

# The Yeshiva University OBSERVER



THE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER OF STERN COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, SY SYMS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, AND YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

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## “I AM CURIOUS, AND I AM COMING TO LEARN”

Sivan Rahav Meir to Join Yeshiva University for the 2019-2020 Year



Meir with husband Yedidya; the couple will be making the move with their five children. (Photo: Jerusalem Post)

### NEWS

BY SARA SCHATZ

On June 19th, renowned Israeli journalist and recent World Mizrahi icon, Sivan Rahav-Meir, announced on her Facebook page that she will be living in Manhattan for the year with her husband and five children. They will be *shlichim* (missionaries) for World Mizrahi and this largely involves her teaching students at Yeshiva University. The plan is to broadcast her weekly *parsha shiur* (which currently

takes place at Hechal Shlomo in Jerusalem) every Wednesday at Stern College in both Hebrew and English. In addition, Meir intends to stay at Stern for one or two *shabbatot* on campus, have one-on-one meetings with students, and guest lecture in multiple classes, including Professor Avital Chizhik-Goldschmidt's Features Writing class, GPATS classes, and Professor Maria Blekher's Sy Syms class on Israeli Business Environments.

The idea to teach at Yeshiva University came into fruition after Meir spent a significant amount of time in the States as a scholar-in-residence after her weekly *parsha shiur* gained massive popularity. "It was so amazing to me because all I do is discuss the *parsha* -- what I find interesting," she noted. "Suddenly, I found myself ten times in the states -- from Washington to Baltimore to Los Angeles to New York."

As her visits increased, and her understanding of Jewish life in America expanded, Meir's tours grew more and more meaningful. Then, Rabbi Doron Peretz, the president of Mizrahi, and Rabbi Dr. Stu Halpern, Senior Advisor to the Provost of Yeshiva University, suggested that she come to America for an entire year. Though it was a difficult decision to make, she

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### NEWS

## SCWSC ENTERS FALL SEMESTER WITHOUT ELECTED PRESIDENT

BY RACHEL JACOBI

We are entering this semester without an elected person filling the role of SCWSC president. How did this atypical state of affairs come to pass?

Let us recap the

complicated events of last semester.

Elections for the student council of 2019-2020 were

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### NEWS

## NO LGBTQ+ REPRESENTATIVES AT FIRST RA LGBTQ+ SENSITIVITY TRAINING

BY MOLLY MEISELS

Resident Advisor training on the Beren and Wilf campuses incorporated historic firsts this academic year. Along with the usual emotional support and values training, on Monday,

*The Counseling Center opted for a straight therapist... rather than an expert on LGBTQ+ issues.*

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Stern grad advocates for the deaf community.

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**WELCOME BACK!**  
FROM THE  
YU OBSERVER

## EDITORIALS



FROM THE EDITORS' DESK:

## BIGOTRY IS HERESY

The *Observer's* Religious Mission  
to Eliminate Intolerance

BY MOLLY MEISELS

*“What is done cannot be undone...”*

After three years of over-hearing snippets of bigoted conversations at Yeshiva University, often featuring statements like “he’s a f\*g” or “Muslims are terrorists,” I have become distanced from my idealism.

Although difficult to grapple with, I know that hate has found a home in the Orthodox world. Rabbis, teachers, political figures, and writers have all jumped on the bandwagon of bigotry, while flaunting the Torah as their shield. This has given many YU students the unspoken permission to hide behind holy text, allowing God and our ancestors to take the fall for their personal prejudice.

Recently, a YU student proudly stated to me that supporting gay rights is apikorut (heresy) because “caring [for]... people that go against halacha is heretical.” I do not blame this student for his intolerant views because I understand that this issue is bigger than him. He is merely the product of a zealous Orthodox establishment that finds no issue with “corroborating” its hatred with Torah sources. The zealotry begins with those at the top -- rabbis who directly influence Orthodox young adults. For instance, earlier this year, an Israeli rabbinical figure at Bnei David, a yeshiva in the West Bank, said, “The gentiles will want to be our

slaves...Instead of just walking the streets and being stupid and violent and harming each other, once they’re slaves, their lives can begin to take shape.” A respected rabbinical figure in another yeshiva told a student -- “You are going to hell, you *shvartze* [Yiddish slur for a person of color].” These occurrences are not isolated incidents, and are growing in number. Yet Judaism and bigotry do not, and must not, go together. These rabbis are not promoting Jewish values with their rhetoric, they are disgracing them. Anyone, no matter their stature, who clings to prejudice while claiming that Torah values are in their court, *chooses* to do so. Judaism does not live or die under a banner of bigotry.

*Anyone, no matter their stature, who clings to prejudice while claiming that Torah values are in their court, chooses to do so.*

Hillel, one of the most revered rabbis in our tradition, understood this. When he said, “What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow: this is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn,” he was not excluding the LGBTQ+ community or people of color. Hillel, along with generations of leading rabbinical scholars, understood that Judaism was not to

be a religion of hostility, but one of harmony. Yet our community seems to have abandoned this. It’s as if we have joined the side of the oppressor, just to see what it’s like. For once, we are not the focus of American persecution. Therefore, many of us have popped open bottles of champagne, spritzing our comfort on the graves of our ancestors -- forgetting what it feels like to be hated, and, in turn, celebrating while others suffer.

This cannot remain the status quo. We, as Jews, have an obligation to combat intolerance and hatred, especially Jews in the journalistic community. Writing has the power to change realities. It has shaped religion, gender, and family structures, especially Jewish ones. We are the People of the Book, and writing has been fundamental to the progress of our practice.

Just as Jewish communities have used writing to progress societies, they have also used writing to regress them. This has been made clear by the *Jewish Press*, a lauded Orthodox publication, run by an editor in chief who tweets, “How about this exchange? Whites give blacks money, and blacks publicly thank whites for giving them Christianity to replace the primitive African religions they were practicing when they got here.” His Twitter is bursting with racist and homophobic analyses. He even claims that white national-

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The Yeshiva University  
**OBSERVER**  
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2019-2020

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Founded by the women of Yeshiva University’s Stern College in 1958, The Observer is the independent newspaper of Stern College for Women, Sy Syms School of Business, and Yeshiva University.

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## EDITORIALS

## BIGOTRY IS HERESY

FROM PAGE 2

ism and supremacism do not exist, and are merely figments of the progressive imagination.

His intolerance does not end with personal tweets. The *Jewish Press* recently published an article titled, "The Pride Parade - What Are They Proud Of?" This piece relentlessly bashes the LGBTQ+ community, without even recognizing that many of the Jewish children unlucky enough to read the piece, are gay or transgender. These children will live their lives in shame and sorrow, soaking in their self-loathing. But this

reality is not contemplated by the editorial board of the *Jewish Press*. The article uses the Torah to support and reinforce intolerant claims, feeding the flames of pain which rest in the hearts of Jewish LGBTQ+ individuals. This is the blueprint of bigotry that many Orthodox Jews have chosen to follow.

But change is imminent. As the future of the Orthodox world, we – the young women and men of Yeshiva University – have a responsibility to transform the Jewish community. The *Observer* takes on that responsibility with pride. We believe that Yeshiva University and the broader Jewish community need

to distance ourselves from bigotry, and we know that a new generation of journalism can accomplish that. The *Observer* will embrace the religious traditions of our ancestors by writing as an expression of our values -- values of tolerance, advocacy, and acceptance. Instead of using the Torah as a shield, we will use the Torah to shield the vulnerable. No matter if you are ultra-Orthodox or an atheist; straight or gay; cisgender or transgender; white or a person of color, you have a home in the *Observer*. We will write for you and we will fight for you.

*No matter if you are ultra-Orthodox or an atheist; straight or gay; cisgender or transgender; white or a person of color, you have a home in the Observer. We will write for you and we will fight for you.*

We will not allow our people to descend into darkness.

*...but one can prevent it happening again." - Anne Frank*

## THERE IS NOTHING BUT YOUR TRUTH



(Photo: Pixabay)

BY TALYA HYMAN

*"Hear, O Israel: Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is One."*

*When They See Us*, creator Ava DuVernay's Netflix miniseries masterpiece based on real-events, is a painful and eye-opening depiction of Kevin Richardson, Antron McCray, Yusef Salaam, Korey Wise, and Raymond Santana Jr.-- the five Black and Hispanic teenagers dubbed the Central Park Five, and now, the Exonerated Five-- who were unethically charged and falsely convicted for the brutal assault and rape of a woman in the 1989 Central Park Jogger case. The reality of the injustice shocked me and infuriated me and broke me. The five boys' resilience, strength, and morality put me back together again.

Following the heart-shattering sentencing of Kevin, Antron, Yusef, and Raymond to juvenile facilities and Korey's sentence to adult prison, the five teenagers were offered the opportunity of parole if they confessed to the crime. They

could not tell a lie. A falsified conviction had been forced upon them, but the five forcefully stood by their own conviction: the steadfast and fierce belief in their innocence. Standing with stolen lives and shattered dreams, the five teens' power lay in their choice to remain in a land of metal bars rather than live a lie. The undying belief they had in themselves as good people, with integrity, served as their lifelines as they endured the most trying and debilitating of circumstances.

As the saying goes, if you are going through hell, keep going. Even when the world they knew and loved went mad, when they were forced to confront that very same world devoid of justice, Kevin, Antron, Yusef, Korey, and Raymond clung to their one reality that remained unmoved and impenetrable as they walked through their own hell: the truth.

Truth, we learn from Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgensztern of Kotzk, the Kotzker Rebbe, is only achieved when we confront the inner recesses of our hearts and souls and demand authentic lives of ourselves. "Do not be satisfied with the speech of your lips and the thought of

your heart, all the promises and good sayings in your mouth, and all the good thoughts in your heart. Rather you must arise and do!" the Kotzker Rebbe is attributed with saying. The values we claim to live by mean nothing if they are not reflected in the actions we perform and the lives we live. We must be engaged in constant self-analysis to determine the root of our intentions. Am I merely seeking for others to view me in a certain positive light, or am I actualizing my soul to the world?

*What is the one value, belief, assertion in your life that makes you get up in the morning, that makes you proud of who you are, that makes you believe in yourself?*

The Torah personality whom I feel most embodies the actualization of his soul is our forefather Avraham, the revolutionary truth-seeker. Avraham was the first monotheist, the first believer in the eternal Truth of our

tradition, who in turn changed the world for eternity. Even when the entire world was against him and even when met with tests from G-d Himself, Avraham continuously fulfilled his truth by fighting for G-d's immanent and transcendent Truth to be manifest in the physical world. Our first father teaches us to demand the truth-- whether that be religiously, spiritually, socially, or politically-- for ourselves and of ourselves, and to infuse that truth into all that we do, everyday of our lives.

Living your truth is baring your soul to the world. So now I turn to my Yeshiva University community -- to you. What is your truth? What is the one value, belief, assertion in your life that makes you get up in the morning, that makes you proud of who you are, that makes you believe in yourself? No matter your truth, awaken to it and live it. Live like Kevin, Antron, Yusef, Korey, and Raymond. Live like the Kotzker Rebbe. Live like Avraham Avinu. Most of all, live like yourself. And then you will be able to say that you have lived an authentic life aligned with your beliefs and values: a life of Truth.

*"I am Hashem, your G-d: It is true."*

## NEWS

## NEW DEAN OF SY SYMS SHARES HIS VISION

BY RACHEL JACOBI

Before coming to Yeshiva University to take over as the dean of Sy Syms School of Business, Dr. Noam Wasserman was a professor at the University of Southern California. On top of being a professor, he acted as the founding director of the Founder Central, an initiative that guides founders and startup builders with early decisions. Prior to his time at USC, Dean Wasserman was an award-winning professor at Harvard Business School for 13 years, where he created and taught a popular elective course. Dean Wasserman has also authored two bestselling books -- *The Founder's Dilemma: Anticipating and Avoiding the Pitfalls That Can Sink a Startup* and *Life is a Startup: What Founders Can Teach Us about Making Choices and Managing Change*.

