



The Yeshiva University OBSERVER

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EDITORIALS

On Lifting Up Our Front Line By Shoshanah Marcus, Editor in Chief

There is something extremely satisfying about the trip home from work.



Many times, especially when there is less traffic, this travel can be a deep exhale that acts as a way to leave the stressors from one's job outside of one's home. For most front line healthcare workers, however, this last year and a half has been one very very long day of work.

Despite this seemingly never ending work day for healthcare workers, even the most essential of personnel do find themselves back at home eventually. While over the last year and a half my home has transformed into the ultimate safety and security from the unknown accompanying the COVID-19 pandemic, for most healthcare workers deep uncertainty has permeated into the safe space of their homes.

The phrase "front line healthcare worker" arose at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic as a means of describing those individuals who were directly combatting the virus. Before this, "front line" was a military term describing the soldiers in battle who were closest to the enemy. Just as many soldiers who encounter the brunt of the battle often have difficulty integrating back to their regular lifestyle, so too do front line healthcare professionals. Front line physicians, and especially

Critical Care doctors, are put in a uniquely difficult decision because, according to [Carolyn Barber](#) in "Critical Care Doctors are in Crisis", "Physicians, especially intensivists, are trained to react in the moment and to push off emotional considerations for later. In the age of COVID, with its seemingly relentless waves of illness and death, that has proved impossible, in part because 'later' never seems to arrive."

My father, a Critical Care Intensivist, has been the last face that many patients with COVID-19 have seen, has had to break devastating news to loved ones, and has consoled countless nurses, physician assistants, and doctors who are on the brink of a mental breakdown. My father has recited kadish for many Jewish patients, and he has even recited *viduy* (confessions) and asked his family for *mechilah* (forgiveness) during the peak of the virus.

These responsibilities can become extremely overwhelming for frontline physicians, and, according to Barber, "In a recent national survey of roughly 12,000 doctors, more than half of critical care physicians reported burnout." Barber cites "staffing and personal protective equipment (PPE) shortages, the death toll, personal safety concerns, a feeling of inadequacy in providing emotional support to patients and their families" as well as "carry[ing] the sadness, blame and grief that's often directed at them from patients" that "all contribute to a wave of difficulty that, deep into the summer of 2021, continues to build. "

Just as many doctors feel a deeply rooted sense of responsibility to their patients, the community has a responsibility to care for them. With the potential of a new coronavirus variant on the rise, it is time that we as a community protect those who have been fighting the brunt of the battle. Growing up in a family full of healthcare providers, I can say with experience that it is often difficult for those who have such a vast amount of knowledge about the human body to admit that they themselves are in need of help. "More than one in seven ICU staff reported thoughts of suicide or self-harm," says Barber and therefore it is critical that we as a community have to normalize healthcare providers seeking help. There are many hotlines available including [The Physician Support Line](#), which Barber describes "is a free and confidential service, staffed by volunteer psychiatrists, that offers support for physicians and U.S. medical students." To reach their hotline, call 1-888-409-0141 between the hours of 8 A.M. and 1 A.M. ET.

Our Responsibility to Mental Health

By Danielle Lane, Managing Editor

As we begin our emergence into the world there is a weight on our society with which we must reckon. While we have spent the last year tirelessly seeking out the truth on the most effective ways of protecting our physical health, many of us have allowed our mental health and the mental health of our community to fall to the



wayside. During the past year we have taken great pains to follow physical health guidelines, to wear our masks, to social distance, to stay in our homes. But what have we done to protect our mental health?

During these next few months, during this heightened period of change it is important that we as students check in with ourselves both physically and mentally. We have been isolated from those we love for over a year, missing birthdays, *bnei mitvot*, and weddings. We have endured hard days and long nights without our support system of friends and family. The excitement to burst into this next chapter of our lives may be overwhelming but we must stop to make sure we are taking care of both our social needs as well as our mental needs.

There are many ways to do this; the first is to remember we have all experienced a massive trauma together. Consequently, our anxiety is valid and shared by many. Furthermore, large social gatherings are unexpectedly more stressful and exhausting. . It's normal to not always be feeling the joy and relief that we have been talking about since March 2020. It's possible that our basic tasks and errands may take more emotional and physical energy than they used to, our social interactions may leave us feeling less satisfied than we remember, and our day to day lives may feel less exciting than we have been anticipating.

As a member of the YU community you are not alone. Not only are your teachers and friends here to listen to and support you but so are the mental health services provided by Yeshiva

University. The Yeshiva University [Counseling Center](#) offers many free services to students including individual counseling sessions relating to anxiety, depression, and LGBTQ+ matters.

Now more than ever we must stand together as a community to support each other as we face this new chapter.

Mental Health in a Yeshiva Setting By: Gabe Gross, News Editor

This is a short article representing my feelings and sharing some tools that I've found to be useful in dealing with mental



health in a male *yeshiva* setting. It is much easier to help others than to help ourselves, but hopefully this can be a wake up call to those who need to help themselves. I apologize for not including *midrashot* (seminaries) in this article, but I felt it would be inappropriate to talk about an experience that I did not have. I hope that this article will be applicable to that world as well.

One of the biggest values that people often take away from their *yeshiva* experience is the ability to be productive. The positive *aveerah* (atmosphere) in the *beis midrash* (place of study) is unmatched in pushing everyone to put forward 100% effort. While this value is obviously a positive, there can be negative impacts that particularly appear amongst anyone struggling with mental health issues. Although I believe everyone can benefit from utilizing these simple tools (that I

will go through in detail later), I am not necessarily speaking to people who have not gone through these struggles, but rather analyzing and coming up with methods to help those who have/are going through this struggle in life or in *yeshiva*.

Given that we are all human, we tend to judge people and characterize them based on what we see. It's easy to understand why your *chavruta* (study partner) wasn't in *shiur* (class) if he got into a car accident. Within the view of mental health, empathy is significantly more difficult. Comments arise such as: "I also get sad, but that doesn't mean I miss *shiur*," "getting up is hard for everyone. He is just lazy," or "everyone gets nervous but we just have to push through." If you read those and thought, "wow, what an insensitive person," I believe that response might be part of the problem. When something is obvious to us we tend to dislike explaining it and even get frustrated at others inability to understand. It's possible that the world would be a much better place if instead of talking about the person making comments as being insensitive, we directly address the issues the person raises in order to confront the problems at hand.

Depression and anxiety are not simply extensions of sadness and nervousness. Our societal rhetoric too often deems anxiety and depression as extremes of regular emotions instead of addressing them as serious mental health challenges. Depression is not simply "extreme sadness." Rather, it is a medical issue with the brain. It is as if you told someone with a broken arm that they just "hurt their arm really badly" and should be able to move it.

In my personal experience, I always felt extremely insecure about my “beis time.” I strived to be as productive as possible, yet on the days when I felt extremely depressed or anxious, I just collapsed and beat myself up over not being the ideal person I wanted to be. It’s very easy for other people to fall into this judgmental paradigm of presuming we know the entire story of the person who is not up for *seder* (learning) or not spending “late nights in the *beis*.” Our biggest challenge is when these thoughts come from within and become a part of the story we tell ourselves about who we are as a person. They cast a looming doubt on our own self-worth, and the worst case scenario can lead to terrible depression and even suicidal ideation.

These are ideas that helped me in *yeshiva*:

1. Speaking to trusted *rebbeim*/people you look up to: We should understand that they are probably not judging you as harshly as you judge yourself. Simply explaining where you are at and communicating your mental health challenges enables you to create the space that is necessary for you to succeed in *yeshiva*. The same way that you would speak to your *rebbeim* if both of your arms were broken and you could not write, you should speak to them about potential mental health struggles you’re having in *yeshiva*.

2. Holding yourself to your own standards: Role models can be great and empowering if used correctly. Realizing that you want to emulate the value of a role model and not the role model themselves is the key to healthy growth. Under no circumstances should you ever compare yourself to someone else

because after all, you’re not them, you’re you. The truest form of self-growth, which is derived from kabbalistic/*chassidic* texts through the panentheistic lens (the belief that the divine pervades and interpenetrates every part of the universe and also extends beyond space and time), is that the only person you should strive to be is the highest extension of yourself. Asking yourself the questions: Who do I want to be? Why do I want to be that way? Does G-d want me to be that way? And how do I become that way? are sure-fire to creating a platform for healthy emotional and spiritual growth.

3. Seeking help when needed: Although I personally did not experience this in my *yeshiva*, others have told me that it can be considered looked down upon to seek real help like therapy. Although your *rebbeim* and friends can provide essential growth and advice, at the end of the day, they are not and should not be your therapists. The distinctions lie in the degree/professionalism/objectivity that they express over you. I will link several organizations in Israel and America that can help you find a therapist for your gap year/extended *yeshiva* experience.

4. Learn/do what you love; not what everyone else loves. To be more forthright: It’s okay if you do not feel *olam haba* (the world to come) every-time you learn *gemara* (talmud). *Machshava* (Jewish thought), Tanach, halakha, and aggada are all beautiful and fascinating parts of *Talmud Torah* (the study of Torah). Although we should always strive to learn as much as we can, taking breaks to read your favorite novel or to discuss a topic with friends is in no way shape or

form *bitul torah* (time wasted from learning torah).

Even if you yourself are not struggling with these very issues, you may develop them later in life, and you most likely have friends who are in the various aforementioned situations. I would charge anyone reading this to give some thought as to how they can be an agent of change to a problem that is sweeping through our communities.

My Experience on NCSY Hatzalah Rescue

By Rebecca Aduculesi, News Editor

Going into NCSY Hatzalah Rescue, I really didn’t know what to expect. I applied to be an advisor on the program almost on a whim; I was sifting through the NCSY Summer packet that was mailed to my house, and I happened upon a program that combined medicine and inspiring Jewish teenagers. These are two things I am quite passionate about, so with little information on what the program actually entailed, I applied. A few months later, I was on a flight to *Eretz Yisrael* with thirty-four high school kids from across the country. And that was just the beginning.

I am often asked what Hatzalah Rescue is all about. “Are you an EMT? Did you ride around in an ambulance all day? Did you save any lives?” The answer to all these questions is no.

Shortly after arriving in *Eretz Yisrael*, the high-schoolers and staff members took a sixty-hour course spanning



several days in order to become certified as emergency medical responders (EMR), which is a step below an EMT. In order to train to become an EMT, as opposed to training to become an EMR, one would have to complete an additional sixty hours of training and pass an exam. Nonetheless, an EMR certification is enough to allow a group of rowdy teenagers to ride around in ambulances with EMTs and literally be the first responders to real life emergencies.

I learned a lot of things on Hatzalah Rescue, and most of them did not come from the sixty-hour EMR course. Being surrounded by teenagers all day, I learned that there is often much more to a person than first meets the eye. I quickly learned that so many of the happy, peppy, go-with-the-flow kids were actually dealing with tremendous hardships and challenges back at home. Hearing their stories was enough to bring me to tears, and I have never davened *shemoneh esrei* (a Jewish prayer) with such emotion as I did when davening for them.

Another immensely valuable lesson I learned is to always ask people how they are doing. Probably 95% of the time you'll get a "doing well thanks how about you," but for the 5% of scenarios when someone is on the brink of tears and desperate to pour their heart out to someone, just asking a simple question can make all the difference.

Besides riding around on ambulance shifts, a large part of the program was touring *Eretz Yisrael* (the land of Israel). We travelled to all the holy sites, rowed banana boats in Eilat, and went repelling in Mitzpei Rimon.

Through it all, I learned another valuable lesson: you can influence others most strongly by just being yourself. It is one thing to preach, but it is another thing to practice what you preach. There were so many instances in which kids came up to me and told me they respect a religious action I did, not because I told them about it, but because they watched me do it. There is a power to lead by example, and I saw that quite prominently on Hatzalah Rescue.

I can go on about a million and one things that I gained from Hatzalah Rescue, but I will end with one. Being in *Eretz Yisrael* for the summer reminded me that *Eretz Yisrael* is where we belong. Yes, *galus* (exile) is extraordinarily comfortable and convenient. But there is a certain *kedusha* (holiness) to *Eretz Yisrael* that one can feel but not explain. As Jews, it is crucial to constantly return to *Eretz Yisrael* in order to remind ourselves of where home truly is, and IYH we will all get to the point in our lives when we can move there permanently. *Eretz Yisrael* is where every Jew is meant to be, and IY"H (with G-d's help) *mashiach* (messiah) will come *bimheira biyameinu* (speedily and in our days). See you at the *mikdash* (Temple)!

A Practical Guide on How to Successfully Survive College: YU Edition

By Mili Chizhik, News Editor

One of the most daunting experiences I have ever gone through was leaving high school a year early and going straight to college. Without knowing anyone or knowing whether I was ready, I threw



myself into the seemingly frightening abyss: being an undergraduate student.

While many claim that to succeed in college after skipping your senior year of high school requires one to be an absolute genius, realistically anyone can do it with effort, focus, and knowing how to beat the system. While each individual has a different way they approach their academic career, there are general tips that can apply to every one of all different walks of life and career paths.

1.) Plan out a list of courses to take each semester.

One of the first things a student should do when they start college is to have a breakdown of all the courses one plans to take each semester. While the schedule will provide structure to one's college career, it should be used flexibly and one should be ready to move things around to make room for the classes they would need. During the planning of the classes one takes, one should open themselves to different subjects, regardless of their major and career endeavors; this will not only give them a more expansive education, but it will make one a more well-rounded person.

2.) Meet with an academic advisor before course registration.

Despite the student ideally having their semester course schedules that lay out each requirement they need to graduate, they should meet with an academic advisor (general and/or

Judaic) prior to every registration period. These meetings will ensure that they are signing up for the correct courses and that they're on the right track. Furthermore, when one meets with an academic advisor that they work well

with, they should stick with the advisor throughout college; the advisor would then be familiar with the student and perhaps even build a relationship with them.

3.) Register for your classes ASAP.

After meeting with the academic advisor to confirm the correct classes, one should try to register as soon as they can because classes get filled up quickly with older students. One should have the list of the Course Registration Numbers (CRN) ready before they start to register.

4.) Pinpoint what works for you.

After successfully registering for one's classes and starting the new semester, one should figure out what works best for them. For example, one should experiment with what is the best way to stay on top of their assignments and due dates; this can be through using digital applications, planners, reminders, to-do lists, etc. Another important thing to find out is the location of where one studies best, whether it's a study room, library, dorm room, café, or classroom. Additionally, one should utilize different modes of learning to learn productively, such as using a study group, using a tutor, reading the textbook, watching videos, or simply studying on one's own with their notes. Lastly, one should not compare their methods or ways of studying to the way others study; everyone studies differently and at their own pace, so one mustn't get caught up in believing that they need to do the same thing as their peers.

5.) Familiarize yourself with the different offices and things offered by YU.

Most universities, like YU, have many different offices that each have their own function and realm of responsibility. Having a basic understanding of what each office

does will make one's experience simpler when one wants to receive help or some sort of service as a student. One incredibly useful tool is the YU Library website to access academic journals and books that can be used for any research needed for courses. The counseling center, career center, and office of student life are just three examples of the many important offices that most students end up approaching at least once during their college career.

6.) Create a resume.

One should create a resume in the beginning of college and should be ready to add all their experiences, jobs, honors, awards, etc. throughout their college career. Having the resume already written and revised will save a lot of time and stress when one wants to apply for a job or internship opportunity.

7.) Be on top of your spending.

Being a university student is almost synonymous with having to spend a lot of money on a variety of things. For example, it may seem that at the beginning of the semester one has unlimited money on their meal plan, however, the sushi rolls and coffees quickly add up and can leave one with not as much money as they had previously anticipated. Therefore, one should roughly estimate what their weekly or daily expenditure should be to comfortably make it to the end of the semester. Additionally, one should not buy the textbooks that their classes require before checking out whether the library has a copy or if someone is selling it via a Facebook group, like YU Marketplace or Stern in the Know.

8.) Join clubs and student organizations on campus.

While many students prioritize their academics over anything else, one should not disregard the importance

and benefits of participating in on-campus activities and student organizations. One can meet more of their peers, learn more about the relevant topics, and expand their list of extracurriculars for professional and academic purposes. One should also not restrict themselves to being involved in extracurriculars that are related to their major or career path.

9.) Befriend Upperclassmen.

One of the biggest tips given to students should be to befriend older students as they not only can make great friends, one can get advice on being a student and look at them as role models as well. Older students will provide students with the inside look of being a student and how each course conducts itself, things that an academic advisor or faculty member will likely not be able to share with the students.

10.) Take advantage of New York City.

Whether one is a New York native or an out-of-towner, they should take advantage of the campus being in New York City. Almost anything is a subway and/or bus ride away, ranging from famous tourist attractions, art museums, or concert halls. Being familiar with the subway map and using the My MTA app will ensure that one can get around New York City with the best efficiency at any time.

While there are plenty more tips one can find and get from their fellow students, these will get you far and will help smooth out the rest of your college career. Good luck and may your studies and experiences only prove to be successful and meaningful!

