

# The Yeshiva University OBSERVER



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## YU'S COVID-19 TESTING POLICY CHANGED FROM TWICE A WEEK TO ONCE A WEEK REQUIRED TESTING



### NEWS

BY REBECCA ADUCULESI,  
NEWS EDITOR

In an email sent out to the student body on November 10, 2021, students were informed that beginning on November 11, 2021, students will only be required to get tested for COVID-19 once a week, as opposed to twice a week. This test will be a PCR test compared to the previous requirement of a PCR test on Mondays and a rapid test on Thursdays.

In the email, the COVID Monitoring Team expressed, "We are pleased to see continued low numbers of positive cases on the campuses. As such, in consultation with the university's medical director, we are now in a position to begin slowly dimming certain COVID-19 protocols." Ac-

ording to the COVID-19 tracker, between October 31, 2021 and November 5, 2021, there were only two positive COVID-19 results from the 1,340 on-campus tests conducted on Beren campus, and zero positive COVID-19 results from the 1,555 on-campus tests conducted on Wilf campus.

Biweekly testing has been in effect since October 4, 2021. Since returning from the holiday break, students were required to receive a PCR test every Monday and a rapid test every Thursday. In the email, students were informed that, "For your convenience, YU will continue to offer PCR testing hours twice a week on both campuses, though students will only be required to test once per week with us." However, students were also told that YU will no longer

be accepting tests taken outside of YU's official testing "except under unusual circumstances."

In addition, a new testing schedule was announced. Students were informed that "testing will shift to Mondays and Tuesdays, and will be available on the Beren Campus in room 501 of 215 Lexington from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and on the Wilf Campus in Furst Hall room 501 from 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m."

The email also reminded students that "mask requirements remain in place on the campuses – including in all academic and administrative buildings, and indoor public spaces (including the cafeteria) unless you are eating or drinking." The "temporary" mask mandate has been in effect since

August 29, 2021, and has yet to be changed.

Many students had positive reactions towards this news. Eliana Wagner (SCW '22) told the YU Observer, "I think it's a lot easier for students and will make the whole process a lot more manageable. I'm really glad that the school is willing to adapt and work with the student body."

### INSIDE THIS EDITION



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## EDITORIAL



## NO PLACE LIKE HOME

BY SHOSHANAH MARCUS,  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

“But the Land, to which you pass to possess...absorbs water from the rains of heaven, It is a Land that the Lord your God seeks out; the eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it” (Deuteronomy 11:11-12).

Rashi comments on Deuteronomy 11:12: “It is as if God cares only for [Israel], and with that caring...He cares for all the [other] lands along with it.”

The last year and a half have been a time of great pain for the Jewish people. Along with the rest of the world, we have suffered through the seemingly endless heartbreaks of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our communities have had to endure virtual funerals

and drive-by weddings. We have celebrated birthdays in isolation and heartbreak in solitude. The list of pandemic-related disappointments is seemingly endless, but one ache that many in the Jewish nation have added to their list is the pain of being cut off from our homeland, our Promised Land, Israel.

Since the beginning of March 2020, the Israeli borders have been almost entirely sealed to all non-Israeli citizens. Though there have been slight exceptions to the policy, there has been an almost impermeable barrier keeping diaspora Jews from entering and Israeli Jews from exiting. There have been countless stories of milestone life events missed due to the stringency of the Israeli border. This has caused an almost unbearable pain in the collective global Jewish soul. We are a people who

speak daily on our love and desire to be in the Land we were promised. Our birthright was given to us by God. To be kept from our Land has inflicted a deep pain upon our nation’s soul.

Just after finishing classes in the Spring 2021 semester, I traveled to Israel with the hopes of getting married in my homeland. The process of applying for entry permits to Israel and collecting paperwork and documents, including needing to prove that my siblings were my parents’ children, was a nightmare. Despite the immense effort required, our families were as dedicated as my now-husband and myself to gain entrance to our home. Even after filling out every

**Israel is our land:  
it is written in our scripture and is beating  
in our hearts.**

necessary form, I still felt like an intruder in Israel while waiting on the long airport security lines.

I knew most of my friends would not be able to fly out for my wedding, but what many do not know is that I did not know if even my own siblings would be able to attend. After months of holding my breath, I will never forget the moment I was told that my siblings received entry permits and would be able to attend my wedding. The thought of not having my siblings at my own wedding was heartbreaking, and hearing this news was a relief to say the least. With God’s help, I was able to get married in Israel in early June with my entire immediate family in attendance, there are so many who were not as fortunate.

Beginning this month, there seems to be a light radiating from the end of a very long, dark tunnel. On November 1, 2021, Israel opened their

borders to vaccinated tourists. While there are still necessary procedures in place to protect the health and safety of citizens and travelers, this new lifting of restrictions is a huge relief to many.

As we enter into the Thanksgiving season we are reminded of the importance of family and loved ones. It seems like good timing, in my opinion, that the relaxing of travel restrictions to Israel comes as American families begin to gather and reflect on the many blessings in our lives. After almost two years of being separated from our friends, family, and homeland, this reopening perfectly reflects the celebration of Thanksgiving.

The Jews’ connection and love for the Land of Israel has been ongoing for thousands of years. Israel is our land: it is written in our scripture and is beating in our hearts. In every generation Jews have pined for the spirituality and protection found within the borders of Israel. These past two years have been painful, yes, but just as our ancestors returned, so shall we, and when we do, we will sing out the praises of hodaya [thanksgiving].

**Editor’s Note: Thank you to the YU Observer’s Managing Editor, Danielle Lane, for being a soundboard to discuss the ideas of this article.**



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## FOUNDING OF RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS CENTER FOR VALUES AND LEADERSHIP ANNOUNCED BY YU



BY MILI CHIZHIK,  
NEWS EDITOR

On October 27, 2021, YU announced on their news blog the founding of the Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks Center for Values and Leadership, or the Sacks-Herenstein Center, in memory of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, zt”l (may his name be of blessed memory).

With his first *yahrzeit* [anniversary of passing] happening this past week, Rabbi Sacks will always be remembered as a major inspirational figure within the Jewish community. As described in YU’s blog post, Sacks-Herenstein Center was created by Terri and Andrew Herenstein with the intention to spread the teachings and contributions of “Emeritus Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of Great Britain and the Commonwealth” to the Jewish community. The goal of the center is to have classroom discussions of Rabbi Sacks’s lessons and values, while also encouraging others to endeavor authoritative roles and voices in the community. Moreover, the graduates of this program will continue on to teach, write, and publicize the strong Jewish values and ethics that were so important to Rabbi Sacks.

The blog post continued further when describing the role of the Sacks-Herenstein Center, explaining, “It will—in the spirit of Rabbi Sacks—educate students, communal leaders, teachers, executives and authors using the

timeless teachings of Judaism’s spirit, embodying our core Torah values and applying Jewish wisdom in addressing the challenges of our era, both within the Jewish community and beyond.”

Throughout his life, Rabbi Sacks was awarded many titles and degrees. He also gave speeches at YU institutions and events. As described in the blog post, “He was awarded an honorary doctorate in 1997, received the inaugural Lamm Prize in 2010, and was appointed the Kressel and Ephrat Family University Professor of Jewish Thought at Yeshiva University in 2013. Rabbi Sacks also regularly addressed the student body, most recently at YU’s commencement in 2020.”

Lady Elaine Sacks, wife of Rabbi Sacks, shared with YU that “the establishment of The Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks Center for Values and Leadership founded by Terri and Andrew Herenstein is something I find extremely moving. My husband’s relationship with Yeshiva University was one he treasured over many decades. We always enjoyed our visits to the campus, in large part because of the warm reception he always received and, most importantly, because of what Yeshiva University stood for: a combination of Torah u’Madda, of Torah knowledge and worldly wisdom. It was this combination that framed my husband’s life and work.” Lady Sacks elaborated, “That is why it means a great deal to me and my family to see his legacy and teachings continue in this way at Yeshiva University. I want to personally thank Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman together with the Heren-

steins for their vision and support in bringing this project to fruition. I hope generations of students are inspired to live, as my husband described it, ‘a Judaism engaged with the world,’ one that teaches them Jewish values and challenges them to take on leadership positions in their future careers.”

One of the founders, Terri Herenstein, shared in the YU blog post that they “are excited to partner in this deeply impactful project. Through his words and life lessons, Rabbi Sacks has been a guiding light for our entire family. A number of years ago, we were fortunate to host Rabbi Sacks and Lady Elaine for Shabbat, and his Torah continues to illuminate our Shabbat table and spiritual lives to this day.”

Andrew Herenstein, another founder of the Sacks-Herenstein center, shared in the post, “When Dr. Berman mentioned the possibility of creating a lasting legacy to Rabbi Sacks at YU, a lightning bolt struck. The opportunity to combine the flagship Jewish university with one of the preeminent theological minds of our generation was exhilarating. Both YU and Rabbi Sacks’ writings are powered by the same principles: that Jewish values matter and that creating a meaningful Jewish future is dependent on stewarding the next generation of Jewish leaders intellectually, morally and spiritually.”

President Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman said in the post, “Yeshiva University is guided by our Core Torah Values and our mission is to inspire the leaders of tomorrow. Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks uniquely

exemplified and articulated Yeshiva University’s world view and mission to the broader Jewish people and the world at large. While his loss left us bereft, his words and teachings continue to inspire and inform. This new center, powered by his teachings, will be dedicated to both transmitting values and educating the next generations’ leaders.”

President Berman continued, “Terri and Andrew Herenstein are outstanding leaders and examples to our community and students. They are role models of living a life infused by Torah values, with a deep dedication to impacting the Jewish world and beyond through their exceptional communal leadership and philanthropy. Their devotion is reflected in Andrew’s leadership as a distinguished Trustee of YU. I am deeply grateful for their partnership in transmitting to the next generations the teachings of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks.”



## NEWS

## YU COUNSELING CENTER LAUNCHES CONTINUATION OF SUPPORT GROUPS FOR THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY AND FUNCTIONAL PSYCHOLOGY FOR LIVING WELL

BY SAMMY INTRATOR

On Monday, October 18, 2021, the Yeshiva University Counseling Center sent an email to students laying out the continuation of support groups for undergraduate students that were launched back in February 2021. The first support group that was introduced was an LGBTQ+ support group for students who identify as part of the community, which is a direct continuation of the LGBTQ+ support group announced last year. This group will be run by Shira Silton, a senior therapist at the Counseling Center. The second group will be a six week group moderated by Doctor Robert Ogle, a clinician in the Counseling Center, discussing Functional Psychology for Living Well. This group is a modification to the previously announced support group on

anxiety and stress management. Both of these support groups will be on Zoom and will be available to all students on the Beren and Wilf campuses.

Dr. Yael Muskat, the director of the Counseling Center, told the YU Observer, “The Counseling Center is happy to be able to provide groups again this semester. Groups provide a safe environment where students can support each other and validate each other’s experiences. Participation in a group is also a good way to learn new coping skills in a comfortable setting, with others who are facing similar challenges or emotions. We have seen first-hand, and have been told by former group attendees, how meaningful the group experience can be for our students.”

Mrs. Silton’s LGBTQ+ group will provide those in the

LGBTQ+ community an outlet to express themselves and connect with others who also identify with the community in order to cultivate a sense of safety and empathy. “It is an honor to launch the LGBTQ support group once again this semester,” remarked Mrs. Silton. “We are eager to welcome both new and returning students, each of whom uniquely enhances the experience.”

Dr. Ogle’s group will be utilizing contemporary research and what we already know about the brain to help students better grasp the way they behave, feel, and think. The email also says that students will leave with practical tools to use to feel better, think effectively, and fill life with the things that matter most.

Students shared their thoughts about Dr. Ogle’s group. One student (YC ‘24) who would like to remain anonymous shared, “I

think the Functional Psychology for living well sounds like a really great opportunity for those of us, like me, who want to learn more about how to use our brains more effectively.”

Many students had a positive reaction to the announcement from the Counseling Center. Leo Newmark (YC ‘23) shared with the YU Observer, “Both of these new groups emphasise the importance of balanced mental health towards becoming a successful and productive student. YU recognises that fact.”

*Students interested in either club should reach out to the respective Counseling Center staff running it at [shira.silton@yu.edu](mailto:shira.silton@yu.edu) or [Robert.ogle@yu.edu](mailto:Robert.ogle@yu.edu).*



## BROOKDALE RESIDENCE HALL ELEVATOR TRAPS SCW STUDENT

BY RINA SHAMILOV,  
NEWS EDITOR

On November 9, 2021, the elevator in Beren campus Brookdale Residence Hall stopped on its way to the building’s lobby and trapped a SCW student again.

Lara Amar (SCW ‘23) was trapped in the elevator for almost thirty minutes as the New York Fire Department (FDNY) tried to open the elevator door. Amar told the YU Observer that she called elevator maintenance, but they did not come. Then, Amar’s friend “called elevator maintenance” from outside the

building, “but they were coming from 7th Avenue and took a while so the security called the FDNY and they opened the elevator.” Amar described her experience as “annoying and very traumatizing.” She also added that a friend of hers said *tehillim* [psalms] for her while she cried in the elevator alone.

After Amar came out of the elevator, the security guards at Brookdale Residence Hall made her sign various forms about what had happened and asked if she wanted to see a

doctor. Amar reported that she sustained no physical injuries but “needs some counseling after the experience.”

This is not the first time that the YU elevators have been malfunctioning. There have even been some free-falling elevator experiences reported.

Beren campus students have become accustomed to the frequent malfunctioning of the elevators on campus. Racheli Jian (SCW ‘25) shared with the YU Observer that “the elevators

on Beren campus have become a sort of rite of passage. If you didn’t know about the elevator’s constant dysfunction before you came to YU, you definitely do





## OPINIONS

## THE WEIGHT WE PUT ON WEIGHT

BY DANIELLE LANE,  
MANAGING EDITOR

A few months ago I heard on a podcast that a young woman was worried about seeing her family for the first time in over a year due to the weight she had gained during the pandemic. She was worried about what her family would think: would they judge her, think less of her, or speak about her behind her back? She asked the hosts of the podcasts what she should do and if she should cancel the visit with her family altogether.

A couple of weeks later I overheard some of my mom's friends talking over Zoom about a new diet they were all trying. My mom's friends would fast for 24 hours, eat regularly for a day, and then fast for another 24 hours. Over and over again they would repeat this until they reached their desired body weight and size. They all felt that they had "let themselves go" during the pandemic and wanted to look good as they made their reentry into society.

I was shocked when I heard this. I sat in utter horror hearing these women speaking about themselves and their bodies so judgmentally and critically. Here were a group of successful wives, mothers, and

working professionals so casually reducing their self-worth to the size of their jeans. There was no mention of the things these women had accomplished during the pandemic, no talk about the memories made with the bonus time they got with their children, not a word about the resiliency of these women who had kept their families functioning during a massive global trauma.

**"Self-love is an ongoing, life-long journey."**

These two experiences got me thinking about the way in which we view ourselves and the weight we put on weight. As someone who gained almost 20 lbs during the duration of the pandemic, I related to what all these women were saying. I have clothes that no longer fit, stretch marks in new places, and an increased awareness of the space I take up. I struggled, just like the women on Zoom, to accept this current chapter of my body.

But then I took a step back. I backed away from the mirrors

and the scales, I stopped comparing myself to the perfectly crafted images I was seeing on social media and the women around me who had gotten in shape during the pandemic. I put in real time and effort to not only accept but love the skin I am occupying.

This is a long conversation, and it should be. Self-love is an ongoing, life-long journey. One moment, one article, one writer is not enough but hopefully it can start a much-needed conversation. I know that this unconditional love I have for myself might not last forever, and that's okay because I also know that the size of my body is the least interesting thing about me. The little letter on the tags of my clothes is the least defining thing about me. And the number on the scale is the least important thing about me.