Dean Wasserman's arrival at Yeshiva University has been met with optimism by Sy Syms students. Shaiel Soleimani, Vice President of Sy Syms Student Council, says, "Dean Wasserman is a great addition to YU. He truly cares about the students and what is best for them. He has many visions and goals for Syms. He is empowering and engaging with faculty, staff, and students. I cannot wait to learn from him and continue working with him

this upcoming year!" Recent Sy Syms graduate Jacob Edinger, Syms '19, concurs, "I'm really excited for Dean Wasserman to elevate the academic standards and integrity of Syms."

Dean Wasserman certainly does have ambitions for elevating academic standards. He describes his enthusiastic vision for Syms and says, "Over the last three months, I have been working with the faculty, other Deans, and supporters of the school to identify priorities in each of three key stages of life: the undergraduate program, the graduate program, and post-graduation continuing education. This year, we will be making major inroads in each of these three stages."

One of the changes that Dean Wasserman has put forth is the improvement of the Honors program. Honors students were consulted to create a "wishlist" for what they wanted built within the program. Their feedback was used as a resource, along with a multi-year donation, to increase the Honors program course offerings by 40% this semester between the Beren and Wilf campuses.

Dean Wasserman plans on instituting changes that have already started and he will continue to invest effort in the faculty. Dean Wasserman explains, "Most centrally, we are working on strengthening the teaching across the board, and on investing additional effort and resources in the Honors program in particular." He has particularly found the faculty to be "delightfully receptive to ex-

perimenting with adding more experiential and practice-oriented elements to their courses." With regards to the changes that will be implemented, Dean Wasserman credits the faculty as the "core to all these efforts." As a result, faculty development will be prioritized both in research and in teaching.

*"We will continue to tap the voice of the student -- through continuing my chats with students... through... modes of communication that we'll tap on an ongoing basis."*

- Dr. Noam Wasserman

Yeshiva University graduate schools can expect to see programs that are "more cohesive and practice oriented." There will be a launching of a new MS in Real Estate program and a more general MS in Finance program. More broadly, for college graduates, continued education programs have already been implemented. Dean Wasserman's full-day Founder Bootcamp



Dean Wasserman officially began his position in mid-May 2019. (Photo: YUNews)

founders of the YU Innovation Lab, and they learned about navigating early decisions. Future bootcamps are on the horizon for Angel Investors, as well as for those looking to learn about solidifying and strengthening the leadership of nonprofit organizations.

Dr. Wasserman's priorities as the new Dean include ensuring that a Sy Syms education will provide "Day 1 Job Readiness" in Syms students -- this will enable the success of their job search, allowing them to become immediate and invaluable contributors upon being hired. Dean Wasserman says, "We are exploring when and how to encourage students to focus on two areas within Sy Syms (e.g. business analytics

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## SIVAN COMES TO YU

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eventually concluded that living with her brothers and sisters in America was an opportunity she could not pass up. Together with her husband and five children, she hopes to create a dialogue with American Jews, in addition to "teach[ing], learn[ing], experienc[ing], hear[ing], absorb[ing]... any other verbs?" she joked.

Rav Reuven Taragin, Educational Director of the World Mizrahi Movement, noted that the idea stemmed from the relationship Meir and her husband, Yedidya, had with the diasporic community in general, particularly World Mizrahi. The goal of World Mizrahi, the first Religious Zionist organization in Is-

rael founded in 1902, is to connect Jews around the world to Israel. They accomplish this in numerous ways, most significantly by bringing the best of Israel's religious content to diasporic communities.

"I think she brings something very unique to the YU world," Rav Taragin stated. "On the one hand, she is a very religious woman, while on the other hand, she is someone deeply involved in the broader culture, which is essentially what YU stands for."

Beyond her homebase at YU, Meir will be speaking as a scholar-in-residence at various synagogues and shuls in North America, and beyond that, will hopefully get involved in the press in the United States.

"She is very much a tone-setter in journalism and

beyond... [which] shows what impact she has not only on the religious *tzibbur* (public), but

*However, Meir is particularly excited for her stay at YU. "YU in Israel's eyes is an icon," Meir stated. "I feel really privileged to be part of such a premiere, respected team. We have a lot to learn from you and your communities from the Judaism you've built. I am curious, and I am coming to learn!"*

the entire public," Rav Taragin indicated. "Simply, her character will have a greater impact on the US as a whole."

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Stay tuned for more information on Meir's arrival and programming schedule!

Author's note: The author would like to thank Mrs. Sivan Rahav-Meir, Rabbi Reuven Taragin, and Rabbi Dr. Stuart Halpern for taking the time to help make this article possible.

# MAY'S ELEVATOR FREE-FALL PROMPTS CONCERN AND QUESTIONS FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR



Brookdale Hall, sight of the elevator free-fall.  
(Photo: YU, Stern Orientation 2017)

BY MOLLY MEISELS

When Shifra Lindenberg, SSSB '20, fell four stories in a Brookdale Residence Hall elevator in May, many members of the student body were outraged. Elevators throughout the Yeshiva University campuses have been out of service, breaking down, and trapping students for years, inconveniencing most and acting as a debilitating obstacle for some. But when Lindenberg experienced what she claims to be a “free fall” in the 20-story residence hall, which houses most incoming students, parents and students were alarmed. What is currently most concerning to YU community members is that the accident gave Lindenberg a concussion which she is still suffering from.

Jonathan Lewis, YC '16, is not surprised by this turn of events. In the 2015-2016 academic year, he got stuck in the Morgenstern Residence Hall elevator – the residence hall housing male upperclassmen. He did not panic at first. Lewis told the *Observer*, “[I decided to] press the phone button... no answer... [I] call[ed] security on my cell phone...no answer. I needed to call my friend in the library to fetch a

security officer to radio someone over to rescue me.” After being rescued, the guard disclosed to Lewis that the “elevator ha[d] been having problems for a while, yet it was still running.” The YU alumna wonders what would have occurred had there been a medical emergency.

Besides for students getting stuck and suffering from head injuries, the constantly malfunctioning elevators negatively impact students with disabilities. Yeshiva University's Student Bill of Rights says that “students who are otherwise qualified to attend the University have the right to reasonable accommodation of their physical or learning disabilities as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act.” A recent Stern graduate who developed muscular atrophy in her left knee while at Stern, believes that the constantly broken elevators do not conform to this rule. During the past academic year, two of the three 245 Lexington Ave elevators were out of service for a bulk of the year. 245 Lexington is one of two academic buildings for the Beren campus. Due to its foot-traffic, when its elevators

are out of service, the efficiency of the institution declines.

The Stern College alumna was frustrated for much of the 2018-2019 academic year. She says, “I had to get to the school building half an hour early for my 9 a.m. class to make sure I got in the elevator...sometimes I had to walk up to the fourth floor... because I couldn't get a spot...”

Besides for students getting stuck and suffering from head injuries, the constantly malfunctioning elevators negatively impact students with disabilities.

The *Observer* asked Yeshiva University Facilities if anything would be changing for the upcoming semester. Randy Apfelbaum, Chief Facilities and Administrative Officer, says, “The safety of our stu-

dents is of utmost priority...YU has been making significant investments in building infrastructure...Over this past summer, every elevator has received an upgrade to its door locking mechanism.” In response to parents' concerns over Lindenberg's May incident, Apfelbaum says that Lindenberg did not “‘free fall’ as reported... [the incident] was the result of the malfunction of the system that tells the elevator computer which floor the car is located.” This report contradicts Lindenberg's, as Apfelbaum further states that “Elevators, including the Brookdale cars, have multiple redundant safety systems... to ensure that it cannot ‘free fall’.”

However, Lindenberg's account is not the only instance of an elevator dropping at Yeshiva University. In mid-July at Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University's graduate institution, a first-year student got stuck in an elevator and experienced what she called a “free fall.” The medium-sized elevator contained seven Cardozo students and the elevator repairman himself, who just claimed to have fixed the infamously broken elevator. She says, “We went up a couple of

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## SCWSC ELECTIONS

FROM PAGE 1

originally slated for May 2, 2019, but when the results were posted, the winner for the role of president was conspicuously absent. Instead, there was a vague postscript: “Due to a lack of clarity in campaign policy, a new election will be administered for SCWSC president this Monday.”

On May 5, 2019, an update by the canvassing committee was posted, citing no clear winner for the role of SCWSC president as a result of “multiple allegations regarding both

SCWSC [p]resident [c]andidates' campaigns due to rule ambiguities and rule breaking.” There was no clarity provided about what precisely the allegations were against the candidates. A reelection was scheduled for May 6, 2019 between the two candidates, Talya Saban and Shanee Markovitz.

On May 6, 2019, instead of posting the results of the reelections, the canvassing committee announced that the candidates were once more in violation of various stipulations. This time the violations were specified. The canvassing committee stated, “With this second round of election came the stipulation that all posters and campaign-

ing materials must be down by Monday, May 6th at 9:30 am, no exceptions. As of this morning, multiple posters and promotional materials were still up in favor of both candidates in the school building and in the dorms, and as a result we feel it is most appropriate that both candidates for SCWSC [p]resident are disqualified.”

Currently, the recently enacted constitution that was ratified on May 29, 2019, includes as part of its election campaign guidelines in Section IV, that “no campaign materials may be publicly displayed before the first day of campaigning begins.” The previous constitution did not include this

stipulation in the campaign guidelines.

Because the canvassing committee was comprised of graduating seniors, the second reelection was delegated to the Office of Student Life. At this time, no members of the Office of Student Life have responded to our requests for information on what the reelection process will look like or when it could be expected to take place.

While both previous candidates have been termed eligible to run for the SCWSC president position again this fall, neither have supplied a comment about what their plans are for the upcoming reelections.

## NEWS



## THE MOTHERHOOD CENTER OF NEW YORK SHOULD BE A RESOURCE FOR STERN STUDENTS

BY TANIA BOHBOT

Motherhood does not just start with a pregnancy glow. It does not just make your hair longer and your nails stronger. It is not only a time when you feel overwhelming joy due to the knowledge that you are with child.

Pregnancy is difficult, and the aftermath can oftentimes be worse. During pregnancy, one's hormones are all over the place, certain foods are dangerous for the baby, and most others lead to nausea. There are biological changes caused by pregnancy as well -- some individuals' taste buds change and some have trouble controlling their bladders. For some, bladder control is so difficult that they need to wear a diaper. Many pregnant people cannot handle the changes in their weight and develop an eating disorder.

Some pregnant women are ashamed to admit that they develop mood and anxiety disorders postpartum, such as Postpartum Depression,

the Baby Blues, Postpartum Anxiety, Postpartum OCD, Postpartum Psychosis, and more.

All of these bodily adjustments and mentality shifts can make a woman feel weak. But this is not what women are raised to believe. We are raised to believe that pregnancy is beautiful, that real women, can and should be, able to go through the motions of pregnancy with ease. We are taught that motherhood should be easy, fully fueled by the joy of having a child. However, that is not the case; as with everything in life, there is a difficult side to the journey and it is also okay to ask for help.

The Motherhood Center is an organization that provides support for new and expecting mothers. It is staffed by psychiatrists, therapists, specialists, and a kind, warmhearted staff that is driven to aid women in the difficult challenge that is motherhood. They host support groups, such as New and Expecting Mom's PMAD and

*The Motherhood Center is located...right around the corner from Stern College for Women. If you or a loved one is having a difficult time transitioning into motherhood, please do not be afraid to call or head over to the clinic. Everyone needs help from time to time, and that's alright.*

partner groups as well. In the New and Expecting Mom's PMAD support groups, mothers are given the opportunity to surround themselves with the support of other mothers sharing their struggles. It is comforting

for mothers to know that they are not alone and that the anxiety they felt and the hardships they have gone through are normal.

