

The Yeshiva University OBSERVER



ONE OF TWO INDEPENDENT, UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPERS OF YESHIVA UNIVERSITY'S STERN COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, YESHIVA COLLEGE AND SY SYMS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

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Editorials

By Fruma Landa, Editor in Chief

Living History



One of the many objectives of a newspaper is to document moments in time with the goal of providing individuals in later generations with primary sources about events which occurred. This year, we witnessed history being made, and I am proud to say that as a newspaper, we had the privilege of documenting it. Aside from living through the COVID-19 pandemic, we witnessed first hand the groundbreaking lawsuit against YU regarding their refusal to provide LGBTQ+ students on campus a club. These two instances, although vastly incomparable, will root themselves in history.

One of the most important things about living through history is that we take part in making it. Every news article regarding COVID-19 cases or testing procedures on campus leaves a paper trail for future historians to follow while researching institutions' response to the pandemic. Articles depicting the struggles and pain of the pandemic can be used down the line to understand how the pandemic influenced the lives of college students, socially, emotionally and academically. Every article pub-

lished this year contributes to the knowledge people will have about the pandemic in the future.

Aside from contributing to history via documentation, students on campus have done their fair share of changing the future of YU, thus making history. The YU I am about to graduate from is not the same YU I enrolled in. Initiatives such as the Beren Campus Rosh Chodesh Minyan and clubs such as the Jewish Activism Club and Students Against Sexual Assault have done great work changing the landscape of our communities for the better. While these initiatives and clubs were not active when I arrived at YU, they have been active for several semesters and show no signs of slowing down. The formation of these clubs, as well as the articles written about their events, root these clubs in the YU experience.

Unlike the above YU-supported clubs and initiatives, not all life-changing clubs have been granted the right to exist on campus. In my first year at YU, the YU Pride Alliance, an unofficial club dedicated to providing

resources and community to the LGBTQ+ student body, had not been formed. There were previous attempts to start an LGBTQ+ related club, and conversations of how to best support LGBTQ+ students on campus were already in motion, but we were still far away from change. Although controversial, the YU Pride Alliance has the power to drastically improve students' lives for the better as it provides life saving resources to queer students and has the ability to connect students to a larger LGBTQ+ community on campus. The formation of the YU Pride Alliance, although not included in the lists of YU clubs, has not been left out of history. The trail, beginning at the LGBTQ+ march, to the many attempts to gain club approval, to the eventual lawsuit, can be traced throughout YU Observer articles.

Writing about events has the ability to record them for the future. But further, documenting new initiatives gives movements a voice which allows them to gain visibility and support, ensuring continuity.

As a newspaper, we have the ability to strengthen movements and create history. This privilege comes with extreme responsibility. I am proud that the initiatives that changed the face of YU between my first and last semester have been neatly recorded in the YU Observer, ensuring they are not lost in time. I am confident that the YU Observer will continue to document the happenings of YU, and I look forward to reading about our history in the making.

Passing the Torch: Mesorot and Looking with Hope Toward the Future of Yeshiva University

By Shayna Herszage,
Managing Editors

Mesorah. It is a word we use on a regular basis in Yeshiva University. Colloquially, it refers to the collection of notes gathered for a class over the years that is passed along to future students. Literally, it means the passing on of something, such as a responsibility or a set of knowledge, from person to person. Overall, it is a term that represents the giving over of something from one person or group to the next, marking the end of one era and the beginning of another.

Throughout my final year as a YU undergraduate student, I struggled to come to terms with the impending mesorot. My time in Yeshiva University has been filled with many communal goals, and so many of these goals still have a long way to go. When I, along with my graduating peers, leave, who will take our places and continue the path toward what must be accomplished? What if the mesorot end here?

In my first semester, for example, I heard tangentially about the “Infamous Gay Panel of 2010” while I wrote an article about Ben Katz (YC ’11), a YU alumnus and LGBTQ+ activist. I had never heard of the panel before, and neither had most of my peers. In the beginning of my time at YU, the discussions surrounding LGBTQ+ inclusion on campus were kept muffled at best, but more commonly they were shut down entirely.

Since then, much has changed. LGBTQ+-friendly events including “What Helps and What Hurts: Mental Health and LGBTQ+” and “Being LGBTQ+ in an Orthodox World” took place as YU-sponsored events. The YU administration has begun, after years of

persuasion, to openly engage in dialogue about LGBTQ+ presence at YU, making progress by starting an LGBTQ+ support group through the Counseling Center. Such open recognition of LGBTQ+ students at YU would have been almost unheard of in my first semester — but three years later, so much within the realm of LGBTQ+ acceptance has become a reality at Yeshiva University.

Nonetheless, there is still a lot to do in order to make Yeshiva University truly a place of LGBTQ+ equality. The YU Pride Alliance, a club which attempted to attain official YU club status in 2020, has been repeatedly denied approval. In response to a culmination of homophobic acts and rejection of LGBTQ+ inclusion and dialogue, several students and alumni have filed a lawsuit against Yeshiva University. While this lawsuit has not yet come to a close, its initial filing stands as a testimony in itself to the fact that the YU community’s journey toward LGBTQ+ inclusion is well on its way.

Another issue whose progress I have witnessed at YU is reproductive health education. In 2013, before I came to YU, a controversy sparked: a Stern College for Women student, Dasha Sominski (SCW ’14), posted an anonymous survey on Facebook, titled “YU Sex Ed and Questions of Acceptable Sexual Promiscuity.” Soon afterward, she received an email informing her that her housing scholarship had been revoked due to her post about such a topic. Yeshiva University’s anxieties about reproductive health education resulted in efforts to silence its discussion, regardless of the effect it had on students.

The summer before my final year at Yeshiva University,

Sarah Liberow (SCW ’22) and I organized Health Education for Students Society (HESS). HESS, we decided, would be a club dedicated to educating YU undergraduate students about reproductive and sexual health. This club was particularly necessary due to the fact that many YU students had not taken a reproductive health education class in high school, and many of those who had been exposed to such a class reported that it was not of adequate educational quality.

We knew, given YU’s discomfort around the issue, that getting HESS approved on the Beren Campus would require nothing short of a miracle. Sarah and I designed a survey about sexual activity and reproductive health education which we posted on social media and sent in group chats. Our aim was to have a collection of data which we could show to the Office of Student Life in order to support our claims that Yeshiva University students did not have the reproductive health education backgrounds they needed. Within minutes, survey responses began pouring in.

Soon after I posted the survey online, a friend sent me an article about Sominski’s controversy. I was terrified, but there was no going back: the survey had been posted, we had over thirty responses and I had made up my mind that HESS was going to happen, no matter what it took. For weeks, I waited to receive an email like the one Sominski had received seven years prior — but fortunately it never came. HESS was not an easy club to get approved — it required almost a full semester of meetings, strategies and countless emails before our first event was able to take place — but it was approved nonetheless.

The approval of a reproductive health education club on the Beren Campus of YU is a big step toward confronting a topic that used to be avoided altogether. However, much like the journey of LGBTQ+ inclusion, the development of reproductive health education accessibility at Yeshiva University is far from finished. During my time as co-club head, we only had one full semester for events; there is still so much more to learn. Additionally, we acknowledge that many of the students on the Wilf Campus have also been denied reproductive health education for most of their lives — will a Wilf student see what is missing in their community and run a parallel chapter?

The Yeshiva University of my first semester is not the same as that of my final semester. For that I am proud of myself and my peers, and I am thankful for those who have helped these changes come to fruition. But I also recognize that a great deal of work has yet to be completed, and I call upon the current and future students of YU to continue what has been started. As Rabbi Tarfon states in Pirkei Avot, “It is not your responsibility to finish the work, but you also may not abandon it.” We must not grow comfortable with how far we have come to the point of stagnation, especially when we consider how much ground we still need to cover.

As I prepare to graduate, I look at how much has been accomplished and I feel tremendous pride. I also look at the outstretched hands of students prepared to continue the fight for change, and I am full of immense hope for the future of Yeshiva University. The work is not yet finished — will you pass the torch?

Wilf Campus Election Candidate Profiles Spring 2021

Compiled by YU Observer
Editorial Staff

YSU President

Elazar Abrahams

Hi, I'm Elazar Abrahams and I'm running for YSU President! A little bit about me - I'm from Brooklyn and went to MAY for high school followed by shana aleph at Netiv Aryeh. I'm majoring in English and minoring in Political Science. I like vanilla ice cream, the Yankees, and good divrei Torah that don't involve gematria. I also firmly believe that shtick should exist outside of Adar.

Baruch Hashem, I was able to accomplish a lot as the Junior Rep on student council this year. Aside from the fun events I helped plan and run (Amaré Stoudemire, Comedy Nights, Yom Haatzmaut tekes and BBQ, etc.), there was a lot behind the scenes. I played a big part in saving the late drop date, bringing back the inter-campus shuttle, and most recently protecting next year's reading week when YU wanted to cut it. It would be an honor to continue representing you, and I hope I can count on your vote this Thursday! Please reach out with any questions.

YSU Vice President of Clubs

Baruch Lerman

Hi everyone! My name is Baruch Lerman and I am running for YSU VP of Clubs! Over the past two years, I have run some events and advocated on behalf of the students to the administration. I have loved serving the student body and trying to make all our experiences here as enjoyable as possible! I hope to make next year the best year possible by running amazing events, working with the administration to try and improve things for students, and by working hard to make sure everyone's voices are heard!

YSU Vice President of Affairs

Michael Stark

My goal as VP of Student Affairs is to make you, as students, as happy as possible. I am pro-swang and want to have student council give out as much as possible. I will listen to the students and will take your concerns into consideration. I want to make this coming year as fun and enjoyable as possible! I hope you all vote for me in the elections!

YSU Senior Representative

Joey Wajsberg

Hey Everyone!

My name is Joey Wajsberg. I am originally from Antwerp, Belgium, and moved to New York for college. I am double majoring in Accounting & Marketing. As most of you probably know, the elections are on Thursday, April 29, and I am running for Senior Representative this year. I am very excited to give it my all, and to have the best final year at YU with all the seniors. I have a lot of amazing ideas and can't wait to start planning them.

If you can take 30 seconds on Thursday and vote for me, it will be much appreciated!

Of course, if anyone has any questions, feel free to contact me!

YSU Junior Representative

Binyamin Sloves

My name is Binyamin Sloves and I'm running for Junior representative. Why am I running for Junior representative? Well, simply because there are issues within YU that will only get worse if not addressed. I'm from Los Angeles and was off campus this year and wondering: where is all the swag? Whenever I see my YU friends with swag, most of it comes from sports teams. Why can't I or my friends be decked out in swag if we aren't on a sports team? How come my friends on teams only have sports swag and not regular YU

swag? Is there not enough of it? Does this swag lack aesthetic appeal? Whether we like it or not, we all need more swag. Some of us are in clubs, some of us are in sports teams, some are neither, but they all need more swag. Maybe the clubs can't afford it? Well then they need a bigger budget. My goal for student council is very simple: students...need...more. They need more money in their clubs for activities. They need more options for food in the cafeteria. They need more plies on their toilet paper around campus. There can ALWAYS be more. More events, more representation in decisions, and absolutely, more swag. My goal for Junior representative is to make the students heard and their needs fulfilled, until they are drowning in the privilege of being a YU student. Vote for me for Junior representative and you'll see the difference I can make around campus.

Yisroel Tannenbaum

My name is Yisroel Tannenbaum, and I am running for Junior Representative. Over my short time in YU, although it has been incredible in my opinion, there are still many ways we can improve as a community. I am determined to make a more connected and integrated student body. That means shabbatonim involving all the programs, and more activities outside the NY area! I also plan on bringing back some great classes that aren't offered anymore, including Yiddish.

YCSC President

Jonah Chill

Hi! My name is Jonah Chill and I am running for Yeshiva College Student Council President. I am a junior from New Rochelle, NY, majoring in political science and minoring in finance. Outside of classes, I am a Writing Center tutor, YUNMUN chair, madrich for the students from Gush (where I went to yeshiva for two years), and serve on the boards of YUPAC and College EDge. In addition, I have also had the

immense pleasure of serving as the Vice President of YCSC.

I believe that one's YU experience is however you make of it. The past year has been tough for a lot of us. As the situation improves, I want the next year to be the start of making up for all the good times, fun activities and interactions we have missed out on. I want to make next year at YU meaningful, both to seniors who will spend their last year on campus and those younger who haven't had a "normal" YU experience to date.

YCSC Vice President

Elie Shapiro

Abraham Walkenfeld

Hi there fellow YU people, Allow me to introduce myself. I am Avraham Walkenfeld, and I am running for VP of YCSC (which stands for Yeshiva College Student Council). I am majoring in...I do not know yet, and my life goal is to become super-rich, and so far, the lottery tickets have not worked. So here I am. Some of you may be wondering: why am I not in Syms? The answer is...none of your business — just kidding, it is just too long to explain here. I am running for student council because I understand that the student council rarely accomplishes anything of value, and my goals are absolutely not to accomplish anything from this position. The importance of this position for you the people of YC is that it gives me access to the bully pulpit to advocate for important things. The world rests on 3 pillars, and so I will tirelessly advocate for 3-ply toilet paper, a Nerf gun war over the 3 levels of the library, and pareve ice cream sandwiches for the 3rd meal on Shabbos. The importance of this position for me is that it gives me something to put on my basically empty resume. In all seriousness, I will try to be a good VP who does stuff, and I can guarantee that I will work hard.

David Lifschitz

Hi, My name is David Lifschitz and I'm running for Yeshiva College Student Council Vice President. My main plans are to bring back Nagels, keep improving on the channels of communication between the administration and the student body, and implement more cohesive events between clubs.

YCSC Treasurer

Sapir Amar

My name is Sapir Amar, 22 years old, and I was born in Israel but have been raised in 5 different countries. Yes, really! To be different is to be special — your experiences and stories are what makes you unique.

I am running for YSCS Treasurer because I have great interest in leadership. My goal is to provide support to teachers, shape relationships with students and the public, and strive to create a beneficial school environment for everyone who passes through school gates.

I am currently studying to become a medical student (and eventually become a doctor, B'ezrat Hashem) since I love to help people and make a difference, which is my main goal in life. I speak English, Spanish and Hebrew fluently and one of my main hobbies is soccer — it is my way to disconnect, distress and "charge my batteries."

Although it's my first year at YU, I have realized how the YU community is special. The daily life at YU can be busy and stressful sometimes (let's admit it). However, besides dealing with the financial aspect of YU, I am here to make the student and life experience at YU an unforgettable one.

Now that you know a little bit more about me, and who I am — let's do this together! My goal is to make it happen with you, not alone.

Are you in? Any question you may have I am here to help

Thank you,

Sapir!

AJ Book

Hey hey hey! My name is AJ Book and I'm running to be your YCSC

Treasurer! I am confident that my skill set and experience can lead me to be successful in the position and help make some positive changes that will help your college experience. For some background about myself: I am from Teaneck, New Jersey, and I went to Yeshivat Noam and TABC before coming to YU. My track record speaks for itself. Literally, I am the coach of the TABC Storm track team and helped lead them to a first-place finish at the championships in 2019. I've helped organize Shabbatons, practices, and fun get-togethers for the Storm team. It's been an amazing experience, one I am sure will help me in planning events for YCSC. Additionally, I am an avid Star Wars fan. I was even given the "Dark Saber" from a famous celebrity figure. With the force's help, I plan on blasting our campus to the moon. As Treasurer, I don't want to ignore the wishes of my classmates. I am a Jedi and can do this. I want to get to know more students and I want to work for what will make them happy. Please, don't hesitate to reach out. My email is abook@mail.yu.edu

SYMSSC President

Jake Sheckter

My name is Jake Sheckter, I am running for President of the Sy Syms School of Business, and I believe that pioneer problems require pioneer solutions. I have had the good fortune and pleasure to meet many of you through my shiurim, classes, friends of friends, and, most recently, in my position as president and co-founder of the Yeshiva University Stock Exchange (YUSE) club. While I do not have prior experience in student politics, my friends, classmates, club members, and individuals of our esteemed faculty can attest to one thing: I get the job done and I always put in 100%. After listening to countless students in Sy Syms, I'm happy to share my plan to serve the student body, should you elect me president.

We are living in unprecedented times. If the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it's the importance of communication and implementing measures to address an issue early on. It is much more effective dealing with the problem before it escalates and becomes overwhelming. Think back to your first year at YU and the daunting challenges it presented. Many of us may have

wished that there were additional systems in place to address our personal questions and issues. Now we find ourselves, sophomores, juniors, and seniors alike, having to adapt to a "new" campus, with new protocols and rules; and in a certain sense, we are all freshmen again. I would like to ensure we have the right systems set up to address the potential issues that may arise through the transition to in-person classes. This would also include assembling a 'COVID Taskforce' to address pandemic-related issues that arose during our time online. This team of students and faculty would place a strong focus on mental health support, grade issues, international student support, and difficulties with transitioning to in-person classes. I will continue to serve the Sy Syms student body in any capacity I can, and kindly ask for your vote to ensure your voices are heard. Thank you.

Akiva Poppers

\$30,000. That was the amount of money in the Syms Student Council budget this year. I won't let it go to waste. My name is Akiva Poppers, current SOY President, Executive Producer of MacsLive and candidate for SYMSSC President. I'm the only guy in the race who has any experience in student government and working with the YU bureaucrats, which means that I literally will hit the ground running and start the job in May, not in October. It takes 2 months in YU to get anything substantial done, so by the time someone new to the job gets settled in, almost half the year is gone. Despite being on SOY and not SYMSSC, I've already been in meetings all year with Deans Wasserman and Strauss, so the transition to SYMSSC will be seamless.

I've got the connections within YU to make sure everyone in Syms gets great swag and in short order. If I win, everyone in Syms will get a Syms dri-fit, baseball cap, and portable charger over the course of the upcoming year. And in case it wasn't obvious, I love helping YU and the student body, which is why I spent hours computing mathematical calculations which proved that YU's caf plan 1 1/2 years ago was taking money from students, resulting in the plan being reversed and students being saved \$300,000. Lastly, I respond to 98% of WhatsApp messages within 10 seconds, so if

you have any ideas or suggestions send me a text.

Dovi Schlossberg

SYMSSC Vice President

Eden Taranto

Hi, my name is Eden Taranto. I am an Upper Junior, Finance major at Yeshiva University and I'm currently running for Vice President of Syms. Ever since I got to YU back in 2019, I have loved this place with a strong passion, because of both the Jewish lifestyle and the amazing secular curriculum. Throughout my two years in YU, I have been a part of countless clubs on campus, including MacsLive and TAMID. I also made sure to further my involvement by being a board member of The Sephardi Club and Baking Club. Additionally, I founded the Sports Management Club this year because I saw that there was an overall interest in the industry from a decent amount of students and I took the initiative of bringing us together to form a community. I did all of this to show my love for this school, but I have so much more to do as well.

So, why should you vote for me? I believe that my experience being involved on campus is a recipe for bringing an amazing year to YU. I plan on helping integrate in-person classes back to campus and I also hope to work effectively with whoever the Syms board may be in order to bring amazing events, great guest speakers, and more swag! A vote for me is not only a vote for experience, or a vote for a leader, but a vote for me is also a vote for someone who is willing to do the work needed to give our school a great year.

Max Ash

Hey everyone my name is Max (Uri) Ash and I'm running for Syms VP. My campaign is unique in that I have the recruiting and professional experience which none of the other candidates have. I'm going to use this experience to change Syms from the ground up and prepare students for internships and recruiting, well in advance of the interview season.