I am so much more than the size of my body. I am a student, a daughter, a sister, and an aunt. I am a loyal friend and a passionate advocate. None of that changes with the fluctuation of my weight. Yes, I gained weight during the pandemic, but I also gained a niece, cooking skills, and a profound appreciation for

my community and family. The people I am lucky enough to love and be loved by are in no way affected by the size of my body, if anything they are luckier now than they were before the pandemic because there is literally more of me to love.

As Instagram-er and body positivity advocate William Hornby (@willaimhorby) put it: "your body has kept you alive during a deadly global pandemic, and you're upset with it because it doesn't look the way you want it to? It had other priorities, and it delivered on them."

As we enter into this new phase of life let us hold space to appreciate that our bodies are wonderful and powerful entities that helped keep us going during a global pandemic. Let us remember that our bodies were built to change and that we should honor that change. And finally, it is literally impossible to hate yourself into a version of yourself that you will love so be gentle and kind always.



## THE CASE FOR LEARNING SHNAYIM MIKRAH

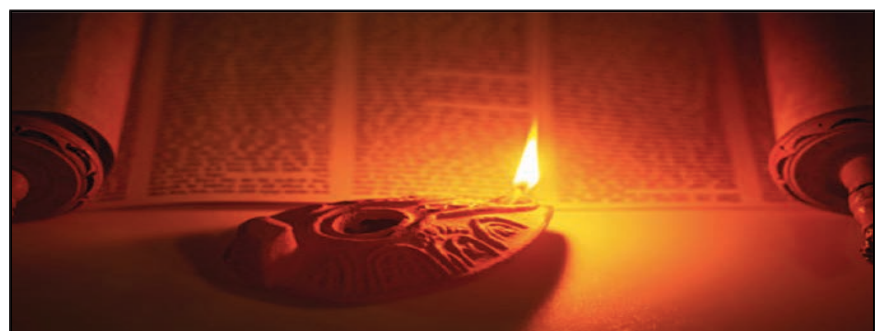
BY RIVKA BENNUN

When I was in seminary last year, a few days before Simchat Torah, I was informed that I would be giving a dvar Torah on the night of Simchat Torah. I responded that I would rather not; I've never really loved giving over divrei Torah [words of Torah]. I always feel I don't know enough to be able to share with others. But I didn't really have a choice; I had to give this dvar Torah, and I had to figure out what to say.

I started to get stressed as I didn't know what to speak about. I consulted with my friends, who said that I should just speak about something I was passionate about.

One thing immediately came to mind: Shnayim Mikrah. I decided if I was going to be forced to speak, it would be about something I really loved. I gave over what was essentially a dvar Halacha [Jewish law], reciting the halachot [laws] of Shnayim Mikrah, and told everyone why I thought it was so important.

Afterwards, several girls came up to me and said they were going to start doing Shnayim Mikrah. Even the few men who were at the meal said they would be more makpid [strict] on this halacha. Thus began what I now call the Shnayim



Mikrah Revolution at my seminary. I'd like to share with you why I think this halacha is so important.

The Gemara in Brachot 8a teaches that a person should always read each week's parsha together with the community, by doing Shnayim Mikrah v'Echad Targum – reading all the pesukim [verses] of the parsha [weekly

Torah portion] twice, and the translation once, even for the pesukim that are the same when translated. The Gemara on that same daf tells us that anyone who does this will lengthen his days.

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## OPINION

SHNAYIM MIKRA  
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The halachot pertaining to Shnayim Mikrah can be found in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim Siman 285. There are several different opinions as to what order a person should do the two readings and the translation, but the Mishnah Berurah writes that every shita [method] is acceptable and therefore a person can read in whichever order they want.

Targum [translation] generally refers to Targum Onkelos, which is the Aramaic translation of the Torah. However, since the goal of the Targum is to help better understand the Torah, the Shulchan Aruch writes that one can read Rashi instead, as it accomplishes the same goal. He adds that a yirei shamayim [someone who fears Heaven] can do both.

The idea is to read the parsha at the tzibur [community] begins to read it, so one can start

learning next Shabbat's parsha at mincha of the previous Shabbat, as that is when the community begins reading it. Ideally, a person should finish Shnayim Mikrah by Shabbat lunch, but they can also finish by mincha, and some even say by the following Wednesday. If one does not finish the parsha, they have until the next Simchat Torah to finish, as that is when the tzibur will finish reading the whole Torah.

This is my third year doing Shnayim Mikrah, and while it has certainly been a journey learning how to keep up with the fast pace, it has also been the most rewarding learning experience I've had. It demands a certain type of hatmada [consistency], similar to that of daf yomi. I personally prefer to learn an aliyah [section of the parsha] a day, which means every single day I need to find a half hour to sit down and learn the parsha.

Shnayim Mikrah has changed the way my week is structured.

The entire week I am learning about the parsha and therefore thinking about Shabbat. My Shabbat is no longer just a restful day, or a meaningful day to daven [pray] and spend time with my family. Once I started Shnayim Mikrah, a Torah element was added to my Shabbat.

Aside from my Shabbat being enhanced, my general learning has been greatly enhanced as well. Whenever anyone makes a reference to anything in Torah, I am automatically able to make connections in my head. I know what pasuk they are talking about, I know the surrounding pesukim, I know the general context, and I know what Rashi has to say on that specific pasuk. My knowledge of pshat [simple reading of the text] and Rashi on Torah has grown exponentially. I think that general bekiut [broad] study of Tanach is something which tends to be ignored, and Shnayim Mikrah is a great way to cover a lot of ground.

My final point on the importance of Shnayim Mikrah relates to something the Gemara, Rambam,

and Shulchan Aruch all mention – the sense of tzibbur. The Mishnah Berurah says that a person should not read ahead in Shnayim Mikrah, meaning one should not begin next week's parsha before the rest of the tzibbur is reading it. I spend the whole week reading the parsha, and by the time I reach shul on Shabbat morning, I am reading along with the tzibbur that which I have already learned on my own. Torah-reading in shul on Shabbat is the culmination of my entire week.

Reaching Simchat Torah having finished reading all of Torah creates a huge sense of both a communal and personal accomplishment. The tzibbur is celebrating finishing the cycle of Torah reading, and I, along with them, am celebrating having read along with them and learned the whole Torah on my own. Although I personally am not obligated to complete Shnayim Mikrah, it has changed the way I learn, the way my week is structured, and created a special sense of community in my life.

## OPEN THE GATES

BY ATARA BACHRACH,  
WEBSITE MANAGER

I've always been in absolute awe of note-takers. You know those people who go to every class, pay full attention, and write down what the teacher says from start to finish? Amazing. I wish I could say that about myself. If I'm being honest, note-taking is something I've actually struggled with for as long as I can remember. It's not that I don't care, or can't be bothered – but as someone with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), my brain finds it difficult to focus on one thing for too long, and class is no exception.

I'm not ashamed to admit that my note-taking peers are pretty much the only reason I didn't fail out of high school or fear

for my grades. The idea that I might not receive notes for a class, and do poorly because of it, was never really something I had to worry about. Until college, that is, when I learned a new word from my fellow students: gatekeeping. As per Google, the definition of a gatekeeper is "one who controls or limits access to something:" kind of like TSA workers in the airport, or those red-coated soldier guys who walk around Buckingham Palace in fluffy hats. And not unlike these matters of national security, note-sharing is not without its gatekeepers.

I understand that when someone works hard for their notes, it's supremely frustrating when someone chooses to mooch off their effort. I mean, maybe a deal could have been made before school started and

everyone could've created some kind of sharing or trading system for notes in class, or even taken turns writing them. But instead, if you took those notes, it seems like someone chose to slack off completely and then rely on you last minute to provide you with the resources you need to do well on this upcoming test. That might bother you. Those notes are probably like your "baby," and to just give them away? Just like that? To watch someone else use what you painstakingly worked on for many weeks and end up with the same – potentially better – grades as you? It's probably the worst. As it should be! It's annoying, and it's very close to, if not genuinely, considered being taken advantage of.

So what do you do? What happens when a student puts in time and effort to take notes in class and finals season hits: do they share with the 'slackers'?

Well first, I think we have to ask ourselves why we even take notes in the first place. Most people would probably say it's so that we can study, do well on exams, and hopefully keep our grade point averages (GPA) up. If that's true, then the real reason we take notes is as a favor to our future selves. We need notes because it will ultimately help us in the long run. But the real question is: once you have those notes, will sharing them really have a negative impact on that vision?

I've given a lot of thought to this question to try and get to the root of why people might not like to share their notes. All my personal observations have led me to think that ultimately, the real reason we don't like sharing notes is because...

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## OPINION

GATEKEEPING  
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we're jealous. Well, maybe jealous isn't the right word. More like innately competitive.

If society has succeeded at one thing, it's been to consistently infiltrate our minds with the idea that we're just not good enough. As we grow up, this ideology only continues to evolve, inculcating this massive drive for competition and leaving us with this internalized need to always be better. We've developed this idea that our own success isn't real unless compared to the successes of others. Now, in retrospect, I think we can all probably agree that that's not true. "Success" is entirely subjective, and what might be considered a complete success for one person might be perceived as a massive failure to another. We clearly must

have learned somewhere, somehow, that unless we did better than someone else, we didn't really do well at all. Because "well" doesn't mean well anymore. It means better.

But excelling doesn't have to come at the cost of our compassion. It might be exasperating to watch someone else get away with doing less work, but now that you're here and they're asking for your help, is there a real reason to say no? We never know what's going on in someone else's life or inside their head. And even if we did, we would still share with each other because... we're here together. And we're all here for the same thing. We're just trying to survive our classes with decent grades to obtain our future goals. We're not here to teach our peers a lesson.

Who are we to decide who does or

does not deserve help? Do we possess enough knowledge to pass judgment on our peers? We've been raised to work hard, but also be kind and helpful to those less fortunate than ourselves, and honestly, it can be really easy to help those in need. In college, that can mean assisting those with learning difficulties. However, the bigger challenge arises when faced with helping those who might not seem to

need or deserve our help. This of course doesn't mean you have to share with them. But wouldn't it make you a kinder person and this world a better place if you helped them anyways?

We're all here to give ourselves good options for the future. If I find myself in a situation with an opportunity to help someone, even if they appear rude and maybe slightly selfish for asking, I will help them if I can. Obviously it's not necessarily going to feel good, but in my opinion, if helping you doesn't hurt me, I don't really have a good excuse not to

do it. One of the main values of this school – and please don't tell me you haven't noticed those giant multicolored banners sitting everywhere on campus – is chesed [kindness]. This is the kind of atmosphere that we are supposed to be creating and nurturing in Yeshiva University: one in which we can avoid judgment and just act with more compassion.

do it.

I'm not here to judge or tell you what to do. I'm not suggesting you share notes with anyone who asks – I get it. No one is excited to share notes with someone who didn't show up to class. Maybe now, the next time you're reluctant to share notes, you might think about this article and ask yourself: What's the real reason I don't want to share? Will it really hurt me? And most importantly: am I really in a position to decide who deserves compassion?

In my opinion, there's no harm in a little extra kindness.

do it.

## MY SIX FOOT TALL MOUNT EVEREST

BY YITZCHAK SPODEK

I can already feel my legs giving out on me; my shirt feels like it's made of lead from how much I've sweated. The stretcher on my back has been digging the straps of my backpack into my shoulders, causing them to become inflamed and painful to the touch. I am only six kilometers into my fifty-five-kilometer march, my final test before receiving my red beret and officially joining the ranks of the elite 101st Paratrooper Brigade in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). I am six kilometers in, and I already want to quit. It was times like these, of immense pain and stress, that I was forced to confront the question of "why am I doing this?" What kind of person am I that I would move halfway around the world, to a country where I had no immediate family, to a people with whom I could not communicate, and to an army to which I was clearly an outsider?

That fifty-five-kilometer march occurred at the end of my eight months of combat training. But that was not the first time I had to face the question of what kind of person am I to do something like this. The first time I really had to ask myself that question was about a month into my training. It was my unit's first real test: a week out in the field learning the basics on how to survive as a soldier in the elements. After a week of grueling physical tests, no sleep, and minimal food, came the final exam. We began the test early in the morning, and it lasted until early into the next morning. At one point in the middle of the night, we were tasked with having to climb up the side of a mountain without being detected. As a group, we made our way silently up the mountain and eventually made it to the top where our commander was waiting for us. To our surprise and delight, he was sitting down and motioned for us to join him.

We gathered around, sitting in a circle one next to another. It was a cool desert night and being that we were in the middle of nowhere the stars were out in the millions. Everyone's face was illuminated by the moonlight, throwing our shadows over the mountain. That's where we started one of the most influential conversations I have had in my life.

Since we had only met a couple of weeks ago, we all went around saying our names, where we were from, and most importantly why we were there. I had thought about why I wanted to draft into the IDF before, but I never truly realized just how important of a question that was, and how more important my answer was. When it was my turn to speak, I started off by telling how I was born in Israel, how Israel has always been a part of my life, and that the army was just another aspect of every Israeli's life. I explained that I felt no different than any other Israeli, plus I really wanted to get to jump out of an airplane. No real self-introspection, no deep and profound reasonings, and that was okay. My answer to why I was there was able to get me to that point, but it would not be able to get me through the next seven months. For that, I had to look inside of myself and figure out who I really was. I spent the next seven months doing what you would expect, suffering through rigorous physical tests, learning everything you can know about my M-4 and my M203 grenade launcher and yes, jumping out of an airplane. During those seven months, I learned who I was in ways that the average American nineteen-year-old simply cannot fathom. I learned that the limits I thought existed within myself were far below what I could really accomplish. I learned that I enjoyed reaching my limits and breaking through them. I reconfigured the way I viewed what I could achieve, I stopped

saying I can't and started saying what's next. I learned to never give up, nothing I did was easy, and calling it hard would be the understatement of the century.

I remember struggling to pass one of the required physical tests: an obstacle course that I had to run in all my gear, vest, gun, helmet, and all. There was a five-hundred-meter run followed by a myriad of obstacles and lastly a six-hundred-meter run, all of which had to be completed in under ten minutes. Most of the soldiers in my unit were able to finish the course under the required time in one of their first tries, but it took me eight months. I remember feeling defeated, small, useless; like I was failing my commanders, and even worse like I was failing my dream. There were times when I gave up. I threw my helmet off and walked off the course, totally ashamed. But the next time the opportunity arose for me to try again, I did. At first, I was running the first half-kilometer too slowly, so I picked up my pace. I knew that I had to get to the first obstacle, the wall, by the two minutes and thirty seconds mark. Once my timing was correct, I focused my energy on getting over the six-foot-tall wall. This was where I quite literally hit a wall. I could not jump high enough to pull myself over this wall, I tried and failed countless times. I screamed, cursed, and totally embarrassed myself in front of all my brothers. During one attempt I spent thirty minutes trying to get over the damn wall and I didn't even come close. I walked back to my room with my head hanging low when suddenly my commander grabbed my shoulder and asked to talk. I thought I was going to be reprimanded; I couldn't complete the course and they were kicking me out. However, the conversation that followed changed my life forever.

In the IDF, during a combat soldier's training, the relationship between the soldiers in training and their commanders is purely professional. So, when my commander pulled me aside and opened up about his own experiences and struggles during his training, that conversation was a major shift in how I believed



in myself. He told me that he struggled with the same things I was struggling with and that he too felt the way I was feeling. And then he asked the question I had heard him ask that night up on the mountain under the stars: "why was I there? What kind of person am I? What kind of person do I want to be?" For the first time I had to truly think about where I was, what I was doing, and the person I wanted to be. That conversation ignited a spark that lit a fire that is still and will forever be burning inside me. Under the stars I discovered my sense of me. I am someone that pushes boundaries. That does not accept that status quo simply because others do. I learned to fight, for those I care about, and at times for those I don't. I learned the true meaning of the United States Navy SEALs infamous catchphrase, "embrace the suck." Most importantly, I learned why I had come all that way, gone through all that suck, to get to where I was now. I did it so that the person who I am today, is better than the one who began this journey a mere eight months ago. I realized not just the person I was but also the person I was meant to be. I am proud of where I am today: stronger because of my experiences yesterday and prepared for whatever lies ahead tomorrow.



