

"YOU THOUGHT
THERE WOULD BE
NO MORE
SHABBATON
ARTICLES?"

THE COMMENTATOR

The Independent Student Newspaper of Yeshiva University

"YEAH, WE DID
TOO."

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Men's Basketball Falls to Farmingdale in Skyline Conference Championship

By CHANA WEINBERG

Editor's Note: This article was originally published online on Feb. 26.

On Sunday afternoon, Feb. 24, the YU men's basketball team's run to become back-to-back champions ended with an 81-75 loss to the Farmingdale State College (FSC) Rams in Farmingdale. After a historic season in which the Macs won a record 17 games in a row, their league-leading offense never broke out, with the Rams holding YU to its lowest score since the season's opening weeks.

The Macs faithful filled up three sections of the Nold Athletic Complex Center at FSC, including a large group of students who traveled on two full Athletic

Department-sponsored buses from both undergraduate campuses, as well as other alumni and fans from the broader Jewish community.

With the score shifting back and forth in the opening minutes, the Macs took their biggest lead of the game, 8 points, at the 13:00-minute mark in the first half. But it never got further than that, with the scoreboard reading 34-32 Rams as the first 20 minutes came to a close.

One of the biggest stories of the first half was junior forward Gabe Leifer's constant presence around the rim where he grabbed 7 rebounds and shot 7 for 10 from the field. Leifer finished the game as the Macs leading scorer, accumulating a double-double with 27 points and 15 rebounds while

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Gabe Leifer led the team in scoring with 27 points.

YU ATHLETICS

Undergraduate Men and Women Divided on Student Life Issues, Older Students Less Satisfied Overall, Survey Finds

By AVI HIRSCH and BENJAMIN KOSLOWE

A recent survey of YU undergraduate students conducted by The Commentator found that women tend to be more comfortable with mixed-gender situations than men. The survey also found noteworthy gender differences for issues related to President Berman and student life.

The survey polled 368 YU undergraduate students regarding a wide array of issues related to the college experience. These issues included social life, religious observance, student life, the administration and academics.

There was a sharp discrepancy between the satisfaction of men and women regarding cafeteria food, with a majority of men but a minority of women reporting being satisfied. Approximately half of the women surveyed reported being dissatisfied with their cafeteria food.

The YU library was similarly divisive, with men tending to be more satisfied (81 percent) than women (49 percent). And while a majority of both men and women disapprove of elevators on campus, women tended to be less satisfied than men. Nearly half of women stated that they are "extremely dissatisfied" with the elevators.

"I am very frustrated about the

fact that there was only one working elevator for more than two days in the 245 Lexington building," said Zahava Fertig (SCW '21). "Getting to class on time was nearly impossible." She added, "Every teacher, every student knows that the elevators aren't working. Many of the people around me are experiencing the same frustrations."

The survey found that men tend to stay on campus for Shabbat more often than women, and Yeshiva College (YC) students more often than Syms-Men students.

When asked about President Berman's job performance and vision for YU, many students, primarily women, answered "Don't Know/Not Applicable." Approximately half of female respondents answered "Don't Know/Not Applicable" when asked to rate President Berman's job performance and his vision for YU. Men generally seemed to have a better idea of President Berman's performance, although Syms-Men students were slightly more likely than YC students to choose "Don't Know/Not Applicable" (32 percent

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SCW Computer Science Dept. Receives State Grant for Collaboration Lab

By TALI GREENBERG

Editor's Note: This article was originally published online on Feb. 26.

In a press conference on the Beren Campus on Monday, Feb. 25, New York State Assemblymember Dan Quart (D-Manhattan) announced that he procured a \$250,000 grant to expand the "computer science collaboration lab" on the ninth floor of Stanton Hall. The funding complements a grant from the Selma T. and Jacques H. Mitrani Foundation in January that allowed for the original creation of the space. The lab is expected to be completed by the end of the current semester.

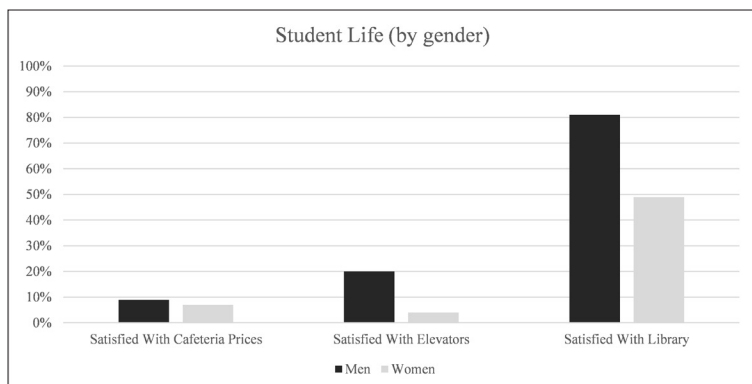
The current plan for the lab consists of two rooms and will contain floor-to-ceiling writable glass walls, Arduino processors and a 3D printer, according to a YU press release. Stern College for Women (SCW) Computer Science Chair Prof. Alan Broder explained that the additional funding will enable the computer science department to double the space on the ninth floor by adding another classroom

and a lounge area for students to work together.

"The lab is designed to reflect the facilities at leading NYC tech companies," Broder told The Commentator. "We envision CS students ... to be able to spend a good portion of their day in this flexible dedicated space taking classes, working in the lab on projects with other students, interacting with faculty and participating in collaborative events like hackathons."

Quart was introduced at Monday's event by Dr. Karen Bacon, The Mordechai D. Katz and Dr. Monique C. Katz Dean of Undergraduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences, who described the new lab as the next step for SCW Computer Science. Assemblymember Quart spoke about the importance of women in technology and the need for YU to work with New York to expand opportunities for SCW students. "An investment in Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women is an investment in the future," Quart said. "There is no doubt in my mind these young

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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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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The Appeal of 'Off the Derech' Memoirs

By BENJAMIN KOSLOWE

"Off the Derech" (OTD) literature is a widely-popular genre among American Orthodox Jews. Including such best-sellers as Shulem Deen's "All Who Go Do Not Return," Deborah Feldman's "Unorthodox: The Scandalous Rejection of My Hasidic Roots" and Hella Winston's "Unchosen: The Hidden Lives of Hasidic Rebels," the non-fiction novels typically present deeply personal, often traumatic accounts of ex-Haredim or ex-Hasidim that culminate in the protagonist's rejection of his or her dogmatic upbringings.

Datasets from several public libraries that serve major Orthodox Jewish communities attest to the OTD genre's popularity. The Teaneck Public Library possesses nine total copies of the three aforementioned novels, which have been checked out 435 times by patrons. The Peninsula Public Library in Lawrence, New York owns thirteen copies and the Queens Library at Kew Gardens Hills owns twelve copies of the same novels, checked out 335 times and 629 times, respectively, by local patrons. The Finkelstein Memorial Library near Monsey, New York owns 20 copies of those same novels and, though the library was unwilling to share precise circulation details, one reference librarian assured that the novels have been read "many, many times."

Putting aside a more rigorous comparative study to scientifically assess the degree of appeal, there is clearly a significant fascination in certain major Orthodox Jewish communities with OTD novels. What is it about OTD novels that so captivates the Orthodox Jewish readership?

After some consideration, four answers

to this question present themselves.

Like any bestselling personal narratives, successful OTD novels are simply good stories. These novels masterfully employ clear organization and prose to bring to life compelling characters and their stories of conflict, redemption and all else that complex human experiences entail. In this sense, OTD novels engender broad appeal, irrespective of readers' religious or cultural affiliations.

Another captivating element of OTD novels is the lens that they provide into the generally clandestine world of

validation. OTD memoirists implicitly, and often explicitly, criticize hypocrisies and negative anachronisms inherent to the communities in which they grew up. *Those Haredim are much more extreme than I, or I am not nearly as close-minded as this author's parents and teachers*, a comparatively modern individual might think when reading a traumatic account deriving from New Square or Brooklyn. Thus, OTD novels help religious Jews justify their own dogmas and practices as moderate in comparison with perceived extremists.

What is it about OTD novels that so captivates the Orthodox Jewish readership?

Haredim and Hasidim. Essentially cut off from the modern world, communities like New Square and Williamsburg are showcased by OTD novels and their up-close firsthand accounts. These communities naturally breed curiosity among outsiders who will never walk into the sacred study halls, synagogues or homes of ultra-Orthodox communities, let alone even manage to comprehend the communities' basic properties due to deep cultural and language gaps. OTD novels bridge those gaps by offering processed accounts of mysterious communities, allowing the masses to digest, process and form opinions about their essences.

OTD novels offer another appeal specifically for Jews who lie denominationally to the left of the ultra-Orthodox. When Modern Orthodox, or even Yeshivish Jews who are modern compared to Haredim and Hasidim, read OTD novels, they experience a certain

But OTD novels also breed, at least in some readers, a sense of admiration. Whereas readers may possess serious doubts about their religious lifestyle, they either have not yet, or perhaps never will, actualize their concerns into a bonafide rejection of Jewish practice. OTD novels allow these readers to live vicariously through other, braver individuals who bit the bullet and, despite inevitable backlash from their communities, left the fold.

To the extent that the third and fourth answers ring true, they should call attention to individuals' and communities' tendencies to divert attention from their own faults by pointing instead to those of others. It is easy to decry ethical lapses when they are presented about another community and in the organized form of a novel. Harder, though, is to put down the novel and instead constructively reflect internally.

News Briefs

By COMMENTATOR STAFF

On Feb. 13, over 450 members of the YU community gathered in Furst 501 to hear five YU students speak about their experiences struggling with mental health. The annual event was organized by Active Minds in collaboration with the Counseling Center and attracted a variety of students from both campuses, as well as numerous faculty members. The speakers shared what it was like to battle with anorexia, OCD, PTSD and other disorders. Each speaker added a unique element to his or her speech; some chose to tell their story in a humorous manner while others

opted for a poetic approach. Following the event, a small club fair educated students on how they can get involved and stomp out the stigma on mental health.

"The goal was to come together as a community to let each other know that mental health challenges are real, normal and worth talking about. We hoped to encourage people to get help, give help and get involved in the mental health conversation," said Talia Schiff (Stern '19), the co-president of the YU chapter of Active Minds. "No one is alone."

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After projecting a grand opening in

Feb. 2019, the new 16 Handles store in Washington Heights still has yet to open its doors. This delay follows several years of difficulties and delays dating back to early 2016. As late as Feb. 28, the frozen yogurt franchise was still not ready to confirm when the new store will open, but one public relations representative assured that they are doing everything they can to hopefully open by the end of March.

The Commentator will follow up on this story as it develops.

Continued on Page 3



1 No More Silence
Great, now what am I supposed to do? No way Key Food grapes can carry this column on its own.



2 Shoutout in YU Crushes
To the person who gave this column a shoutout, you made my day.



3 Rabbi Yosef Blau
At least someone is willing to speak up.



4 The MET Cloisters
Oh, just *delicious* and mere *steps* away from Wilf Campus!!! Stacked with monk's robes, the Old Testament and its underrated sequel!! Makes the perfect date location if you're trying to avoid riding the subway together.



5 Bradley Cooper and Lady Gaga
Find someone that looks at you the way Bradley Cooper looks at Lady Gaga platonically.



6 Olivia Colman Oscar Speech
This is why the women should always be allowed to speak.



7 "Frozen 2" Trailer
Hot take: Elsa is going into the sea to try and find her parents and Anna has summer powers.

7 UP ↕ 7 DOWN

BY SAMUEL GELMAN



1 Robert Kraft Banners All Over Campus
"What is your *chalom gadol*? What is your great, big dream? Dream a big dream. Don't just play it safe." Now we all know what his "*chalom gadol*" is and what happens when you don't play things safe.



2 Replacing Kraft with Bibi
Don't worry Bibi. We will hold on to the torch while you are in prison. And might I suggest some options for your replacement: Dennis "Lucky is the 45 Year Old Woman" Prager, Ben "I'm a *mensch*" Shapiro or Meir "I'm Not a Terrorist" Kahane.



3 Using the Same Joke in 7 Up/7 Down Every Year
You know how hard it is to come up with 14 jokes about YU related content? Okay, fine, actually not that hard, but this joke was too good.



4 "Green Book" Best Picture Win
We did it!!! We solved racism!!!!



5 Seforim Sale 5 Percent Discount
Yay! Now my copy of "Was Yosef on the Spectrum?" will only cost \$28.13 instead of \$29.61.



6 Modern Orthodox March
SOY forgot to label the month so I did it for them. I know, I know... It's not ideal but it will have to do.

When you see someone defending Rav Kahane on your meme page for YU teens



7 Meme Wars
One person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter except when they are actually a terrorist.

Correction

An article titled "Uptown Shabbaton Unites Wilf and Beren Campuses" in the Feb. 17, 2019 issue of The Commentator about the recent Uptown Shabbaton incorrectly reported that though the Wilf Campus' Furman Dining Hall cafeteria was open on Shabbat for those interested in a single-gender environment, only about 25 undergraduate men were in attendance. The Commentator editors and the author have learned that in reality, roughly 50 undergraduates were in attendance. The article has been updated on the website.

Raffle Results

The Commentator is pleased to announce the results of its recent raffle that was conducted in conjunction with the newspaper's Spring 2019 Survey. Thank you to those who completed the survey, and congratulations to the following winners!

- 1st -- Ari Gutenmacher (\$150 Amazon gift card)
- 2nd -- Jacob Rosenfeld (\$50 Amazon gift card)
- 3rd -- Jonathan Mamet (\$20 Amazon gift card)
- 4th -- Meira Motechin (A mention in next issue's 7up/7down!)

Be sure to keep an eye out for Commentator surveys and raffles in the future!

NEWS BRIEFS,
continued from Page 2

After engendering some controversy in the fall, YU's Wurzweiler School of Social Work told The Commentator that it intends to host an event with transgender activist Hannah Fons later this semester. The program, entitled "Neither He, Nor She, But Me: A Personal Story of Gender Variation," was originally scheduled for Dec. 10 at the Riverside Memorial Chapel on the Upper West Side, until it was abruptly postponed.

"We are committed to ensuring that Hannah Fons has an opportunity to share their story," said Wurzweiler Dean Danielle Wozniak. "We are currently working on scheduling a panel discussion and clinical workshop that will take place at a larger venue and will focus on the role that clinicians can best play to intervene and support the community."

Fons' talk will be hosted by Wurzweiler's Care Café, a grant-funded program that coordinates events about topics such as addiction, mental illness, suicide prevention and relationship issues.

Robert Kraft, who delivered the commencement address and received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters at Yeshiva University's 85th Commencement in 2016, has been charged with two counts of soliciting prostitution in separate visits to an illicit massage parlor in Florida, police said on Friday, Feb. 22. Images of Kraft, who owns the New England Patriots, appeared since the beginning of the 2018-19 academic year in several large posters around YU's Wilf Campus in Washington Heights, including one prominent poster on Amsterdam Ave. with Kraft's quote, "What is your *chalom gadol*? What is your great, big dream? Dream a big dream. Don't just play it safe."

This past Thursday, several of the Kraft posters were removed and replaced with posters of other famous speakers who have addressed YU. The Kraft poster that previously adorned one elevator in the lobby of Furst Hall was replaced with a poster of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Incidentally, on the same day last week, Israel's Attorney General recommended Netanyahu for indictment on bribery and corruption charges. As of the time of publication, the Robert Kraft poster on Amsterdam Ave. remains in place.

YU's Office of Marketing and Communications declined to comment on Kraft's charges or how they will affect his relationship with YU, such as if the Amsterdam Ave. poster will remain or if he will retain his honorary award. A Patriots spokesman declined to comment on the matter as well.

*MEN'S BASKETBALL FALLS,
continued from Front Page*

adding 8 assists.

"I thought it was very well played by both teams, great defensive effort on both sides," said Assistant Athletics Director Greg Fox to The Commentator during half-time. "I think the Macs need to be a little more aggressive offensively," added a hopeful Fox.

But the Ram's defense kept the league-leading offense from getting on a run. Co-Captain Simcha Halpert, last year's championship game MVP, was held to 14 points on 3-9 shooting from the three-point range and 5-13 overall.

"It was a well-fought effort," said Malky Perlberger (SCW '20), who attended the championship game wearing the "White Out" t-shirt distributed at the semifinal game. "[Yeshiva] played its best but Farmingdale's defense was on point."

YU Athletics Director Joe Bednarsh had a different take.

"I don't think it was the defense," said Bednarsh of his men's basketball team's play. "We got a lot of clean looks and many of the same types of shots we've knocked down all season. They just didn't fall [on Sunday]."

"This team captured the attention of

programs throughout the country and laid down the gauntlet as a team to be reckoned with," added Bednarsh when asked about the team's overall season. "Both individually and as a team, these young men represented YU and their people with dignity, class, sportsmanship and hard-nosed tough play."

Eli Mamann, a recent YU graduate and captain of the 2017-2018 championship team, had words of encouragement for his former teammates.

"I know they took big strides this year," Mamann told The Commentator at the conclusion of the game. "These guys really ma-

Leifer led the league in assists (5.4/gm.), rebounds (12.0/gm.) and blocked-shots (2.3/gm.). Turell was named Skyline Rookie of the Year and was also named to the all-conference first team after leading the lead in points per game (20.1) in an outstanding rookie performance. Simcha Halpert got his

"It was a well-fought effort," said Malky Perlberger (SCW '20), who attended the championship game wearing the "White Out" t-shirt distributed at the semifinal game. "[Yeshiva] played its best but Farmingdale's defense was on point."

This loss was the last game for seniors Michael Hayon, Tal Gweta and Justin Hod, but the rest of the team stays intact as they bring back the three "Big Three of Halpert, Leifer and rookie Ryan Turell as well as a strong supporting cast. Bednarsh specifically mentioned Daniel Tzion, a freshman who started off the season strong only to go down with an injury midway through, as being an important part of the 2019-2020 Macs team.

"For the last two years we have captivated and energized the Jewish people and fulfilled our goal of being the Pride of the Jews — I expect to further that next season," concluded Bednarsh.

tured. You can tell on the court they really played their hearts out this year. They're always looking forward to the future; that's all they can do. They work hard in practice, they gave it their best effort and sometimes it just goes down this way."

"Congratulations to this team, you guys are awesome" added Mamann. "Keep fighting for all of us."

Fitting for the type of season they had, the awards did not stop after captains Katz, Gweta and Halpert accepted the runner-up trophy with tears in their eyes. Leifer was named Skyline Conference Player of the Year while making the all-conference first team.

second all-conference first team spot and finished the year at no. 8 on YU's all-time scoring list, with 1,345 career points.

Head Coach Elliot Steinmetz reflected on these awards in a statement to yumacs.com:

"While the season didn't end the way we wanted, these awards are a great recognition of the hard work these players put in day in and day out," Steinmetz said. "These are special young men who have been leaders and trailblazers for our program and it's nice to see them get these deserved awards from the conference coaches."

*COMMENTATOR SURVEY,
continued from Front Page*

vs. 24 percent).

Overall, students from the Beren Campus were more likely to travel to Wilf than vice versa. Half of women — but only 13 percent of men — frequently or occasionally commute to the opposite campus. 87 percent of men stated that they rarely or never travel to the Beren Campus, whereas less than half of women rarely or never travel to the Wilf Campus.