SYMSSC Treasurer

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YU Faculty Profile: Jon Schapiro

By Yosef Rosenfield on behalf of Features Staff

Each month, the YU Observer aims to highlight a YU faculty member. For the May edition, the YU Observer is highlighting Professor Jon Schapiro.

Name: Jon Schapiro
 Department: Music
 Educational Background/Qualifications: Master of Music in composition from the Manhattan School of Music
 Hometown: New York
 How long have you worked at YU?: 20 years
 What got you passionate about your field?: Hard to say. I was a musical kid who enjoyed everything about music from an early age — even practicing! The camaraderie of being in the same room with other musicians, all

working on sounding better, all developing wordless communication — all individuals but parts of a whole — is a truly addictive sensation.

What do you like about working at YU?: In music, I get what's left of you guys after arduous days of intense study. I enjoy classes with students ready to let off some steam and stop taking themselves so seriously for an hour. The occasional spirited debate can also be fun.

How has COVID-19/Zoom affected the way your classes function?: Naturally it's more challenging to make points about music when we're not in a classroom. Having access to a piano in Muss Hall makes certain explanations much easier; I'm sure

this is true about most academic disciplines.

If you could bring in any guest lecturer, alive or deceased, who would it be, and what would he/she speak about?: Louis Armstrong. "Pops" (one of his nicknames) witnessed the most important — and fascinating — era of American music, during which musicians wrestled with the challenges of blending ragtime and the blues. New Orleans was a culturally rich and diverse city with pretty much everything American music had to offer.

Armstrong lifted himself from poverty and first saw the U.S., then the world. It's hard to imagine an aspect of 20th century life he couldn't illuminate for a class. Do you have any advice for

students interested in a career in your field?: Learn everything. Be prepared. Remember that it's supposed to be fun.

What is one thing you want students to know about you?: I've had the very good fortune of working with 17 of New York's top musicians. Summit Records has just released our second album, "Human Qualities," available electronically and on CD. Check out our website, www.schapiro17.com. (And I'm always up for a little music schmooze.)

Is there a YU professor you admire whom you would like to see highlighted in future editions? Email us at theyuobserver@gmail.com.

Gilad Menashe

Hi, my name is Gilad Menashe and I am a current freshman at Yeshiva University, studying at the Sy Syms School of Business. My first year at YU has proven to be one of the most growth oriented years of my life and the university, students, and community has been nothing but positive throughout the year. For this reason, I hope to give back to the university, and I believe that the Syms Treasurer position would be the most appropriate way of going about that. I look forward to the rest of my time at YU, and I hope my future experiences mirror the ones of the past year.

SOY President

Yoni Laub

Hey everyone, my name is Yoni Laub and I'm running for SOY President! I'm from West Orange, NJ, went to TABC for high school, then spent 2 years in Hakotel, and am now finishing up my junior year in YU, where I'm majoring in psychology and minoring in business and learning in Rav Sobolofsky's shiur. I love to connect with and be there for people, learn, listen to shiurim and podcasts, hang out with friends and family, and drink water. This year, I had the opportunity to be the YP representative where I helped plan events, shabboses, and arranged speakers and I was also an RA for Rubin 5. I look forward to the opportunity to combine my experience and passion and, im yirtzeh Hashem,

help make next year's religious experience on campus as meaningful, enjoyable, and smooth as possible. Please reach out to me at jlaub@mail.yu.edu with any and all questions, concerns, and ideas!

SOY Vice President

Michael Smolowitz

Aryeh Bienstock

SOY Public Relations

Ezra Emerson

Hey there,

My Name is Ezra Emerson. I am an upcoming Junior in Yeshiva University Sy Syms School of Business and planning to major in either Marketing or Management. I am also planning on Graduating in the spring of '23. I am running for the position of SOY PR. My reasoning for running is that I can be on the student council and help represent SOY in any way and shape I can. I believe that I have a lot to bring to the table, even though I don't have much experience on student council. I believe that every position is important to YU, no matter the title given to it. I wish the best of luck to my fellow candidates who are running for all types of different positions, and that we as a whole can make YU great once again.

SOY BMC Representative

Joey Yellin

Hi there, my name is Joey Yellin. I'm an upper sophomore at YU, and I am currently attending SY SYMS. I am officially running for the position of BMP representative, and want to tell you why: simply, people are bored. People tell me that they find it hard to get out of bed in the morning, and that they have nothing to look forward to during the day. Indeed, not everyone struggles with motivating themselves to get their day started; however, I don't think it should be a challenge for anyone. Now, I'm not here trying to convince you that I'm going to change the world. But, I am here telling you that I can change the state of my morning program — BMP. So, whether it is BMP shabbatonim, inter-shiur softball games, BBQs, or bringing in fun personalities to speak to the guys, I want to help everyone I can to enjoy their time here as much as I am. My name is Joey Yellin, and I am the right choice for BMP representative.

Aharon Traurig

Hi, I'm Aharon Traurig, I am currently a Junior majoring in Accounting and have been a talmid in Rav Schnall's BMP shiur for the last two years. As BMP representative I intend on ensuring that all students have the best college experience possible. This includes working with the other Student Council members as well as Rebbeim, OSL, and administrators. I will aim for events specif-

ically for BMP talmidim such as shiurim and shabbatonim, as well as getting BMP SWAG! I've been on campus BEFORE COVID and know what life on campus used to be. I am prepared to work tirelessly to cut through the bureaucracy and succeed in improving everyone's experience. Don't forget to vote TRAURIG for BMP representative.

SOY IBC Representative

Jonathan Saks

Max Friedman

Hi, my name is Max Friedman. I'm from St. Louis, Missouri, and am attending my first year at YU. I'm running for IBC representative with the overall goal to make IBC a much more communal experience. Personally, I believe that one of the flaws of IBC this past year was that we were not able to hold many Shabbat meals or events (some of that was obviously due to COVID circumstances). Next year, I pledge to not only hold activities that people can go to, but gauge interest from the people, holding events they will be actually interested in.

SOY JSS Representative

Marc Ziarno

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Wilf Campus student council elections will be taking place Thursday, April 29.

Beren Campus Election Candidate Profiles Spring 2021

Compiled by YU Observer Editorial Staff

SCWSC President

Shoshana Wallach

When comparing my first year on campus to this last year, there are many differences that stand out, aside from being in a global pandemic. Still, one major difference was the meaning brought to my campus life this year by being a member of the student government. Over the last two semesters, I saw firsthand the positive impact that student government can make. As SCWSC VP of Academic Affairs, I worked hard to improve the student body's campus (or digital campus) experience.

I am running for SCWSC President because I believe I have more to give back to my peers. I want to use what I have learned from this year to continue to improve the lives of students and to be a strong advocate for you. I aim to continue programming that provides enjoyable, unique experiences and makes the 6-foot gap feel smaller. I will work to bridge the gap between on-campus learning and online learning (if we have that next year) to give everyone the college experience they deserve.

Talia Leitner

My name is Talia Leitner and I'm so excited to be running for President of SCWSC! I served as the VP of Clubs this year and loved forming a connection with so many students! I enjoyed organizing Yoms, trivia nights, comedy nights and more this year! I really hope to continue to bring more in-person events to the Beren campus next year! I understand that not everyone comes from the same background, and I really want to foster a stronger community among all of the different students on campus! Help me make these dreams a reality by voting this Thursday!

SCWSC Vice President of Academic Affairs

Hadas Hirt

SCWSC Vice President of Programming

Nina Anina

Hello! My name is Nina Anina and I am a sophomore Biology major at Stern. I came into Stern last year as a true freshman from public school. I initially got involved in Student government as the Freshmen Class President. During my first freshman class event, a meet and greet, over 100 students showed up! This year, I am running for VP of Programming.

Over the last year, with this worldwide pandemic, we all faced challenges that were greatly unexpected. As VP of Programming, I want to make up for lost time. I want to advocate for my fellow peers and inspire them to bring their event ideas to the table and make it happen. Anything is possible, and I am all ears.

SCWSC Vice President of Public Relations

Meital Lindenberg

My name is Meital Lindenberg and I'm a sophomore from Cherry Hill, NJ, majoring in music. I'm running for SCWSC VP of Public Relations because I have experience in and enjoy making posters. I also am passionate about planning events that the student body wants, which is why I plan to send out a Google form after events for students to give their feedback and input ideas for new events they'd like to see happen. I also want Beren students to be more aware of events that tend to get lost in emails by making a Facebook and Instagram account where all the events can be in one place.

Chana Fischer

Hey! My name's Chana Fischer and I'm running for SCWSC VP of PR. I'm from Detroit, Michigan and a rising junior. I really enjoy being involved in my school community, which is why I ran for student council. In high

school, I was in charge of PR and made flyers and logos for Bnei Akiva and NCSY. I can't wait to help make next year great!

TAC President

Suzanna Rabinovitch

I'm Suzanne from Denver, Co and I'm running to be TAC president for this upcoming year at Stern! After attending MMY for a year and a half, I made it to campus and am currently majoring in Business Management at Syms, hoping to go into the Jewish non-profit world after graduation. From the moment I arrived at Stern, I knew that the Torah life and programming that exists here is a huge part of what makes this university special for all of us in the student body. My goal is to create programming that each and every student on campus can connect to and enjoy, and continue to build upon the amazing foundation that TAC has laid out in the past many years. If anyone has any ideas or suggestions for TAC, please don't hesitate to reach out!

TAC Vice President of Chesed

Meira Prager

Hey! I'm Meira Prager and I'm a junior from Teaneck, NJ, majoring in Early Childhood education. I'm running for TAC VP of Chesed. I love doing Chesed on campus, and I want to take Chesed to the next level! I have tons of great ideas to improve chesed on campus next year, including getting in touch with local organizations that could really use our help, and restarting Stern's Chesed group chat with small daily Chesed opportunities.

Sela Boord

Hi! My name is Sela Boord. I am from West Hempstead, Currently in Sy Syms majoring in Business Management. I am a rising senior and am so excited about the opportunity I have to run for TAC student council. Since my first semester on Beren, I

saw all the positive impacts all of the members of the student council have made on the Beren Campus and always knew I wanted the opportunity to run for student council and help contribute to that impact. I am so excited to be running for TAC VP of Chesed. I have gained so much from all the religious programming done on campus through TAC all which enhanced my religious experience as an undergraduate student. Chesed has always been an integral part of my life and I loved the opportunity to arrange Chesed programming in my schools prior to coming to Stern. As TAC VP of Chesed I would be able to develop meaningful related programming to all students and would be able to help my fellow students give to the world around us in different ways that connect to them.

TAC Vice President of Public Relations

Leia Rubinstein

Hi! My name is Leia Rubinstein and I'm running as VP of PR for TAC! I decided to run because I love Stern, I love Torah and I love making new friends. I want to make sure that everyone knows about all the incredible Torah related events that happen on campus. It would pain me to see someone missing out on a R' Aryeh Leibowitz shiur or a massive Challah bake with ALL your friends, simply because they didn't know about it! Did you know that TAC runs incredible events on Shabbos as well? Yes, that's right, you don't need to stress about finding rides back and forth from Stern because you can stay! As VP of PR of TAC I will make it my mission to ensure that everyone stays "Stern in the Know." I love meeting new people and I'm super open to any suggestions so don't hesitate to reach out! If you vote for me, I'll make sure to spam your WhatsApp notifications with all the Torah events on campus... who wouldn't want that? But, seriously, I'm super excited about running for TAC, and good luck to everyone running!

Lizzie Janssen

My name is Lizzie Janssen. I'm a junior from Chicago, majoring in psychology. After high school, I went to Migdal Oz and then did a year of Sherut Leumi at Shaare Zedek hospital, working as a nursing assistant in the children's ward. After Stern, I want to move back to Israel and get my Master's in dance/movement therapy. I am choosing to run because I believe I have a lot to offer TAC. I am passionate about the Torah content at Stern and believe that Torah is something that everyone should be involved in some capacity, even outside of Judaic classes. And that can look like a lot of things.

Hannah Karben

Hi everyone! My name is Hanna Karben from Monsey, New York, and I am running for TAC VP of Public Relations. I am currently a sophomore, majoring in Jewish education! As someone who enjoys learning Torah, and as someone who hopes to teach Torah as my career, I am passionate about having good speakers and ensuring that everyone knows about it. I plan to help make every shiur accessible to everyone who is interested, and to inform everyone about learning opportunities. Looking forward to our journey together!

TAC Vice President of Speakers

Ayelet Topp

Rebecca Aduculesi

Hellooooo women of Stern College!!! As you all know, election day is coming up, so let me give you three rapid fire reasons for why you should vote for me for TAC VP of Speakers! Reason number one: I own an awesome speaker, and I use it to blast pre-Shabbos jams every erev Shabbos (Friday afternoon). Reason number two: I have experience speaking, and I speak to my roommates on a consistent basis (they're willing to testify to this). And finally, in all seriousness, reason number three: I truly believe we are so privileged to go to a university where we have ample opportunities to get involved in Torah, and we are so blessed to have shiurim provided for us on a nightly basis. I want to do whatever I can to continue cultivating an environment of growth, learning, and developing oneself religiously. I will do my best to bring in speakers who will teach

us torah at the highest caliber, so we can all continue to enjoy and learn from the incredible shiurim at Stern College!

SYMSSC President

Shaiel Soleimani

I am Shaiel Soleimani and I am running to be YOUR Sy Syms President. If you don't know me, allow me to introduce myself. I'm from Great Neck, New York, and yes, I'm Persian. I am double majoring in Accounting and Finance and double minoring in BIMA and Real Estate. I have been your Syms Vice President for the past two years. On student council I have created and spearheaded the Syms Beren Mentoring Program, created Syms swag, I have approved clubs and club events both in person and online. I have also planned many Beren Campus events. Additionally, I have helped and pushed to bring the Real Estate minor on campus. Now as your future President I plan to do SO much for you all. I want to help students with the internship/job process. I plan on doing this by continuing to work with the career center and Professor Spear on this matter. Additionally, I want to create more of a relationship between students and professors, so that students can reach out to professors for jobs/connections, almost like a student-professor mentorship. I think it is also important for Syms students to network with other Syms students as we are the future. I plan on doing so by making a Syms Networking Week. Additionally, I want to create a networking event between YU and other NYC business schools. I also want to create more Syms swag for you all, and of course plan an AWESOME SYMS DINNER! I am also open to any suggestions you have. As you can see, I have given my whole heart to YU, and more specifically Sy Syms. I want to continue to give all I have for you all and make your time at YU as amazing as possible.

Abigail Lerman

Hi, I'm Abigail Lerman and I'm running for Student Council President of the Sy Syms School of Business. One year ago, I set a personal goal to enhance Syms student life. I was tired of my peers asking me the Golden Question, "How did you hear about that event?" Because of this, I made a commitment to

improve programming in Syms by ensuring that students knew what was happening on campus while providing them with opportunities to build their personal and professional networks.

How did I accomplish this in my role as the Vice-President of Public Relations?

*I spearheaded the creation of a new platform called "Syms in the Know" by updating students about campus events via a new WhatsApp group to minimize the number of SSTUDS they received.

*I helped plan a Peer Mentorship program which provided opportunities for experienced students to serve as mentors and role models and to provide career advice for those students new to Syms.

*I helped create online and in-person events, such as Trivia Nights, which were attended by over 100 participants, and two full days of programming for the Yoms, which included both our students living on campus as well as those Zooming in online.

As your Syms Student Council President, I want to continue the work that I started by creating opportunities for us to connect with each other while preparing for successful careers in our chosen fields. Here's a glance of what you can expect from me in the coming year if elected President:

*For our Marketing and Management majors, I plan on creating an Open Café Forum where we will invite alumni in the field to share their experiences and network with you. This will give you the chance to explore different paths as you plan your career trajectory.

*For those studying Finance, BIMA and Accounting, I plan on bringing in established professionals to conduct workshops to help you expand your technical skills which will include a Capstone Project at the end of the day where you will have the opportunity to implement your new skills. This will give you the chance to network with professionals, build your resume and gain a competitive edge in the hiring process.

*For all Syms students, regardless of major, I plan on organizing a Case Competition which will provide opportunities for all of us to collaborate with each other in small teams to help solve real-world business challenges

by utilizing the skills and talents from across all the Syms majors and curriculum.

As Election Day approaches, I want you to know that I am committed to improving your experience at Syms both personally and professionally and already have a plan designed to accomplish this goal! Last year I made a commitment and I delivered! This year won't be any different!

SYMSSC Vice President of Public Relations

Rafi Kapitanker

My name is Rafi Kapitanker and I'm super excited to be running for Syms VP of PR! I am a Marketing major and Management minor and I have a ton of experience in PR. I want to be on the student council because I want to be more involved in Syms, and continue making communication clearer. I can't wait to make next year amazing and your email inbox more organized!

Senior Class Vice President

Rina Melincoff

Junior Class President

Lea Saadoun

Hi I'm Lea Saadoun, an international student from Paris. I'm running for president of the junior class because I want the students of Stern to have the best college experience possible. I've been in Stern for two years now and I realized that there are so many girls that I have never met and never talked to. People say that college is the best years of your life and that the relationships you make here last forever. Well, I want to prove that. We have the chance to all be Stern and be in a Jewish environment where we all share the same values, Torah, and religious perspectives. Everyone is so unique and so special and has such different backgrounds and stories. I want people to meet extraordinary stories whereas you're from Russia, Paris, South Africa.

Plus, with COVID, so many activities and opportunities got cancelled. Being in college is not only about getting the best grade possible, but it's also about the social environment you're in.

I want to create new possibilities, activities, and events.

Ayelet Monas

Rachel Gilinski

My name is Rachel Gilinski. I graduated from a really small, really new high school in Miami called Yotzer Ohr, where I was lucky enough to be able to take on multiple leadership roles. I was the class president and ran our school newspaper, and I

regularly helped organize events and trips. After graduating, I spent a year at Midreshet Tehillah in Israel. I am now a sophomore here at YU, majoring in Business & Management.

Natalie Barbanel

Beren Campus student council elections will be taking place on Thursday, May 29.

A Summer of Opportunity

By Sarah Brill, Science & Technology Editor

It perhaps goes without saying that the summer of 2020 was quite a diastater. What might have been a vacation of pool parties, beach days, theatre runs and outdoor strolls turned into a mostly locked-down summer. I myself had a difficult summer: to occupy my time — with a number of companies not hiring and many volunteering opportunities being discontinued — I took on many summer courses, all of which I needed in order to graduate, but all of which I might have completed at a different time if not for the pandemic. The summer of 2021, however, looks bright. The vaccines are being distributed throughout the U.S. at a faster rate than many other countries. New York State alone has almost a 50% vaccination rate! Mayor Bill De Blasio of New York City even announced that the city would, safety permitting, reopen fully on July 1, 2021.

Erica Sultan, SCW '22, comment-

ed to the YU Observer that, unlike last year, she “will be able to work and make money this summer.” Many of us rely on part-time jobs to pay for groceries throughout the year, in addition to school expenses. In the absence of those side hustles, this year was especially tough for college students and others who couldn’t find jobs.

Not only was last year difficult for student workers and non-student workers alike, it was especially challenging for international students. Last year there was confusion regarding whether or not the Fall and Spring semesters would be online, Creating a dilemma for international students who were studying here in the U.S. but weren’t sure if they would be able to live here. To do so, international students must acquire a visa — documentation that permits a short-term stay in the country for educational purposes — but visas were un-

available during the pandemic. Sophomore Devorah Gurevich (SCW '22), whose husband — like many other international students — was trying to get a visa, shared that last summer she was arranging to obtain one while juggling an internship, whereas this year she can focus on “working on [her] business.”