The Motherhood Center acknowledges that pregnancy and motherhood not only affect the mother, but impact any relationship the mother has. When a new baby arrives, the relationship between the parents expands to include the new baby. This change can be difficult and can put a strain on the relationship of new parents. The Motherhood Center aids partners to strengthen their relationships by helping them maximize intimacy and affection, prevent harmful fights, improve communication, compromise, co-parent, and more.

Beyond support groups and clinics, the Motherhood Center offers health and wellness classes, classes for parents, and training courses for those who would like to help themselves and become doulas. Along with these classes and support groups, the Motherhood Center provides a day program for pregnant and postpartum women.

According to the Motherhood Center, their "day program is a safe, comforting space for pregnant and postpartum women who are dealing with moderate to severe depression, anxiety or a similar

### ELEVATORS

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floors, but when the door was supposed to open, it didn't... Unfortunately, though, the elevator started to rumble a bit, and then began to free fall, luckily not falling more than a floor or two. The elevator repairman kept saying that it was 'just working when I tested it'... frantically pressing the buzzer and call buttons, but they weren't working." The student interviewed suffered an anxiety attack

due to the event.

Students believe that events like these should not be occurring anywhere, least of all at a university, especially since, as Apfelbaum quoted to the *Observer*, YU hired a new elevator maintenance contractor in late winter -- Schindler Elevator. However, Schindler Elevator has had various maintenance issues in the past. On May 31st, 17 New Yorkers were trapped in an elevator managed by Schindler at the new Q-train 72nd Street station. The ten escalators at the 72nd

Street station, also managed by Schindler, "experienced 83 outages on average over...[a] 15-month period." NY1 reported that the MTA expressed frustration with the company.

With that being said, students care less about Schindler and more about how the elevators will run this academic year. They hope that elevator malfunctions will be the least of their college woes.

SEE **MOTHERHOOD CENTER**, PAGE 7

## NEWS

## HISTORY REPEATS:

# BOARD SOUNDINGS: OLD NEW VOICE

From the Observer Archives  
(November 10th, 1966)

BY RIVKAH LANDESMAN

The "Observer" has had many problems in the past not the least of which has been its lack of prestige and consequent lack of self-confidence.

Recognizing the problem, we have pledged ourselves to remedy this situation before tackling any other major "Observer" maladies, in the hope that one shot of confidence will cure many of our other ills.

Until very recently, I was certain that the administration rarely read our issues and ignored the ones they did scan. But the deans' assistance by by arranging a meeting for us with Dr. Belkin, in asking Public Relations to withhold news of the grant until the "Observer" released it, by urging us to print an unprecedented "extra," were all evidence that they do acknowledge our ex-

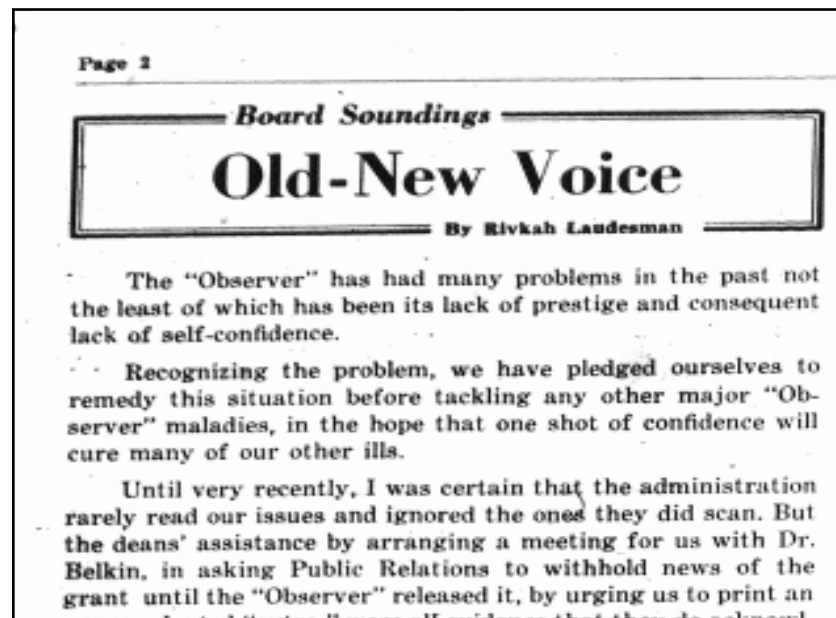
istence and do consider us when something important is involved.

*We have been recognized as the "voice of the school." We now look to our fellow students for recognition and assistance.*

These were giant steps toward self-respect spurred by the knowledge that we do have latent prestige.

We have been given a large shot of confidence by the administration and we needed it.

The student body may now more readily contribute its skills in reporting, advis-



ing, and letter-writing.

We need all these aids. The student-body has been "short-changing" the "Observer" while criticizing its lack of initiative and successful journalism.

We have been recognized as the "voice of the school." We have

been accorded honor and dignity by the administration. We now look to our fellow students for recognition and assistance.

Editor's Note: "History Repeats is a new series of articles from the archives. We hope you enjoy."

## NEW SYMS DEAN

FROM PAGE 4

plus accounting for people who can leverage the power of both, or finance plus entrepreneurship for people who might want to do fintech intrapreneurship), and how to facilitate students graduating with both undergraduate and graduate degrees to strengthen their prospects on the job market. Initial great jobs will then set the table for impactful careers and lives."

In the midst of these changes, Dean Wasserman emphasizes, "We will continue to tap the voice of the student -- through continuing my chats with students; through having them provide their professors with mid-semester feedback about what's going well in the course and should be reinforced, and what can be strengthened during the remaining half of the semester; and through other modes of communication that we'll tap on an ongoing basis."

Dean Wasserman is a

recent addition to YU and many students have not yet had the chance to interact with him. However, those who have worked with him have only positive remarks. Miriam Schloss, the president of the Sy Syms Student Council, says, "I've been working on a few initiatives with Dean Wasserman's help and direction over the summer, and it's been a pleasure to work with him. He's been incredibly receptive to implementing new ideas and has offered whatever support I need to make them a reality." She also encourages that "he actively seeks student feedback about the Syms experience. If anyone has thoughts that they would like to share, I know that he would love to have the opportunity to listen."

In his short tenure, Dean Wasserman has made positive inroads, and has a wide reaching vision that many Syms students are excited about. We can all look forward to seeing what Dean Wasserman has in store for the future of Sy Syms.

WHEN THERE'S A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES...



YU CLUB  
FAIR FALL  
2019  
WEDNESDAY,  
SEPTEMBER  
10TH  
WILF: 5:45 PM,  
BEREN: 7:30 PM

## MOTHERHOOD CENTER

FROM PAGE 6

perinatal mood disorder. Each day involves a holistic treatment approach including individual and group therapy, yoga, meditation, education and a lot of support." This program includes an on-site nursery staffed by professionals who are experts in mother-infant attachment. This program is open Monday-Friday from 9:45AM until 2:40PM.

Motherhood can be hard, but it should not be anxiously done alone. The Motherhood Center works with all mothers to minimize the costs of their support

groups and classes so that every mother receives the help that they deserve.

The Motherhood Center is located at 205 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10016, on the corner of 32nd and Lexington -- right around the corner from Stern College for Women. If you or a loved one is having a difficult time transitioning into motherhood, please do not be afraid to call or head over to the clinic. Everyone needs help from time to time, and that's alright.

The Motherhood Center can be reached at (212) 335-0034. Their website is [themothhoodcenter.com](http://themothhoodcenter.com) and their address is 205 Lexington Ave, New York, NY 10016.

Y don't U write for

# The Observer?

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## NEWS

## LGBTQ+ TRAINING

FROM PAGE 1

August 19th, RAs were given a session on LGBTQ+ sensitivity. The sensitivity training, called “Respecting Differences,” was led and facilitated by Michele Demry, an Orthodox psychotherapist with a private practice on the Upper West Side. Demry says that the training was meant to “increase sensitivity and awareness.”

When asked about what prompted this training, Dean Chaim Nissel, YU’s Dean of Students, says, “We have discussed LGBTQ issues in the past and this year we decided to bring in an outside professional to help guide the discussion.” According to the RAs in attendance, the information presented during the two hour session was basic and included definitions of the identities encompassed by LGBTQIA+. Demry tells the Observer, “Much of what I presented were current facts, educational information, and questions to stimulate thinking.” The session was full of fact and one RA says that it lacked emotion.

Over the last few months, advocates have been pressuring Yeshiva University to provide visibility and support for its LGBTQ+ students. That is why, when Mordechai Levovitz, the founding director of Jewish Queer Youth (JQY), an Orthodox organization for LGBTQ+ young people, received a call from the YU Counseling Center, he was

hopeful. However, instead of asking him to facilitate the LGBTQ+ sensitivity training, they reached out to him for advice on how to conduct it. Levovitz, a YU alumnus, was told that JQY could not have a part in the training. Levovitz says, “[YU] said they want to do a training, but they can’t have the person running the training be affiliated with any LGBTQ+ organization, be-

cause that is not appropriate for Yeshiva University.” He does not understand how one can teach LGBTQ+ sensitiv-

ity without a member of the LGBTQ+ community and is disappointed that there was no LGBTQ+ representative present to plead a personal case. He fears that the training was not intended to help LGBTQ+ people, but meant to throw YU LGBTQ+ advocates a bone, allowing YU to paint themselves as “progressive and accepting.”

The Counseling Center opted for a straight therapist who is not affiliated with Orthodox LGBTQ+ groups in the tri-state area, rather than an expert on LGBTQ+ issues. Demry, while an experienced therapist and successful educator, works on dozens of issues and is not particularly

focused on gender and sexuality. She works with university counseling centers to help them run educational workshops, and says that “topic matter is dependent upon the needs of the university.” When she worked for NYU’s Health Center she provided crisis intervention “in areas of suicide prevention, trauma, sexual assault, LGBTQ concerns, substance abuse, eating disorders, unplanned pregnancy, and illness.”

A LGBTQ+ YU student who wishes to remain anonymous told the *Observer* that while they believe Demry’s training is “a step in the right direction...if [Demry] doesn’t specialize in LGBTQ+ is-

suues and advocacy, then there’s no saying whether or not what [she] said was accurate or appropriate.”

Ellie Parker, SSSB ‘20, a Resident Advisor at Beren, says that the session was reactive instead of proactive. The training’s title, “Respecting Differences,” came into play strongly, as RAs were encouraged to take LGBTQ+ issues on a case-by-case basis and act according to their comfort levels and the comfort levels of students on their floors. Parker states, “It was very much a ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ situation.” With regards to how to act when a student hangs up a Pride flag or a “Safe Space” sticker, RAs were told that allowing it is never a definite yes, as it must be a conversation with others who

share the area -- the goal being not to make those who disagree with LGBTQ+ lifestyles uncomfortable either. Additionally, the training had no mention of referrals to resources for LGBTQ+ students and it did not offer the RAs tips on how to connect LGBTQ+ students with support, clinics, hotlines, Jewish LGBTQ+ organizations, or other LGBTQ+ students. Nissel says that the “YU Counseling Center staff was present at both trainings...and we discussed how to best help all our students.”

While Parker gave the *Observer* insight into the Beren RA training, three Wilf RAs decline to comment on their training, saying that it makes them “uncomfortable” to do so. Beren RA opinions on the training were split on ideological lines. Parker says that “the [RAs] who lean to the left said that ‘we should accept gay people,’ and those more to the right [said], ‘I don’t want gay people on my floor’.” Demry told a Beren RA that the Wilf training was a mixed bag. Half of the men in attendance were receptive and aware, while the other half were making light of the serious topic. Levovitz says that these jokes could have been avoided “if a LGBTQ+ facilitator or student were there to make it human.”