Adapting to the Age of Information Through Podcasts

By Eli Saperstein, Opinions Editor

I have always been fascinated and interested in so many different topics. I've wanted to learn about philosophy, history, politics, and so many other subjects in a more formal setting than "just" conversations with friends and acquaintances. The reason for this is that in my experience, my peers and I generally rehash the "topic of the day" that happens to be getting more screen time, usually due to current events, filtered through our particular political lenses as opposed to increasing our knowledge about a particular issue. Unfortunately, as an accounting major, I cannot learn about these topics in a class or dedicate a worthwhile amount of time reading up on these subjects or pursuing these topics in another, more formal setting. Even though the information is easily accessible because every single topic ever discussed or thought of is on the internet at this point, I do not know where to start, since there is no direction or guide for me to follow. I know the information is out there, but in my experience, there is no natural starting point for me to begin my course of study.



In the past, when people wanted to learn more about various topics, they opened up a book. We all know [the story](#) about how Abraham Lincoln walked miles to borrow reading materials, and these weren't even necessarily educational! Needless to say, he later became one of the most memorable presidents to date. I can only imagine it had something to do

with his character and drive to acquire more knowledge.

We all wish we could be more knowledgeable, but in the age of instant gratification and constantly being busy with other responsibilities, opening up a book and being able to take the time to sit down and delve into the content is a luxury only available for many on *Shabbos* (Sabbath), if ever.

When was the last time you opened a book and finished it when it wasn't required reading? Of course, many of us have the opportunity to read on *Shabbos* (Sabbath), but even so, is reading once a week enough to satisfy one's desire to know more about the world we live in? Our generation, a generation with more information at our fingertips than existed in every previous generation [combined](#) since the dawn of civilization, is facing a problem like no other. We, unlike many previous generations, have *too much* information readily available. Another factor in the steady decline in time spent reading is our many other modes of entertainment. Given a choice between an educational book or a thrilling TV series, many of us know what we tend to choose. We now have more [content](#) that has been created for public consumption than one can consume in a lifetime. We are living in a generation of [information overload](#). It is now not a matter for most *if* they will be filling up their time so much as *what* they will spend their time on.

Listening to podcasts might be the perfect option for those of you who, like me, have always wanted to learn about your particular interest at a higher level but also, like me, have

never had the path or the conviction to open up a book dedicated to the topic. However, suppose, despite all the obstacles, you are still interested in learning about your favorite topic of interest and more. In that case, I know that I have significantly benefited from listening to podcasts and would definitely recommend them as a medium to learn! Listening to podcasts is an easy, convenient, and generally free way of learning about your favorite topic that requires a lot less effort on the "student's" part!

I, like many others, used to doubt the efficacy of listening to a podcast. So many people do not have the right approach or sometimes even the right voice for podcasting! Who to spend your most precious resource, time, on? I've resolved this issue, at least for myself, by multitasking while listening to podcasts. Going about my daily life while listening to podcasts allows me to listen at my leisure without dedicating a specific amount of time to learning about the subject I am interested in. Of course, it is best to listen to a podcast while you are doing something that doesn't require too much concentration; otherwise, it can lead to more wasted time in the future.

Of course, like any other method of obtaining information, podcasts have their problems. In my experience, there doesn't seem to be a way to verify the trustworthiness of any given podcast. One can only assume that a recognized podcast does its own fact-checking. This is a concern for me because it is so easy for anyone to make a podcast. Like with any other source of information, it is best to take what you hear with a

grain of salt and verify what you hear.

With the [explosion of podcasts](#) during the pandemic, podcasting has become a perfect example of quantity versus quality. Choosing a podcast and sticking with it can be difficult as some podcasts are little more than nonsense designed to be entertaining and [advertising bait](#). Some, of course, are very informative, but ads on a podcast can be very disorienting and can quickly make you wish you never began the podcast in the first place. Another issue that I've encountered is, as anyone who has ever had that high school experience where the author of whatever novel you read in English class was bland or difficult to understand, podcasts are no different. Communication styles are different between the spoken word and the written word. While this may seem obvious to everyone, many podcasters don't seem to realize that! When discussing podcasts with my peers, another issue that frequently came up was that the choice to listen to a particular podcast or not really depended on how the person sounded! Whether it is a poorly edited podcast or simply the podcaster's voice, that can be the difference between an enjoyable podcast and one where you will not listen to the next episode, assuming you can get through the first one. However, having a nasally, high-pitched voice or otherwise less appealing voice is not necessarily a dealbreaker. A perfect example of this would be Ben Shapiro, a talk show host on the Daily Wire, who has mentioned that many people have told him that they don't like his voice! However, despite all this, he seems to have many who listen to his show.

There are so many genres of podcast entertainment; while most are generally designed to be informative, there are as many podcasts as there are topics to talk about. For example, I initially began listening to political podcasts like The Ben Shapiro Show and [NPR's Politics Podcast](#). However, over this past summer, I began to listen to all sorts of podcasts like Dan Carlin's [Hardcore History](#) to delve into my deep-seated interest in history a bit more on topics covered without nuance in elementary school. It was an eye-opening experience. When I was looking for something a bit more profound and philosophical, peeking behind the curtain of why society is the way it is and what it potentially could be, I would listen to [Stephen Partons' Society In Question](#).

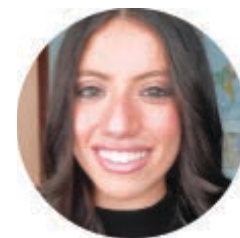
I listened to podcasts about the Israel/Palestine conflict, realizing just how little I actually knew about the history of events that occurred. I also learned an incredible amount about the effects of the atomic bomb and how it impacted not just peace, but war. While these podcasts reflect some of my more "constructive" interests, I also absolutely loved listening to more fun, fandom-type podcasts for Avatar the Last Airbender and Harry Potter universes, which are some of my favorite topics of discussion. Thanks to me getting introduced to podcasts such as [Potterless](#) and [Avatar: Braving the Elements](#), I have been able to learn more about these fandoms without having to "work" for them (or rewatching for the tenth time) and spend my time researching these (while fun to talk about) not necessary bits of information. There are, of course, so many other genres

of podcasts but the ones I have listed reflected my particular interests.

There is so much information available to us so easily that it is overwhelming, and yet we rarely do anything to change that. Now is a perfect time to begin listening to your favorite podcast. However, be warned, before you start listening to podcasts 24/7, think about when is a good time to listen to podcasts. This is not a simple yes or no question, as different podcasts have different required concentration levels. For example, some might decide to listen at work, but depending on how engaged you need to be at your work, you need to determine whether you should be listening to a more or less focus-intensive podcast. Work is not the only place you can listen to podcasts, of course. On the road is a typical time to listen to podcasts, but again, the rules of the road and the podcast should be considered before you do. Personally, I generally listen to podcasts when I do something that requires little to no concentration, like the routine cleaning of my pristine room, or folding laundry, or packing to move into my YU dorm room. Something you can do by rote and is generally a frustratingly dull and tedious task can now be turned into a fun, productive, and enjoyable time. Happy listening!

The Humor in the Unknown

By: Esther Perez, Opinions Editor



One thing that I believe is a byproduct of growing up and seeing beyond the glimmer of childhood, is

realizing that there are no guarantees in life. One can never know what will happen from second to second, and that realization can paint the world in a very frightening way. Uncertainty is the foundation of most suffering. Most people were reported to prefer a definite and expected painful thing occurring to them, rather than the possibility of that same thing happening at an unknown time. There is no doubt that the pain of the unknown is valid, but that doesn't mean we have to be a victim to these potentially crippling situations.

When we think about what makes a joke funny, we could suggest the tone, timing, or context. But what really makes the punchline stick is the unexpected ending that no one saw coming. There's a reason why the potency of a joke decreases the more you hear it, no matter how identical the delivery is to that first time you heard it, as it is impossible to match the experience of hearing a joke for the first time, a second time. When you know what is coming, the joke isn't as funny anymore. While many situations, of course, require solemnity and seriousness, and Judaism certainly doesn't glorify lightheadedness or foolish behavior during matters that warrant a serious attitude. Sometimes the best coping mechanism for a situation that has absolutely no warning is to see the humor in it. When a person doesn't have the preparation needed to maintain a positive mindset to help them through the challenge and create new ways to adapt, we can try to make our instantaneous reaction by finding the funny within the unforeseen.

Although this can come naturally to some people, many of us are not as

adept at seeing past the initial hurt and surprise. The punchline is buried too far beneath the shock and numbness of the present situation. Sometimes we need to retrain ourselves not to take things too personally and to lighten ourselves by slightly removing ourselves from the intensity of the current situation. Part of finding something amusing is having the mental adaptability to see beyond the hurt and to acknowledge that great things can come in unexpected packages. Sometimes the situation calls for not taking ourselves too seriously. Being able to see the laughter in the sudden collapse of plans or expectations can be a healthy way to overcome disappointment. Embracing the twists and turns of life builds a mental resilience to the things in life that are unknown and have a high chance of things falling through. Like the old saying goes: "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em." Instead of fighting against the currents of the things you can't change, sometimes ride the wave and see where the situation takes you.

While this obviously cannot be expected for every situation- and as I mentioned, sometimes this approach may be inappropriate- most of our everyday inconveniences that get us so wound up can be released with a mental reset. Whether your mental reset is letting go of your baggage through humor or some other positive coping mechanism, I wish everyone a mentally healthy and wonderful start of the year!

Tampa Bay Champions: More Than Just A Title
By Renee Lisbon,
Features Editor

When it comes to winning in a sport, people think it is all

about the title. While that may be true, people tend to overlook the aspect of what comes with winning. Winning a championship in a sport not only brings pride and financial recognition to the team's organization, but also to the city that the team is representing. Tampa Bay sports is one of the prime examples and reasons why Tampa is now named the [best city in Florida](#), topping Miami, and the 22nd best city in the country.

There are many reasons to admire Tampa, Florida. The beaches, skylines, and boardwalks are all home to the two title championships. In 2021, [the Lightning won the NHL Stanley Cup championship](#) for the second time in a row defeating the Montreal Canadiens. Their wins captivated the Buccaneers which led them to host and win the 2021 NFL Super Bowl Championships at their very own home field. On the other hand, even though the Rays did not win the MLB 2020 World Series, they bought themselves a great success on landing in the 2019 MLB playoffs and an American League East title in 2020.

A lot of Tampa's, including the Mayor of Tampa, Jane Castor, are now calling [Tampa Bay "Champa Bay"](#). Tampa's sports success has brought in media exposure and tourism, allowing small businesses to boost and renovate the city with their sales. This includes bars hosting watch parties for the big game, hotels creating a special weekend package for tourists, and companies advertising a product affiliated with the big event.

In the midst of the pandemic, it is no shock that many businesses



had to shut down, causing unemployment rates to increase. For a lot of business owners in downtown Tampa, the Bucs winning the Super Bowl was not just a title but a relief. The morning after the Bucs won the Super Bowl, many people came into local businesses, including small shops, to buy merchandise including jerseys, hats, keychains, stickers, etc., even when the products had not come in yet. Roberto Torres, the owner of Black and Denim, a clothing outfitter store in Tampa, made a [statement](#) to the Tampa Bay Times that the best thing that could have happened to him was “that the Super Bowl was in Tampa, and that our team won the game”. Even though the excitement will wear down, the future of Tampa for the next ten to fifteen years is only going to grow.

As someone who has been living in Tampa for the past five years, I was never a Tampa fan. I followed my parent’s footsteps in becoming a fan for the New York and D.C. teams, where my family and I are from. However, I would say, after seeing such success, one Tampa sport’s team that is growing on me is the Rays (sorry mom and dad, Yankees is still my number one). I know I am not the only one who is fascinated by the improvements not just from the Rays but Tampa sports as a whole. It is a bit crazy to see how much recognition they are receiving. It used to be that Tampa's history with sports was just a national punchline. But now, with their leading championship titles, when everyone hears Tampa, they think of the thriving success from their teams and the impact on their communities.

In a city full of life and culture in a time of isolation, one of the few

things that has brought everyone together is sports. In sports, it does not matter what your age, race, religion, gender, sexuality, or political affiliation are, everyone is accepted. Unless you are rooting for the enemy’s team, then you should probably take a few self-defense classes. In all seriousness though, sports have brought in joy, community, and passion. And in Tampa, they have continuously proven to the world what you can do when everyone comes together, even when coming together has not been so easy.

Higher Grounds: Refining Your Coffee Culture

By Avior Hazan, Features Editor

This past summer I made thousands of peoples' days better. Surprisingly, the means were relatively simple: I became a coffee barista for a locally owned coffeehouse. Although I know most people can show a certain appreciation for coffee, it really is amazing that forcing piping hot water through some fancy beans can make you from sluggish and tired to energized and motivated. I was fortunate enough to learn from experienced baristas at “Nordic Bakery”, a European Café located just a mile from the Boardwalk in Hollywood, Florida. Notwithstanding the 4:00 am wake-ups, serving as a barista has not only opened my eyes to the culture of coffee, but the lack thereof.

Let me explain: “Can I please have a caramel macchiato?” says the confident customer in front of me.



“Certainly! That will be \$4.50” I say. I turn around, pull two shots of espresso, and conduct the procedure to make the perfect Latte. Why? The answer is simple. Real coffee enthusiasts know that Starbucks Coffee has spoiled the virtue of true European coffee culture. In fact, a “Traditional” European Macchiato is simple: espresso, topped with a dab of foam in the center of the crema (the natural foam which accumulates at the top of an espresso shot). Further, they certainly do not add any flavors, other than sugar of course. Much different from this is the Starbucks “macchiato” that Starbucks lovers across the world have come to love -- which is actually neither a macchiato, nor a latte.

Another example of this phenomenon is with the americano, which interestingly originated from American Soldiers in Italy during WWII. When Italian coffee (just plain espresso) was too bitter for them, they began adding small amounts of water, which is exactly what an “Americano” is. Nowadays however, serve an American a traditional Americano, and you will likely be met with an unhappy customer. Having not known the difference, I would be upset, too.

Afterall, knowing your coffee is knowing what your caffeine intake levels work best for you, and what flavors make your day sweeter. I have found that finding a rhythm is what is most important, no matter if you go with Starbucks, Dunkin’, or the YU cafeteria, find what you like best and stick with it. More than the antics of picky baristas such as myself, there really are plenty of amazing coffee options available. My personal recommendation for an

extra boost: A simple iced latte with two shots of espresso — which will certainly get you up and running for the start of the semester!

As they say in Norway, Skål!

Another COVID-19 Catch-22
By Gitty Boshnack, Science & Technology Editor

Maskinators:

While this sounds like a COVID and Terminator mashup or some crazy sci-fi movie, it's our reality. Many



people who were vaccinated earlier this year thought that they would no longer be required to wear masks in public areas. While it definitely wasn't the only consideration for me, it was undoubtedly an important one. With the rise of the Delta Variant, the Federal Government has been pushing states to institute mask mandates. About 50% of the US population [is vaccinated](#) for COVID-19, and 90% of the 60+ age group is vaccinated. Why then is the government pushing for masking after vaccinating?

[The daily Covid-19 case rate](#) for the past seven days is at 99,727, but the dead toll for the past seven days is consistently at 454, which does not differ much from the previous week. There is a significant disconnect between the death rate and the case rate. This shows that the panic that's ripping through the media may not be entirely necessary. [In February 2021](#), when we had the same rate of infections, we also had about 2,569 deaths per day. As reported by the New York Times editorial board, the

Delta surge is poised to be less severe than previous surges in the United States. [The current variant](#), however fast its infecting is not as threatening as what we've seen prior. That's why the Delta Variant is so contagious--because people can pass it along and continue their daily living while they are sick with it.

[CNN](#) reports that people who vaccinate reduce their chances for reinfection by at least half. However, the majority of vaccinated people will be prevented from severe illness and death. There has yet to be a vaccine developed that can prevent infection that would require a different sort of vaccine, and this is why we are seeing thousands of cases of reinfection. Rochelle Walensky, the head of the CDC, said in an interview, "I think we all have to recognize that with 164 million people who are vaccinated, we should expect tens of thousands, perhaps, of breakthrough infections."

The issue is that when public officials start instating mask mandates, the public deduces the vaccines are ineffective, which creates additional vaccine hesitancy. This is the wrong message to send because the vaccines effectively do what they are supposed to do: prevent death. This brings us to the current catch-22; while the public health officials want to institute mask mandates to stop the spread of the Delta Variant, they end up promoting mask hesitancy. In addition, if we're encouraging mask-wearing on top of vaccination, the message given is that the masks are stronger than the vaccines. In the end, though the Delta Variant spread may be slowed by the masking and quarantining, fewer people will vaccinate, and when the next variant

comes around, we'll be in the same place as we are now.

It is unilaterally agreed upon that vaccinations will bring the pandemic to its end. The problem is that the mask culture war continues until the population reaches a higher level of herd immunity. We, the younger population, trail dramatically in terms of the percentage that are vaccinated. Between the Federal and Local governments and us, we have the upper hand in convincing our unvaccinated friends. Notwithstanding our moral responsibility to promote safety and the wellbeing of our peers, if we want to see the end of the pandemic, we must encourage our unvaccinated peers to get vaccinated.

My Summer at Camp HASC: What I Gained from Giving
By Leia Rubinstein, Sci-Tech Editor



My summer consisted of twelve-hour workdays filled with physical labor, but it was the most enjoyable summer I have ever had. This was my experience as a counselor at Camp HASC; the exhilarating environment of the camp and the bond that I formed with my campers made it so helping special needs individuals with every aspect of their personal lives, was transformed from what could have been challenging drudgery in any other setting, into a fun and meaningful experience.