While some students, like Erica and Devorah, have decided to take on jobs over the summer, others have chosen the same approach that Bina Davidson, SCW '21, adopted last summer: “take summer classes.” Bina expressed, however, that unlike last summer, she “will not be stuck at home!”

This summer will hopefully, for everyone, look different than last summer. I, for one, intend on working at a camp, something I have not done in a very long time that I wish I could have done last summer. I am grateful, though, that during my sum-

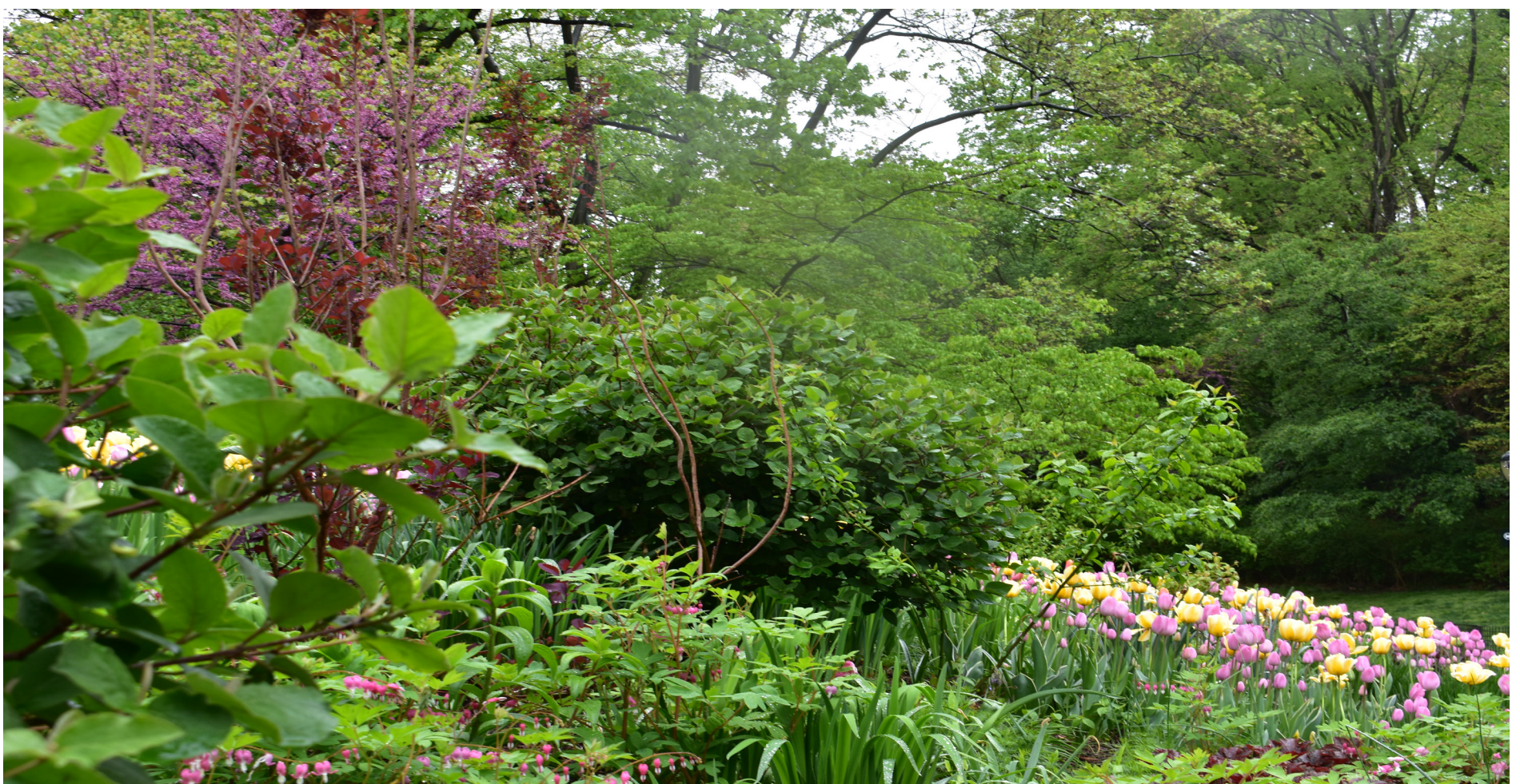
mer leading into nursing school I will get to relax while doing something that brings me joy. If I had not received the COVID-19 vaccine and if the pandemic were not, for the most part, under-control, this would not have been possible — so thank you to all the healthcare workers and first responders who not only got us through the pandemic, but also have been administering vaccines on a daily basis in an effort to end the pandemic.

Now is the time to get vaccinated so we can all ensure a pleasant and safe summer.

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Sources:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-data-vaccines.page>



Club Profile: The YU Pride Alliance

By Bina Davidson, Features Editor

Each month, the YU Observer aims to highlight one club available to the YU undergraduate community. For the May issue, the YU Observer is highlighting the YU Pride Alliance, an unofficial club on campus.

Throughout the past year, I have been a part of publishing many of the club profiles for our “Club Profile” column in the Features section. When I sat down to think of which club should be interviewed for this month’s edition, I could not help but choose the YU Pride Alliance. Over all of my years at Stern College for Women, there has been much talk about the club and the YU LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning) community as a whole. More recently, the club has been part of many conversations since the news broke that they, along with 4 other plaintiffs had filed a lawsuit against YU for discrimination. There has been much talk about the club and if it should be an official club on campus but I felt as though the club hasn’t had the opportunity to officially introduce themselves as a club and share a little bit of what they are about with the student body. In order to protect the privacy of the board members of the club, they will remain anonymous. I met with the board members and asked them a series of questions and compiled them together.

The Pride Alliance’s mission statement (found on their facebook page) is as follows: “The Yeshiva University Pride Alliance is an unofficial group of undergraduate YU students hoping to provide a supportive space on campus for all students, of all sexual orientations and gender identities, to feel respected, visible, and represented. Conversation is at the heart of our community, in order to foster awareness and sensitivity to the unique experiences of being a LGBTQ+ person in YU and the Orthodox community, and to advocate for their unconditional inclusion and acceptance. Part of achieving this is working with the administration to officially recognize our club. Our space will promote open dialogue for all, regardless of religious views and political affiliations. We ask students to be cognizant and respectful of the beliefs, experi-

ences, and backgrounds of everyone in attendance at our functions. At our events, please do not express assumptions about or hostility towards any person or organization.”

The YU Pride Alliance has 8 board members combined of both Wilf and Beren Campus students. The club serves students on both Beren and Wilf Campuses and the plan is that when the club, please G-d, gains official status, they will host events on both campuses. The Pride Alliance board members and those who attend their events come from all different backgrounds. They represent the entire religious spectrum and levels of frumkeit, are in-towners and out-of-towners, are freshmen all the way up to seniors. There are people who are out to everyone about their identity, and people who are closeted to almost everyone. Confidentiality is supremely important to the club and all events and groups have measures in place to ensure confidentiality.

There are 116 clubs on campus, and each one is unique in its importance to the YU community. The same stands for the YU Pride Alliance. Having an official club on campus is crucial for providing a safe space for all students, especially those who may be struggling or suffering alone. The club would enable students from all backgrounds to learn about the LGBTQ+ community and hopefully bring awareness to the fact that LGBTQ+ students are part of the YU community. Through educational events and opportunities, YU students will hopefully become more sensitive in how they speak in front of and to their peers, on social media, and to the general public as a whole. While the Pride Alliance hosts events and currently runs in an unofficial capacity, their crucial work is limited without support from the YU administration. As such, many students who could benefit from the club, students who are often struggling emotionally and mentally, don’t have easy access to these life-changing resources and communities.

The YU Pride Alliance also hopes to be a resource for YU students. Your sibling just came out to

you as pansexual and you don’t know what that means or how to support them? You’re questioning your gender identity and are looking for a safe space to connect with others? Do you need advice about coming out to your roommates? Reach out to the Pride Alliance and they can help.

Getting involved in the YU Pride Alliance is not as simple as many other clubs due to its unofficial standing. Most clubs have a table at the club fair and also have emails going out to the student body when applications are out, but the YU Pride Alliance cannot partake in this. They have Facebook and Instagram pages where they post educational posts, information on events going on and how to get involved. There is also an email address, yupridealliance@gmail.com, where students can get in touch with the club for information, join the different whatsapp groups that they run and get involved!

Getting involved may seem scary to some, as they might be afraid of what their peers and/or family may think, but the more people join and become active, the less stigmatized being connected to the LGBTQ+ community will become. Further, the Pride Alliance offers the security of having a strong confidentiality policy regarding the members of the club. Being involved in the club does not have to mean you are a member of the LGBTQ community, we have allies on our board and at all of our events. When people are open about their support, not only do others feel safer to express their support, but this also shows the LGBTQ student body that they are loved and safe on campus.

In addition to having WhatsApp groups and small-group events to discuss LGBTQ+ topics and get support from others who are going through similar things, Pride Alliance board members are also always available to speak to students one-to-one just to be a listening ear- just reach out to them on any of their platforms.

If you were wondering “what does getting involved with the club entail?” that is a brilliant

question. Through the generous funding from a non-profit organization called JQY (Jewish Queer Youth), the YU Pride Alliance has been able to run some really exciting and informative events, both online and in person. For Purim, the board members put together and delivered Mishloach Manot to over 20 students who signed up. Over Pesach they ran a book club and they hope to continue reading books through next semester. They rented out a movie theater which was a huge hit and COVID-19 safe. They have a continuous series called “Coffee and Catch Up” where they provide students with a \$5 gift card for a drink of their choice and then join a Zoom to discuss different topics at each event. These are just some of the events they have run and are looking forward to many more in the future.

The reality is, there are LGBTQ members in every place in the Jewish community — any of them. They are living on the same floor as you, are in classes with you, sit next to you at an event and some are probably in your friend group. You don’t know about many of them because they hide an integral part of who they are from the public due to fear. They fear that if they came out, they would be ostracized from the community, no longer wanted by their friends and family and their life, as they know it, will be over. This fear is a very real fear and has happened to a sickening amount of people. As not only Jews, but humans, we should open our hearts to every single person, regardless of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation

The most important thing for YU students to be mindful of is to be sensitive and respectful of the words they say, the comments they post online and the way they treat every single person. Thinking about how an off-hand comment could hurt someone who is closeted and afraid may very well save a life, so do your part to making the YU Jewish community the absolute best it can possibly be.

Staff Writer Profiles: Tova Shmulewitz

By Bina Davidson on behalf
Features Staff

Each month, the YU Observer aims to highlight some of the YU undergraduate students who have written articles for us over the course of the semester. For the May edition, the YU Observer is highlighting Tova Shmulewitz.

Name: Tova Shmulewitz
College: Stern College for Women
Major: Political Science

Year: Junior

Where are you for the COVID-19 pandemic? With Whom?: I was home in London, England, with my family. I'm now living on the Beren campus in NYC.

Currently reading: "Becoming Kim Jong Un" by Jung H. Pak
Currently watching: Zoom class recordings

Currently listening to: My favourite oldies playlist!

Favorite way to social distance

with friends: Walks

Any cool things you've done/hobbies you've picked up over the COVID-19 pandemic?: nah
What do you miss most about your pre-COVID-19 life?: Walking outdoors without my glasses getting fogged up.

What is your favorite thing about YU?: Shabbat!

What's a quote/thought/or piece of advice you have for your fellow students?: no regrets

Read her past articles here:

<https://yuobserver.org/2021/04/lightning-in-the-arctic/>

<https://yuobserver.org/2021/02/where-have-all-the-insects-gone/>

<https://yuobserver.org/2020/11/useful-inventions-throughout-history-the-copy-and-paste-technique/>

<https://yuobserver.org/2020/03/does-yu-really-recycle/>



Daf Yomi at Beren: Cyclical Learning and the Meaning of Hadran

By Shayna Herszage,
Managing Editors

Most months, the “Daf Yomi at Beren” column in the YU Observer features a section from a recent page of the daf yomi cycle. However, for the month of May, I will be diverting from this convention as this month marks the fulfillment of one of my biggest college goals: finishing all of Talmud Bavli before my undergraduate commencement.

I began the process of learning all of Talmud Bavli three and a half years ago, when I was in seminary in Jerusalem between high school and college. Throughout that year in Israel, I heard constant reminders that we would not be able to put aside time for Torah learning in college. I had only just discovered my love for Talmudic study, and I was not ready to pursue my secular studies passions at the price of my Judaic learning. As such, I established a goal for myself before starting YU of finishing Talmud Bavli before

my undergraduate commencement — in order to prove to myself that I can live a life of Torah learning and secular learning in tandem.

Upon completing a tractate of Talmud, it is traditional to recite a series of passages and declarations, collectively known as the “Hadran,” named for the opening word in this series. The text begins (roughly translated) with the following proclamation: “We will return to you, Tractate _____, and you will return to us.”

The Hadran emphasizes the notion that a person who has learned a text has not actually completed studying it. Rather, a person is expected to continue learning and someday revisit the same text for the sake of reviewing and gaining a deeper understanding. Through repeated study of the same text, its values and content will become a more central part of the learner’s life, and the experience may even illuminate for the learner new

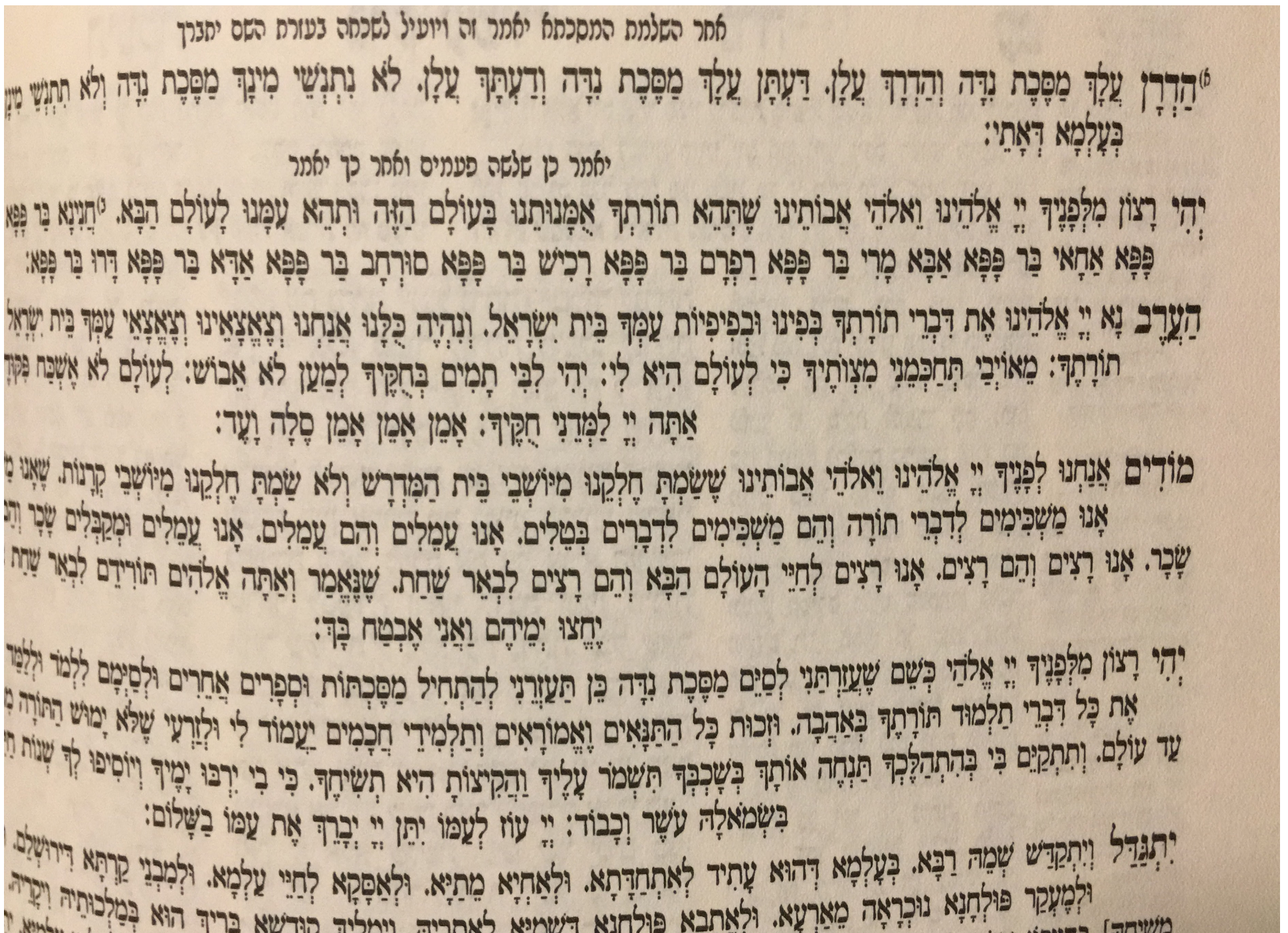
details and meaning within the text.

The notion of a learning cycle is not at all foreign to Jewish rituals. In addition to the daf yomi cycle and the cyclical theme of the Hadran, Jewish communities around the world celebrate Simchat Torah each year. The holiday of Simchat Torah is a double celebration: we celebrate having finished reading all of the weekly Torah portions, in addition to immediately restarting the very same cycle of reading the weekly portions, a process which lasts a year on the Hebrew calendar.

For me, preparing to say the Hadran this month makes me think of this text as more of a declaration than ever before. Completing Talmud Bavli on such a tight schedule (the standard daf yomi cycle lasts approximately seven years, twice as long as the amount of time I gave myself) as a full-time student was not easy. It required learning between classes, on the subways and late at night.

However, I knew that I had a goal to meet, and that goal kept me motivated and on task. When I make my siyum (celebration of completion) this month, the Hadran will serve not only as a statement that I completed one round of this goal, but also as a commitment that this will not be the last time I finish the Talmud Bavli cycle — as the passage states, I will return to it. Having fulfilled this goal once now despite tremendous difficulty, I am determined to do so again. The end of the cycle, therefore, does not represent the end of the learning, but an invitation to learn the text anew.

As I near the conclusion of my final “Daf Yomi at Beren” article as an undergraduate student, I know that this is not the end of my life of Torah learning, but a new beginning. Talmud Bavli, I will return to you.



YU Pride Alliance Files Groundbreaking Lawsuit Against Yeshiva University on Grounds of Discriminatory Club Refusal

By Rachel Jacobi, Erica Sultan and Sara Verchleisser

Zippy Spanjer contributed to this article.

May 13, 2021 Update by Sara Verschleisser, Science and Technology Editor

According to the Decision + Order on Motion filed May 13 on behalf of the Hon. Lynn Kotler, the Plaintiff John Doe has been granted the right to his anonymity. While the motion filed by the plaintiffs mandates the defendants be informed of John Doe's identity for the sake of confirmation that he exists as a student, it stipulates that no identifying information be released to the public. Kotler's decision states that the motion for anonymity was granted because "his sexual orientation is not public information ... [and] he could face significant adverse consequences as a result of its disclosure."