With regard to the question of a woman speaking at the end of Shabbat morning *minyan* on the Wilf Campus, men were divided, with almost half of male respondents reporting being either somewhat or very comfortable, and almost half of men reporting being either somewhat or very uncomfortable. Men were similarly split on the issue of women

eating in the Wilf cafeteria on Shabbat, with almost half of respondents coming down on either side of this issue as well. A majority of women reported being somewhat or very comfortable with both of these scenarios.

A majority of both men and women are comfortable with the opposite gender studying in the library on their respective campus, although more women than men reported being comfortable. Only 26 percent of men and 11 percent of women say that they would be uncomfortable with this situation. Responses were similarly split regarding attending mixed-gender extracurricular events.

The survey also found discrepancies in religious observance between YC and Syms-Men students.

Although a majority of both YC and Syms-Men students identify as Modern Orthodox, a smaller percentage of Syms-Men students than YC students identify as such. And while

a minority of both YC and Syms-Men students identify as "Right-wing" Orthodox or Yeshivish, the percentage was higher for Syms-Men students than YC students.

The survey found that by several other measures, Syms-Men students tended to be more religiously observant than YC students. While 59 percent of YC students stated that they fully observe *halakhah*, 74 percent of Syms-Men students responded the same. Similarly, 68 percent of YC students stated that they are *shomer negiah*, versus 77 percent of Syms-Men students who said the same. Finally, 71 percent of YC students stated that they fully believe in God, compared to 89 percent of Syms-Men students who responded that way.

Across the board, older students tended to be less satisfied than younger students with many aspects of student life. (Note that we refrained from drawing conclusions from fourth year students, since they represented

only 7 percent of respondents.)

Satisfaction with cafeteria food and cafeteria prices, for example, tended to be lower for third year students than second year students, with first year students being the most satisfied. This trend held for other areas of student life as well — older students tended to be less satisfied with Shabbat on campus, and had a more negative "overall" sentiment towards student life at YU.

In many other areas of student life, students from all colleges were satisfied overall, including "Dorms/Housing" (55 percent of students satisfied), "Internet/IT" (74 percent satisfied) and "Extracurricular Options" (55 percent satisfied).

For a more detailed breakdown of the survey's results, please see the article "Commentator Spring 2019 Survey: A Comprehensive Analysis" on page 12.

*SCW COMPUTER SCIENCE LAB,
continued from Front Page*

women will emerge as the next generation of leaders in innovation and technology," he added.

After Quart spoke, Riva Tropp (SCW '17), one of the first Computer Science graduates at SCW and a current employee at Google, explained that learning how to collaborate is extremely important for a job in the industry, and that the new lab will help facilitate this skill. Ilana Radinsky (SCW '19) thanked Quart for his support and described the vision for the lab of a space that will "help fuel the growing sense of community within the Stern Computer Science department and give students the space to collaborate with and learn from each other."

To conclude the conference, Zoe Abboudi (SCW '20) taught Quart basic coding concepts and helped him print his first line of code. She described to The Commentator how "watching the assemblyman write his first lines of code, all the computer science majors in the room were reminded of their first introduction to the exciting world of programming."



Students gather around Assemblymember Dan Quart as he learns to code.

Editor's Note: The articles "Men's Basketball to Play Old Westbury in Conference Semi-Final" and "Men's Basketball Advances to Second Consecutive Skyline Championship" were originally published online before the Skyline Conference Championship.

Men's Basketball to Play Old Westbury in Conference Semi-Final

By CHANA WEINBERG

Editor's Note: This article was originally published online on Feb. 21.

After securing the No. 2 seed with their 18-6 season, the men's basketball team will host SUNY Old Westbury in the Skyline Conference Semi-Finals on Friday, Feb. 22, at 12 p.m. YU had two decisive victories over Old Westbury during the regular season: the first by 28 points (Jan. 22) and the second by 20 points (Feb. 5).

defense and toughness night in and night out," said junior guard and team leader in 3-point percentage (44 percent) Simcha Halpert of his team's efforts during the streak.

When asked about how they were able to keep up their energy, even in games when they were ahead by 10 or 15 points, the players returned to the same refrain — comradery.

"We're a family," said Senior Captain Tal Gweta. "We focus on defense first, always competing — play-by-play. Executing 100 percent."

"We try to bring the same energy, defense and toughness night in and night out."

—
Simcha Halpert

A highlight of the season was a 17-game win streak which ended on Saturday evening, Feb. 1, with an 80-78 defeat at the hands of Farmingdale State College at the Max Stern Athletic Center (MSAC). This streak, which started with a win against Mount Saint Vincent on Dec. 1, is the longest in program history, surpassing the eight-game streak established in the 2017-2018 season.

"This historic win streak is a testament to how hard these young men work at practice and the selflessness they show on the court," stated Athletics Director Joe Bednarsh.

Additionally, Bednarsh acknowledged the "amazing work" that the team's coaching staff, led by Head Coach Elliot Steinmetz, has done this season.

During the streak, the team shot 53.6 percent from the field while inducing an average eight steals per game.

"We try to bring the same energy,

"I love being part of a team that cares about each other like this one does," said freshman forward Ryan Turell, the team's leading scorer.

At the start of the season, Coach Steinmetz told The Commentator that his team "need[s] to take better care of [the ball]." Even with this goal, the team is averaging one more turnover per game, at 16.5 compared to last year's 15.5. But where they have regressed in ball control, they have largely increased in their scoring, averaging 84.6 points-per-game and shooting 52 percent from the field, compared to last year's 77.1 and 47 percent, respectively.

Even after back-to-back buzzer beater losses, the team appears to be confident heading into the last game of the season and the playoffs.

"We can't be satisfied with what we have already accomplished," said Turell. "We are all hungry to do more than any other YU team in history."

Men's Basketball Advances to Second Consecutive Skyline Championship

By YOSI ZIMLOVER

Editor's Note: This article was originally published online on Feb. 22.

The no. 2 seed men's basketball team advanced to the Skyline Conference Championship with a commanding 103-70 victory over the no. 3 Old Westbury Panthers on Friday, Feb. 22. This marks the second consecutive year in which the Maccabees have earned a spot in the championship.

The Macs dominated the first half of play and went into halftime with a commanding 55-26 lead.

Gabe Leifer accomplished a double-double in the first half alone with 17 points (including three 3-pointers) and 14 rebounds. Additionally, Simcha Halpert went 4 for 7 from behind the arc and scored a field goal for 14 points after 20 minutes.

YU never looked back and led for the entire duration of the game with the largest

lead of 37 points coming with five minutes remaining in the second half. Leifer finished the game with 31 points (7 for 10 from 3 point range), 18 rebounds and 7 assists. Ryan Turrell also significantly contributed with 29 total points.

In a postgame interview with MacsLive, the official streaming service for YU Athletics, Leifer said, "we're going to enjoy Shabbos, and we're going to worry about it after and do whatever we need to do to win," when asked how the team will be preparing for the championship.

In the championship, the Macs will play the Farmingdale State College Rams (no. 1 seed) at the Nold Athletic Complex in Farmingdale, NY. The Maccabees split their regular season matchups with Farmingdale, beating the Rams 88-83 on the road in December, but losing 98-96 at home last week.

The championship will be this Sunday, Feb. 24 at 1:00 p.m.



Macs Logo

YUMACS.COM



2018-2019 Men's Basketball Team

YUMACS.COM

YU Opens Alternative Study Space in Glueck Center

By **BENJAMIN KOSLOWE**

As of this Fall 2019 semester, Classroom 308 in the Glueck Center for Jewish Study has been designated “as a quiet study place for the talmidim,” according to promotional signs that were posted in early February. The study room, which was arranged by the Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY) in conjunction with Yeshiva University’s Office of Events, is reserved for undergraduate

male YU students from the hours of 3:00 p.m., until the classroom is closed by YU Security for the night at 11:30 p.m.

Classroom 308 features lecture hall seating that can fit a capacity of roughly 50 people. In previous semesters, the room held YU *Rosh Yeshiva* Rabbi Michael Rosensweig’s Mazer Yeshiva Program (MYP) *shiur*, whose times vary by the day of the week but always finish before college classes begin at 3:00 p.m., as well a variety of Yeshiva College (YC), Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB) and

Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) courses that took place in the afternoons. This fall semester, the room is used only for Rabbi Rosensweig’s *shiur* and three RIETS courses, all of which conclude by 3:00 p.m., leaving the room empty thereafter.

“A number of students approached me about creating an alternative and more private study area than the library that would be open the same hours as the library,” explained SOY President Moshe Spirn (YC ’19). He added that the Office of Events was “very accommodating” in working around potential scheduling issues.

Several visitations over the past few weeks suggest that usage of the room is minimal. The room is typically empty in the afternoons, with the room at its fullest boasting no more than five students at a time.

Most of the students who do use the room expressed similar motivations. “Unfortunately, not everyone in the library dresses or behaves in accordance with *halakha*,” said Matan Friedman (YC ’21), one student who regularly uses the study room. “The new study

room will hopefully alleviate some of these concerns, though the issues with the library should certainly be addressed.” Several other students preferred not to speak on the record, although in similar fashion expressed concerns with the mixed atmosphere in the Gottesman Library.

This fall semester, the room is used only for Rabbi Rosensweig’s shiur and three RIETS courses, all of which conclude by 3:00 p.m., leaving the room empty thereafter.

Though the official designation of an alternate study space in Glueck is something new, the phenomenon of studying in Glueck classrooms is not. Ever since the Glueck Center was opened in Fall 2009, undergraduate students have utilized the classrooms located on the third, fourth and fifth floors of the building, especially during midterms and finals seasons when the Gottesman Library fills up beyond comfortable capacity.



Glueck Room 308

THE COMMENTATOR

YC Computer Science Department Hosts Hackathon

By **CJ WIESENFELD**

Yeshiva College hosted a workshop and hackathon featuring the company AdaCore on Feb. 15 in Furst Hall classroom 535.

According to its website, AdaCore “build[s] tools and provide[s] services that ease the complex and often difficult process of developing high-integrity software.” These tools and services serve several languages such as Ada, C and C++.

The hackathon took off with a crash course in which the Ada software engineers laid out the basics of the signature AdaCore programming language. After a coding exercise, students were introduced to the language on a deeper level, including its approach to type safety, arrays, stacks and functions. Finally, the students proceeded to the feature presentation of the hackathon — a debugging exercise with Ada’s Child language, SPARK.

“It’s great that the computer science department is working on having these events for us, and I hope it continues.”

Yehuda Goldfeder (YC ’20)

By the time it ended, students had spent close to five hours gaining computer science skills and interacting with Ada software engineers.

YC Computer Science Chair Judah Diamant explained, “The hope is that hosting Adacore would expose students to professional grade, secure, real-time and embedded systems development.” He also felt that the hackathon would be a great opportunity for students to “connect with professionals in an area of computer science that they otherwise wouldn’t be exposed to.”

Student impressions were positive. “The exposure that we got to Ada showed us that

as new computer science students, it’s not difficult to pick up new skills as long as you know the basics. It showed us our potential,” said Aaron Bryer (YC ’22).

Yehuda Goldfeder (YC ’20) said, “The Adacore event was great. Not only did we get free swag, but we got to meet engineers from Adacore and learn a bit about what they do. It’s great that the computer science

department is working on having these events for us, and I hope it continues.”

The positive response went both ways. Rob Tice, an AdaCore software engineer, was impressed with the students. “Everyone was really engaged. I was really excited that everyone was so interested,” he told The Commentator.

The hackathon was part of YC’s larger

effort to up its tech game. Other efforts included in this venture was the recent hiring of several new professors, the creation of two new specialized tracks, the instantiation of an industry advisory board consisting of leading professionals in the field and a sharp increase in tech events, including last semester’s Techeducation.



Students collaborate at the YC Hackathon.

THE COMMENTATOR

SCDS Hosts First-Ever Monologue Competition

By **BENJAMIN KOSLOWE**

Editor's Note: This article was originally published online on Feb. 20.

Approximately 70 Yeshiva University undergraduates attended "The Great Monologue Competition" on the evening of Tuesday, Feb. 19. Presented by the Stern College Dramatics Society (SCDS) and coordinated by YU's Office of Student Life (OSL), the competition, which was the first of its kind at YU, was received well by a captivated and entertained audience that laughed and cheered for their peers' performances.

The Great Monologue Competition took place in classroom 218 in Belfer Hall from 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. 16 undergraduate performers — 13 women and three men — each delivered monologues from famous plays, TV shows and

films. The rules of the competition dictated that the monologues last fewer than three minutes. Participants made varied use of props, with some utilizing some

community — of people who just love performing coming together to enjoy and support each other. I couldn't have asked for anything more."

The performances were judged based on energy and physical presentation, vocal presentation and projection, characterization and emotional connectedness/

who presented the monologue "Cruising Close to Crazy" by Laura Shaine Cunningham, took the gold medal. Second place was awarded to Eli Azizollahoff (SCW '20) for her rendition of "Mr. Keating's Monologue" from "Dead Poets Society," and Sarit Perl (SCW '21) won third place for performing "Juliet's Monologue" from "Romeo and Juliet." Elka Weisenberg (SCW '20) and Chana Weinberg (SCW '20) both received honorable mention nods, for their presentations of the monologues "Speaking of Witch" by Janet Stevens and "Charlie Brown's Monologue" from the musical comedy "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown," respectively.

Other monologues included "Friends, Romans, Countrymen" from "Julius Caesar," "BoJack's Eulogy" from "BoJack Horseman," "Captain Hook's Monologue" from "Peter Pan" and "Jessup's Monologue" from "A Few Good Men."

"The energy in the room was unbelievable; the performers were excited, the audience was excited and you really felt a sense of community ... I couldn't have asked for anything more."

SCDS Vice President Racheli Moskowitz (SCW '19)

combination of a chair, lectern or sheets of paper, and other participants utilizing only their own body language.

"I was thrilled with the turnout," expressed Racheli Moskowitz (SCW '19), the Vice President of SCDS. "The energy in the room was unbelievable; the performers were excited, the audience was excited and you really felt a sense of

The monologues were judged by a panel of three judges who determined the winners at the end of the evening. These judges were Reuven Russell, who is the artistic director of SCDS, Lin Snider, who has directed 23 productions for the Yeshiva College Dramatics Society (YCDS) and Danny Hoffman (YC '10), a writer and actor for the "Soon By You" YouTube series.

stage presence and rigor. SCDS board member Rocky Pincus (SCW '20) checked each monologue for accuracy.

"The monologue competition was a lot of fun to watch," said Avi Lekowsky (SSSB '20). "Kudos to all the participants who put the time and effort in to make it an enjoyable evening for everyone."

Chana Weiss (SCW '20),



The participants from "The Great Monologue Competition"

THE COMMENTATOR

Mental Health First Aid Training Course Administered on Beren Campus

By **SHAYNA HERSZAGE**

The Active Minds Club, in conjunction with YU's Counseling Center and the Office of Student Life, hosted a ThriveNYC Mental Health First Aid Training course to educate 43 students about mental health, mental illness and how to aid others in a case of crisis, on Feb. 17 on the Beren Campus.

ThriveNYC is an initiative by New York City that aims to help New Yorkers recognize behavior of those in crisis, have the confidence to help those in crisis and destigmatize mental illnesses. They lead Mental Health First Aid Training courses for individuals of all ages, from adolescents to older adults.

The course spanned approximately eight hours, and covered topics such as self-harm, anxiety, substance abuse and psychosis. During the course, participants learned about conducting an effective conversation with those struggling with mental illnesses or substance abuse, and aiding those in crisis to seek professionally trained help.

"It is important that this event was held on our campus so that students can continue to raise awareness about mental health and deepen their knowledge about mental illness," said Shanee Markovitz (SCW '20), who attended the first aid course and was also a speaker liaison for Stomp Out The Stigma, a mental health awareness event which took place on Feb. 13.

In the introduction to the course, the trainers explained that college students are at high risk for crises related to mental health and substance abuse due to factors such

as brain development, stress and transitioning between stages of life. "This course is especially useful in this time of the year, with seasonal depression, the holidays being over,

and lots of stress and especially after Stomp Out The Stigma," stated Elana Luban (SCW '19). "Just knowing this exists on campus is important," she added.



Mental Health First Aid

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

AEPi on Campus: Fact or Fiction?

By **ELLIE PARKER**

Like many others, I always equated a college social life with Greek life on campus. I assumed that my weekends would be filled with over-the-top parties and beer pong competitions. I had imagined myself rushing for a sorority and becoming a part of a smaller community within my university, sharing a house with my fellow sisters. Binging every season of “Blue Mountain State” and “Greek” on Netflix only strengthened my association between the two. Coming to Stern, however, extinguished my frat life fantasies.

Before entering college, recent Stern graduates raved to me about the AEPi events that were held almost weekly in the Heights. They explained that, though the fraternity’s presence wasn’t like that on state college campuses, it was strong nonetheless. However, having spent two years on campus, I have yet to deduce whether or not AEPi exists at all. Rumors about the fraternity can be found on almost every YU social media page, with incoming freshman inquiring about joining the fraternity or attending events. Most serious questions are met with vague responses only adding to the mythical quality of YU’s supposed fraternity.

Although it has undergone some changes, AEPi’s leadership assured The Commentator that the fraternity is, in fact, active on the Wilf Campus and isn’t going anywhere. Sebastian Finkerrera, the fraternity’s president, described AEPi’s founding and current standing at YU: “AEPi itself was created well over 100 years ago at NYU, where President Richard Joel was an active member. Our chapter at Yeshiva has been around since 2006 and today we are proud to say that we are bigger than we were the year before.” The frat currently has 28 active members, and Finkerrera is hopeful that the group will continue to grow.

Maxwell Goldstein, current VP of AEPi and active member since his freshman year on campus, said that although President Joel was a member himself, he withheld his approval of AEPi at YU while he was president. “Yeshiva University AEPi is registered on a national level, just not recognized by the university,” he said. He believes that the hesitation to approve the club comes from the stigma of fraternities in general. However, Goldstein argues that AEPi stands for more than an excuse to party and meet people. “AEPi focuses on building a community of Jewish people with a specific focus on charity and Israel. We want AEPi to serve as an outlet for guys to escape from school for a couple of hours a week and do something different.”

Like any frat, AEPi has its new members pledge and rush in order to learn the values of the fraternity. Pledging, as defined by Goldstein, is a process that shows your dedication to the chapter through secret

and specified events and discussions led by the members — known as “brothers” in the frat world — for inductees. One of the requirements is the memorization of the fraternity’s core values, something that differentiates AEPi from other fraternities. “As a Jewish frat, it

the idea of frat life is so frowned upon.”

The stigma attached to the fraternity frustrates Goldstein, who sees many selling points and positive aspects of fraternity life, including study groups, developing philanthropic contacts and con-

events is their annual charity event which was held earlier this year. “Every semester we have a philanthropic event,” explained Finkerrera. “The gains are given to charity groups affiliated with AEPi.” AEPi brothers spend hours in the library, calling donors to help

While AEPi at YU is still smaller than its presence on almost every other campus, Finkerrera and Goldstein have high hopes for the future. “I definitely would like to see the chapter expand and potentially have a stronger impact on campus,” said Finkerrera. “Fraternities seem to have a stigma of partying, but that is not our mission on YU campus. We are here to grow and shape future leaders of the Jewish community.” Goldstein stressed the diversity of AEPi on campus. “We are looking for guys who are chilled out and cool. We don’t look for people from any specific background. We just want people who vibe with us and agree with our mission.”