Parker says that the reactive nature of the session indicates “our attitude towards gay students at YU. [It’s not] -- ‘I’d love to make this a place you’d want to go.’ It’s really a place of -- ‘If you’re here, I guess we’ll make you comfortable’.”

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*Editor’s Note: If you identify as LGBTQ+, reach out to [lgbtqyu@gmail.com](mailto:lgbtqyu@gmail.com).*



## The YU Observer

QUOTE OF THE MONTH  
August 2019

*“One must forget many clichés in order to behold a single image. Insight is the beginning of perceptions to come rather than the extension of perceptions gone by.”*

- Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets* (1962)



Have a quote you’d like to share? Email [saraschatz01@gmail.com](mailto:saraschatz01@gmail.com)



## OPINION



(Photo: Pixabay)

## LESS THAN BEST IS NOT OKAY REGARDING MENTAL HEALTH

BY ELKA WIESENBERG

The parallel between mental health and physical health has been drawn many times, often in terms of de-stigmatizing the former. Just as you would sympathize with a friend who reveals a chronic physical illness, not G-d forbid judge or condescend because of it, that's the attitude you should have towards mental health.

Let's use that parallel one more time. Just like you wouldn't accept anything less than the best healthcare from the PAs at YU, you absolutely should not accept anything subpar from the Counseling Center. If there is any student need that is expected to be taken care of, but is not being addressed by the PAs, someone would write an article and do something about it. What about mental health needs?

I would like to preface this by saying: DO go to the Counseling

Center. Just because I want to talk about how to improve it does not mean it's not worth going to right now. I want it to be better, but it's already an appropriate place for you to go if you're struggling with mental health in any way.

*YU, if you do not have the proper resources to provide your students with as much mental health care as they require, it's time to up your game. It's NOT okay to turn a student away when he or she needs you most.*

College is a really, really stressful time for many young adults. It's a transition from childhood to adulthood. It's a time of identity struggle. It's a different workload and social scene than high school or seminary/yeshiva. College is not the party that so

many make it out to be.

Because of this, many students need help. They need someone to turn to, to talk to. They need the Counseling Center.

The first problem, one that must be remedied with efforts by both the Counseling Center and students combined, is the stigma around therapists. No, going to the trained professionals at the Counseling Center does not mean you're crazy — whether or not you have a mental illness, you're not crazy. It actually makes you smart. If you aren't feeling well mentally, go to the doctor! It's that simple. Don't be embarrassed — everyone could use help from time to time.

So you went to the Counseling Center. You had a good experience. That's awesome. You want to reschedule. After your second session, you want a third. You ask for one.

Well, sometimes, you're told there isn't time.

The second problem is that the Counseling Center, whether truthfully or not, claims not to have the resources to take everyone who needs them more than a couple times.

YU, if you do not have the proper resources to provide your students with as much mental health care as they require, it's time to up your game. It's NOT okay to turn a student away when he or she needs you most. Oftentimes, those are the students coming back to you a third, fourth, or tenth time. Even if it's not weekly sessions, make time for these students. It's discouraging to someone who reaches out for help when that person isn't taken seriously

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PAGE 11

## ANSWERING THE “CALL OF TORAH” AT YESHIVA UNIVERSITY’S BEREN CAMPUS

BY ELISHEVA COHEN

Torah has always been a central pillar of Yeshiva University. The very name, Yeshiva University, as well as the dual curriculum, connotes the importance of Torah learning at YU. It was not until this past year, however, my junior year at Stern, that I truly felt as De-

varim 30:14 says, “The matter is very near to you -- in your mouth and in your heart -- to perform it.” According to Rashi and others, the *pasuk* (verse) is referring to Torah. Yes, I took many Judaic classes my first year at Stern, but it was not until my second year that Torah became a tangible presence on campus -- that Torah opportunities filled my schedule day

and night.

“The Torah is not in the heavens” and “neither is it beyond the sea,” says Devarim 30:12-13; it is within our reach. Much of this reality at Stern, of tangible Torah, can be attributed to the combined effort of many people who have worked and continue to work tirelessly to spread Torah on campus. The amount of Torah oppor-



President Berman giving a shiur in Beren's Beit Midrash last year.

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## OPINION

## HOW THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY DEBATES ARE SIMILAR TO LIFE AT YU

BY PHILLIP NAGLER

In case you haven't heard, there are many people running for president in 2020. To be exact, there are twenty six candidates: 24 Democrats and 2 Republicans. The Democratic National Convention (DNC) decided it would be wise to have 12 primary debates, the first six of them consisting of up to 10 candidates per night.

*I have taken the liberty of giving my own take on on these frontrunners in order to introduce them, as it is vital that all college students are politically informed, especially in this polarizing era. [...] one just might be the next president of our nation.*

In the first two rounds, the multitude of candidates created quite a commotion, resorting to personal attacks, shouting over one another, pre-rehearsed cheesy one-liners, and even a warning of the "dark psychic force" that emanates from Donald Trump.

Don't sweat it if you missed the June and July debates, because another round of primary debates is coming up in September, and it will only feature the top candidates. To qualify for this round, one must accumulate 130,000 unique individual donors for their campaign, in addition to exceeding 2% in four different Democratic presidential polls. As of now, eight candidates have qualified for this primary debate. I have taken the liberty of giving my own take on these frontrunners in order to introduce them, as it is vital that all college students are politically informed, especially in this polarizing era. Hopefully, it will inspire you to more thoroughly examine some of these political figures, as one just might be the next president of our nation.

The Top Candidates:

- Former vice president, **Joe Biden**, is currently leading in the race with a pretty wide margin of support compared to the other candidates. Voters are hoping that he will bring another eight years of the Obama presidency (minus Barack Obama). On the campaign trail, he has been focusing on his past political accomplishments and achievements, and has been less vocal about his policy proposals. The media has been launching attacks on Biden since he has declared that he is running. Questions are being raised about how he treats women and on his record with racial issues. Although he has had a steady lead, he does not necessarily have the nomination in the bag.
- **Senator Elizabeth Warren** has had a recent surge and is currently in second place in most primary polls. With her famous line of "I have a plan for that," she has built a strong grassroots movement



Senator Elizabeth Warren in September 2017, who together with Bernie Sanders (left) created a "Medicare for All" reform plan.

(Photo: Associated Press)

and has energized a base of young progressive voters. Her signature issues are student debt cancellation, a wealth tax, and medicare for all. But these are only a small slice of the pie, as she has proposed a legislative solution for almost every issue that is affecting this country, from the opioid crisis to corruption affecting giant corporations. The way she effortlessly and clearly describes her ideas makes complex political issues

SEE **DEMOCRATIC DEBATE**, PAGE 11

## MY (ENTIRE) BODY, MY (ENTIRE) CHOICE

BY SHAYNA HERSZAGE

**Confession:** After I finish looking at Snapchat stories, I always scroll briefly through the news stories underneath, just to see if the clickbait is compelling enough to read. Usually, it is not, but, in my travels through the black hole of low-quality journalism, a trend is evident -- the scandal of plastic surgery.

I have little reason to care about close-up images of whoever-it-is-this-time's possibly-newly-enlarged lips/eyes/whatever, but it is difficult to ignore the judgmental subtexts. She (they always judge a "she") changed a part of her body in some way, and we, the readers, society as a whole, hate her for it. She is entitled to her own opinions and decisions, but this particular decision is wrong.

Articles and whispered gossip have taught us to scorn others when they change their bodies without our permission. She got a

nose job. He got highlights in his hair. She has a lip piercing. And we all know what these appearance changes "say" about them, right?



(Photo: Pixabay)

Nothing. Literally nothing.

It is not up to us to call someone materialistic, a follower, or too feminine or masculine based on their decisions for their body and appearance.

We are seeing this person from outside of their situation, and therefore, we are not getting the full perspective of who this person is. If someone hates the

scar on their forehead and wants it removed, or thinks a diamond stud in their nose might look cute, that is the only thing the scar-removal or nose piercing indicates, and we do not have the right to draw conclusions otherwise.

A common statement I hear in these judgments is that the person in question is playing into society's beauty conventions, and therefore, is inherently going against their own nature. This now makes them unworthy of respect.

*While controversial, it is nonetheless easy to claim "my body, my choice" regarding reproductive rights. Pro-Choice! Sex education! Sex positivity! But what about the rest of the body?*

SEE **MY (ENTIRE) CHOICE**, PAGE 12

# missing

## ZWI MIGDAL: THE MISSING PIECE OF OUR JEWISH HISTORY AND EDUCATION

BY FRUMA LANDA

America - land of the free and home of the brave. This seems to be one of the highest forms of praise. Not only does it praise the policies and values America stands for, but it praises the dedicated and brave citizens who have fought to turn these values into reality.

America is a country that exists to protect the rights of its citizens. While most Americans are generally aware of the lack of equality amongst many different groups living in the United States, we still like to think of our country as a progressive, cultured, and civilized First World nation.

America is far from perfect, but many are thankful to live in a country safe from the horrors that other underdeveloped nations face. It wouldn't be surprising to discover high percentages of sex trafficking in underdeveloped countries. Horrifying, *yes*, but shocking, *no*. What about America? In the free and civilized United States of America, we are free from sex trafficking, right? Wrong!

After watching documentaries and reading articles and testimonials, I was horrified to discover that the National Human Trafficking Hotline reported that sex trafficking was occurring in each of our states. I was faced with the revolting truth

that sex trafficking was indeed alive and well in the United States.

Keeping the sex trafficking pandemic hidden under a rug furthers the growth of this industry. There is no way to fight an issue or protect oneself if we don't know what we are up against. The National Human Trafficking Hotline reports that there were 5,591 potential cases of sex trafficking in 2016 (gathered from call data alone). According to the Polaris Project, there was a 13% increase in sex trafficking cases from 2016 to 2017, bringing the count up to 9,000, with the estimation of many more unreported incidences. As specified by the Federal Human Trafficking Report, in 2017, 95.1%

of active criminal cases involved sex trafficking. 65.8% of those cases involved children.

Like victims of molestation, many victims of trafficking know their abusers well. 14.4% of sex trafficking and criminal labor cases in 2017 had "defendants who trafficked their children, spouses, intimate partners, siblings, or other family members."

We live in a country where family members are trafficking other family members and where children are living lives of abuse. It is difficult to

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PAGE 13

### MENTAL HEALTH

FROM PAGE 9

enough to be given the time of day. Allocate more funds for mental health care. Extend hours. Bring in more counselors. Do what you need to do to keep your students safe and secure.

The third problem is recommendations. If you don't have enough resources for a student, while you should still be there and meet with him or her as much and as often as possible, you need to have a better database of people to refer students to. Have lists of people with availability under all large insurance companies. Find lists when students come to you with less-known insurance. Spend more time finding resources to make up for what you currently lack, instead of just recommending out-of-pocket therapists, no matter

how cheap they are.

If these three needs are addressed, YU, you will be a safer, happier, and healthier place. You will be the environment college students badly need. This is not an option; it's an obligation. If you truly are a university that cares about its students as much as you claim, you will pour as much as possible into this vital operation.

*Kol hamkayim nefesh achat myisrael, maaleh alav hakatuv kiylu mkayim olam kulo.* Anyone who saves a Jewish life, the Torah considers it as if he has saved the whole world. Think about the lives that could be saved by a better Counseling Center, and invest in it.

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*Editor's Note: The Beren Campus Counseling Center was moved to the 13th floor of 215 Lexington Ave.*

### DEMOCRATIC DEBATE

FROM PAGE 10

comprehensible to even the layman. In addition to positive media portrayal, Warren had two strong debate performances and arguably had the line of the night in the second debate, when she told John Delaney, "I don't understand why someone would go through all the trouble of running for president of the United States just to tell us what we can't do and what you won't fight for."