April 29, 2021 Update by Sara Verschleisser, Science and Technology Editor

The Honorable Shlomo S. Hagler, the judge initially assigned to the lawsuit of YU Pride Alliance v. Yeshiva University, has recused himself from the case. A motion of recusal was filed the morning of April 29. Hagler, who received his B.A. from Yeshiva University in 1988, cited avoiding the "appearance of impropriety... as [the Court] maintains continuing affiliations with defendant Yeshiva University as an alma mater of said educational institution" as the reason for the recusal. Hagler has been replaced with the Honorable Lynn R Kotler.

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On Monday, April 26, 2021, the YU Pride Alliance's legal representation formally submitted a lawsuit against Yeshiva University in the New York County Supreme Court on grounds of discriminatory actions taken against

LGBTQ+ students at Yeshiva University.

The lawsuit was submitted by attorney Katherine Rosenfeld, partner and civil litigator at Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel LLP. Rosenfeld described this as a straightforward case, saying that, "This is discrimination under NYC human rights law, plain and simple. YU cannot choose to opt out of civil rights laws. The purpose of this case is to require YU to follow the law."

The defendants are listed as Yeshiva University, current Vice Provost Dr. Chaim Nissel, and President Dr. Rabbi Ari Berman. Nissel is currently the university's Title IX coordinator (a federal civil rights law that prohibits a university from discriminating against people based on one's sexual identity).

YU Pride Alliance et al v. Yeshiva University et al includes five plaintiffs; The first being the YU Pride Alliance, three are former YU students, and one is a current student. Molly Meisels (they/them), former president and founder of the YU Pride Alliance, was an LGBTQ+ student activist and leader during their time on campus. Amitai Miller (he/him), an LGBTQ+ former student, was the president of the Yeshiva College Student's Association (2018-2019). Doniel Weinreich (he/him), a former board member of the YU Pride Alliance, was an LGBTQ+ ally and advocate on campus.

The final plaintiff is an anonymous current YU student, John Doe (he/him), who is also a YU Pride Alliance board member. In John Doe's affidavit, he explains that he wishes to remain anonymous since he has not publicly announced that he is a member of the LGBTQ+ community, and only a select group of friends and YU faculty know of his sexual identity.

Meisels shared at the April 27 press conference that "this [lawsuit] was a last resort. For years we gathered together, we marched, we met with the faculty administration and staff. Time and again we've been rejected, and

we as students have felt rejected. This lawsuit was the only chance to protect current and future students. We wish we didn't have to be here, but now that we are we hope to represent the queer and allied students of YU in the best way we can."

The summons and complaint, which is publicly available, describes the grounds on which the YU Pride Alliance is suing Yeshiva University. On three separate occasions since 2019, YU has denied the recognition of an LGBTQ+ club. The first time was in the Spring of 2019 when Amitai Miller tried to form the Gay-Straight Alliance. Miller attempted on multiple occasions to collaborate with at-the-time Dean Chaim Nissel, President Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, the Office of Student Life, and other administrators. Despite this, Miller was unsuccessful. The administration refused to allow a club with the words "gay" or "LGBT" in the title. The second time, in Spring 2020, YU did not respond to the YU Pride Alliance's club application. Finally, in Fall 2020, YU refused to recognize an LGBTQ+ club, when the administration denied the YU Pride Alliance official club status.

The filed summons and complaint maintains that these acts are deliberately discriminatory, and inflict emotional and psychological harm on queer students at YU. The complaint argues that by denying a club, YU is denying these students the emotional and psychological benefits such a club would offer, including support, a safe space on campus, guidance, camaraderie, and other resources for support.

YU is aware, as the complaint contends, that their refusal to officially acknowledge a club for LGBTQ+ students is illegal, as shown in a 1995 internal memo: "Yeshiva University is subject to the human rights ordinance of the City of New York, which provides protected status to homosexuals. Under this law, YU cannot ban gay student clubs." Further, YU is bound by the NYC Human Rights Law, as a nonsectarian university that receives millions of dollars of

public funding. YU is not registered as a religious corporation, but as an educational one, allowing it to receive federal and state financial aid. "Because [YU] is a secular institution," the formal complaint states, "it cannot pick and choose which New York City laws apply to it and which do not. YU is a quintessential place of public accommodation and it may not discriminate against students." The complaint argues that YU's refusal to grant the YU Pride Alliance official club status is discriminatory. YU, despite the demonstrated needs of its students and its own recognition of its legal obligation to recognize the YU Pride Alliance, refuses to acknowledge the YU Pride Alliance as a formal club and does not allow it equal access to YU's resources. There are tangible benefits available to all 116 other approved clubs on campus, which are denied to the YU Pride Alliance. These benefits include funding, advertising opportunities (such as via YU email lists), as well as the ability to participate in YU club fairs.

Joy Ladin, an English professor at Stern College for Women, shared with the YU Observer that "As a faculty member, as a Jew, and as a member of the LGBTQ community, I couldn't be prouder of the students who have worked so long, in the face of so much hostility and discouragement, to make a place for LGBTQ students at Yeshiva University [...] to refuse to do so – to continue to pretend that these students aren't here, and, even worse, to pressure them to hide and erase themselves and pretend that they aren't who they are – makes a mockery of the values which, in other areas, Yeshiva University proudly promotes and represents."

The YU Pride Alliance, which was informally established in September 2019, is currently an unofficial club for LGBTQ+ students at Yeshiva University. On January 30, 2020, then-President Molly Meisels, along with the other board members, submitted a Club Application form. However, on February 9, 2020, in an unprecedented move, the student council presidents decided to

Continued on next page

YU Pride Alliance Files Groundbreaking Lawsuit Against Yeshiva University on Grounds of Discriminatory Club Refusal Cont.

abstain from voting on the YU Pride Alliance, arguing that such a decision would be “too complex and nuanced” for students to vote on.

Following this decision of the student council, the YU Pride Alliance both filed an unofficial claim of discrimination against Yeshiva University with the New York City Commission on Human Rights, and also brought the case to the Beren Constitutional Council. The Beren Constitutional Council rejected hearing the case on grounds of the case having already been brought to New York City Courts, releasing this statement: “Since the New York City courts, rather than the Constitutional Council will ultimately ‘decide’ the merits of [the YU Pride Alliance’s] claim, the justices on the Constitutional Council have determined that it would not be appropriate for us to hear the case or issue our own decision.”

Consequently, the abstention of the student council deferred the decision of whether or not to approve the YU Pride Alliance to the YU administration. Despite this, Yeshiva University never responded or announced a formal decision regarding the YU Pride Alliance’s club application. In a meeting on February 19, 2020 with the YU Pride Alliance, both Vice President Joseph and Dean

Nissel refused to give an answer about whether the club would receive official approval.

Once more, in early September of 2020, the YU Pride Alliance applied for official club status. That same day, September 3, YU emailed a letter titled “Fostering an Inclusive Community”, signed by a team created by Berman to address LGBTQ+ issues. The letter outlined the reasons for YU’s decision to refuse an official LGBTQ+ club at Yeshiva University. In the announcement YU claimed that Torah values are complex and the formation of a club would “cloud this nuanced message.” At this point, Yeshiva University has not changed its decision regarding its refusal to acknowledge the YU Pride Alliance.

Following the “Fostering an Inclusive Community” announcement, several students reported the club refusal to Dr. Chaim Nissel, the Title IX coordinator, as a violation of Title IX due to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Three months later, the students were told that their reports had been reviewed and the Title IX committee had not found evidence of discrimination claiming that the announcement had also shown LGBTQ support. The response further stated that

the university’s decision about the club was in line with Title IX, as to YU’s status as an institution “guided by Torah values.”

The Title IX complaint response claims that a club is not needed as “There continue to be events and programming that address and discuss issues of concern for the LGBTQ+ community.” While there have been some LGBTQ+ events on campus, beginning with “Being Gay in the Orthodox World” in 2009, historically these events have difficulty gaining approval. According to the affidavit of Jane Doe, a current student, LGBTQ+ event organizers “were met with many challenges and difficulties” because they could not run events without the support of approved clubs or faculty. This included the 2020 “Being LGBTQ+ in an Orthodox World” panel.

Because of its repeated rejections of an official club for LGBTQ+ students, the complaint filed on April 26 argues that Yeshiva University has violated its own policies by contradicting its “Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy & Complaint Procedures.” It also sets forth the claim that YU has violated the New York City Human Rights Law; the refusal to allow a club is unequal treatment of certain students based on their sexual

orientation or gender identity. The lawsuit calls for a restraint against the defendants’ refusal to recognize a club for LGBTQ+ students, whereby YU will recognize the YU Pride Alliance as an official student club, and damages will be awarded to the plaintiffs.

Yeshiva University, in response to the lawsuit said in a statement to the YU Observer that “Yeshiva University is the bearer of a 3,000 year-old Torah tradition, which we hold sacrosanct. At the heart of our Jewish values is love - love for God and love for each of His children. Our LGBTQ+ students are our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, family and friends. Our policies on harassment and discrimination against students on the basis of protected classifications including LGBTQ+ are strong and vigorously enforced. Our Torah-guided decision about this club in no way minimizes the care and sensitivity that we have for each of our students, nor the numerous steps the university has already taken. We are actively engaged with our students, faculty and rabbinic leaders to facilitate productive discussions with an eye toward understanding and embracing diverse perspectives.”

This article has been updated to include a statement from the Yeshiva University administration.

Spring 2021 Beren Election Results Announced Wilf Results Delayed

By Shoshanah Marcus,
News Editor

The Yeshiva University undergraduate student body voted on April 29, 2021 for their respective Beren and Wilf candidates in the Spring 2021 student elections, with polls closing at 5 p.m. EST.

Students on the Beren Campus were notified of the results via an email from the Beren Election Committee on April 30, 2021 at 1:30 a.m. EST. The released results were reported as follows:

SCWSC President: Talia Leitner
SCWSC VP of Academic Affairs: Hadas Hirt
SCWSC VP of Clubs: Shaina Ma-teev
SCWSC VP of Programming: Nina Anina
SCWSC VP of PR: Meital Lindenberg
SCWSC Class Council Senior Rep President: Yael Laks
SCWSC Class Council Junior Rep President: Natalie Barbanel
TAC President: Suzanne Rabinovich
TAC VP of Speakers: Ayelet Topp

TAC VP of PR: Hanna Karben
TAC VP of Chesed: Sela Boord
SYMSSC President: Abigail Lerman
SYMSSC VP of Clubs: Shaina Levin
SYMSSC VP of PR: Rafi Kapitanker

The email further notified students that the the candidates running in the Spring 2021 election for the positions of TAC VP of Shabbat, Class Council Senior Rep VP, Class Council Junior Rep VP, Class Council Sophomore Rep President, and Class Council Sophomore Rep VP did not

“[fulfill] either the criteria for eligibility or votes required set forth by the Beren Constitution.” The announcement concluded, “These positions will be included in the Fall 2021 election along with the Katz Class Council and Freshman Class Council.”

The Spring 2021 Wilf Campus election results have not been announced yet, due to a petition sent to the Wilf Student Court regarding whether students participating in the Post-Pesach Program can vote.

YSU V. Canvassing Committee Case Resolved; Spring 2021 Wilf Election Results Announced

By Shoshanah Marcus,
News Editor

On April 30, 2021, an email was sent to the Yeshiva University Wilf undergraduate student body announcing the results of the YSU v. Canvassing Committee case. This case questioned whether Post Pesach Program students would be able to vote in the Spring 2021 Wilf election and subsequently delayed the results of the Wilf election.

In their decision, the student court held that “Students of Yeshiva University’s Post Pesach Program are considered ‘Yeshiva University Undergraduate male students,’ and can vote in Wilf Elections for YSU President, YSU Vice President of Class Affairs, YSU Vice President of Clubs, SOY President, Vice President, PR Secretary, and all amendments, as mandated

by the constitution.” The court continued to explain that “due to the error by the Canvassing Committee in not sending ballots to Post Pesach students” the court ruled that the Canvassing Committee “not release the results of the election until all Post Pesach Students [have] receive[d] a ballot and are able to exercise their constitutional voting rights.”

Dovie Solomon (SYMS, ‘21), chair of the Canvassing Committee, shared, “We want to get the results out ASAP as the school and Candidates are owed that so this was the time solution we felt was right for all.” The ballots for Post Pesach Program (PPP) students opened at 2 p.m. on Friday afternoon and closed on Sunday morning at 1 a.m. According to Solomon, “No new PPP filled out a ballot after 5:30 Friday afternoon and a total of 10 ballots had votes cast.”

The following are the results of the Wilf Campus elections:
YSU President: Elazar Abrahams
YSU Vice President of Academic Affairs: Micheal Stark
YSU Vice President of Clubs: Baruch Lerman
YSU Makor Representative: Menachem Aharon Wallach
YSU Katz Representative: none

YCSC President: Jonah Chill
YCSC Vice President: David Lifschitz
YCSC Treasurer: AJ Book

SYMS President: Akiva Poppers
SYMS Vice President: Eden Taranto
SYMS Treasurer: Gilad Menashe

SOY President: Yoni Laub
SOY Vice President: Aryeh Beinstock
SOY Public Relations Representative: Ezra Emerson

SOY MYP Representative: Ephraim Klein
SOY BMP Representative: Joey Yellin
SOY IBC Representative: Max Friedman
SOY JSS Representative: Marc Ziarno

Senior Class President: Joey Wasjberg
Junior Class President: Yisroel Tannenbaum

In addition, the following is a summary of the rulings made for the proposed amendments voted on in the student council election:
Amendment 1: Passed
Amendment 2: Passed
Amendment 3: Passed
Amendment 4: Rejected
Amendment 5: Passed
Amendment 6: Passed
Amendment 7: Rejected
Amendment 8: Passed

New Undergraduate Email System to Replace Individual Email Messages

By Temmi Lattin

A new email format system for the two undergraduate email listservs, Beren and Wilf Events, was announced on May 6 in an email sent to the undergraduate student body by Scott Stimler, the senior chairman of Wilf’s Student Life Committee. The email stated that the new system would be put in place the next week, on May 10.

The new format, termed “Digests,” will combine all the emails sent to berenevents@yu.edu and wilfevents@yu.edu into one email, with “a numbered index of all of the W/B Events emails called ‘Today’s Topics,’ which will outline the subject titles and senders,” followed by the full emails at the end of the document. Both Beren and Wilf events will be included in a single email.

Other than replacing individual emails with a compilation, everything else will remain the same regarding how and where to send the emails. Students can opt out of the new format and maintain the original method of receiving individual emails by emailing

helpdesk@yu.edu or submitting a Help Desk ticket.

YU students have expressed dissatisfaction with the email systems for a while, as demonstrated in former YU Observer editor-in-chief Kira Paley’s opinion piece pointing out the lack of guidelines for the emails. Ideas and attempts to reduce the amount of emails sent to students have also been featured in Student Council candidates’ campaigns.

This change comes over a year after former director of student events for the Office of Student Life (OSL) Dr. Linda Stone announced discussions about a change to the undergraduate email guidelines in Dec. 2019. These details were clarified in a February 24, 2020 email. This system replaced the then-current sstud/ystud policy with the Beren/Wilf event emails and instituted a three message limit for each student event or initiative as well as specified requirements for email subject lines.

In addition to these changes, the February email also announced a

daily email list of all upcoming events for the next two weeks, but this change was never officially implemented. Similarly, a 2012 announcement of an initiative to replace emails with the events calendar didn’t last.

Tamar Guterson, SCW’s VP of Public Relations, created a “This Week at YU” initiative, and emailed out calendars with events for the upcoming week during Fall 2020 and some of Spring 2021, but explained that “it was challenging to stay on top of it” because she was the only one “who seemed to make an effort to get information to students about upcoming events in an organized way.” Additionally, she ran into issues when the events weren’t being finalized early enough to be included. Referring to the “whereverYUare” WhatsApp groups, Guterson worked with Baruch Lerman, YSU Sophomore Representative, to utilize that platform for effectively advertising student events.

“A good portion of students don’t read their emails because we are all bombarded with so many of them in one shot. It’s under-

standable that they just give up and don’t bother reading them,” explained Stimler to the YU Observer. Working with YU’s ITS department, Stimler learned that there was a system to reduce the many emails into one that was currently in the “beta” stage, and he volunteered to test it out for some months and give feedback until it was ready to be announced to the students and implemented.

This new format will affect both Berenevents and Wilfevents email addresses, but when asked about Beren Student Life Committee’s role in this decision, Stimler stated that they were not consulted, explaining that he had been working on this project before January 2021, when the Beren Student Life Committee was formed.

Stimler concluded, “If this unusual year has taught us one thing it’s that communication is key - hopefully this change will encourage more students to read their emails, and most of all, get as many current and future students engaged with clubs events and student organization activities as possible.”

Yeshiva University's Plan to Open In-Person Fall 2021 with a Vaccine Mandate Evokes Mixed Responses

By Shayna Herszage,
Managing Editor

For the upcoming Fall 2021 semester, Yeshiva University will be resuming completely in-person schooling. On April 28, an email from President Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman announced that, given the national increased vaccination rates in recent months, all courses will return to in-person instruction with the appropriate precautions in place.

For many students, the opportunity to be on campus after over a year of remote learning is a welcomed surprise. For example, Gillian Herszage (SSSB '24), an incoming student whose first semester as at YU will be this Fall, has stated that, while she is "a little surprised because most schools are still planning to be blended or still online," she is excited to start her undergraduate experience in-person and on-campus. "I'm

ready to be learning on campus at a post-vaccine YU," added Gillian Herszage.

For other students, however, in-person courses can provide difficulty. "I am really disappointed and think that it's truly unfair that YU has decided to completely remove an option for remote learning ... After all the effort the school has put into setting up a remote learning system that works relatively well, I don't see why it couldn't be adjusted to accommodate students who literally are unable to attend in person," Explained Devorah Gurevich (SCW '22), who has spent the past several months attending classes remotely from England, her husband's country of origin. Due to the influx of people seeking United States visas, it would be impossible for her husband to be able to get a visa by the beginning of the fall semester. "The fact that no effort has been made to help

these students and we have to choose to take a leave of absence or withdraw feels like intentional exclusion, and I'm honestly hurt by the lack of understanding," she concluded.

In addition to shifting the university to a fully in-person format, COVID-19 vaccinations will be mandatory for all Yeshiva University undergraduate and graduate students for the upcoming semester. Yeshiva University's Weissberg Commons became a COVID-19 vaccination site in April, with walk-ins available since April 25. Due to the accessible nature of COVID-19 vaccines in New York, particularly with a vaccination site on campus, all students will be required to be fully vaccinated by the beginning of the semester.

Yeshiva University's mandatory vaccination plan for the fall semester has evoked mixed responses from students. Many

students have expressed excitement for what this means for the near future of YU as a step toward returning to a typical college experience. For example, Batia Segal (SCW '23) stated, "I think it's wonderful that they are mandating vaccines, making it possible for lighter social distancing restrictions and in person classes bringing campus life closer to normalcy."

Meanwhile, other students are uncomfortable with the mandate, feeling that it encroaches upon medical autonomy. "[I] [c]an't say I approve of YU's vaccination mandate, on political/ideological grounds - but YU is, after all, a private institution acting well within its rights," explained Yosef Rosenfield (YC '21).

More information will be posted here as developments for the Fall 2021 semester unfold.



The 90th Annual Yeshiva University Commencement To Be Held At Arthur Ashe Stadium

By Sarah Brill,
Science and Technology
Editor

On May 6, 2021, the Committee of Ceremonial Occasions sent out an email to the undergraduate community regarding the time, place, and logistics of the 90th annual commencement ceremony. Seniors will be having their in-person graduation ceremony at the Arthur Ashe Stadium at the USTA Billie Jean King Tennis Center in Flushing Queens, on May 26 at 1 p.m. EDT. While initially announced to be virtual, a later update notified the student body that the commencement ceremony will take place in-person, a reversal of the initial decision.

