 1980s, their pay, accounting for inflation, has stagnated for decades. That, coupled with increased costs associated with healthcare, education and home-ownership which have outpaced inflation and increasing job insecurity has made it difficult for the average American family to get ahead in this tough-but-'booming' economy.

here, we won't be able to solve anything. To answer that question, we should begin where this country started: the yeoman farmer.

The yeoman farmer, or an independent self-sustaining individual in Elizabethan (17th century) England, became the emblem of the young British colonies in North America. These farmers, who came over as indentured servants from the U.K., colonized much of what we regard as the original thirteen colonies. They did not employ slave labor, nor could they rely on government assistance. They acted alone, succeeded alone,

intentional debasement by the royal treasury. In an attempt to slow the inflation, caps were instituted on maximum pay for artisans and most of the market became regulated and highly competitive. The Statute of Artificers (1563) restricted the movement and employment of most artisans and marks one of the first times a government actively and directly intervened in purely economic affairs. By setting a maximum pay, the king had thought to fight inflation, however, the inflation continued, leaving the growing middle class unable to demand higher compensation.

categorized poverty and provided aid to those destitute enough to earn the court's sympathy. If one had just cause to be poor (i.e. injury, disease etc.), he would get some help. On the other hand, one who dared be destitute without cause would be arrested, enslaved, shipped abroad or even executed. Thus, having been previously expropriated, the poor of England could now be held accountable for their poverty. Since, as we all know, the good Lord hath commanded "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground."

The [American] government, by virtue of its incessant violation of laissez-faire and its heavy-handed approach towards systemic poverty, has become what it once acutely feared: a corrupt, cruel, totalitarian communist entity.

and if it they could not avoid it, failed and died alone. They came alone on a mission to find freedom and self-sufficiency in the newly-discovered Americas, but they did so out of desperation and with the will to restore what they had lost back home.

Life in 16th and 17th century England had become quite difficult for the middle class. Freed of feudal constraints, the English middle class grew and began to develop industries of its own. Guilds formed and strengthened, and farmers and artisans, bolstered by common ownership of arable

Additionally, upon recognizing the government's inability to fight inflation, the government began to seize and sell plots of state land, previously 'common' or shared, public land, and sell them to private entities. This, it claimed, would encourage more efficient farming/grazing practices and, of course, relieve the government of some of its debts. However, on account of the inability of the middle class to solidify as a powerful economic force, and as a result of corrupt political negotiations and unequal leverage, most of the public lands seized did not sell for a proper price and it became still harder for the now-impoorished to keep up.

Over 150 years, much of the once-common land had been repurposed for industrial farming or grazing, or turned over for recreational activities such as deer-hunting, while masses of poor, thoroughly expropriated and ever multiplying, made their way to the major cities in search of food and lodging (sometimes even their houses were destroyed in land takeovers). Through these numerous Acts of Enclosure (or fencing off), the middle class was destroyed, and from its ashes sprung the despaired masses of the English working industrial class and the Industrial Revolution.

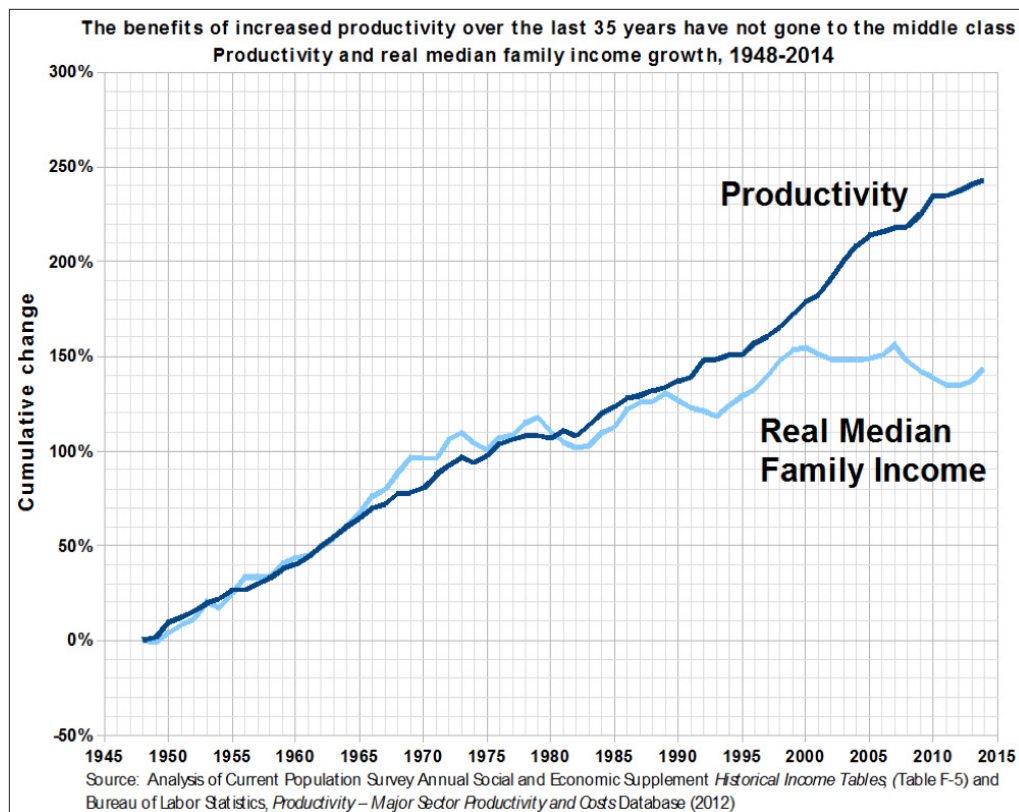
During the messy transition, and on account of the appalling conditions of the expropriated masses, many sought a way out. Those who had the courage signed up for indentured life in the colonies and left their brethren to struggle with an infantile welfare state. Extreme poverty gave way to pervasive crime and dangerous streets and, in response to an increasingly worried constituency, Queen Elizabeth I instituted the Poor Laws (1601). These laws, an expansion of previously-limited legislation, defined and

While this may all seem very distant to us all, we should not turn away from the stark similarities we encounter in both our contemporary world and pre-Industrial England. I do not claim scientific accuracy in my analysis, but perhaps a basic understanding of historical phenomena.

To start with, we could go back to the 1960s. The middle class, sustained by the post-war boom of the 50s had come great strides since the turmoil of the 30s. The average American worker made significantly more than his parents' generation, and, on average, Americans were living better, longer and healthier lives. The wars in Korea and Vietnam, and the Cold-War preoccupation put some strain on the American psyche, but wreaked havoc on the government economic interests. The U.S., unable to pay back investors and lenders, decided in 1972, under the auspices of President Nixon, to debase the monetary supply (by taking us off the gold standard), effectively defaulting on billions of dollars of debt and thus lending a tail-wind to the hyperinflation crisis of the 70s and early 80s. Pension funds and middle-class savings were hit the most, and by the time the government had come around to fixing what they had done by re-evaluating the currency through the economic reforms of the 80's (e.g. raising interest rates to +20%), the middle class had suffered an insurmountable setback.

Instead of letting the working population nurse its wounds, the government, intent on restructuring government policy and fearful of its own irresponsibility, began to privatize major industries and actively joined hands with private enterprise. The banks got bailouts, the interest rate was reduced dramatically when recession hit in the late 80's, and the middle class was then left to suffer with recession, and, of course, now with less stock in the collectively-built,

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These facts underlie many of the great social issues our generation faces, but, without a better understanding over how we got

land, began to grow self-sufficient. However, the country began to suffer economically from inflation instigated by wars, debt and



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Political Cartoon

THE MIAMI HERALD

MODERN AMERICAN INDUSTRY,
continued from Page 11

industrial prowess of the American economy.