## OPINION



## DO NOT LET ANTISEMITISM STAND IN THE WAY OF YOUR RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

BY ESTI POLOTSKY

When my sister texted in my family chat that school was canceled because there was no power in the high school, I thought nothing of it. Little did I know the backstory behind it. As I was going about my day, scrolling through my Whatsapps, I saw a text about an alleged antisemitic event that occurred at two schools in Denver, my hometown.

Suddenly, I was very confused because I didn't hear anything about this up until that moment. With a quick Google search of "Denver Academy of Torah," the name of my high school, a few articles popped up with the words "hate crime" included in the title. As I kept researching, I saw more articles about two events that occurred at two different schools within a mile of each other. One of the schools was my alma mater, Denver Academy of Torah, and the other was a public school close by called George Washington High School. The articles alluded to the incidents possibly being related to each other, but there was no definitive proof yet. At George Washington High School, the building and bleachers

were vandalized with graffiti of hateful words and swastikas. At Denver Academy of Torah, rocks were thrown into windows, damaging an electrical box. I realized: this is the reason there was no power in the high school; this is the reason why my sister texted that school was canceled.

After putting all the details together in my head, I realized what happened in my community. People threatened the safety of my family and friends in the Jewish community because of their hateful beliefs about Judaism and Jews. I don't know all the details of the event, and even with the investigation ongoing, I have a feeling of uneasiness surrounding the safety of my hometown, my community, and my family. The thought that any person can go into a place that you call home and harm others because of their antisemitic beliefs is a scary reality.

Living a life of Torah and Mitzvot [Biblical commandments] is the most fundamental part of my life. Being able to express your beliefs freely is something that I hold true to myself. My parents came from the former Soviet Union.

They were oppressed and forced to repress the religious part of their identity in communist Russia. They couldn't practice Judaism until they immigrated to America, where they made a life for themselves. They decided to embrace the religion that was hidden from them their entire lives and create a new story for themselves. They became religious and raised a beautiful family in a religiously observant home. They taught me what it means to be oppressed and how to come out stronger because of it. My parents taught me to look at the positive things in life and to thank Hashem every day for all the brachot [blessings] in my life.

Not one day goes by where I don't think about the gratitude that I have for my parents for raising me and my siblings the way they did. They went through so many hardships, but that didn't stop them from having such faith in Hashem [G-d] to become religious at the ages of 26 and 27 when they were starting a family. The strong foundation my parents created for me is the reason why when I heard about the antisemitic event that happened, and I was taken aback. I couldn't believe that such a thing could happen in a country like the United States that promotes freedom. My parents ran away from the former Soviet Union because of the oppression that permeated their every day. They came

to America because of the possibility of having the freedom to practice their religion without fear of repercussions.

Someone could look at the event that happened and take two approaches going forward. They can let it scare them and push them away into a corner to be ashamed of their roots and beliefs. Or they can be like my parents: they can take the sour situation that they were placed in and start a new beginning. There is always the possibility of hope and positivity. I learned from this event that acknowledging the upsetting events is important, but it's even more crucial not to let it sidetrack you from your goal in life. My goal in life is to serve Hashem to my greatest potential. It is important for me to understand the reason why my siblings didn't have school yesterday. However, the most critical piece to take away from this situation is that no matter who or what tries to stand in the way of your religious path in life, it's your responsibility to stay true to yourself. No one, not even criminals who try to vandalize your high school, should sidetrack you from your religious identity and observance.

**WANT TO SHARE YOUR OPINION?**

***WRITE FOR THE YU OBSERVER!***

EMAIL [THEYUOBSERVER@GMAIL.COM](mailto:THEYUOBSERVER@GMAIL.COM)





## “Jews and Muslims: A Look Toward the Future,” Sheikh Mohammed Al-Issa Visits Yeshiva University

BY ELI SAPERSTEIN,  
OPINIONS EDITOR

YU’s new Presidential Forum series, an initiative in which Yeshiva University president Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman will engage with the global leaders and voices who are shaping today’s world, kicked off on October 21, 2021 when Yeshiva University welcomed Sheikh Mohammed al Issa to the Wilf Campus. Dr. Al-Issa spoke privately with Rabbi Berman and some close friends of Yeshiva University over lunch before addressing students from Yeshiva College, Sy Syms School of Business, the Graduate Program in Advanced Talmudic Studies (GPATS), Yeshiva University High School for Girls, and the Marsha Stern Talmudical Academy (MTA) in Belfer Hall’s Weisberg Commons. The event for students was conducted in association with

the Rabbi Arthur Schneier Program for International Affairs of Yeshiva University, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, and the American Sephardi Federation.

The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre named Dr. Al-Issa one of the most influential Muslims globally in its 2020 edition of “The Muslim 500: The World’s Most Influential Muslims.” In addition Dr. Al-Issa received the inaugural “Combat Anti-Semitism” Award from the Combat Anti-Semitism Movement and the American Sephardi Federation for his contributions to the fight against anti-Semitism and racism. Dr. Al-Issa has been a staunch ally and friend to the Jewish people and is helping the two people come together in unprecedented

ways.

Rabbi Berman began the program for students by introducing Dr. Al-Issa and by explaining his role and the importance of that moment in history, saying, “the visit by Sheikh Mohammed al-Issa to the flagship Jewish university, reflects the enormous opportunity today of reconciliation not only between nation states but between peoples.” Berman also further noted, “Today we have an opportunity to not only come together to bury our past but build our brighter future.”

After Rabbi Berman’s opening remarks, Malcolm Hoenlein welcomed Dr. Al-Issa, thanking him for visiting Auschwitz and fighting against Holocaust denial. Hoenlein noted that Dr. Al-Issa is the senior-most Muslim leader to visit the Nazi concentration camp and has publicly spoken out against

antisemitism.

Dr. Al-Issa spoke to the audience through a translator, noting the “shared responsibility” between Jews and Muslims in steering a world that is so focused on science, technology, and knowledge back to one based in values. Dr. Al-Issa explained, “Universities need to teach values so we can apply technologies in the right way and not cause division.” Dr. Al-Issa shared with the audience that this belief can be learnt from what happened in Nazi Germany as Nazi Germany did not lack culture, knowledge nor an education system, they lacked the values to guide their advancements and their resultant crimes shook the human conscience.

SEE **JEWES and MUSLIMS**, PAGE 12

## JSCREEN’S GENETIC SCREENING PROGRAM: THE WHO, WHAT, WHY AND HOW

BY SARA CHEMEL

The phrase “knowledge is power” perfectly captures the mission of JScreen, a non-profit genetic screening and education program that aims to provide people with easy access to information about their health.

JScreen’s unique testing process ensures that one can access their healthcare infor-

mation with ease from the comfort of their home. For their ReproGEN test, which focuses on genetic diseases that could be passed to one’s children, JScreen uses an at-home saliva test which tests for over 200 known genetic diseases including but not limited to those that are especially prevalent in the Jewish population. Upon the conclusion of

laboratory testing, results are reviewed and reported back to the patients by a genetic counselor through a private tele-health genetic counseling session. What the individual chooses to do with the provided information is left to his or her own discretion, but JScreen remains a staunch support system and an excellent source of resources.

JScreen has historically fostered a relationship with Yeshiva University by hosting a screening event on campus annually and testing thousands of Yeshiva University students. The immense impact JScreen has had on students over the years is palpable. “Right off the bat, I will say JScreen saved my life. If I hadn’t used JScreen’s services when they came to Stern, I would

SEE **JSCREEN**, PAGE 12



## YU LIBRARIES RUNS A RAFFLE AND FINE FORGIVENESS PROGRAM

BY ADINA BRUCE,  
FEATURES EDITOR

During the week of October 11-17 YU Libraries ran a program titled the “Library Raffle & Fine Forgiveness Week.” Students who visited the library were able to enter a raffle by correctly answering quiz questions on the library. In addition, any overdue books returned during the week had the fines associated with them forgiven.

After a year and a half of the campus facing restrictions caused by COVID-19, the libraries hoped to utilize this program as a way of introducing new students to YU’s libraries, as well as welcome back old students who might not have been to campus for a while. Jay Rosen, Public Services and User Experience Librarian of the Pollack library, shared with the YU Observer, “Our libraries are some of YU’s most active social and intellectual hubs, and we look forward to seeing returning students and welcoming new ones!”

Furthermore the library hoped to use this incentive as a way to promote returning overdue books, especially ones that

might not have been returned since before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Jay explained, “because of the pandemic, many students haven’t been able to visit us to return books or other library materials. Getting some of these materials back will ensure that other students and faculty can use them.” Further explaining that they wanted to encourage students to have a positive association with the library “we’re hoping to offer a “clean slate” for students to help them feel more comfortable using our libraries again. We know it’s been a very difficult 18 or so months and we’re not here to punish anyone; we just want our stuff back!”

The library did not say how many books were returned during the week of the program but Jay did disclose that “we did get quite a few books back during our fine forgiveness week and waived a significant amount of overdue book fines.”

Students were able to enter into a raffle to win a \$100 gift card by filling out a quiz available by QR code at the front desks of the Pollack, Mendel Gottesman and Heidi Steinberg Libraries. The library reported

that they got over 50 entries to the survey.

The fine forgiveness program took place a week after several large public libraries around the country announced they would be getting rid of fines. As of October 5, 2021 the New York Public Library (NYPL) announced that they would be getting rid of late fines as well as clearing all old fines. “Research shows that fines are not effective in ensuring book returns ... unfortunately, fines are quite effective at preventing our most vulnerable communities from using our branches,

services, and books” explained Tony Marx, President of the NYPL. Going on to say “as New York grapples with the inequities laid bare by the pandemic, it is all the more urgent that we ensure the public library is open and freely available to all.”

Reflecting on the success of the program Jay concluded “this is the first time we ran a fine forgiveness program, and look forward to increasing participation in future events.”



## SASA HOSTS EVENT AIMING TO EDUCATE ABOUT TITLE IX

BY LIANA HANOKAEE

On Tuesday, October 26, 2021, the Students Against Sexual Assault (SASA) club held an event titled “Title IX Discussion, Sexual Violence and Supporting Survivors.” The main speaker, Chloe Horowitz, spoke passionately throughout the Zoom event, along with speakers Dean Joe Bednarsh and Shira Silton.

Chloe Horowitz is a trauma therapist and campus outreach and prevention coordinator at Mount Sinai Beth Israel. After she explained how Title IX prohibits sex-based discrimination in schools, Horowitz went into detail about the importance of identifying what counts as sexual misconduct, who are people that might commit sexual assault,

how students can become more aware of sexual assault, and what students can do to take action so as not to be bystanders. Furthermore, Horowitz informed the audience that “about 80% of sexual assaults are perpetrated by somebody that the person knows ... and that is because it is easier for people to have access to somebody if they know them ... this could just be an acquaintance or somebody that somebody just met on a dating app.” She discussed this throughout the Zoom meeting, stressing the importance of awareness of this point.

The event was very interactive, as Horowitz incorporated a temporary question-and-answer poll

system throughout the presentation, allowing participants in the Zoom to voice their opinions and create an engaging learning experience.

Dean Joe Bednarsh, Associate Dean of Students at Yeshiva University spoke next, speaking about how although he believes that all of the students are safe on campus, he wants everyone to feel safe on campus. Dean Bednarsh went on to encourage students to reach out to him with any of their concerns.

Shira Silton, Senior Therapist at Yeshiva University and associated graduate schools, shared that “everything that you

report to us is confidential and also nonjudgmental. Our goal as therapists is to really provide a safe and comfortable space for you to open up wherever you are in the process,” referring to the process of internalizing the events of a trauma to a victim or reporting an individual. Silton further discussed the importance of trust in yourself and the people around you, exploring how all aspects of one’s life affect each other.

Around 20 students were present, and at the end, there was some time allotted when stu-

SEE [TITLE IX](#), PAGE 13



# DAF YOMI AT BEREN: THE MATH IN THE MASEKHTA

BY PROFESSOR LAWRENCE TEITELMAN

When invited by a student editor to contribute an article to the *YU Observer's* "Daf Yomi at Beren" series, I became curious as to the nature of this column: Does one summarize a recent daf [page] or set of dapim [pages] in easily digestible form? Explore in greater detail one particular Halakhic [Jewish law] or Hashkafic [Jewish thought] topic arising in the Daf? Highlight actual Daf Yomi activity occurring on the Beren Campus?

An online search soon revealed that several past postings have focused on the retention of one's Daf Yomi learning. Surely this challenge is not unique to Daf Yomi, but attempting to study an entire daf in the typically allocated 30-60 minutes (or the increasingly popular 10- or 8- or 5-minute editions), that in a regular Beit Midrash [designated place of Torah study] setting might otherwise take several days or even weeks, raises the likelihood of forgetfulness if not failed acquisition in the first place. One is reminded of the famed Brisker Rosh Yeshiva who began his keynote address at the Siyum [completion of Jewish text] of an especially ambitious program of Mishneh Torah study by musing, "I mean, how can anyone actually complete three perka-kim a day of Rambam? I cannot finish even one halakha!"

One methodology referenced by previous authors in the articles "Memorizing all of Masechet Berachot" and "Daf Yomi at Wilf: Reviewing all of Shas in Your Head" is the Zichru program. In this approach, cleverly crafted simanim [mnemonics] link the actual daf number (bet, gimmel, etc.) with a few salient points from the daf. As a passive subscriber to (albeit not an active practitioner of) the Zichru emails, WhatsApp messages, and other resources, I can attest to their outstanding potential and successful implementation by others. This standalone system when "practiced religiously" — in both senses of both words — leads to remarkable results.

Another approach is ostensibly inspired by a position posited by Tosafot (Berachot 11b). R. Yitzchak was asked, why do we say a separate blessing each and every time we eat in the Sukkah, yet a single utterance of Birkhot Hatorah [the blessing on learning Torah] early in the morning suffices for learning interspersed and interrupted throughout the day? Tosafot famously answers that Torah is different in that even as one engages in other activities, one retains some degree of attention to Torah (shani Torah she-eino meya'esh da'ato de-khol sha'ah adam mechuyv lilmud...).

Tosafot, however, does not directly define how that ongoing engagement with Talmud Torah

[learning Torah] is preserved. Does the obligation itself that continually devolves upon the individual become metaphysically equivalent to involvement? Is it a more conscious and conscientious attempt to integrate broad-based Torah values into one's conduct? The application of Halakha to one's decisions even in seemingly secular contexts? Perhaps one way to implement this imperative, particularly in the context of a university, is to associate one's Torah learning — Daf Yomi and otherwise — with one's other academic studies.

To quickly illustrate with just a few examples from Masekhet Rosh Hashana and two courses, Discrete Structures and Networking & Communications: On page 6b (and again on page 20a), the Gemara presents the opinion of Acherim: "There are four days between one Atzeret (Shavuot) and the next, and one Rosh Hashana and the next; and if it was a leap year, then five days." A typical twelve-month Hebrew year, with alternating months of 29 and 30 days respectively, yields a total of 354 days. In the "modular arithmetic" of number theory (also known as "clock arithmetic" because its measurement of time resets at 12- or 24-hour intervals),  $354 \bmod 7 = 4$ , i.e. the remainder after dividing by seven, the number of days in a week, is four. Thus, the number of weekdays by which

a holiday will shift from one Hebrew year to the next will be four. Similarly, in a leap year in which one more 29-day month is added, there are now 383 days, and  $383 \bmod 7 = 5$ , translating into a shift of five days by the same holiday from one year to the next.