Regarding the number of attendees, during the week of April 26, seniors were asked to request

tickets and the email sent out on May 6, addressed the many ticketing concerns of the seniors such as: can additional tickets be requested after submitting the form, and the number of guests which can attend? The email stated that not only would all the tickets previously requested be honored, seniors are allowed to request additional tickets. The email outlined the process of reserved seating, which will allow seniors to, later on, confirm seats for family members so they may sit in a "pod" (group of members who do not need to distance from each other).

Haviva Tirschwell, SCW '21, shared with the YU Observer: "I am very excited to celebrate with my friends, and it's amazing that the commencement committee found a place that can

fit so many people so everyone can celebrate without having to decide who to invite."

The email concluded stating the COVID-19 protocols will be in place to keep everyone at the ceremony safe. The attendees are required to show either proof of vaccination, a negative COVID-19 PCR test 72 hours before the start of the ceremony, negative COVID-19 rapid test taken within 6 hours of the start of the ceremony (from 7 a.m. onward on the day of the 26), or proof of recovery from COVID-19 in the last three months. All of these documentation requirements can be shown to the designated checker either digitally or in hard copy. Additionally, mask-wearing will be enforced and the ceremony is expected to run for two hours, with initial seating starting

at 11:30 a.m.

Tamar Guterson, SCW '21, commented on the significance of an in-person event ceremony, "Having an in-person graduation is incredibly important to me and my fellow graduates," she shared. "The class of 2021 lost half their junior year and the entire senior year we had imagined. Unlike the underclassmen, we were lucky to have a full college experience before COVID changed the landscape of our time at YU; but we also know what we lost"

For those who will not be attending the in-person ceremony, there will be a livestream broadcast, of which seniors who are not attending the ceremony may take part in. There will be live programming and the announcement of the names of graduates.

Yeshiva College to Stop Offering Music Major

By Sarah Brill,
Science & Technology Editor

The Yeshiva College (YC) music major will no longer be offered in the upcoming semesters, informed Professor Daniel Belavsky, chair of the music department, to the YU Observer. The reason behind this cut, Belavsky explained is that “too few students are pursuing [the major].” Although the department will no longer offer a major, “a wide range of coursework in music theory, history, aesthetics, and practice” will

still be offered throughout the upcoming semesters.

As of now, current senior Yosef Rosenfield, YC '21, remains the last music major at YC. Commenting on the matter, he stated: “I’ve been carrying the music department on my back, it seems, for so long — performing many live concerts and Zoom shows, submitting just as many music articles to both student newspapers, and babying the music section of the YU Journal of the Arts — it’s tough seeing the music major die out.”

Former graduated music majors are sad to hear that the music major will no longer be offered. Gedalia Robinson, a YC '17 music major, shared with the YU Observer saying that he is “sad to hear the major go, as [he] had a wonderful time in the major [himself].”

Expressing his frustration, Rosenfield shared: “After everything I’ve done to promote and encourage the music scene here at YU, the removal of the major, I believe, reflects the adminis-

tration’s lack of confidence in the students’ ability to carry that torch. I’d like to think that the student body I leave behind will prove them wrong.”

While the music major has officially been cut from the Yeshiva College’s list of academic majors, the option to shape a music major still remains open.

At the time of publication, the Yeshiva University website does not currently reflect this new change.

Opinions

Missile Mania



By Lara Vosburgh

I am not going to talk about who is right or wrong in the renewed conflict. Both sides suffer and both sides lose lives. I am an Israeli and as one I will write about how Israelis of all kinds do their best to continue living and sanctifying their time on earth. All of Israel is traumatized by the rockets including me, my mother, and friends. But when Israeli families go to the shelter, they play games with their children, talk about good memories, and make arts and crafts. In my mom’s building there is no shelter. When there is a siren my mom, myself and all of our neighbors gather in the stairway. My mother has a special siren stash of candy for the younger kids of the building. Everyone seems to be coping relatively well, except for one little dog that yaps her head off with every siren. I cried for the first time today from these sirens and colossal booms. Before the tears have had a chance to dry my mom’s as she tries to put a smile on my face and a laughter in my

throat.

There are even some wonderful parts to what I like to call the “missile mania.” It serves as a type of Cupid; many couples met during the sirens streak of 2014. I have practiced over the years getting dressed in less than half a minute (ahh...the skills you develop when you need to). I also never thought I would be studying for my finals at a friend’s shelter inside her parent’s closet. Focusing on something else helps a lot and especially when the topic is interesting. Of course, as I have written earlier, making jokes about the situation is always fun and helpful. Finally, what really helps put things in proportion is when I think about how terrible and traumatic the lives of the Israelis are who live around Gaza and how sad it is that people including me in Tel Aviv understands this only when rockets are landing on our own heads. Now that things are getting worse, finally my half-sister (who is not Israeli)

really understands what it is like to live in the Wild Wild West that is the Middle East. “I never thought it was as bad as that for Israelis,” she said.

Essentially watching the Israeli news on TV is like Watching ‘Fauda’. Listening to the news every hour on the radio is like listening to a suspenseful and violent audiobook. Just like in our worst nightmares, the worst things take place. Falling asleep without a sleeping pill is impossible because you are too scared something will happen. Then when you are finally sleeping too deep due to the sleeping pill, you do not wake up for the siren. And then — well, may G-d protect you. I call my mom ten million times a day to make sure she is okay. She lost her brother who was a paratrooper in the IDF during the Yom Kippur War. She knows what the grave costs of war are, and she knows how to cope with stressful situations.

I do not know what I would do without her. I check my WhatsApp obsessively to see if anything has happened. The oddest thing is that history is repeating itself on my street of Ben Zion Boulevard (near Rothschild). In 1941, Mussolini’s forces fired missiles on my street and 41 people died. May they all rest in peace. I do not have kids yet, but I dread the day I will bring them into this reality. My children will obviously have to go to the military like I did. Whoever tells you otherwise is delusional. Even if we attain peace with the Palestinians, we will still need an army because we will never stop being attacked. This does not mean we should not make peace. Peace is a choice — a hard choice to make and as long as the leaderships on both sides don’t agree to disagree about certain things, we shall not see peaceful days during our lifetimes.

Why I Recommend Being a Student Employee

By Shayna Herszage,
Managing Editor

I have been a student employee since January 2020, when I started working as a tutor in the Beren Campus Writing Center. A year later, I also took on the role of working in the Gottesman Library on the Wilf Campus. These two experiences have been enlightening, rewarding, and, in many cases, a lot of fun. For those who are able to make the time, I recommend being a student employee because of the different perspective student employees have as members of the Yeshiva University community.

Helping others grants a person a special form of self-fulfillment and interpersonal connection. In fact, according to research such as that of Raposa, Laws, and Ansell (2015), there is empirical proof that helping other people decreases a person's stress, strengthens their interpersonal connections, and, in short, makes the helper feel good — the positive impacts of helping others go both ways. When I help someone find a book or take the next step in writing an essay, I feel like I have come to understand one of my peers on a deeper level than before. Not only do I now know

their name, their hometown, and some of the more commonplace information, but I also know many of the inner workings of their mind — what they care enough to write about, and why they care. After a Writing Center session or after helping someone in the library, my fellow student and I have accomplished something together, and that builds an incredible, uncommon bond.

Additionally, as a student employee, I have learned more than I originally expected when I took on the roles. Until I began working at the library, finding a book among the many floors of shelves was an overwhelming task. The rows of numbers and letters on the spines of the books looked like gibberish to me, and I was never even sure which floor each book would be on unless I asked a librarian. A few weeks ago, after a semester of working in the library, I embarked on a mission in my spare time to find about a dozen books in the Wilf library to use as sources for my term papers. I had experienced this journey before, and it was typically stressful. However, my hours of shelving library books had changed the experience entirely; no longer was I aimless and confused as I wandered the fourth floor. Rather, I knew



exactly where I was going, and the stress of finding books was removed entirely.

I have also come to learn a lot as a Writing Center tutor. Even after a grueling semester of Composition and Rhetoric, I did not fully understand many of the terms my English professors used. For their assignments, I wrote what I thought seemed correct, but I truly felt that I was in the dark nonetheless. After countless hours of explaining and discussing terms such as “genuine question” to subsequent Composition and Rhetoric students, I came to understand the elements of a well-written essay on a much deeper level. Now I do not only understand what to write and how to write it, but why I am writing in that way. Had I nev-

er had my many enlightening discussions with fellow students about the elements of a good paper, I may never have reached this level of understanding.

It would be foolish of me to state that everyone should be a student employee. It is not always economically or academically reasonable to take on the positions, and there are certainly not enough student employee positions to satisfy every student in Yeshiva University. However, for those who have the ability to be a student employee, I recommend the experience. Not only can being a student employee give you the ability to help others within your university, but it may help you learn more yourself as well.

Looking Back, and Looking Forward

By Sarah Brill,
Co-President of the
YU Democrats

When I joined the board of the YU College Democrats, I never thought I would end up where I am now. I started as the Vice President of Environmental Issues, but the term was short-lived. Mere months after I got the position, the president of the club at the time, Molly Meisels (SCW '20), approached myself and Courtney Marks (SCW '20) and asked us if we would take on the mantle of being co-presidents for the YU Democrats. Without hesitation, from either of us, we agreed; a few weeks later, our club got shut down.

Definitely a way to start the presidency. During the Fall of 2019, myself, Courtney, and Molly were all fighting to get the club reinstated.

So there we were, myself and Courtney, new presidents, fighting for a club we had never got the chance to lead. Long situation short, we got up running, and the ball was rolling; we planned events, voter registration, even attended the YUPAC trip to Washington, D.C. with our board members.

While that year was difficult for Courtney and I, the worst was yet to come as the pandemic swept across the country and all events were moved online. A blessing and a curse for the YU College Democrats, because while we received many more speakers than we could have asked for, we also received online hate, spamming, and Zoombombing from fellow students. With the world masked behind their screens, we continued to push through and our board members showed us that

anything was possible, even in the worst scenarios.

The start of the 2020-2021 school year was extremely intense. The election was on the horizon, and tensions were heating between the Democrats and the Republicans around the world. While we, as a club, welcomed and promoted thoughtful discussion to all of our members, Democrats and Republicans alike, we still felt the backlash of the students, not only from YU, but from other universities as well. The aggression rose so high to the point where people from other institutions, including from YU, were spamming our WhatsApp group chat with hate speech, even going as far as to spam call members. Taking action, Courtney and I closed the group chat and made our invite link exclusive only to those who reached out to us personally,

thereby shutting off many prospective members from joining the conversation. This was not only detrimental to the expansion of our club, but it restricted new students from expressing their opinions, ones that might not be accepted anywhere else other than in our group chat.

Though it started rough, the school year was filled with incredible speakers from Indigenous activist Sarah Addam Cornell to, most recently, Pete Coppolillo, an environmentalist who is using dogs to save the planet. Throughout this semester, we learned from a variety of activists, as well as doing our own part to be activists on campus not only for the Jewish community but for the Black, Latinx, and Asian communities as well. It is no news that this year has been an absolute

[Continued on next page](#)

Looking Back, and Looking Forward Cont.

disaster, to put it lightly, for minority groups, and through our campaigns on campus and on social media, we hope we brought light and awareness to certain issues and the struggles that surround our community, and the ones listed.

Our social media has served as our communication to the world this semester. Starting with only 120 followers on our

account this year, we have now reached over 300 as we continue to grow and spread, not only to YU, but to other universities as well. We were lucky enough to be approached by many people, young and old, with their thoughts on political matters, democratic and not, and how they themselves are changing the world.

This year has been truly

eye-opening. I have seen the worst in people, and the best, but if this pandemic taught us anything, and if my presidency taught me anything, it is that people will come through when you need them the most no matter their religion, gender, sexual orientation, or race.

While I have learned and, hopefully, accomplished much through these last 2 years as

president, I look forward to the future of the YU Democrats and have very high hopes for the board members who are not graduating and know they will do amazing things for this club.

So, thank you YU Democrats. It has been an honor being your president.

Beautiful, Not Pretty

By Anonymous

Around 2004, pop singer Jesse McCartney unleashed a hit song, Beautiful Soul. This catchy tune features memorable lyrics like, "I don't want another pretty face, I want you and your beautiful soul." If secular entertainers attribute more significance to a romantic partner's soul than physical appearance, shouldn't we?

#CallOut

The Gemara says, "You should marry someone beautiful." Pop culture experts suggest beautiful = pretty. Students of social psychology understand these two terms ain't identical. The compliment "pretty" offers praise for a person's favorable physical features such as hair-color, bone structure, curves, eyes, etc. The compliment "beautiful" goes way beyond physical appearances. A typical "pretty girl" wears high heels, possesses zilch body fat, and accumulates public attention for eye-catching good looks. A typical "beautiful girl" organizes surprise birthday parties for friends, wakes up at 2 a.m. to get Grandma from the airport. Unfortunately, many of today's

Jewish singles deem prettiness more important than beauty. Consumption of this impure philosophy has prompted religious singles to perform anti-Torah behaviors.

#SayWhat

Shadchans from around the tri-state area have listed two common anti-Torah behaviors.

Behavior number 1- Picture observation and evaluation.

Often, religious guys request photos of prospective girls from shadchans. Upon receiving the female's picture, guys perform a visual analysis. Height, face, smile, hair, etc. Following multiple photo evaluations, most guys agree to meet the prettiest girl. Forget personality, yirat-Shamayim - awareness of God - values, it's all about looks.

Behavior number 2- My Look Sadly, many single guys request specific physical looks from a shadchan's lineup. She's gotta be this tall, brown hair, particular smile. That's my look. She's not my look.

#WhoAreYou?

Why do today's rabbis, shadchans, and highly-valued Jewish communities tolerate this anti-Torah behavior?

#TellMeWhy

Out of curiosity, this author asked a few shadchans to explain our communities' misguided romantic priorities. One notable shadchan relayed the following off-putting response. "Most girls will learn to like a guy's appearance. But men, well, um, have harsher looks standards and turn down great girls for this unjustified reason. You know the ole' expression, whoever holds the gold makes the rules."

Amongst the Orthodox community, more Jewish girls remain single than men. This population gap provides a numbers advantage to eligible Jewish males. Undoubtedly, statistical leverage encourages these better positioned males to act more choosy than female counterparts. Many law school applicants have this mindset. If New York has plenty of well-established law school programs, I want to attend the prettiest, smartest, and most appealing institution.

Taken aback by this shadchan's response, my saliva-filled lips offered a follow up suggestion. "Men should also learn to like the girl's look. Shadchans and rabbis need to call guys out for judgmental misconduct. Rav Moshe Feinstein would vomit at this nonsense. It's a mitzvah to get married, not marry a super-model."

#LookItUp

Composed and collected, the shadchan offered a conciliatory response. "Rabbis know about this grotesque looks culture but don't call guys out for two reasons. First off, most guys won't listen. Second off, rabbis don't want to offend loyal students and lose a strong teacher mentor relationship over shidduchim-dating related critiques."

#Excuses

Story time

A few months back, amidst a

reference phone call, this author experienced a new personal low. Out of goodness grace, one thoughtful family friend suggested a single girl to me. "She's smart, genuinely nice, attends shul every Shabbos, volunteers Sundays at a nearby orphanage, has wonderful parents, learns Torah after work," the good stuff. Following these impressive statements, a hesitant reply sounded from my embarrassed vocal cords. "Do you think I could find this person attractive?" Unalarmed and un-offended, my family friend offered a chilled-out reply. "I think so. She's nice looking. Would you like to see a picture of her?" Without a beat, I responded back, "Nooooo, my rabbi says it's assur (forbidden) to see pictures of a potential shidduch date."

#FakeShtark

Last year, I asked a YU rabbi this exact question. "Could I ask shadchans for pictures of shidduch suggestions?" Following a short pause, my rabbi provided an unexpected answer. "You shouldn't look at pictures of prospective dates. Humans cannot accurately predict attraction from a single two-dimensional image. Hundreds of other factors showcase someone's beauty beyond a snapshot photograph. The way a girl offers compassionate care to roommates and family members. Does she have an Ayin Tova - positive outlook? Does she have respect for Torah? Don't observe a one-time visual glimpse via WhatsApp and think, eh, not for me. Wouldn't you want someone to give you a chance?"

#Riiiiiiight

Confused and discombobulated by this anti-picture idea, I asked my rabbi a follow up question.

"But you won't know going into

Continued on next page



Beautiful, Not Pretty Cont.

the date if you'll be attracted to her, it's a gamble. Why waste time on a gamble?"

Rolled up sleeves atop the office's brown work desk, this Yashar - respectable mentor - provided a memorable answer. "On every date you gamble on a girl's personality; you gamble on romantic chemistry; Everything in life is a gamble."

#Uncertainty=Always

Following my family friend's comment, anxious thoughts attacked. Nice looking. She's nice looking. Nice looking isn't good looking, and good looking isn't pretty, and pretty isn't gorgeous. Based on this irrational thought pattern, moral observers will accurately conclude, he ain't no Chafetz Chaim, Lubavitcher-rebbe, nor Rav Aryeh Levin. Unfortunately, this woman's

quick description, "nice looking", demolished all of my romantic interest. Two minutes later, I told this family friend, "I'll think it over."

#SubtleDecline

Social psychologists might offer two reasons to explain my shallow behavior.

Reason number 1 - The Big Fish syndrome

During middle school, these eyes observed Zach Morris, Drake Bell, and other charismatic actors via TV. All charismatic male actors seek to acquire their show's prettiest female. The acquisition of a highly attractive romantic partner delivered each show's actor crazy Kavod - honor - from peers. Fishermen undergo a similar Kavod attainment process. If two fishermen catch a pack of Blue Marlins and bring each fish

back to shore, fellow fishermen will offer high fives and sick praise for this impressive feat. Comments like, "No wayyyyyy," "Dannng," will occur for several seconds. Likewise, this author hopes to land a pretty girlfriend and experience similar reactions from peers.

#HonorHungry

Reason number 2 - Inferiority complex

Many humans lack movie-star-good-looks. Everybody has warts, pimples, wrinkles, etc. This author has a few visible physical flaws. From a realistic standpoint, many girls prefer to date someone without physical irregularities. A large supply of self-conscious and insecure thoughts has caused this author to develop illogical romantic demands. If my looks ain't perfect,

hers must be.

#NoLogic

A few readers might finish this article and think, why would anyone allocate nine hours of Pesach break to discuss an unchangeable issue? Pause these thoughts and close your eyes. Imagine the following scenario: Your future daughter wants to get married. For this goal to be achieved, she must have an attractive shidduch resume picture: the perfect lighting, dress, make-up, hair, you know. This photo will be sent around for male evaluation. One thought should enter your mind: Uhhh.

#NotMyDaughter

I encourage all single guys and girls to be better than this shallow author. Search for beauty, not prettiness; a beautiful person, not some big eye-catching fish.

Dear Closeted LGBTQ+ Individuals

By Anonymous

*The YU Observer has verified that the writer is a current SCW student.

Dear closeted LGBTQ+ individual, whether you are a student in high school, an undergrad at YU, post college, or in any stage of life, I am writing this to tell you that I see you. I know the pain of being hidden and silenced. I know the fear that comes along when searching social media for just one religious queer couple for you to have as role models and finding no one. While I am not ready to come out publicly yet, it is important to me to let you know that we do exist. I am an Orthodox gay woman in a relationship with another Orthodox gay woman. My life is built around learning Torah and keeping Halacha (Jewish Law) and I hold tradition dear to me. My girlfriend too lives a life of Torah and Halacha, often reading Mishnah Berurah before going to sleep at night.