American industry rebounded, though with the promise of further automation and higher efficiency. Large, private conglomerates assimilated many smaller industries, technology and robotics improved, and, as a result, industry employs less and less of the working population.

Many of America's battered workers then turned to the 'services' sector of the economy. Instead of pure manufacturing, American workers began providing an array of different services. We no longer focused on producing cars, but rather information, hospitality, food services and more. The strong, unionized, and proud industrial worker gave way to the overworked, downtrodden, paper-pushing wage-worker (see David Graeber's book, "Bullshit Jobs"), unable to find either a proper income, nor a reliable safety net in the post-Industrial economy.

America expanded its social services to assist those who could not succeed in the new jungle of an economy, but these came with expectations, requirements and bureaucratic condescension. The proud middle-class American could still survive, but only as a humble servant of political and economic interests. The days of self-sufficient unionization and proud workmanship had passed. Instead, poverty again began to anger those in power.

Debtors' prisons reopened under the guise of myriad antiquated laws, the War on Drugs took on racial and social prerogatives to rid the streets of previously misdemeanor crimes and impoverished criminals, and mass-incarceration started to make its way into lower-income American society. Poor states languished from reduced federal spending, schools became re-segregated as a result of unequal economic development, and politicians happily relinquished control over major industries and interests in favor of their friends in the private sector. Taxes were cut, 'entitlements' reduced, and the American work ethic, once a mutually-accepted value, became the mantra of an increasingly polemic aristocracy, eager to establish moral domination over the *nouveau-pauvre*.

One can see that, America, and with it much of Western society, repeated the same mistakes and iniquities that had once produced poverty in pre-Industrial England. Eager to control the market, the government limited the economic prospects for a large segment of its population (raising interest rates). It then proceeded to unfairly redistribute previously state-held resources in an effort to still reassert itself. Upon its predictable failure, the government adapted to the interests of the new elites, and doubled-down on its anti-worker agenda.

In historic England, food was kept expensive by politically motivated tariffs, while in modern America, monopolistic private

policy, unbridled/protected by regulation, has made basic goods and necessities more and more expensive, and public bailouts of private banks have erased the limits of government intervention. In England, the poor concentrated in the cities and set in motion the Industrial Revolution. In our times the poor learned to forego stable industrial jobs in favor of new 'services', undefined and unstable. Education has become a commodity, individual responsibility an oft-repeated but misunderstood trope, and the middle-class's hopes to resurface have been beaten back after multiple economic shocks.

The American worker, having suffered much in the last few decades has become accustomed to his new situation. He is a servant of the financial interests of the market. The government, on the other hand, by virtue of its incessant violation of *laissez-faire* and its heavy-handed approach towards systemic poverty, has become what it once acutely feared: a corrupt, cruel, totalitarian, communist entity.

We will not find a solution to this tragedy of the commons easily. As time goes on and the market continues to distribute unequal gains to the rich, the American worker will continue in his despairing tumble into the void of interminable subjugation. He cannot escape to a new world of opportunity, no new frontier awaits his manly courage and steadfast determination. We must make do with what remains for us workers and hope to see change in our times. We must also

demand change and take back what is ours.

The great English author George Orwell, famous for his anti-communist satires (e.g. 1984, *Animal Farm*), once wrote (*Tribune* 8/1944):

If giving the land of England back to the people of England is theft, I am quite happy to call it theft. In his zeal to defend private property, my correspondent does not stop to consider how the so-called owners of the land got hold of it. They simply seized it by force, afterwards hiring lawyers to provide them with title-deeds. In the case of the enclosure of the common lands, which was going on from about 1600 to 1850, the land-grabbers did not even have the excuse of being foreign conquerors; they were quite frankly taking the heritage of their own countrymen, upon no sort of pretext except that they had the power to do so.

It is desirable that people should own their own dwelling houses, and it is probably desirable that a farmer should own as much land as he can actually farm. But the ground-landlord...has no function and no excuse for existence. He is merely a person who has found out a way of milking the public while giving nothing in return. He causes rents to be higher... that is literally all that he does, except to draw his income. If that [redistribution] is theft, all I can say is, so much the better for theft.

FROM THE COMMIE ARCHIVES

Editor's Note: The Commentator has decided to reprint the following op-ed about journalistic goals and ideals. Though written 30 years ago, the questions raised and ideas expressed remain relatable and relevant today.

From the Archives (November 22, 1988; Volume 54 Issue 4) — Opinion: Role of The Press

By BARRY KAYE

There are those among us that feel the role of The Commentator should be limited to reporting only the positive aspects of YU. They claim the paper, being read by thousands including alumni, is no place for students to air their complaints, their criticisms or even their misgivings. Similarly they profess that the paper should not highlight any of YU's lackings or failures, but rather should report the news in a saccharin fashion.

I must protest these assertions. As a responsible Yeshiva journalist, I am cognizant of the seeming tension between those who state that any form of public criticism, even if it be constructive, is forbidden and those who advocate the type of role Western society has reserved for the media.

As far back as Sophocles, philosophers have espoused the position that writers should portray the world as it actually is, so as to allow man to judge for himself his own iniquities and hopefully reform his actions. Similarly, our press is a medium by which our community, comprised of students and faculty, is able to evaluate its actions. Maimonides implies in his writings on repentance (Mishnah Torah: Hilchot Teshuvah) that before one can fully repent and feel remorse for one's actions, one must be fully aware of what he has done. Thus, we need a means of examining our actions and a forum for constructive criticism that will reach all the members of our community.

We attend a yeshiva that prides itself on the encouragement it extends to the students to take an active role in determining its direction. We have a student government, Senate and Court, all of which are outgrowths of this desire and all of which are alien to the classic yeshiva. The classic yeshiva had no need for democracy since its goal was unidirectional--to teach Torah and thereby mold its students into proper Jews. Our goals are centered around Torah and the desire to be proper Jews, but often include secondary valid pursuits.

By instilling the framework for a sense of democracy in the yeshiva we must also accept its responsibilities. A democracy cannot function without the participation and the careful scrutiny of its participants.

Our paper is an integral part of a system of checks and balances which serve to safeguard students' rights. Without the public forum, an individual's complaints might receive little attention. Thus, by examining an issue, that maybe some would like to keep secret to the outside world, we are admitting our human frailty and are taking the first step towards correcting our actions.

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my shoes, but they were paralyzed with fear.

One of the Arab teenagers started lobbing any objects he could find at the other two teenagers. He first picked up a large branch and threw it at them. Then he whacked them with a spatula that he grabbed from a nearby grill. Not long after, he lifted the entire grill and launched it at them.

The fight moved a few feet away from where I was sitting. I mustered the courage to put on and tie both of my shoes. A security guard arrived, his face with a grim and nervous expression. He called for backup on his walkie-talkie.

My friend and I got up and started to leave the area. As we started to move away, we saw about seven or eight security guards running in the direction of the fight. At this point, I felt safe and started to calm down. We went back to get the rest of our friends a few minutes later, and everything seemed to have settled down. It was getting late, so we gathered up all of our things and headed out of the park back to Jerusalem. Suffice it to say, we had a good story to tell everyone when we got back.

This whole experience made me think a lot about Arab life in Israel. I've had a few interactions with Israeli Arabs, but I don't think I had ever spoken to someone who identified as a Palestinian. When the whole fight was happening just a few feet away from me, there were all of these voices echoing in my head. Some of these voices were educators from middle school and high school. They were telling me that Palestinians are taught to hate Jews in grade school and that they are cruel people who use human shields. These voices were also telling me that I was in danger and that these teenagers were about to attack me. Then there was another voice in my head, the voice of mainstream media. It spoke to me saying that Palestinians are people too; that they are oppressed and live in a poor economic society. This voice told me that this fight had nothing to do with me and that I had no reason to be scared.