Finkerrera hopes to have a large, YU event in the near future to expand campus recognition of the fraternity. “We are starting rush week in the upcoming weeks,” said Finkerrera. “Please come down and check out AEPi.”

“Fraternities seem to have a stigma of partying, but that is not our mission on YU campus. We are here to grow and shape future leaders of the Jewish community.”

—
YU AEPi

is more than just a fraternity. It is a group of men who will grow into great Jewish leaders one day to spread the light of Torah into the world,” said Goldstein. “[We emphasize] values of Jewish life [like] charity, *midos*, Torah and brotherhood.”

Though both Finkerrera and Goldstein agree that AEPi is a staple on campus, they recognize that their presence comes with some challenges. “Since we are in NYC, it is quite hard to copy what a chapter would be like at a state school,” said Finkerrera, pointing to AEPi’s lack of a house and general space. Goldstein emphasized the deficit of not having a house on campus: “My Freshman year, AEPi had a house on 186th and St. Nicholas. We were always holding events there. But after more and more members graduated, the fraternity could no longer afford to pay the rent and we had to give up the house.”

With the loss of a homebase, AEPi became less active on campus as they had nowhere to host parties and events. Goldstein, who will become AEPi president next semester, said that he hopes to buy back the house with all of the incoming AEPi brothers. “I would love to get a house to throw events for the school, but since relinquishing the house to YU, it has become a dorm for special needs YU students,” said Goldstein, referring to YU’s Makor College Experience. “Without a house, it will only become harder to get members to join the frat,” concluded Goldstein.

Furthermore, as an unregistered and unofficial club, it is difficult to get the word out about AEPi. You will not find the fraternity advertising on y/sstuds or any official YU communications. Rather, AEPi recruits its members by word of mouth. “We recruit by posting flyers around campus and reaching out to kids we think would be ideal to join the fraternity,” reported Goldstein.

In addition to not having a designated space for the fraternity, AEPi has also struggled to fight the stigma associated with fraternity life. “To date and from my knowledge,” said Goldstein, “we have never had a problem with the administration. However, we certainly feel unwelcome at times. It’s hard to create and maintain a successful fraternity at YU because

necting with other AEPi chapter across the state. “The main goal is to lean on each other [and] to have people around you that won’t let you down, said Goldstein.” Still, with all of the good the fraternity tries to do, there is still an underlying sense of resistance because of the stigma.

One of AEPi’s most successful

achieve their monetary goal. “AEPi has a ‘Repair the World’ fund that we use for our charity. It consists of ten different charities ranging from aid to Africa to the protection of Israel,” said Goldstein. “Every year, AEPis around the world attempt to raise \$1 million in charity. In the past two semesters, YU AEPi has raised around \$1,700 for charity.”



AEPi Shield

From the TAC VP of Shabbat's Desk: Singing Competitions and Coed Shabbatons: What 'American Idol' Taught Me About the Jewish Community at YU

By **BELLA ADLER**

The seventeenth season of "American Idol" premiered on March 3, 2019. For many of us, American Idol brings back nostalgic memories of cozy family TV nights under a warm blanket with some hot cocoa or popcorn. Looking at it now, though, I cannot help but see its resemblance to our 2019 Yeshiva University Jewish community.

Commonly referred to as "Idol," this singing competition involves discovering unsigned singers from across the globe and bringing their voice to the stage to give them an opportunity to shine. The show collects a diverse group of singers and molds them into musical superstars. Talents such as Carrie Underwood, Kelly Clarkson and Jennifer Hudson all started on "Idol."

It is not just the talent that makes the show so entertaining. Each season the community of singers is not only diverse, but they actively use their time together to learn from each other. Mentors are brought into the community, duets are distributed, critiques and compliments are shared. Though the contestants sing different genres, ultimately their interpersonal skills with each other allow the viewer to feel the weight of the community they have created season after season. Evidence of this can be viewed on elimination nights when contestants cry as their friends are sent home — knowing that even though they are leaving California, they are forever a part of that season's society.

And just as American Idol contestants are

taught to listen and benefit from their community's diversity, so too, as Jewish people, we have a responsibility to learn from each other. Our communities vary vastly in tradition, practice, community member makeup and more. As twenty-first century students, our world values diversity and dialogue. We must do the same in our Jewish communities and make an effort to see how others are practicing. We must bring a variety of performers, mentors and singers to the stage and truly listen to what each has to offer.

Just as unsigned singers are flown in to compete on "American Idol," some Jews go to great lengths to see Jewish communities literally across the globe. But I would like to argue that we don't need to go that far. In fact, we don't need to travel at all. Truthfully, we just need to open the doors in our dorms, walk down the hall, knock on the door of our neighbor and start a conversation.

Yeshiva University is composed of students from around the world, each with a different understanding of what it means to be Jewish far beyond the Sephardi and Ashkenazi divide. Yes, we each have our "crews" — our friends from seminary or *yeshiva*, from our hometowns or countries and our roommates. But if one were to line up those "crews," one would see that they represent Jews from around the globe. Not just in the literal sense, but in their diversified practice as well. We as the student body must branch out to meet people with unique Jewish narratives that are new to us. We must talk to people who question that which we thought to be true. The wisdom of our

peers in our classes is far greater than that of the textbook.

I'm advocating for exposure to our student's diversity.

And at the same time, I'm advocating for independence.

Being in a Jewish university is the most incredible opportunity a person has to develop his or her own story. The wide variety of Jewish classes offered to us might be challenging with a dual curriculum, but it is an opportunity to explore varying perspectives of Jewish thought. There are so many professors and leaders to choose from, many of whom are readily excited to be a mentor.

And just as American Idol contestants are taught to listen and benefit from their community's diversity, so too, as Jewish people, we have a responsibility to learn from each other.

The message I want to share is one of both inclusive diversity and grounded independence. We as students would gain so much by developing our own Jewish narrative parallel to learning the narrative of others. *We will grow immensely by advocating for our personal understanding of Jewish tradition*

and observance while meeting with people whose songs are sung in an entirely different genre than ours. These years in university allow us to become passionate about what it means to be Jewish and to find inspiration in how others practice Judaism.

We would benefit tremendously with the recognition that the student experience at Yeshiva University is in our hands. Its success is dependent on developing Jewish leaders who accept others for who they are and learn from their peers while staying grounded in their own observance. *The progression of our community is contingent on developing people who are passionate about building inclusive societies for the diverse Jewish community that we are. We as students will gain not only by feeling the blessing of what it means to be in a Jewish university, but by feeling the value of learning from all students on our campus.*

No matter where your inspiration comes from, know that you have an important role to play in the future of Yeshiva University. Know that your involvement in this community makes a difference. Write an article for the school newspaper about how you feel. Make an appointment to speak with a dean about a program you would like to see developed. Join a student council. Spend time with change-makers. Know that your voice and your advocacy — both for your individual observance as well as the unification of all types of students — are important.

Step up to the mic. We are listening.



FROM THE COMMIE ARCHIVES

Editor's Note: For all of the infrastructure improvements in New York City over the past few decades, parking is still a nightmare. Aside from certain technical differences, this article about the frustrations of parking in Washington Heights could almost pass as if written today.

REFLECTIONS:

Don't Even Think of Parking Here

The Commentator Archives

THE COMMENTATOR

From the Archives (September 16, 1992; Volume 58 Issue 2) — Don't Even Think of Parking Here

By JAMIN KOSLOWE

Having a car at your disposal gives you the freedom to go wherever you want, whenever you want.

However, to my chagrin, I discovered that keeping a car at YU entitles you to more than just freedom. Here are a few pointers for the new drivers on campus.

PARKING

For those who do not feel like paying YU the "extremely reasonable" fee of \$500 per semester for full time parking, learning how to work the streets is essential. As those familiar with New York City know, there are more cars in the City than available parking spaces on the street. This leads to a game of "musical chairs" whereby drivers circle city streets in search of the ever-elusive spots.

Because of the parking space shortage, many New York drivers would just as soon never vacate their spots. Accordingly, the New York City Government, in the spirit of fair competition, enacted ALTERNATE SIDE PARKING RULES. These rules require drivers to leave their precious spots for a few hours, and then race to reclaim them. Unfortunately, nobody explained this exciting game to me, and it wasn't until a week after my arrival at school that I returned to my car to find three parking tickets and an unremovable sticker affixed to it. The sticker was especially painful because it informed the entire city of New York that reckless parkers such as myself are responsible for the filthy City streets.

To avoid being stigmatized by one of these embarrassing stickers, just follow these simple rules:

- 1) On Mondays and Thursdays and/or Tuesdays and Fridays, depending upon which side of the street your car is located, you must double park on the other side of the street before 11:00 AM.
- 2) Double parking is illegal.
- 3) You will usually not be ticketed for double parking if you double park on an alternate side parking day on a one-way street after 10:17 AM.
- 4) It is illegal to reclaim your spot before 2:00 PM.
- 5) If you wait till 2:00 your spot will be taken.
- 6) You will usually not be ticketed, stickered, or towed if you reclaim your spot after 12:23 PM.
- 7) If the parking police have not filled their quota of tickets for the month, you may be ticketed for double parking and/or returning early on alternate side days.

SAFETY

There are not truly safe parking spots in Washington Heights. However, some spots are less dangerous than others.

I vividly recall the conversation I had with a friend, a far more seasoned NY driver than I, after the first time my car was broken into. "Well, where did you park?" he asked. When I told him that I had parked on 186th St. between Amsterdam and Audubon Avenues, he inquired if I had parked before or after the fire hydrant. After I told him that I had no idea what he was talking about, he explained to me that the hydrant was exactly in the middle of the block. When I admitted to parking the car on the Audubon side of the hydrant, he threw up his hands in disbelief. "Well, what did you expect," he screamed, "everyone knows that if you park past the hydrant your car is fair game!"

If you've ever taken the Amsterdam Ave. exit off the Cross Bronx Expressway, and looked at what's left of the cars on the side of the road, you know that the Washington Heights locals are extremely adept at automotive disassembly. By that standard, my car fared pretty well for the year. I only had my trunk broken into a couple of times, my spare tire stolen, my antifreeze stolen, my glove compartment ripped open, my battery stolen, and the drivers side of the car completely smashed in by a hit-and-run driver.

You may be thinking that I'm not the person who should be advising others where to park. Remember, THERE ARE NO SAFE PARKING SPOTS IN WASHINGTON HEIGHTS. Most of the damage to my car occurred in "safe" spots.

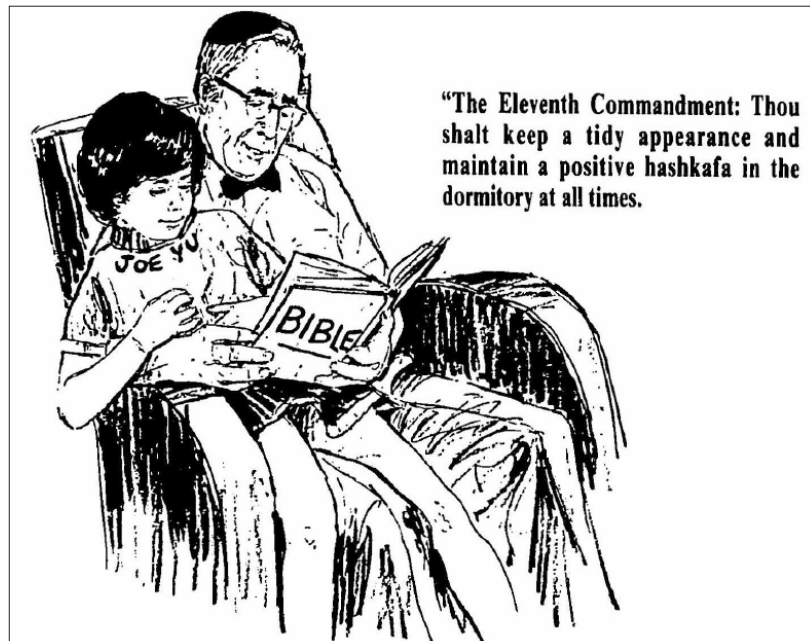
LUCK

As you may have guessed, a large factor in determining whether your car will survive the year is how lucky (or unlucky) you are. Just remember to always think positively (gam zu letovah) no matter what happens to your car. I'll admit that even I was thinking a little bit negatively after I walked to my car on Purim morning to discover that another car had skidded through the snow and smashed into its side. Apparently, the driver had, in his haste, forgotten to leave a note.

But like the Jews of Shushan, my sadness turned to joy that Purim morning when upon looking through the snow for car parts, I discovered a piece of the perpetrator's car — his license plate. Following a threatened lawsuit, I recently received a very generous settlement from his insurance company.

So I wish all you new drivers, Good luck! — You'll need it.

Flashbacks



"The Eleventh Commandment: Thou shalt keep a tidy appearance and maintain a positive hashkafa in the dormitory at all times."

February 17, 1988; Volume 53 Issue 8

Thursday Morning, 2:38 AM

By MATTHEW SILKIN

I imagined I was the worst person to ever live, worse than all the dictators who ever thought they could crush the souls of the people, worse even than the ones who use the kindnesses of everyday life for their own benefit, worse even still worse, and yet

how can I justify
how can people not recoil at the mere notion
of my breath, of the plague of my pestilence
how can those who love me
how

COURTESY OF THE YU POETRY CLUB

Origins of the YU Maccabees

By DANIEL LUBOFSKY

Have you ever stopped to wonder about the origins of your favorite sports team's name? It's difficult to pinpoint the exact reasoning behind some organizational and school decisions, and any attempt to retrace their steps may wind up leaving you with more questions than answers.

There are those who link their team name to the sport in which they play, such as the Brooklyn Nets. Others choose to connect it to a part of their local culture — like the official state bird — as is the case with the New Orleans Pelicans and Baltimore Orioles.

Yeshiva University's basketball team has long been a staple of the school's identity. The Maccabees have created a long list of memorable moments for the school and its supporters, mostly while bearing the four-letter MACS as a symbol across their chest.

It wasn't always that way. Just like so many of America's greatest sports teams, the

While not a point of concern, their name was a weird fit. A mite is a tiny insect-like creature — not exactly the type of persona a team would like to exude before going head to head in any competitive battle.

The name didn't sit well with one person, in particular, David Gleicher. Gleicher had recently become the Sports Editor of *The Commentator*, and like most Mites fans he wound up in a discussion about YU's prospects for the upcoming season with the Editor-in-Chief of *The Commentator*, Steve Reisbaum. Only while Reisbaum seemed to be more focused on the Xs and Os, Gleicher had other ways to make improvements.

"Is there any team in America with a wimpier name?" Gleicher asked Reisbaum. "Maybe if the team changed its name, it would play harder, more aggressively and with more pride."

It was an interesting stance to take, and one that wasn't devoid of logic. As NFL Hall-of-Famer Deion Sanders put it, "You look good, you feel good. You feel good, you play

— who came up with the solution. Gleicher had suggested adopting the name of the Yeshiva University High School for Boys teams, the MTA Lions, the fiercest of animals and kings of the jungle. However, that idea was quickly shot down by Reisbaum on the basis that an animal name was too bland and common. They needed something new and

connect the school's basketball team to the annual story of one of the greatest miracles in Jewish History. It seemed to be a win-win proposition for both the school and the team.

"You can't just change the team's name" Reisbaum mentioned through laughter. "You have to get permission, though I don't know from whom."

*In a column published in *The Commentator* on Nov. 20, 1974, Gleicher proclaimed the change of the team name from Mighty Mites to Maccabees.*

original to ignite a fire of confidence under the players after such a horrible season in the prior year.

Reisbaum suggested something much more unique and on brand for the school: The Maccabees. "That's it," Gleicher said as if a lightbulb had immediately gone off inside his head. "From now on, the team will be known as the Maccabees."

True, Gleicher did not have the authority to officially change the team's name, but as the recently appointed Sports Editor, he had a platform with which to experiment. In a column published in *The Commentator* on Nov. 20, 1974, Gleicher proclaimed the change of the team name from Mighty Mites to Maccabees.

"As Sports Editor, I made sure that only



YU Maccabees Logo

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

YU basketball squad went through its own name change back in the 1970s, one that wound up leaving a lasting impression on the school for longer than anyone could've possibly imagined at the time.

Like most origin stories, this one started out simple. Originally known as the Quinthooplets, the YU basketball team took on the moniker The Mighty Mites in the late 1930s, a nickname that had been bestowed upon miniature guard Julie Wagner and would eventually spread to the rest of the team.

Fast forward to Nov. of 1974 when the Mites were coming off their worst season to date, posting an abysmal record of 1-19.

good." A name change wouldn't magically increase YU's field goal percentage or limit turnovers, but it could spark an increased level in confidence, which is a known attribute to some of the world's most successful people in any industry, especially athletes.

But what would that new name be? Picking one was easier said than done. The *Commentator* had actually sponsored a contest to rename the team in Nov. 1959, but the results weren't very encouraging, with the potential names ranging from the Knickerbockers which would result in copyright issues with the professional NBA team to the inaeesthetic sound of the Sarachuckers.

Ironically enough, it was not Gleicher — the student who brought this issue to light

When choosing the name for a sports team, there are three rules of thumb one should attempt to follow. It has to have a connection, it has to evoke confidence and most important of all it has to sound good. The newly proposed name appeared to be a hand in glove fit.

The original Maccabees were a Jewish army in the time of Antiochus who fought back against the Seleucid Empire in order to liberate parts of Israel. Opponents of the team may not know what it meant, but the players would certainly take pride in the tale as a fitting representation of the underdog persona the team had taken on in the sports world being the "Jewish school." And for the university, it was an excellent idea to

the new name appeared in the articles," David wrote. "The next year, I prepared the athletic department's media guy, and the team's name was listed as the Maccabees. I never got permission from Red [Sarachek] or Jonny [Halpert] or even Mrs. Miller, who really ran the athletic department. I just did it."

Indeed he did, and as history would have it, the name would stick, becoming official in the early 1980s when a student by the name of Mitch Murlis gave a petition to Athletic Director Arthur Tauber in the hope that all the sports teams could officially be designated as the Maccabees. However, the transformation really began roughly a decade earlier with a singular student and his desire to help his school in any way possible.

Commentator Spring 2019 Survey: A Comprehensive Analysis

By AVI HIRSCH and YOSEF LEMEL

Editor's Note. For the purposes of this article, unless otherwise specified, "satisfied" refers to students who indicated that they are either "satisfied" or "extremely satisfied," and "dissatisfied" refers to students who indicated that they are either "dissatisfied" or "extremely dissatisfied." Likewise, "comfortable" refers to students who indicated that they are either "comfortable" or "extremely comfortable," and "uncomfortable" refers to students who indicated that they are either "uncomfortable" or "extremely uncomfortable."

Over the past several weeks, The Commentator conducted a survey of current Yeshiva University undergraduates about a wide array of issues related to the college experience. In this article, we present a detailed breakdown of our results.

INTRODUCTION

Overall, the Spring 2019 survey polled 368 undergraduate YU students, or 17 percent of the total undergraduate student body.