Rav Judah Mischel, the Executive Director at Camp HASC, explained this phenomenon by comparing a summer at Camp HASC to Purim, a Jewish holiday, which is a day of giving to others without expecting

anything in return. For instance, part of the obligations of the day is the requirement to give over two food items to one person as well as to donate “*matanos l’evyonim*” to charity. However, there is another essential aspect to Purim, which is that Purim is a joyous day where “anything goes.” We have the tradition of dressing up in costumes, and as recorded in the Talmud, one is required to drink at the festive meal of Purim until they are unable to distinguish between the cursed Haman and the blessed Mordechai.

It may seem curious that Purim, a day of giving, would also be one of the happiest days of the Jewish calendar where we are required to be silly and carefree. However, we can learn a valuable lesson from Purim: the importance of not viewing life as simply transactional. When we give to others without expecting something back in return, we adopt a mindset of not always needing validation. Instead, we can learn to live in the present and not hold grudges or ruminate over past mistakes.

Camp HASC is two months of Purim; while I spent my time giving to those who cannot give anything in return, I had one of the most enjoyable summers of my life. There was never a second when I felt that I was in a one-way relationship with my campers. My campers and all the campers of Camp HASC plastered a constant smile on my face. They created an environment where the atmosphere was akin to that of “Purim.” Camp HASC was a place where I was able to forget my anxieties and be happy. The difficult times did not detract from the overall excitement of camp because of the

carefree and giving attitude I was able to adopt.

This year I celebrated Rosh Chodesh Elul, the beginning of the Teshuva period, at Camp HASC and I could not have thought of a more appropriate place to be spending it. The two months I spent as a counselor taught me a valuable lesson on achieving Teshuva: the power of living in the moment and letting things go. In fact, one of the acronyms of Elul is “*ish l’rayehu u’matanot l’evyonim*,” a person should give food to his friend and money to the poor, which reminds us of the Purim mindset amidst this period of Teshuva. My campers never bore a grudge or over-thought something that they did. In this way, they were able to both have and teach me how to have a more peaceful and carefree life. This Elul, by embodying this lesson of living in the present, we can achieve complete repentance and change our lives for the better.

“The Three Rs,” Reading, (w)Riting, and (a)Rithmetic: Are we Moving Upstream or Downstream?

By Nicole Abittan, Science and Technology Editor

If a class of high school students were to be polled on whether reading, writing, and math “truly reflect what every student [needs to thrive](#) in the 21st century,” the question would certainly be met with a cacophony of opinions. The removal of reading, writing, and



math from high school classrooms is becoming the reality for Oregon’s students, at least for the next three years. Recently, state lawmakers voted to approve a bill, signed by Oregon Governor Kate Brown, that is “[dropping the requirement](#) that high school students prove proficiency in reading, writing and math before graduation.”

While “supporters of the bill insist that considering math and reading essential skills have been [an unfair challenge](#) for students who do not test well,” there are other solutions to assist those students. For instance, if exams were found to be the main source of difficulty, testing could include using notes, or completing a project that demonstrates ability.

My uncertainties with this bill are twofold. First, this bill is hurting students who are proficient in or inclined toward math or English, and weaker in history or science. Throughout high school, my teachers often showed us the popular YouTube video by Prince Ea, “[I Sued The School System](#).” In his video, Prince Ea articulates his concern for America’s students, comparing them to “[fish swimming upstream](#) in class, never finding their gifts, thinking they are stupid, believing they are useless.” By implementing this change in it’s high schools, Oregon is drastically increasing the number of “fish,” students who could excel in math and English, if given the opportunity. Second, Oregon high schools are sending the wrong message to their students by eliminating subjects that cause difficulty. Prince Ea questions America’s educational system’s effectiveness in preparing students for the workforce and for life. He

maintains it is an injustice for students to be taught to equate challenges with being insurmountable. Oregon should be encouraging its students to face their obstacles, rather than eliminating them altogether.

As a biology major, I've always had an appreciation for the sciences. Although science is not the subject being removed, it overlaps with math and English. I cannot envision entering STEM without having become proficient in "The Three Rs" in high school. While I understand that others have differing passions and interests from my own, reading, writing, and math are crucial to any field. I believe that people entering other professions, be it business, fashion, psychology, nutrition, etc. will need these skills.

Although I have my hesitations, only time will tell if this bill proves to be beneficial for a majority of students. And for the time being, high school students who support this bill can always look into moving to Oregon for a couple of years.

The Power of Every Human Emotion: How What Makes Us Uncomfortable is What Inspires Us to Change

By Batia Segal, Business Editor

According to the Anxiety and Depression

Association of America, anxiety disorders affect over 40 million adults every year. In addition, [according to a study published in 2020](#), from 2008 to 2018 there has been an increase of reported



anxiety of "7.97% to 14.66% among respondents 18–25 years old," which is the most rapid increase among all age groups in the study. It has become more obvious that something has changed in recent years. Life does not seem any more stressful than it used to be. Everything is more accessible and comfortable, from self-driving cars to cooling mattress tops to high speed internet. It is apparent that as we gain more comfort, we become more anxious. This does not make sense as things that are meant to make our lives easier should not be giving us more anxiety. It seems, however, more complicated than that.

As the amenities become robust, it becomes easier for us to avoid the emotions that make us uncomfortable, therefore exacerbating those emotions instead of acting on them when they first arise. To explain, consider the example of someone who is anxious before taking an exam. Instead of studying they decide it's time for another Netflix show. In this case it is clear that the person is ignoring their emotions that are so useful to them. Every emotion, whether desirable or not, is useful and it is vital that we as human beings embrace them all so that we can live a wholesome and fulfilling life.

The first emotion that we constantly seem to push aside is anger. Anger is not only uncomfortable, it's scary. It makes our palms sweat and our heart race. Not only that, but the possibility that someone else may be angry with us is agonizing. Nonetheless, this discomfort is incredibly useful. Anger is a sign that our boundaries have been crossed and that our needs are not being met. For example, an

employee has been working overtime at their job and their boss asks them for an extra favor. The employee begins to feel a sense of anger and resentment toward the boss because he failed to recognize how much his employee already has on his plate. The employee can utilize his anger to express to his boss that although he would love to complete an additional favor it greatly angers him that his boss failed to recognize the heavy load that he expects of him. The employee now recognizes his own limitations and needs, which helps him better get to know himself. With every feeling of slight, we become more aware of the things that are important to us as individuals, more aware of our basic necessities.

Another example of prioritizing comfortable emotions is the negative perception of fear. Something that holds us back as people. The truth is that fear protects us from danger and helps us survive. When utilized correctly, anxiety is incredibly helpful. It's what motivates us to study for that exam, to wear a seatbelt and prevents us from dangerously approaching the ledge of a tall structure. The issue arises when we are not conscious about the severity of a perceived threat, the extremity of always expecting the worst. This is unhealthy. Taking care of anxiety when it first arises allows us to use this basic human emotion to our advantage and allows us to make the changes necessary to become as successful and whole as possible.

Moreover, guilt is another uncomfortable emotion that is wished to be avoided but similar to the two aforementioned emotions, it is not to be ignored. Guilt is a sign that we have overstepped our moral code.

Which means that either we need to adjust our moral code or we need to acknowledge the error and fix it. Guilt catapults us to change and evolve as human beings. It is important to note that guilt is different from shame. Shame is the feeling that a person's entire self is immoral and there is little they can do to change. On the other hand, guilt is the understanding that a certain behavior does not match the person and therefore the behavior should be corrected. A simple example of this is if a student fails an exam and immediately believes that he or she is dumb, causing him or her to drop the class and find a new major. On the flip side, a different student fails the exam and instead of saying that he or she is dumb, he or she recognizes that neglecting daily studying is not going to result in high scores. The difference is the latter leaves room for the student to change, the former leaves the student feeling incapable. This is how guilt and shame differ. With that being said, guilt is useful, shame is not.

Ultimately, every emotion is a piece of information that allows us to get to know ourselves a little bit better. The common denominator between anger, fear and guilt is that each of them inspire us to change and evolve. Without them there is high likelihood that we would end up in a state of stagnation. Although positivity, happiness and gratitude have been continuously shown to increase longevity, they are only one part of becoming whole. Overall, the suppression of the feelings mentioned previously serves as a barrier to feeling true joy.

Breaking Records, Going To Space, And Getting Out Of Bed

By Jake Shekter, Business Editor

These days, it seems like we can barely go a few weeks without breaking some type of record. We hear it in the constant barrage of news each day, from the world's richest humans and their [record-breaking divorce settlements](#) to the "Once in a Century" storms and wildfires we seem to have been getting much too often lately. While the media may often portray the news in a negative or dramatized light, we must remind ourselves that there is good when we look for it. In many instances, world records and drastic changes are exciting, beneficial, and even commendable.

In this year's 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, during a time when hot and humid conditions and COVID-19 restrictions threatened to hinder the performance of Earth's athletes, contenders not only persevered but rather flourished to break [over 20 world records](#). Team USA brought home the largest number of [medals with 113](#), and Israel broke their own record by bringing home two gold medals in one year. Away from the global stage and a little closer to home, animal shelters are now more empty than ever. Shelters, non-profit rescues, and private breeders have reported that consumer demand for a furry quarantine companion has been through the roof. In a [Nielsen survey](#), 20% of respondents said they had adopted one or more dogs or cats between March and June last year, an increase from less than only 5% the same time the year before. Additionally, a report from the



non-profit 'Shelter Animals Count' stated that shelter intake was [down 24%](#) compared to the previous year.

Over this last year or two, the financial world has been no stranger to the effects of breaking records, increased inflation, and general volatility. Whether it was the cost of lumber [literally tripling](#) in 7 months before crashing back down to its original price 3 months later, the prices of houses increasing 15% over a year, or the stock market's IPOs ([Initial Public Offering](#)) and SPACS (Special Purpose Acquisition Companies, or "Blank-Check Companies") [hitting records](#) left and right, volatility has remained the name of the game for pandemic investors. Recently, Goldman Sachs reported its revenue for the second quarter for this year, coming in at [\\$15.4 billion](#). This is the second highest quarterly revenue report ever for Goldman Sachs, second only to... the first quarter of this year. This means that the 152-year-old investment bank managed to rake in more than \$33 billion in the first half of this year alone (which is more than it brought in for all of 2017). Goldman, however, doesn't flaunt their recent successes alone, with JP Morgan also reporting profits that [nearly doubled](#). If you were to go back in time to the start of 2020 and tell someone walking down the street that US stocks would soar nearly 35% over the following 18 months, they would potentially believe you. But if you told them that somewhere squished in the middle of those 18 months was a global pandemic, record unemployment claims, and the [shortest recession in history](#), they might begin to doubt your sanity.

At this point, you may have also realized that the push to break through boundaries and explore the unknown doesn't apply to only "earthly" matters anymore. We've been entertained, shocked, and/or inspired by the trend of billionaires strapping themselves to rockets and launching themselves into space as of late. The debate on whether these endeavors have been a fair, efficient, or ethical use of Bezos's or Branson's expansive resources is definitely an interesting conversation to flesh out, but the contrast between the two individuals' approach holds its own merit. While Jeff Bezos's 'Blue Origin' launch did "beat" Richard Branson's 'Virgin Galactic' trip to the outer reaches of earth, he did pay a penalty when it came to the quality of the experience. The 'Blue Origin' rocket's total flight time capped out at about [10 minutes](#), while team 'Virgin Galactic' was privileged to enjoy roughly [an hour](#) of the monumental experience.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we've been pressured or even forced to adopt new and improved methods of communication as our physical interactions were to be kept at a minimum. We have unfortunately come to substitute texts, Zoom calls, and social media for genuine encounters and relationships between ourselves, co-workers, and loved ones. In this (somewhat) false reality, we tend to lose sight of the meaningful things we should be working on. Instead of focusing on the progress we make in our own lives, we compare ourselves to Olympic medalists and their miraculous minute or two on the track, but not the years of sacrifice and dedication it took for them to reach that pinnacle. While many of us

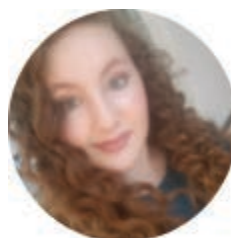
struggle to overcome the financial hardships introduced by the pandemic, we keep close watch of the billions earned by the banks or a company like 'Microsoft' [joining the exclusive \\$2 trillion dollar club](#). Looking to star athletes, astronauts, and business titans for inspiration or strength can be an incredibly rewarding pursuit, and should not be discouraged. But, during times when reports of anxiety, insomnia, and issues of mental health are coming in at nearly [4 times](#) the pre-pandemic numbers, we must remember the progress, goals, and accomplishments that truly matter. Our records and expectations of growth should remain our own.

For some, the next step in the journey is shaving a second or two off our best hurdling time at the Tokyo Olympics, or maybe even making that extra 70 thousand foot climb in elevation to improve the quality of our trip to space. But for many of us, just getting out of bed in the morning, managing to eat something for breakfast, or putting up an effort to battle mental health issues is a tremendous feat worth celebration, praise, and maybe even a medal. Regardless of how large or small your personal goals are, they must be taken seriously to result in genuine improvement. **Don't just break records, break your own records.**

Friendly Reminder: COVID- 19 Edition

By Amalya Teitelbaum, Business Editor & Manager

Friendly reminder that we are still in a pandemic.



Friendly reminder that people are still struggling.

Friendly reminder that people are still affected.

Friendly reminder that this was not a pause and play on life. A pause and play indicates that one restarts where one paused. A pause and play indicates that no time has passed, no problems made capable, no struggles made real. A pause and play indicates that nothing has changed. When the pandemic started I was about to begin the second half of my senior year in high school. Currently, I am about to begin my second year of college. That is a life transition. I know people who were not in a relationship before the pandemic and are married now. I know people who were together before the pandemic and now don't speak to each other. People who were students and are now working in the rat race. I can definitely say that I am not the same as I was when the pandemic started, and I am sure many would say the same.

Friendly reminder that this was and is not a vacation. It is not a reprieve from life, a time of zen and peace to recharge. To start projects, new hobbies, a time for entrepreneurs to emerge. While it is wonderful that people were given the opportunity to create incredible things during this time, it was not a time of hope. It is a time of struggle, a time that is not yet over. Zoom class was a massive adjustment and a struggle for many. Yes, to professors and yes, to parents, but most of all to students. I had classes where it was difficult for me to pay attention to in person, and therefore near impossible to focus on through a computer screen. My grades were certainly

affected somewhat and my work ethic definitely slipped between the cracks. It did not feel like school, it did not feel real. And yet it was real, almost too real. Less work should have been given to accommodate for the traumatic time, yet it seems as the work doubled exponentially. “In these trying times...” was the preliminary sentence of every email and yet it felt like no one was trying at all.

Friendly reminder that just like life tends to be, this was a time of change. Changes of physical nature, changes of social nature, changes of mental nature. People are not going to be the same and that is something that is essential to understand. Too much of the change was unsolicited and unavoidable. The pandemic forced many people to turn inward on themselves to stop the outside world from destroying them. People, including me, were definitely forced to stay inside or limit social activities to a certain extent. This affected many people’s personalities and mental states. As things are slowly returning back to normal people are having difficulty readjusting. When my friends and I were first able to see each other again, there was a definite change in the air. Of course, as we continued to meet up it went back to normal but we must allow time for people to adjust.

Friendly reminder of things we are not going to do. We are not going to be insensitive to people’s new and current situations. We are not going to comment on people’s physical appearances. We are not going to pretend that we are all at the same level of normalcy. We are not going to invalidate others. We are not going to invalidate science. When the

pandemic first started my caution levels shot up to the sky, especially due to the fact that I am immune-compromised. I did not leave the house without a mask, I did not go anywhere unless it was completely necessary, I completely steered clear of people I knew weren’t cautious. After all, thousands of people were being hospitalized, and even more, people were, unfortunately, passing away. This is why it was so infuriating to me that there were people who, to put it simply, did not care in the slightest. I would swipe through social media, seeing people who were getting together without masks and social distancing, promenading in public places, hopping on flights halfway across the world. They would call it a hoax, a senseless phobia, and not care about the people it was affecting around them.

Friendly reminder that we are not yet out of the fire.

Friendly reminder that we are still burning.

Being The Best vs. Doing Your Best: Thoughts Inspired by Simone Biles and the 2020 Olympics

By Elisheva Hirsch, Arts and Culture Editor

When I was younger, someone I respect told me that there will always be someone better at whatever it is I’m doing, and someone better than the person who’s better than me. They said that that’s the way the world works for everyone, so I should stop comparing myself to others. I heard their message, and I mostly accepted its truth. Yet a small voice in the back of



my head cried: at some point, if you follow the chain long enough, there really is someone who comes out as the absolute best! So aren’t those few people the only ones who are truly successful at what they do? As someone who has always loved following competitive gymnastics, I quickly landed on Simone Biles as a perfect example. With multiple Olympic medals and gymnastic moves named after her, she truly earned her nickname “GOAT,” or Greatest Of All Time. I felt bad for whoever competed against her; if they would never be as good as her, what was the point in even trying?