Part of me at the time of the fight wanted to get up and run away with only one shoe on. I felt that it would be naïve of me to stay so close to a potentially dangerous situation. Another part of me felt that I would be safe since this wasn't my fight. After all, why would they attack me? It turned out that I got out of this situation completely unscathed, but I wondered: was it right of me to not get up and move away immediately when the fight started?

Ultimately, it is foolish to shape an opinion on a group of people from one bad experience. However, it made me realize that I never really thought about the Palestinians who are living in Israel. Some of them may be violent like these couple of teenagers who got into a fight, for whatever reason. But some of them are nice and friendly people, like the guy that my friend was speaking to. After this experience, I view Palestinians as human beings, rather than as a political concept.



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students have the capability to make an impact on Jews all across America. In my opinion, we often don't appreciate the fact that YU is the flagship of Modern Orthodoxy in America and, therefore, the impact it has on America. We don't realize how communities all across America feel connected to YU and look to its *roshei yeshiva*, faculty and students as role models. This fact is quite intimidating, and forced me to think how we could actively reach out to the world while

still in college. So, to broaden the influence of the YU student body, I created a Torah publication, written by YU students, that will be distributed in YU and in shuls across America. The name of the publication is *Yitzchak Yiranen* (Yitzchak rejoiced). My hope is that this publication will enable the students here at YU to appreciate the impact they can have on the larger Jewish community just by contributing to and being active in the community of Yeshiva University.

After internalizing the amazing opportunities here in YU, I think that there are several other things we must do in order

to maximize our time here. I will reiterate what I said at the *kennes*: I think that it is critical for every student here to have a religious role model and mentor with whom to consult about life and religious growth. In addition, we must avoid cynicism at all costs. While I must confess that I, too, am guilty of being cynical, I think it is fair for me to suggest that we must not complain just for the sake of complaining. Instead of focusing on the problem, why don't we focus on thinking creatively about what can be done to remedy the issue? (On that note, if anyone has any suggestions or concerns regarding

religious life on campus please feel free to come over to me in person or to email me at moshespirn@gmail.com).

Finally, I will conclude by saying that in regards to growing religiously on campus, we receive a return only if we invest. We must stay in for *Shabbos*, and we must participate in the various other religious programming YU offers. Hopefully by taking advantage of the religious opportunities for growth in YU, we will really enjoy our religious experience on campus. I am looking forward to an amazing year!

Counterpoint: Changing Routines, Not Lives

By SHIRA LEVY

Deserts have perpetually blue skies—the sort of blue associated with beach days and summer weather. But the blue stretching above the monochrome desert sand of Arad, Israel does not have that positive, sunny-day effect. Everything in Arad happens beneath a ceaselessly blue sky that, to many, would indicate hope and opportunity, but to Aradians represents the cyclical nature of their trying lives.

I came to Arad with Counterpoint Israel, a Yeshiva University program that sends students to the Israeli cities of Kiryat Malachi, Dimona and Arad to run camps for at-risk teens. Counterpoint counselors are brought to these cities to “help campers strengthen their written and oratory English skills, to

since Counterpoint ended, my answer to the question of ‘why it matters’ is clear in my mind and is different than what I was told it would be.

A simple answer, such as “we changed their lives,” would be disrespectful to the campers I came to love and a misrepresentation of the impactful work Counterpoint counselors do. Talking about the impact we made as “life-changing” or “everlasting” is both a simplification and overestimation. I do not say this to minimize Counterpoint or discount its immense value, rather, I aim to identify and specify the impact of Counterpoint in Arad.

For three weeks, we teach kids ranging from 11 to 16 years old English, give them love and attention, and model a positive relationship with authority. Then we leave. We leave just when the attachment and re-

well being were a primary concern. Where vacation time is usually time spent roaming the streets or watching television, camp offered structure and activity. We promoted interests and encouraged ambition by having the teens try new activities and think bigger about their goals. For example, we facilitated a camper-run play of a comedic, bilingual

or that they will make better choices following their new experiences, it would be conjecture. The kids we grew to love will likely fall back into their routine. The endless blue sky will remind them every day that they live in Arad with limited options and a sort of routine that qualifies them as “at risk.” Their lives will most likely stay on course,

Saying that we ‘changed lives’ does not accurately describe what we went there to do, nor does it properly depict the amazing things we accomplished.

version of “Romeo and Juliet.” In cycles of aggression and searches for dominance, we ended feuds in handshakes and catfights with apologies.

unchanged by three weeks of summer camp. However, I do not believe the significance of Counterpoint lies in quantifiable results. Saying that we ‘changed lives’ does not ac-



The never-ending blue sky that covers the desert of Arad goes on unchanged, just like the lives of the campers at Counterpoint.

ELANA MULLER

bolster campers’ overall self-confidence, and to engage campers in conversations geared towards identity development,” according to the program’s mission statement. These lofty goals are actualized in a three-week summer camp that combines learning English with camp activities such as sports, art and dance.

I think it’s important to reflect humbly and honestly on why Counterpoint Israel matters, and accordingly, after being a counselor on the program, I am forced to ask how three weeks of summer camp can make any difference in an otherwise-relentless routine of boredom and unchallenged potential. Due to the subtleties involved in forming relationships with teens, I could not seriously consider why and how Counterpoint makes a difference in the lives of the teens it serves before participating in the program, and while I was in Arad, I constantly wrestled with a nagging concern that the work we were doing did not matter at all. Now, as almost two months have passed

relationship solidifies. We leave at the point where they will be sad to see us go, but not miss us once we are gone. It is not clear that three weeks in a full childhood matters at all.

We did not change the cycles our campers live in. We did not change the reality of absent parents, desperate financial situations, or relieve them from whatever circumstances they were born into that qualify them as “at-risk teens.” We did not radically alter their relationships or facilitate a new kind of understanding. What we did do was introduce a welcome contrast and a joyful disruption. We interrupted an otherwise-empty summer and created variance where there was routine. We created a hiccup in these children’s painful and seemingly ceaseless cycle.

While the campers generally and comfortably challenge authority, face the consequences thereof, and again defy authority, we insisted on a different dynamic by establishing warm and playful relationships. We modeled for the campers trusting relationships, ones in which their happiness, balance, and

For three weeks, nine Yeshiva University students worked endlessly to create an environment based on unapologetic celebration of values, learning and fun. We watched reticent campers emerge as self-declared color war captains. Restless teens with little interest in English articulated full sentences with genuine pride and a brand new confidence. In an energetic, charged environment where teamwork and comradery were essential, campers opened up to one another, embraced their peers and worked to understand each others’ differences.

However, each morning the campers woke up to the same unflinching, blue sky, reminding them that no matter the fun they had at camp, their circumstances can not be changed. To me, that color was a symbol of what we came to Arad to do. Our accents, attitude, hashkafa and relationships all came together to create a fiery new color for contrast.

If I were to put forward that the children’s routine will feel different after this disruption

curately describe what we went there to do, nor does it properly depict the amazing things we accomplished.

No cliché can do justice to the joy this program creates and the potential it unleashes. On the backdrop of life in Arad, the campers’ experience on Counterpoint is one of utter difference. Counterpoint matters because it offers newness in every respect—not because it changes lives. Being around college students who believe unflinchingly in each campers’ ability to achieve their ambitions and fulfill their potential is valuable in its own right. Those three weeks matter not for the results that follow, but for what they were: unthinking fun and unquestioning support for teens who are brimming with untapped potential. The three weeks matter in their insinuation that there is more out there—that there is room for warm, caring relationships beneath the Aradian blue sky.