160 respondents (43 percent) are Yeshiva College (YC) students, 66 (18 percent) are male Sy Syms School of Business (Syms-Men) students, 121 (33 percent) are Stern College for Women (SCW) students, 18 (5 percent) are female Sy Syms School of Business (Syms-Women) students and three (1 percent) are Katz School students. (Since such few Syms-Women and Katz School students responded, our analysis will not devote specific attention to those schools.)

126 respondents (34 percent) are in their first year, 127 (35 percent) in their second year, 90 (24 percent) in their third year and 25 (7 percent) in their fourth year or beyond.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

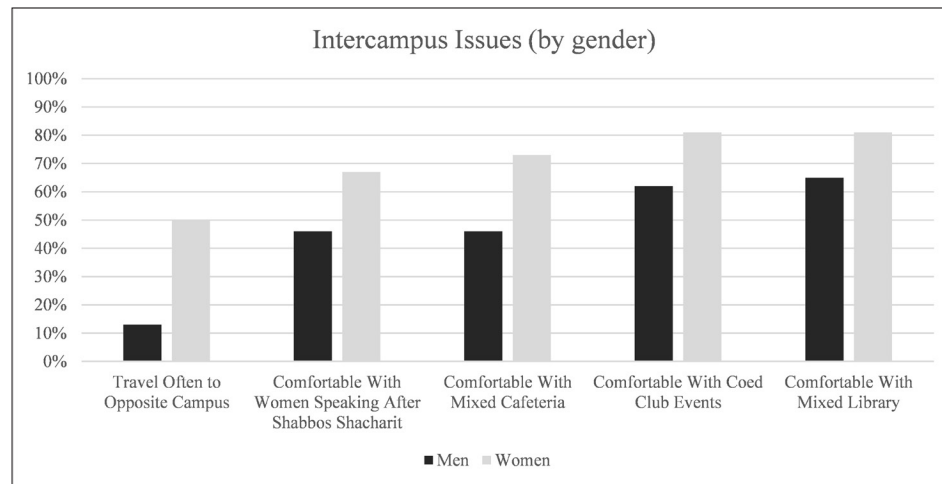
Overall, 66 percent of survey respondents identify as Modern Orthodox, compared to 22 percent who identify as "Right-wing" Orthodox or Yeshivish, 4 percent who identify as Not Orthodox and 8 percent who identify as Hasidic, Chabad or other.

The 145 Mazer Yeshiva Program (MYP) students who were surveyed were asked about their *seder/shiur* attendance. 78 percent of MYP respondents indicated that they always attend, versus 17 percent who frequently attend, 3 percent who sometimes attend and 2 percent who rarely attend.

Both men and women are comfortable with the opposite gender studying in the library on their respective campus.

Overall, 88 percent of undergraduate students mostly or fully observe *halakhah*. Only 5 percent of undergraduate students either do not or mostly do not observe *halakhah*.

Undergraduate men attend *minyán* for *shacharit* more frequently than do undergraduate women. During the week, 73 percent of undergraduate men either always or often attend *shacharit*, versus only five percent of undergraduate women who either always or often attend *shacharit*. A similar trend occurs on Shabbat, when 81 percent of undergraduate men either always or often attend *shacharit*, versus 50 percent of undergraduate women who either always or often attend *shacharit*. Only 6 percent of undergraduate men never attend Shabbat *shacharit*, versus 18 percent



of undergraduate women who never attend Shabbat *shacharit*.

Overall, 77 percent of YU undergraduates believe fully in God. 14 percent of undergraduates tend to believe, 3 percent have doubts and 2 percent do not believe in God. 68 percent of undergraduate students indicated that they are *shomer negiah*, versus 24 percent of undergraduate students who indicated that they are not *shomer negiah*.

Students from both campuses are overwhelmingly dissatisfied with cafeteria prices.

There were notable discrepancies seen regarding religious observance between YC and Stern students compared to Syms-Men students.

68 percent of YC students and 70 percent of Stern students identify as Modern Orthodox, versus 58 percent of Syms-Men students who identify as Modern Orthodox. 19 percent of YC students and 18 percent of Stern students identify as "Right-wing" Orthodox or Yeshivish, versus 35 percent of Syms-Men who identify as "Right-wing" Orthodox or Yeshivish.

59 percent of YC students and 63 percent of Stern students fully observe *halakhah*, versus 74 percent of Syms-Men students who fully observe *halakhah*. 68 percent of YC students and 65 percent of Stern students are *shomer negiah*, versus 77 percent of Syms-Men students who are *shomer negiah*.

A notable discrepancy can be found between all of the undergraduate colleges regarding their respective beliefs in God. 71 percent of YC students fully believe in God, while 79 percent of Stern students and 89 percent of Syms-Men students fully believe in God.

INTERCAMPUS ISSUES

Overall, students from the Beren Campus are more likely to travel to Wilf than vice versa. 50 percent of women and 13 percent of men say they frequently or occasionally commute to the campus of the other respective gender. 33 percent of men stated that they rarely travel to the Beren Campus compared with 39 percent of women who said that they rarely traveled to the Wilf Campus. 53 percent of men said they never travel to the Beren Campus while only 10 percent of women said they never travel to the Wilf Campus.

With regard to the question of a woman speaking at the end of Shabbat morning *minyán* on the Wilf Campus, 46 percent of men are comfortable while 44 percent of men are uncomfortable. The survey showed that 67 percent of women are comfortable with a woman speaking at Wilf. Only 19 percent of women said that they would be uncomfortable with that prospect.

73 percent of women said they are comfortable with men eating in the Beren

cafeteria on Shabbat. Male respondents are split on the issue, with 46 percent saying they would be comfortable versus 44 percent saying they would be uncomfortable with women eating in the Wilf cafeteria on Shabbat.

Both men and women are comfortable with the opposite gender studying in the library on their respective campus. 65 percent of men and 81 percent of women stated that

they are comfortable with an individual of the opposite gender studying in the library on their campus. Only 26 percent of men and 11 percent of women said that they would be uncomfortable in that situation.

Most male and female respondents reported being comfortable attending a coed extracurricular event. 62 percent of men and 81 percent of women said they would be comfortable attending a coed extracurricular event. Only 27 percent of men and 12 percent of women said they would be uncomfortable attending a coed extracurricular event.

SOCIAL/PERSONAL

Though the vast majority of YU undergraduates — 92 percent — have never used YUConnects, our survey found a disparity between men and women, where 11 percent of undergraduate women have used the service, but only 4 percent of undergraduate men have used the service. We found a similar

Both men and women disapprove strongly of the elevators on campus, with women tending to be less satisfied than men.

discrepancy in the realm of dating, with 40 percent of undergraduate women currently dating for the purpose of marriage, versus only 28 percent of undergraduate men currently dating for the purpose of marriage.

Undergraduate women are noticeably more active on social media compared to undergraduate men. 90 percent of

undergraduate women use Facebook or some other social media account, versus 70 percent of undergraduate men who use Facebook or some other social media account.

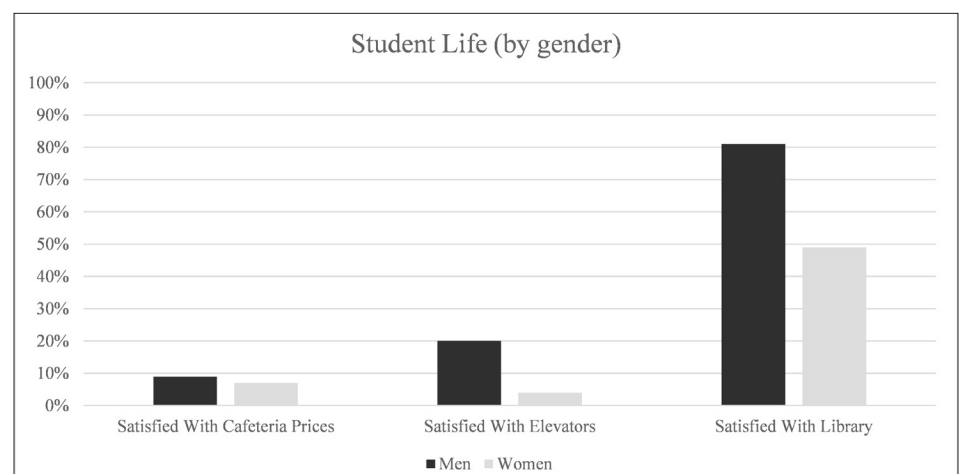
Undergraduate men on average learn more Torah per week compared to undergraduate women. 66 percent of undergraduate men learn Torah for at least 11 hours per week, compared to only 15 percent of undergraduate women who learn Torah for at least 11 hours per week. Overall, 95 percent of YU undergraduates learn some Torah each week.

Aside from learning Torah, 39 percent of YU undergraduates spend at least 6 hours per week on social media. 37 percent of YU undergraduates spend at least six hours per week consuming visual entertainment (sports, TV, movies, video games, etc.), and 72 percent of YU undergraduates spend at least six hours per week on school work outside of class. One discrepancy we noticed was that 23 percent of YC students spend at least 15 hours per week on school work outside of class, versus only 5 percent of Syms-Men students who spend at least 15 hours per week on school work outside of class.

The vast majority of YU undergraduates do not use recreational drugs or party. Only 10 percent of YU undergraduates have used recreational drugs, and only 23 percent of YU undergraduates have partied. Undergraduate men are more likely to drink alcohol than undergraduate women, with 53 percent of men drinking at least occasionally, versus 32 percent of women drinking at least occasionally. 31 percent of undergraduate men drink at least once a month, versus only 16 percent of women who drink at least once a month. By year, 33 percent of first year students, 45 percent of second year students and 59 percent of third year students drink at least occasionally.

STUDENT LIFE

Men tended to be more satisfied than women with YU cafeteria food and prices, although students from both campuses tended to disapprove strongly of cafeteria prices. While 69 percent of men are satisfied with the cafeteria food, only 27 percent of women felt the same way. And while only 17 percent of men are dissatisfied with the food, approximately half (49 percent) of women felt that way.



Continued on Page 13

*SPRING 2019 SURVEY,
continued from Page 12*

respectively, are satisfied.

There was a divide in satisfaction between men and women regarding the YU library, with men tending to be more satisfied (81 percent satisfied) than women (49 percent satisfied).

Both men and women disapprove strongly of the elevators on campus, with women tending to be less satisfied than men. Only 4 percent of women reported being satisfied with the elevators, compared to 20 percent of men. A majority of both men and women reported being dissatisfied with the elevators, with 53 percent of men and 86 percent of women expressing dissatisfaction. Furthermore, nearly half (46 percent) of women are “extremely dissatisfied” with the elevators.

With regard to student opinion of the administrative offices, academic advising fared the worst.

Although both Syms-Men students and YC students are dissatisfied with elevators at YU, Syms-Men students are less satisfied overall, with 68 percent of Syms-Men students and 47 percent of YC students disapproving of the elevators.

In many other areas of student life, students from all colleges are satisfied overall, including “Dorms/Housing” (55 percent of students satisfied), “Internet/IT” (74 percent satisfied) and “Extracurricular Options” (55 percent satisfied).

Across the board, older students tend to be less satisfied with most areas of student life. (Note that we refrained from drawing conclusions from fourth year students, since they represented only 7 percent of respondents.)

Satisfaction with cafeteria food ranged from 64 percent, to 50 percent, to 46 percent among first, second and third year students, respectively, while 21, 32 and 32 percent of first, second and third year students reported being dissatisfied. Older students are also less satisfied with cafeteria prices — 13, 6 and 4 percent of first, second and third year students,

respectively, are satisfied, while 62, 74 and 76 percent are dissatisfied.

This trend holds for other areas of student life, with older students being less satisfied with Shabbat on campus, as well as having a more negative “overall” sentiment towards student life at YU.

The survey found that men tend to stay on campus for Shabbat more often than women, and YC students more often than Syms-Men students. 27 percent of women and 50 percent of men stated that they are “frequently” or “always” on campus for Shabbat, while 56 percent of women and 26 percent of men stated that they are “rarely” or “never” on campus for Shabbat. 36 percent of Syms-Men students and 54 percent of YC students stated that they are “frequently” or “always” on campus for Shabbat, while 38 percent of Syms-Men students and 20 percent of YC students stated that they are “rarely”

or “never” on campus for Shabbat. 74 percent of students stated that they are currently involved in clubs on campus, versus 26 percent who stated that they are not.

ADMINISTRATION

With regard to student opinion of the administrative offices, academic advising fared the worst. 40 percent of undergraduate students polled are satisfied with academic advising, versus 37 percent who are dissatisfied. Comparatively, 42 percent of students are satisfied with the Office of Student Life (OSL), compared to 20 percent who are dissatisfied, and 61 percent of students are satisfied with the faculty at YU, versus only 16 percent who are dissatisfied.

The Career Center divided male and female students. Overall, 26 percent of men and almost half (46 percent) of women are satisfied, compared to 22 percent of men and 18 percent of women who are dissatisfied.

When asked about President Berman’s job performance and vision for YU, many students — primarily women — answered “Don’t Know/Not Applicable.” 18

percent of women stated that they are satisfied with his performance, 13 percent that they are dissatisfied, and 47 percent answered “Don’t Know/Not Applicable.” 22 percent of women stated that they are satisfied with his vision for YU, 6 percent that they are dissatisfied, and more than half (51 percent) answered “Don’t Know/Not Applicable.”

Men generally seemed to be more opinionated than women regarding President Berman’s job performance, although Syms-Men students were more likely than YC students to choose “Don’t Know/Not Applicable.” 21 percent of Syms-Men students and 24 percent of YC students approve of his performance, and 21 percent of Syms-Men students and 24 percent of YC students disapprove. 32 percent of Syms-Men students and 24 percent of YC students answered “Don’t Know/Not Applicable.” There was a similar spread in responses to President Berman’s overall vision for YU.

When asked to evaluate YU’s administration overall, a plurality of students (31 percent) stated that they are dissatisfied, compared to 27 percent who reported being satisfied.

Syms-Men students are also more satisfied with the Jewish studies core than YC students. 36 percent of YC students and 62 percent of Syms-Men students are extremely satisfied or satisfied with the core. 44 percent of Syms-Men students and 18 percent of YC students are extremely dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the Jewish studies core.

YC and Stern students tend to take books out of a YU library at a higher rate than Syms-Men students. While 65 percent of YC students and 57 percent of Stern students have taken a book out of a YU library, only 33 percent of

footsteps of our political poll that we conducted last semester. Before conducting that poll, we reached out to Professors Silke Aisenbrey and Daniel Kimmel, who advised us on methodology to get the most accurate and representative results possible.

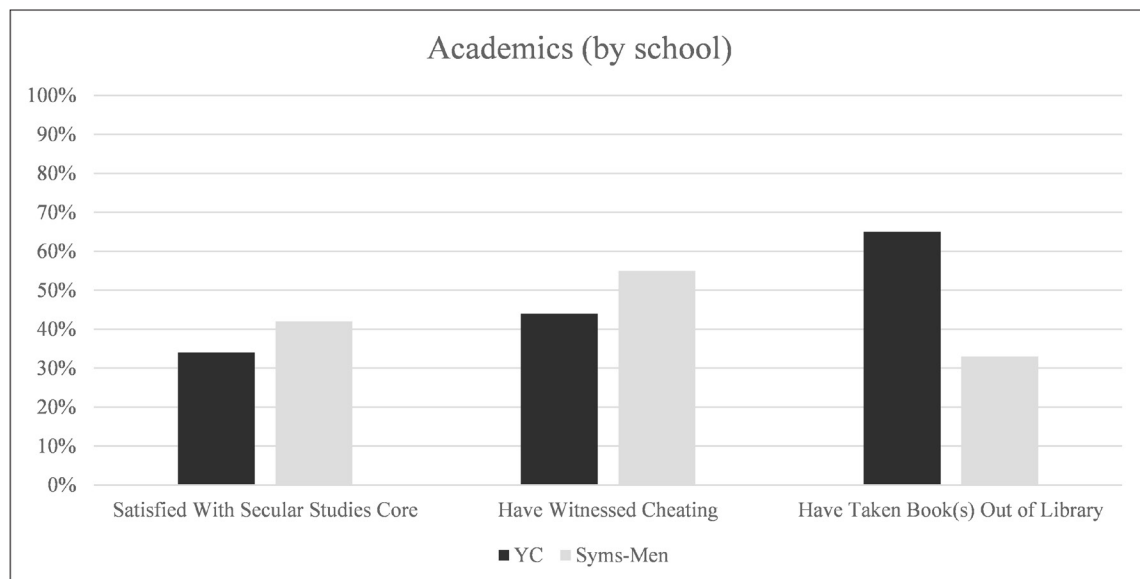
Like last time, we reached out to students via email and social media, as well as through their professors, gathering a total of 428 interested undergraduate students from Yeshiva College, Stern College for Women, Sy Syms School of Business (Men), Sy Syms School of Business (Women) and the Katz School. We conducted a raffle with

75 percent of the undergraduate body have admitted to using a phone in at least one of their classes.

Syms-Men students have done so.

There are notable differences between the various YU undergraduate schools regarding cheating. 55 percent of Syms-Men students, 44 percent of YC students and 40 percent of Stern students said that they have personally witnessed cheating incidents in YU classes.

a \$150 Amazon gift card first place prize (double our prize from last semester) to motivate respondents. Before opening the survey to these students, we reviewed all respondents with the YU Office of Student Life to ensure that they were all current undergraduate students and to eliminate duplicates. 368



ACADEMICS

Syms-Men students are more satisfied than YC students with regard to their secular studies core. 42 percent of Syms-Men students said they are extremely satisfied or satisfied with their secular studies core, compared to 34 percent of YC students.

44 percent of Syms-Men students, 31 percent of YC students and 26 percent of Stern students are satisfied with the YU administration’s current policies on cheating. Only 6 percent of Syms-Men students, 3 percent of YC students and 3 percent of Stern students have admitted to cheating on an exam and/or plagiarizing material for an assignment.

75 percent of the undergraduate body have admitted to using a phone in at least one of their classes. There was no notable statistical difference between the various undergraduate schools with regard to phone use. When taking into account the progressing years of the undergraduate population, there is a notable statistical difference between them. 68 percent of first year students, 77 percent of second year students and 82 percent of third year students have admitted to using a phone during at least one of their classes.