Another instance of mathematical reasoning in Rosh Hashana is the "predicate logic" that appears on Daf 22a. After enumerating various individuals disqualified as witnesses, the Mishna asserts that "Any testimony which a woman is ineligible to offer, they too [the aforementioned individuals] are ineligible to offer". The Gemara then also stipulates that "where a woman is eligible, they [the aforementioned individuals] are also eligible." According to the ordinary rules of logical reasoning, one cannot infer the "inverse" of a statement from the statement: just because "p implies q", does not mean that "not p implies not q." One must either conclude that the Rabbis already had a tradition to the latter ruling, and were just attaching it to the Mishnah because of its natural relevance, or the original statement should be reinterpreted as "bi-implication," that is, the two types of testimony or woman and others were already bidirectionally linked.

SEE DAF YOMI, PAGE 18

## STAFF WRITER PROFILES: SHANI MIZRAHI

BY RU BENHAMOU,  
FEATURES EDITOR, ON  
BEHALF OF THE *YU OBSERVER*

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 November 2021 edition, the *YU Observer* is highlighting Shani Mizrahi.

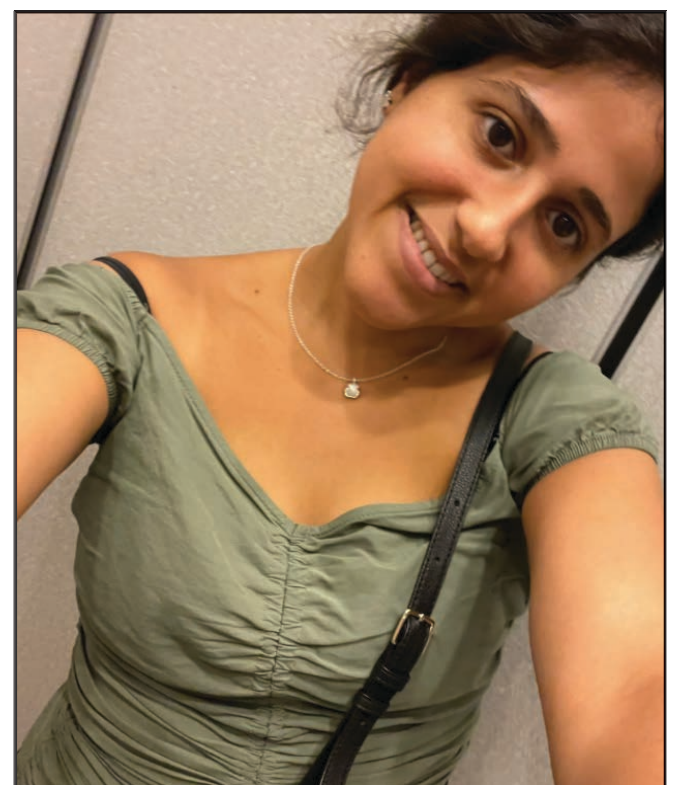
**Name:** Shani Mizrahi  
**College:** Stern College for Women  
**Major:** Computer Science  
**Year:** First year  
**Favorite part of being on (or back on) campus?** Seeing

**people and being involved on campus.**  
**What do you miss most about Zoom school? It's my first semester, so lucky me I did not have Zoom school!**  
**Currently Reading:** An Israeli Book: One Summer Together  
**Currently watching:** 90210  
**Currently listening to:** Hebrew Music  
**Coke or Pepsi? Diet Coke!**  
**Android or Apple? Apple**  
**What's a quote/thought/or piece of advice you have for your fellow students?** Always

**look at the bright side!**

See some of Shani's past articles here: <https://yuobserver.org/2021/08/forgotten-female-scientist-marie-skłodowska-curie/>  
<https://yuobserver.org/2021/08/the-rise-in-antisemitism-over->

Photo Credit:  
Shani Mizrahi





## JSCREEN

FROM PAGE 9

be dead right now!” insisted alumna Yardena Goldstein (SCW ‘18). Through JScreen testing, Mrs. Goldstein was informed that she suffers from Factor XI deficiency, a genetic disorder prevalent in Ashkenazi Jews which causes blood to clot ineffectively. Other common symptoms include continuous bleeding from wounds, frequent nosebleeds, and heavy menstrual periods.

When Mrs. Goldstein became pregnant for the first time, she informed her obstetrician of her diagnosis and was sent for additional testing. Based on the test results, she received transfusions prior to giving birth and delivered her daughter without complications. Two weeks after her daughter’s birth, Mrs. Goldstein began bleeding uncontrollably. She was rushed to the hospital and underwent an emergency procedure to control the bleeding. Mrs. Goldstein reflected on how integral it was that she went through the JScreen testing process. She said, “If I didn’t know through

JScreen that I had Factor XI deficiency, my doctors would have had no idea what they were dealing with and I would have died. Usually people can live their whole lives without knowing they have Factor XI deficiency but in my case, it was so important that I had that information.”

Additional alumni were similarly grateful for what they discovered about themselves through undergoing JScreen’s genetic testing. One anonymous Stern alumna reported, “I got tested with JScreen the first semester I was on campus in Spring 2019. I found out that I have Gaucher Disease. I had no idea. I had no symptoms. I learned something completely new about myself.” Gaucher disease is fairly common amongst Ashkenazi Jews and symptoms include easily fractured bones, anemia, and bleeding problems. She considered the ramifications of her diagnosis stating, “Even though it hasn’t affected my life, I know it can affect my life in the future, as well as the lives of my future children. I’m so thankful to JScreen for



supplying me with that information!”

Another Stern alumna related how undergoing JScreen testing impacted not only her health, but the health of her family members. She said, “I learned that I am a carrier for a blood disorder which often causes symptoms in carriers, such as easy bruising and nosebleeds. I had many nosebleeds as a kid, so getting that medical information about my body felt really empowering. I’m also a carrier for a rare hearing loss disorder. When I got tested, my niece had already had hearing aids for a few years. It was very helpful to be able to turn to my sister and tell her that this may be

a genetic issue. Now my sister and her husband plan to get tested with JScreen to find out if the hearing loss is genetic.”

It is evident that JScreen has deeply impacted the Yeshiva University community by affording students the opportunity to learn more about their own health and prepare for the future. While genetic testing tends to be associated with family planning and carrier screening, the information provided by JScreen also allows for better understanding of oneself. Look out for the next JScreen campaign on campus!

## JEWS and MUSLIMS

FROM PAGE 9

He also spoke about the power of language and how words can be used both to heal and harm. He stated, “We may have differences, but we must have love for one another and come together.” Dr. Al-Issa added that “Diversity should be a tool used for better understanding and better relationships, and not a tool to make people grow apart.”

Following Dr. Al-Issa’s remarks, Rabbi Berman and Dr. Al-Issa engaged in conversation on Dr. Al-Issa’s influences, with a few pre-approved questions submitted from students. The dialogue included a discussion on Dr. Al-Issa’s accomplishments, views on the Middle East, and how his family life shaped him into becoming the transformative person and leader he is today.

As the event came to a close President Berman asked, “What do you think prevented an event like this from happening earlier in history, and what do you think changed to make this event possible today?” Al-Issa responded with a smile, “Maybe I didn’t receive an invitation before” his answer was met with a resounding round of applause from

the audience.

The university presented Al-Issa with a gift honoring his achievements in furthering Jewish-Muslim relations and there were opportunities for students to have pictures taken with Dr. Al-Issa and Rabbi Berman.

At the conclusion of the event, Rabbi Berman teased several new initiatives such as a potential exchange program in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia.

This is only the most recent event regarding YU’s global outreach initiatives. YU has engaged with different Islamic leaders and countries over the past year. Rabbi Berman visited Dubai for Yom HaShoah in April 2021, where he spoke and met with various Muslim leaders. Sheikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, who is the undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Political Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, spoke at YU on October 5, 2021.

Rabbi Berman noted that this event gave Dr. Al-Issa an oppor-

tunity to speak directly to the young Jewish leaders of the world of tomorrow. Berman elaborated, “For them to be in dialogue with you and hear your message of reconciliation, so that when they move into their positions of influence and authority in the future—they will be informed and inspired to move this conversation forward.”

The Rabbi Arthur Schneier Program for International Affairs of Yeshiva University shared their thoughts with the YU Observer, saying, “We were delighted to have the secretary general of the Muslim World League, Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa, visit Yeshiva University. Our program is determined to build cross-cultural bridges and we feel that Sheikh Dr. Al-Issa’s meeting with President Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman was a successful step in the process of reconnecting the Jewish and Muslim communities in peace. The two peoples have a deep-rooted connection with one another which has been forgotten by so many and we are very pleased to be a part of the re-shaping of

this narrative. It was also an honor to have Rabbi Arthur Schneier at the event, bringing his decades of global diplomacy to stage and promoting the reparation of the bridge that Jews and Muslims share.”

Students shared their thoughts on the event with the YU Observer. A student (SSSB ‘23) who wishes to remain anonymous stated, “For a country that has traditionally sanctioned and supported terror to take such a huge step toward peace is incredible. To be part of an event which is one small step on this road to peace is humbling.” Another anonymous student (SCW ‘23) noted, “There was a noticeable silence on the topic of Islamophobia. While for various reasons I would hesitate to equate Antisemitism with Islamophobia, it is important that when both sides come together and are working on building a relationship it needs to be more than just about being nicer to Jews.”



# ART EXHIBIT REVIEW: JENNIFER PACKER

BY DANIELLE LANE,  
MANAGING EDITOR

In Jennifer Packer’s exhibit at The Whitney Museum she uses sharp color and vivid imagery to depict intimate portraits of loved ones and floral tableaus. Packer uses both observation and memory to create her art, painting her loved ones not only the way she sees them literally, but the way she sees them emotionally. Her depiction of flowers is as beautiful as they are meaningful due to the fact that her work has an underlying political meaning.

In one painting, Packer uses a mix of yellows and greens with darker blacks and blue shades to depict her emotions regarding the death of Sandra Bland. Bland was a black woman who died in police custody in 2015. She was found hanging by a

noose in her jail cell after being arrested at a traffic stop. Her death was investigated as a murder and sparked outrage amongst the Black Lives Matter community as another brutal killing of a black person at the hands of the police. Packer used the creation of the painting to help work through the emotions she was feeling and cope after the senseless death of Ms. Bland. Beau Rutland, an art curator, described the piece as “an offering, a memorial, a tender protest.”

In her portraits of friends and family, Ms. Packer almost exclusively paints black individuals. She paints the people she loves clearly and yet slightly they are obscured, using monochromatic paints and blurred boundaries to recreate her loved ones on canvas in a way that both invites the viewer in and keeps them at arm’s length. Due to the unnatural colors and sharp

images, the subject of the paintings seem to be just out of reach. No matter how hard or how long you look, you’ll never be able to quite understand what you’re looking at.

The exhibit, entitled *The Eye Is Not Satisfied With Seeing*, is the largest showing of Packer’s work. Spanning over thirty pieces, Packer described her desire to paint this series as “a completely political one. We belong here. We deserve to be seen and acknowledged in real time. We deserve to be heard and to be imaged with shameless



Original *Twin Peaks* series opener.

generosity and accuracy.”

The *Eye Is Not Satisfied With Seeing* will remain at the Whitney Museum until April 22, 2022. I highly recommend everyone go experience Ms. Packer’s moving works.

## THINGS TO DO IN NYC: THE EDGE, BROADWAY, AND BASKETBALL GAMES

BY SHANI MIZRAHI,  
STAFF WRITER

New York is the city that never gets boring. It’s the “city that never sleeps.”

After two years living here, I can still find new things to do every day. Here is a list of fun activities I think you might enjoy.

### The Edge

This lookout is an awesome platform from which to view the city, as well as a perfect location for some cool photoshoots.

Where: 30 Hudson Yards, New York, NY 10001

Price: \$36-\$71

To find out more: Edge | Buy Tickets to the Highest Outdoor Sky Deck in NYC ([edgenyc.com](http://edgenyc.com))

See a Broadway Show

Enjoy one of the best shows in the world, only on Broadway! The theater offers an amazing experience for all ages, from Disney shows to mul-

tigenerational favorites such as “Mama- Mia.” You will never forget this moment, guaranteed.

Where: Many locations

Price: \$50 - \$500

To find out more: [https://www.nyc.com/broadway\\_tickets/?msclkid=c360f4c-1d189108a5b179554af2e76d6](https://www.nyc.com/broadway_tickets/?msclkid=c360f4c-1d189108a5b179554af2e76d6) Attend a basketball game

Where: Madison Square Garden / Barclays Center

Price: various of prices, from \$20

To find out more: NBA Tickets -



SEE THINGS TO DO,  
PAGE 15

### TITLE IX FROM PAGE 10

dents were able to speak or get questions answered. One participant in the Zoom meeting asked, “If you are in a social setting and someone you know who has been sexually mistreated themselves says something sexist or incorrect about sexual conduct, is there a good way to respond to him? Should you respond in that social setting or is there a way to combat that?” Silton answered that one

could respond to this person by saying words along the lines of, “It pains me to see you like this, to see you in pain and I am worried about you. Can I accompany you or help you seek help?”

Another participant, Benny Klein (YC ’24), SASA board member, commented in the meeting, “It seems like people are only willing to start trusting someone even just a little bit when they know them and... a little bit more trust at first

makes it easier for something to be bound to happen.”

Participants expressed positive feedback regarding the event and the SASA club. After the event, a participant shared with one of SASA’s board members that, “We need more awareness in the Jewish community and in general.”

Due to alleged events that have taken place on campus this year, events such as this one, which

raise awareness of issues dealing with sexual assault, are more relevant than ever. It is up to students to take action in educating themselves and being there for each other. If students do not look out for each other, then who will?





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“To the  
world  
you  
may be  
one  
person,  
but to  
one  
person  
you  
may be  
the  
world.”

-Dr. Seuss



# CODING AS A LITERARY ART

BY ARYEH FIRFER

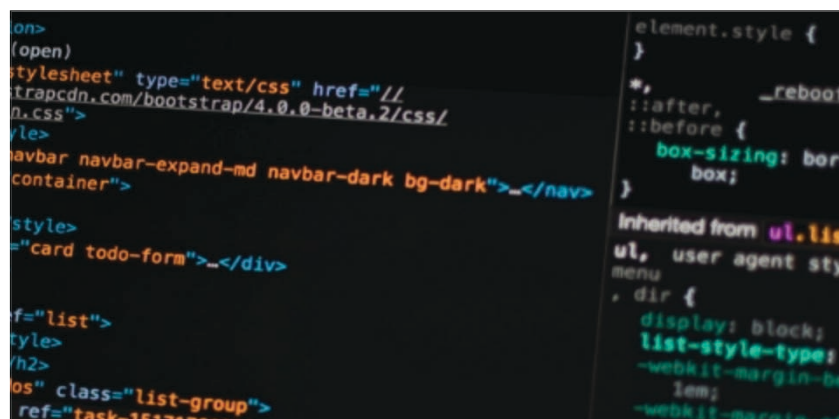
Every year, high paying jobs at big tech firms lure many naïve YU students into choosing computer science as their major. Ahead of these students are long hours of staring at their screen, desperately scouring their code for errors, in hopes that they will be able to show their teacher something that works when their assignments are due. Caught between malfunctioning code and tight due dates, many such students find it impossible to keep up with the demands of their professors and choose another major. After such an experience, it would be easy to see computer language as a brain-power consuming monster, while overlooking its similarities to common language.