Lessons Learned at YU

By EFRAT MALACHI

Hopping off the plane fresh from *shana aleph* in Israel and transitioning into the big world of college and adulthood is scary and as you step foot into new, untested territory you are bound to come across some rocky plains. That is why I have made it my duty to share a few of the major lessons and tips I picked up during my first year on campus. My hope is that you are able to internalize these thoughts and messages that I've laid out and, in doing so, you minimize your chances to err, giving you the opportunity to have a smoother experience at school.

Welcome to all the incoming and returning students! I will warn you, it will be a rollercoaster ride of a year — as is life — but in the end, it is worthwhile. Ladies and gentlemen, fasten your seatbelts and hold on tight as the ride of your life is about to begin.

In no particular order, here is a list of lessons I learned and want to share with you.



It is important to know that there are resources for getting help right at your fingertips.

Firstly, it is **better late than never**, which, before this past year, has never rung so true. It doesn't matter whether it's coming late to a class, handing in an assignment past its due date or even being tardy to an exam/midterm/final, you must remember that you can only gain by going or handing in those assignments. Arriving late might feel like the most embarrassing moment of your life, but that moment is fleeting. The unpleasant moments that enter your life function as a substitute teacher that's there to teach and then run off towards the closest exit. They don't hang around.

Don't settle for less just because you feel a bit nervous or embarrassed of what others might think of you by being late. If you do have those thoughts, just highlight them and use them to improve. Although you may be running late to class, it is still beneficial for

you to go. It is better to be late and know you tried than never to show up at all, which might anyways result in worse consequences. Give yourself a chance. You deserve it.

My next piece of advice is that **avoidance is never the solution**. This means that avoiding and pushing off work until a later time not only decreases your chances of doing satisfactory work but also puts extra strain on your current workload. Unfortunately, there is no prophetic aid anymore — no one really knows what will demand time and effort and affect daily life. The only thing you can be certain of is the present moment, therefore it is better to do whatever work you can get done today than to wait for tomorrow. Additionally, unfinished long-term projects can create clouds that rain stress until the work is done. All in all, the faster you start then the faster you finish and whether you do it the moment it's assigned or the moment it's due, it still needs to get done, so you may as well use your time wisely. Be smart; don't wait until the last minute to do your

homework. You got this.

Thirdly, **well-balanced social FOMO is better than you think**. Having a fear of missing out can feel like the end of a potentially awesome social life you might have had. But it is important at times to realize that nothing is more important than focusing on your future success. If a social event or hang out with friends seem to trump most things in your life and fog your vision, then you need to redefine priorities. It is healthy to go out and have fun with friends, just remember that everything is best in moderation. It's all about the balance.

It's crucial to frequently check in to see that all areas of your life are fully balanced. One of the greatest things is to feel wanted and included in a social group. It's exciting participating in events or campaigns, being a part of something bigger and having those

good memories to look back upon. But if these fun times and friends are all that we are, then who are we?

You are not defined by how many people like you or dislike you. You are not more or less of a person if you do or don't go to a party. No one and nothing can diminish your

Don't throw away the grand life that's waiting ahead for a glamorous social life that you cannot take with you. Remember to take a step back once in a while and see the larger picture you're painting.

intrinsic value. You are a whole individual who has many parts and roles attached to you but still, those external things are not you. You are a part of a family, a part of a social circle, a part of an institution, but you are not limited to these associations because you are infinite at your core. Once you can feel complete with your infinite self, then you will become more comfortable with missing fun outings and working many long hours all alone in your room. Don't forget what you're fighting for. This is your future self, future career, and your future family that you're investing in. Be steadfast in what you're building towards and re-adjust your focus when you need to because college is a confusing time and things can occasionally get out of whack.

Don't throw away the grand life that's waiting ahead for a glamorous social life that you cannot take with you. Remember to take a step back once in a while and see the larger picture you're painting.

Fourthly, I recommend you **pray, pray, and pray some more**. This is not just a comforting line or tip to say to someone when they are at a loss and can't seem to find their way but a real-life skill. First, a person must have an honest conversation with himself to identify what his worries and weak points are and then he should address whatever is setting him off. Communication is the greatest tool one has in life, whether it be praying to God, seeing a counselor or talking to a friend or mentor. It's not embarrassing or shameful at all; rather, it's the opposite. It's a sign of strength, maturity and responsibility. Taking the first step in asking for help shows a level of self-care, self-love and responsibility.

Nowadays we are truly blessed that at our disposal are countless resources to facilitate communication. Nothing is too big or too small to handle and no matter how scary and bleak the situation may seem, all the help and answers are there. Like with the struggles and fears that settle and build inside you, the strength to overcome and rebuild is inside you as well. Once you start

establishing those helpful connections you will secure some peace of mind. So, whether it be a class you're failing in, a relationship you're unsure about, social challenges or even family drama, there is always someone on the other line. You just need to pick up the phone and make the call.

Finally, **do what makes you happy**.

This is not to say you should go out and do whatever you want. Rather, I'm saying you should incorporate a recreational element into every day. It's important to realize that you are not just a student but a person with complexities. It's easy to get so bogged down by work that you end up skipping over this aspect of your day, but it's crucial to recognize that you're not a robot. Taking breaks in between long study sessions to do the things that make you happy makes you a more efficient, productive and satisfied student and person.

College is about balancing our multifaceted lives and maintaining them to a top-notch quality but sometimes we can forget why we put ourselves through it. You should keep your eyes on the future while remembering to care of yourself. While focusing on building a quality life for your future, remind yourself to consider the quality you have now and don't be quick to compromise on either.

Dr. Benjy Epstein, a wise spiritual mentor of mine, once said, "self-care is not selfish." This attitude will make your college journey more successful. Do what makes you feel at peace with yourself, whether it be sipping on a Dunkin Donuts coffee, taking a stroll in the park, watching a movie, playing cards, talking with a friend, meditating, working out, or even napping. The happier you are, the more focused, confident and driven you can become.

It is incredibly important to be aware of this inner self and know that you can always tap into it because it is the source of your efforts and motivation to pursue your dreams. Doing the things you like emits this positive energy which envelops you afterwards, and your smile will emerge simply because you are more in tune with yourself. That is what we all must be working towards: not just the quantity of the zeros on our paychecks but the quality of the one life we have to live. Let's live it right.

Vote For Me, Vote for You, Vote for Who?

By CHAYA BRACHA WALKENFELD
and THE BOARD OF THE COLLEGE
REPUBLICANS

"Vote for me!"

"Vote for me!"

"No, actually just vote for me!"

Democratic candidates persuade you to vote for them by claiming that their party ensures equal rights for all citizens, including for Jews. This is why Jews voted for them historically, specifically from the time of Franklin D. Roosevelt (Jewish Virtual Library).

I am here to tell you that although the

Democratic Party at one time staunchly supported religious (and Jewish) freedom, that is no longer the case. The Democratic Party promises to give everyone equal rights (<https://democrats.org/>), however, that is impossible because some people's rights impede on the rights of others. By legislating civil rights that are not in the Constitution, the Democrats are actually taking away rights enshrined in the Constitution. In particular, the Public Leadership Institute explains that many states grant protections to specific classes of people—these protections conflict with your constitutional right of religious freedom.

The Colorado cake shop incident is the

perfect example to demonstrate that not everyone can have equal rights at the same time. When Jack Phillips, the owner of Masterpiece Cakeshop, refused to bake a wedding cake for a same-sex marriage, the Colorado Civil Rights Commission (CCRC) ruled that Phillips violated the civil rights of the gay couple who ordered the cake, despite the fact that designing the cake went against his own religious beliefs. State court rulings upheld the CCRC rulings. *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* went to the Supreme Court where, in June 2018, the justices reversed all prior court decisions and voted 7-2 in favor of the cake shop owner. According

to their explanation, Colorado discriminated against the owner of the shop because of his religious beliefs.