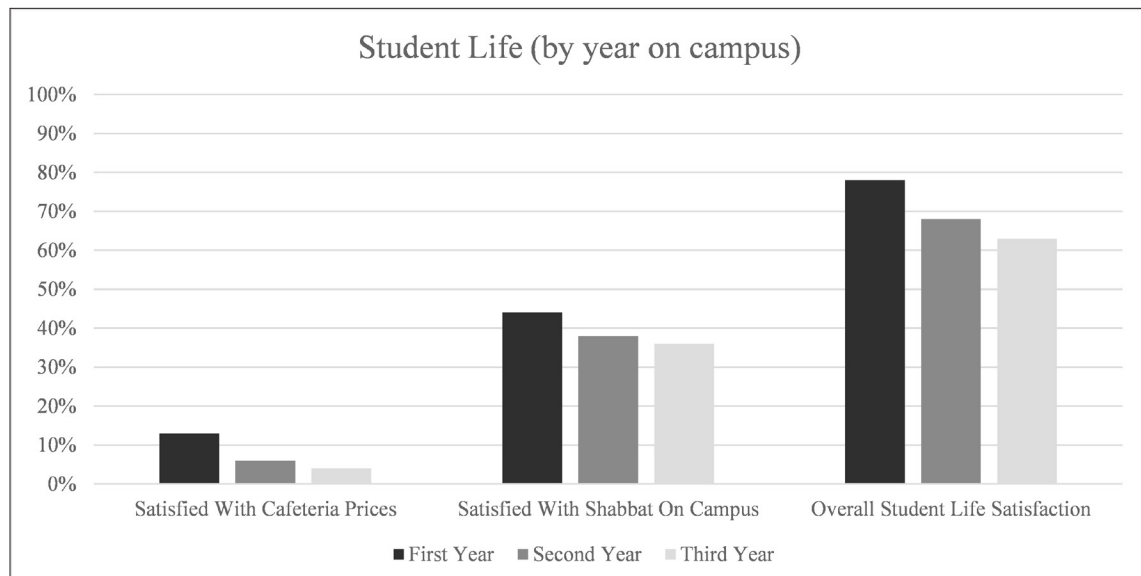
METHODOLOGY

We mostly followed in the

students completed our survey over the next week.

Survey respondents were highly distributed among different majors. Of the 368 respondents, 13 percent are majoring in biology, 11 percent are majoring in computer science and no more than 10 percent are majoring in any one other field. Respondents were distributed over more than 30 different majors.

Several confounding factors could have skewed our results in one direction. For example, Syms-Men constitutes 26 percent of total YU undergraduate students but only 18 percent of survey respondents. Additionally, because only 5 percent of our respondents attend Syms-Women (comprising 11 percent of the college), 1 percent of our respondents attend the Katz School (comprising 6 percent of the college) and 7 percent of our respondents are in their fourth year, we refrained from drawing conclusions from these data sets.



What's President Joel Up To?

By BENJI HALPERN

Mr. Richard Joel served as the president of Yeshiva University from 2003 until he stepped down from the position in 2017. He has consequently swapped the hectic schedule of a university president for that of a professor.

Joel is currently the Bravmann Family University Professor and teaches the popular class titled "Management in a Non-Profit World." He believes it's an important topic to teach and expressed his love of building relationships with his students.

"President Joel's class is one of the highlights of my week," said Yehuda Rosenberg (SSSB '20). "Learning from someone who has played and continues to play such a pivotal role in the Jewish community is truly a privilege."

Joel has previously taught at the Wurzweiler School of Social Work and the Benjamin Cardozo School of Law and looks forward to remaining involved in teaching in the future.

Joel occasionally speaks with his successor, President Ari Berman, although Joel doesn't "presume to give him advice, other than to stay healthy."

In addition to his present role on campus, Joel is currently writing a book about his world view and the effect it had on YU over his tenure. "It is honestly a daunting task to try to encapsulate how and why one has lived," said Joel in reference to his work, "but I'm having at it."

Now that he is not hindered by the long schedule of a university president, Joel has

been able to find more time for his self-described "eclectic" style of learning Torah. Every week before Shabbos, he makes sure to read Rabbi Jonathan Sacks's various works. *Iturei Torah*, an anthology on the weekly parsha is another mainstay in President Joel's learning. He also regularly learns *Pirkei Avot* with his youngest daughter. In addition, Joel plans on setting up a regular chavrusa on the Wilf Campus.

Joel serves on the Board of Directors of the Geshar Foundation, an Israeli organization dedicated to "bridging the gaps between different segments of Israeli society." Whenever he is in Israel, Joel visits his daughter Penny, the Director of Experiential Education at the Pardes Institute, and makes sure to spend time interacting with her students.

"My life has been, and continues to be, a special gift."

President Richard Joel

After years of busy Shabbosim, the Joels have been enjoying the new phenomenon of a quiet Shabbos. They have also been hosting several students in their home for Shabbos. Joel has also been trying his hand at cooking, almost mastering potato kugel and sweet and sour meatballs.

While he no longer has to go on fundraising and recruiting trips, Joel is still keeping himself busy. His days are "unstructured, but not empty," allowing him to explore avenues he's wanted to for a long time.

Joel can also be frequently found working out at the Riverdale Y, where his wife Esther recently stepped down after years of service on the Board of Directors.

Incentivized by senior citizen ticket prices, President Joel has enjoyed his time at the theater. He particularly loves the philharmonic, as well as the films "Green Book" and "Darkest Hour" (Joel saw the latter three times).

Joel's flexible schedule has allowed him to spend more time with his children and

grandchildren. He regularly visits the "holy city of Cleveland." Joel loves the vibrant and growing Cleveland community and even boldly claims that "Mitchell's is the best ice cream in the Midwest."

The Joels are planning a wedding this June for their youngest child and are very excited about the upcoming simcha. Reflecting on his past and present experiences, President Joel could only say, "my life has been, and continues to be, a special gift."



President Richard Joel

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

Clarifying Details About the Recent Uptown Shabbaton

By COMMENTATOR STAFF

It has come to The Commentator's attention that some readers in the extended YU community would benefit from a short article clarifying certain details about the recent Uptown Shabbaton, which generated much discussion in recent weeks. This article will attempt to succinctly and precisely present the manner in which the Shabbaton was approved and the details regarding how the Shabbaton itself played out.

In seeking out clarification, The Commentator spoke with student council leaders who, along with YU administrators, were involved in planning the Shabbaton. Dean of Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) Rabbi Menachem Penner and Senior Director of YU's Office of Student Life (OSL) Rabbi Josh Weisberg both declined multiple requests for comment.

THE APPROVAL PROCESS

The planning for the recent Shabbaton began in the first week of Oct. 2018, with a meeting between Yeshiva Student Union (YSU) President Nolan Edmonson, Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY) President Moshe Spirn, Rabbi Josh Weisberg, Rabbi Menachem Penner, Dean of Undergraduate Torah Studies (UTS) Rabbi Yosef Kalinsky, Irving I. Stone Beit Midrash Program (SBMP) and RIETS instructor Rabbi Eliezer Schnall, and University Dean of Students Chaim Nissel.

At said meeting, the preliminary schedule of the Shabbaton was discussed, with the initial plan to have all programming

at the Mt. Sinai Jewish Center, located on Bennett Ave. roughly five blocks from YU's Wilf Campus. According to student council leaders, the members of RIETS at the meeting believed that having women from the downtown campus too close to YU build-

By the time that negotiations had concluded, the OSL, RIETS, Dean Nissel and members of the student government had all approved of the plans for the Shabbaton.

ings would make some men who prefer a *yeshiva* environment uncomfortable and unwelcomed. They specifically pointed to the fact that women would be around the plaza right outside the Glueck *Beit Midrash*. Edmonson in turn argued for the Shabbaton to take place on the Wilf Campus. That first meeting ended with no final decision on venues or programming.

A second meeting occurred on Oct. 24, 2018 with Edmonson, Spirn, Rabbi Weisberg and Rabbi Penner in attendance. A new itinerary was presented in which *seudat shlishit* was scheduled to take place in the basement of MTA, while all of the other activities would be hosted at Mt. Sinai. Rabbi Weisberg noted that, as women would inevitably enter *yeshiva* buildings, this proposal would still not solve the concerns raised by RIETS administrators. Once again, no final decision was made at that time, although the involved parties were willing to confirm to The Commentator that the Shabbaton would indeed happen in February.

Over winter break, the Yeshiva

Community Shul at Sherk, located on 185th St. between Audubon Ave. and St. Nicholas Ave. — exactly one block away from the Glueck *Beit Midrash* — was suggested as the home base of the Shabbaton's meals, activities and *shiurim*. This was determined to be

a fair compromise by all parties, as the Sherk Shul is close enough to the Wilf Campus to honor the spirit of the Shabbaton desired by some student leaders, but also far enough such that the staff of RIETS were comfortable. Both the OSL and RIETS approved this arrangement, which concluded the planning stage of the Shabbaton.

By the time that negotiations had concluded, the OSL, RIETS, Dean Nissel and members of the student government had all approved of the plans for the Shabbaton. It remains unclear when exactly the *roshei yeshiva* were informed about the Shabbaton, but it seems that at least some learned of its existence only the week before it occurred.

THE SHABBATON

The Shabbaton itself took place on the weekend of Feb. 15-16, 2019 (*Parashat Tetzaveh*). Around 120 students attended the meals, which included roughly 65 men and 55 women. In the weeks before the Shabbaton, the OSL reached out to females who lived in Washington Heights who might

be able to house Beren Campus students, which is where many of the latter students wound up staying. Other Beren students decided to arrange for their own housing for the Shabbaton.

The Shabbaton began with *Kabbalat Shabbat* in the Fischel *Beit Midrash*, located in Zysman Hall on Amsterdam Ave. between 186th St. and 187th St. Dinner, which took place in the Sherk Shul, was attended by students along with several members of the OSL. Dinner was followed by "Cholent and Chill," which featured cholent, kugel and snacks in the Schottenstein Lounge, located in the building of the Sherk Shul.

Davening Shabbat morning took place once again in Zysman Hall, in the basement. Shabbaton attendees then walked back to the Sherk Shul for *Kiddush* in Sherk's Schottenstein Lounge, a round robin of *chaburot* in the sanctuary and lunch in the Sherk building. Afternoon activities included the option to walk to Washington Heights' Fort Tryon Park, learning in an open *beit midrash* in Sherk and board games in the Schottenstein Lounge. Mincha then took place in the basement of Zysman Hall, followed by *seudat shlishit* and *maariv* back at Sherk.

After *havdalah*, students were invited to the Furman Dining Hall — located in the basement of the Rubin Residence Hall located at the corner of Amsterdam Ave. and 185th St. — for an ice cream bar.

None of the Shabbaton's activities took place in the Glueck Center or the Gottesman Library, which are located on 185th St. between Amsterdam Ave. and Audubon Ave.



NEVER. STOP. COMMENTATING.

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

Chipotle on Shabbat Shalom

By LINDSAY BRANDWEIN

During senior year of high school, the last thing anyone wants to hear is “you will end up where you’re supposed to be.” To every senior, that basically translates to “well, you’re not getting into your top choice school so I’m trying to make you feel better.” But somehow, you really do end up where you’re supposed to be and sometimes it’s a place no one expects. Or a place you didn’t even know existed, like Stern College for Women.

I attended a Reform Jewish high school in Davie, Florida where none of my friends kept kosher and where students wore shorts as a school uniform. In this school, you never heard about Yeshiva University. The University of Florida? Of course you’d heard of that, along with constant talk about tailgating during football season. You might have had those two or three friends who wanted to move to Israel, join the Israeli army, maybe even become religious. I was definitely not that friend. Case in point: In the yearbook, I, along with one of my best friends, was named “life of the party.”



Have you ever brought Chipotle into Brookdale? Probably not.

LINDSAY BRANDWEIN

Needless to say, I was not the ideal Stern candidate.

When I heard back from all of the universities I applied to, I was ready to commit to the University of Central Florida where my older brother and younger sister attend. Of course, I made it a big deal and thought, “OMG I’m not ready to commit yet.” I decided to wait to make my decision until after the weekend. The next Monday, Josh Pransky, former Director of Recruitment and Alumni Affairs for the YU Athletics Department, happened to be at one of my school basketball games. Josh called women’s basketball Head Coach Michal Alon who flew down to watch me later that week. They proposed to me the idea of coming to YU on an academic scholarship — because Division III schools don’t offer athletic scholarships — and invited me to an unofficial visit. The next week, my family and I flew up to New York City. The first place the tour took me was the *beit midrash* — probably not the best location for me to see first.

Later that night, I observed basketball practice. The next night, I went to watch the girls play a basketball game. During the game, I looked at my brother and said, “Jason, there is no way I will ever come here.” But somehow, that August, my mom and I flew up to New York City, and I moved into Brookdale Residence hall, room 16E.

Not knowing what to expect — in terms of school, my roommates and especially the religious aspect — I showed up in shorts and a t-shirt. I don’t think I’ve been checked out more in my life than when I was standing in that line waiting to get into the dorm. The number of girls that looked me up and down was extremely uncomfortable.

And the looks didn’t stop there. Have you ever brought Chipotle into Brookdale? Probably not. Well, *that’s* how you get a Stern girl’s attention. But I knew from the start that I stood out. During the first day of orientation, one of the deans pulled me aside and said, “You know there is a dress code, right?” I replied, “Oh I might have not gotten

that email, I will go out and get a skirt right after this.” Ever since then, I keep an emergency skirt in my backpack. Clearly, I didn’t (and still don’t) have “Stern girl swag.” The only thing that connected me to this place was the fact that I am proud to be Jewish, even if my definition of that is different from my roommates’, classmates’, teammates’ and professors’.

But somehow, that August my mom and I flew up to New York City and moved me into Brookdale Residence hall, room 16E.

I grew up in a Jewish home where attending Shabbat dinner was both mandatory and much anticipated. After dinner, you could do whatever you want. Shabbat dinner has been a tradition since before I was born; we have many families over. That is how I have always seen and still see Shabbat. It’s a tradition, and it is special as long as you make it special.

During my first week at Stern I discovered many crazy things. One of them is that Shabbat, the thing that I always associated with Friday nights, actually starts on Wednesday. During my first week at Stern, all of my classmates would say “Shabbat Shalom” to our professor after class. Intrigued by this, I decided to start a new “trend” where I take in all that Shabbat Shalom has to offer, starting with an official name change: from Shabbat to Shabbat Shalom. Along with the “official name change,” I also learned to enjoy Brookdale Residence Hall’s emptiness on Thursday nights. I never thought that my Thursday nights in college would consist of chillin’ with the security guards, who, by the way, are all hilarious. I remember calling my mom to tell her I might need to book a flight home to Florida for the weekend because the dorms were closing. It feels like all Stern girls go home Wednesday night and manage to never have class Thursday. They usually start to make their way back to the dorms Monday after classes.

My most memorable Shabbat Shalom experience is going to a Shabbat Shalom lunch where my job was to get drinks. I got some ice teas, lemonades and, of course, grape juice. Who would think there is grape

juice that isn’t kosher? Well, fun fact: Welch’s isn’t kosher! It’s a good thing I was going to my teammate’s apartment. It was a good *shtick*. We all laughed hysterically and they said, “classic Lindsay.” My teammates have embraced me for who I am.

Freshman year was rough and this year has still consisted of Chipotle stares (but no more accidental run-ins with the Dean). My wish is to show the students that this school isn’t as accepting as many of them make it out to be. To all the students: think twice when signing up for Shoshana Schechter’s class; you might want that easy ‘A’ but not all of us went for *shana bet* and became homies with Rashi. Let those who need it take the class. And yes, I dressed myself this morning, so I know I am not wearing a skirt and you don’t have to stare at me in the 215 elevators — but I will take it as a compliment anyway.

But the hardest part about going to Stern isn’t Shabbat Shalom or getting into a Shoshana Schechter class. Rather, it is watching my classmates get confused about what they want in life. They may be religious, but many of them don’t understand why they are wearing skirts and oftentimes are too afraid to ask why. Maybe my purpose here is to show them that it is okay to be unsure of who you are. I challenge Stern in the most respectful way and I make it my own. I respect the rabbis but I challenge them because all my thoughts are almost unheard of — every other student has been learning the same types of Torah lessons since they were children.

Someone recently asked me, “If you could give one piece of advice to an incoming freshman what would it be?” I replied, “Stern can be anything you make it.” You can choose to get married before you’re legal to drink. You can explore one of the greatest cities in the world and take advantage of the opportunity it brings you. When walking to class, I can’t help but smile. Listening to music, holding a cup of coffee and walking from Park Avenue to Lexington Avenue is a dream come true for many people.

I really do believe everyone ends up where they are supposed to be. For some reason, the biggest beach bum ended up in a concrete jungle. For some reason, a Reform Jew ended up in an Orthodox university. For some reason, she is still in New York City learning to love it and embracing every moment. She is unsure of the reason at the moment, but can definitely say that it has been one of her greatest adventures so far.

Hey YU, Tear Down That Poster!

By SHAYNA HERSZAGE

American Jewry often looks to Yeshiva University as an indicator of the state of Modern Orthodox Judaism and its values. In light of recent events, by keeping a picture of Robert Kraft on the outside of the Gottesman Library building on the Wilf Campus, even after removing other posters of Kraft around campus, Yeshiva University is making a statement that sex trafficking and solicitation of prostitution are excusable crimes. As a high-ranked secular university and an influential Jewish institution, it is the responsibility of Yeshiva University to remove the image of Robert Kraft from the Wilf Campus.

On Feb. 25, the newly formed Jewish Activism Club (JAC) posted a call to action on Facebook urging Yeshiva University to remove the image. The post quickly gained

traction, receiving reactions of both agreement and outrage. Some of the individuals who disagreed insisted in the comments under the post and its shared offshoots that it would be a shame to invalidate the good deeds of Robert Kraft in light of his crimes.

I, however, wholeheartedly disagree with those sentiments. Leaving the image of Robert Kraft giving the 2016 commencement address on the wall on Wilf Campus sends a message to all who see it. If this person who was charged with solicitation of prostitution with victims of sex trafficking can still be lauded and honored, how bad were his crimes? Are his crimes even wrong? If one who solicits prostitution continues to be celebrated for other actions, is there a reason any other individual should refrain from soliciting prostitution? The presence of this image in a place of honor empowers

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The outer wall of the Gottesman Library on Feb. 28

THE COMMENTATOR

*TEAR DOWN THAT POSTER,
continued from Page 16*

individuals to make similar decisions.

On a college campus, this message is particularly dangerous. Women in universities internationally are often subjected to objectification, misogyny and sexual harassment and assault. According to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN), female college students aged 18-24 years are three times more at risk for sexual assault than other women. The presence of Robert Kraft's image on Wilf Campus bolsters feelings of misogyny, particularly among the men who walk past the picture daily on their way to classes. As a result, the safety and self-esteem of the women who attend Yeshiva University can be put at risk; his image enables those who already see women as objects.

On Feb. 28, Yeshiva University removed the poster of Kraft on the elevator in Furst Hall. However, there has been speculation that the poster on the outside of the library will not be removed until another poster arrives to replace it. While this shows that Yeshiva University is not condoning Kraft's actions, the message would be stronger if the poster was removed immediately. Rather than avoiding having a blank space on the wall for a few days, why not let the blank space make a statement in itself; that it values integrity over appearance?

Specific to Yeshiva University, keeping the image makes a statement to a much greater audience. Yeshiva University influences both the present and the future of American Jewry. When Yeshiva University makes a statement, whether active or passive, the entire Orthodox world listens. Yeshiva University not removing the picture of Robert Kraft on Wilf Campus makes a

wordless statement about its view on prostitution. What will happen to the community as a result of those who choose to listen to this statement?

Rather than avoiding having a blank space on the wall for a few days, why not let the blank space make a statement in itself about valuing integrity over appearance?

In response to disagreeing comments on the Jewish Activism Club's Facebook post, Molly Meisels (SCW '20) commented, "... [T]o [the] question about whether all his good deeds should be invalidated should

he be convicted — the deeds should not be invalidated, but he should be. The university should not laud a man who is so desperate for sexual pleasure that he pays for women who are being held against their will."