- As progressive as Warren is, **Senator Bernie Sanders** is undeniably the most left-wing candidate in the race. Sanders is running on his 2016 platform, which he used when he was running against Hillary Clinton. Back then, his ideas were considered extremely

radical and many voters were troubled by his self-proclaimed label of Democratic Socialist. Fast forward to 2019, Sanders' ideas on healthcare and climate change have had a large impact on forming the debate conversations and his ideas have become more mainstream in the Democratic Party. Despite this, many are skeptical that he is fit to serve at his age (he would enter the white house at 79, if he were elected.) His campaign seems to have hit a stump and many of his supporters are migrating to Warren.

- Next in the polls is **Senator Kamala Harris** of Califor-

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## OPINION



## PRIDE IS NOT A PARTY

When Pride Month Is Lost in Translation

BY SHAYNA HERSZAGE

The first day of June marked the start of Pride Month -- the annual celebration of Target's rainbow t-shirts and tutus, 'Love is Love' stickers, and, yes, Pride parades across the globe.

Immediately after the 2019 Pride month began, my Facebook and Instagram feeds were bombarded with pictures from various Pride events. This would have been

a pleasant interruption to the negativity of social media, if not for the fact that these posts were not from members of the LGBTQ+ community. Rather, many of the posts were from my straight Facebook friends attending Pride with their other straight friends, or even their straight partners.

The heterosexuality of Pride this year was evident on a much larger scale than just attendees. Controversy grew when Ariana Grande, a straight musician, announced that she would be headlining

Manchester Pride, bringing both increased numbers of heterosexual fans and heightened ticket prices to the event.

*Pride parades...have become an excuse for people outside of the LGBTQ+ community to put on glitter eyeliner and rainbow shorts, and to attend these events like they are global parties. When we infiltrate these events...we risk diluting the meaning behind them in a sea of Snapchat stories.*

In the midst of rainbows, drag queens, and clever, glitter-encrusted signs, it seems that we have forgotten what Pride Month is meant to celebrate, and also, that Pride, and what it stands for, extends far beyond the month of June.

Around the world, the LGBTQ+ community experiences various levels of rejection -- whether it is inability to be legally married, lack of respect for their preferred pronouns, or,

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## DEMOCRATIC DEBATE

FROM PAGE 11

nia. Harris gained national recognition during the Kavanaugh hearing due to her powerful and unrelenting questioning style. In the first debate, she captured the attention of viewers and the media by landing a jarring attack on Biden, specifically for his record on race-related issues. This momentum gave her a slight boost in the polls, but following her second debate performance, she seems to have lost that momentum. Representative Tulsi Gabbard brought up Harris's past as Attorney General of California and pointed out that Harris "put 1,500 people in jail for marijuana violations and laughed about it when asked if she ever smoked marijuana." Even with her questionable past, Harris would make a strong opponent against Donald Trump, and her supporters are eager to see her debate him on the 2020 stage.

The frontrunners who I have just highlighted are classic DC politicians and have all served in the US Senate. Pete Buttigieg on the other hand, who has been rising in the polls recently, is the mayor of Southbend, Indiana (which is also the hometown of a couple of YU students.) He is the youngest in the race, at just 37 years old, and is the first openly gay man to run for president. Although he does not have the political experience of his opponents, he is a war veteran, a Rhodes scholar, and speaks multiple languages. His bid may be a longshot, but he has received a flood of donations towards his campaign. He took the lead in the second fundraising quarter, amassing a total of 24.8 million dollars for his campaign.

The Others:

For the sake of succinctness, I won't go into too much detail for the few others who will be on September debate stage, as they are polling very low and are unlikely to secure the nomination. **Senator Cory Booker** will likely

make an impression on viewers with his storytelling skills, and not to mention, his big dreamy eyes. **Former Representative Beto O'Rourke** seems to be on the decline based on his poor performance in the first two debates. While he may make a comeback with his charismatic personality, it seems that his presidential race will be unsuccessful (similar to his race for Senator Ted Cruz's seat). **Senator Amy Klobuchar** champions herself as a pragmatist and a leader of bipartisan legislation. She is hoping to end the opioid crisis and combat the high prices of prescription drugs. Unfortunately, she has failed to generate excitement for her campaign and couldn't fire up a room if she had a blowtorch in hand.

Now that you are a bit more informed about the United States political scene, you may ask -- what does any of this have to do with Yeshiva University (as the title of my article

insinuates)? Each semester at YU, students will be listening to various voices that are vying for their attention -- professors, religious educators, parents, grandparents, sisters, brothers, friends, best friends, boyfriends, girlfriends, non-binary friends, etc. School can be overwhelming with so many things to balance and so many important relationships in our lives to grapple with. Similar to the Democratic primary, it is unwise to simply focus on one voice and ignore all the others. But nobody has the time to learn about all the candidates from A-Z. The secret to success at anything in life is to have a good strategy and to know how to properly manage one's time. With a new semester here, it's important to have a good game plan early on for tackling the semester. Don't wait until it is reading week, trust me on this one. And of course, don't forget to make time to keep up with the 2020 election.

## CALL OF TORAH

FROM PAGE 9

tunities available to Beren Campus students surged this past year and continues to expand and grow. Multiple *shiurim* (Torah lectures) are offered each day from Monday through Thursday at varying times and across many topics, including -- *mussar* (character development), *halacha* (Jewish law), *emunah* (faith), *Gemara*, *Tanach* (Bible), and the *parsha* (Torah portion). The *shiurim* continue at night with “Torah with the *Roshei Yeshiva*” on Mondays, night *sefer* on Tuesdays, and quite often, guest speakers. Aside from the scheduled *shiurim*, the *kol shel Torah* (call of Torah) can be heard emanating in the *beit midrash* from multiple small *chaburot* (learning groups), many run by students, such as the *Mussar Va’ad* or *Tanya Time*. At the same time, GPATS women, women in the Graduate Program for Advanced Talmudic Studies, can be found pouring over a *gemara* or *halacha sefer* (book on Jewish law), learning with an undergraduate, or helping someone navigate the *beit midrash*.

Not only can Torah be heard in Stern by voice, but also in writing, in its many Torah publications,

*We have to be open and ready to soak in the Torah of our teachers and make the most of the classes and Torah opportunities around us. On the other hand, when learning Torah, we have to keep in mind that we are not only learning for the present, but for the future...*

including a weekly parsha newsletter, *Hi Sichati*, and *Kol HaMevasser*, a joint Jewish thought publication with Yeshiva College. Another major catalyst in spreading Torah on campus is the Beren Bekiut Program, an incentivized *bekiut* (proficiency) learning program launched last year. Through this program, a student is able to learn in one of four tracks -- *Halacha*, *Tanach*, *Mishnayot*, and

*Gemara* -- and after successfully taking tests on the Torah she learned, she receives a gift card to Yeshiva University’s *seforim* sale. This program caters to all students, with two tracks this year for *mechina* students (see emails and flyers for more info.) All of the opportunities mentioned above, as well as many not mentioned, have created a Torah-filled environment at Stern beyond the classroom, and it only continues to grow.

Is there more to work on? Certainly. Steps are being taken on a daily basis to improve and refine Stern’s Torah opportunities, to make the *beit midrash* more accessible, reach a wider audience, and further spread the *kol shel Torah* on the Beren Campus and beyond. These efforts are vital to the continued growth of Torah learning at Stern. At the same time, however, we have to appreciate the plethora of Torah-learning opportunities at hand. The challenge is not to continue adding new *shiurim* and *chaburot* but to take advantage of the treasures at our door and carry the Torah with us, as part of our being. Rav

Aharon Lichtenstein beautifully encapsulates this point in his idea on each person’s responsibility to be a *shliach l’kabbalah* (messenger to receive) and *shliach l’holacha* (messenger to transmit). On the one hand, Rav Lichtenstein teaches, we have to be messengers to receive. We have to be open and ready to soak in the Torah of our teachers and make the most of the classes and Torah opportunities around us. On the other hand, when learning Torah, we have to keep in mind that we are not only learning for the present, but for the future, to carry the Torah with us and spread it, to be a *shliach l’holacha*. We need to be open to receive in order to be ready to give.

The Torah is available. In the words of the Rambam, “The crown of Torah is set aside, waiting, and ready for each Jew...whoever desires may come and take it” (*Rambam Hilchot Talmud Torah 3:1*). With Torah filling our halls, classrooms, and *beit midrash*, let us all be ready to “come and take it.”

## MY (ENTIRE) CHOICE

FROM PAGE 10

However, if a person withholds something that they want for their bodies, be it medical or cosmetic, solely to be worthy of your respect, the person has not defied society’s beauty standards. Rather, they have catered to your standards instead of their own. But why should either option make a person less worthy of respect?

While controversial, it is nonetheless easy to claim “my body, my choice” regarding reproductive rights. Pro-Choice! Sex education! Sex positivity! But what about the

rest of the body? What about hair dye, shaving or not shaving, piercings, or any other individual decisions a person makes about their body? In all the fun of gossip, we have forgotten that our opinions about another person’s body do not matter, because it is not our body -- and, by extension, not our choice.

If you want to get short hair and dye the remains, pierce your cartilage, or get a breast reduction, go ahead. And if you would judge your friends for any of these decisions, why be judgmental when you could instead be quiet?

## PRIDE: NOT A PARTY

FROM PAGE 12

in some cases, living in areas where homosexuality is illegal. Specific homophobic attacks have taken place in recent years, such as the Pulse shooting during Pride Month in 2016.

However, at the same time, the treatment of LGBTQ+ individuals in many places has improved, including the legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States in 2015 and the formation of LGBTQ+ advocacy groups around the world, including Shoal in Israel.

International LGBTQ+ rights and acceptance have come

a long way, but it is also important to acknowledge that we, as a society, have a long way to go. This is why Pride exists -- to celebrate what has been accomplished in the history of LGBTQ+ advocacy, and to show the world that LGBTQ+ communities are a presence that can not be ignored, even beyond the confines of Pride Month.

The significance of Pride Month, meanwhile, has been lost in translation. Pride parades, and Pride Month as a whole, have become an excuse for people outside of the LGBTQ+ community to put on glitter eyeliner and rainbow shorts, and to attend these events like they are global

parties. When we infiltrate these events, and other events which hold similar significances to other groups, we risk diluting the meaning behind them in a sea of Snapchat stories.

Often, when I make these claims, I am met with this argument: doesn’t inviting the wider (straight) community to Pride and commercializing the LGBTQ+ community, aid the path to acceptance?

I see the reasoning in the argument. Exposure to a community helps prevent its demonization. However, in this case, I disagree. The straight, cisgender people who attend Pride do not experience the community in a

way that generates acceptance. Rather, they experience rainbows and glitter, aiding in the building of a caricature of what it means to be a part of the LGBTQ+ community - white, conventionally attractive “gay best friends” who wish to watch Netflix romantic comedies with you.

It boosts LGBTQ+ visibility, but not LGBTQ+ acceptance. The straight people who post photos at Pride in June are still the same people who snicker when a man walks past

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SEE **PRIDE: NOT A PARTY**, PAGE 14

## OPINION

## ZWI MIGDAL

FROM PAGE 11

believe that these children have access to a decent education when their bodies are consistently sold for the pleasure of others.

Our own Jewish communities have been tragically affected by the sex trafficking pandemic as well. History tends to forget the Zwi Migdal, a Jewish prostitution ring of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. At the height of their power, they controlled thousands of women, owned 2,000 brothels, and directed bases throughout South America.

Thousands of young Jewish girls wishing to escape poverty or European pogroms walked eagerly into the hands of the Zwi Migdal under the pretense of a better life. Parents trustingly gave their daughters to these men hoping that their lives would improve. Jew-

ish men would travel to Eastern European shtetls pretending to be searching for employees for rich Argentinian Jews.