Republicans support the Supreme Court's decision in *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. CCRC* because it pledges to "...defend the religious beliefs and rights of conscience of all Americans and to safeguard religious institutions against government control." It continues to say that "Our First Amendment rights are not given to us by the government but are rights we inherently possess. The government cannot use subsequent

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“Westworld” Metacommentary Part I: These Violent Delights

By **SAMUEL GELMAN (HOUSTON, TEXAS)**

Analysis.

On the surface, “Westworld” tells the story of killer robots rebelling against their abusive human masters. On a deeper level, “Westworld” examines questions regarding free will and humanity, asking its viewers to question what makes someone human and the value of reality. Beneath that philosophical jargon lies a meta-commentary on the nature of stories and how they relate to their viewers and readers. The unique setting of the show — a theme park full of pre-programmed robot characters with backstories, personalities, and drives — allows the sci-fi/Western to critique and assess the current entertainment landscape in our world, offering insightful and somewhat disturbing observations. Over several issues of *The Commentator*, this series of articles will examine this commentary and its ramifications on current TV and movies. First up: violence and sex.

Violence and sex dominate television and movies. Movies such as “*The Godfather*,” “*No Country For Old Men*” or anything directed

by Quentin Tarantino contain an abundance of violent and bloody scenes, while films such as “*Fifty Shades of Grey*” are dedicated to the topic of sex. Many of these scenes become iconic; everyone remembers the horse head scene from “*The Godfather*” or the moment the will-they-won’t-they couple of their favorite TV show finally hooked up. Others send more of an artistic message; “*No Country For Old Men*’s” random violence serves as an antithesis of the Western genre and the philosophy of Tommy Lee Jones’ protagonist. As for Quentin Tarantino, well, those movies are just over-the-top fun.

Not everyone, especially contemporary critics, see it this way. Some of the most popular entertainment programs of the last decade have received criticism for their use of violence, gore and sex. Critics complain that shows like “*Game of Thrones*,” “*True Blood*” and “*Spartacus*” use violence and sex as crude ways to grab their audiences’ attention. In fact, the explicit sexual content on “*Game of Thrones*” has become so typical that it warranted the creation of a new term — *sexposition* — which the *Financial Times* defined as “keeping viewers hooked by combining complex plot exposition with explicit sexual goings-on.” The show’s infamy

even spread here to YU, where Rabbi Jeremy Wieder criticized *The Commentator* for publishing an article about “*Game of Thrones*,” saying that “the show itself is deeply, deeply problematic.”

At first glance, it would seem that “*Westworld*” embodies the many criticisms of “*Game of Thrones*.” The first shot of the pilot opens to a dark room that slowly illuminates to reveal a naked woman sitting on a stool. Other notable moments of the first episode include a rape scene, plenty of shootouts, a scalping and a close up of a man literally getting shot through the face. To say that the show contains explicit and graphic content would be quite the understatement.

Looking a little more critically, though, one sees how the violence and sex in “*Westworld*” takes a much different form than that of “*Game of Thrones*.” “*Game of Thrones*” uses these types of scenes to show the brutality and harshness of its world. They become an artistic tool utilized to get its message across. Of course, art can take many forms, leading to much of the criticism of this approach. Other methods may portray the brutality of a world just as well as explicit violence and sex. “*Vikings*,” which depicts a harsh and unforgiving world with a

more subdued approach to violence and sex, serves an excellent example of this.

“*Westworld*” falls into an entirely different category. It uses these graphic scenes not to further its own narrative, but to comment and examine the nature of these scenes on other shows precisely like “*Game of Thrones*.”

To make this more clear, I have to back up and explain the unique setting of “*Westworld*”. The show takes place in a theme park called Westworld. Pre-programmed robots with backstories, personalities, unique and subtle character traits, motivations and drives inhabit the park. Humans — referred to as guests in the show — pay to enter the park and do whatever they want to/with the hosts. And I mean *whatever* they want. Outside the park, the audience watches as Anthony Hopkins’ Robert Ford and Simon Quarterman’s Lee Sizemore create new narratives and characters, ensuring that the experience stays fresh and exciting for the guests.

If this all seems a bit familiar, that’s because we all experience this any time we turn

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Westworld Logo

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on a TV. Through its setting, “Westworld” deconstructs and recreates the format of television and movies. The robot — or hosts as they are labeled on the show — parallel the actors and performers. The people up at HQ correspond to the writers, directors, and producers, the crafters of the story. And the guests? They are us. They are the viewers. The writers and directors (the people at park headquarters) create characters and cast actors and actresses (create hosts), forcing them to do whatever they need to do to entertain the viewer and get higher ratings (entertain the guests in the park). This includes “killing,” graphic sex scenes, and any other ridiculous thing that shows make their actors and actresses do.

None of it is real, though, and the viewer faces no consequences for their actions. At the end of the day, the cast will go home to their real lives, only to return the next day to do it all over again. So too with the hosts. Their sole purpose is to entertain the guest in any way possible, be it being killed or having sex with them. The guests don’t give a second thought towards their actions against the hosts. They are robots, programmed to feel whatever their programming (script) tells them to. They will not remember any of the horrors they went through, and will return to the park the next day as they are all programmed to do.

Therefore, whenever “Westworld” engages in explicit violence or sexual behavior, it does so not merely to attract viewers or make an artistic point, but rather to show the audience their own viewing experience through the actions of the guests. The guests and

the viewers are one and the same. Violence becomes necessary because the show must reflect the violence of the TV and movies in our world. “Westworld” asks its audience — by positioning them as the guests — to examine why they love these types of scenes so much.

Granted, the guests live the violence and sex as opposed to the audience who simply watch it. While that may be a significant difference, it does not matter in this case. Both the guests and the audience ask for the same explicit content, just in different formats. Furthermore, with the development of VR technology, the boundaries between “Westworld” and our reality are shrinking. Do we really believe that those gaming ex-

Westworld asks its audience — by positioning them as the guests — to examine why they love these types of scenes so much.

periences will be any different than what TV and movies, or video games, for that matter, give us now in terms of content? The short answer is no, but this is all beyond the scope of this article.

In an interview with Vice, Co-Creator Jonathan Nolan address the explicit violence and sex head-on. “This might be somewhat hypocritical, but Lisa [Joy] and I aren’t terribly interested in portrayals of sexual violence onscreen,” he said. “Obviously, part of what the show is about is that, but it wasn’t something we were interested in fetishizing. It is a show about violence, though, and we’re asking the question, ‘Why is it that we like violence in almost all of our entertainment?’ Violence is in most of the stories we like to watch, but it isn’t part of what we like to

do — so why are [the guests on Westworld] paying money to exercise that appetite?”

The same can be asked about our own television and movie programs. If we find it so disgusting and degrading to see these things in our true reality, why do we tolerate them in our stories? Why do we pay extra money to afford premium cable networks like HBO and Starz, two of the primary culprits of this new trend in violent and sexually explicit TV? By making the hosts the victims and crafting the show in a way that makes the audience sympathize with them, “Westworld” forces the viewer to ask themselves, why do they enjoy watching this? Why do we keep coming back to the same violence, the same sex? What does it say about us as a society?

I don’t have an answer to this question, and neither does “Westworld.” Lee Sizemore, the park’s Narrative Director, and Charlotte Hale, Executive Director of the Delos Destinations Board, seem to believe that people love these types of stories for the sake of the violence and sex. “Most of the guests just want a warm body to shoot or to f***,” Hale tells the Man in Black. People are just looking for an escape, a place where they can find cheap thrills. And there is a lot of evidence for this argument. Just look at the ratings for “Game of Thrones” or the top box office champions. Even “Westworld” offers some guidance, with the ratings for the much more tame season two falling from the high season one numbers.