In a sense, writing a script for a computer is like writing a piece of literature. Both scripts and literary articles use some form of language to accomplish a purpose: be it to portray an argument to an audience or to create a functioning program. To do so, these scripts and literary

articles must introduce the appropriate objects and link them together with the correct logic, while structuring said logic in a way which is intuitive to read. There is, however, no single way to structure your paragraphs of text or code, enabling people to develop styles which are unique to them.

Although words are the flesh and blood of any form of text, they need to be structured properly to gain their functionality. If you are writing works like novels or articles, your text will technically still work if this rule is ignored; though because scripts written in coding languages will inevitably be run, they need to strictly adhere to their principles of grammar. It may be annoying when a script you've put hours into refuses to run because of a missing semicolon, but from the computer's perspective, your line has no solid definition, and would therefore need further clarification.

Unlike with written languages, each word in a script will always be interpreted for exactly what it means. One minor mistake in a program can cause the entire thing to function improperly.



Finding and correcting small imperfections in programs is largely considered the most tedious part of programming, but it is what perfects the program's logic, and is ultimately what pushes it to completion.

An essential part of a convincing piece of literature is to have a point which you want to express and to express it strongly. This point is commonly called a thesis. In common language, your thesis would be the bottom line of your writing. In the context of programming, your thesis is your desired output.

The most satisfying feeling obtainable in the field of computer science is that of completing a program. After hours, days, or even weeks of your computer

misinterpreting your scripts and mocking your use of syntax, you've finally created something that functions properly.

The result, however, extends beyond the program's output. Before a program's output can reach your screen, the computer running it must read its grammatically correct source file, process it logically, and interpret it in a manner which is similar to how a human would read a book or an article. Just as a piece of literature will elegantly express thought and emotion to the reader, a program will express its output to the computer's screen. To the average observer, your program can be seen as another mundane object, but when you can see a program for what it truly is, you can experience its full beauty as a work of art.

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# NYC EATS: NOI DUE CAFE

BY CAYLA MUSCHEL,  
ARTS AND CULTURE  
EDITOR

The Noi Due restaurants are a staple in the world of kosher restaurants. Originally a small, kosher, Italian eatery in an off-Broadway basement, Noi Due now has multiple locations. One of these spots is the Noi Due cafe, nestled in the heart of the Upper West Side. Relative to the rest of Manhattan, the West Side is a quiet neighborhood; the cafe is the only spot on the block that draws a crowd.

Soft acoustic tunes play over the speakers while patrons sit in brick walled alcoves or at the windows. Quiet chatter arises from the windows, bar, and tables in the back. The meal begins with appetizers; arancini, speared caprese salads, or macaroni and cheese balls are served on simple

ceramic dishes. After sharing appetizers, diners dig into gourmet editions of warm comfort food: crispy pizzas, creamy pastas, and for the particularly sophisticated diner, artfully roasted fish. If arriving in the morning, patrons can enjoy French toast, a mild shakshuka, and a warm, decorated latte.

Noi Due Cafe is one of the rare few restaurants that came out stronger during the pandemic, and it is not hard to see why. The cozy, family atmosphere has drawn residents of Manhattan in the wake of the virus in search of warmth, while the sophistication of the restaurant ensures a quality experience for connoisseurs.



## THINGS TO DO

FROM PAGE 13

StubHub

Take the best selfie at the Color Factory

On the beautiful Spring Street is a museum full of color and fun that will provide the perfect selfie spot for you.

The Color Factory is a special museum. You will find huge,

inspiring exhibits such as a huge ball pool, colorful walls and more.

Where?  
251 Spring St, New York, NY  
10013

Price: \$38

To find out more:  
Home - Color Factory

The Friends Experience  
If you are a fan of the classic sitcom "Friends," you will find

this place super awesome and very exciting! You can take some pictures with the "cast" of the TV show, and hear some fun facts during the tour.

Where?  
130 E 23rd St, New York, NY  
10010

Price: \$60

To find out more:  
The Friends Experience: The One

In New York City | The Official Guide to New York City (nycgo.com)

## TIPS AND TRICKS FOR BROADWAY TIX

BY YAFFA GOLDKIN

Living in New York City is the absolute best! There are so many opportunities to visit awesome places and do so many great activities: from famous landmarks like the Empire State Building to art museums like the Met to beautiful places like Central Park. You can go shopping in Times Square, visit the Frick, or see a Broadway show! All seem easily accessible until you hear that Hamilton tickets cost \$300? But I'm in college; I don't have that kind of money! Well, lucky for you, this article is a compilation of easier and cheaper ways to get Broadway tickets so that you too can experience the magic that is Broadway!

TKTS

The Times Square TKTS booth is located at 47th street and Broadway, under its famous red carpeted stairs. Broadway show tickets are often on sale there, usually for 50% off or more. They have cheap prices for same-day shows or next-day matinees. Typically getting there earlier is best, due to potential long lines, but often the prices drop significantly closer to curtain time. For more information, visit their website.

TodayTix

TodayTix is an awesome app and website that offers cheap Broadway tickets. Download the app and start browsing! They have savings from 10% off up to 80% off! You're sure to find cheap tickets to a show you love and can't wait to see. For more information,

visit their website or download the app!

Lottery

There are so many websites and options where you can win tickets for really low prices. One of the most popular lotteries now is the Hamilton Lottery, where you can enter to win Hamilton tickets for just \$10! First, download the official Hamilton app. Then, enter the lottery! Each lottery opens at 11 am two days before the show, and closes at 9 am the day of the show. If you win, you will receive the notification by 11 am that day. If you're lucky enough to win, then make sure you accept the tickets quickly, before 4 pm! These lotteries are also available for many other shows, including Harry Potter and the Cursed Child and many

more.

Rush the Theater

Many productions have same-day rush tickets. These tickets can sell for as low as \$20 apiece. To purchase same-day rush tickets, visit the box office of the show's theater on the performance day. They will usually open around 10 a.m., or 12 p.m. on Sundays. If you don't mind standing, they sometimes offer standing room tickets for lower prices. Some shows offer rush tickets through TodayTix. Often, just going directly to the box office of the show can save you from any extra fees. Also, you have the chance of getting awesome seats that have just been added to the ticket pool and not yet bought by the resale market. You can get great prices by

SEE BROADWAY TIX, PAGE



# SASA

## CLUB PROFILE: STUDENTS AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT (SASA) CLUB

BY RU BENHAMOU,  
FEATURES EDITOR

*Each month, the YU Observer aims to highlight one club available to the YU undergraduate community. For the November 2021 edition, the YU Observer is highlighting the Students Against Sexual Assault (SASA) club.*

**Club Name:** Students Against Sexual Assault (SASA)

**Heads:** Cayla Muschel, Noa Berman

**Relevant Campus(es):** Beren, Wilf

**What is your club's mission statement?**

Students Against Sexual Assault is an undergraduate organization committed to working toward a safer university experience at YU. We aim to educate, advocate, and promote a safe campus culture.

**Why is this club important?**

Now more than ever, our club is essential. This is because we believe there is not enough awareness or resources for students when it comes to sexual assault. Our club hopes to spread

awareness and knowledge of the resources that exist as well as advocate to create new resources on our campuses if necessary. Unfortunately, the sad reality is that sexual assault happens on every college campus, and we want to work toward educating people on how to prevent, identify and respond to sexual assault.

**What was your pull to get involved in/start the club?**

Noa Berman (NB): Unfortunately, many people close to me are survivors of sexual assault, so it is a topic that is not new to me. The issue is considered taboo in general but especially in the Jewish community, and I don't want victims to feel alone or have to stay quiet. I felt that it was essential for me to join SASA to help make the campus a safer and more enjoyable experience for everyone.

**Cayla Muschel (CM):** I feel very strongly that being on campus at YU should be a positive experience for everyone, and for that to happen, everyone must feel physically safe. I think SASA helps establish a safe environment, and that's an integral part of working overall toward a healthy campus life. Joining SASA felt like a crucial part of the overall advocacy, and it's definitely something I'm passionate about in and of itself.

**What are some things your club has done in the past?**

We have had several events such as an "Informational Q&A" event where we had students send in questions about reporting sexual assault, abusive relationships, and other related

topics. We had therapists from the counseling center and other qualified professionals as panelists answered questions posed by students then opened it to other questions from the attendees.

There was a "Healthy Relationship" presentation, where we invited Chloe Horowitz to present an informational and interactive slideshow about signs of healthy vs. unhealthy relationships. How to spot abuse and manipulation and discussed how to get help and how to help others who are in unhealthy relationships.

We had a "Survivor Speaker" where we partnered with the Shalom Task Force to have a survivor of sexual assault come and tell her story.

Earlier this year we had a "Title IX" event to provide a basic understand-

SEE [SASA CLUB](#), PAGE 17

## DAF YOMI

FROM PAGE 11

Aside from dealing with Rosh Hashana per se, the tractate also addresses the more general matter of Rosh Chodesh: the sighting of the new moon, the declaration of the new month, and the transmission of that information to cities well beyond the Beit Din [Jewish court] where the formalities take place. This is essentially a networking problem, only that the packets are encapsulated in fire signals (an early form of wireless technology) and the routers are mountaintops in the various legs ("hops") of the end-to-end communication (see 22b). The contemporary cybersecurity issues known as man-in-the-middle and spoofing also come into play. The Gemara also entertains the challenges of "acknowledgement" and "negative acknowledgement" used in the Transport-Layer of networking: What can reasonably be inferred from the absence of

such signals? Does it mean that Rosh Chodesh has been postponed, or other factors may be responsible?

The Gemara (33b) discerns the type of sounds blown from the wailing of Sisera's mother when her son did not return home from battle. Jewish tradition takes this source even further by saying that we blow 100 Shofar blasts on each day of Rosh Hashana because she cried 100 times. When did she begin to cry? In the language of networking, we might say after the RTT ("round trip time"), the reasonably expected duration of the journey to the destination and the return home.

While the potential correlations and connections between Daf Yomi and other subjects will necessarily vary depending on both the pursuers and the pursuits, applying the "Associative Property" not only makes our Birkhot Hatorah more pertinent but also our

Talmud Torah more permanent.

Lawrence Teitelman is a faculty member in Stern Col-

lege's Department of Computer Science and Rabbi of Young Israel of New Hyde Park.





# SONG REVIEW: I MISS THOSE DAYS

BY CAYLA MUSCHEL,  
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

"I know I was lost, but I miss those days."

Bleachers is the one-man musical project of popular songwriter Jack Antonoff, drummer for the band Fun and songwriter for Taylor Swift, Lorde, and more. Based on his resumé, one tends to associate Antonoff with Top 100 hits; however, the lyrics from Antonoff's Bleachers music tells a deeper, more thoughtful story.

"I Miss Those Days", from Bleachers' second studio album *Gone Now*, is a song about nostalgia, change, and the ephemerality of youth. Although this seems like a message that is usually associated with an older generation, Antonoff conveys the piece's wistfulness while still utilizing his unique ability to relate the song to a younger generation.

The song begins, "Yeah, we talk about getting older/But there's so much we haven't done yet...And I curse my bedroom but I left it all alone/'Cause all this time I'm runaway, runaway, runaway, runaway, gone." The narrator

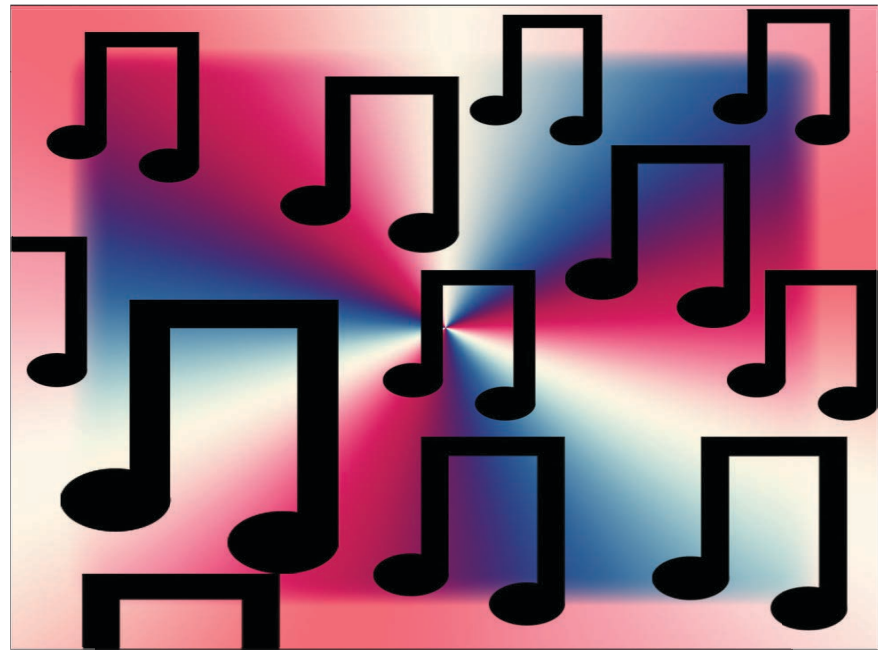
references contemporaries who consider themselves old, but they're really still quite young. The difference between the present and their youth is that they are now bound by the structure of adult life. Today, all the narrator can do is "curse his bedroom," whereas when he was younger, he had the freedom to simply leave his bedroom and run away. Around him, society is changing as well: "And everyone is changing/And storefront's rearranging/I picked up a quarter and I just saw my face." The narrator identifies with images of historical figures engraved on the currency.

The message conveyed by the lyrics is one of sadness, yet the melody of the song is fast-paced and strong. This contrast is evocative and bittersweet: in different hands these lyrics could have been associated with a mournful requiem for youth. Instead, Antonoff directs the song toward a deep appreciation for life as it was, the time that came before. Though the narrator experienced the sadness, confusion, and loneliness of adolescence, he can still look back and feel unadulterated love for his younger self's

life. "I'm sorry that you saw me when I lost my way...Hey, I know I was lost but I miss those days."

The narrator knows he was lost, imperfect, young. "I'm not sure that we were meant to survive," he says of himself; he is not looking back through a rose-colored lens. But now that he's no longer "lost", he longs for a time with less structure, a time when he "...was sixteen in a van driving myself to Florida." The narrator

notes that he has not completely cut ties with his younger self: "Part of me never left that seat 'cause/Nights and weekends still looking for a dream." Societal nostalgia is generally associated with our older generations and their longing for the "olden days." "I Miss Those Days" is associated with a different sort of nostalgia, one that is accessible to our generation as well: longing not only for the way society used to be, but for the freedom of adolescence.



## SASA CLUB

FROM PAGE 16

ing of what it legally encompasses and to give resources to the students.

*What are some plans you have for this semester/future semesters?:* Distributing alarms for SAAM (Sexual Assault Awareness Month), a self-defense event for both campuses, and a bake sale!

*What is your favorite OSL-provided food for club events?:*

NB: Pizza is my favorite food in general, so I feel like I have to go

with that.

CM: Pizza is the call.

*How is your club adapting to being back on campus?:*

The club's first official year was when everyone was off-campus due to COVID, so we're excited for all the possibilities and preparing for the possible challenges that being on campus brings.

*What is your advice to someone looking to get involved on campus?:*

NB: Join as many group chats as you can (I know they get

annoying, but it's an excellent way to see what's going on on campus). Go to as many events as possible. Join any club that you find interesting. Stay in for Shabbat. On-campus jobs are also a great way to meet new people while making money. Just take advantage of everything that the campus has to offer. Take advantage of your time here. It's going to go by faster than you think.

CM: When you find a club that seems interesting, apply! Join group chats! If you take the initiative, fate often ends up aligning, and you begin to

be active on campus. Honestly, I don't know how I became involved in campus life, so I don't feel equipped to answer this question. Anyway, crash your battery with the number of group chats you're in.

Anything else to say about your club:  
Join our group chat to stay updated on different events and initiatives SASA will be running, and follow us on Instagram at @sasa\_atyu!