As we headed into the 2020 Olympics, I, along with the rest of the world, was confident that Simone would perform with her usual best, stunning everyone with her remarkable skill. So when I saw the breaking news notification on my phone that Simone Biles had withdrawn from the women’s gymnastics team final, I was shocked. Later, when I had time to research what went on, I was saddened to learn that she cited mental health reasons, and then also the “twisties,” a phenomenon in which gymnasts lose their ability to gauge where they are in the air, making it extremely dangerous to execute moves safely.

I don’t know what Simone Biles’ specific mental health concerns are, and it isn’t my place or anyone’s to try and guess them. But all this has led me to think about how our society’s emphasis and praise for the GOAT position must put tremendous pressure on the few people who have actually made it there to uphold it. That kind of pressure can’t be easy or

enjoyable to withstand. It makes continuing to do what you've been working for your entire life incredibly difficult, to the point where it can even prevent you from doing it at all. Considering all this, being the best at something simply for the sake of being the best at it does not seem like a worthwhile value to be striving for.

However, doing *your* best is something to strive for. The difference lies in seeing life either as a competition against everyone else in the room, or as a mosaic in which we all push ourselves to utilize our talents and abilities to make the world a more colorful place. Yes, it's true that some may be more technically skilled and score higher than others, and that when some like Simone Biles push themselves they may end up in the top place. But that doesn't negate every other individual's performance, because they too have pushed themselves to perform their own best. Each best is unique with their passion, flair, or pure apparent joy at doing what they love, making their contribution meaningful and worthwhile.

This mindset has only heightened my reverence for Simone Biles. Her brave decision to prioritize her health and withdraw from some competitions at the Olympics was her doing her very best, even if she didn't get the scores expected of the best gymnast in the world. Because doing your best includes choosing to value things that truly matter, like health in this case. It leaves room for fluctuation, depending on our changing mental and physical health and contexts: your best can look different from moment to moment. In contrast, aiming to be the best

includes pushing aside other values in pursuit of the one goal of being at the very top.

So whether there is always someone better than you at something or you are the GOAT, it doesn't matter either way. What matters is that we push ourselves to try new things and work hard, because it's in that space that we change ourselves and the world in a way only we, with our unique talents and personality traits, can.

NEWS

Inter-campus Shuttle Services Resume with Additional Sunday and Morning Times



By Adina Bruce

Intercampus shuttle service between the uptown Wilf and downtown Beren campus was announced to be resumed for the Fall 2021 semester, starting August 22, 2021. According to an update to the [Safety & Security](#) page on the YU website, shuttle times will restart with the same times as the 2020-2021 school year, but with the addition of Sunday evening times.

Shuttle services [returned to campus](#) in the 2020-2021 school year following the discontinuation of campus services due to Covid-19 in Spring 2020. After the return of students to both campuses in the Fall 2020 semester, and a call from [students](#) for resumed service, the shuttle service was reinstated but

with limited times compared to the previous semester.

Due to COVID-19 precautions service will continue to be provided using a yellow school bus, enabling students to spread out on the shuttle. Other precautions listed on the security page include, “[b]efore entering the shuttle and during the duration of the ride, students will be required to wear a face mask” and “[s]tudents should sit in every other seat, so they are not directly next to, behind or directly across from someone.”

Sign up slots are limited to 11 persons. Pick up and drop off will be at Amsterdam Ave between 186th & 187th on the Wilf Campus, and outside the Brookdale residence hall on the Beren Campus. A morning shuttle will leave from the Wilf Campus at 8 A.M. Monday-Thursday. Evening shuttles Sunday-Thursday will leave from the Beren Campus at 5:30, 7:30 and 9:30 P.M. and at 6:30, 8:30 and 10:30 P.M. from the Wilf Campus. The shuttle is only for undergraduate students.

The 8 A.M. shuttle time-slot was a new addition to the shuttle service in Fall 2020 from the previous times offered in the Spring 2020 semester. Students report that the shuttle was at times unreliable in getting students to their 9 A.M. classes on time. When asked about her thoughts on the continuation of the morning shuttle and the addition of a Sunday shuttle, Shani Lewis (SCW '22) stated, “having a morning and Sunday evening shuttle is something YU needs and I am thankful they are providing for this upcoming year. Adding these shuttle services makes the two campuses feel more connected and safer to travel

between.” Commenting on the status of the shuttle this semester Chief Facilities & Administrative Officer Randy Apfelbaum stated “[w]e are closely monitoring the health protocols and plan reevaluate schedule for after the *chaggim* (Jewish holidays).” He further added that “[f]or events uptown there will continue to be transportation options available.”

Rabbi Avi Feder as the New Director of Housing and Residence Life on Wilf Campus



By Rebecca Aducalesi, News Editor

Rabbi Avi Feder, YU alumnus, will undertake the role of Director of Housing and Residence Life on the Wilf Campus beginning in the Fall 2021 semester.

Rabbi Feder graduated from Sy Syms School of Business in 2014 with a business and management/marketing major where he also served as RA and Head RA. He later attended the *semichah* [rabbinical] program at YU’s Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary until 2017. He told the *YU Observer* that these experiences, among others, “have enabled me to feel humbled, honored, yet confident in my ability to excel in the challenges that lay ahead.”

Before accepting his new position at YU, Rabbi Feder worked at the Orthodox Union as the Director of Yachad Advisor Engagement and

Volunteer Services for four years. He describes his work there to be “centered around outreach, engagement and service to hundreds of college-aged volunteers is a natural stepping stone into this work with student housing and life on campus.” Rabbi Feder also served as the Senior Rabbinic Intern at the Jewish Center on the Upper West Side, as well as the Manhattan Director of NCSY, while he was a *semichah* (Rabbinical training) student.

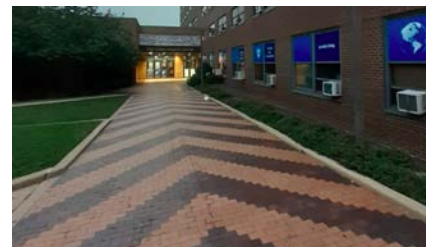
Rabbi Feder expressed his excitement for his new role, stating, “I am excited to be back at Yeshiva as the Director of Residence Life, and particularly excited to welcome students back to campus very soon! I’m grateful to Dr. Nissel and Dr. Asher for bringing me on board and look forward to working with them, as well as the entire Res. Life team.”

Rabbi Feder also elaborated on his plans with the *YU Observer* his goals and plan for the upcoming year. He said, “I will be focusing my efforts on the Wilf Campus while working collaboratively with the staff from Beren Campus. Working closely with Michael Altaras and our talented group of RAs and Head RAs, we will continually enhance and improve the housing and residence life experience for all.”

Dean Nissel expressed his confidence in Rabbi Feder and shared with the *YU Observer*, “Avi Feder is a caring, approachable, and creative leader with a strong background in Housing administration and an intimate understanding of the YU community. I am fully confident that Avi, along with Assistant Director of Housing Michael Altaras, will truly

accomplish great things for Res. Life this year.”

YU Clarifies Proof of Vaccination Upload System Prior to Returning to Campus



By Shoshanah Marcus, Editor in Chief

As the upcoming Fall 2021 semester approaches, Yeshiva University clarified the requirement for getting the COVID-19 vaccine upon students return to campus. On July 12, 2021, students were notified via email from Joe Bednarsh, Associate Dean of Students, of the proof of vaccination upload system.

Joe Bednarsh explained in the email that the proof of vaccination will be required to be uploaded to student’s maybe explain what this is, and, once approved, “the appropriate YU administrators will have real-time access to it.” Bednarsh elaborated that “this system is intended to provide a more robust level of security for your documents than sending it in an email.” The email included instructions on how to upload the relevant vaccination documents and resources containing helpful information for international students under the ‘International Students’ heading. Additionally, those who have questions regarding the specific requirements for the vaccine can visit the university’s COVID-19 vaccination FAQ page.

In response to the state's success of administering the COVID-19 vaccine and Governor Cuomo lifting COVID-19 restrictions, Dr. Chaim Nissel, Vice Provost of Student Affairs announced in an email sent to the YU community less than a month ago that Yeshiva University's COVID-19 protocols would be revised. These revisions included fully vaccinated individuals not being required to wear masks or social distance and lifted restrictions for the summer term.

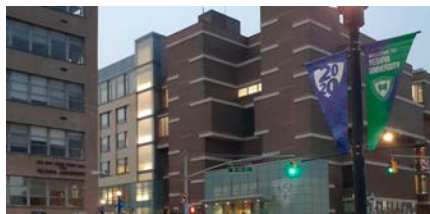
Though Yeshiva University officially has announced that all students, faculty and staff must be vaccinated upon returning to campus, those with a valid medical or religious reason that would warrant exemption from vaccination can undergo a formal process as described in another email from Bednarsh to the YU community on July 15, 2021. Bednarsh described, "To request an exemption to the requirement, please email VaccineExemptionRequest@yu.edu from your YU.edu address and ask for either the medical or religious exemption form. Once a fully completed request is received, it will be reviewed by the committee. The committee may ask for additional supporting documentation, a meeting to discuss your request, or may arrive at a determination without the need for more information." In addressing how long this process may take, Bednarsh explained, "We expect that the process could take as long as two weeks to complete depending on the volume of requests."

In the email sent on July 15, 2021, Bednarsh urged students to not only get vaccinated as soon as possible to ensure that they can be fully vaccinated when the school year

begins, but to also upload their proof of vaccine as soon as possible because the administration "expect[s] that it will take longer to approve documents as we get close to the start of classes and the volume of submissions is higher." Bednarsh concluded, saying, "If you have any questions about this policy, please email VaccineSubmission@yu.edu [from your YU.edu email address] with the particulars of your situation and we will try to work with you to come up with a solution."

Dr. Nissel commented on this decision, sharing with the *YU Observer* that "YU's decision to require all students, staff and faculty to be vaccinated for Covid-19 (unless specifically exempted) is consistent with hundreds of other colleges and will help keep the YU community safe."

Joe Bednarsh Announces New Role as Associate Dean of Students; Greg Fox Takes Over as YU Athletic Director



By Rebecca Aducalesi, News Editor

On June 23, 2021, Dean Bednarsh, formerly the Director of YU Athletics, sent out an email to the undergraduate student athletes sharing his new position as Associate Dean of Students. Dean Bednarsh also announced that Greg Fox will take over as Director of Athletics and Carly Moss will be promoted to Associate Director of Athletics beginning July 1, 2021.

Dean Bednarsh has been a part of the athletic department for 30 years and served as Athletic Director for the past 15 years. He stated in the email, "It will be bittersweet for me not to be at the helm anymore, but I could not be more confident in a new leadership team than I am with Greg and Carly."

Students expressed their excitement about this news. Student athlete Liana Maza (SCW '23) shared with the *YU Observer*, "I personally think that Joe is particularly talented and am excited to see everything he brings as Associate Dean of Students." Maza continued, "Joe did so much more than run athletics. He was personally involved in the lives of every student athlete, and it is a real privilege that Joe will be extending his extraordinary talents to the rest of the YU student body. I am excited to see how this plays out!"

Greg Fox has been part of the YU athletic department for the past five years after spending many years in Division I. According to his [biography](#) on the YU Maccabees website, prior to his promotion to Director of Athletics, he served as the Associate Director of Athletics where he was responsible for the day-to-day operations on the Wilf Campus and oversaw all eight of the men's sports teams. Before working at YU, Fox served as the Associate Director of Athletics for twelve years at LIU Brooklyn, where he was in charge of 60 coaches and administrators as well as nearly 250 student athletes. Fox was responsible for development of the program, alumni relations, home event management, fan engagement, marketing, and licensing.

Fox shared his excitement with the *YU Observer* saying, “I’m honored and grateful to serve as Director of Athletics at Yeshiva University. I’ve been entrusted by Rabbi Dr. Berman, Dr. Nissel and my predecessor, Joe Bednarsh, to support all of our incredible student-athletes on both campuses in their quest for success on and off the playing fields. My talented administrative team and I will do so with an emphasis on the student-athlete experience and their well-being, while helping to create leaders and student scholars.”

Carly Moss has also been part of the athletic department for the past five years. She was previously the Assistant Athletic Director and Senior Woman Administrator, and she also earned the title of Athletics Health Care Administrator in August of 2017. According to her [biography](#) on the YU Maccabees website, Moss was in charge of the day-to-day operations of the seven women’s varsity sports teams, and she is the only athletics administrator on Beren Campus. Moss also serves as the Skyline Conference Committee Chair for both the Athletic Training and Committee on Safe Return to Skyline Sports, which was formed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dean Bednarsh concluded his email by expressing his optimism towards this change stating, “I know you all join me in publicly celebrating Greg and Carly and in the confidence we all share in them.”

The Katz School Announces New Cybersecurity Training Program in Partnership with ISACA



By Rachel Gilinski, Social Media Manager

In partnership with the Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA), the Katz School of Science and Health announced in a [blog post](#) on June 29, 2021 that they will be offering students the chance to earn a master’s degree in cybersecurity.

As a global learning organization focusing on technology, ISACA works with many other organizations, including academic institutions and nonprofits, to “develop a strong, ethical cybersecurity workforce,” as ISACA chief product officer Nader Qaimari phrased it in the announcement. ISACA offers educational, training, and professional development opportunities to their students, which aim to position graduates for success in the cybersecurity field.

The organization’s seminars, CSX Cybersecurity Practitioner certification, student membership discount, and networking and mentorship opportunities are some of the ways in which ISACA will benefit their prospective students. As Dr. Paul Russo, dean of the Katz School and vice provost, stated in the announcement, “The relationship with ISACA is an important opportunity for Yeshiva University students to network with industry professionals, as well as enable them to get industry-recognized

cybersecurity certifications from a trusted global leader.”

The [STEM Master’s Degree](#), which is projected to take less than two years to earn, will give students technological and managerial experience in the cybersecurity field. The rapidly-growing cybersecurity field demands rapidly-increasing amounts of cybersecurity professionals who have the ability to protect against evolving cyber threats and adhere to evolving cybersecurity regulations, and students of Katz School’s Cybersecurity Degree will graduate with these capabilities. The program will give students experience in cybersecurity protocols and procedures, covering communication strategies that encourage cyber-safety, software development, and threat analysis and mitigation, among others.

With the cybersecurity opportunity the Katz School now offers, and the hands-on experience and cybersecurity know-how it entails, there is no doubt that the partnership between ISACA and the Katz School of Science and Health really will be, as chapter president Karen Alexander phrased it, an “innovative and groundbreaking initiative.”

OPINIONS

If Only: a Personal Connection to the Venezuelan Downfall



By Sarit Benzaquen

The world would be a different place if Venezuelan President Rafael

Caldera had not pardoned Lieutenant Colonel Hugo Chavez in 1994. An economic emergency, caused by a large decrease in oil prices, hyperinflation, and a banking crisis, led to a failed attempt at a military coup. During the uprising, Chavez was sent to jail but was never convicted in order to appease the military force. The newly elected president, Rafael Caldera, pardoned him, opening the doors for Chavez's political career, which took him to the presidency four years later, in 1998. Once Hugo Chavez became president, he began to implement anti-democratic ideas that brought the country to the authoritarianism that exists today in the oppressive government of Nicolas Maduro, even more than five years after Hugo Chavez's death.

If Hugo Chavez was not granted a presidential pardon in 1994 and was convicted according to the law, the democratic foundations of Venezuela would likely have survived the economic challenges of the time. If that had happened, the people looking for a change from the traditional dual political parties would have shifted to support candidates like Andrés Velazquez or the Primero Justicia party, which offered democratic alternatives of change. These contrasted with the radicalization and populist socialism that Hugo Chavez brought to the country, causing the greatest misery and recession in the history of Venezuela.

Having a democratic country would have given citizens the freedom and supplies to live safely, which is a strong contrast to the Venezuela that exists today. If democratic ideals had been adopted, Venezuelans would not

be forced to flee the country in search of food, medical supplies and safety. Parents would not need to tell their children that gunshots are fireworks, and young students would not be tortured merely for exercising their freedom of speech. Three months of labor would buy more than just a dozen eggs. People would not search for their next meal in the trash. They would not need to stand in line for hours just to buy an overpriced roll of toilet paper. Society would receive proper medical treatment without having to worry about lack of medication. The economic market would not have been destroyed if other countries had not put sanctions on Venezuela. Millions of passionate workers would not have fled their magnificent homeland. If Chavez had not been pardoned, the people would be in a rich and developed country. People would live with basic human rights guaranteed.

I am from Venezuela. I fled my beautiful country. Because of Caldera's decision in 1994, my family has experienced hardship. The place where we felt most at home is now a danger zone. The place I would pick mangoes with my Grandma is now a battleground. My favorite hiking spot is now deserted. If Chavez had not been pardoned, I would be able to walk outside my childhood home by myself instead of needing a bulletproof car. My family would safely travel to the Caribbean beaches. Venezuelans would be able to feed and support their families from their wages. The old charm and splendor of the enchanting country would return. Venezuela would be home. The tucán would sing of freedom, the turpial would dance in awe and the araguaney would sway with joy.