It is important to note that, as Meisels stated, his good deeds should not be invalidated, but he should be. In such a case, we must isolate in our minds Kraft the person from Kraft the donor of large sums of money to many noble causes. Are we, as a university and as a society, going to value one person's wealth over the dignity and safety of women?

Yeshiva University is an institution that influences not only the student body but the greater Jewish community. It is the duty of Yeshiva University to condemn sex trafficking and solicitation of prostitution through the removal of the image of Robert Kraft from its campuses — for the sake of the university, its students and the wider Jewish community.

YU's Hidden Gem

By ZACHARY ORENSHEIN

Consider this account of a moment of religious confusion resulting from what was meant to be an empowering lecture:

A few years ago, I had a startling experience. For days, I had been anticipating this event. After being inspired by his books for years, I was finally going to hear this great figure speak in person. I scanned the room eagerly. There he was, finally, walking up to the podium to face the crowd. I was overcome with feelings of awe and excitement. But then, he spoke. And I was offended. Dumbstruck. How could someone whose writings taught me so much say words which hurt me to the core? To this day, I am not sure how to process that moment because even though I deeply disagreed with what he said then, I had always enjoyed his books before...

This was told to me by a friend of mine and as soon as I heard it, I knew it didn't sit right with me. I understand the listener's response and I think it was natural. However, my experience in Yeshiva University has shown me the great advantage to be had in responding differently. YU has taught me how to learn from a great variety of people who disagree with me and to build real connections with them as well.

The typical *yeshiva* is run by rabbis who have specific perspectives on Judaism. Thus, they end up attracting

students who see the world through that perspective. The unique opportunity YU affords its students is in its deviation from that model. The rabbis in YU are more different from each other than the classical model of a *yeshiva* would ever allow. This reality has two tremendous benefits. First, the student body is more diverse than a classic *yeshiva*; therefore, the social connections we can make here are great in number and in variety.

I am grateful to both Rabbi Shulman and President Ari Berman for the actions they have recently been criticized for.

Second, and the point I want to emphasize, is that this variety of perspectives among the rabbis forces students to constantly encounter people whom they both deeply respect and disagree with strongly. Before I came to YU, I knew I viewed the world differently than some of the rabbis here. Now, after three-plus semesters, I have discovered more things we disagree on and more rabbis with whom to disagree. However, at the guidance of more seasoned YU students, I eventually made the conscious decision to learn from these rabbis as well. The result is not just that I know things now that I am tremendously grateful for learning, but

that I have gained the irreplaceable life skill of embracing respectful and constructive disagreement.

I now take for granted that people disagree with me regarding topics I feel strongly about, yet I push myself to hear what they have to say. I can have an argument about something I feel passionate about and remain calm enough — most of the time — to have a respectful two-way conversation. I can now get excited about hearing a lecture from people I know I disagree with in many areas because I respect them and I understand that they still have a lot to teach me. I think this is a powerful way to approach the world in general.

For this reason, I am grateful to both Rabbi Shulman and President Ari Berman for the actions they have recently been criticized for. Yes, I side with the many *roshei yeshiva* who have expressed that they are in favor of the coed Shabbaton. However, I may have gained the most in my learning and religious development so far in YU from the *roshei yeshiva* who were most strongly against it. Rabbi Shulman reminded the Modern Orthodox world of the invaluable opportunity YU provides its students to encounter intellectual opposition from respected figures. It may be true that the content of the announcement should upset us. Yet, we cannot ignore that at the same time his respectful tone with which he delivered his words and his deference to the opinions of the other *roshei yeshiva* communicated this kind of mutual respect loud and clear. That's exactly the point. If I spent my time at YU focusing on what I did not like about the rabbis and teachers in my presence, I would not have learned nearly as much from my experience.

President Berman is someone who I think clearly appreciates this. Some have criticized President Berman for not addressing specific issues and remaining too general in his statements. It seems to me that the only way YU is able to remain one institution containing so many great rabbis, teachers and students with such a range of perspectives, is if its foundational values are at once specific enough to want to fight for, yet general enough that we can all agree. To me, this is President Berman's Five Torot. When I heard them the first, second and third time, I was inspired and felt proud to be a part of YU. Does that make me want to hear what President Berman has to say about more specific issues on campus? Sure. Yet, I think doing so may be irresponsible as long as he is the head of this institution of such delicate diversity. Individual rabbis within YU will continue to state their many different opinions which will continue to make YU a compelling place to spend crucial years of a person's developing religious life. In my opinion, though, the president's current position is correct. In areas of controversy, we cannot look for a unifying opinion from the top, or for a single *psak* to bind the entire student body. Such an approach would endanger our invaluable diversity.

Recent events have highlighted for us that YU's unusual diversity for a *yeshiva* presents both great challenges and great potential. The diversity among the rabbis allows for many different students to find their place and at the same time learn from teachers and students so different than them. I encourage everyone to be concerned about preserving this special gift that we have. Let's pursue our visions with respect for the space of others' visions, so we can take full advantage of the variety of people around us and the great things we have yet to learn from them.



Gottesman Library

Coed Activities Are and Should Be Normal: What Both Rabbi Shulman and His Critics Get Wrong

By **DONIEL WEINREICH**

There's been a lot of discussion recently about Rabbi Shulman's statement against the Wilf coed Shabbaton. Rabbi Shulman urged students to leave campus for Shabbat in protest of the event. According to *The Commentator*, he questioned the *tznius* of such an event and said, "Boys and girls should date, but they don't have to date in the *beis midrash*." The statement came under a torrent of critiques from many different angles. Many justifiably took issue with the double standard between the uptown and downtown campuses, the undermining of the student body and its leaders, the marginalization of women from "the *yeshiva*" — and macrocosmically the Orthodox community — and the implication that the existence of women as people (i.e. subjects, not objects) is only on the periphery of our religious leadership's judgment.

But the most prevalent critique I saw by adults on social media was that enforcing such strict gender segregation between eligible young adults perpetuates "the *shidduch* crisis". Every Jewish mother was up in arms. How will their child meet someone?! According to these people, coed events are positive and necessary because young adults need fora to meet other-gendered people for courtship.

Unfortunately, both Rabbi Shulman and his detractors share a common error — one that itself demonstrates the necessity of normalized coed activities. Both sides automatically associate coed activities with the prospect of dating. There's no good reason for this to be the case.

I cannot speak for the orchestrators of the coed Shabbaton, only as an attendee and, more broadly, a participant in YU student life and the Modern Orthodox community. But the Shabbaton was not a *shidduch* event, nor are most coed events and activities. Coed activities can be — and usually are

— merely informal social interaction. It's absurd for Rabbi Shulman to jump from "coed Shabbaton" to "boys and girls going on dates," but it's just as absurd and harmful for his detractors to accept this conception.

Talking about coed programming as a breach of *tznius* or primarily as a healthy medium for forming romantic relationships makes sense only if you accept that the default social landscape is single-gendered and view coed programming through a hypersexualized lens. But this conception of the social landscape is inaccurate and this hypersexual lens is harmful.

We live in a coed world. Students at YU often come from coed high schools, participate in coed summer programs, do coed extracurricular activities, and even the minority who refrain from all of the above will go on to a coed workforce. These happenings aren't opportunities for courtship or licentiousness; they're just everyday social occasions. As society progresses, gender differences — whether essential or constructed — play less and less of a role in our everyday lives. There's no barrier or planetary divide between men and women in our society. Having coed meals, *tisches*, learning, board games, conversations and whatever else your Shabbat may include is only natural and normal in such a context. Conceiving of a coed Shabbaton as a breach of *tznius* or as a singles event is divorced from the reality of our world. The Shabbaton wasn't made up of people trying to meet potential partners, it was people who already know each other — many already in relationships — merely hanging out. The Shabbaton created an institutional outlet for an already existing community. And this community — like most in our modern society — included both men and women.

Not only is a hypersexualized conception divorced from reality, but it also results in a self-perpetuating toxic environment. Many frequently lament the "meat-market" atmosphere at many coed events.

Jokes and memes abound about downtown Shabbatons, The Seforim Sale and the more social floors of the Gottesman Library. But the only reason these are seen as occasions for "*shidduch* shopping" is because of the rarity of intergender mingling at YU. When dating is on the back of someone's mind — as it is for many single twentysomethings — and they have few interactions with the other sex, every interaction is going to be seen as an opportunity and every interlocutor as a prospect. This dynamic is what makes many at YU anxious and uncomfortable in coed spaces. One either has to be on the defensive from being pursued or nervous due to all the pressure on this momentary opportunity. Any innocent socialization is tainted with perceived expectations.

Both Rabbi Shulman and his detractors share a common error ... Both sides automatically associate coed activities with the prospect of dating. There's no good reason for this to be the case.

Meaningful relationships are difficult to form without regular proximity. Friendships generally don't form by active pursuit, they form from frequent informal interaction. Many of the closest friends I have made at YU have been people I happen to share classes with, have sat next to during lunch repeatedly or have hung out with on Shabbat afternoons. Friendship arises organically with the people we happen to be around. The only sort of relationship that at all lends itself to more active pursuit is the romantic, where we have designated rituals. In a single-sex social landscape, where coed activities are the

exception, substantial intergender relationships can form only by active pursuit. Non-romantic relationships are therefore totally precluded, and even romantic relationships cannot arise in a more organic and less nerve-racking way. Segregation is what creates the hypersexual focus and the toxic environment. If we want to relieve this pressure and free ourselves from this hostile atmosphere, coed activities need to be the norm.

This dynamic is not unrelated to the other issues with Rabbi Shulman's statement, namely the underlying sexism and double standard. As in all cases, socialization and diversity breed empathy, whereas homogeneity perpetuates inconsideration. It is not uncommon to hear *yeshiva bochurim* and alumni talk about women as mere objects of distraction and temptation. They object to their presence in the library, cafeteria and lounges, and they certainly don't want them giving *divrei Torah*. Surely this hypersexualization is the opposite of what religious spaces intend when they segregate. The idea that a woman's mere presence is problematic or that their publicness is inappropriate is perverted, regardless of the context. *Yeshiva* is no exception. While less explicitly vulgar, this *yeshiva*-breed of objectification is fundamentally no better than its counterpart that arises in other all-male spaces such as fraternities. Women are people and ought to be related to as such. Policy decisions must take their experiences into account.

This feedback loop of segregation and hypersexualization runs unchecked in our largely segregated YU community. It is incumbent upon us to question it and to halt its toxic force by normalizing coed activities. Not so people can meet romantic prospects, but so our social landscape at YU can come into line with the rest of the world's, where intergender interaction is normal and generally conducted in a healthy fashion.



A scene from a recent YU coed event

Jewish Racism

By **RABBI YOSEF BLAU**

Editor's Note: This article was originally published online on Feb. 25.

After Naftali Bennet and Ayelet Shaked, the two government ministers in the religious Zionist party Habayit Hayehudi, left to start a new party that defined itself as a mix of religious and secular right-wing nationalists, the remaining party feared that it would not pass the threshold to stay in the Israeli parliament. This fear, combined with pressure from Prime Minister Netanyahu and the promise of two significant ministries, led Habayit Hayehudi to create a bloc for the coming election with Otzma Yehudit, a party whose leaders are all followers of Rabbi Meir Kahane.

The Kahanists are considered a fringe element in the religious Zionist community and most Jewish leaders view them as Jewish racists. Their inclusion is perceived as a legitimization of their extreme positions. This has led to a fierce debate between those who view it as a moral issue that crosses all boundaries and those who see it as a risk of losing right-wing votes. The loss of those votes could conceivably lead to a leftist government that could agree to a Palestinian state on part of the land of Israel, an issue that some see as outweighing all other considerations.

Kahane was a controversial figure during his active periods in America and Israel. His followers heard a message of Jewish pride and power that quoted Jewish sources. Detractors saw him as a figure who promoted violence and revenge. While in America, Kahane's Jewish Defense League fought anti-Semitism and for Russian Jews, his tactics included actions that led to loss of lives.

morning when they were praying at a mosque in *Me'arat Hamakhpela*. Kahane's followers, including the leaders of Otzma Yehudit, consider Goldstein a martyr and hero.

There are rabbinical figures who supported Kahane as representing an authentic strain within *halakhah*. Others, while disagreeing, still consider his positions as within the pale. Opponents, however, see his

charismatic leadership. Some of his followers are still banned from America. Except for a few pockets of sympathizers, the American Jewish community has opposed any granting of legitimacy to the Kahanists. It weakens support for Israel amongst younger Jews and in broader American society.

However, in Israel many religious Zionists believe that maintaining sovereignty in Yehuda and Shomron is of paramount importance. To them, a government that would compromise on territory would forfeit legitimacy. For them to lose the votes for Otzma Yehudit that will be wasted if they don't pass the threshold is inconceivable.

From the beginning of the Zionist movement, religious Zionism worked with secular and even anti-religious Zionists. If Habayit Hayehudi itself has had secular members of parliament, some argue, why can't they make a technical arrangement with the Kahanists?

There is a fundamental difference. The secular Zionists were openly secular while the followers of Kahane claim to represent authentic Judaism. At stake is one's conception of Judaism. For Yossi Klein Halevi, a disillusioned former JDL member who wrote in a blog in the Times of Israel on Feb. 24, 2019, legitimizing Kahanism and Jewish racism is a *hillul Hashem* (desecration of God's name).

The land of Israel has sanctity. Of greater importance is to be a nation that is *kadosh*.

*The land of Israel has sanctity.
Of greater importance is to be a nation that is kadosh.*

Kahane had been associated with Zionist youth movements, and when the American government began to arrest JDL members he moved to Israel.

In Israel, his Kach movement attracted young people with its strong stance against Arabs. He considered all Arabs to be enemies of the Jewish state and potential terrorists and proposed expelling them from Israel except for those who were willing to accept living in a Jewish state without any political rights. Before he was assassinated by an Arab terrorist while speaking in New York, he was ostracized by the entire spectrum of the Israeli political establishment. In particular, his calls for violence against Arabs took an ominous turn when a follower, Baruch Goldstein, killed twenty-nine Arabs and wounded many more on a Purim

stress on revenge and violence as abnormal Judaism and against basic morality. Since his followers have supported violent acts, this is not a theoretical question.

One of the party's candidates on the combined list is a lawyer who primarily defends Jews accused of violent acts including murder against Arabs. He and others consider the Israeli government, in particular the Shin Bet and police, as enemies of patriotic Jews. The hatred of Arabs was extended by Kahane and his followers to those Jews who are too accommodating to Arabs, whom they call Hellenists.

In America, the younger generation of Jews is not familiar with Kahane, though he wrote many books promoting his views. After he left for Israel, the Jewish Defense League essentially disappeared without Kahane's



Reuven Rivlin negotiating after the 2015 elections

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Why We Should Never Compete

By **DEBBIE SOUFIAN**

What is the premise of competition? Scarcity. A concise definition of classical economics is the study of how we make decisions when capacity and scarcity are the defining lenses with which we view not only our economy but our thinking. Unfortunately, that thinking is dominated by a lack mentality. When we believe in limitation, namely finite potential or opportunity, we act in ways that work against rather than for each other. Competition is not a righteous act; it gathers around the belief that we think we know what is best for us. It operates under conditions of entitlement where we think we deserve something more than someone else does. Ultimately, we either feel like losers or winners at the expense of others.

In attaching ourselves to an outcome and doing anything we can to obtain it, we place our attachment and faith in forces

that have no ability to provide the meaning and innate impact we seek. And this is why we suffer. In operating according to a belief in finite resources, and that we are more deserving than others, we inevitably feel threatened by them. Marianne Williamson, a New York Times bestselling author and spiritual teacher/lecturer, wrote that every relationship is meant to be holy. We are here to help expand and use our good character to love one another.

Because we may believe we should act against each other, we justify this thought pattern by believing that God operates the same way — but He doesn't. God is benevolent, a force of love that He distributes to all of his creations. And if we were created in his image, then we are meant to do the same. Therefore, competing is an act against faith. God has gifted us with free will, and, with that choice, we have the ability to act in or against love. God does not inflict harm, so why must we? Can't we work with, rather

than opposed, one another?

Our God-given role is to heal the world through love. However, rather than asking God for guidance, direction, the privilege to be used in service of repairing the world, we worship our self-interest — perhaps a modern form of idolatry. It isn't ambition that is wrong. Ambition is healthy as long as the intention behind it is healthy — but ambition rooted in insecurity and competition has the capacity to enslave our inner peace.

If your pursuits are spurred by competition, then everything that you obtain is something you're taking from others — an uncomfortable thought. Material wealth earned in goodwill, however, with the intention that your abundance will serve and benefit others by being able to support your community, is a worthy goal to strive for. Abundance yields growth and heightened prosperity. When we motivate our careers to be a vessel towards collaborating with and helping others, we heal. In asking God for

success, we surrender our inclination to beat, judge or hold resentment toward anyone. If someone obtained something you think you want and do not have, then bless that person. We have no idea what is ahead for us. It is said by Rabbi Yaakov Cohen (in a podcast hosted by Rabbi Yaakov Wolbe called "This Jewish Life") that when someone acts with love and, therefore, the absence of ego, their abundance is impervious to the evil eye. You can't help but love these people. In fact, you pray love should be felt by the world.

We all deserve spiritual and material sustenance. We all desire to earn our share with the intention of using it to build and be of use to others and to know the joy of giving. Just because you think you missed out on an opportunity that your peer obtained doesn't mean you won't experience it in your own time. Sometimes we confuse improper

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NEVER COMPETE,
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timing with failure.

Moreover, if you have the intention of a higher moral belief that your life, career and relationships should be used for *tikun olam*, for healing the world, then not only will any success you do acquire be more sustainable, but you will be gifted with the inner joy that you have contributed to the well-being of the world. Nothing done purely for the self can match the pleasure of service and devotion to something vastly larger than

yourself. This is what it should mean to claim piety to God — to attempt our best, take care of ourselves and others and to surrender the mindset that we know exactly what we need; to commit to love rather than its opposite. This way, we will know that what we earn is truly deserved. And, if we do not, we can only trust we are being directed toward something better. This way, we will have never really lost because somewhere along the way we know we connected with a human being that God loves and gave life to. And that is always a win.



Competition is not a righteous act.

‘Whoever Desires May Come and Take It’: On *Baalabatim* and Torah Study in *Frum* Culture

By MICHAEL WEINER

How are *baalabatim* depicted in Orthodox Jewish music? What function do they serve, what are they praised for and how are they held up as role models? These seemingly bizarre questions occurred to me recently as I was listening to one of my favorite songs, “Joe Dimaggio’s Card,” which is sung masterfully by Abie Rotenberg on his album *Journeys III*.

I’m a big fan of R. Abie’s work, and I appreciate his unique ability to deliver religiously inspiring messages through the use of plain, folksy English lyrics and relatively simple melodies. However, listening more closely to the lyrics this time, I picked up on how *baalabatim* are treated in “Joe Dimaggio’s Card,” and it rubbed me the wrong way.