I know what it is like to not know what your future will look like and to anxiously wonder whether the price to pay for being your authentic self is worth the cost of the future you always imagined. I too planned on marrying a man, too afraid of what I would lose to allow myself to consider the possibility that I was not straight and that I wanted another option. Eventually, after a tumult-

uous year, I knew I must choose my future and my happiness by being true to myself, otherwise, I would lose myself and waste away in tension, fear and unhappiness.

After beginning a relationship, as some of you must be feeling, I felt the pain and fear of making a decision not condoned by Halacha and felt afraid knowing that it wasn't enough to prevent me from choosing love and happiness. What kind of eved Hashem (servant of G-d) am I? I asked myself knowing I would always choose my own future instead of living someone else's, however halachically preferable. I did it because I deserve love, I deserve contentment, I deserve happiness — and so do you. Balancing the struggles of my sexual orientation and knowledge of Torah, Halacha and communal standards is a horrible weight I carry daily, but find solace in the fact I can't bear to shirk one, either my identity or my commitment to God. I knew I couldn't be part of a religion that would not allow me to live my authentic life. A community that forces me to throw away love and happiness was not one I could have remained in. So, I chose to stay in my religion and in my communities by choosing to choose me.

I want you to know that you have a future as an LGBTQ+ individual in the orthodox communities. You are not alone, I am here and

I am working to get to the point where I can publicly be the role model I wish I would have had. Things may be incredibly difficult and I often wonder why I am still in the orthodox communities. The struggle is real, we all deserve so much more, so why do we stay in a community that offers us so little? I still do not have an answer other than, I am here because it is mine. No one can force me to leave my home.

It gets better. Those words were said to me and I never thought they could be true. I have had ups and downs, but the pain I face now as an LGBTQ+ individual in an orthodox world is nothing compared to the pain I felt knowing that I must live my life as a straight individual regardless of what I was feeling. I have found a supportive community of wonderful people, people whom I relate to and YU and you can too. We can help you find a path forward with continuous and unconditional support. You are worth it and you are valid. I know what it is like to feel so alone and I wish for you to feel that there are people out there that understand some of what you are going through.

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Resources:

If you are a student at YU, I highly recommend reaching out to the YU Pride Alliance at yupridealliance@gmail.com. Jewish Queer Youth, an orthodox adjacent organization aiming to provide resources, such as community, mental health support as well as guidance on which Israel gap year programs are queer friendly. These two resources have been incredibly helpful in giving me the tools I needed to accept my identity and find a way forward. The Eshel Welcoming Shul Project offers guidance on LGBTQ+ friendly and supportive shuls. I recommend reaching while trying to find a community as well as taking a look at the other resources Eshel and Keshet offer. Lastly, if you are looking for immediate support call the Trevor Project TrevorLifeline at 1-866-488-7386, or see here for chat or text options. JQY has a warm line at 551-JQY-HOPE (551-579-4673). The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline can be reached at 800-273-8255





America's Economic Inequality

By Rivka Lasson,
VP of Economic Inequality and
Healthcare

Regardless of one's political standpoint and their thoughts on the subject, there is a very clear and present scale of economic distribution of wealth in the United States today. To call it inequality is beyond just the simple definition as it has made its way to become a political and sociocultural statement. The state of our country's economy is one that has torn the country apart, as capitalists and socialists fight over the legitimacy and integrity of the wealth distribution in America. As a free country bound by liberty and equality, such an inequality may seem to be contradictory to the mantra our country holds sacred, but as years progress and the ideals of the country shift to a more open, expansive state of being, we Americans have the responsibility to make sure we are getting the proper social welfare necessary to keep up with the everchanging times.

Even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, through which our country has had a call for social welfare unlike anything seen in the last few generations, the country has still managed to somehow maintain very similar wealth gaps and positions that it has had for quite some time. A study by the Pew Research indicates that the same

gap of wealth between white and black Americans has actually grown from about \$23,800 in 1970 to roughly \$33,000 in 2018 (par. 3), something that our country's expansive mindset is strongly against, with 61% of Americans believing that this inequality is too much (par. 4). So, what are we doing? Why is there an ever-present call for the tightening and closing of the wealth income gap but instead of closing, it has been expanding? Why is this country – so impassioned by the ideals of equality for all, the rights of all, and the justice for all – still suffering from such a gap? Is it the fault of the left? Not really, because the left-leaning socialists are doing as much as they can to elect officials who will lead the economy into a state where distribution of wealth will be as social welfare dictates it to be. In addition, with the economic distribution closing via a commonwealth, socialists believe that if the government controls the wealth, there will be a better usage of our country's resources and this will reflect on the sociocultural aspects of daily life. Then, is it the fault of the right? Also, not really, because the idea behind capitalism is that people will work for their money, and in truth, people do

rightfully deserve the money for which they work hard. Furthermore, the right is not calling for fewer people to get jobs; in fact, they have embraced it in the past. Where is the middle ground then?

Very similarly reflective of the individuals of our country so torn apart by strong political beliefs, in order to fill the wealth gap, there needs to be a mixture of socialism and capitalism working together in a harmonious blend. The left needs to understand that the more socialism takes over the expectations of the country, the more financially unstable we will become amongst the global economic powers. G-d forbid we take a similar turn for the worst like Venezuela, whose economy turned into a socialist nightmare, where over 270 billion Venezuelan bolívares sum up to a United States dollar (XE Currency Exchange Rates), and the streets are piled with bills. The right, too, needs to be aware that if capitalism floods the country, then the wealth will eventually be crammed into the top 5% of the country, and very possibly more, leaving the welfare of the bottom 95% in a state of poverty. Yes, such cases are extreme, but it is never too late to think about the future, and

although we do not see the consequences of our turmoil now, we will one day if our country continues to be immersed in war over its well-being. Coming together – creating a society that takes the positive elements of each perspective and meshes them together – while idealistic, is the only way we won't have to live in fear of our country's economic downfall and the gap widening to the point where we end up in a state of chaos and despair.

COMMENCEMENT 2021

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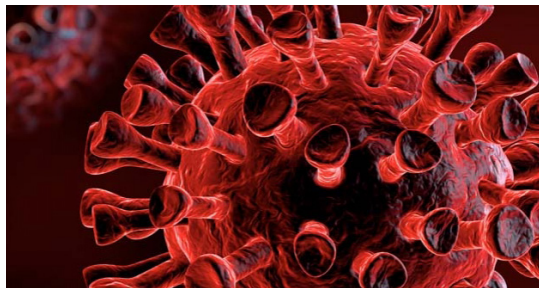
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SUPPORTING & EMPOWERING
JEWISH LGBTQ YOUTH
FROM ORTHODOX HOMES



The Cognitive Impacts of COVID-19

By Shayna Herszage,
Managing Editor

COVID-19 is generally classified as a respiratory virus. However, research and evidence have indicated that its impact does not stop there. In addition to the impact of the virus on the respiratory system, COVID-19 also has the potential to cause cognitive difficulties and memory impairment.

Ritchie, Chan, and Watermeyer (2020) conducted thorough research into the topic of COVID-19's impact on cognitive functions and memory. Autopsies have shown that the virus enters the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), giving it easy and fast-acting access into the brain. When the virus has entered the brain, it is able to infiltrate different parts of the brain and the

central nervous system (CNS) as a whole. In particular, the virus has had strong effects on the frontal cortex, which is the center of higher-level activities such as planning, and the hippocampus, which is the center of short-term memory. As a result, higher-level cognitive functions and the process of encoding short-term memories into long-term memories are at risk for permanent damage.

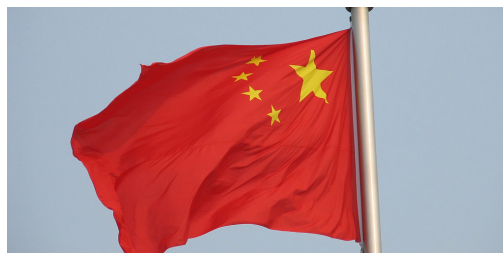
Additionally, the fact that COVID-19 is a respiratory virus has an impact on the brain due to the lack of oxygen it causes. Many people who have had COVID-19, especially those who needed ventilators, have reported experiencing long-term symptoms such as a short attention span, difficulty with long-term memory, executive dysfunction, and a slow process-

ing speed. These symptoms arise because of the prolonged occurrence of hypoxia, which is a lack of oxygen in the blood. When a person is in a state of hypoxia, every moment that passes may lead to further damage. In this state, the brain does not get enough oxygen, leading to cell death, cerebral atrophy, and enlarged ventricles — all of which contribute to impaired cognitive functioning.

The psychological trauma of suffering from COVID-19 also has the potential to cause long-term cognitive deficits. The fear and uncertainty a person may experience while combating a novel virus such as COVID-19 may have large impacts on the brain. This psychological distress can lead to cognitive symptoms characteristic of trauma in general, such as paranoia and

memory loss. The triggers for cognitive detriments due to COVID-19 may be physiological, but they also may be psychological.

The effects of COVID-19 have been shown to extend well beyond a cough and fever. Due to the virus's ability to permeate the blood-brain barrier, the dangers of hypoxia, and the impacts of medical trauma, COVID-19 may have long-term, even permanent effects on memory and cognition. As vaccines become more widely and readily available, we, as a society, must understand that we are combating much more than a short-term illness. We are combating the long-term effects, deficits, and consequences COVID-19 has the potential to bring to ourselves, the people around us, and our global community as a whole.



Chinese Rocket Reentry - As it Happened.

By Tova Shmulewitz

On April 29, 2021, a Chinese rocket named “Long March 5b” successfully entered into orbit around Earth. This rocket contained a part needed for a planned Chinese space station. The launch itself was successful, however, the core piece of the rocket, which carried the module for the space station, ran out of fuel and began circling Earth, and losing altitude. The 21-metric-ton rocket was headed for uncontrolled reentry to Earth, moving too fast for scientists or analysts to come up with a clear idea of where or when it might land. The breakdown of this reentry is as follows:

April 29th - “Long March 5b” is launched into a low Earth orbit.

April 30th - The core is observed as ‘tumbling,’ ‘not in control,’ and is reported to be circling Earth roughly every 90 minutes,

rendering it impossible to know where and when it might land.

May 3rd - The core reached the incredibly fast speed of 27,600 km/h, and dropped in altitude by almost 80 km. It is expected to land around May 10, 2021.

May 6th - The US has no plans to shoot down the rocket, says Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, optimistic that it will not be harmful.

May 7th - It is still too soon to tell where the rocket will crash land, says John Kirby, a Pentagon spokesperson, but it is being tracked. According to ABC News, Aerospace.org reported that reentry can be “as far north as Chicago, New York City, Rome and Beijing and as south as New Zealand and Chile.”

May 8th - It is reported that the rocket will re-enter Earth on May 9. Western US, South America, China, western and southern Africa, and northern India are all ruled out as potential landing sites.

5 p.m. - It is reported that the rocket will begin reentry between 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. EST.

8 p.m. - The window for reentry is specified to 9:11 p.m. to 11:11 p.m., with the possible location of reentry in the Mediterranean basin.

10:24 p.m. - Chinese officials report that the rocket has made reentry, in the Indian Ocean, near the Maldives. This information was confirmed.

May 9th - The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) criticises China for this incident, saying that “China is failing to meet responsible standards regarding their space debris.” It is still unclear if there has been any debris damage to the Maldives, although most of the remains were burnt before landing.

May 10th - China criticises the U.S., claiming that the media attention about this event was only in efforts to discredit and stop China's space program.

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We Can All Do Better

By Sarah Brill, Science & Technology
Editor

If you have been following along throughout the year, you might have noticed that all my articles have been centered around the one topic that is little spoken about, yet most pressing; climate change. From the summer of 2019, until that same fall, the climate movement had gained much traction after teenage activist Greta Thunberg started her “Fridays for Future” campaign, aimed at raising awareness of the impact and importance of climate change. Her campaign led many students to skip school and march on Fridays, so that governments around the world would write new climate laws to help better the planet.

After the pandemic hit in 2020, the climate activism and marches ceased. Social media became the old new network to be an activist. Trying to enact change online, however, is difficult. Social media may be a global platform, but there is something to be said about get-

ting outside and physically marching for change. Nonetheless, everything that could be done through social media had been done.

This year, I would say, would be the one year where we didn't need as many laws around climate changes, since humans were quarantined indoors for the entirety of 2020. This proved extremely beneficial to the environment, as old species came back from extinction. An example of this was the Tasmanian devils. According to National Geographic “These marsupials disappeared from the continent 3,000 years ago.” This lack of human traffic decreased pollution, both on the mainland and into the atmosphere, which contributed to the reintroduction of this species.

If this pandemic taught us anything it is to not take anything for granted, but also to respect the Earth we live on. Unfortunately for the planet, however, in 2021 we are set to

see a 5% increase in carbon emissions documenting the “second highest year-on-year increase in history, according to a report published April 20 by the International Energy Agency (IEA)” which only proves proving that humans are impacting the Earth, and only we can make a difference.

Last year, we saw how everything shut down in a heartbeat, not only from the pandemic, but from natural storms as well. Mother Nature does not take kindly to those who use the land like it is garbage. We saw this through the freak set of storms in Texas over the winter, and the multitude of tornadoes that were scattered throughout the South. You might call this weather, but if you ask yourself, have these types of storms happened before? And if you answer no, then maybe call it climate change. Because it is.

All I ask is that out of common

courtesy to planet Earth do the bare minimum; don't dump your garbage on the streets because it is convenient, walk when you can, recycle, use a reusable water bottle, and just do what you can to help the environment, whether you believe in climate change or not. Take little steps to reduce your carbon footprint so we can ensure a brighter and cleaner future on planet Earth.

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The Dangers of Being an Astronaut

By Avigail Abisoror

Ever since I was a young girl, the night sky amazed me. Looking up at the stars and the moon, I used to wish I could see them up close, which is why when I first learned about astronauts, I was awestruck. Being an astronaut is perhaps one of the most challenging jobs in the world and comes along with many risks. While space travel is a relatively new concept that we do not know much about, we have been able to study its effects on human beings, with the conclusion being that there are some damaging results to the astronauts' DNA. This damage is mainly caused by the astronauts' exposure to space radiation.

The International Space Station (ISS) is where the astronauts stay when in space and the ionizing radiation (IR) sources, where the ISS orbits, include three primary radiation sources. Galactic cosmic rays (GCRs) range from protons to Fe-ions, solar particle events (SPEs), and electrons and protons trapped in the Van Allen Belts (TPs) outside the spacecraft. This creates a complex radiation environment around the ISS, and inside of it as well (Furukawa et al.,2020). Primary GCRs produce many secondary particles through projectile and target fragmentation

in the ISS shielding materials and the bodies of astronauts. The flux of primary TPs increases as the altitude of the ISS increases and so they play a role in either increasing or decreasing the exposure of astronauts to radiation in Low-Earth Orbits (LEO)(Benton and Benton, 2001).

Solar ultraviolet (UV) radiation is part of the natural energy that is produced by the sun and reaches the Earth's surface. UV has different effects on biological processes and so it is classified as UV-C, UV-B, and UV-A. UV-C does not reach the surface of the earth, as UV-B and UV-A do, as it is eliminated by the stratospheric ozone layer (Singh et al., 2017). Although sunlight is beneficial for life on earth, it does still contain a harmful amount of UV-B radiation which causes damage to important cellular components, such as DNA, RNA, protein, and lipids (Britt, 1996). DNA, which stores genetic information, has its structure directly altered by UV radiation. Cyclobutane pyrimidine dimers (CPDs) are the main UV-induced photoproducts and account for approximately 75% of DNA damage (Sancar, 2004). The environment of space consists of much short-wavelength solar UV radiation, among a variety of different

types of radiation and so astronauts are exposed to a very large amount of space radiation. In fact, UV-C is much more prevalent in space, and at a higher intensity which is quite dangerous for human beings.

Radiation-induced DNA damage includes base damage, single-strand breaks (SSBs), and double-strand breaks (DSBs). DSBs are the most severe and if not repaired correctly, cell death, cellular senescence, and tumorigenesis may occur (Sankaranarayanan et al.,2013). It is important to consider the energy of radiation when exposed to it in space versus on earth. When one is exposed to radiation on the ground, the radiation levels are at low-LET (linear energy transfer) and include X-rays and y-rays. GCR on the other hand contains high-LET radiation such as energetic protons and heavy particle beams, i.e., HZE particles. (Ohnishi and Ohnishi, 2004) High-LET radiation exposure induces complex DNA damage as it leads to dense ionization along the radiation tracks of such particles. These regions of damage are referred to as complex/clustered DNA damage (lesion) and when compared to normal DNA damage, they are much more difficult to repair (Rydberg 2001), So, even if one were to be exposed to the same

amount of radiation in space as on the ground, the quality and amount of DNA damage that occurs will be different. Clustered DNA damage induced by high-LET radiation exposure is detected using the comet assay or agarose gel electrophoresis.

Chromosomal Aberrations (CAs) are used as cytogenetic biomarkers for exposure to IR and other DNA-damaging agents, and the frequency of CAs in peripheral lymphocytes may be associated with the risk of cancer. CAs have been analyzed in spacecraft crews since the 1960s and the frequency of total CAs is higher at postflight than at preflight- usually when the flights are longer than 180 days (Maalouf et al.,2011). Studies using FISH- fluorescence in situ hybridization- painting revealed that HZE particles frequently induce highly complex chromosomal rearrangements when compared with the effect of low-LET IR (George et al.,2013). Carcinogenesis is a major concern for future space missions, as the missions will probably be for longer durations and the longer one is exposed to radiation, the more dangerous it becomes. The astronauts on such missions will be constantly exposed to IR from natural radiation sources. HZE-charged particles

Dementia Linked to Kidney Failure

By Sara Muharremi,
Staff Writer

According to the CDC, “Dementia is not a specific disease but is rather a general term for the impaired ability to remember, think, or make decisions that interferes with doing everyday activities.” The World Health Organization (WHO) further describes dementia as a “[...] syndrome, usually of a chronic or progressive nature [...that] is not a normal part of aging [...]” They estimate that there are close to 50 million people worldwide affected by dementia, with almost 10 million cases being added each year. One of the most common types of dementia is Alzheimer’s disease. Although there are no current cures for dementia, some treatments and medications can help protect the brain or manage symptoms, such as behavioral symptoms.

There are certain factors that can increase a person’s risk for dementia, and recognizing these risks is important in order to test for a diagnosis sooner rather than later. Age is the highest known risk factor, with most cases of dementia occurring in those 65 years or older. Family history is another

large indicator; along with race and ethnicity, poor heart health, and traumatic brain injuries. Karolinska Institutet, one of the world’s most prominent medical universities and Sweden’s largest center for medical academic research, recently found that kidney disease can also be a high risk factor for dementia as well.

Their research found that older people with kidney disease have a higher chance of being diagnosed with dementia, and that risk increases when kidney function declines.