The Breakdown of Civil Dialogue



By Eli Saperstein, Opinion Editor

Everyone knows someone who has "that" relative, a self-declared "independent thinker" who has a degree from [Facebook U](#) and therefore declares themselves to be an authority. Unfortunately, these so-called independent thinkers tend to listen only to people who think as they do, reinforcing each others' opinions, cementing vague theories, which becomes the only worldview they and their peers will accept. When the government asks these individuals to "[listen to the science](#)" and take the vaccine for their benefit and the country's benefit, it is comparable to talking to a brick wall. Why is this? Where is the disconnect? Why do "those people," think that there is a microchip in vaccines? Why is there such hesitancy with this vaccine versus all the vaccines taken every year? The government has tried all kinds of incentives, from offering [beer money](#) to [lotteries](#) for a million dollars, yet nothing seems to be changing hearts or minds.

What's strange is that we know people have been taking vaccines for decades without nearly as much resistance as we are seeing now. So what makes this vaccine different from all the other vaccines? Part of the reason for the hesitancy is attributed to the frantic speed with which this vaccine has been developed and rushed into

production. The common-sense reason for this is that former President Trump's [operation warp speed](#) was given an unlimited budget, and contracts for hundreds of millions of doses gave companies the financial incentive to get a working vaccine into the arms of everyone as fast as humanly possible.

Another reason for vaccine hesitancy that is often given is that these "[newfangled mRNA technologies](#)" have not yet been proven safe long term, and like everything new, can be a cause for concern. This, however, is only partially true; the groups that are anti-vaxxers appear to be made of groups who have a historic and strong distrust of the government. Upon further analysis, this demographic initially seems to have very little in common. *"In one group are those who say they are adamant in their refusal of the coronavirus vaccines; they include a mix of people but tend to be disproportionately white, rural, evangelical Christian, and politically conservative, [surveys show](#). In the other group, they say they are open to getting a shot but have been putting it off or want to wait and see before making a decision. They are a broad range of people but tend to be a more diverse and urban group, including many younger people, Black and Latino Americans, and Democrats."* Very few communities have less in common than these two groups. Those in the rural/white camp have lost faith in government institutions and are more susceptible to conspiracy theories such as [QAnon](#). The fact is, the Covid-19 vaccine was successful in getting its approval for [FDA](#) Emergency Use Authorization in record time, using a technology called [mRNA](#). Add to this the

pressure from the government threatening the unvaccinated with [vaccine passports](#). This made those who are paranoid and prone to conspiracy theories more susceptible to being convinced that the government was trying to push an agenda. Thus, this became a civil liberties issue instead of a public health matter.

In the face of all this uncertainty and fear, people turn to the familiar and rely on what they and their fellow Facebook graduates already believe; the government is not to be trusted. Anything the government proposes to incentivize people to get the vaccine is useless, as to them, it is viewed as an increasingly desperate ploy to trick them into getting the vaccine. They know that they need to fight against the government and defend their bodily autonomy. The urban/POC (people of color) camp has different reasons for distrusting the government but comes to the same conclusion; "the government isn't to be trusted." There are reasons for this, of course. In recent history, the medical field took [advantage of these communities](#) and tested medications on unsuspecting members of the POC community. The black community is fearful and will not trust the institutions that harmed them in the past. This has created a lack of trust and a fear that the government is not genuinely looking for the best for its constituents, preventing a successful dialogue from occurring.

What is telling about the current theme of vaccine hesitancy is that [even](#) people who have taken the vaccine are concerned about potential consequences. This means that the number of people who are hesitant regarding this vaccine is higher than

the number of unvaccinated. One of the driving forces of the vaccination gap is the [information](#) gap, which led to many efforts to educate those "anti-vaxxers" who were in reality "just" experiencing vaccine hesitancy. The information these people were giving them was so contradictory to what the government and peers were telling them that they were not to be able to connect and bring themselves to agree with those who are tasked to convince them to take the vaccine. Given a choice between not taking the vaccine based on what they felt they "knew" versus taking the vaccine based on new information that directly contradicted much of what they "knew" to be accurate, is it any wonder there was difficulty communicating? It has only been after efforts were made to bridge the gap in understanding who the government has to convince to take the vaccine that they realized the majority of those who haven't taken the vaccine are not anti-vaxxers but instead, hesitant people. "[About 10 percent](#) of American adults have made it clear in interviews, discussions with family members, and conversations with survey researchers that under certain circumstances, they are open to being convinced to get a vaccine." This was a significant development and changed how the government designed its interaction efforts. This was only possible because efforts were made to encourage a dialogue, allowing for these insights to be revealed. Sadly, this is not the case for so many other issues that are pretty well established. There is little effort to reach out across the aisle on "established" matters to those who disagree. There is minimal effort, in general, to reach out to others and try to come to a bipartisan agreement.

Instead, the attitude that pervades all of US politicking is one of superiority for one's own beliefs and frustration, or even hate, directed towards those who [disagree](#).

It wasn't always like this. What led to the disconnect [between the parties](#)? Many factors have caused this rift, but part of it is that [“we now have TOO much information.”](#) There is so much information being created for consumption that it is nearly impossible, even for those with full-time jobs dedicated to consuming media, to process what happens daily. The average individual who has responsibilities, whether as a student, a parent, or someone who must work for a living, does not have the luxury to sift through information. Instead, the majority of them see headlines without nuance. In addition to clickbait, people are radicalized by the lack of nuance as they only consume the most toxic information that is only somewhat reflective of reality. Along with most people who associate with each other in echo chambers, this idea is quickly taught not to give “the other side” the benefit of the doubt. This destroys any incentive to have a dialogue with those who disagree, as not only are they misinformed, but they are actively choosing to keep themselves “on the wrong side.” Society has begun embracing the culture war, pitting neighbor against neighbor, any and every variation of “us vs. them.” The only successful thing that has been accomplished has been ripping the fabric of society apart by creating and escalating the hate and distrust felt for one another. There is minimal incentive to go against the flow and ask why people promote a particular policy or any other

political discourse. People are afraid of becoming a pariah in these online but still authentic communities. Some fear losing their jobs or other real-world consequences if they [speak](#) their mind or don't cave into the pressure of performative gestures. It has gotten to the point where people want to be right more than they want to be [effective](#). So rather than having the difficult conversations necessary to improve our society, performative gestures are substituted, which are then condemned (rightfully so) for not doing enough. If people try to question some of the trending ideas, they are threatened with potential consequences by their peers, instead of these individual voices being lifted up for asking questions and trying to do what needs to be done.

While society is becoming increasingly problematic and even toxic, society can be turned around and become a force for good. We can use the influences of culture to shape our lives for the better. This is why we constantly need to look around at ourselves, our community, and our society and question. To do that, we must embrace the intricate, complex, nuanced thoughts, ideas, and conversations that are largely absent from the mainstream. Specifically, the topics and discussions that are real, meaningful, and, yes, difficult. With people you disagree with, as opposed to talking amongst your peers, who already believe the same or at least similar things as you. Instead, the standard thought process should be: What is really going to help people? Is it the policies my peers are advocating in favor of implementing? Or do I think there is something else that would be more effective and beneficial for society?

Last year, I created a [Whatsapp Chat](#) that will hopefully soon become a club for YU students. The group chat was designed to create a space for everyone from all political affiliations to debate different ideas and discuss current events from diverse political angles. I consider the experiment a success. The group brought together people who might otherwise not have met during the pandemic when YU was [entirely online](#). The greatest success of this experiment was not for the reason I had originally anticipated. I had assumed that this forum would allow for the debate between members of the Republican and Democrat chats to finally interact with each other. While there initially was some debate, the tone of the conversation quickly changed as it became clear that, for the most part, people who initially imagined themselves to be talking about the same topic were, through no fault of their own, relaying different versions of the same event. There was such a vast difference in point of view due to bias and the facts and information presented by the “other side.” Many were not familiar with what was being told to them by their “opponents.” It wasn't just that the conversation between different parties was limited, but for many, there was so much information that they had never heard before! People realized that the “facts” and information they were using to form their opinions differed from their “opponents”! Some students came to this realization, saying that “we would be debating past each other,” arguing against the strawmen their information and tactics were designed against as opposed to the actual points that were being said. In

order to achieve anything, people need to understand what the other person is saying in order to understand the various points of view and underlying facts to formulate an appropriate and constructive response. The nuances need to be made extremely clear, the gray areas colorized. This is the only way to make lasting progress. This cannot be done if people only give credence to dramatically different points of view or base their opinions on different versions of events.

An example that I often bring up as a success of the chat is what happened after RBG passed.

Republicans and Democrats were in an uproar. Both were appealing to their respective bases in demanding justice, that their objectives regarding the empty seat be met. The Republicans came out in favor of Amy Comey Barret's nomination. The Democrats came out against the Republicans, saying the President had no right to nominate a judge to the supreme court during the twilight of his term. Both sides were spreading information that supported their "team." Those who were stuck in their echo chamber were never given the opportunity to see the other side's viewpoint. Much of the information was based on the opinions of the leaders of the respective parties. Ranging from high-level democratic officials stating that a president is a president for four years, not three, "[The president](#) is elected for four years, not three years, so the power he has in year three continues into year four." In contrast, Democrats were spreading clips of high-level republicans who denied just that. Lindsey Graham saying: "[I want you to use my words against me](#)" was a sound bite that got a lot of play.

The solution going forward is to foster intellectual debate, cultivate a desire to learn from and respect one another, and listen to multiple news networks to diversify information used to form opinions. I believe what needs to be done is to have difficult conversations. Imagine if there was a conversation between the Democratic presidential candidates instead of the fiasco that was the 2020 debates about their vision of what the country could be. The candidate going to the ballot would come in with the premise that they, along with their opponent and their opponent's supporters, genuinely want what is best for America. Not some cheap stunt meant to score cheap political points and put one person above the other with a "gotcha" question for a sound bite, but something more. Ideally, this would lead to a president who would be elected not just enacting his own party's predetermined plan but would involve aspects of the other candidates' plan that were well-liked. To have a successful conversation, this is what the premise must be. That they—like you—want what is best for America. Sadly, that is something that many lack in today's [society](#). Individuals need to not just communicate their information but be able to articulate their point. How they interpret the information they receive is essential, but an effort needs to be made to understand the others' premises as well. Once people begin to freely associate with one another ideologically without fear or prejudice, there will be hope for Americans to unite and share in a future where everyone respects, values, and understands one another. However, before there can be a debate, there must first be an

understanding and a dialogue between not just the [two parties](#) but between every American.

On Seeking Academic Advising



By **Danielle Lane, Managing Editor**

Every year freshmen are bombarded with lots of different advice on how to be most successful in College. The advice typically ranges from getting enough sleep and eating right to the best places to score free food. While some advice is more useful than others, it's all given with the hope that it might help new students adjust to college life. As a senior, I hope that I too can pass on some advice to the incoming class of Yeshiva University students.

When I entered Stern College for Women in the fall of 2018, I was a true freshman, and had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. I had no idea what to major in or what to be when I grew up. I felt lost all throughout orientation, surrounded by women who knew exactly what careers they wanted and how to achieve their goals. While these students might have known how they wanted their college journey to end, they were just like the students who didn't know what to major in, in that neither group knew how to navigate their college classes. This is a result of the many class requirements for YU students. It can be hard to fulfill all of the core requirements AND complete your major in just three or

four years with the advising center's help, it is nearly impossible without their expertise.

So here comes my advice: take advantage of academic advising. I was blown away by the number of students who blindly signed up for classes without consulting the professionals whose job it is to help you pick out the right classes. By not strategically picking the right classes you may end up taking the wrong classes and wasting your time. Going to academic advising means you will be starting your college career off right by getting the help you need to choose the right classes, regardless of your major.

Academic advising can also help you pick a major as it did for me. I made a meeting to meet with an advisor my first week in school and I genuinely don't know where I would be had I not. In my first meeting, I learned about the YU joint program with the Wurzweiler School of Social Work. The joint program allowed me to complete my undergraduate degree in three years and the transfer to Wurzweiler in my fourth and fifth year. This means that in just five years I'll be able to complete both my BA and Master in Social Work.

Had I never gone to academic advising I would have wasted time, money, and energy in classes that I would not have necessarily have been able to use towards my degree. Instead, I was able to start productively working towards my future in my very first semester of college. So while it is important to get plenty of sleep and know where to get free food, it is also important to make sure you are taking the right classes at the right time. You can

make an appointment with academic advising [here](#).

The Rise in Antisemitism Over the Summer



By Shani Mizrahi

It is no secret that there is a lot of antisemitism in the world. Wherever we go, we can see, hear, read and sometimes even feel the antisemitism in our bones. As a Jew who was born, raised, and educated in Israel, I experienced and learned about antisemitism regularly. In history class and our general study classes at school, we studied the many acts of antisemitism perpetrated against the Jews throughout the years.

As an Israeli Jew, sometimes antisemitism can be so strong that you can find yourself in a situation where you are afraid to walk in the street, in your own neighborhood, in your home, in your own country, in the Land of Israel, the Land of the Jews. The Land for which our ancestors fought for with their hands, blood, sweat, and tears to create a safe haven for a constantly targeted People. Israelis have fought for years in various wars for the defense of the Land of Israel. Our great army, the IDF, is named the Israel Defense Forces. It is not an "occupation" army as our haters in the world present it. Unfortunately, there are many who "live in a bubble" and rush to flood the net with spam. Sharing the latest infographic, filled with all sorts of biased information,

is rarely sent out by people who verify what they are sharing with their peers. Instead, in their efforts to impress those who think like them, they send out hateful, anti-Israel messages without examining the sources out into the world, not realizing the effect that this can have.

I recently moved by myself from Israel to North New Jersey. New Jersey is a charming, quiet neighborhood close to New York City, a community with a very Jewish, partly religious character. Life in this area of the United States is very quiet and peaceful - unlike life in Israel - no drama. Jewish and otherwise, the people are very calm, polite, and often too polite as things are too "politically correct" here. People here seem to love Israel. Most of the people who heard that I come from Israel were very excited and curious to listen to what it is like to live in Israel. There are so many nice people who have expressed interest in getting to know my culture better.

When COVID-19 started in the winter of 2020, the situation was very confusing all over the world. People did not know what to do, what they were going to go through, or what it would be like. Being a foreigner, alone, in a foreign country with a different language and culture than mine, during a worldwide pandemic was quite scary. On the one hand, I had no idea what was about to happen. But, on the other hand, like me, many had the same universal worries. Even if you did not worry about getting sick yourself, you were concerned about the unknown as well as worrying about your family, who are living so far from you during all this madness. However, I felt very safe because everyone was very nice

and gave me the support and “safety net” I needed. Thankfully there was almost no reason for me to be afraid. During the pandemic, I worked as a nanny for a family who hosted me in North Jersey. We passed the isolation together and had fun, trying to keep ourselves safe as much as possible. Throughout all this chaos, we struggled to maintain our positivity and optimism. I had so much fun during that stressful period, but I can say with all my heart that I did not feel any antisemitism.

To sum up my experience in the United States so far, I have not felt any antisemitism at all. Not even a little. When the pandemic began to diminish, and more people began to get vaccinated, I allowed myself to visit NYC more. Even there, in a city that is literally a grouping of postcards of people from all over the world, I did not feel any antisemitism.

You could say that the people in the city and in general Americans are very nice, but it is largely because everyone is more preoccupied with their own private lives and does not get too involved in the lives of others. Most people simply do not have time for such leisure.

I want to believe that most people now have heard about what happened in the summer. I am talking about the rise in antisemitism worldwide due to the recent fighting between Israel and the terrorist organization located in the Gaza Strip.

The fighting that took place over the summer between Israel and terrorists in the Gaza Strip was called “Operation Wall Guard.” As its name implies, it is intended to guard Israel’s borders and not kill

Palestinians and innocent people. This is readily apparent if you look at the facts. They show that throughout the years, no harm was done intentionally towards innocent Palestinians.

These operations have aroused an incredible amount of antisemitism all over the world, and perhaps this operation, in particular, is what prompted the most interest because of the internet. The news of Operation Wall Guard erupted on every platform. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, newspapers, radio made their loud, antisemitic noises. As a result, NYC, where I had felt safe before, became dangerous. People protested in the streets, waving Palestinian flags in front of the Israeli embassy in New York, as well as attacking [Israeli](#) demonstrators. My world quickly became very scary. People in the city were beaten, cursed, and spat at by people just [because they were Jews](#). My friends were afraid to speak in Hebrew in the street. I was so confused and did not understand how we could have gotten into such a situation. Even though I, as an Israeli citizen, am accustomed to the constant wars, I was afraid that this time it would not end. Because this fighting led to what was becoming a civil war in Israel, and the whole country was on fire. Arabs used stones to break windows and vehicles of Jews, and Jews in return also caused riots, burned businesses, and destroyed houses. The situation was becoming very ugly, and it was very painful for me to see it.

Operation Wall Guard began following the escalation of the riots in Israel on “Jerusalem Day.” Those riots had led to dozens of demonstrators and several police

officers getting injured. Hamas fired rockets into Jerusalem and its environs, as well as into the Gaza Strip. In response, the IDF attacked back, and so [Operation Wall Guard](#) began.