For those unfamiliar with the song, it tells the story of two American Jewish boys growing up in 1950s-era New York, whose close friendship is rooted in their mutual obsession with all things baseball. One day, they both buy packs of baseball cards, and one of the boys finds a valuable Joe DiMaggio card in a pack. He hides it “deep inside” his drawer and vows to keep it “forever and forever,” for “it was so precious to me.” It’s a sweet depiction of friendship and captures the magic that sports and athletics hold for young boys of a certain age.

In the next stanza, however, they go off to *yeshiva* and everything changes:

“When we grew older, and left for *yeshiva*
A change could be seen from the start
Sam loved to study while I loved to daydream
Slowly we drifted apart.”

Their friendship fizzles out and they go on to take very different paths in life. Sam, the studious one, becomes a *rosh yeshiva*, while the daydreamer becomes a *baalabos* of some sort. Over the years, his Joe DiMaggio card becomes incredibly valuable, but he turns away would-be buyers who make lucrative offers to purchase the card, demurring, “it’s not for sale.” Then, the moment of drama in an otherwise pretty prosaic song arrives:

“...there was a fire that ravaged his school
I knew it just might break his heart
So I reached in my drawer and said my goodbyes
To the great Joe DiMaggio’s card.”

A tragedy leads to an inspiring sacrifice.

To make the story come full circle, the ending sees our *baalabos*’ grandson arrive home from school holding a new “*gadol* card” and declare:

“Look *Zaide!* Reb Shmuel is one of the *gedolim*
And I’m giving his card to you.”

And of course, the response has to be that our protagonist lovingly hides it “deep inside” his drawer, and vows to keep it “forever

our unnamed *baalabos*, who parted with a beloved childhood baseball card in order to save his old friend’s *yeshiva*? Did he not selflessly choose to support *harbatzas Torah* instead of pocketing a cool \$500,000? What kind of monster could object to the moral lesson here, you might ask?

Great question.

Allow me to explain myself: It is indeed noble, generous and heroic for someone to sell a sentimental object of great value in order to support a Torah institution. If any

Jewish life.

First and foremost, it’s sad that the setting of a *yeshiva* is what caused the end of a childhood friendship. The implication here is that once Sam started learning Torah, the boys had nothing left in common. From there, one becomes a *rosh yeshiva* and the other a *baalabos*, and never the twain shall meet. I object! Why couldn’t Sam and his buddy continue bonding over sports *bein hasedarim*, as is quite common in many *yeshivot*? I’m speculating here, but what



Illustration of a man studying Talmud

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and ever,” for it truly is “so very precious” to him. With that, the song ends and we are left feeling warm and fuzzy and a bit teary-eyed, unless that’s just me.

You might be wondering why anyone could possibly have an issue with this inspiring, heartfelt song. Does it not depict an incredible act of sacrifice on the part of

readers out there have a spare Joe Dimaggio card lying around, I’m sure YU would be profoundly enriched by your generous donation.

What bugs me are — as I mentioned in the beginning — the implicit messages that this song sends about what it means to be an ideal *baalabos*, and by extension, the limited place of Torah learning in communal

message might Sam have received from his *rebbeim* such that he completely cut sports out of his life, thus shredding any last connection with his old friend? In my time at Yeshivat Har Etzion, I heard R. Ezra Bick

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AI is Here and We're Losing the War

By **ARYEH SCHONBRUN**

For many months now I have directed my anger against many groups and people. Against the government, the elites, the rich billionaires (“tycoons” in Israeli parlance), the *system*, politicians, businessmen, religious figures, pop icons, the barbarous right, the ultra-sophisticated left and much in between. Not that I hate each and every member of our screwy society, I’ve just had to acknowledge that they don’t seem to care very much for my well-being. They don’t show me much affection and I hardly deem it necessary to express much sentiment in return as I encounter my fellow man in the street, on the bus or at the mall.

True, I have found some friends,

low levels. I know that if I would express even a slight interest in someone else’s life or interests, I would break all of post-modern society’s moral codes. I would be categorized as invasive, insidious, impertinent, an encroacher, an enthusiast, a provoker, a nudge, a nudnik, a ne’er-do-well, an annoyance, an aggravation or just plain weird. I know this because I’ve tried. It remains nearly impossible to start any kind of conversation today in a public space, not only because of our acute meekness, but also as a result of harsh, cold social conditioning that has progressively dehumanized society as I have grown up.

We live today in a technological paradise, but we live poorly. Fewer people die young, but their longevity threatens the natural balances

catastrophic climate change, engage in pointless trade and military conflicts and unnecessarily denude a majority of humanity of livable lives. We hoard our wealth in select hands, in select countries, for selected uses and for irrational periods of time. We don’t make use of our resources in a responsible manner, we neglect our progeny and our future selves in search of immediate gratification, we rewrite history, undermine our psyches, hack our lives and destroy our humanity. Our politics have fallen lower than the level of tribal hunters, who at least felt secure within their own groups, and as such we seem to have consciously driven ourselves to our own destruction.

Were it not for our cultural disarray, our logical inconsistencies, our dysfunctional societies

we possess enough resources to allow back-saving artificial machinery to reach even our far-flung cousins across the seas. Scientific and medical research have reached levels undreamed of even a mere hundred years past. We can process information at breakneck speeds, communicate across the vastness of the Earth’s geography and travel incalculable distances at our own whim. A short glance at the richness of human history, or at even the past few hundred years, yields immeasurable troves of human creativity, ingenuity, artistry and imagination, from paintings to music to literature and beyond, and, while they may appear to us as far off and, fantastical, they give today’s generation a glimpse at the potential of a functioning society.

The beauty that managed to

the generations of men that preceded us remain with us today. They form the vanguard of the pure, the true and the beautiful that will lead us to our destiny. Imagine if Beethoven would have been able to futz around with a modern recording studio, if Van Gogh were to have painted his world through animated motion-pictures, or if Shakespeare could have learned to rap or the Rambam studied *actual* science. The great minds and legends of the past combined with the technological and societal improvements of the modern era would propel us into an era of cultural, spiritual and technological greatness! So why do we falter? Why have we lingered in the purgatory of exilic man, subject to forces that threaten his existence? Do we really deserve just President Trump, postmodern art and general banality?

The forces that have contributed to our continued material success have also worked against us. Technology, a blessing in times of peace, quickly becomes deadly in war. As humanity tamed the beast of nature, it developed increasingly destructive powers that would eventually bring the entire world to the brink of extinction. We barely survived the Cold War, we suffered incalculably from the utter devastation of the World Wars and the many conflicts that followed and we continue to carry the scars of modern man’s psychological and societal disasters. Technology, while both a civilizing factor and the reason we have all that now serves us, also came to serve the devil.

Starting in the waning days of the Second World War, and on into the Cold War, our newest technology, the computer, began to develop. It evolved from code-breaking machines to the beasts of computer science mythology into the laptop upon which I now compose this essay: a compact, efficient, powerful piece of technological instrumentation, the culmination of decades of electrical research and engineering which I owe to the great minds of generation’s past and present. I cannot but stand overawed by the great complexity that now serves my lowly occupation and I feel that, compared to even my parent’s generation, I am blessed.

However, I am also cursed with technology’s new vices: the ceaseless violation of my personal life and social sphere, the dehumanizing effects of artificial screens and barriers, the alien nature of today’s society and the cold, intelligent efficiency of today’s system of repression. All of my daily life is now governed by technologically-assisted programming, algorithmic associations and consumerist advertising specs. Whatever I see, hear, do, recall, enjoy and experience is not only harvested by the infinite “live” appliances, applications and apparatuses, but also conditioned by third parties only



Death to Robocracy! Long Live Humanity!

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

I’ve experienced some lasting relationships, but, mostly I keep expectations of my fellow at dangerously

that have kept nature at peace with humanity’s survival from Day One. We neglect our planet’s biosphere, contribute to what may amount to

and corrupt politics, we might have built a heaven on Earth. Manual labor has been eliminated from much of the developed world and

escape the ravages of previous generations’ plague, war, unrest and subjugation, such enlightened thought, art and consciousness of

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More Than an Announcement

By SAMUEL GELMAN (HOUSTON, TX)

Editor's Note: This article was originally published online on Feb. 21.

It is hard to decide where to even begin. The recent statements by Rabbi Eli Baruch Shulman regarding the coed Shabbaton are disturbing, embarrassing, disrespectful and ominous. They underline major issues Yeshiva University faces today, including its treatment of women, its view of the male-female dynamic, the role of the rabbi and the lack of clear leadership at YU. But before delving into these more abstract issues, let's start with the facts.

In his plea, Rabbi Shulman stated that "No *yeshiva* past or present, none of the *yeshivot* where you learned before, would dream of hosting a coed Shabbaton on the *yeshiva* grounds. Nor was it ever done in the 100-year history of this *yeshiva*."

This is false. This *yeshiva* held such a Shabbaton on May 2-3 in 1980, just under 40 years ago. *Kabbalat Shabbat* was held in the Morgenstern Shul itself, right below one of the major male dormitories, and the meal was held in the Rubin Cafeteria, right below the other major dormitory. Rabbi Dr. David Ebner and Rabbi Yitzchok Cohen, a current YU *Rosh Yeshiva*, both gave *divrei Torah* on that Shabbat. Having meals and *davening* on Wilf Campus itself seems much more "scandalous" than scheduling programming in the Shenk Shul half a block away from Wilf Campus. But moving past the facts, the striking issue here is how this recent

controversy and campus-wide conversation plays into and encompasses many of the larger debates YU struggles with every day.

Like so many of the issues that relate to YU Shabbat programming, we begin with the role of women on the Wilf Campus. Rabbi Shulman's statement that the "*Yeshiva* is a *makom kadosh*" when discussing the coed Shabbaton is deeply troubling. With it, he seems to be implying that, by having a coed Shabbaton on the Wilf Campus, the *kedushah* of the *yeshiva* is threatened or even destroyed; that, somehow, having women and men interact with each other as they honor the glory of God and celebrate Shabbat makes the *yeshiva* less of a *yeshiva*; that having women uptown gets in the way of the men's' religious growth.

This is not the first time women have been cast as the stumbling block in front of the blind *yeshiva* student. The Klein@9 controversy had similar undertones, as certain individuals claimed that it would make the men uncomfortable to see and hear a woman give a *dvar Torah*, and that because Wilf is a men's campus, we have to make sure to respect the concerned group's wishes, even if they might not necessarily attend Klein@9.

These arguments are deeply degrading to the women of the Beren Campus and effectively turn them into the enemy. They are cast as a modern-day Siren, told they must stay away lest they seduce the good and pure *yeshiva* student away from his religious growth and study into a life of sin, seduction and lust. I agree that the *yeshiva* is a *makom kadosh*, but there is no reason to believe that a Shabbaton such as this one did not elevate the *yeshiva*. The Shabbaton

consisted of *davening*, singing, joyous meals and Torah study, the same things that occur at every YU Shabbat. Furthermore, it gave many students their first relatable Shabbat on campus, allowing them to connect to the religious day. Is that not *kadosh*? Why does all of this change when women are involved? Why do we view women as a threat to the spirit of the *yeshiva*? What do statements like these say about the men who believe them?

This is not the first time women have been cast as the stumbling block in front of the blind yeshiva student.

In his comments to The Commentator, Rav Shulman linked the Shabbaton to dating, saying that "Boys and girls should date, but they don't have to date in the *beis midrash*." What he seems to be implying here is that this Shabbaton was created to allow men and women to meet for romantic purposes. While I am sure that some men and women participated in the Shabbaton to spend time with their significant others or look for potential partners, the idea that this Shabbaton was based around romance and dating is highly misconstrued. The purpose of this Shabbaton was to try and bridge the gap between the two undergraduate campuses to create a new micro-community within our larger YU community.

The Shabbaton also gave a portion of the

YU student body that is displeased with the classical *yeshiva* Shabbat programming a Shabbat experience they could truly enjoy. So many students at YU are dismayed by how Shabbat functions uptown. They find the cafeteria cold, unwelcoming and *hashkafically* uncomfortable. They are not interested in hearing a *parsha shiur* from a rabbi they have no relationship with. They don't want to spend every weekend playing Settlers or Codenames. They want a warm, vibrant social environment, one that includes men and women. Not because they necessarily want to date them, but because hanging out with old friends from school and camp and meeting new people is an enjoyable social experience. They want to hear new perspectives and have different conversations. They want to enter new social circles. They want to create a community that mirrors what they have at home and what they will have once they leave the halls of YU.

This negative association of coed events with improper dating is not a new phenomenon in YU. Women who come uptown to the Gottesman Library endure strange looks and audible comments from men and women alike about how they are just there to meet guys. Men that take the shuttle downtown have a certain stigma attached to them, as not having a shuttle account uptown is viewed by many as a sign of piety.

Major coed events like Stomp Out the Stigma and the YOMs are attended by a larger number of women than men, as guys are pressured to not miss night *seder* and

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The Annual Welcome Back BBQ, one of the many coed events on campus

ANNOUNCEMENT,
continued from Page 22

be associated with such things. All of this creates a poisonous and unhealthy environment. Associating everything with dating and romance places unnecessary pressure and shame on those who participate in such events. It creates unrealistic expectations and leaves many feeling upset at themselves after such an event when those expectations are not met. Furthermore, it prevents men and women from attending events they find interesting, fearful of the reputation that would come from being seen there. The comments made by Rabbi Shulman only add fuel to the fire, as the Shabbaton will now forever be associated with dating, and all those who attended it will be marked.

This brings us to the third issue: the role of the rabbi. In his comments, Rabbi Shulman spoke about how the Shabbaton was opposed by every *rosh yeshiva* and *rebbe*, saying, “that in itself is wrong.” This is also false, as there were multiple YU rabbis who participated in and helped plan this Shabbaton. Regardless, the idea that the opposition of the rabbinic leaders of this institution to this Shabbaton should somehow make it “wrong” is a problematic approach to take. How many *roshei yeshiva* must be consulted for something to be considered “wrong”? What if they disagree? Is it majority vote? Two-thirds majority? What about BMP, IBC and JSS rabbis? Do they get

a say? What about rabbis in the OSL, Straus Center and Center for the Jewish Future? What about Beren Campus or Revel rabbis? Is every YU rabbi allowed to just stand up and make a public plea? Where does the line end? Where does the buck stop?

Furthermore, the *roshei yeshiva* do not dictate YU policy on their own, as is evident by the disparity between Rabbi Schachter’s *psak* regarding lighting Chanukah candles and the official YU policy, which was established by Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik. Rabbi Schachter holds that one should light in their room, but, since YU does not allow candles to be lit in the dormitories, he recommends students go home, light and sleep there. Most students stay on campus and light in the dormitory lounges, evidently not following the *psak* of Rabbi Schachter. Is this also “wrong”?

While we do have a vague and undefined “internal *mesorah*,” history shows it is susceptible to change. The *mesorah* used to be that women were not taught Talmud at Stern College for Women, until it wasn’t and the tradition became the exact opposite. Of course, Rabbi Shulman is allowed to disagree with a change in the tradition (even though, as we saw before, no change is occurring). He could have voiced this opinion in his *shiur*, in one of the *mussar* schmoozes or in private to students who asked him for guidance. But to make a public announcement and appeal in the Glueck Beit Midrash — a place where all Wilf students should feel welcome and

comfortable — and then call it “wrong” is a misguided view of his and the rest of the *roshei yeshiva*’s authority at YU.

Which brings us to our final issue: the lack of clear leadership. I am sure my previous paragraph infuriated many readers. “Rabbi Shulman is a rabbi,” they may argue. “Of course he has authority and gets a say in the policy of the *yeshiva*. That is what a rabbi does.” Now, if this were his *yeshiva*, I would wholeheartedly agree. However, this is not his *yeshiva*. It is not Rabbi Penner’s *yeshiva*; it is not Rabbi Schachter’s *yeshiva*; it is not Rabbi Berman’s *yeshiva*. Rather, this *yeshiva* belongs to no one.

The question of who is in charge of religious policy at YU has plagued the university for decades, and has become the subject of much debate in the last few years. Scandals such as the Klein@9 controversy and the Rabbi Klapper incident all occurred because no one knows who is in charge. Is it President Berman? Rabbi Penner? Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz? The Office of Student Life? Rabbi Shulman? Without a formal figure or body to ask questions to and make clarifications, the *yeshiva* is left in a limbo state with multiple factions arguing over what it stands for. No one can claim they speak for the *yeshiva* because no one knows who is in charge.

This lack of clarity is hurtful to the student body. They are left confused and agitated, looking for clear leadership only to be greeted with silence or empty ideologies. One

side is always left feeling betrayed, waiting for clarification from their leaders that will never come, holding onto the hope that this is not the “real YU.” The other side basks in their victory until the next controversy flares up and the roles are reversed. And so the cycle goes.

YU suffers as well, enduring embarrassing story after embarrassing story, making it look like an archaic institution in the eyes of the modern Jew. It pushes prospective students away and makes it all the more difficult for many of the alumni to discuss their alma mater with kind words. It makes the rabbis who make these announcements, silence women and tear down fliers look bizarre and disconnected from reality. Due to their controversial nature, these actions become their defining factor as opposed to their great Torah knowledge, communal work and *chesed*.

If YU wants to avoid stories like these, it must clarify who is in charge and what they stand for. They must decide if announcements such as the one that occurred on Feb. 13 are appropriate. They must decide if coed Shabbatons like the one that occurred this past Shabbat are appropriate. It is unclear who this announcement would come from, and many will be upset no matter what course of action is taken. But at least the students will know where their university stands. At least they will know who to turn to.

Until then, the pulpit should remain empty.

FRUM CULTURE,
continued from Page 20

fondly reminisce on more than occasion about playing basketball with R. Aharon Lichtenstein and various other college students and *kollel* fellows at YU. Not everyone on the court was a *talmid chacham*, but everyone enjoyed playing together nonetheless.

More troublesome to me is the end of the song and the *mussar haskel* therein. The *baalabos* has made his laudable donation, which must have been very painful, and as a consolation prize, he gets a “*gadol* card” from his grandson that features his old pal Shmuel the *rosh yeshiva*. There’s no indication that the two men resumed their boyhood friendship after the DiMaggio card donation, and the song sadly ends without them meeting once again.

Here’s the rub: The *baalabos*, who was a

daydreamer in *yeshiva*, is celebrated solely and exclusively for his *tzedakah*. That, apparently, is his one great *maalah* in life. Learning Torah, teaching Torah and matters of *frumkeit* are all left in the hands of Reb

The message certainly can’t be that non-roshei yeshiva should only aspire to work hard and then give money to roshei yeshiva.

Shmuel at the *yeshiva*. A child listening to this song might reasonably deduce that *talmud Torah* is confined to the *yeshiva*, while those outside its walls are the daydreaming Jews who fulfill their *chiyuv* in *talmud Torah*

by writing a check — or selling a card, as the case may be.

Why must this be? Why isn’t there a stanza anywhere that acknowledges and praises the Torah learning of our *baalabos*, be it early morning *daf yomi*, learning the *parsha* with his children or a weekly *iyun chaburah* he attends at night? In the song, there is a clear and strict division between those who learn Torah and those who support Torah. The supporters are the “daydreamers” who couldn’t make the cut in *yeshiva*, and their solace is to provide for the “top guys” who did. To be clear: I have no issue with praising *tzedakah*, which the Talmud says is greater than offering *korbanot* (*Sukkah 49b*), but why does our song hold it up as the only possible religious experience available to laymen? The message certainly can’t be that non-*roshei yeshiva* should only aspire to work hard in order to give money to *roshei*

yeshiva. Their own Torah learning — either as part of the *chinuch* of their children or for its own sake — surely matters too.