Their research found that older people with kidney disease have a higher chance of being diagnosed with dementia, and that risk increases when kidney function declines. Chronic kidney disease is common amongst older adults, where the global prevalence can be as high as 25-40%. The study included “[...] more than 325,000 individuals 65 years of age or older, [and] the researchers found a clear link between poor kidney function and the probability of receiving a dementia diagnosis during the follow-up. Nearly 19,000 cases of dementia (5.8

percent) were detected over a median follow up of five years.” Their study was one of the largest studies done regarding kidney function and dementia, and the results showed a clear correlation between a decline in kidney function with a dementia diagnosis. Estimated glomerular filtration rates (eGFR) were also conducted in order to

test kidney functions themselves. A normal baseline for an eGFR in healthy individuals is around 90 ml/min or higher. The institute found that those who had a filtration rate of 30-59 ml/min had a 71% increased risk of dementia, and those with an eGFR score less than 30ml/min had double the associated risk in comparison to those with a normal eGFR.

Dementia doesn’t just affect the individuals themselves, but those around them as well. To not have a cure for dementia makes it even harder on families and those affected. To be aware of the risks,

and to know if you or a loved one are in a higher risk category, can lead to an earlier detection which can then hopefully result in better treatment as well. One of the authors involved in the research even said that their “[...] analysis suggests that as many as 10 percent of dementia cases could potentially be attributed to chronic kidney disease.” With this connection, physicians can begin to establish better policies to keep an eye out for people with kidney disease and implement various screening strategies in order to decrease the risk of dementia for individuals as much as possible.

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The Dangers of Being an Astronaut (cont.)

are part of the radiation field in space and as it is carcinogenic, HZE particle irradiation promotes more aggressive cancers, such as increased growth rate, transcriptomic signatures, and metastasis (Barcellos-Hoff and Mao, 2016).

Aside from the risk of cancer that space radiation causes, NASA began focusing on the risk to the astronauts’ Central Nervous System (CNS). Although the brain is largely a radio-resistant organ, ground-based animal studies have indicated that space radiation alters neuronal tissue and neuronal functions such as excitability, synaptic transmission, and plasticity. HZE particles have also been demonstrated to

inhibit neuronal connectivity, neuronal proliferation, neuronal differentiation and to change glial characterization (Cekanaviciute et al.,2018). However, the long-term effects of higher-dose-rate exposure to radiation are unknown as researchers only observed the response to short-term higher-dose-rate exposure to radiation.

In conclusion, radiation is very damaging to human beings’ DNA. Normally, one is not as exposed as our Earth has a protective magnetic field that keeps extremely damaging radiation away from us.

However, astronauts go past that protective barrier and are exposed to that damaging radiation. The

results are a more intensely damaged DNA that is harder to repair. This leads to life-threatening diseases such as aggressive cancers, and also affects the Central Nervous System which consists of the spinal cord and the brain — which is the body’s most complex organ. All in all, we must be extremely grateful to the women and men who put their lives at risk so that they can help keep our Earth healthy and safe by studying it from a different angle.

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Falcon and the Winter Soldier Review

By Sarah Brill
Science & Technology Editor

Coming on the heels of one of the greatest Marvel TV shows in history, “WandaVision,” came “Falcon and the Winter Soldier.” Airing on March 19, 2021 on Disney+, the show follows two of the newer Avengers on their quest to disband the Flag-Smashers, a group of anarchists whose aim is to make what is wrong in the world right again. While their intentions are good, their execution is downright problematic. This show tackles themes such as refugees in crisis, the African-American story, and post-traumatic stress and does so in a very elegant fashion.

Needless to say this show has all the action. In these roughly 40-minute episodes, there can be upwards of at least three fight sequences on average. While those fights might be entertaining, they do take away from the plot, which gets jumbled and lost in those scenes. Compared to the previous

Marvel TV show released on Disney+, “WandaVision,” “Falcon and the Winter Soldier” seemed subpar. While their themes and mentality of tackling larger issues was there, the show as a whole was downright confusing.

The show begins with a clear objective; the Winter Soldier, also known

villain is; Karli Morgenthau (Erin Kellyman), a passionate vigilante, or John Walker (Wyatt Russell), a Captain America fraud, both of whom think they are doing good for the world but, ultimately, end up being corrupt themselves.

Unlike “WandaVision,” the show does not progress in a clear manner, but instead

Compared to the previous Marvel TV show released on Disney+, “WandaVision,” “Falcon and the Winter Soldier” seemed subpar. While their themes and mentality of tackling larger issues was there, the show as a whole was downright confusing.

as James Barnes (Sebastian Stan), is struggling with post-traumatic stress from his time as the Winter Soldier, while the Falcon, also known as Sam Wilson (Anthony Mackie), travels the world dismantling corrupt organizations that have risen after the blip. While the show progresses, the audience is unclear who the main

progresses through a series of fight sequences and sketchy background without much context and ends with what might have needed to unfold throughout the entire episode, but is instead shoved into two minutes.

If “Falcon and the Winter Soldier” accomplished one thing, it was tackling the theme

of racism and mental health throughout the entire show. This theme of racism was prevalent through the use of Isaiah Bradley (Carl Lumbly), a former enhanced soldier who was dishonored by the United States merely because of the color of his skin. Mental health was depicted through the use of Bucky, who struggles with his past throughout the entire episode, finally finding peace at the end of the show. Additionally, this show shed light on the necessity of having a prominent super hero character portrayed by a person of color, and I am thankful that Sam Wilson is now Captain America.

This show had its ups and mainly downs, but there were some key takeaways. From the context of the finale of the show we can expect to see more Marvel characters emerge in the MCU’s Phase 4, and possibly look forward to another, hopefully better, season two.





How Do We Remember 9/11?—Foer’s Literary Profundity

By Yosef Rosenfield,
Features Editor

On page 15 of “Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close”, author Jonathan Safran Foer concludes Oskar’s account of “the worst day” with a brief passage that reads so quickly it looks too short to be significant. Each sentence, however, contributes to Oskar’s narration and carries a much deeper meaning than the reader might think — and this quality is uniquely demonstrated in the very first sentence. The passage opens with the times of Dad’s follow-up phone messages from work: “There were four more messages from him: one at 9:12, one at 9:31, one at 9:46, and one at 10:04.” Beyond simply communicating when exactly Dad had called, which is not inherently interesting, this line draws parallels between Dad’s missed calls and the events of 9/11 as they unfolded that morning: after the first call at 8:52 (shortly after the initial World Trade Center’s North Tower plane crash at 8:46), Dad calls again at 9:12 and a third time at 9:31 following the 9:03

crash into the South Tower; he calls yet again at 9:46 and 10:04, corresponding to the 9:37 Pentagon crash and the 10:02 crash in Shanksville, PA.

These specific times are important outside the world of the

...he reminds us that the tragedies of September 11 were in fact very real and quite difficult to cope with for those who were impacted — poignantly fitting in with the overall theme and title of the novel, “Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close”...

story, as they allow the reader to better appreciate what really happened on that historic day. People who grew up in the 21st century and don’t actually have any memories of September 11, 2001 tend to think and speak of the day as simply “9/11” — suggesting a singular, simplistic notion of those events. By referencing 9/11 using exact times, Foer seeks to combat that perception; he reminds us that the tragedies of September 11 were in fact very real and quite difficult to cope with for those who were impacted

— poignantly fitting in with the overall theme and title of the novel, “Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close”, as they both speak to how intensely the attack affected its victims and their families. On a personal level as well, Oskar’s reaction to these

child, further reinforcing the idea that we must not reduce these atrocities to a single, bite-sized term such as “9/11.”

This one sentence, therefore, operates on various levels and accomplishes multiple things from a literary standpoint. From a surface read, of course, it tells us when exactly Dad phoned from work. It also parallels the times of the four plane crashes on September 11, referencing when the hijacked planes went down without even mentioning them. Furthermore, the tone itself invokes the answering machine’s emotionless recitation of Dad’s messages and Oskar’s reactional shock upon listening to them. These layers beneath the text collectively denounce the tendency to oversimplify the events of 9/11, and Jonathan Safran Foer — in this sentence alone — stresses the importance of remembering people’s real stories and personal losses from that very sad day in history.

messages also comes through in the tone of this sentence, which matter-of-factly lists the missed calls and their times. The cold, machine-like rhythm of the text mirrors the sound of Oskar’s answering machine and reveals his emotionless response to hearing Dad’s account of what has happened. The reader is brought into Oskar’s world and feels the utter shock that he is experiencing after learning of the unspeakable horror that just took place; we relive the barrage of attacks that must have overwhelmed him as a young



The Moment Has Come and Broadway Has Returned

By Sarah Brill
Science & Technology Editor

As fun as it is for us theatre nerds to listen to our favorite musicals on repeat, there is something to be said about in-person theatre. Good news for us, Broadway is reopening! On March 12, 2020, Broadway, a beacon of light and theatrics, closed its doors to the public with the hope of reopening that April. The pandemic took full swing and Broadway was forced to remain closed until the safety of the guests and actors could be confirmed. Now, nearly a year after the closing of the theatre, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that Broadway will open its doors, with some performances beginning as soon as September 14.

The major question that has come up regarding the reopening is why not open sooner? With New York planning on a full reopening in July, why can't Broadway do the same? The main answer is safety and the protocols that come into place. Another reason to postpone, according to the New York Times, is that "... individually and collectively, [Broadway is] trying to imagine when large numbers of people are likely to feel comfortable traveling to Times Square, funneling through cramped lobbies and walking down narrow aisles to sit shoulder-to-shoulder with strangers. Most Broadway shows lose money even in the best of times, so producers say there is no way they can afford to reopen with social distancing, given the industry's high labor and real estate costs."

In older theatres that house some of the most popular shows, such as the Gershwin Theatre, home to "Wicked", there are only three levels, each of which has small lobbies, and even smaller bathrooms. With the mob of people that normally rush to the restrooms during intermission, it is natural for the industry to first find a creative solution so people feel comfortable before the show and during intermission, as well as comfortable squeezing down the aisle. Let's just hope that no shows are set to run in The Lyceum Theatre, the oldest theatre on Broadway notorious for its small spaces and bathrooms.

The good news about Broadway is that it left on a high note. In 2019, Broadway grossed over \$1.8 billion in sales and the hope is that trajectory will con-

tinue. It might be assumed that after watching illegal tapings of their favorite show on YouTube or relistening to their favorite musicals on Spotify, that the majority of Broadway fans will flock to the theatres upon reopening, hopefully boosting sales. The hope is also that after such a high grossing income in 2019, entertaining both new audience members and theatre geeks, that the love for theatre, no matter if you grew up on it or not, continues to grow.

So, now is the time to buy your tickets, and let's turn Broadway's lights back on together.

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The Art of Neuroscience

By Shayna Herszage,
Managing Editor

Every time I tell someone my two majors, I enjoy seeing the surprised confusion on their face. As someone studying in the neuroscience concentration of the psychology major and the creative writing concentration of the English major, my two areas of study seem to be complete opposites. How can someone have a passion for two things so different as neuroscience and the arts? However, in my two years as a declared double major, I have learned that neuroscience and arts, in fact, have no problem coming together in harmony.

One example of this is the story of Santiago Ramón y Cajal, the father of modern neuroscience. Cajal's dream, his entire life, was to go to school to become an artist. However, his father wanted him to study medicine, so he turned his back on art and complied with his father's wishes. After medical school, however, he returned to his passion for art when he saw sam-

ples of brain tissue under a microscope. Instead of seeing a tangle of chaotic neuronal structures, he saw a series of patterns. Using his artistic eye and his knowledge of neuroscience, he drew vivid diagrams of neurons within the brain. By applying art to neuroscience, what was difficult to know about the brain and nervous system was elucidated.

Several decades after Cajal used his artistic skills for neuroscientific advancement, Dr. Oliver Sacks used his literary abilities to bring neurology to the public. Dr. Sacks is known for writing books such as "The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat" and "An Anthropologist on Mars." In his books, Dr. Sacks discusses neurological disorders and anomalies he encountered as a neurologist. His books, while undoubtedly scientific in nature, also have a literary quality: they are fun to read, easy to understand without an education in neuroscience, and they have clear narratives. Thus, due to Dr. Sacks's ability to make his literary skills and neurological background

converge in his novels, readers are able to cultivate a love and understanding for neuroscience.

Both Sacks and Cajal opened my eyes to the idea that the arts and sciences, specifically neuroscience in my case, are not contradictory values. All my life, I had heard that some people are "arts people" and some are "science people." I dreaded the part when I would have to make a choice. When I first declared myself a psychology major in the neuroscience track, I thought the choice had been made. But then I picked up a Sacks book at the bookstore, and a professor told me about Cajal soon afterward, and I realized I had not made a definitive choice between two fields I love, nor was I obligated to do so — and, what's more, I could bring the two together.

For my final semester, I decided that my Advanced Creative Writing class was the chance I needed to try my hand at combining creative writing and neuroscience. For my project, I wrote a script inspired by "The Case of the

Color-Blind Painter," a chapter in "An Anthropologist on Mars" that describes a situation in which a painter suffered head trauma and, as a result, lost all color vision and only saw the world in shades of gray — a condition called achromatopsia.

Writing a play about neuroscience was a challenge — I wanted to be scientifically accurate, but I also wanted to maintain a compelling story. Now, however, I look at my work — a full length, two-act script — with satisfaction and a desire to improve it and make more efforts at combining the arts and neuroscience.

After completing my double major in an art and in a science, am I on the same level as Santiago Ramón y Cajal or Dr. Oliver Sacks? Not at all. But incredible people such as these have shown me that there is more than one path forward, and when the paths are combined, the results can be beautiful.

YU Observer May Poetry Feature: Catharsis

By Anonymous

Each month, the YU Observer sends a call to YU students for poetry submissions following a specific theme. This month, the theme was “Catharsis”, and we are featuring the anonymously written piece, ‘The Soul She Sold’. Other

submissions of honorable mention have been published as well.

The Soul She Sold

It was different before.
I remind myself of the days
When you had a soul
As we laughed,
And laughed,

And laughed on the couch.
The laughter
And the soul
Were pressed from you.
I mourn them both.

You promised to tell
Their truth
Their whole truth
Nothing but their truth.

But isn't there more truth than that?
Isn't the truth
That is not theirs
Truth nonetheless?

The fact is,
Facts do care about my feelings —
Even if you do not.

YU Observer May Poetry Submissions: Catharsis

Each month, the YU Observer sends a call to YU students for poetry submissions following a specific theme. This month, the theme was “Catharsis”, and we are featuring the anonymously written piece, “The Soul She Sold”. However, the poems below are other submissions of honorable mention..

Crying Coalition By Lara Vosburgh

Cry out to yourself.
Because you don't even listen anymore.
Make sure you listen closely.
Tears are the rain drops of your soul.
Cry 'til it is all out.
Cry 'til you know what it is all about.
Cry freely.

Cry because it costs nothing.
Cry because its G-d's way to show he cares.
Cry so your mascara is all smudged.
Cry for your losses.
Cry about what you may lose when you gain.
Cry for those you hate.
All you wished was to really love them.
Cry cause you can.
Cry because there is no ban.
Cry till you have no tears left.
Cry while you laugh.
Sometimes the saddest things are funny.
Cry over milk that has been spilt.
Then you won't cry so much when the
Champagne goes down your cat's throat after he knocks it down on New Year's Eve
Cry tears of Caviar

Cry tears of a crocodile
So, you can know the real tears when they come.
Make a waterfall of tears.
But never cry out of self-pity.
Cry for yourself so you can cry for the world.

Forgetting Forgiveness By Lara Vosburgh

Shakespeare, Chekhov and Becket yearned for catharsis.
What did it help?
They wanted to be absolved from their sins.
How did it alleviate?
They wanted to start over.
How did they turn the page?
They wanted to go to Heaven.
Did the gates open as wide as they can?
They wanted an eternal life.
What was the cost?

The cost was to forgive themselves.
The hardest thing to do.
Even when G-d already did.

Fabulous Fail By Lara Vosburgh

At the top of my success,
I failed to see my failure.
I looked everywhere but inward.
I listened to flattery,
But not to my heartbeat
I smelled fakeness,
But I didn't walk away.
I assimilated with a fake dream.
I became one with duplicity.
Save me from dishonesty.
Connect me to the umbilical cord of truth.
Then the catharsis shall come.

People of the Book: From Stern to the Drama Book Shop

By Lara Vosburgh

On my first day at the Atlantic Acting School, I was sent to the Drama Book Shop. As I stepped in, colorful volumes of plays popped in front of my eyes like chocolate bars in a candy store. I did not know where to begin or which play to pick first. Was I to go for one of the classics or a new up-and-coming writer? In a way, the experience felt not unlike my first visit to the Beit Midrash (study hall) when I was just starting out at Stern. Here too, I deliberated which Sefer (book) to open first. Was I to choose Rashi or a modern parshan (commentator)? They may seem completely unrelated at first, but the Stern Beit Midrash and Drama Book Shop have more in common than meets the eye. Both are places where individuals seek knowledge that has been passed down from generation to generation and sheds light on human existence. Being a student

at Stern and a professional actress, I too am one of those individuals. Both places served as a second home for me over these past few years, ever since I moved to New York from Israel. Both settings are absolutely magical, reminding me of the Flourish and Blotts' bookstore in “Harry Potter”. Granted, the plays and sfarim offer very different kinds of wisdom, yet both contain interpretations and commentaries on how we should lead lives that share the same purpose – making us, the readers, better people.

The Drama Book Shop is not only a house for amazing plays, screenplays, librettos and sheet music. It is also a safe haven for actors wishing to dive into their character's journey and an

inspiring environment for playwrights, theater professionals and enthusiasts alike. Like a riveting book a reader gets lost in, the bookstore itself can get overwhelming, but with the help of the helpful booksellers one could always find one's way. In January 2019, the 100-year-old shop had to close its location. As New York awakens from its pandemic



slumber, I am so excited that the Drama Book Shop is soon set to reopen. The new store's design and charming ambience, meticulously crafted by veteran Broadway

Production Designer David Korin (“Hamilton”), is inspired by the 19th-Century European cafés.

If that's not enough, the store's new owner is none other than legendary Lin-Manuel Miranda. He and his “Hamilton” collaborators were able to

revive the store, saving us from its catastrophic closure. In his early days, Miranda wrote parts of his musical “In the Heights” between the four magical walls of the Drama Book Shop. Now, he is giving a chance to other writers to attempt greatness and pen the next stage hit. “The Drama Book Shop is the heart and soul of the New York theater community,” Miranda said in 2019. “It's been an oasis in midtown for a century of storytellers and theater fans alike - a safe space to gather, to learn, and to find great books and music. I found my collaborators there. I wrote drafts of “In the Heights” there. “Freestyle Love Supreme” was born there. I made sure the first book-signing of “Hamilton: The Revolution” was held there. The Drama Book Shop is home. To the next generation of dramatists, actors, directors, composers, choreographers, designers, and theater enthusiasts: the stage is set...Come in. Discover. Enjoy.

Evolve Shorts & The FSF: Starting A Business During A Pandemic

By Benjamin Plotkin

I am writing this article with two goals. The first, to describe my experience starting my clothing brand, “Evolve Shorts”, while still in school. If you’re reading this and thinking of starting your own, I hope you find this article both motivating and insightful. The second, to encourage more students to apply/participate in this year’s fashion scholarship fund competition. I was blessed to be a winner last year and I am confident that many more Yeshiva University students can as well. Towards the end of the article, I’ll explain the incredible value I received from the experience and some suggestions for what helped me win. (There is no connection between starting a company and applying for the competition).