Unlike previous operations, throughout this operation, people on all sides of the political spectrum expressed their opinions online. This is what caused the escalation and gave legitimacy to civil war, fake videos as well as incitements for further violence. For a little over two weeks, I was afraid to go online because all that I saw was hate. My acquaintances, celebrities I admire, singers, actors, and politicians from all over the world expressed an opinion and seemed to support one side over the other. They presented “facts,” made statements, and shared those infamous infographics without even knowing if what they were saying was true. It didn’t seem to matter to them. It was extremely frustrating for me, someone who has lived through these operations, living in fear the entire time, to now see someone who is sitting on the couch at home with the AC on, in a country that hasn’t experienced war and God-willing will not, judge, preach and dictate what they think should be done to Israeli citizens who since the beginning of their short existence as a nation, have only experienced wars, fear, and terror for their entire lives. In the end, there was a ceasefire, and the situation slowly calmed down. These people who were so quick with all the “answers” forgot about the situation, and life appears to have returned to normal, as much as possible at least.

During this period of conflict, with all the confusion and fear I was in, I

still tried to broadcast “business as usual.” A lovely Jewish teenage girl I worked with (who I would babysit) made me feel so proud and grateful when she told me that she felt the need to be the “ambassador” in her high school and make sure all the students knew about the situation in Israel and what the truth really is. At that moment, I realized immediately that this was also my role, and in fact - the role of every Jew in the world, to be an “ambassador.”

Every nation has people who hate them, although I feel that we - the Jewish people are the most hated nation in the world in all history and [always will be](#). Therefore, we must also be a very strong nation and continue to fight for our existence. There will always be those who try to demonize us and present Israel in a negative light to the world.

I personally felt that precisely in this terrible situation, my job is to spread to all Americans and non-Jewish people from other countries what the truth really is and not the biased information that is seen on the internet. Because today, in such a technological world, anyone can go online and write whatever they want, edit videos and photos and create false propaganda.

Despite everything, I did not succumb to the situation, and I walked proudly and without fear. This is because I am not ready to give in to a situation and be afraid to speak Hebrew in the street.

As a woman who is driven by justice, I would like to convey my message and opinion based on the familiar saying, “Do not judge a person until you walk a mile in their shoes.” What

I am trying to say is that as an Israeli who lived in America during this war and did not experience the war myself - I experienced the hardest antisemitism I have ever dealt with. It was the hardest thing for me and so many others to experience. Many times life here feels like “living in a bubble.” People here have not experienced daily terrorism as the residents of Israel have. They have not had to run to shelters and pray for their lives every day like many Israelis have had to.

So, before you run and flood the web with antisemitic information, which has a very strong power in today's world, please check your sources and look for the truth, not the antisemitic misinformation like what has been spread over the summer.

Breaking the Stigma: Mental Health on College Campuses



By Yael Spodek

The 21st century is an era of modern progressiveness with advancements in technology, medicine, and social justices. However, even with all of the improvements we have made in our world and society, there is still a prominent issue with the stigma around mental health. That's not to say that we haven't come a long way from how things used to be, but we also have a long way to go. A prime example of how the negative connotation surrounding mental health is prominent in today's day

and age is what happened when Simone Biles, age 24, pulled out of some gymnastic events during the Tokyo Olympics due to mental health concerns. Biles received a great deal of backlash against her decision, with television personalities such as Piers Morgan, saying in a [tweet](#) “Are ‘mental health issues’ now the go-to excuse for any poor performance in elite sport? What a joke. Just admit you did badly, made mistakes, and will strive to do better next time. Kids need strong role models, not this nonsense.” Unfortunately, Morgan wasn't the only one who disapproved of Biles' decision. Simone faced nasty [comments](#) from Charlie Kirk, the founder of the Turning Point USA, saying she's a “selfish sociopath” and “a shame to this country” . However, with all the negativity directed towards Biles, many give her props for knowing what she needed and doing what was in her best mental and physical interest.

According to the latest college students mental health statistics, more than 25% of students have been diagnosed with or treated for mental illness. Within this percentage, 63% have dropped out of college due to their mental health struggles. Astoundingly, 71% of college students said they would use tele-mental health services, which is a medium for psychiatric appointments that uses video technology, at their school if they had access. The National Alliance on Mental Illness states that 40% of college students who are diagnosed with some form of mental health conditions don't speak up and ask for help, the main reason being that students are afraid due to the stigma surrounding mental health. Mental

illness is, unfortunately, susceptible to stigmatization more than any other type of illness. The perceived stain around mental health includes ideas that people with mental disorders are violent or incompetent. People dealing with difficult mental health situations are often blamed for their illness, leading to the internalization of the stigma which results in distress and self doubt. Although, we have progressed as a society as a whole, on the views of mental health there is still a lot that needs to be done, especially considering that the suicide rate in college students is 1:5. In order to lower this rate and continue to help our future generations, barriers need to be broken and we should be prioritizing help and resources for mental health on college campuses specifically and generally in the greater population.

In a 2020 article produced by the [Light Program](#), a mental health treatment center, it states that the top four causes for an increase in mental illness on college campuses are pressure to succeed, financial worries, uncertainty about the future, and an increase in social media use. These four impactful circumstances have a significant effect on students' academic performances. A Boston University mental health researcher, Sarah Ketchen Lipson, was the co-principal investigator of a nationwide survey which found that 83% of students academic performance declined due to their mental health challenges. During the Covid-19 Pandemic there was an increase of college students feeling lonely and isolated, adding to their already prevalent mental health concerns. Along with [these statistics](#) there should be an understanding from professors and administration

that mental health is a serious topic that affects college students, which should initiate conversations about being more “flexible with deadlines and remind[ing] students that their talent is not solely demonstrated by their ability to get a top grade during one challenging semester” (McAlpine 2021). When students feel that their professors and schools are more understanding and don't stigmatize mental health there is a greater chance that they will reach out for help, which could result in a better academic performance, and healthier more well adjusted adults.

While the stigma around mental health is universal, it's effect on college students is prominent and possibly greater than in any other stage of life. College students worry that due to their mental illness they will be looked at or treated differently by peers and faculty. Additionally, there is also a large lack of knowledge and information surrounding mental health especially on college campuses. [The Clay Center](#) for Young Healthy Minds, a free and practical, online educational resource, states that colleges “have very limited clinical services and mental health personnel.” (Schlozman and Abdu-Glass), which results in “[inadequate means of providing evaluations or therapy](#)” (Schlozman and Abdu-Glass). Another eminent issue regarding mental health on college campuses is insurance limitations as many student health plans don't have much support for providing mental health care. Furthermore, the majority of students, and surprisingly their parents, have very little knowledge on where to get help, such as on campus counseling centers.

There is a consensus among mental health professionals that the best way to combat this mental health epidemic on college campuses is through education. Students and faculty should have informational programming that highlights the issues at hand, and provides tools on how to navigate some of the challenges that will inevitably arise. Universities such as [Kent State University](#) in Ohio excelled in this aspect and even received the honor of being the one of the healthiest universities in the nation in 2018 (Hopewell Therapeutic Farm 2019). Another way to implement education of mental health on campus is through student run campaigns and initiatives. This may be harder to establish since the stigma around mental health often scares off students who are able to organize such events, however, it is one of the more productive ways of battling the stigma and reaching fellow students. The objective for informational programming and general education on mental health should include definitions and explanations on different psychiatric problems. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of what the mental illness may look like to an outsider, how the illness affects situations, and how people with mental illnesses interact with others. The programming should also include information on where to get help and counseling, as well as tips and tools on how to deal with stress, anxiety, the feeling of loneliness, ect.

Mental health issues need to become normalized in our society. A college or professor who showed insensitivity to a student's physical disability or illnesses would be chastised, penalized or even

potentially fired for such egregious behavior. The same standards are not held for students with mental illnesses. Such double standards are a perfect example of why college students today are reluctant to reach out or seek help when they are facing their own mental health challenges, which only exacerbates an already difficult situation. It is difficult for students to ask for help due to what their peers may think or say, even more so, when it comes to authority figures like professors and administration. Having fellow students make fun and dismiss one's mental illness isn't easy but it becomes much harder to reach out when it's coming from adults who are meant to be role models for us.

FEATURES

My Summer in Ghana



By Sophie Frankenthal

Like many other students, I spent the 2020-21 academic year in my bedroom. Naturally, I grew restless, and I decided that I'd need to pack my summer with extravagant adventure from start to finish in order to compensate for a year full of virtual classes and mundane, household chores. However, as much as I was longing for an exciting, invigorating, fun-filled summer activity, I have come to learn that in choosing how to spend the summers during one's college years, it is imperative to maintain balance--balance between relaxation and

productivity, between fun and growth, between giving and taking, and between living in the present and building toward one's future. So, I set out for an adventure that would not only provide me with this balance, but which could also cater to the intersection between my passion for sociology and my desire to pursue a medical career

To start off the summer, I travelled to Israel for a period of two months and volunteered on an ambulance with Magen David Adom. This experience was phenomenal in the way it allowed me to gain hands-on medical experience whilst simultaneously giving back to my Jewish brothers and sisters and immersing myself in the rich heritage of our homeland. Additionally, it allowed me to gain insight into the Israeli medical system, which was an invaluable learning experience given the fact that I plan on making Aliyah in the coming years. Volunteering with MDA was truly incredible. I could honestly dedicate an entire article to it, but for now, I want to discuss Part Two of my magical summer.

The real highlight of my summer came during the last 3 weeks. I set out on a plane to Ghana (Western Africa) to volunteer in a medical capacity through a New-Zealand based organization called IVHQ. After spending a few days touring the capital city, Accra, I and 8 other volunteers from all over the globe packed into a crammed, sweaty tro-tro (minibus) and embarked on a 3-hour journey to the rural, mountainous village of Frankadua, where we would be living for the rest of our time in Ghana. We resided amongst a community of farmers and hunters, in an area without access to running water or completely reliable

electricity. However, I grew to look forward to cold bucket showers and late-night walks to the outhouse. I loved waking up to the crow of a rooster (no, that isn't just a movie thing), and being accosted by a flock of goats every time I carried anything that seemed like it could be food. Most of all, I loved the serenity and wholesomeness that accompanied such a simplistic lifestyle, and I loved the people who lived it. There was always an air of happiness, gratitude, and unity amongst the villagers, and to live amongst a people with so much appreciation for all aspects of life and the natural world was truly inspirational.

As a medical volunteer, I served a variety of roles in both Frankadua and many of the surrounding villages. Most mornings were spent in one of two local clinics, where I would typically perform basic triage and consultation services for the patients. Some of my tasks included measuring and recording vitals, verifying insurance policies, listening to patient symptoms, performing basic diagnostic tests, and even sometimes prescribing basic medications under the supervision of a clinic health professional. I was also fortunate enough to assist in the delivery of a couple babies and to observe some more advanced medical procedures. A couple days a week, rather than helping out in the clinic, we would travel to various schools in the region in order to provide basic first aid, sex education, and mass malaria testing and treatment for the students.

Arguably though, the most impactful aspect of our medical outreach took place in the afternoons, when we would ride throughout the various

villages on motor bikes in order to make house calls to patients with severe wounds which needed constant maintenance. Most of the wounds we tended to, resulted either from cooking burns, motor-bike accidents, or machete cuts at the farm. Many of these wounds become exacerbated or infected very easily due to the poor and dirty living conditions in these villages, or due to the fact that the people can not afford the necessary treatments. However, we were also introduced to a terrible, flesh-eating wound that seemed to be endemic to the population. The individuals with this wound all claimed that it appeared out of nowhere, and they therefore deemed it a “juju wound”, or a wound that was inflicted by black magic. Upon further investigation though, and much consultation with the local health-professionals, we learned that in actuality, the wounds which we were seeing fall under the category of a particular type of ulcer that is caused by bacteria in the water in many parts of Africa- the Buruli Ulcer. Given this newfound knowledge, we are now raising funds to provide these villagers with access to proper testing and treatment.

Afternoon wound outreach was tremendous in that it allowed us to truly connect to and interact with the locals of Ghana. However, in truth, the best opportunities for meeting and learning from the locals took place during the times when we weren’t working. Every evening, after returning from our volunteer placements, we would all gather at the football/soccer field which was the social epicenter of Frankadua. Here, we would watch and participate in football matches between individuals of all ages, chat

with the locals, and give the children endless piggyback rides. Night times were also filled with a vast range of cultural experiences such as drum circles, bon fires, dance parties at the pub, and impromptu ping-pong matches at the outdoor market. I formed genuine friendships with so many of the locals, and they taught me so much about their culture and livelihood in Ghana, and for that I will be forever grateful.

Of course, before travelling to Ghana, I was somewhat concerned regarding the challenges such a trip might pose to my religious lifestyle. However, Ghana is home to a wonderful Chabad family, and they graciously hosted me every Shabbat along with their community of Israeli expats, Chassidish goldminers, and other travelling individuals looking for a warm, Jewish environment - and maybe some challah and chicken soup as well. During the week, I managed with my own set of utensils, some “instant” meals, various fruits and vegetables, and a ridiculous number of eggs. Suffice to say, maintaining a religious lifestyle was not actually the biggest challenge of living in Ghana- nor were the bucket showers and power outages. Rather, the hardest part of being in Ghana was having to say goodbye to a community of locals who I have come to know and love so dearly, and whom unfortunately, I can’t know when or if I will next have the privilege of meeting again.

These past 3 weeks in Ghana have been truly life-changing, and I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to embark on such a rich, eye-opening adventure. I feel blessed that I had the ability not only to gain hands-on medical experience, but to do so in

the framework of a completely different culture- the absolute perfect way to incorporate my medical goals and my passion for sociology. I feel lucky and humbled to have been able to positively contribute to the lives of people who are less fortunate than I. I hope that I can continue to help out from afar. But most of all, I am so thankful to the beautiful people of Ghana for opening their homes and their hearts to me, and for the tremendous ways in which they enabled me to grow through their endless love, happiness, and wisdom. They have shown me what it means to lead a genuinely meaningful and fulfilling life, and they have taught me to never take the little things in life for granted, because not everyone is fortunate enough to have even that. I pray that one day soon, countries like Ghana can achieve a point at which they no longer have a need for foreign volunteers. Until that day, I encourage anyone who has the ability, to leave the comfort of their Western homes and to go give to and learn from people who aren’t as privileged as they are- I promise you won’t regret it.

Inside a Computer Science Mentorship



By Gabe Aspir

This was my first summer away from sleepaway camp. I know, a little embarrassing for somebody who is 21, but I couldn’t bring myself to step away from the magic of it all until this summer, when Professor Diamant, Chairman of the Computer

Science department here at YU, informed my Computer Science course about a “can’t-possibly-pass-this-up” opportunity.

And it truly was an opportunity I could not pass up! It was a program titled “Industrial Software Development”, and I, a first-year Computer Science student, was given the chance to work and learn from a professional currently in industry.

For those unfamiliar, after your first year of structured Computer Science courses (which was where I was), you do NOT know enough to qualify for any legitimate internship. Really, what you need in order to qualify for such an internship, is two to three years of related classes.

So while I was initially torn between going back to camp and reprising my role as a division head, I chose to stay home and try this Computer Science mentorship.

There were about 24 students in total in this program, and we were split up into groups ranging from 3-5 students per mentor. The mentors that were a part of our program were all very distinguished and intelligent people within their respective fields. Personally I had the privilege of working with Dave Feltenberger, a Senior Staff Software Engineer who works at Google!

I never imagined that I would be able to learn from someone directly at a big software company like Google, after only one year of computer-science-ing. But I did, and pretty well, too. My group created a system known as a “Patent Prior Art Finder” over the course of the summer.

With this tool, a person is able to comb through millions of patents, and find similarities and relationships within them, to avoid the possibility

of patent infringement, and to glean insightful data. Data that can answer such questions, like how similar would my theoretical patent be to all the 100+ million patents out there? Do I need to source other patents as prior art? Am I even able to patent my idea?

So how did I, and a couple other YU students (Zach Fish and Ephraim Meiri), create such a powerful tool?

By learning a lot. Through teamwork, and determination. We were able to design this technology by not giving up.

With the help of our mentor, we first devised a plan of action, stated our end goal, and laid out the foundations of each step. We learnt about how to utilize different existing technologies, and how to implement them within our own advanced system. We explored the various intricacies of the Python programming language, and the pandas library and Google’s Big Query. We were able to utilize other python libraries that first year students would never possess the capability to use.

This experience allowed myself, and the other students who partook in it to really jump-start our computer science portfolios, knowledge base, and coding confidence. If you’re thinking about doing this program next summer, I highly recommend it.

To view all the different projects we’ve created this summer, please click on the link here:

<https://yeshiva-university-cs.github.io/>

Student Research Reaches New Heights



By Danielle Lane, Managing Editor

The Yeshiva University Biology Department hosted an event on July 26, 2021 which highlighted summer research conducted by YU students. According to Dr. Harvey Babich, Chair of Biology Department at Yeshiva University, the purpose of the research meeting was to “bring some normalcy back to the college, to slightly alter the overall feeling of gloom and isolation among faculty and students. The research presentations were given by SCW and YC undergraduates and the meeting was attended by faculty from both campuses. The student presentations were excellent and, upon conclusion, the attendees left with an upbeat feeling.”