Robert Ford, the co-founder of the park,

falls on the other side of the argument. He believes that people want more than cheap thrills and tricks. The viewers/guests may come for the violence and sex, but they stay for something deeper. They want meaning and understanding. “They [the guests] are not looking for a story that tells them what they are,” he tells Lee after rejecting the director’s latest narrative project. “They already know what they are. They are here because they want a glimpse of who they could be.”

The only real proof for Ford’s argument comes from the Man in Black. He serves as a symbol for the viewer that looks for something more from their entertainment other than the basic plot. Someone who seeks the symbolism, themes, philosophies and lessons that a show or movie can provide. He ignores the unnecessary violence and sex that the park offers. Instead, he searches for, in his own words, “something the person who created [the park] wanted to express. Something true.” Yet, even though he does spend most of his time searching for this purpose, this maze, he still indulges himself in the spectacle that the park provides every now and then, going so far as to rape Delores for no apparent reason in the pilot.

We may never get an answer to this question, and it definitely won’t come from an amateur critic such as myself. But it is still important to ask these questions and determine what these scenes and stories do for us as individuals and a society. You may fault “Westworld” for engaging in the behavior that they seem to criticize. You may call them, and me, hypocrites. But at least they understand what goes on around them. At least they ask the question.

VOTE FOR ME,
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amendments to limit First Amendment rights.” Republicans believe that freedom of religion supersedes rights not protected by the Constitution. Democrats want to redefine the words of the Constitution which would take away from the original right to freedom of religion. This case is an example that shows we need justices who will rule in favor of the cake shop owner, and who will uphold our First Amendment right to freedom of religion.

After the ruling, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D) released a statement further proving my points,

“No business or organization open to the public should hide their discriminatory practices behind the guise of religious liberty... Democrats will never stop fighting for every American’s right to full equality

priority over religious liberties.

The Washington Post explained that about a month before this Supreme Court ruling, Democratic senators introduced a bill to amend (and upend) the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to mean that legislated civil rights take precedence over constitutional guarantees of religious freedom.

“While our country was founded on the value of religious liberty, that freedom cannot come at the expense of others’ civil rights,” Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) said. “Since the bill is highly unlikely to pass, without Republican support, its purpose is in large part simply to announce Democrats’ priorities to voters before the midterm elections in the fall.”

Charles Haynes, a scholar on religious freedom, at Newseum said, “One of the reasons for introducing it [the bill] is to signal to people in the country ... this is where we stand, and this is what we would do if we

If you think the cake shop case doesn’t apply to Jews, let me tell you about a case in which the ruling did directly affect a Jew. In *Estes v. Clark*, a Jewish prisoner sued his prison for denying him a *shofar* and kosher food. The prison argued that it was giving him food that was kosher according to its own view. In this case, the judge ruled that the prison cannot decide what kosher is for the Jew. The judge’s ruling was based on Justice Kennedy’s majority opinion in *Masterpiece Cakeshop* in which Kennedy writes, “It hardly requires restating that government has no role in deciding or even suggesting whether the religious ground for Phillips’ conscience-based objection is legitimate or illegitimate.” Although in this case religious freedom did not conflict with civil rights, it is still relevant because our religious freedom is dependent on constitutional justices who recognize that they cannot determine what is a legitimate religious practice. Republicans will nominate and confirm constitutionalist justices who will protect your religious freedoms. Today’s Democrats will nominate justices who would “legislate” rights into and out of the Constitution based on their personal, political beliefs.

For all those who think that it doesn’t matter so much who wins office this election, think again. Remember that the Republican Party is committed to upholding your religious freedom. Who wins is up to you. *It is important to vote Republican so that your First Amendment right to religious freedom is protected.*

“Vote for me.”

No, actually just vote for you. Vote Republican.

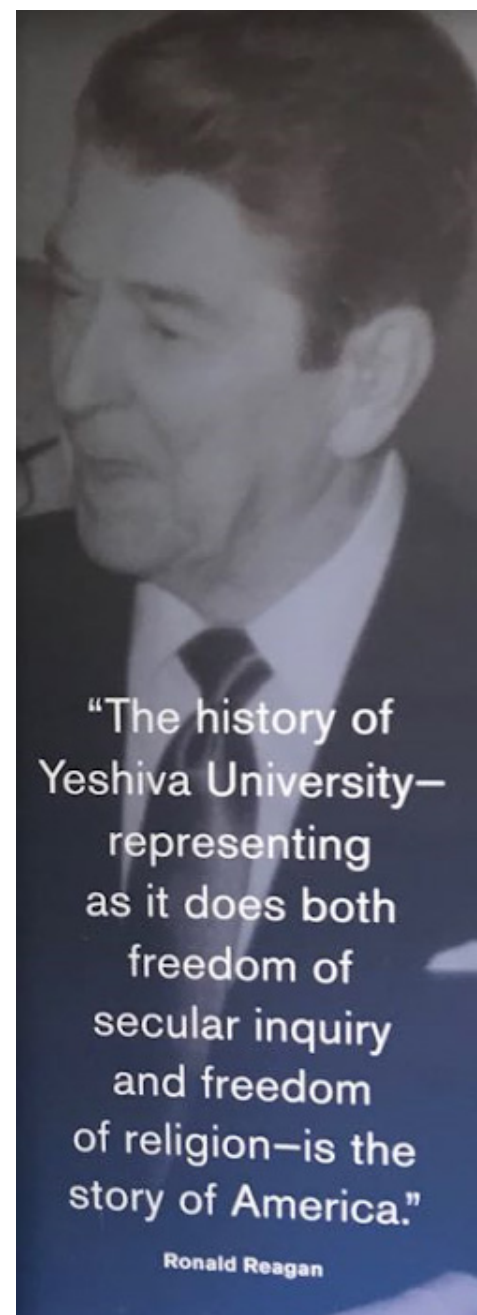
Republicans will nominate and confirm constitutionalist justices who will protect your religious freedoms. Today’s Democrats will nominate justices who would “legislate” rights into and out of the Constitution based on their personal, political beliefs.

and equal justice under the law.”

Leader Pelosi clearly states that everyone cannot have equal rights simultaneously and she believes that legislated rights trump the religious freedoms enshrined in the Constitution. She does this by demeaning religious freedom by referring to it as a “guise” while stating that liberties associated with sexual orientations should take

have the opportunity.” Haynes is more than ready to give away YOUR religious freedom.

Jews, be warned. Understand that the Democrats don’t care about your religious freedom and they are preparing to take it away in favor of civil rights for others. You need to take a stand and understand that the current Democratic Party is not neutral in regards to religious freedom.



“2001: A Space Odyssey:” Cinema’s Greatest Feat Lives on 50 Years Later

By ZACK RYNHOLD

2001 falls into the absorbing category of film that prompts headaches and weariness from over-stimulation. Stanley Kubrick’s 1968 film boasts the most iconic match-cut in cinema history, a memorable soundtrack, innovative special effects for its day, the origin of modern-day technologies such as Siri and Alexa and, perhaps most prominently, a perceptive rumination on the philosophical underpinnings of human life. Although some people deem it slow by today’s standards, many would classify it as timeless due to its masterful combination of aesthetic beauty and sophistication, along with its thought-provoking nature. Hence, critics still speak of 2001 as one of, if not the, greatest films ever created, whose influence continues to pervade modern cinema. Thus, upon its 50th-anniversary re-release in cinemas worldwide this summer, it seems appropriate to revisit this landmark film and its legacy.

Kubrick’s film consists of four segments: The Dawn of Man, the untitled Moon sequence, The Jupiter Mission, and Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite. Although the plot focuses on a mission to investigate a mysterious extraterrestrial object sending signals across the solar system, the film’s subtext regarding humanity’s progress has dominated much of its critical reception. Charting out technological milestones at various moments in human development, the film identifies the origins, advantages and consequences of our evolution. Such messages have grown increasingly relevant in the constantly changing world of the 21st century.