*We can't protect ourselves from corruptions of the world if we don't know what we are protecting ourselves from. [...] We need to stop ignoring incidents of human trafficking in our own country.*

Often times, girls were ensnared through marriage proposals. The pimps offered marriage to the village girls, who quickly married the pimps and followed them to Argentina. Many of them were beaten and starved on the journey over to the New World. Upon arrival, the girls were told to undress, they

were then inspected and auctioned off as sex slaves. Eventually, Raquel Liberman, a former prostitute of the Zwi Migdal, Superintendent Julio Alsogaray and Hon. Dr. Rodriguez-Ocampo, dismantled the Zwi Migdal.

Sex slavery is not something to be taken lightly. We can't turn a blind eye and pretend it doesn't exist. We need to acknowledge it, we need to look it in the eye and let the world know that it isn't okay. There is a popular Talmudic phrase, *shkita k'hodaah* -- silence is consent. If we sit idly by and make no effort to put a stop to these horrors, we are guilty bystanders.

It is wrong to think that we are safe from the evils of sex trafficking because we live in the United States and are a part of Jewish communities. Sex trafficking can happen anywhere. We can't protect ourselves from corruptions of the world if we don't know what we are protecting ourselves from. We constructed an idealized version of our history

built on the erasure of events we would rather not recognize. Skipping over chapters of our history that we are ashamed of teaches us that we are safe, and that bad things can't happen to us. We cannot allow ourselves to be lulled into a false sense of security. We need to be intellectually honest and recognize the corruption we allowed to run rampant in our communities. We need to stop ignoring incidents of human trafficking in our own country.

Spreading awareness and supporting organizations like Equality Now and other organizations committed to ending human trafficking are ways offighting this universal inhumane industry. It is important to recognize the signs of child trafficking, which can be found on the Polaris Project website, and to then report any suspicious behavior. No one is safe from sex trafficking. If we are to live up to our ideals, we need to be brave and speak up.

## PRIDE: NOT A PARTY

FROM PAGE 13

them on the sidewalk in high heels in November, or flinch when two women walk by holding hands in February.

Overall, a large portion of society is on a slow-but-steady path toward acceptance of targeted minorities such as the LGBTQ+ community. Marriage is legalized in many countries, adoption and in-vitro fertilization are possible, despite being difficult and expen-

sive, and Gay-Straight Alliances on countless high school and university campuses have been approved. But we have a long way to go if we want to accomplish full acceptance for the LGBTQ+ community, both legally and socially. Celebrate the LGBTQ+ community's accomplishments, acknowledge that many goals have not yet been reached, even join your LGBTQ+ friends and family members at Pride to show your support, but understand that it is Pride, not a party.

## Don't miss out...

...on the opportunity to write for your college newspaper.

to join us next time, email [mollymeisels@gmail.com!](mailto:mollymeisels@gmail.com)

## FEATURES

## STUDENT INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT: DANIELLA AZOSE

BY ELLIE PARKER

*Danielle Azose graduated from Stern College with a speech pathology and audiology degree and is pursuing a career as a speech therapist. This summer she worked with children who have hearing loss.*

**Ellie Parker:** Can you tell us a little bit about what you did this past summer?

**Danielle Azose:** Sure! I worked

in a camp for kids with hearing loss called Camped Up, on the Upper West Side. It has been operating for seven years and it is run by deaf teachers. The ages of the kids range from two to fourteen. Something interesting about this specific camp is that all of the children have cochlear implants, so none of them speak sign language.

**EP:** How does one go about getting a cochlear implant?

**DA:** Usually insurance covers it, but in certain countries it is harder

to get one. Some of the kids in my camp were from different countries and they got their implants later in life. Those kids have significant delays in their speech and language compared to kids who were implanted at birth. Children who receive cochlear implants before the age of two can... hear and speak as well as a...hearing child. The earlier you get access to sound, the better your speech will be. Language all starts with hearing in gustation, since you can only speak as well as you hear.

*"Almost all of the kids have very strong written and verbal skills and are integrated into normal classrooms [...]. They are very lonely a lot of the time. But Camped Up provides a forum for them to meet other kids [like them.]"*

- Daniella Azose

SEE **CAMPED UP**,  
PAGE 15

## FEATURES



## ADVICE:

## SINCE YOU ASKED...

## A YU Student Answers ALL Your Questions

BY ANONYMOUS

*These questions were submitted anonymously and are published anonymously. The columnist is anonymous as well. Stay tuned for updates on where to anonymously send in your questions for future Observer issues.*

### How do you know if someone likes you?

This is a vague yet important question! Everyone has been faced with this question -- probably more than once in our lives. There are two ways to get an answer. First, you need to look at the signs that they are giving you. Are they giving gifts to you? Reaching out to touch you in some way? Are they spending a lot of time with you? Are they always complimenting you? Are they going out of their way to do things for you? There are five love languages: Acts of Service, Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Physical Touch, and lastly, Receiving Gifts. Now, if they are overwhelmingly showing any of these signs, there's a high chance the person likes you. The second road of actions you can cruise on is... to simply ask them if they like you! Yes, I know, it is a very

awkward situation. But honestly, both situations are awkward. In the first, you are analyzing every move they take and every word they speak. In the second, you are risking open rejection, which might seem like the worst case scenario, but it truly isn't. The worst case scenario is that they do like you and you did nothing about it.

### My best friend just recently broke up with a guy. It hurt her really badly. Now she is going from guy to guy. I don't want her reputation to get ruined. Should I talk to her about it or just leave her be?

I think if you haven't already, you should first talk to her about her feelings towards the breakup. I can tell that you're a very caring friend, but I think it's better to focus on caring about her emotional state rather than her reputation. Contrary to popular belief, one can always better their reputation. Trying to secure one's emotional or mental health is a lot harder to do, and the repercussions of not taking care of this matter first can be very damaging. Therefore, I don't think you should "just leave her be." I think you need to show your support by being a shoulder to lean on, and simply by talking

things out with her.

### My boyfriend is a great guy. He has a good head on his shoulders, comes from a good home, and is well educated. He has been my only boyfriend. My parents think I should venture out before I get serious with him, but I think he is the one. What should I do?

Look, at the end of the day, it is your life. That's not to say that support from your family is not important -- it most definitely is! Your parents most definitely want what is best for you, but still, the person walking down the aisle on *your* wedding day, is *you*! You need to listen to your heart and your intuition. If you seriously think he is the one, you must communicate that to your parents. Don't tread lightly, tell them your feelings for him! Tell them why you think he, and no one else, could be the one! Don't just tell them, decree that he is the one! Confidence will be your best friend when confronting them about venturing out.

### Many of my close friends have entered serious relationships in the past year. I feel that many of them devote nearly all of their free

time to their relationships and barely put any effort into our friendship. Should I try salvaging the friendships or move on to new friends?

You should definitely try to salvage your friendships! You must communicate how you feel about the situation. Find time, although it may be hard, to spend a day with them. During this time, be honest and talk to them about how you feel. Now, if the problem continues after the discussion, then I would take some time to seriously think about who you want to surround yourself with. You should always want to be around positivity.

### I'm part of some clubs and I've met people I like, but how do I become friends with them outside of club meetings and events?

It's a refreshing feeling to like the people you are (kind of) forced to be around! That's an amazing thing! Maybe plan something simple to do after your club event. Before the event or meeting ends, ask the people you are fond of to go out for dinner afterwards! Or

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## CAMPED UP

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A baby born deaf is... given a hearing test, three months later they are given a referral, and then they are given the opportunity to implant or learn sign language... In America, all babies are tested and implanted by six-months-old.

**EP:** What was one of the coolest things about the camp?

**DA:** The whole point of the camp is that the kids are mainstream. Almost all of the kids have very strong written and verbal skills and are integrated into normal classrooms and most of them are the only kids in their class with cochlear implants or hearing aids. They are very lonely a lot of the time.

But Camped Up provides a forum for them to meet other kids [like them.] It was really cool to see these kids interact...

**EP:** How did you find out about the camp?

**DA:** I knew I wanted to work with kids with hearing loss, so I just Googled it. But I would highly recommend it to students who are interested in this subject.

**EP:** Lastly, do you feel like the audiology department at Stern prepared you for this type of job and graduate school in general?

**DA:** Yes, three Stern girls were accepted to my graduate program at Lehman. Elisheva Rosensweig's class prepared me for a career in speech. I feel so well-educated. Even [when] talking to the



(Photo: Daniella Azose)

other speech therapists at the camp, who have been doing this for years, I felt like I was able to maintain intellectual conversations with them. I think my ability to have an opinion on cochlear implants is thanks to Elisheva's class, Oral Rehabil-

itation. Although the audiology department at Stern isn't perfect, I feel well prepared to enter graduate school.

## FEATURES

## ADVICE

FROM PAGE 15

you could simply just text the people because I'm sure that if you get along during the club meetings and events, then you all will get along over the phone.

**I have a single room for the first time this year, and it's going to be a busy semester. I'm worried I won't see my friends as much. How do I keep from feeling isolated?**

First, I am so happy that you are asking this question because it shows that you understand that being isolated is NOT A GOOD THING! You do not want to feel isolated because you could quite literally lose your mind with your busy schedule of dorms, classes, eating, studying, and then dorms, classes, etc. In order for you to not be consumed by school

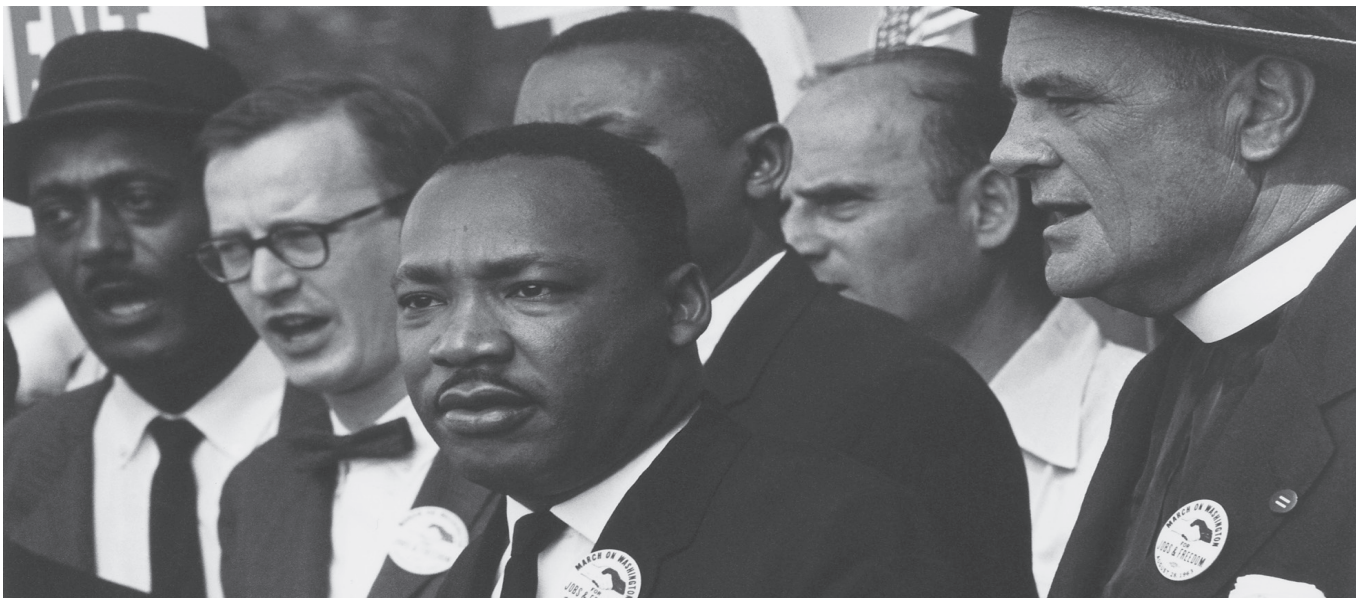


duties and by your single room, create a schedule. In this schedule, include your classes, homework time, work if you have it, time to eat, time for friends, and also schedule alone time! As I'm sure this sounds extremely overwhelming, the YU guidance department has a student assistant director who comes to Stern once a week to help with students' time management. Here is the YU Counseling Center's email: [counseling@yu.edu](mailto:counseling@yu.edu).