## BROADWAY TIX

FROM PAGE 15

going right before a show begins. Sometimes, prices will fall dramatically right before curtain on sites like StubHub or VividSeats. It's a matter of right place, right time. Good luck!

TDF

Although same-day or day-before tickets are great, sometimes I like to plan things in advance. TDF is a nonprofit organization

hoping to bring the power of performing arts to everyone. For \$40, you can join an annual membership where you can get deals weeks before the shows happen. They also let you see some Off Broadway shows for \$11, and you get deals for shows before they go on sale to the general public. A lot of the cities' theater companies also have membership packages where you can get discounted tickets for the year. I would recommend Public Theater, New York

Theater Workshop, or Playwrights Horizons.

Join the Broadway club! Last but definitely not least, join the Broadway Club! Over the course of the year, we will be offering cheaper Broadway show tickets subsidized by Yeshiva University, as well as having awesome events where you can meet other super Broadway fans! The club is open to both campuses, so be sure to join in!





## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## DANCING IN THE DARK

BY GITTY BOSHNACK  
Science and Technology Editor

The nervous system is the control center of the entire body. The spinal cord and brain are the main organs of the nervous system. The brain sends the messages, and the spinal cord delivers them. But what happens when the spinal cord is injured? The pathways that these messages take are blocked, resulting in paralysis and palsies.

Samuel I. Stupp at Northwestern University has discovered an injectable therapy to treat and repair spinal cord injuries. This injection is composed of bioactive molecules that, upon injection, will gel into a network of fibers that will act as an extracellular matrix that can attach to receptors that will communicate with cells. This is known as a biological scaffold. The goal is to maintain control of 100,000 bioactive molecules at once. The network of these many gel-like fibers is known as a supermolecule. These molecules “dance” and move out of supermolecules, and through this, they can communicate better with intracellular receptors. These molecules dance in the darkness

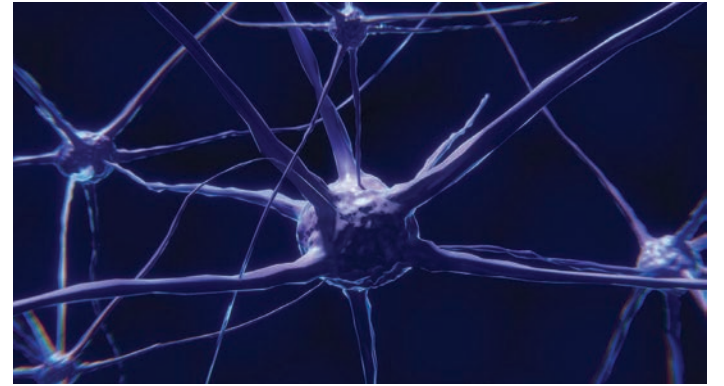
of destroyed tissue and enable movement. The more agile these fibers are, the more opportunity they have to connect with other healthy nerves and tissues. This is because healthy cells and their receptors are in constant motion, so if the scaffolds are not moving fast enough, they will not be able to “dance in sync”

*Stupp and his team of researchers... are potentially enabling thousands of paralyzed patients to dance again.*

with the healthy tissue, impeding cellular communication.

When the molecules on these scaffolds connect to extracellular receptors, they stimulate two things. Firstly, axon regeneration, and secondly, neural accessory cell growth. Axon regeneration is crucial for the transmitting of messages. The axons send the messages away from the neuron to other neurons. The signal sent by the molecules prompts the axons to regenerate. Neural accessory growth is vital for infrastructural reasons. This means that you need the proper machinery to repair a neuron after it's dam-

aged, such as cells that stimulate the growth of blood vessels and the production of myelin. Myelin is like a wiretap that



wraps around the axon and helps transmit messages faster. Specifically, in damaged nerve cells,

myelin protects the axon from the scarring of neighboring tissue, contributing to inhibited cellular communication.

Both these contributions cause improvements in blood vessel growth, axon regeneration, increased myelin production, survival of motor neurons (neurons that aid with movement), less mutation in glial cells (which are the insulators of the nervous system), and functional recovery.

Stupp believes that this therapy can be used for diseases like ALS or stroke where the spinal cord is damaged, similar to how it is in cases of trauma. However, understanding and controlling

molecular assembly processes is more significant because molecular dancing can be applied more broadly in other biological research.

Not only have Stupp and his team of researchers learned to make molecules dance, they are potentially enabling thousands of paralyzed patients to dance again.

\*\*\* \*\*

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<https://www.science.org/>

## MARIJUANA AS A TREATMENT FOR ANXIETY

BY SHANI MIZRAHI  
Staff Writer

When we talk about drugs, we often talk about them in the context of having the potential to help with problems related to psychology, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), depression, and anxiety. In today's world, the use of marijuana has become more and more popular to help people manage their anxiety.

Psychologists recommend many possible treatments for anxiety, such as psychotherapy and lifestyle changes. If there are other options to help people with their anxiety that do not include drug use, how can we be sure drugs and marijuana use in particular are the best help with anxiety?

Marijuana can interact with



anxiety symptoms in very different ways depending upon the

person. Marijuana can either relieve or increase anxiety. Many people seem to be calmer after using medical marijuana;

*There are many ways of using marijuana to treat anxiety disorder. The right marijuana use method depends on a person's symptoms and how they react to cannabis.*

on the other hand, there are others who reported feeling anxiety

and anxious thoughts after using medical marijuana. And of course, as with any other use of a drug, there are both

positive and negative side effects. Among the positive impacts of marijuana use are help with nerve problems, a lessened sense of fear or stress, and a positive effect on mood and anxiety relief. Negative side effects that often result from overuse and misuse of drugs such as marijuana include hallucinations, psychosis, depersonalization as well as intense fatigue or sleepiness.

There are many ways of using marijuana to treat anxiety disorder. The right marijuana use method depends on a person's symptoms and how they react to cannabis.

Smoking, which is the most popular way to ingest cannabis, can

SEE MARIJUANA FOR ANXIETY  
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## MARIJUANA FOR ANXIETY

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easily harm one's health. This is because smoking marijuana is really similar to smoking tobacco, and by doing it, there is an increased risk of inhaling toxins and tar along with the cannabis. Another option is consuming marijuana in food

edibles. This method of use also depends on a person's dietary restrictions in order to gauge whether it is safe for them or not. Many people prefer this option since it can provide an extended effect. Vaping is another option for people who want to feel like they are inhaling marijuana. Utilizing

the vaping method can help to reduce the risk of inhaling toxins into one's lungs.

In addition, if one uses marijuana to overcome one's anxiety, he or she needs to know the limits of using this product, as there are limits to using any drug, even for household drugs such

as cough syrup and Tylenol. As for the use of marijuana and anxiety, one can easily find many limitations on the internet, but one should consult a qualified doctor to determine the best treatment plan.

\*\*\* \*\*

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## THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON TELEHEALTH

BY NAOMI FRIED

Telehealth is defined as the provision of healthcare remotely by means of telecommunications technology. At the beginning of the school year, Yeshiva University announced that they were introducing telehealth services instead of onsite medical services for all students. Some questioned this decision and wondered if the quality of campus healthcare would decline due to this shift.

The development of telehealth is an advancement in the healthcare industry that makes healthcare more convenient and accessible. Whereas in the past people had to potentially travel from city to city to visit a doctor, these days we don't even have to take the subway. Antidote Health, the telehealth company that has partnered with YU, reports that 80% of common health problems don't require the doctor to see us in-person, and can all be resolved via video conference.

Although telehealth began as early as the late 1960s, finan-

cial, regulatory, and technological challenges made it more difficult to advance. In the past, a big challenge was the lack of technology to successfully create a large network that provides health services on electronic devices. The first significant step taken towards the advancement of telehealth in the US on a regulatory and federal level was in 2010. On March 17,

2010, President Obama proposed 'Connecting

America: The National Broadband Plan' to assist in the proliferation and improvement of broadband networks across the United States. This plan calls for the build-out and improvement of medical networks that facilitate remote patient monitoring, electronic health records, and other technology-based health services such as telemedicine.

Among other reasons, telehealth's

popularity wasn't overwhelming due to its lack of coverage by insurance. Insurance companies seemed to differentiate between in person and teleservices and the coverage for telehealth wasn't as broad. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a lot of temporary changes were made, and usually health insurance will cover the same amount for in-person and

*Now, people who previously were not able to access healthcare providers have an easier way to communicate and seek help from professionals.*

health. The first is Live Video-Conferencing, which is a one-on-one conversation between the health provider and the patient. The second form of telehealth is Asynchronous Video. This is an area mainly used to get a consultation from an expert in a different geographical location. The provider receives history about the patient, will take a look at test results, and consult the patient. The third telehealth category is Remote

teleservices. There are four main categories of tele-

Patient Monitoring (RPM). This is often used in senior living facilities and is essentially the collection and sending of data to the provider on a regular basis for monitoring purposes. Lastly, the fourth form of telehealth is Mobile Health. These are apps and software used to assist in monitoring and treating health conditions. A primary example of this is diabetes. Many patients have insulin pumps that pump according to the instructions sent to it by the app in which the patient can input information.

In March of 2020, telehealth's popularity skyrocketed due to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. To illustrate the increase in demand, at Oregon Health & Science University, the number of digital health visits went from 1,100 in February to almost 13,000 a month later, and a month after that all 1,200 ambulatory faculty were able to conduct virtual visits.

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## TELEHEALTH MEDECINE

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A global outcome from the pandemic is that low-income countries who do not have much access to healthcare in largely populated areas are able to implement digital healthcare into their systems. Now, people who previously were not able to access healthcare providers have an easier way to communicate and seek help from professionals. This system was very helpful during the pandemic but will continue to serve these countries when we return to normalcy and will aid in prevention and treatment of diseases in the greater population

The major growth in the popularity of telehealth services can be accredited

to COVID-19. This doesn't mean that telehealth's popularity will decrease post-pandemic. A graph conducted by Trilliant Health illustrates the demand for telehealth services before, during and post pandemic.

The data clearly demonstrates that interest in telehealth has spiked in the past years, with the all-time peak being in March of 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic shut every in-person service down. Obviously, the pandemic made it nearly impossible to access any other type of care, and therefore, one can argue that telehealth is not people's first choice. The argument follows that the use of telehealth peaked because of the extreme circumstances. Although this is true, the graph proves

that satisfaction with the service is high and therefore telehealth use is still almost 5 times more than pre-pandemic.

The accessibility of the service and expansion of preventive medicine possibilities are positive effects of telehealth. In order to make sure these improvements are maintained, legal steps are being implemented on a federal level. Congress is examining the pandemic's temporary changes and are surveying which changes should be kept, reversed or changed. Making these legal changes is important because telehealth will remain in the healthcare system, and a good permanent law needs to be made for the healthcare providers and insurance payers. Committee Chair

Sen. Lamar Alexander of the HELP (health, education, labor and pensions committee) shared his insight stating that from the many emergency policies that were changed the following should remain: Stopping the rule of "Origination site." This rule requires the patient to be at the healthcare provider's office so that the provider can be paid, unless the patient lives in a rural area that has considerably less access to care than urban areas.

Although the pandemic has passed, telehealth will stay with us, and steps are being taken to make sure that everyone can gain from this advanced service.

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# THE CYCLOTRON: THE SINISTER PAST OF ONE OF MEDICINE'S MOST HELPFUL INVENTIONS

BY MALKA GORBUNOV

The cyclotron, invented by nuclear physicist Ernest O. Lawrence (1901-1958), was an invention with a troubled history and a happy ending. Lawrence, whose life's work focused primarily on radioisotopes, eventually merited the distinction of having element 103 on the periodic table, lawrencium, named for him.

A morally objectionable individual, Lawrence was a contributor to the Manhattan Project and (unlike many of his colleagues) took great pride in the resulting nuclear bomb which was dropped on Hiroshima. But there is no denying the good that his invention eventually did for humanity.

What is a cyclotron? It is, essentially, a compact and highly practical particle accelerator—the predecessor of colossal particle accelerators such as the Large Hadron Collider at CERN (an acronym derived from the French for European Organization for Nuclear Research, located in Geneva, Switzerland).

Lawrence created the cyclotron on the principle of accelerating charged particles along a circular path, held in place by a magnetic field. The particles were accelerated by varying the radio frequency. The cyclotron was useful for cre-

ating high-energy beams which provided valuable information in nuclear experiments, such as the products of high-energy atomic collisions. Lawrence won the Nobel Prize for the cyclotron in 1939 and his invention soon became all too relevant as the Second World War broke out.

Cyclotrons were being built in select locations throughout Europe, including in the lab of Otto Hahn (co-discoverer of nuclear fission with Lise Meitner). The Allies (and much of the

team sent to Europe for just this purpose.

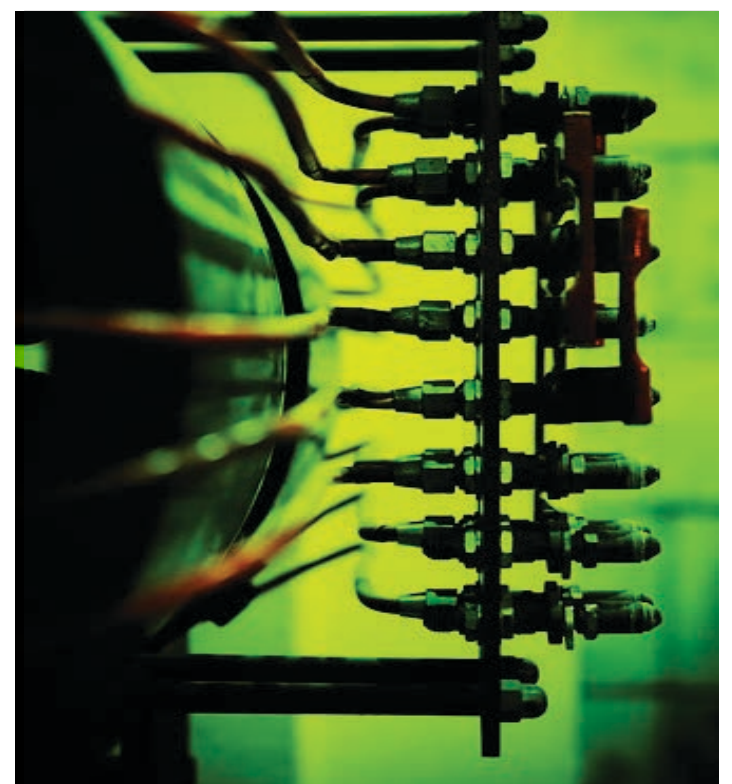
At this time, a cyclotron was being built in the lab of the French physicist Frédéric Joliot-Curie (son-in-law of Marie Curie). When France fell to the Nazis and the government of Vichy France was established, Wolfgang

*What is a cyclotron? It is, essentially, a compact and highly practical particle accelerator*

world) were terrified at the prospect of a nuclear Third Reich, something which seemed very real based on information collected by Allied intelligence. In addition to spurring the Manhattan Project along, this fear prompted many efforts by the Allies to derail Nazi nuclear progress, including Project Alsos: a specialized

Gentner of the Nazi Uranium Club was appointed head of this lab and its newly built cyclotron. However, Gentner had been a friend of Joliot-Curie, who was now an active member of the Resistance, and discreetly aided him. While the sabotage was petty and cautious, it did aid the cause for a while. This, and other obstacles put in the way of the Nazis made a cumulative difference.

In the end, nothing came of the Nazi nuclear project and the



reasons for this are disputed to this day. Some speculate that head scientist Werner Heisenberg subtly held it back; others name different causes. The much feared and coveted cyclotron (along with other resources) did not put a nuclear bomb in Hitler's hands, whatever sinister potential it might've had to do so.

And the continuation of the cyclotron's story is happier,

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## THE CYCLOTRON

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concerning its applications to medicine after the war and through this day.