A substantial portion of the film deals with humanity’s adaptation of technology, the advancement of which currently preoccupies society as an essential component of our existence. 2001 portrays this relationship with our devices through a dialectic lens, examining the codependency that has formed between people and their tools, and the simultaneous benefits and dangers this poses. In the Dawn of Man sequence, we witness the discovery of tools, as an ape realizes the powerful capabilities of bone. The climactic notes of Richard Strauss’ “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” accompany this scene, conveying the significance of this moment in history. This infamous, rousing piece of music marks the triumph of this first step in human progress. However, the apes quickly transition from using their newfound tools for nutrition to using them as murder weapons against a rival tribe. The ape and the bone require each other’s strength to produce this impact, an impact that can produce both resourceful and destructive results.

Kubrick’s apparent bleak outlook regarding human technological achievement highlights how our own arrogance can overcome and dehumanize us.

Kubrick illustrates the fulfillment of such potential in the film’s next transition. He uses a match-cut to jump millions of years into the future, cutting from a victorious ape launching a bone into the air to a vessel in space. By replacing this simple tool with a similarly shaped, yet more advanced one, Kubrick displays the hurtling speed of human and technological advancement which has facilitated humanity’s conquest of space.

Despite the impressive spacecraft dotted above Earth, Kubrick subtly points out that

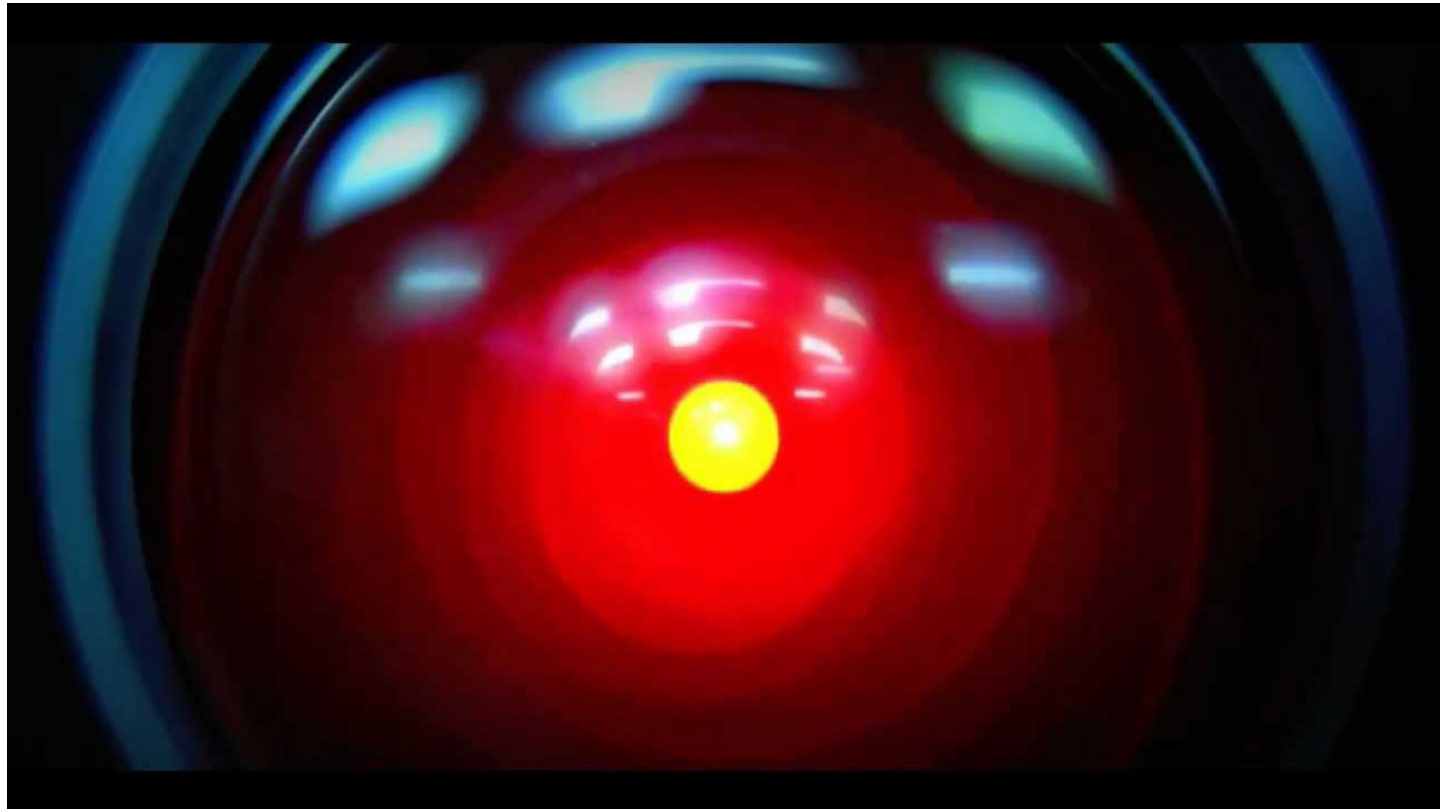
humanity does not possess full control of its tools. In the lunar journey sequence, as Dr. Heywood Floyd (William Silvester) travels to the moon, a flight attendant attempts to relinquish a pen that has flown from his pocket. The pen floats in the foreground of the shot, while the flight attendant gingerly steps towards the pen in the background. Suspended in midair, the pen mirrors the bone and the spaceship but suggests that humanity has started to lose control of its tools. Meanwhile, humanity must now retrace its steps, learning how to function again like children. People are learning how to

can potentially outsmart and outlive us.

Kubrick establishes a new hierarchy in this sense, elevating HAL while demoting the crew members through several cinematic elements. Of the six crew members, four remain cryogenically frozen from takeoff until their deaths, implying that HAL is quite literally livelier than most of the crew. We find the remaining crew members, Dave and Frank, enjoying microwave dinners while watching television. Their expressionless faces and Frank’s negligible response to a birthday message from his parents convey how technology has numbed human experi-

intolerable high-pitched noise. Thus, the apes present more humanlike conduct than their supposedly developed descendants. Whereas the apes exhibit curiosity, the modern-day humans have taken their gift of inquiry for granted because of their lofty position atop the mountain of progress.

Dave’s confrontation with the monolith, however, reflects a more optimistic view of the state of humanity. Laying on his deathbed, Dave slowly points towards the monolith as it appears before him; his outstretched arm echoes that of the apes in their earlier interaction. Dave surpasses his fellow mod-



HAL, a sentient computer and the film’s antagonist.

SHOT FROM 2001, KUBRICK

walk without gravity, they eat softened food through straws and must even learn how to use a toilet as Floyd scans instructions for the zero-gravity facilities. Thus, this sequence not only portrays the glamor of space travel, but indicates that the fruits of progress could knock humanity back down to earth.

The Jupiter Mission segment encapsulates this theme of humanity’s precarious relationship with its tools. Here, the viewer finally meets the film’s main protagonist, Dave Bowman (Keir Dullea), and antagonist, HAL, a sentient computer voiced by Douglas Rain. HAL, mostly shown as a camera lens, oversees all functions of the Discovery One spacecraft, shares conversations with the crew members and even plays chess with Dave. HAL’s soothing voice and heightened

ence and emotion. HAL, on the other hand, acts in distinctly human fashion as he goes to lengths to secure his survival. HAL’s singing of the nursery rhyme “Daisy” ironically serves as the most moving scene of the film.

Kubrick promotes HAL effectively through this contrast of characters. Upon its initial release, critics of 2001 complained that the only relatable, intriguing character that the film provided was HAL, a computer. But such critics missed a crucial point in casting this observation in a negative light. Perhaps Kubrick intentionally filled HAL with personality and drained any such charisma from the other characters, thereby emphasizing how our tools have outgrown and replaced us as human beings. This frightening concept alludes to Kubrick’s critical view of human evolution in response to technological progress.