*The worst case scenario is that they do like you and you did nothing about it!*

**I want to be closer to my parents, but I'm a pretty private person, and I have a hard time opening up to them about my feelings and my daily life. What can I do to help my relationship with them?**

As previously mentioned, there are five languages through which people show their love and appreciation for others. The languages are: Acts of Service, Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Physical Touch, and, lastly, Receiving Gifts. It seems like your parent's love language is words of affirmation, or simply just communication with words. But that might not be your language. Therefore, you need to figure out your language/s and once you have decided, you must tell them how you show your love. You need to express that they will have to translate your love language. For example, say your love language is "Quality Time." You need to express to them that by you all spending time together, you feel close to them.


 HISTORY:

## HE HAD A DREAM

This Day in History: August 28, 1963

BY ELIANA LINDENBERG

On August 28, 1963 some 250,000 people participated in the March on Washington. The march was organized in order to call for the fair and equal treatment of African-Americans, as well as to advocate for the Civil Rights Act, which was then stalled in Congress. This march was also the occasion that featured Martin Luther King Jr.'s now famous *I Have a Dream* speech.

The march was officially called the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. The 250,000 participants and 3,000 members

of the press gathered at the Lincoln Memorial; symbolic because of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Despite the impressive line-up of speakers and performers that the march featured, one man stands out in history above all the rest -- Martin Luther King Jr.

In his speech, Dr. King raised the issue that even 100 hundred years following the emancipation of African slaves in the United States, black Americans were still not free. He said that because African-Americans were still experiencing immense poverty compared to their white neighbors, as well as segregation throughout normal American society, the freedom given to African-Americans 100 years prior did not fix the "shameful condition" that the

American government left these people in.

And yet, Dr. King had a dream.

He had a dream that one day, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners would sit together "at the table of brotherhood." He dreamed that children would play together regardless of the color of their skin, and that true freedom and justice for all would live in America.

"I say to you today, my friends, though, even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths

to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'"

In 1964, Dr. King's dream would become that much closer to a reality. The Civil Rights Act was signed and with it prohibited "unequal application of voter registration requirements, and racial segregation in schools, employment, and public accommodations."

Even further, the Civil Rights Act influenced the passage of later civil rights legislation, including the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Act of 1968 which helped not only African-Americans, but women as well. Finally, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 aided the decision to pass the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.



## FEATURES

## BOOKS:

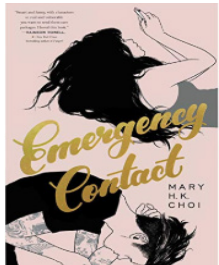


## FIVE BOOKS TO GET YOU IN THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SPIRIT

BY KAYLA PLUTZER

As the summer comes to a close and the school year begins, here are five great books to help you get in the back-to-school spirit!

### 1. *Emergency Contact* by Mary H.K. Choi



This book was really great. Unlike a lot of other novels, it depicted the reality of going away to college. It showed the separation anxiety from your regular life and how sometimes living with roommates isn't the dream we all expected.

### 2. *American Panda* by Gloria Chao



Mei is supposed to become a doctor, but she hates germs and can't stand her biology classes. Mei is relatable as she tries to be herself and figure out her own priorities while dealing with her parents' expectations of her.

### 3. *Rush* by Lisa Patton



I loved this book so much. I loved the characters. Greek life is something that always interested me, and *RUSH* allowed me to imagine what it's like. This was a really great read about friendship, social class, and learning to be okay with who you are.

### 4. *The Ivy* by Lauren Kunze and Rina Onur



*The Ivy* is like *Gossip Girl*, but for college students. The story follows the uber-wealthy elite at Harvard who are determined to be their best and don't care who they'll have to knock down to get there.

### 5. *The Heir and The Spare* by Emily Albright



Studying abroad is an incredible experience, and learning that you're actually a princess while studying abroad changes everything. This is a fun novel about royalty and going to college in a different country.

Love books?  
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## MUSIC:

## GOING AGAINST THE GRIND

### The Story of 88rising

BY AVI LEKOWSKY

It takes a lot to follow a dream. It takes even more to create something no one else is doing. This is the story of 88rising.

Sean Miyashiro wasn't doing too poorly. He had just finished assisting with the launch of *Vice's* electronic music channel, Thump, but he soon found himself growing out of the genre. "I knew

I had the ability and know-how to do it again, but for like 'what' was the question," he said in an interview with *Bloomberg* (abridged). Started out of Miyashiro's car in 2015, 88rising is best described by Miyashiro himself -- "a hybrid management, record label, video production, and marketing company." Something that makes them stand out in the crowded field of music

is that most of their clientele is Asian. That's on purpose. This helps promote Asian representation in music, which was lacking beforehand, through providing a new look at the world of hip-hop. 88rising helps give inspiration to a new wave of kids coming from more diverse homes than ever. Two of these artists in particular, however, have helped break the mold and proved what

this creative collective is capable of.

Brian Imanuel, known by his stage name, Rich Brain, is a 19-year-old rapper from Jakarta, Indonesia. He first learned English by watching Rubik's Cube

SEE **88RISING**,  
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88Rising has helped make this group, *Higher Brothers*, big in Japan. (Photo: The Japan Times)

## 88RISING

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tutorials and hip-hop music videos on YouTube. He started gaining popularity by posting comedic videos on Twitter and Vine, which introduced him to Sean. Releasing the song “Dat \$tick” was what helped his career (and subsequently, 88rising) take off. Currently with over 126,000,000 views, this song featured Brain in a pink polo, khaki shorts and a fanny pack dancing around with his friends. It was the perfect combination of weird, funny, and catchy that helped this song get certified gold by the RIAA. He carried this hype into his first album -- *Amen*. It peaked at 18 on the *Billboard* charts and was

generally well-received by critics. His recently released second album, *The Sailor*, features a more progressed, orchestral at times, sound that has us excited for his next attempt.

Joji, also known as George Miller, is a 26-year-old artist from Osaka, Japan. Like Brain, he also rose to fame through virality, however Joji’s fame may be more recognizable. Remember the Harlem Shake? Yeah, that was him. George’s, (also known by his YouTube persona, Pink Guy) brand of weird and shocking humor helped him gain a unique following and spans over a billion views on his combined YouTube channels. He’ll always be known as the man that spawned many memes over his career, but he’s closed that chapter and moved on. Now, while at first puzzling his old fans, he makes more lo-fi, R&B,

*88rising helps give inspiration to a new wave of kids coming from more diverse homes than ever.*

trip-hop music that has been doing pretty well. His first EP, *In Tongues*, hit 58 on the *Billboard* 200 chart, and his latest album, *Ballads 1*, jumped to #3 on the charts, and eventually making him the first Asian artist to have an album reach #1 on the R&B/ Hip-hop charts.

In just a few short years, 88rising has exploded onto the scene and created viral success stories that have young kids looking up to a new era of role models. With artists like these and Higher Brothers, Keith Ape,

and NIKI, this label will be a very interesting one to follow through the years. We haven’t even touched on other projects they’ve done or are working on, such as the collaborative album, *Head in the Clouds*, featuring all the artists together, along with other artists from the industry. A follow-up has been announced and is currently being developed. The *88 Degrees and Rising Tour* featured artists from the label and other Asian musicians performing in a music-festival-esque atmosphere. 88rising’s *Head in the Clouds* music festival is happening very soon and will feature an expanded lineup of artists.

No one really knows where 88rising will zag where others zig next, but if we know one thing, Sean is ready to take it on in his own way.



MOVIES:

## TOY STORY 4:

# NOT AS GOOD AS IT COULD HAVE BEEN

BY TALYA STEHLEY

The original *Toy Story* didn’t have to be good. Pixar could have released a two-hour tech demo and still made cinematic history. But that’s not what they did. *Toy Story* was heartfelt and well written, and it captured the collective imagination. *Toy Story* 2 and 3 are notable as the rare sequels that outshine their predecessors, with *Toy Story* 3 in particular gaining

notoriety for making adults cry. A big reason why I didn’t initially want to see *Toy Story 4* was that I assumed it would try to outdo the emotional punch of *Toy Story 3*, and I’m pretty sure the only way you could do that is by finding and burning each individual viewer’s favorite toy, right there in the theater. That’s not my idea of a fun Saturday night, but the people I was with wanted to see it, so I saw it.

*Toy Story 4*’s central conflict revolves around Forky, a spork with googly eyes and a glitter glue mouth, and Woody’s

struggle to get him back from Gabby Gabby, a vintage doll who lives in an antique shop. Forky is a piece of garbage that was repurposed into a toy, but he still knows somehow that he was truly made to be used and thrown away. Like all of us, he comes into the world terrified and confused. His lack of knowledge about the world he lives in allows the narrative to question the central assumption of the *Toy Story* universe – that toys want to be played with. If this were inherently true, why would Forky need to have it

explained to him?

Bo Peep from the first two movies returns in this installment, and it turns out that in the intervening years, she’s been ownerless by choice and is happy in that life, calling the franchise’s central assumptions into question from a perspective of experience rather than naiveté. Her new self-reliance stands in sharp contrast with the movie’s villain, Gabby

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## FEATURES



Though it features many of the same characters as the other movies, *Toy Story 4*'s storyline has a plethora of flaws. (Photo: Disney)

## TOY STORY 4

FROM PAGE 18

Gabby, who is obsessed with the idea of being loved by a child and is willing to go to great lengths to get what she wants. She's jealous of Woody's voice box because hers was defective from the start, and eventually, Woody is forced to give it to her in order to retrieve Forky. This plot point was one of my biggest issues with the movie.

When Gabby first expresses the desire for the voice box, it's creepy. And while the toys are often indifferent to injuries that would incapacitate a living thing (earlier in the movie, Bo Peep's arm falls off and she just laughs and tapes it back on), the scene immediately following Woody's voice box removal is a blurry first-person shot from Woody's perspective, evoking the experience of coming off anesthesia after a major surgery. And then it's basically forgotten.

In the past, Woody would occasionally use his pull-string as a grappling hook or lasso, but this never seems to be necessary in the rest of the movie. His sacrifice is undercut by the fact that it never so much as inconveniences him and Gabby Gabby is forgiven by the end of the movie. This felt weak and undeserved.

*Toy Story 4* questions the assumption that toys want to be played with, but that's not the only way it prods at the franchise's worldbuilding. Forky is an object in one moment and a toy the next, raising the question of what precisely defines a toy. Toys in the movie are shown exerting more agency and influence on the world around them than in the previous movies, even terrifyingly interfering with Bonnie's father's driving. On the flip side, though, the movie also raises questions that have no good in-universe answers. Why weren't Bo Peep's sheep sidekicks in the previous movies? Woody says he was manufactured in the

1950s, so why doesn't he remember his owners before Andy? While not necessarily inconsistent with the previous movies, *Toy Story 4* doesn't always feel like an organic continuation of the previous movies.

*While not necessarily inconsistent with the previous movies, Toy Story 4 doesn't always feel like an organic continuation of the previous movies.*

While the writing is flawed, *Toy Story 4*'s visuals are a treat to behold. The environments, from crowded antique shops, lit up carnivals, and mundane stretches of road, are detailed and beautiful. The characters all look better than ever. The animators paid extra special attention to textures this time around. For the first time, you can really tell the difference between Bo Peep's ceramic and Woody's

plastic. Key and Peele play carnival prizes, and you can tell how cheaply made their characters are. You can glance at any one of the toys in this movie and immediately know what it would feel like if you put them in your mouth, like a child might. Because, at the end of the day, that's who this movie is made for. *Toy Story 4* doesn't even approach the series' previous heights -- that's disappointing to me. I would even go as far to say that while it's not bad, it doesn't justify its own existence as a piece of art, but not without acknowledging that I'm not the target audience of this movie. And as far as ways to entertain the kids for an hour-and-a-half, go, you could certainly do a lot worse than *Toy Story 4*.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

 ENVIRONMENT:

THE STERN  
PLASTIC EPIDEMIC

BY SARAH BRILL

Every year, Americans send 38 billion plastic bottles to landfills, and every second of every day, 1,500 plastic bottles are thrown away. 129 million plastic bottles are thrown away per day and 30% of these bottles make it to recycling. So, what is Stern doing to help control the overuse of plastic? One

may say that because our campus recycles, we are doing our part to limit the amount of plastic that ends up in landfills. Unfortunately, this naive perspective does nothing to shift the attitudes at Stern about the plastic crisis.