The Rambam in *Mishnah Torah* (*Talmud Torah 3:1*) puts it well:

“The crown of Torah is set aside, waiting and ready for each Jew, as it says: ‘The Torah which Moses commanded us is the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob (Deuteronomy 33:4).’ Whoever desires may come and take it.”

Indeed. The religious contributions of *baalabatim* that our community celebrates should not be limited to charitable giving. Next time, our *baalabos* should get a *chavrusa* at the *yeshiva* instead of a *gadol* card. Torah learning is a “team sport,” and *frum* music would do well to reflect that.

AI IS HERE,
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interested in my life for their sole gain, irreverent of my hopes, dreams and ambitions and uninterested in my fate.

Most of us knowingly involve ourselves in such outrageously manipulative environments, but not as agreeing parties. We are forced into such alienated interactions not as a way of making things efficient, but as contractually obligated parties, legally

The hum of the server farm and the flashes of fiber-optic connectivity have replaced the human connections that we cultivated throughout our long history.

bonded to this dystopic reality. In order to function today, one *must* check his social networks, email and news etc. countless times a day, make many of his purchases online, and, of course, indulge himself sexually and emotionally through video games, hook-up apps and pornography. The many websites we visit daily directly use the data

we generate to undermine our basic human tendencies, to target our psychological and societal weaknesses and to get us addicted. They do this for many reasons, political, financial and social, but they never ask us what we want. We just don’t matter.

We cannot advise, speak with or communicate with these forces that shape our lives. They will not listen, nor will they allow us to know what they do and how they work. Instead of human connections, we have grown accustomed to the sterility of

postmodern silence: the hum of the server farm and the flashes of fiber-optic connectivity have replaced the human connections that we cultivated throughout our long history. We have sacrificed our humanity for “progress,” and that progress now threatens our existence.

We have, to a large extent, given up our

ability to control and manage our most basic industries. AI, unable to decipher the underlying human, societal, cultural and moral consequences of major financial decisions, routinely wreaks havoc on society, its people and endangers our future. Without hesitation, the financial AI bots (as of Jan. 2017, 30 percent of the entire stock market had been overtaken by ETFs [electronically traded funds] —Financial Times 1/24/2017) that were created with the sole purpose of making money will continue to push our planet and humanity to/beyond their limits. These super-machines, connected through a cloud of wireless cacophony, don’t much care for our survival. They will survive even a nuclear winter (they control our missiles too!) and/or catastrophic climate change. They cannot suffer and show no interest in our safety. These horrific, cold, evil influences on our economy and society shape our daily lives and dehumanize us. They kill us from within and will patiently wait out our eventual extinction if we don’t act now.

We must pull the plug before it’s too late. Before we have given them access to all of our essential industries, utilities, technologies and weapons. If the lattice of neo-colonialist

financial machines continues its march towards world domination, we will not have the resources to salvage our race. As the web grows, humans become prey to the forces of cold calculation, and become harder to save. Our souls die with the bureaucracy that these devils force upon us, and if we shall have any chance in our fight, we will need to act before humanity turns on itself. We need to fight machine with emotion, irrationalism, love and intuition and we must send our sons to fight in the line of fire. Computer science curricula, while heavily defended — they are some of the harshest in all of academia — offer us the only way out. If we do not gather a critical number of hackers, if we shall lack the technological know-how to kill our post-modern Frankenstein, we will all be doomed to the decisions of our corrupt robocrats.

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.” (Ezekiel 36:26)

Death to Robocracy! Long Live Humanity!



Chicken Soup

Sipping and Slurping Without the Settling

By ESTHER STERN

Chicken soup is for everyone: everyone who has pregamed too heavily last night, everyone who finds themselves in the *beit midrash* till ungodly hours of the night and everyone else. After all, nothing warms the belly quite like scoring “adulting” points for taking care of yourself like ordering yourself a plastic, quart-sized container of chicken soup. In that case, both I and your mother couldn’t be more proud of you. And if at this point you find yourself in the unfortunate majority of students on the Beren and Wilf campuses that don’t know where to look for quality chicken soup that tastes like mom’s, I’m talking to you. As a self-proclaimed arbiter of good soup, allow me to open your eyes to the quality options available in the Washington Heights and Murray Hill communities.

well, starting with Mendy’s chicken gumbo. It’s a pleasant, viscous and filling soup with a flavorful base. In this non-newtonian suspension, live chunks of familiar soup fare, allowing for an incredibly strong eating experience. Another pro tip — ditch the Stern salad social scene and take the gumbo to go: sweatpants are the perfect pairing to this hearty soup.

Also serving soup in midtown is Paprika, whose chicken soup is available so infrequently it might as well be a speakeasy. You’re sure to earn real street creds for knowing that this delicacy is even offered there. If you do happen to go on the fortnight when they happen to be serving up the soup, you’d taste mellowed, stewed notes. It’s a no frills dish, consisting only of chicken and the works, but its appeal lies in the comforting familiarity of the experience. I’m no *posek*, but this soup is something that I would feel comfortable saying *Hallel* with a *bracha*, after consum-

As a self-proclaimed arbiter of good soup, allow me to open your eyes to the quality options available in the Washington Heights and Murray Hills communities.

First, on the list of quality local chicken soups is the one found at Burgers and Grill in the Heights. It is the kind of soup that I can only imagine was crafted by a Yemenite grandmother; the kind that, when accompanied by arak, she’d swear would cure you of absolutely anything. It tastes of chicken with copious amounts of bell pepper added, and a flavor you cannot seem to place which is the cumin. The kicker to this soup is the rice and beans, which you have to ask them to add. Pro tip: ask away. It comes with a side of grilled pita, making this soup everything you didn’t realize you wanted. Arak optional.

For those who reside in midtown, don’t fret! There are tantalizing options for you as

ing. It is an entity that can best be described as the overnight kugel equivalent to chicken soup, it’s divine. The quality soup options listed, that are at our disposal are certainly worthwhile, give the chicken soups a chance — you can thank me later.

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Apple & Goldman Sachs: Will They Pull it Off?

By EITAN LAVIAN

Having just one Apple product is not too common for the millions of Apple-users around the world; these loyalists live by the motto of “go big or go home.” Apple has been successful in establishing a brand for itself, and it has made it the norm for many customers to buy nearly every type of Apple product, as customers effectively create an

Although Apple has not officially announced the news, rumors have it that new features on the iPhone, particularly in their Apple Wallet application, introduced by Apple in 2014 will serve as an electronic credit card. Similar to the rings seen with Apple’s fitness-tracking application, Apple Pay will have an additional feature that tracks users’ daily spending habits, sending notifications and allowing users to set self-imposed limits, and track credit card rewards.

firm, estimated Apple’s 2019 service revenue at \$45 billion. They found that close to \$1 billion of that was from Apple Pay; however, this is with only 25 percent of U.S. iPhone users having activated Apple Pay.

Apple is not alone in their attempt to expand the role they play in their customers’ lives. In an effort to make this both a successful and efficient venture, Goldman Sachs is adding customer-support call centers around the country, and is also working on building an internal system to handle payments. This project has a reported budget of \$200 million, and is one of new Goldman CEO David Solomon’s major new initiatives. The bank hopes this card will help gain more customers and broaden the scope of their retail banking services.

Apple has not listed the specific requirements to be eligible for their card aside for being an iPhone user. However, the features they are integrating provide reason to believe that anyone can be a member, even someone with a low credit score. A credit score is a numerical expression that measures the risk

a lender may be taking when dealing with you. A bank, for example, pays close attention to a client’s credit score when issuing a loan. Apple, with their history of student deals, also hopes to acquire students looking for their first credit cards, in an effort to keep them in the broader Apple family.

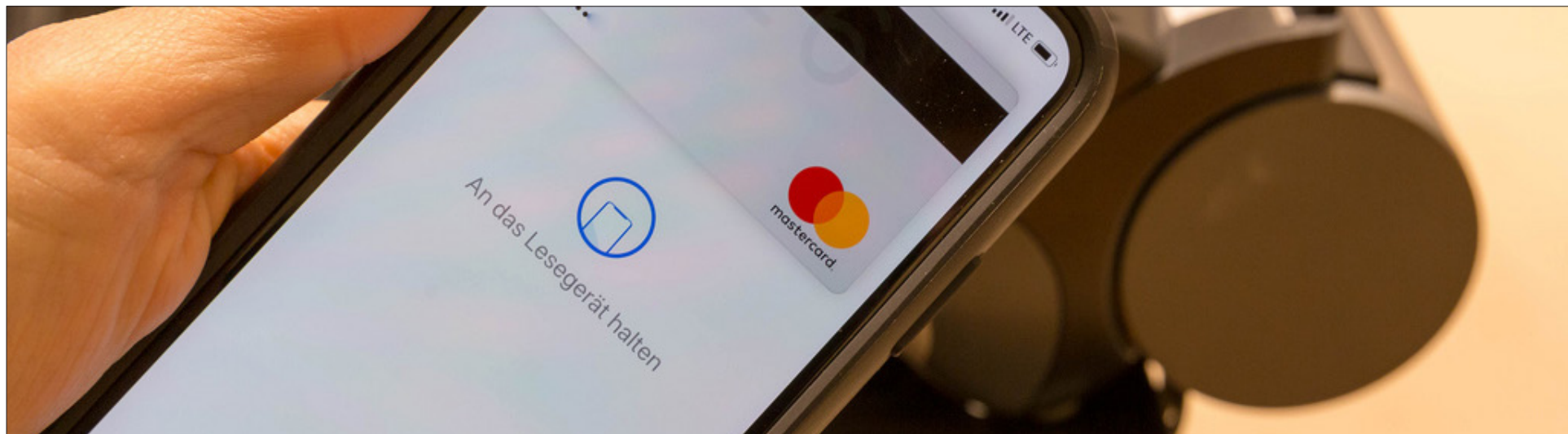
Matt Schulz, chief industry analyst at CompareCards.com, explained that despite their cache, in today’s competitive credit card marketplace, Apple and Goldman will not have an easy time acquiring customers. Others claim the poor performance with Apple’s Barclaycard Visa gives no reason to believe the card with Goldman Sachs will work out any better. Apple, however, has more than proven themselves to be a successful tech company, and, in my opinion, will only continue successfully infiltrating our lives, for better or for worse. As with all great ideas, only time will tell if Apple and Goldman have hit the jackpot.

With the help of Goldman Sachs, Apple is finding new ways to be more involved in the lives of its loyal customers.

Apple ecosystem for themselves. With the help of Goldman Sachs, Apple is finding new ways to be more involved in the lives of its loyal customers.

The Wall Street Journal reported that this coming Spring, Apple is planning to issue a Mastercard credit card with Goldman Sachs.

As far as perks for card users go, members will earn about 2 percent cash-back on most purchases, and potentially more on Apple gadgets and services. After Apple announced their goal of reaching a service revenue of \$50 billion for the year of 2020, Loup Ventures, an investment and research



Using Apple Pay in order to complete transactions very well may be the future of payments.

FLICKR

Millennials, Microbreweries and the Changing Beer Industry

By ELI FRISHMAN

The most exciting part about the largely uneventful 2019 Super Bowl came from a “Game of Thrones”-inspired Bud Lite commercial lambasting Miller and Coors Lite for using corn syrup in their products. But while these beer conglomerates duke it out in a frivolous argument inciting the wrath of corn farmers nationwide, microbreweries are popping up around the country and changing the landscape of the beer industry.

According to current beer trends, major beer companies have more to be worried about than just

overall, beer has been in decline, craft-beer sales continue to rise with 2018 witnessing over four billion in total sales.

The answer to these trends might not surprise you: millennials. While our parents and grandparents generation were satisfied with just a regular cold one, our generation requires that a beer be unique.

Today, there are over 6,000 microbreweries in operation in the U.S. alone. These small businesses create many jobs for local economies. A study by the economics firm John Dunham & Associates titled “Brew Serves America” found that microbreweries accounted for close

appealing to very specific interests. Some of the eclectic and creative selections include a Hoptimus Prime Double IPA, a Sheep Shaggar Scotch Ale and a Rogue Shakespeare Oatmeal Stout. While major brands like Sam Adams and Blue Moon have various seasonal and IPA offerings, it’s clear that they’re playing catch-up with the little guys.

And it’s not just the different options. Many microbreweries also double as brewpubs where a visitor’s bartender is the same guy who crafted the beer. These brewpubs offer tours of the plant where participants can partake in samples of all the various brews. This tight-knit feel not only creates great vibes, but in the process also creates strong customer loyalty. Yoni Weisberg (YC ‘20), who recently visited a brewpub called Steel-Toe brewing in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, noted, “Besides for my tart-raspberry-wheat beer tasting delicious, the brewpub also had this rustic and homey feel to it. The bartenders were more than happy to talk about the variety of beers they had on tap, all brewed on site in the next room over.” Yoni’s experience is just one of the many occurring throughout the country, contributing to the success of microbreweries.

The locations of many microbreweries are also off the beaten path. Steel Toe Brewing is built in an industrial area and many microbreweries were at one point in time churches, bread factories, fire-houses and even prisons. This repurposing is also environmentally and cost-effective. Instead of having to tear down a building or starting from scratch, developers simply use an existing structure and make any necessary repairs to get the building ready for brewing, simultaneously giving it a cool feeling.

Ironically, a major problem confronting microbreweries is growth. For many microbrewery patrons, the appeal isn’t simply the product as much as it is the road-less-traveled-by allure. When microbreweries expand their sales and customer base, their loyal consumers often turn elsewhere in search of the next best-kept secret.

While the unique flavors and experience might be the main factor for the success of microbreweries, it might not be the only. Beyond beer, and perhaps even indicative of the morale of our generation, millennials are more likely to support small businesses than other generational groups. A 2017 study by AT&T found that over half of millennials (ages 16-34) were

willing to pay more to support small businesses compared to 38 percent of Generation X (ages 35-49) and 42 percent of baby boomers (ages 50-75). These statistics may also help explain the coffee



Steel Toe Brewing

STEEL TOE BREWING WEBSITE

For many microbrewery patrons, the appeal isn’t simply the product as much as it is the road-less-traveled-by allure.

corn syrup. In 2018, combined U.S. beer sales for Bud, Miller and Coors Lite declined by 4.2 percent from the previous year. There have also been significant drops in consumer preference for beer. In 2002, beer comprised 54 percent of the alcohol market, but by 2017 that number was down to 46 percent. Although,

to 17,000 jobs while brewpubs accounted for 9,289. Microbreweries are so prevalent that the Brewers Association recently reported that 85 percent of Americans live within ten miles of a brewery.

Unlike the big-name providers that offer only a handful of options, microbreweries offer a wider array of beer flavors and brew types,

industry seeing smaller locally-owned coffee stores competing for market share with giant chains like Starbucks and Dunkin’.

Luckily for New York City residents, there are plenty of microbreweries to quench any thirst. If you’re 21 or older and looking to experience a microbrewery, head over to one of the many NYC locations. Or as Purim approaches, maybe it’s time your *seudah* feature a Washington Heights brewed beer.

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The Spirit of the Masters

By AARON KARESH

As a college student at the College of Charleston, my grandfather played 36 holes of golf a day — 18 holes before class and 18 afterward — and to this day he is the best golfer with whom I have had the privilege to play. My grandmother is from Augusta, Georgia, home of the most famous and exclusive golf club in the country — so exclusive, in fact, that the limited details that are available to outsiders were leaked by a former caddie in 2002. Very little has been leaked since. At the time, membership fees ranged from \$25,000 to \$30,000 annually and there were around 300 members. While no details vis-a-vis membership fees have been made public since then, the number of members has remained the same.

But this article isn't about Augusta National Golf Club, it's about the Masters golf tournament, which is held at Augusta National every year in the first full week of April. I know it's barely March, still winter, and the semester feels like it kind of just started (at least for me), but Masters season is just around the corner.

The Masters provides us with a small silver lining in a day-and-age where money is king and hoarding is second nature.

When he was a teenager growing up in Augusta, my great uncle saved up to buy tickets to the Masters, and has held them ever since. The way these tickets work is as follows: Every year, ticket-holders have the option to renew their tickets for approximately \$325 a piece; if the ticket-holder chooses not to renew their tickets in any given year, the tickets go to the next person on the waitlist, which has been closed since 2000. But what if you are just *dying* to go the Masters but don't have tickets and aren't next in line on the waitlist? In 2012, Augusta National began making a very small number of tickets available for purchase by "the public" if they're lucky enough to be selected in the random lottery. If that doesn't work for you — it won't — then get ready to pony up. Masters tickets are hella expensive.

My dad had the opportunity to go to the Masters two years ago. Upon his return, he made a comment to me that was initially pretty surprising: The Masters was leaving *tons* of money on the table. I knew that the face value of ticket prices was relatively inexpensive considering their scarcity, and that food costs are lower than anyone could imagine (imagine paying \$1.50 for a chicken sandwich!), but I figured that money was made up with massive TV deals and merchandise sales; I was wrong. In a *Forbes* report released in April of 2015, it was reported that the Masters generated about \$115

million in revenue; while this may sound like a lot, it's nothing compared to the approximately \$215 million minimum they would have made had they signed a lucrative domestic television deal, which analysts say would be worth upwards of \$100 million annually.

As a Syms student this appalls me; as a Midwesterner with Southern roots this makes me feel right at home. Allow me to explain. There is often talk in my family about "the spirit of the Masters." Tickets and food are cheap, mega-television deals nonexistent, ad revenue small, all on purpose and all in an effort to maintain "spirit," this "Southern Hospitality." On years when my uncle cannot attend the Masters — this is only the case when it falls on Pesach, otherwise, nothing is stopping that man — he gives the tickets to a colleague of his so as to maintain this aura of respect to the game, to the course, and to the tradition and history of this storied tournament. And as dumb and fiscally irresponsible as that may sound, the Masters provides us with a small silver lining in a day-and-age where money is king and hoarding is second nature. To be fair, though, Augusta National *does* bring in massive amounts of

money selling merchandise. The gift shop, I'm told by eyewitnesses who parted with plenty of money while there, is packed at all times. Hats are \$25, pullover quarter-zips are \$85 and the resale value of these items is nearly double!

While the World Series, NBA Finals, Stanley Cup Finals and Super Bowl all receive more acclaim than the Masters, they are by no means in a league of their own when it comes to resale ticket prices. The average ticket price for both the 2018 World Series and 2018 NBA Finals was about \$1,800, the average price for an NHL Stanley Cup Finals game was just above \$1,000, the average ticket price for a 2019 Super Bowl ticket was nearly \$4,600 and as of Feb. 27, 2019, the cheapest option for a single-day 2019 Masters pass on StubHub was going for upwards of \$2,100. So while the glitz, the glam and the "I was there" appeal of the Masters pales in comparison to that of a "Big Four" championship game, the resale value dictates that it's tickets are just as sought after, if not more.

So why, with such clear and simple evidence that they are leaving money on the table, does the Masters continue to leave hundreds of millions of dollars on the table? The answer lays in the "Spirit of The Masters."



The author's golf bag and 2017 Masters hat



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