Beginning in the 1950s, the cyclotron (and later its more potent successor, the synchrotron) has found its use in nuclear medicine. Proton therapy uses a beam of protons (originating in the cyclotron) directed at cancerous tissue to destroy it. It

has the advantage of minimally affecting nearby healthy tissue, due to its highly focused beam. The use of proton therapy has become a major milestone in cancer medicine. Another medical application of the cyclotron is that its beam can be used to create isotopes used for positron emission tomography (PET) scans. These scans are helpful in diagnosing cancer as well as heart disease and other illnesses. The cyclotron has become

an integral part of medicine, to the extent that several hospitals are equipped with their own cyclotrons, a reality that would've seemed absurd during the Second World War. Memorial Sloan Kettering operates two cyclotrons on site.

This is a demonstration of the potential that scientific innovation has, to shape our world for the better or the worse. The cyclotron passed through many hands and was built with varying in-

tentions, but ultimately found a benevolent niche in medicine.

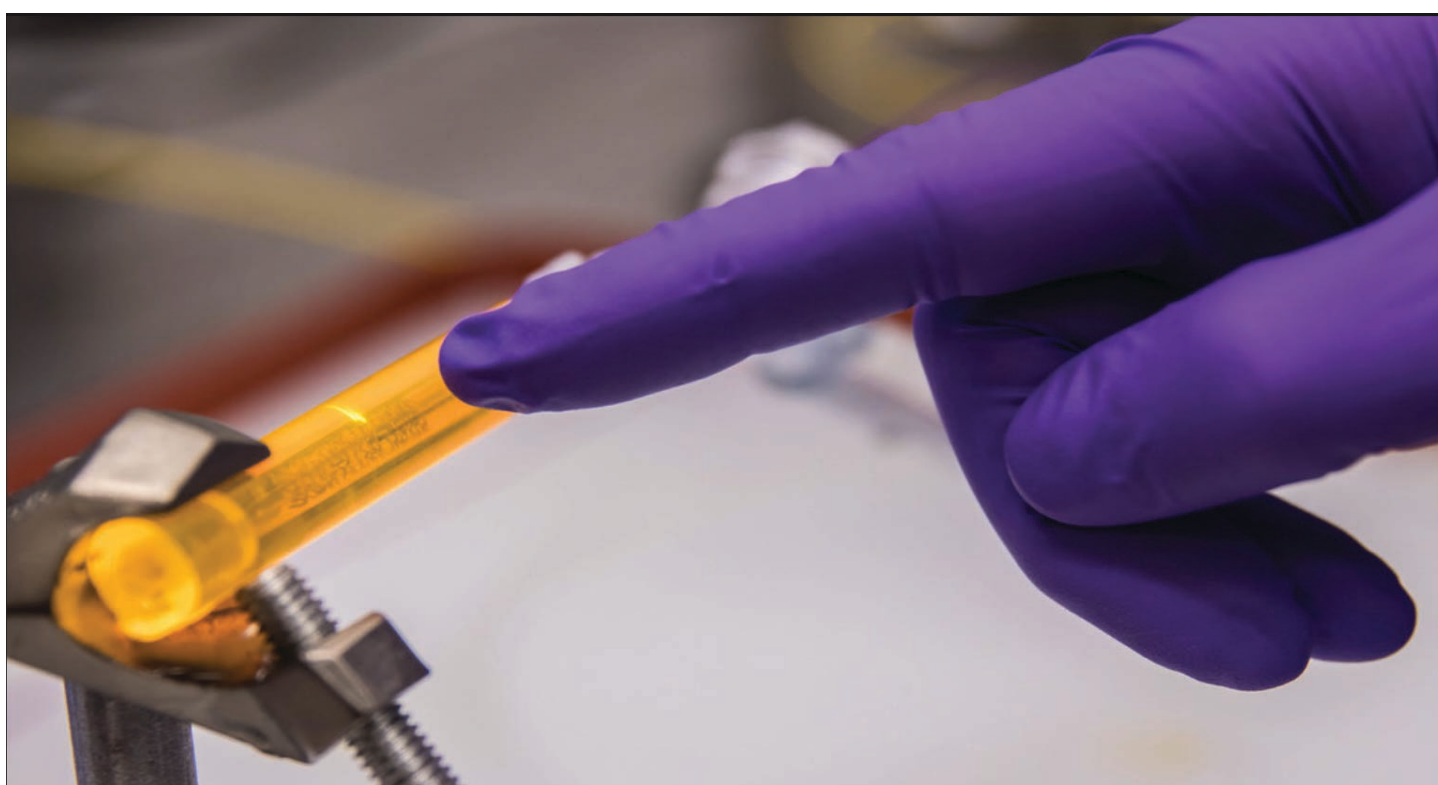
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## STUDENT RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT: TANIA KIESEL

BY NICOLE ABITTAN,  
Science and Technology Editor,  
on behalf of the *YU Observer*

**Nicole Abittan (NA): Hi Tania, thank you for meeting with me today! Let's start with getting to know you.**

Tania Kiesel (TK): Hi Nicole, thank you for interviewing me! My name is Tania, and I am currently a sophomore in SCW. This is my second semester living on campus. I am majoring in Biology and hope to one day become an OB-GYN.

**NA: How did you become involved in this research?**

TK: I wanted to do research over the summer, so I emailed YU professors who

were planning on having labs over the summer. Dr. Vigodner responded and gave me the opportunity to work in her lab.

**NA: What did Dr. Vigodner's lab study?**

TK: The research was about the Regulation of Testicular Sertoli Cells by SUMOylation. The male partner is responsible for infertility in 50% of USA infertile couples. We worked on understanding the causes of male infertility. We studied how one protein can affect the process of spermatogenesis (the cycle of sperm formation). If this protein is reduced, male infertility can be regulated.

**NA: Did you encounter any obstacles while working in the lab?**

TK: No, I did not have any obstacles. Everyone was very patient and helped me understand every process we did.

**NA: What was your specific role in the lab?**

TK: I did many different things, including subculturing, gel protocol, GA treatment, and visibility analysis.

**NA: Thank you again Tania for sharing your important and interesting research with us. I'm so glad that you had an enjoyable and productive**

**summer. Do you have any closing advice for other students?**

TK: Yes, doing research in a lab is an amazing opportunity. As a pre-med student, I encourage every student to get involved in research when they have the chance to.



## BUSINESS

## 3 STOCK HIGHLIGHT: NOVEMBER 2021 EDITION

BY JAKE SHECKTER  
BUSINESS EDITOR

Each month's edition of the YU Observer this year will include a "3-Stock Highlight" on a few stocks that have been in the news lately, have fascinating stories, or provide for an interesting read. On behalf of the *YU Observer*, we'd like to remind everyone that these stock picks are for educational purposes only and are not to be taken

as financial advice or used for investing any real cash. This month, we will be highlighting Digital World Acquisition Corp.

(DWAC), Merck & Co., Inc. (MRK), and Meta Platforms, Inc. (FB) (formerly Facebook).

Digital World Acquisition Corp. (DWAC)

Many special purpose acquisition company (SPAC) stocks have stolen the stage in the past year after announcing a deal. With polarization being the name of the game throughout the pandemic, the Digital World Acquisition Corp. (DWAC) stock may display some huge momentum to push it higher throughout the coming months and/or years. If 'meme traders' were able to punch in a Robinhood order right after the opening bell on October 21, 2021 for \$15-\$20 per share, they may have been able to cash out a near 1000% gain by the end of the day in theory. The next day, on October 22, 2021, shares skyrocketed (briefly) to nearly \$175 before coming back down to earth and settling around \$58.

Trump Media & Technology Group (TMTG) has merged with Digital World Acquisition Corp. to create the Truth Social network. Trump's name is what largely fueled the temporary craze around DWAC. Trump plans to introduce TRUTH social, a social media company and/or subscription streaming service centered on being America's "Big Tent" social media platform that encourages an open, free, and honest global conversation without discriminating against political ideology.

With most SPAC deals, there will typically be a slide deck that details the transaction, however, with the DWAC merger, there wasn't one. Don't worry, you don't have to do a deep dive into SEC files because a Seeking Alpha commentator broke down the numbers for everyone. To sum everything up, there will be 177.7 million shares post-merger, which at today's prices values the company at around \$10.3 billion, generally much too high

*This month, we will be highlighting Digital World Acquisition Corp. (DWAC), Merck & Co., Inc. (MRK), and Meta Platforms, Inc. (FB) (formerly Facebook).*

for a pre-revenue entity. This doesn't mean that the company will flop, considering that if only 10% of the 74 million Americans who voted for Trump in 2020 paid for a \$10 monthly subscription to the service, this alone could generate close to \$840 million in potential annual revenue. This would also not include factors such as advertisement revenue from the platform's free features. Until more information is released on DWAC and its merger, we may have to wait for a more reasonable valuation to come about.

Merck & Co. Inc. (MRK)

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, pharmaceutical companies have showed that while many of them were born in the 1980s (Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, Merck & Co., etc.), long before the tech giants that rule the market nowadays, they can still perform and excel in the stock market when disaster strikes. Merck & Co. Inc. (MRK), while not a contender for the Covid-19 vaccine, will potentially need to create an almost new niche among the assortment of anti-Covid pharmaceuticals available today. Merck & Co. recently announced their contribution to the anti-COVID industry by releasing 'molnupiravir', a pill that has shown promise in preventing death in pre and post-hospitalized COVID-19 patients.

In the most recent phase 3 clinical trials, molnupiravir cut the number of deaths and hospital-

izations by around half in moderately ill patients. On October 11th, Merck submitted a petition for an Emergency Use Authorization to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Merck as well as its partner Ridgeback Biotherapeutics announced that the Japanese Government agreed to buy 1.6 million courses of their oral antiviral medicine for approximately \$1.2 billion (if approved). The U.S. Government has also announced they will purchase 1.4 million courses of the antiviral for approximately \$1 billion (again, only if the FDA approves it). Lastly, the UK became the first to authorize use of the drug for at-risk individuals.

However, while Merck's stock has risen from roughly \$75 on October 1, 2021, to \$90 on November 4, 2021, it is important to know that Merck & Co. is not the only pharmaceutical titan in the COVID market. Pfizer's 'Paxlovid' has reported a higher efficacy than Merck in trials and will undoubtedly be taking a few slices of the market share pie.

Meta Platforms, Inc. (FB)

If you haven't been online in the last month or so, you may not have realized that Facebook changed its name and company image to Meta Platforms, Inc. (FB). On October 28, 2021, CEO Mark Zuckerberg introduced Meta, which combines all of the apps and technologies Facebook owns under a new company brand. Zuckerberg elaborated, "The metaverse will feel like a hybrid of today's online social experiences, sometimes expanded into three dimensions or projected into the physical world. It will let you share immersive experiences with other people even when you can't be together — and do things

together you couldn't do in the physical world. It's the next evolution in a long line of social technologies, and it's ushering in a new chapter for our company."

Facebook's stock is no rookie when it comes to its history in the market, as they continue to dominate the tech and media space. Even throughout the pandemic, Facebook's stock soared from roughly \$214 pre-pandemic to \$344 today, a 60% increase. Facebook's 2021 'Connect' tech conference (where Meta was revealed), brought together augmented and virtual reality designers, content creators, marketers, coders, and more to congratulate the industry's increasing and exponential momentum and success.

For those involved in the world of cryptocurrency, Meta Platforms stated that it "also has cryptocurrency plans in the works, as the further entrenchment of the digital world in everyday life will also rewrite the script on what it means to purchase and own something". This year's conference highlighted and explored what the metaverse may have to offer over the next decade, possibly increasing revenues in the years to come.

If you would like to learn more about the stock market and its components, you may want to look into the Yeshiva University Stock Exchange (YUSE) Club. Learn more about the YUSE at [Yusegroup.weebly.com](http://Yusegroup.weebly.com).





# BUSINESS BASICS: STARTUP GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

BY AMALYA TEITELBAUM  
Business Editor & Manager

To the average person, creating a startup might not seem all too difficult. Many saw the uptick in so-called startups during COVID-19 on social media apps like Instagram and Tiktok. From jewelry to clothing to customized items, establishing a company seems as simple as creating an item and posting it on social media: someone buys the item and now you are an entrepreneur. However, it is not as simple as it seems.

Startups refer to companies in the first stages of operations. Startups are founded by one or more entrepreneurs who want to develop a product or service for which they believe there is demand. There are several types of startups: sole proprietorships, partnerships, and limited liability companies (LLC). A sole proprietorship also referred to as a sole trader or a proprietorship, is an unincorporated business that has just one owner who pays personal income tax on profits earned from the business. In a sole proprietorship, there is no legal distinction between the company and the owner because the company is not registered. In a partnership business, however, all partners share liabilities and profits equally, while in others, partners may have limited liability. Partners are held liable for any business debts which

result from the partnership, which means that creditors can go after the partners' personal assets. A limited liability company (LLC) is a business structure in the U.S. that protects its owners from personal responsibility for its business debts or liabilities. LLCs are hybrid entities that combine the characteristics of a corporation with those of a partnership or sole proprietorship.

For all startups, there are government regulations that the owner/owners must abide by. A business owner must take into consideration his or her business structure when understanding the company's legal requirements. After that distinction is made, the owner must register under an unused business name. Depending on the business structure, there are four ways to register the business's name. The business can register with an entity name, which legally protects the business at a state level or it can register with a trademark, which legally protects the business at a federal level. A business can also register with a DBA (Doing Business As) which doesn't offer legal protection but may be required,

depending on the business's location and structure. Another option for a business is to register with a domain name which claims your business's web address.

Then one must apply for a Federal Tax ID number. A



**While starting a business may not be as simple as selling a handmade necklace on social media, with the right guidance the outcome of a new business may be incredible.**

Federal Tax ID Number is also known as an Employer

Identification Number (EIN) and is used to identify a business entity. It allows owners to legally hire and pay employees, pay federal taxes, apply for business licenses, and open a business bank account. After determining the business EIN determine whether or not a State Tax ID number is required. This requirement depends on the local tax and employment laws in the state.

Then one must obtain the necessary business permits and licenses. There are several levels of licenses, federal level, state level, business location level, and industry level. The Small Business Administration (SBA), has a list outlining common federal business licenses for operating a standard business.

Next, one should choose business

insurance. Business insurance can protect personal assets and business assets. Some types of insurance are required by law, such as unemployment and disability insurance. Other insurance types are just tactical to have. Common insurances include general liability insurance, product liability insurance, and commercial property insurance.

The next step is to open a business bank account in order to separate personal and business finances before you start collecting payments from clients. Some banks offer lower fees for businesses, so research the local and convenient banks for your business before opening an account.

Finally, it would be wise to sit down with a lawyer and an accountant to make sure a newly created business is covered from a legal and financial standpoint. While starting a business may not be as simple as selling a handmade necklace on social media, with the right guidance the outcome of a new business may be incredible.

# SY SYMS ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: HAVIVA TIRSCHWELL

BY TAL ORBACH  
on behalf of the *YU Observer*

The YU Observer aims to not only share aspects of student life but also to keep up with the activities of alumni in order to better connect current and past students. This month, the YU Observer interviewed Haviva Tirschwell. Haviva Tirschwell is a graduate of Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB) class of 2020. She majored in Strategy and Entrepreneurship and minored in Marketing.

**SSSB?**

I wanted to pursue a career in human resources and the management major was the best way to learn the field.

**What was your favorite part of SSSB?**

How passionate the teachers were about their prospective subjects and the correspondence of each class to my career path.

**Take advantage of the clubs and the events they organize, you never know who is speaking and how they can connect you.**

**Out of all your classes in SSSB, which do you believe impacted you the most?**

Professor Finkel's Principles of Entrepreneurship class.