Over the course of the almost four hour meeting, many Yeshiva University students had the opportunity to share presentations of the research they conducted over the summer with the head of the labs in which they conducted their research as well as with fellow researchers. The student presenters included: Kayla Perlmutter, Tania Kiesel (the Vigodner Lab, SCW), Elisheva Miller, Esther Miller, Natania Birnbaum (the Alayev Lab, SCW), Michael Gerber, Avishai Samouha (the Maitra Lab, YC), Nicole Soussana, Jeremy Purow, Eliezer Heller (the Steinhauer Lab, YC), Asher Junger (the Murthi Lab, YC)

and Maayan Hirschhorn (the Rusk Institute for Rehabilitative Medicine). Also present were Shanza Baseer Tariq and Manveet Nanda (Katz School, YU).

The research conducted spanned a range of topics from: Regulations of Testicular Sertoli Cells by SUMOylation, The Search for a Treatment for Triple-Negative Breast Cancer, Liver Cancer, Alzheimers, Investing Genetic Interactions Between Pink1, Parki, and iPLA26A, and Probiotics and the Microbiome.

As each research cohort presented there was a feeling of mutual interest and respect among the researchers. While the topics of research covered a vast array of topics, there was an atmosphere of genuine interest while each group presented their research. The event not only allowed the opportunity for students to share their research with their peers but it also served as a reminder for what we can accomplish as students. After spending over a year isolated from each other and unable to spend time in the places we wanted to be most, the research meeting reaffirmed that even through struggles we will be resilient and return to the things we love the most.

My Summer at Camp HASC



By Gitty Boshnack, Science and Technology Editor

I wasn't supposed to be at Camp HASC this summer. It all happened

with the emergence of the Delta Variant when my family's plans for a trip to Israel were canceled. I took the drive up on July 4th, and I wasn't prepared for Camp HASC's impact on me.

Camp HASC is not just a camp for special needs children; it is a place where souls are reawakened, friendships are made, and broken hearts become whole again. Camp HASC is not the type of place where it's every man for himself; it's a place of teamwork and *achdus*, unity. It's the type of place where when you're walking up a hill with a heavy wheelchair, another counselor will offer to push it for you, even if it's ninety degrees and they have a camper of their own. It's the type of place where when you tell your camper that you're thirsty, someone passing may offer you a cup of water. It's also the type of place where people offer to drive each other home on their off days, making extra stops, and taking extra time after a long week. Though at times it may be challenging to take care of people with special needs, at Camp HASC, you're not on your own.

It's amazing the way your heart can fill with joy at someone else's happiness. On one of my first days at Camp HASC, there was a concert. When the music started playing, I began to dance with my camper, and her face lit up in a way I had not seen before. Joy flooded through me, and I became emotional. I looked around, and I saw many campers on counselors' shoulders, dancing in circles around campers in wheelchairs. The goal at Camp HASC is to make our campers happy.

Time and time again, I was inspired not only by the fantastic Beis

Midrash Program that the camp provided but by the campers themselves. How campers are willing to give up their swing for another camper in a wheelchair. Or how when I was trying to bring a camper to lunch and he didn't want to come an older camper came and took his hand to bring him. How the campers Daven with such enthusiasm and point to every word. Finally, how they smile despite all their obstacles.

Camp HASC is known to be the happiest place on Earth. But to me, it's the place that heaven meets Earth.

Kochvei HaShamayim: Bridging the Gap Between Professional and Family Life



By: Esther Perez, Opinions Editor

Upon having conversations with many students at YU, individuality and uniqueness among the student body has become very obvious to me. We all have different dreams, different areas where our skills are prominent, and different routes we want to take in order to shape the world into a better place. Although our professional goals and life milestones are all different, inherent questions and fears are the same across the board. There are very few people in college that I know who don't, in some way, feel a sense of pressure and stress when it comes to grappling with a future career and a future family. For some of us, graduate school is a necessity, and for most of us, it takes years to work our

way up our particular industry to produce the paycheck needed to support the many expensive facets of Jewish family life. Because of this struggle, many people feel they have to choose between taking their career and education to the furthest level and possibly pushing off starting a family, or having their ideal family life and forgoing the extent of professional success they had previously envisioned.

To me, this seemed like a fact of life: There's a gap here, and it seems unfair, but life is full of those. However, necessity is the mother of all invention, and this one brought about the formation of a non-profit organization that combats this challenge head on. Kochvei HaShamayim was born this year and was established by young Jewish professionals who know firsthand how difficult it is to reconcile the two worlds of the professional and the personal. The organization aims to empower young Jewish couples by helping establish connections with the larger Jewish community and/or providing financial support. There are many challenges along the way, but with their varying initiatives, Kochvei HaShamayim is committed to trying to help various young couples with diverse educational paths and personal goals. "We know it's possible because there are many examples of individual couples who have done it," Daniel Lazarev, YC '16 and founder of Kochvei, explains. "Kochvei is about creating an organized support structure that would enable any willing couple to do this."

If being in YU has taught me anything, it's that we should think twice about compromising. Upon

YU's inception, the founders of the school didn't compromise on a Yeshiva environment and Torah values, as well as a top notch education that was on par with every other university. So, too, in this situation that many young couples are facing, why should we settle for an either/or? With every challenge the greater community faces, it is our responsibility to rise up and problem solve. Despite the struggle, we try to excel in living up to all our values. Kochvei HaShamayim understood the need, and working with them has reinforced my understanding of the Jewish approach to resolving the conflicts in our lives, and how to move forward when there is a supposed impasse.

As Kochvei takes off from the ground, the mission needs to be broadcasted. In collaboration with Stern and YU, a webinar explaining the mission and the process to get involved will be taking place on Sunday, August 29. In anticipation of this event, we encourage all possible participants to check out our [website](#), and sign up for the event (and be entered to win a \$50 Amazon gift card!) using the QR code below. We look forward to greeting you at the beginning of our new journey! In collaboration with Stern and YU, Kochvei hopes to host an on-campus event this fall. For more information, visit Kochvei.org.



My Summer in Memphis



By Ezra Emerson

Oh summer. The time of year when people usually lay back from their usual schedule and unwind. Some have more sleep time, others sit around and watch tv, play video games, scroll on Instagram, TikTok or Snapchat, or go to their local pool or beach and just relax. Well, at least most of us do that. Others like to maintain some sort of schedule to their day plus get some of that dough (money) for the next year, so they sign up to work at the many camps and day camps. The last and least desired summer activity is an internship. According to the Cambridge English dictionary, an internship is "a period of time during which someone works for a company or organization in order to get experience of a particular type of work". You wanna know the best part about it? Usually one does not get paid. What FUN!!! Anyways I did an internship, paid thank G-d, and here is both my experience and what I have learned about it.

I had the opportunity to work at the beautiful Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Memphis in Memphis Tennessee. This is the point where people are probably asking "hold on a sec, where is Memphis?" and the answer

is on the bottom left point of tennessee and right next to the mississippi river, or “why get a Internship in Memphis Tennessee out of all places?” which can be answered right now. Long story short, I have a good chunk of family that lives in Memphis and they have a couple of connections with the hotel. I asked if there was anything I could do there since I needed a job for the summer, and they asked for me and sure enough I had a job.

The job was working a week at all the different departments they had in the hotel, and getting a feel for each of them. I started off with housekeeping, which I hated at first but came to appreciate what they do and how it's done. I know for myself that the next time I stay at a hotel, I am gonna keep it as clean as I can since I have been on the other side before. Next up was the front desk, which was very interesting to work at and get a feel for that. By far the hardest part was calling people since I am more of an in person interaction type of guy than the phone most of the time, so answering them was definitely hard to get over. The next week after I went to the Accounting department, and with the stuff I was taught in accounting this past semester, I did great in that department. After that I went over to the sales and catering department, which was also excellent as well. Then I went over to the maintenance department, which was very interesting. I had to fix some sinks, some bathtubs, some toilets, and other stuff as well. It was definitely one of the hardest working weeks of my life, but I loved every moment of it. Then finally the one I was excited for, which was working at the restaurant in the hotel. I was the host

and worked both the dinner shift a couple of days, and the breakfast shift for other days. Sometimes it was a little hard to get up early in the morning for the breakfast shift, but I made it work.

What I came out of this internship with was that you got to work with great people, it will go a long way. Everyone enjoy the new semester!!!!

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Aduhelm: A Major Breakthrough in the Elimination of Alzheimer's Disease



By Leia Rubinstein, Sci-tech Editor
[The Food and Drug Administration](#) has recently approved a new drug for treating Alzheimer's disease. Called Aduhelm and manufactured by Biogen, this drug successfully removes beta-amyloid plaques that have been associated with the deterioration of neurons in the brains of Alzheimer's patients. Scientists have believed that the excess buildup of proteins in the brain is the cause of memory loss in Alzheimer's patients, which is what prompted FDA approval.

The clinical trials focused on the surrogate outcome of removing the amyloid plaque and not on a real-world outcome, such as restoring one's memory. This is a much faster, easier, and cheaper way of getting a drug approved. While this method of approving drugs has been successful in the past, [critics](#) say that this does

not guarantee that the drug can cure Alzheimer's and does not take into account the possibility that this drug may have other damaging effects.

Aduhelm can cause painful swelling or bleeding in the brain, as seen in [30-40%](#) of patients in the study, and is extremely expensive, costing [\\$56,000](#) per year. Medicare will bear the brunt of the costs, causing the government to spend excessively over this new drug that may or may not prevent memory loss. Patients who receive the treatment are required to receive monthly infusions intravenously as well as brain scans.

Nonetheless, the FDA has taken a leap of faith and approved this drug. Around 6 million Americans suffer from this deteriorating brain disease, yet there has not been a new Alzheimer's drug since [2003](#). The abundance of caution that must be taken when approving a drug as well as the bureaucratic measures and liability lawyers that are involved, prevent many potentially life-saving drugs from entering the market.

Anyone who has a family member or friend with Alzheimer's knows the pain of watching their loved one slowly fade away through their memory loss. They may still be living and breathing, but they are no longer themselves. Any small chance that a drug can prevent brain deterioration, is a huge win and one step closer to completely eliminating the disease.

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Forgotten Female Scientist: Marie Sklodowska Curie



By Shani Mizrahi

Marie Curie was a brilliant [French-Polish scientist](#) who contributed greatly to the field of science, particularly to Chemistry and Physics. Marie won the Nobel Prize twice: in 1903, she won the Nobel Prize in Physics along with her partner Pierre Curie, and in 1911, she won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. She was the first woman to win the Nobel Prize twice and the first woman to become a professor at the University of Paris in 1906.

Marie was born in 1867 in Warsaw, Poland. Marie had four brothers and sisters. Her father was an atheist and fought for the freedom of Poland, which made it difficult for him to keep his job. Her mother was a Catholic. When Marie was only eleven years old, both her older sister and mother died which affected her belief, leading her to become agnostic.

Marie graduated high school when she was only 15 years old, with

excellent grades. She had worked as a private tutor for children in Poland, before moving to Paris at the age of 24 to study mathematics and physics at the Sorbonne. Marie's goal was to earn a teaching certificate there, and then return to Poland. In 1893, after she completed her degree in physics, she began working in the industrial laboratory of Professor Gabriel Lipman. She also continued her postgraduate studies, which she completed in 1894.

Marie initially met a French scientist named Pierre Curie in a non-romantic way. One thing led to another, and they eventually married and brought two daughters into the world. Marie and Pierre were not only romantic partners, but worked together at the laboratory as well - work for which they won the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1903, which made Marie the first woman to win a Nobel Prize.

Marie was also well known for investigating the radiation emanating from components that we now identify as radioactive elements, including uranium, radium and thorium. She found that the intensity of [radiation from uranium](#) can be actually measured, and that the intensity was always proportional to the amount of the element in the compound - regardless of which compound. Her second Nobel Prize, won in 1911, was given to her in recognition of her discovering and studying radium and polonium. In an extraordinary move, she did not patent the process of isolating radium, thus enabling the scientific community to conduct further research without any interruption. Marie later died of a blood disease, resulting from exposure to large amounts of radiation.

Marie's daughters kept her legacy alive. Her eldest daughter, Irène Joliot-Curie, also won a Nobel Prize in Chemistry (along with her husband Friedrich Joliot-Curie) in 1935. Her other daughter, Eva Curie, published a comprehensive biography of her mother in 1937. The book was a great success and was translated into many languages, including Hebrew.

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Greenland's Looming Crisis



By Yosef Scher

Greenland, the [largest island in the world](#), is melting at an alarming rate. Although this is not a recent discovery, the [increased rate](#) of melting ice concerns the scientific community. According to [Denmark](#), the country that owns Greenland, on July 28th, scientists measured "enough meltwater to drown the entire US state of Florida in two inches, or 5cm, of water." Such a substantial loss of water in such a short period of time has severe implications for our planet.

The most obvious problem caused by this massive ice melting event is the crisis that will occur to Greenland's population within the next couple of decades. Even though Greenland is

the largest island in the world, it has one of the smallest populations. Since Greenland is [80% covered in snow](#), the only places where people are comfortably able to live are in coastal cities. As the rate of ice melting increases, these coastal cities are put at risk for numerous things, including increased risks of flooding due to glacier runoff and [increased risks of mental illness](#) as their country shrinks.

Although the tragedies for Greenland's population will only escalate because of climate change, the potential problems resulting from Greenland's ice melting will negatively affect our sea levels. [Greenland](#) has "656,000 square miles of ice [that] play a pivotal role in protecting much of the world's freshwater ice supply." As temperatures continue to rise, more ice disappears. This direct correlation assures that sea levels will continue to rise as more ice turns to water. According to data from the [NASA Goddard Space Flight Center](#), the rate of change of sea level rising is 3.3 millimeters per year. Additionally, in 2021, scientists at [this facility](#) believe that sea levels are close to 100 millimeters higher than what they were in 1993. A significant contributor to rising sea levels is ice melting in Greenland. [Michon Scott](#), a prolific writer and member of the National Snow and Ice Data Center, found that "Greenland['s] ice loss in 2019 was enough to raise global ocean level by 0.06 inches (1.5 millimeters)." This number has only grown since and will continue to do so in the following decades to come.

Nature and society will experience the adverse consequences of rising sea levels. According to [Oliver](#)

[Milman](#), an environment reporter for The Guardian, the "rate of ice loss, which is accelerating as temperatures continue to increase, is changing ocean currents, altering marine ecosystems and posing a direct threat to the world's low-lying coastal cities, which risk being inundated by flooding." By individually analyzing these outcomes, a person can better understand just how serious of an issue this is. If ocean currents are altered, then [dramatic weather pattern](#) changes will follow. As marine ecosystems begin to shift around, many of the food chains worldwide will break down, leading to a possible [food crisis](#). Finally, as coastal cities begin to flood, more people will have to [move inland](#). This can lead to overcrowding, which has several detrimental effects in itself.

Considering that some scientists predict Greenland's total demise in roughly [600 years](#), which would cause sea levels to rise to more than 20 feet, we need to figure out a way to fix the climate change problem before it is too late.

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Fukushima: A Wild Conundrum



By Yosef Scher

On [March 11, 2011](#), Japan was struck with a 9.0 magnitude earthquake—the largest earthquake in Japan in over 1,000 years. The earthquake had catastrophic consequences; it destroyed entire towns, cost Japan [\\$235 billion in damages](#), and resulted in more than

[18,000 tragic deaths](#). Possibly the most significant of the damage, however, was caused by the three nuclear meltdowns of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, which released a substantial amount of radioactive material into Fukushima and the neighboring towns. As a result, the Japanese government created a [twenty-kilometer evacuation zone](#), forcing over [150,000 people](#) to evacuate their homes. This led Fukushima and many towns in the vicinity to become ghost towns—or so the Japanese thought.

While the area became depopulated, domestic pigs and wild boars began to inhabit the abandoned territory. [Donovan Anderson](#), a researcher at Fukushima University who has been studying the wild boar population ever since the nuclear meltdown occurred, explained to a reporter that “[o]nce people were gone, the boar[s] took over.” Specifically, Donovan directed a genetic study of the wild boar and domestic pigs to understand how these creatures could thrive so well in this unusual environment. He discovered something peculiar after analyzing DNA samples: pig-boar hybrids. In a seemingly almost perfect example of a “Darwinian natural selection test tube,” the domestic pigs began to breed with the wild boars due to inadequate food supply. Over several years following this event, [researchers](#) have found that the “domestic pig genes have gradually been ‘diluted’ over time.” The scientific community continues to marvel at this strange occurrence.

Scientists are curious to see what will happen to the animals once people are allowed to return to the previously restricted area. [In 2018](#),

the Japanese government told the public that some of the affected areas could become repopulated. However, in addition to their fear of returning to a place that was contaminated with high levels of radiation, “[residents](#) have voiced [their] concerns about the dangers of encountering wild boars in their streets and backyards.” After living in these towns for almost a decade, these wild boar and pig-boar hybrids are reluctant to give up their territory. According to [those who returned to the towns](#), the animals they encountered did not seem to be phased by them. Furthermore, some of these animals may have high radiation levels inside of them because of the contaminated water that they drank. In fact, “[a]ccording to some tests conducted by the Japanese government, some of the boars have shown levels of radioactive element cesium-137 that are [300 times higher than safety standards](#).” This has elevated the level of fear in many of the residents.