Last semester, straws were unavailable for student use for about a week, and as a result, approximately 172,916 straws were not disposed of on

**As Jews and citizens of the world, we have an obligation...to take steps to provide a future for our grandchildren and the generations that follow.**

SEE **PLASTIC**,  
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The feeling of YOUR  
piece being published...



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## SCI TECH

## PLASTIC

FROM PAGE 19

beaches, where every year, 8.3 billion straws pollute them. But the lack of straws was not done purposely to create a more environmentally friendly Stern environment. They were merely unavailable. I was in awe to see how many Stern students were distraught about this coffee-drinking technicality. Not only do Stern students place straws in their iced coffee drinks, they place it in their Snapples, juices, and

even hot coffee beverages.

But straws aren't the only issue. Plastic water bottles are in high demand at Stern for a trivial reason - the reusable ones must be cleaned. When this topic is brought up to



many Stern women, they dismiss it as if it is not a concerning issue. While this is not the case for all students, many are still ignorant to

the fact that plastic affects the rivers, beaches, and streams of the world, and if it is not dealt with accordingly, it will destroy wildlife.

In Deuteronomy 25:4,

G-d says not to “muzzle an ox that thrashes.” This can be interpreted as “do not do more harm, as harm is

already being done.” In today's ecosystem, plastic straws are stuck inside turtles' noses and plastic beer rings are found inside of seagulls' guts.

As Jews and citizens of the world, we have an obligation not to contribute to the “thrashing” and to take steps to provide a future for our grandchildren and the generations that follow. To ensure a livable ecosystem, we must notice that we are not the only creatures that wander, and that we are surrounded by non-human life. The next time you go for a straw, reach for a plastic water bottle, or purposely fail to recycle, just know that you are contributing to the destruction of our planet.



(Photo: Flickr)

## ♀ WOMEN'S HEALTH:

# PLANNED PARENTHOOD

## Myth vs. Fact

BY SARAH LIBEROW

Amidst the controversy surrounding Planned Parenthood and its various services, there are a lot of misconceptions about Planned Parenthood and what services it provides to the general public. Many may believe that Planned Parenthood's sole purpose is to provide abortions or that it is only needed by pregnant women or those with uteruses. There is also confusion on the ramifications of providing sex education to teenagers and whether only sexually active people need to be tested for STDs. To aid in clearing up these misunderstandings, I will address several myths and shed light on lesser known facts about Planned Parenthood.

A myth that circulates often is that over 90% of Planned Parenthood's services are abortions. Although there is a mistaken assumption that Planned Parenthood largely exists as an abortion clinic, Planned Parenthood's 2017-2018 Annual Report proves otherwise: only 3.4 percent of the 9.6 million services provided by Planned Parenthood in 2017 were abortions. In reality, Planned Parenthood provides a myriad of services for general sexual and reproductive health, which leads us to the second myth: Planned Parenthood can't help you with anything unless you're pregnant. In truth, Planned Parenthood's services span many aspects of sexual and reproductive health for any

gender, including, but not limited to: access to birth control,

*Planned Parenthood's range of healthcare services provides both adults and young adults alike access to essential care...and provides critical sexual education to people from all walks of life.*

contraception, STD testing and treatment, pregnancy testing and services, patient education, as well as routine screenings for

women, men, and anyone who requires care. These services are covered under most health insurances, and even otherwise, Planned Parenthood will work to provide its patient with services.

Some may wonder why they should care about Planned Parenthood if they aren't looking to get pregnant or aren't sexually active, but general wellness checkups are important no matter what stage of life someone is at. Planned

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(Photo: Pixabay)

## FINDINGS AND REFLECTIONS

### Summer in a Stern Lab

BY NICOLE SOUSSANA

During my first summer as an undergraduate at Stern, I decided to spend my time with Dr. Ran Drori, Professor of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry at Stern College for Women, in order to receive firsthand experience of life as a researcher.

Upon entering Stern, I planned to attend medical school, like mostly everyone else. Over the course of two semesters, my plans have transitioned from an intended MD to PhD. This means that rather than going to medical school and become a practicing doctor, I have shifted gears to instead enter a field that would further my understanding of the world of science, in addition to becoming part of a community dedicated to enhancing the breadth of scientific knowledge. While this sounds like a great feat, I wanted to experience life in research before solidifying my decision. My summer in Dr.

Drori's lab helped me reach this intention.

Dr. Drori's lab focuses on antifreeze proteins (AFPs). These proteins play a vital role in the survival of cold-environment organisms by stunting the growth of ice within them. Due to the effects of antifreeze proteins, ice crystals can exist within the organisms without causing harm, because ice growth is inhibited. AFPs are present in many organisms living in freezing temperatures, such as fish, insects, bacteria, plants, and fungi. Like most occurrences in science, these magnificent proteins are not as simple as they sound.

Pure water melts at just above zero degrees celsius and freezes just below zero. There is practically no gap between the freezing point and the melting point. However, the basic means of antifreeze proteins is to bind the ice and inhibit its growth. This creates a gap between the melting and freezing points. In

this gap, called TH (thermal hysteresis), ice will not grow and will therefore not cause harm to the organisms living in

*The work leading up to a discovery...is extremely hard and taxing, but at the end of the day, when you discover a small nuance...leading you to your final answer, it is more than gratifying.*

sub-zero temperatures (where ice would have grown if it were not for AFPs). Once the ice crystal in the presence of AFPs reaches the freezing point, the crystal bursts. The story becomes highly complicated when adding various types of antifreeze proteins, degrees of

activity, and binding sites to the planes of ice crystals, all of which impacts how and when the ice grows, while also manipulating the temperature.

During my time in Dr. Drori's lab, the research I conducted was twofold. On the one hand, I focused on the influence that time would play on the TH activity of different AFPs. If you leave the ice crystal at a constant temperature within the TH gap, will this give an opportunity for more AFPs to bind, thereby increasing the TH activity? We concluded that the impact of time on TH activity would depend on the protein. For AFPI, which is found in flounders, there was no observed change of TH activity as time

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## PLANNED PARENTHOOD

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Parenthood's regular screenings can catch STDs and cancers while they are still treatable. Additionally, some may believe that there is no need to be tested for STDs if they aren't sexually active, when, according to the Mayo Clinic, "The organisms (bacteria, viruses or parasites) that cause sexually transmitted diseases may pass from person to person in blood, semen, or vagi-

nal and other bodily fluids." For example, HIV can be passed from an HIV-positive person to an HIV negative person through the sharing of injection drug equipment. Therefore, it is important to have affordable and accessible testing centers where one can be screened for STDs and treated if necessary.

According to a survey that Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducted in 2017, 40% of American high school stu-

dents had already had sex, with almost half not practicing safety measures to prevent pregnancies or the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Consequently, it is vital for teenagers to be educated in order to avoid unwanted pregnancies and to protect themselves. Planned Parenthood provides many resources for teenagers to learn about puberty, STDs, and pregnancy prevention, as well as learning about consent and their sexual and

gender identity. It is imperative to supply teenagers with accurate medical information so they can make safe decisions as they mature. Therefore, Planned Parenthood's range of healthcare services provides both adults and young adults alike access to essential care—from contraception to general well-being—and provides critical sexual education to people from all walks of life.

# A TRANSPLANT RESEARCH JOURNEY

YU Student Reflects on Summer in Boston Children's Hospital

BY MICHAEL GERBER

On average, a kidney transplant patient lives 12 to 20 years post-surgery. Currently, pediatric transplant research is focused on creating immunosuppressive medication to be administered following a transplant. This past summer, I worked in a pediatric transplant research lab for nephrology, at Boston Children's Hospital, that focuses on prolonging the life of post-transplant pediatric patients. The lab focuses their research on a protein that controls the expression of turning

genes on or off, which regulates

*The most important aspect of research is to **keep questioning and understanding**. If an experiment does not work, **try again**.*

immune system expression which can prolong the life of post-transplant patients.

I had the fortunate opportunity to take part and contribute

to this amazing research which included working with mice, genotyping, and working in a wet lab. A wet lab is defined as "a laboratory equipped with appropriate plumbing, ventilation, and equipment to allow for hands-on scientific research and experimentation." Scientific research all begins with an observation, and continues with hypothesis, experimentation, and finally, the evaluations of the results. While the scientific method seems very basic in essence, research is heavily focused on this technique. It is very simple to put solutions togeth-

er, but the technique and experiments performed can drastically affect the results.

One technique I used is called a western blot. Blotting is the transfer of the specific molecule onto a nitrocellulose paper. There is a northern blot (DNA detection), southern blot (RNA detection), and a western blot (protein detection). These three techniques

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## STERN LAB

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increased, even with varying concentrations. However, with a more active protein, QAE, found in eelpouts, differing concentrations displayed an increase in TH activity with time. The basic explanation for this occurrence is the different ways the proteins bind to ice. QAE

specifically causes sharper tips on the crystal with the increase of time, which increased the TH.

The other aspect of my research involved comparing the ice crystal shape as it is formed to just before it bursts. If it is found that the crystal shape becomes sharper before burst, it could explain an increase in TH activity. The sharpness of the ice crystal displays how efficiently

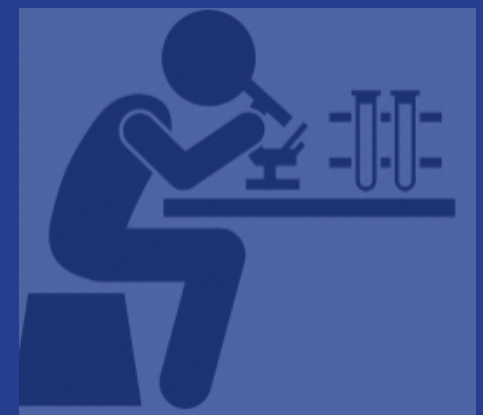
the AFP is inhibiting ice growth. The sharper the tips of an ice crystal, the further growth is being inhibited. Once the rate of ice growth is faster than the AFP binding, the crystal will burst.

While the bulk of my time doing research happened to be very tedious, repetitive, and included many failures along the way, I learned that this is the path every researcher follows.

The work leading up to a discovery or even just to the step which will lead to a discovery, is extremely hard and taxing, but at the end of the day, when you discover a small nuance or some small reaction that wasn't expected or a clue leading you to your final answer, it is more than gratifying.

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## TRANSPLANT RESEARCH

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are very similar, however a western blot focuses on the detection and weight of a protein. It is very important to be precise when measur-

ing the weight of these proteins, otherwise the experiment will not work. Even if one is precise with their measurements, however, the experiment could fail for various other reasons. You could perform the same experiment three to five times and yield no results. From that point on, you look at your observation and hypothesis to revise it. Personally, I can tell you that it is a great feeling to get posi-

tive results, but also a terrible feeling when the results you expect come out negative.

The most important aspect of research is to keep questioning and understanding. If an experiment does not work, try again. There are not many transplant research centers in nephrology, yet the one I worked with devotes their

time to saving countless lives. Through remaining optimistic, yet level-headed, these scientists contribute to research that will change the lives of children in need of a transplant.

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*Editor's Note: Work in a lab?*

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