Background & Founding

During my first year in Syms, I came across a clothing brand by the name of “JustDon”; a brand known for their retro-themed basketball shorts. A pair of polyester mesh shorts with a rib knit waistband, and most importantly, designs embroidered across the front. A very uncommon style perhaps, but one that is becoming more and more popular within streetwear. The only problem is that they retailed for \$400. I personally couldn’t justify the purchase and decided to look for cheaper alternatives, and to my surprise, there were none. This is what inspired the inception of Evolve Shorts. But I still had a question to answer: How could I start a company that made high quality shorts for a fraction of the cost?

Roughly 10 months ago (July 2020), I officially launched the first collection of “Evolve Shorts”; a brand I had pondered starting for over a year. In the beginning, I hit roadblocks figuring out how I was actually going to produce the shorts. Minimum order quantities were too high in America and I didn’t want to buy pre-made (wholesale) shorts from other brands. After searching for manufacturers overseas (through AliBaba) I established a connection in Pakistan and was able to place my first order for around a couple hundred dollars.

When reflecting on why

it took me over a year to start the brand, I would say it took so long for a couple reasons. First, I would look for validation from friends with hopes that they would want to come on board and start it with me. This was a way for me to find comfort in not founding alone. Second, I would spend so much time going back and forth in my head about what type of brand I wanted to build.

Takeaway:

Don’t wait — in reality the first step is the most important. As much as you want everything to be perfect from the start, by just starting you are expediting the learning process and broadening your perspective of what the brand can actually be. Once you start, the vision in your head is only going to get bigger and better. You’ll be filled with more ideas, energy, and excitement towards continuing to build upon what you’ve created.

Business Model:

In order to both mitigate risk and minimize costs, I decided to build an On-Demand modular model. Meaning, I would order blank shorts from Pakistan in the sizing and style I wanted, but the actual designs would only be placed on the shorts once an order was made. This enabled me to hold inventory across multiple different product variants. In order to do this I purchased a vinyl cutter and heat press, and would apply the designs on my own. The pros, If one design didn’t sell, there was no risk and I could try again with another design. The cons, it took time to actually fulfill all the orders because I have to do most of the work after the orders are placed.

Takeaway:

The modular model was definitely something that I reflect upon and believe to be a smart way to mitigate risk, but as the business grows it’s definitely not a scalable cost effective strategy for processing orders.

Quality is everything — when trying to build a brand it is so incredibly important that the customers are not only happy with their purchase, but that they return again for multiple orders and encourage their friends to buy as well. If the quality from packaging to product to delivery, and customer service isn’t at its best, it is not only

difficult to build a brand that can grow but also one that you can be proud of.

The Past 10 Months

Over the past school year I have been able to place a total of 4 orders, starting from 20 units to my recent order in the hundreds. I would say that the key takeaways for how I generated sales are as follows: In the beginning I focused my efforts on marketing through facebook ads, but quickly realized that my budget was too low and ineffective for properly targeting my niche demographic (17 - 24 year old males interested in basketball and streetwear). The strategy I employed and received the most success from was targeted marketing through Instagram pages. I would find pages that were in line with my brand and run “swipe up” story ads on their accounts. This would drive traffic to my website where I would generate sales and build my Facebook Pixel (Facebook’s machine learning model that collects data to more effectively target your ideal customers). Another important variable that helped me drive sales was optimizing for the search engine. By linking my products with keywords, I would generate organic traffic that cost me zero marketing dollars and helped maintain high profit margins.

Takeaway:

If you have a small budget, I have found it to be more effective to target customers through instagram pages that fit your demographic. This is a more cost effective strategy for putting your product in front of your ideal customer, but it is not a scalable solution for building your brand. Ultimately you’re gonna want to target a much larger group of people through Facebook marketing, Google ads, etc...

The Fashion Scholarship Fund:

Every year the Fashion Scholarship Fund (FSF) hosts a case study competition, allowing students from eligible schools to apply and participate. The case study is split into four disciplines: design, merchandising analytics, retail, and supply chain, each with a unique challenge needed to be solved.

There are multiple reasons as to why you should apply. First, FSF gives out one million dollars a year to the selected applicants

who are declared winners. If you have student loans, this could prove to be an incredible opportunity to alleviate some of that burden. The second is the unique learning experience. Prior to the competition, I was not familiar with the supply chain discipline, so I took it as an opportunity to challenge myself and learn from it. I found this to be the most rewarding as this experience has helped me expand my perspective and better prepare me for challenges I will face in the future. This can be said across all the disciplines; if you are looking for ways to expedite learning and broaden your perspective across any of the mentioned disciplines, this competition is for you. It provides you with a chance to not only showcase your skills to the judges, but most importantly to yourself. Last but not least, the competition will connect you with the vast FSF networks, a network filled with industry leaders, mentors, and various opportunities for internships.

The first year I applied, I didn’t win. The key differentiating factor between winning and losing was how much more work I decided to put into the project after I said it was good enough. Obviously everyone has different measures of their work, but if you are committed to the consistent refinement and candid observation of your work then your project can only get better. I used previous winning cases as references and I was committed to working until I was certain my case was of a high enough pedigree to compete. The internet will be your greatest ally and you can always ask a teacher to be an advisor as well. Please reach out to Melanie Zuckerman for more information and how to apply. I hope you give it a shot and I’m confident, with the right dedication, you can be a winner as well!



Annual Sy Syms Awards Dinner 2021

By Eli Saperstein

On Monday, May 3, 2021 the Sy Syms School of Business held its annual Awards Dinner at the Keter Torah Synagogue located in Teaneck, New Jersey, where faculty, guests, parents and students gathered to celebrate the accomplishments of students and faculty after an unprecedented year.

Everyone was required to show their compliance to Yeshiva University's COVID-19 safety program, and the green smiley face of the online YU COVID-19 questionnaire was required at check-in. Once you were told your table number and took your seating card, you were allowed to enter the main hall where the hors d'oeuvres were being served in a COVID-19-safe way, with everyone being required to sit at their table with servers coming around periodically as opposed to the typical pre-covid way of crowding around various stations and receiving a portion. Despite all these restrictions, the excitement was palpable, this dinner coming after a long, primarily online year was the first time for many of the one-hundred-fifty guests to meet or reunite with their professors and classmates in person in a formal setting.

Before the official programming began, a perek (chapter) of Tehillim (Psalms) was said in honor of Donny Morris and all those lost at Meron this past Lag B'Omer, led by Adam Baron, the current president of Yeshiva University's Sy Syms School of Business Student Council.

Opening remarks were given by Alexandrie Brody and Adam Baron about the successful events over the past year such as the stock market challenge, followed by a welcome from Dean Strauss. President

Rabbi Dr. Berman spoke about the role of students in the workforce and how their Avodas Hashem (service of G-d) is no longer just in the Beis Medrash (study hall), but about growing the economy, helping the community and producing wealth while making a Kiddush Hashem (representing Judaism positively) is its own form of Avodas Hashem. Marcy Syms (President of the Sy Syms Foundation and former CEO of Syms Corp) began her introduction of Steve Lipman about how wonderful it was to see everyone mentioning that "it is her first time being in a room with more than four people" as well as relating her views on inspiration and aspiration which was inspiring for all those present. Her introduction moved to the keynote speaker who this year was Steve Lipton, Global managing partner of Rothchild & Co. Someone who should be an inspiration to all of us as "Mr. Lipman can be proud that he is one of a handful of investment bankers who has the same friends in his address book that he had fifteen-twenty years ago and he hasn't changed his cell phone number!"

The keynote speech which focused primarily on work ethic and its resulting rewards began by giving a brief introduction to what he actually does on Wall Street, maximizing value. He mentioned that no matter what in order to be successful "you need to go all-in" as well as relating that in his experience the employees who feel connected to the firm's culture and value being surrounded by the best and brightest will have a very different attitude than the employee whose sole goal is to make a lot of money and has no passion for their work then, "you may be rich someday but I doubt you will ever be happy." The speech concluded with the

hope that those present will re-define what they might assume to be a success such as attaining personal wealth and challenging everyone to think about success as "what you can do for others, that concepts such as tzedakah and tikkun olam do not begin and end at shul they are how you define yourself in the business world and beyond" to the applause of everyone.

Following that Dean Wasserman gave a siyum (celebration of completing a Judaic text) on Tractate Bava Basra, elevating this wonderful event to a seudas mitzvah (celebratory meal in honor of fulfilling a Jewish commandment). Following that, the Dean Harold Nierenberg Valedictorians Awards were given to Tali Goldman and Noah Tradonsky, after which the Bernard Brown Salutatorian Award for Excellence in Business Studies was given to Pamela Abraham and Avraham Kaminker.

There was a break given for the entree to be served after which everyone was called to return to their seats after which the awards were to commence.

The Award for Outstanding Achievement in Accounting was given to Yosef Bram, Daniel Spigel, Jennifer Sorscher, and Joshua Saltzman.

The Dean's Award for Scholastic Achievement in Business Intelligence and Marketing Analytics was given to Jason Jubas and Seth Mintz.

The Dean's Award for Scholastic Achievement in Finance was given to Joseph Aron, Daniel Koenigsberg, and Eden Krenzel. The Dean's Award for Scholastic Achievement in management was given to Zev Markowitz and Isabelle Selter.

The Dean's Award for Scholastic Achievement in marketing was given to Lily Betesh and David Schmidt.

The Dean's Award for Service

and Character was given to Harrison Drucker, Eden Krenzel, Ilan Marouani, and Haviva Tirschwell. The Dean's Hakarat Hatov Award for Service and Leadership went to the respective presidents of each campus, Alexandrie Brody and Adam Baron.

Another break was given for the dessert, after which the Professor of the Year Award went to Professor Mark Finkel and Professor Yitzchak Rosenthal.

The Adjunct Professor of the Year Award was given to Rabbi Dovid Bashevkin.

Members of the BGS (Beta Gamma Sigma, an academic honor society for top business school students) were then announced. Congratulations to: Abraham Bahar, Adam Duitz, Rafael Fischer, Cody Halbert, Daniel Jaspán, Ahuva Oppen, Boaz Sobal, Noah Zaionz, Moshe Zeileniec, Yaakov Schreier, Jakob Sheckter Samuel Adler, Aryeh Bienstock, Rachel Doretsky, Liav Garbuz, Andrew Gottfried, Madlan Kavian, Shaina Levin, Jonah Loskove, Jonathan Saks, Dov Schlossberg, Elizsheva Katz, Isabelle Selter, and Sharon Tuchman.

We were then treated to concluding remarks from Adam Baron and Alexandrie Brody. There was an after-party which consisted of doubles ping pong, Jenga, miniature basketball, giant connect four, giant checkers, and multiple air hockey tables. Swag was given out shortly after another call for social distancing and mask-wearing which consisted of a Sy Syms clear plastic bag, a wireless charger, and a washable mask.

Fun was had by all and, at approximately 10:30 p.m., the busses brought the students back to their respective campuses after yet another successful Annual Sy Syms dinner. Congratulations to all honorees and award winners.

YUSE Interview With Trey “Trades” Collins

By Eli Itzhaky

On April 22, the Yeshiva University Stock Exchange (YUSE) club hosted Trey “Trades” Collins during their first-ever event. The event was moderated by YUSE President Jake Shekter and YSU president Zachary Greenberg. Trey is a very popular trader on Youtube with over 200k subscribers — he provides his viewers with top notch content and has established himself as the prominent AMC bull. The first question of our event tackled Trey’s background. He described to us how he had trained to become a professional marathon runner before discovering a heart condition which derailed his running career. While searching for a new hobby to learn, Trey stumbled upon the stock market. Trey, who has a government job and works on his YouTube channel at the same time, explained how he successfully balances both. He credits his time-management skills to the tight schedule he sticks to daily, devoting ample time to researching and preparing for his videos while never slacking off from his schedule. Trey further stressed the importance of

time management and sticking to a schedule if one wants to achieve success.

Trey also spoke about the growth of investors over the pandemic, primarily the growth of Robinhood. Robinhood can be described as the beginner app for investing. An easy to use brokerage, Robinhood’s mission is to make investing accessible and understandable to all, no matter one’s knowledge or capital available.

Jake then asked Trey what he thinks about newer investment strategies, as well as the addition of so many younger investors to the stock market. Trey highlighted the continued transition away from position trading (long-term) towards momentum-based trading and investing based on the future, as evidenced by outrageous P/E ratios for many tech-related companies. Jake then asked if Trey believes, like many currently do, that the market is overvalued in its current state. Trey responded that the market is definitely overextended, given the juxtaposition between current COVID-19 pandemic conditions and the all-time high prices many companies are generating. Trey named inflation as the catalyst for a

large-scale correction, given the amount of money being printed and the amount of funding hedge funds have been getting from the major banks. Trey then gave us his 5 favorite picks for the long term: Microvision \$MVIS, ExOne Company \$XONE, Sonosics \$SENS, Applied Genetic \$AGTC and Technologies (these are just ideas and should not be taken literally as financial advice.) Regarding the quick recent rise of crypto currencies, Trey believes the crypto sector has more room to grow and has potential to grow peoples savings into fortunes. Savings accounts and bonds no longer can keep up with inflation, Bitcoin can. Trey sees Ethereum as the younger brother of Bitcoin but thinks both will experience tremendous growth over the next 5-10 years.

We then dove into the recent rise of the “meme stocks” and how Trey began to support AMC’s stock so intently. Trey discussed how Gamestop’s incredible run showed him that something strange was going on, so he began looking at other meme stocks which he believed many investors would FOMO their way into. AMC’s heavy short volume, combined with the coming influx of peo-

ple finally returning to movie theaters after the pandemic, made this stock his perfect target. Trey touched upon NFT’s and revealed that he is actually working on his own. He thinks they’re here to stay. He agreed that soaring prices are probably in a bubble but sees a possible transition from physical to digital art. Trey sent us off with some advice points, mainly 4: Grit, skill, timing and luck. “Timing and luck are determined by your grit and skill.” Trey was preaching the importance of always learning and trying to make a lesson out of everything. Trey attributes his success to his grit as at a point in his life, he was living in his car for a few months but never gave up.

The Yeshiva University Stock Exchange Club’s mission very much aligns with the goals of Robinhood (aside from the occasional price manipulation of certain stocks). We work to make investing understandable to everyone- this includes daily stock tips, sending weekly upcoming earnings charts and engaging in stock talk on a daily basis. This past semester, we started incorporating cryptocurrencies into our chat, offering crypto Friday stock tips. This is just one of many speakers to

Neuromarketing: The Future of Advertising?

By Shayna Herszage,
Managing Editor

When you are watching a commercial that elicits an emotional response, your focus is hardly on the biological responses happening within your body. However, when viewing an emotionally significant stimulus, many biomarkers, such as changes in skin conductance and heart rate, are present. With the necessary neurological and biological assessment tools, these biomarkers help companies and entertainment platforms to improve their marketing techniques.

Neuromarketing, a term coined in 2002, is the application of neuroscience to the world of marketing. With these assessment tools, advertisers are able to understand the internal responses of consumers and, as a result, are able to capitalize on the responses that will result in an increased number of consum-

ers.

One highly effective assessment tool is eye tracking, in which a sensor analyzes where a person’s gaze is focused when looking at visual stimuli. Eye tracking developers such as iMotions have contributed to deeper understandings of various aspects of marketing strategies by analyzing what a viewer sees, focuses on, and remembers when shown visual stimuli..

For example, in one study, participants were shown an advertisement with a picture of

a baby beside a few sentences of details about a product. Some participants saw an advertisement featuring a baby turning to gaze at the words, whereas other participants saw an advertise-

ment featuring a baby facing the viewer directly. The eye tracking component

of the study helped the researchers to determine that, when the baby was facing the viewer, the viewer did not look at the informational sentences as much as when the baby was facing the sentences. As such, the viewer-facing baby distracted

the viewer too much, rendering the advertisement less effective than the advertisement with the sentences-facing baby. By analyzing where the viewer’s gaze is most focused, researchers and marketers alike are able to find empirical indications of which advertisements are effective and which are too distracting.

With the introduction of neuroscientific and biological assessment tools to marketing, the field has the capability to take on a scientific component that may greatly improve marketing strategies. While the technology is still improving in its accuracy and the ethics of the field are heavily contested, one thing is certain: the development of neuromarketing is a significant step in the world of marketing — one that could change the game entirely for advertisers and their platforms.





Strategizing Your Starting Portfolio

By Eli Longman

Investing into the stock market can be a tricky game, so the best question to ask yourself is “how can I learn to make money”? The stock market is truly a fascinating way to make money, but the biggest scare for most people is simply losing their cash. Some of the first steps to consider in the process of investing is to assess your own risk. When you think a company’s stock price can rise \$10 in a month, you must consider that it can also fall \$10 in a month, so then you ask “how do I know if it’s a good stock to invest in?” Well for starters, I started investing in April of 2020, right after the pandemic hit. Of course, like every other young investor in a bull market, I said to myself “How hard can it be?” and before I know it, I’m taking loss after loss and thinking “What am I doing wrong?”

It was simply my strategy. I thought every stock’s price would soar after a ‘bullish rating’, but little did I realize the value of patience. I just knew a strategy was the missing piece. This realization brings me back to my original point of managing your own risk. As a starting investor, invest what you are willing to lose. Now that’s not to say that you should pick an egg out of the basket and hope it’s the shiniest one. In reality,

you should find and understand the underlying fundamentals and technical analysis of that specific company you’re potentially interested in investing in. A company’s financial statements and historical data on the stock’s price can help you navigate the best time to buy. This is how I started to properly assess my risk and overall tolerance, by strategically deciding between value stocks and growth stocks.

Whether I think

A company’s financial statements and historical data on the stock’s price can help you navigate the best time to buy.

a stock is undervalued or has a bright future, I do my due diligence by properly researching and analyzing that company. Don’t get me wrong here, there were several moments in time where I said to myself “this is too hard” and “I’m never gonna get this”, but I also remember reassuring myself that “I am committed to learning about the stock market.” As long as I kept getting up and trying to do my best, I realized that eventually the hard work will pay off.

Let’s say, for instance, you are down 5% in a day, or realized you shouldn’t have bought this stock at \$40 because it’s now \$30 or less in a matter of two days. These are

all realistic scenarios that you may and likely will encounter, but you as the investor should set for yourself a gameplan with attainable goals and necessary precautions. Purchasing stocks, bonds, ETF’s, or Mutual Funds is just like purchasing products on Amazon. You want your money to go to something that’s going to give you value in return.

I would also like to mention that as young college students, we are very fortunate to have access

to all the information we need to properly buy any interesting stock we may come across. To bring this full circle, investing into the stock market is a tricky game and the wins won’t come easy. You must commit time to learn about the stock market, and assess your risk properly. Financial services like Robinhood have proven their dominance in popularity and the mobile-trading scene, even though fairness to the individual investor has been debated ever since the company had temporarily restricted trading for the global demand on chaotic stocks like AMC and Gamestop. Subsidiary Citadel LLC was shorting the Reddit hyped stocks Gamestop and AMC. Robinhood restricted traders on the platform from selling shares of Gamestop and AMC because one of their subsidiaries Citadel LLC was down billions of dollars from shorts they had on these two stocks. In the end, both parties won some and lost some, but the integrity and image of Robinhood has been questionable ever since. Meanwhile, the Apple App Store and Google Play Store offer a variety of mobile applications for investing to help ensure that you find which app suits you the best. Also don’t forget to keep an eye on the cryptocurrency market because the shift to digital, blockchain-based, decentralized currencies have been stated as a potentially enormous new market of technology of the past decade. Now if that doesn’t float your boat then I don’t know what will. Invest with strategy, but also invest with enthusiasm, because having fun while investing allows you to succeed in

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