Kubrick’s apparent, bleak outlook regarding human technological achievement highlights how our own arrogance can overcome and dehumanize us. The black monolith and the differing reactions it triggers throughout the film symbolize this theme. An imposing black column popping up at various points in time and space, the monolith plays an instrumental role in 2001 as a daunting symbol of progress. The monolith appears at three points in the film: with the apes, on the moon, and to Dave in the final scene. When the apes encounter this intimidating edifice, they shriek with alarm before curiously and humbly stepping up to touch it. The humans on the moon approach the monolith without such trepidation, cheerfully taking photographs with it. In response to their lack of respect, the monolith emits an

ern-day humans to reach this moment. By defeating HAL, he disconnects himself from the immersive technological beast born out of modernity, reminiscent of a person turning off a cell phone to escape the stronghold of our technology.

Alone, Dave concludes the mission to follow the monolith’s signal in the final segment of the film, traveling through a psychedelic wormhole before finding himself in what appears to be an old-fashioned bedroom on Earth. In one of the most discussed scenes in cinema history, Dave watches and becomes an older version of himself, living a technology-free, everyday life in the confines of his room. After his death, Dave transforms into “The Starchild,” hovering above Earth in the form of a wide-eyed fetus. Having disposed of the trappings of human technology and physicality, Dave transcends the prior form of human existence.

Although 2001 projects a rather dim perspective of human progress, its ending engenders a glimmer of hope for humanity in the age of technology. In 1968, Kubrick expertly mapped out the positive and negative aspects of human development, yet his warning resonates even more 50 years later. Audiences of 2001 ought not to view Kubrick’s message as a condemnation of technology and our need for it. On the contrary, those who watch 2001 should internalize Kubrick’s lesson of how not to utilize technology. By preserving our human features, which HAL and the apes adopt from their human counterparts, we can deploy our tools correctly as the vanguard of progress.

Welcome to the Hedge Fund Profile Series

By AARON KARESH

As a summer analyst at a hedge fund in New York City, I developed a particular interest and familiarity in the industry - the movers and shakers, the firms that make headlines (for better or for worse). So, I welcome you to a new series dedicated solely to hedge funds. In this column, I will focus on both the industry as a whole, and on certain firms—aiming to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of how hedge funds function, who the major players are and, most importantly, what they actually do.

In this column, I will focus on both the industry as a whole, and on certain firms – aiming to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of how hedge funds function, who the major players are, and most importantly, what they actually do.

Seeing as we just got back to school, I won't inundate you with information... yet; for now, here is a quick rundown.

In its most basic form, a hedge fund is an investment vehicle for wealthy individuals and institutional investors--people and organizations that have the capital to invest, but not the know-how to do so on their own. Though often described by journalists as secretive and unregulated, that is not actually the case, at least not anymore. Gone are the days where hedge funds governed themselves, if they ever did at all. Now, depending on the size of the fund, they are regulated heavily by the SEC, even with today's business-friendly government in power.

For those who recall, the last article I wrote for The Commentator was about the hit Showtime TV show "Billions," and how it compares to the real hedge fund world, particularly Steven Cohen's Point72. As such, the first official "Hedge Fund Profiles" column will be a deep dive into the storied world of S.A.C. Capital-turned-Point72. I promise, it reads more like a novel than a research report, and I'm sure you'll enjoy it.

Thank you for coming along with me on this journey through the murky waters of the hedge fund industry.



Hedge funds have been mislabeled by journalists in the past.

By AKIVA FRISHMAN

The fall semester is finally upon us and with it enters a return of the highly anticipated barrage of ystuds/sstuds advertising the many extracurricular activities offered here at YU. And though you've no doubt meticulously combed through each email, weighing its subject line's cleverness, the author's choice of font and exclamation count, and whether or not membership includes pizza, you may still be at a loss as to what you should involve yourself with on campus.

Don't fret. Allow me to make a sale.

Like any "Shark Tank" aficionado knows, I'll need to begin with the flashy, eye-catching, dude-hand-me-my-wallet, perks of writing for the Business section. As such, I'm required to mention the prestige to which an employer grants a candidate with "Newspaper Writer" emblazoned on his resume. I have to stress how a public forum like that of The Commentator's serves as a most effective motivator for developing clear, articulate, and expressive writing. I can't shy away from the fact that high-level executives are often made aware of a writer's article and decide to reach out to her for further discussion.

And to be quite honest, these factors alone would provide more than sufficient reason to join our section; in today's competitive job market, an impressive resume and noteworthy connections are just as important as a student's GPA.

But the true value of anything can rarely be evaluated solely on its tangible, observable qualities and rather depends on a more comprehensive metric that considers all of the entity's many subtleties and abstract qualities. In this case, simply summing-up my pitch with "Writing for The Commentator gives you a good shot a landing a job" would grossly devalue the position's true worth. Instead, I'd like to go a little in-depth and showcase some of

Let's Talk Business

the less-obvious yet perhaps more valuable aspects of writing for the Business section.

The economy is a complex, all-encompassing, multifaceted world and as a writer, you'll have the opportunity to explore it. You can investigate our politicians' tax plans, fiscal policies, and stances on minimum wage and then weigh their respective merits. You can sift through the mass of pundits' commentary and talk-show banter and determine whose opinion most closely aligns with objective facts and statistics. You can

a more informed, educated individual.

A well-respected publication for over 80 years, The Commentator is a staple of this institution and continues to serve as the premier discussion forum for a broad range of issues. Its articles from decades past still occupy a space in the library on Wilf Campus, ensuring an historical record of YU. In other words, your submissions are not merely a short-lived string of a few hundred words, but rather a timeless contribution to a reputable newspaper.

Whether you're an engineering student captivated by FinTech, a Biology major looking to bring down the cost of medicine, or an Accounting fanatic captivated by companies' financial statements, this section and its readers are eager to see your perspective.

speculate as to how turmoil in the Middle East, the rise of Amazon or negotiations with North Korea can affect the price of pretzels at Nagel. You can sit down with entrepreneurs and executives and uncover the strategies and decisions that made them so successful.

Your travels into the business need not be so far from home. Plenty of YU alumni hold respectable positions in companies like J.P. Morgan and EY and are eager to meet with writers and give advice to current students. If you're frustrated by YU's Caf Card policies, perhaps you'll decide to research the New York State tax code and figure out how it affects your choice of dinner. Based on your level of ambition, you might even take a look at our university's finances and propose a strategy to trim excess spending or secure stronger investments.

Following your expeditions, you'll consolidate your findings into an article, presenting them to your peers, faculty members and just about anyone with access to the internet. Such a process will naturally require you to become very familiar with your topic and therefore ensure that you're

And who knows? Perhaps 10 years from now someone'll consult your article on New York taxes and convince the University to let him buy some chips for a friend.

Now you might be wondering why I'm so interested in your contributions and to be honest, it's simple: Your viewpoint is important. In its mission to advance campus discourse and promote sophisticated debate, this paper relies on the many different voices of students at YU. This section is no different. Your political and ideological leanings, the state or country you're from, your upbringing and your educational interests all converge to create an entirely unique identity that informs your perspective on economic and business-related issues and by sharing that, you help create a diverse, profound dialogue within these pages.

So whether you're an engineering student captivated by FinTech, a Biology major looking to bring down the cost of medicine or an Accounting fanatic captivated by companies' financial statements, this section and its readers are eager to see your perspective.



The Business section offers the opportunity of exploring the multifaceted world of the the economy.



NEVER. STOP. COMMENTATING.

Got something to share?
Email benjamin.koslowe@mail.yu.edu