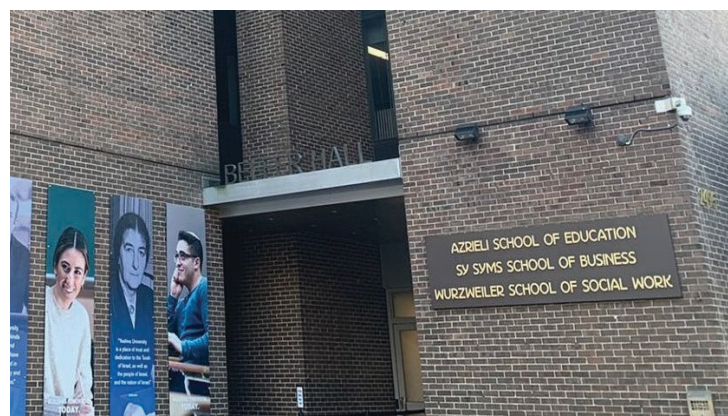
**How did SSSB prepare you for your career?**

They provided me with multiple Human Resources.

**What do you do for a living?**

I am currently working as a Human Resources assistant at Yeshiva University.

**If you could give one piece of advice to current SSSB students what would you say?**



Take advantage of the clubs and the events they organize, you never know who is speaking and how they can connect you.

If you are a Sy Syms alumni or know someone who is, please fill out this form for the opportunity to be featured in our next edition.

**What made you decide to be in**



# COMPANY DEEP DIVE: SEQUOIA CAPITAL

BY ELI LEVI,  
BUSINESS EDITOR

Sequoia Capital was one of the first in the field of venture capital (VC). To understand Sequoia Capital, however, it is necessary to understand the origins of Silicon Valley. The dawn of Silicon Valley can be traced to a group of eight employees that left Shockley Semiconductor Laboratory to start a new company, Fairchild Semiconductor. These employees went on to be known as the “traitorous eight.” Due to limited infrastructure for startups at that time, the eight went to Sherman Fairchild, one of the large investors in International Business Machines Corporations (IBM) and owner of Fairchild Camera and Instrument. Sherman set the eight up as a division of Fairchild Camera and Instrument called Fairchild Semiconductor.

Don Valentine, the founder of Sequoia Capital, was born in 1933 in Yonkers, New York. Valentine’s first job was at Raytheon Technologies in California where he also attended several marketing business courses at a local college. Marketing and product-market fit would be the key driver of Valentine’s strategy in later years.

After working in California for a bit, Valentine was recruited by Fairchild Semiconductor and was soon promoted to head of sales and marketing. He immediately proceeded to blow Fairchild’s previous sales out of the water. Valentine worked closely with Bob Noyce (one of the traitorous eight) among others developing the semiconductors that Valentine sold. In this way, Valentine “knew the future” as he put it in a later talk at Stanford because he was there when the semiconductors (the tech industry’s future) were being created and developed. As Valentine was selling the semiconductors at Fairchild he began to make small investments in the companies to whom he was selling the semiconductors. Valentine knew the important role semiconductors would play in the future and in that way “knew the future” and where the market was going. Valentine also personally knew the network of people creating and developing the latest semiconductors working at Fairchild. Finally, Valentine had an amaz-

ing set of marketing skills that he had acquired.

For the aforementioned reasons, Capital Group, which was an investment vehicle, recruited Valentine to make investments based on his unique insight. Valentine accepted and Capital Group gave him a five million dollar fund entitled Sequoia. This was a pretty risky move by Capital Group as five million dollars is a lot of money to give to one person to invest in a nonexistent industry. At the same time, Valentine was finding places to invest in the Capital Group’s fund, and Valentine wanted to start his own investment vehicle. Capital Group supported Valentine in his quest for his own fund, nevertheless, it was extremely hard to raise capital.

*To understand Sequoia Capital, however, it is necessary to understand the origins of Silicon Valley.*

In 1975, after three years of hard work, Valentine finally secured the capital for his fund. Sequoia’s first investment was a \$600,000 investment in Atari, the first and largest company in the video game space. The very next year Atari was acquired by Warner Communications for \$28 million. This was an amazing 4x return for Valentine, but it was still less than his previously stated expected return of 20x on his investments. In 1977 Sequoia invested \$150,000 in a small company called Apple, which became their biggest mistake. Valentine was forced to sell his stake in Apple for only six million dollars because the investors in that Sequoia fund needed money for tax reasons. This was one of the main reasons Sequoia would later only accept money from tax-exempt institutions; to never miss out on gains because the investors needed their money back. The second lesson Valentine learned from Apple was that the PC was going to be integral to the future. This spurred Valentine to invest in all of the supporting pieces to the PC, such as disc drives, printers, and magnetic discs. The main

investments in the early years of Sequoia centered on the hardware of the future. The hardware world was what Valentine was familiar with and that is where he put his investor’s money. One of Valentine’s best investments was when he invested \$2.5 million in Cisco for 30% of the company and Valentine stayed on the board of Cisco until the 1990s.

By the ’90s Sequoia was steadily raising about \$150 million every three years or so.

Valentine had to add new partners because a part of Sequoia’s VC model was to be actively involved in the companies they were investing in. For this reason, Valentine needed more people to help him run the show. Valentine wanted people as different from him as possible because the way things were run at Sequoia was through consensus, and if a consensus was needed then Valentine wanted as many dissenting opinions as possible. The first partner Valentine brought on was Gordon Russel who specialized in biotech and healthcare. Valentine also convinced known investor Pierre Lamond to work at Sequoia. Michael “Mike” Moritz was a journalist looking to write a newspaper about the VC world. Valentine saw Moritz’s potential and convinced him to come on the Sequoia team. Lastly, Doug Leone, who started his career at Hewlett Packard, was brought on to Sequoia in 1988.

In 1996 Valentine called Moritz and Leone into his office and told them the new age of investing was beyond his expertise. Valentine told Moritz and Leone, because they were the ones with the best track record, that they were the future of Sequoia Capital. Valentine gave Moritz and Leone the proverbial keys to run Sequoia. Valentine created

**SEQUOIA** 

Sequoia in a way that was never founder-centric. It was always about the market and where the market was going. When Valentine felt he no longer had an edge he passed the reins.

After Valentine passed the torch to Moritz and Leone, they wanted to expand into China, but Moritz and Leone knew that China was not their area of expertise. So following in their mentor’s footsteps they created a new team to invest in China. That team invested in some of the most lucrative companies there: Pinduoduo, Alibaba, Meituan, Bytedance (owns TikTok) amongst 50 or so others. Moritz and Leone worked in lockstep together for about twenty years and had some early successes with Yahoo and Google, among others. After three successive funds that did phenomenally well by any metric, Moritz and Leone had a bad fund and because of their prior success, most venture capital firms would take the loss and move on. But Sequoia worked with the companies they were invested in, to at least have some sort of return. They persevered and their investors were given a satisfactory return. Sequoia to this day is one of the most successful venture firms ever.



# ELON MUSK AND SOLVING WORLD HUNGER

BY RONI LEIDER

With a net worth of over \$300 billion, entrepreneur and business magnate Elon Musk says he is willing to consider a UN proposal presented by the UN's World Food Programme's (WFP) director, David Beasley, regarding potentially solving world hunger. Beasley has previously stated in a CNN interview that billionaires need to "step up now, on a one-time basis", making direct reference to Elon Musk and Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, two of the wealthiest men on earth. Beasley continued by saying, "\$6 billion to help 42 million people that are literally going to die if we don't reach them. It's not complicated." Musk later added that he would only consider the proposal under the conditions that the public gets a transparent view to see exactly how this money would be distributed via "open source accounting."

The program has already

detailed the distribution of the proposed wealth that Musk would be donating. Beasley replied to Musk's tweet concerning the "open source accounting" of the programme, writing that the financial statements and operational documents of the WFP are all public, and that the WFP

Generally, they are efficient in accomplishing their humanitarian development goals. In 2020, the program has provided food assistance to Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, Bangladesh and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

**Elon Musk says he is willing to consider a UN proposal presented by the UN's World Food Programme's...director**

is "an open book." To this, Musk replied "If WFP can describe on this Twitter thread exactly how \$6B will solve world hunger, I will sell Tesla stock right now and do it."

The World Food Programme is the world's largest global humanitarian organization and works in over 80 countries to create solutions that will actively combat world hunger. They are attempting to meet the needs of the masses faced with starvation and famine in impoverished nations.

According to CNN, only 2% of Musk's wealth could assist in ending the hunger.

The WFP is funded through the UN member states and the public, and this year the organization has only secured approximately 75% of its requirement. The money is absolutely crucial for the organization to prevent famine, help stabilize nations, and support mass migration. Beasley tweeted the calculations of the plan, stating, "\$.43 x 42,000,000 x 365 days = \$6.6 billion." The \$6.6 billion would



ultimately avert a crisis for 42 million people in 43 countries. This contribution by Musk would assist in filling the gap and help the organization reach its needs.

Musk proceeded to poll his 63 million twitter followers, asking them whether he should sell 10% of his stake in Tesla. With over 3.5 million votes, 58% of votes were in favor of the share sale. The share price of the sale decreased significantly, compared to before the tweet. This follows a proposal by US Congressional Democrats to target stocks of the extremely wealthy as

a means of taxing them. Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, tweeted, "We must demand that the extremely wealthy pay their fair share. Period." In response, Musk dismissed Sanders, saying, "I keep forgetting you're still alive," and then followed with a tweet saying, "Want me to sell more stock, Bernie? Just say the word..." Musk, however, did state that he would agree with an estate tax, as well as on extravagant consumption. This seems to typify ongoing rhetoric between corporate America and the progressive left.

## GAMESTOP: THE REAL STORY

BY RONI LEIDER

The headlines in January 2021 were flooded with stories of GameStop (GME) stock soaring from \$20 to \$350, and then back down to below \$50. Many in different fields seemed involved one way or another: Wall Street was being "squeezed" from their position, Robinhood stopped the ability to buy, and a man going by the name of 'Roaring Kitty' (or Keith Gill in real life) became the hallmark for financial advice due to his YouTube videos which became famous for promoting buying GameStop. After almost a year of analysis, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) finally published a report on the true events that unfolded this past winter. The conclusion: it was just crazy investors.

The behind buying shares of GameStop (GME) stock

was that the stock had a short interest over 100%. This meant that the stock had been borrowed more times than actual stock existed, also known as naked shorting. The theory was that if individual retailers banded together and pushed the price higher, it would force the short-sellers to cover their position and fight over the

**The GameStop episode shows the power of the group**

outstanding shares which would then push the shares even higher, known as a "short-squeeze." GameStop's short interest was already mentioned on Reddit in 2019 and received more attention throughout 2020. By January 2021 the short interest reached 123%, which was far larger than any other stock, and

the only one above 100%.

In the report, the SEC believes that there was no naked shorting involved with GameStop and the

percentage just reflected stock being lent multiple times. Naked shorting is considered an illegal activity, but lending a stock a few times is not, even though it looks the same in the short-interest percentage. There were a few funds that lost considerably by the time they covered their short position, but broadly, the SEC says that hedge funds and institutions were largely unaffected. Melvin Capital Management lost 53%, and is one of the few funds that lost heavily



during the event. Both Citadel and Point72 gave almost \$3 billion to Melvin to shore up its finances. There were actually several funds who joined the rally and profited from the volatile situation. Senvest Management, for example, made \$700 million! While there are a few small spikes that can be correlated with short-covering, this volume represents only a small fraction of

SEE GAMESTOP  
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## GAMESTOP

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the total traded volume, which means that the large price rally was not really affected by short-covering (Chart A).

The second theory centered around an event called a “gamma squeeze” Gamma is the element of an option price that reflects the movement of the underlying stock. When an order is put into the market, there is not always a person available to take the other side of the deal. Market makers usually will take the other side in order to make sure markets run efficiently, while receiving the difference between the buying and selling price when they sell their position to a buyer when they show up. Market makers, however, sometimes keep positions in their books for a while and in order to prevent loss due to unexpected volatility, they will attempt to hedge their position by buying the underlying stock in the event they need to deliver on the options they created. In other words, they will buy

the stock in advance so that if the stock price passes the exercise price, they will not lose when they need to deliver the stock. When many people bought GameStop long-options, it created a large short-position with the market makers. To prevent large potential losses, the market makers bought GameStop to hedge their position, which further pushed up the stock price.

The SEC, again, found that this was an unlikely cause. Normally gamma squeezes occur when there is a large increase in purchases of call options where the market makers buy the underlying asset to hedge their position. While the number of options traded increased from \$58.5 million on January 21, 2021 to \$2.8 billion on January 27, 2021, the vast majority were traders buying put options rather than call options!

In that case, what caused the spike? The SEC concluded that GME experienced a confluence of five factors: large price moves,

large volume changes, large short-interest, frequent Reddit mentions, and significant coverage in mainstream media. In another word, hype. People traded because the price was rising and wanted to join the party. Only a few months before the pandemic began, Robinhood became famous for free trading (lack of trading fees) and many other brokerages followed. Some even started offering a free share of stock for opening an account. According to the SEC report, the average age of a Robinhood account is 31 years old and maintains a balance of \$240. In 2020 approximately 6 million accounts were opened, which is a 137% increase from 2019. Of those 6 million accounts, about 1 million are investors with an average age of 19 years old. The number of individual accounts trading GameStop increased from 10,000 at the start of January to 900,000 at the peak (90x). The number of institutional accounts trading GameStop was dwarfed by the individ-

ual investor (Chart B).

The GameStop episode shows the power of the group. It may have seemed impossible in January for individual investors to have the ability to drive a stock price up 2,700%, but the SEC concluded that with strong collaboration through Reddit and social media, the price moves were mainly pushed by these individuals. This entire story introduces a major question: What other unexpected accomplishments can we accomplish through mass collaboration?

*Editor's Note: All charts can be found at [www.yuobserver.org](http://www.yuobserver.org)*

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## CLASS SCHEDULE FOR SPRING 2022

### MONDAY

**2:50 P.M.**

**Aaron Koller**

Ancient Egypt and the Bible

**4:50 P.M.**

**David Berger**

The History and Nature of Anti-Semitism

**NEW COURSE**

**6:50 P.M.**

**Josh Zimmerman**

From Catastrophe to Renewal: Polish Jewry since 1939

**Ephraim Kanarfogel**

Readings in Medieval Talmudic Commentaries and Halakhic Compendia (tractate 'Avodah Zarah)

**NEW COURSE**

### TUESDAY

**2:50 P.M.**

**JJ Schachter**

History, Memory, and the Commemoration of Catastrophe: From the Destruction of the Temples through the Holocaust

**NEW COURSE**

**4:50 P.M.**

**Jeffrey Gurock**

American Jewish History 1881-1967

**Ari Mermelstein**

Introduction to Biblical Studies

**6:50 P.M.**

**Mordechai Cohen**

Kabbalistic vs. Philosophical Exegesis

**Ephraim Kanarfogel**

Introduction to the Literature of the Rishonim

### WEDNESDAY

**2:50 P.M.**

**Shalom Holtz**

Book of Jeremiah

**4:50 P.M.**

**Jess Olson**

German Jewish Intellectual History

**6:50 P.M.**

**Josh Karlip**

In the Land of Atheism: Rabbinic Thought and Writing in the Soviet Union

**NEW COURSE**

**Daniel Rynhold**

Survey of Modern Jewish Philosophy: Evil & Suffering

### THURSDAY

**2:50 P.M.**

**Shira Weiss**

Dogma in Medieval Jewish Thought

**Joseph Angel**

Rabbinic Aramaic of Eretz Yisrael

**NEW COURSE**

**4:50 P.M.**

**Steven Fine**

Jewish Art & Visual Culture

**Richard Hidary**

Topics in Aggadah: Talmudic Stories

**6:50 P.M.**

**Ronnie Perelis**

Varieties of Jewish Autobiography

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