A select few, however, such as [Shoichiro Sakamoto](#), are trying to solve this issue by reducing the wild boar and pig-boar hybrid populations by hunting them. Sakamoto, and other brave individuals, have decided to build traps to capture the animals so that the hunters will have an easier time. In a New York Times article, writer [Kimiko de Fraytas-Tamura](#) reported that “in the three years since 2014, the number of boars killed in hunts has grown to 13,000 from 3,000.” Even though the population of these animals has significantly decreased, Japanese residents are still hesitant to return to their previous homes. Time will tell whether the residents and the boars will be able to coexist.

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How Elite Athletes Prepare Mentally and Physically



By Aaron Shaykevich

As the Olympics come to a close and the Paralympics begin, it is important to understand how athletes train for such an event. What are the physical and mental challenges of these athletes, and how do they overcome them? Is there anything we can learn from these athletes and implement into our lifestyle?

If there is one thing high-level athletes are known for, it is their consistency. Athletes train [six days a week](#), and while different sports vary in training style, the consistent training regimen is universal. Jim

Taylor, Ph.D., [writes](#) four things an athlete should try to keep consistent - effort, life, mind, and preparation. Consistent effort is performing with consistent strength and keeping your environment (equipment, training, etc.) the same. This, according to Dr. Taylor, must be paired with a consistent life and mind, meaning acting harmoniously with how you think. Lastly, consistent preparation is the athlete performing consistently for competitions.

For athletes, diet and nutrition play a significant part in their lifestyle. An article in [Penn Medicine](#) recommends that 50 percent of an athlete's diet be fruits and vegetables. [Another article](#) gives a clear organization: 55 percent or more carbohydrates, 12 to 15 percent protein, 30 percent or less of fat. This is similar to the distribution recommended to the general public. Furthermore, an athlete with a more strenuous workout routine may want to increase the carbohydrate intake to 70 percent.

Athletes, of course, must also make sure to be physically prepared. [For endurance](#) athletes (running, skiing, swimming), this preparation includes increasing their "VO2 max." VO2 max is a measure of an athlete's ability to intake and use oxygen. To calculate their VO2 max, athletes have to wear a mask attached to a 1.5-pound device while training.

Reaction time and speed are also crucial for virtually every athlete to improve on. Using advanced cameras, sports scientists are able to identify faulty movements and address them with the athlete. [To increase muscle strength and flexibility](#), athletes have to focus on

resistance training (using weights, for example) and stretching.

A big issue athletes face is mental health concerns, a developing topic which most recently American Gymnast Simone Biles brought attention to. As mental health becomes increasingly recognized as a legitimate concern, athletes are taught to confront these issues head-on. [Fear of failure](#), a lack of emotional control, and a lack of self-belief are a few of the more common issues athletes must address if they are to be mentally healthy and perform well.

Cindra Kamphof, Ph.D. is a [brain trainer](#) for the Minnesota Vikings, and helps athletes "develop their grit." She writes that, among many things, players should "believe in [their] purpose" and "own the moment." This seems to emphasize a cognitive approach to the mental health dilemma, allowing reasoning to be the solution. Indeed, [this approach](#) to mental health in the sports field is aptly called "grit theory." The underlying theory being positive psychology. In practice, this involves focusing on the athlete's love of the sport and on trying to improve their ability.

However, even with the best training, there will always be off days, and preparation will not help athletes 100% of the time. An [article in Harvard Medicine](#), however, points out that there are benefits to failure. Richard Ginsburg, Ph.D. points out that the brain "grows more from failure than it does from success."

While the lifestyle of elite athletes appears unreachable, there are certainly lessons we can take to live a healthier lifestyle. Consistency is an

important attribute for anyone, and while athletes may take it to an extreme, keeping a consistent mindset is definitely valuable. Furthermore, for a balanced diet, find what works for you. Eating food that isn't conventionally healthy is certainly okay, as long as it's in moderation and with oversight from a physician if you have any concerns. Also, working out will not only make you stronger but can [reduce](#) the likelihood of getting bad cholesterol, diabetes, and even some cancers. While many workouts can help with different parts of the body, just actively [walking](#) or doing some squats can be very effective.

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Student Research Spotlight: Talia Simpon



By Gitty Boshnack, Science and Technology Editor

Throughout the year, and especially over the summer, many students take advantage of various research opportunities at Yeshiva University and its affiliated graduate schools. This month I sat down with Talia Simpon, who interned at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in a cognitive neurophysiology lab, to gain greater insight into the research she was involved in over the summer.

Gitty Boshnack (GB): Hi Talia, thank you for taking the time to meet with me. Let's start by getting to know you a bit.

Talia Simpon (TS): Hi! I'm a rising junior majoring in psychology,

specifically the neuroscience track. I'm still undecided about my specific career at this time, but something in the psychology field.

GB: How did you get involved in this research?

TS: It was actually a super easy process! I went on YU CareerLink and found a summer research internship through YUSOOP (Yeshiva University Summer of Opportunity Program). The project was categorized as "pediatrics/neuroscience," and the research involved a rare condition known as 22q11.2DS deletion syndrome, which really interested me since I hadn't heard of this syndrome before, and I particularly love learning about underdiagnosed or rare conditions. I sent in my resume online and was later invited for an interview.

GB: What did you hope to gain from this research experience?

TS: As my first clinical research internship, I wanted to get my feet wet and immerse myself in the field as much as possible. As someone exploring different careers, it was incredibly valuable for me to meet neuroscientists, clinical psychologists, neuropsychologists, and other staff. In addition to being in a lab environment, it was a valuable opportunity. My work in the lab also allowed me to have some experience under my belt for whatever I choose to do next.

GB: What did you study in the lab, and whom did you study under?

TS: I'm grateful to have interned for Dr. Ana A. Francisco at the Cognitive Neurophysiology Lab.

This project was characterizing the sensory profile in 22q11.2DS deletion syndrome and autism. We learned about the goals, background, and methods of our research and met with the rest of the lab team. Then, together with another intern (who happens to also be from Stern!) I worked on data input and assisted with data analysis through group difference analysis using violin plot and network analysis models. We then made a presentation together and presented our findings to the rest of the lab staff.

GB: What does Dr. Francisco hope to achieve with this research?

TS: People with 22q often have a unique set of sensory processing differences compared to the neurotypical population, but as of now, there is no defined sensory profile or set of characteristics, which would be helpful for diagnosis and treatment/ intervention. Since 22q11.2DS deletion syndrome is considered rare, this population's cognitive and psychiatric profiles aren't well-researched, as opposed to the sensory processing differences for individuals with autism, which is more well researched. Dr. Francisco hopes that by comparing both these groups with controls, we can uncover any possible distinctions between sensory profiles in autism and 22q and learn more about the specific sensory differences in the 22q population.

GB: What was something that interested you from your research experience?

TS: It was eye-opening to see how the lab functions as a unit with so many different moving parts. Dr.

Francisco was wonderful in that she integrated the interns into the rest of the lab-- we were invited to meet everyone at all the lab meetings and journal clubs. This was the first time I was exposed to what it really means for study coordinators, primary investigators, lab managers, research fellows, clinical psychologists, and neuropsychologists to work together.

GB: What are some skills that you developed?

TS: I found myself thinking critically and analyzing information in new ways. For example, after we ran the data and looked at network analysis models, I thought a lot about relationships, strength, and centrality of variables and what differences in those models might point to.

GB: Did you change any of your or your family's habits due to anything you learned from this study?

TS: While I did not change any habits, I learned a lot about sensory processing differences, their effects on quality of life, and different methods of measuring them. Everyday occurrences that most neurotypical people might not even think twice about, such as the vestibular input of playing in a park, or the auditory input of a motorcycle driving by, for example, can be extremely distressing for people with sensory issues.

GB: Do you have any advice for students who are trying to get lab positions?

TS: Start looking early! I waited until May, and while I was lucky enough to find this internship (which

I loved), many positions by this time were already closed.

GB: This was so interesting Talia! I learned so much about your productive summer. Thank you so much for sharing.

TS: My pleasure!

BUSINESS

Business Basics: How to Build Credit



Amalya Teitelbaum, Business Editor & Manager

Many people are given their first credit card around the time they first enter college. Many of those same people have no idea what the purpose of said credit card is. And no, it isn't just so that you don't have to carry around 20's with you. The purpose of a credit card is in the name itself; to build credit. But, how one does it, is indeed the essential question.

Certain questions, however, must first be answered. The first being: what is credit? [Credit is](#) the measure of trust one party has in another party's ability to receive some kind of resource and pay for it at a designated point in the future. Simply put, it is for those who would like to immediately obtain something, but do not wish or do not currently have the means to pay for it. It can be used to purchase a car, take out loans, pay for a property, and much more.

Question number two: who issues credit? The simple answer is the bank you are associated with, but a deeper look reveals a more complex system. A credit bureau, or a credit reporting agency, is responsible for issuing and regulating credit. More elaborately put, a [credit bureau is](#) an organization that collects and researches individual credit information and sells it to creditors for a fee so they can make decisions about granting loans. In sum, they measure your "creditworthiness" (or trustworthiness).

Question number three: what types of credit are there? There are two types: [secured credit and unsecured credit](#). While both secured credit cards and unsecured credit cards have numerous overlapping similarities, there are a few key differences. The main difference is who the card is funded by. A secured credit card is funded by you; you place the money in the account and you decide the limit. An unsecured credit card is not funded by you. Your credit limit for these cards is based on factors like your credit score and credit history, and is generally determined by your lender. If you continue to demonstrate good credit habits, your lender may decide to raise your credit limit. While both are decent options, a secured credit card is the best option if it is within your limits. [There are three key reasons why:](#)

1. Using a secured card can help ensure that you live within your means and avoid falling deep into debt when trying to rebuild your credit.
2. A secured card can strengthen your credit score by helping you use credit wisely, and it's a great card to start with when you're first learning to use credit.

3. When you have bad credit, unsecured cards may carry high fees or come with high-interest rates, neither of which is beneficial for someone trying to build/rebuild credit.

Now we come to the essential question: utilizing all this gained information, how can people, especially college students, build credit? There are [seven simple steps](#) to explain how to build rock-solid credit, no highfalutin language needed:

1. Pay all your bills on time. Easier said than done of course, as things tend to be. However, utilizing the automatic payment process can help it be very easily said and even more easily done. It is important to keep in mind that the later your payment is, the larger your bill will be.
2. As discussed earlier there are two types of credit; secured and unsecured. A secured credit card is the best card to help you build your credit score.
3. Become an authorized user. An authorized user is someone, typically a child, who is added to someone else's, typically a parent or guardian's, credit card. So any good credit on the original user's card will appear on yours as well.
4. Pay off any existing debt you have.
5. Apply for a credit builder loan. This step is for those who don't own or do not wish to own a credit card. This is the process of sending money through a middleman to the credit bureau on monthly payments. If paid on time and in full, the money will be returned to you. Doing this

builds your trust and creditworthiness.

6. Request a credit limit increase. It is important to note that you should keep your balance below or at the same amount when you do this. For if you increase the limit, and increase the amount you owe, it would completely disvalue your action of increasing your credit limit.
7. Consider adding other accounts on your card. This can help you build credit and boost your credit score, which represents your creditworthiness as an individual, as well.

Best of luck to all, especially my fellow college students.

Complexities of Investing in China



By Toviya Slager

What makes the great investors stand out is their ability to move their money into growing markets before everyone else realizes the potential. Over the past year the political and economic relationships between the U.S. and China started changing tones. For some this is signaling the transition of international power from the U.S. to China, while others believe that China's policies are hindering its expansion. China has embraced the [phrase](#) "the East is

rising and the West is declining". However, is it worth investing in the growing market?

The potential transition from the US being the largest international superpower to China has been discussed for more than a decade. In 2011 the [Pew Research Center](#) published results of a survey that showed a large part of western Europe's population (France 72%, Spain 67%, Britain 65%, and Germany 61%) already believing that China will replace or already replaced the US as the world's leading superpower. That narrative only strengthened during the COVID-19 pandemic as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) marks their 100-year anniversary. Xi Jinping has changed the Chinese attitude [towards the U.S.](#) by telling them to focus on domestic race problems and remain uninvolved with Chinese policy. During earlier administrations the Chinese understood the US power and created less confrontation, but in recent meetings, the Chinese government has made it clear that they [will no longer be bullied](#) by the U.S. and will create their own sphere of influence. This was made clear with imposing communist rule on Hong Kong and convicting, last month, the [first man guilty](#) of China's National Security Law for protesting.

While China changes their tone and is expanding their political influence, their economy is also growing rapidly. According to a [report](#) by UK-based Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR), China is forecasted to overtake the U.S. as the largest economy by 2028. This is for a large part due to their stronger COVID-19 response than the US. The question remains: Does such

growth create opportunity for the average international investor?

The easy answer is “yes”; a growing economy means expansion of companies will expand and the rise of asset prices. Many are in this camp. The Wall Street Journal reported in January that for the first time China overtook the U.S. as the [leading destination](#) for foreign direct investments. In general, emerging markets are seen as locations for faster return on capital due to the [frontier market](#) concept. The idea is that frontier markets, such as the United States and Europe, are more developed therefore take more effort to grow than less developed markets. It is like most learning curves, where the development is fast at first, but gradually slows as you reach the “knowledge frontier”. Emerging markets have had many periods where they outperform developed markets but are also more volatile since they rely more on outside investors. China has been following this front for a while through their rapid expansion, and many investors assume that investing in the Chinese market will allow them to capitalize on this growth.

However, the Chinese government and market have come under attack, leaving investors skeptical. First, the Chinese government has forced companies to delist or transformed them into government entities. In July the large ride-hailing app, Didi, was told to [pause their NYSE IPO](#); directly preceding China's [crackdown](#) on Bitcoin miners, and blocking [Ant's record breaking \\$34 billion IPO](#). Additionally, the Chinese government [announced](#) on July 26 that private afterschool education programs must operate as non-profit

organizations to help lower costs for families to encourage them to have more children. This news shocked the market and the MSCI China Index fell 4%. This is just one example of the unpredictability of Chinese regulators, causing international investors to feel uneasy.

Second, as many investors are considering Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) in their investing portfolio, China has many problems relating to human rights and environmental concerns. In 2020 alone, the amount of money allocated to [ESG funds](#) [has doubled](#), and many more funds are including ESG into their investing criteria. However, this creates issues when investing in China since they continue to violate human rights against the [Uyghur population](#), and remains the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases.

Third, Chinese regulators seem to have distaste for large private corporations. For example, China blocked Ant's initial public offering (IPO) after Jack Ma criticized the CCP. With that being said, companies may be compelled to remain smaller to prevent attraction from Chinese authorities. less companies will file for IPO and asset growth will remain limited, even if the economy is growing. The main problem faced by businesses is that the [CCP prioritizes](#) political control over economic efficiency, and therefore may never become

Finally, the Chinese market is historically volatile; rising close to 50% one year and falling 20% the next. In fact, the last 5-year annualized return for [S&P China 500](#) was 12.9%, but over the last 10-years it has only been 7.47%. This is

relatively little compared to the US S&P 500 [10-year return](#) of 14.71% and 5-year return of 17.51%.

Nevertheless, there are still investors who look at these government regulations through alternate lenses. Most notably, [Ray Dalio](#), founder of Bridgewater Associates and long-time investor in the Chinese markets. He feels that the crackdown on large corporations such as Didi are part of China's long-standing policy for steady development of capital markets and entrepreneurship. In his view, the Chinese government runs the capitalist system and will crack down to protect the state where other countries may not have. In the case of the aforementioned company, Didi, the Chinese government feels the data they possess is too sensitive to allow them to go public. Ultimately, Dalio remains a strong believer that Chinese stocks should remain in a well-diversified portfolio.

All in all, whether to invest in China is not straightforward. Nonetheless, China's growing influence is not to go unnoticed.. Although some view the government's intruding policies as a hindrance to stable market growth, others see the policies as a protective measure for the general population.

The First Offer is Simply a First Offer



By Batia Segal, Business Editor

A person walks into their first major job interview with the hiring manager of the company. They are unsure how they landed the interview in the first place but nonetheless grateful for the opportunity. The hiring manager conducts the interview and is utterly impressed by the candidate sitting in front of them. She wants to do everything she can to ensure that this candidate becomes a part of the team so she makes an offer. The candidate accepts frantically, afraid that he will never land on an opportunity like this ever again.

To many, this is a familiar story. Settling because their own insecurities tell them that this opportunity landed upon them out of mere luck and never will it happen again.

The truth is, most things do not happen out of luck, they happen as a consequence of consistent efforts and proving qualification. This shift of perspective is the first step to being paid the salary one dreams of. A question probably pops into the minds of many; what does a dream salary look like? The answer is obvious, it varies from person to person. As mentioned earlier, the first step is recognizing that labor is worth something, the second step is determining how much it is worth. In other words, putting a dollar value on the work. This can involve checking the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the official US source for all labor records which includes salary information for every legally registered job, and coming up with a better understanding of how much the market pays for your expertise. For example, an aspiring software engineer may value his work at a yearly salary of a million dollars but

placing that kind of demand on the table will deter employers from hiring him because that is more than what the market is willing to pay for a software engineer.

Once you decide how much the market is willing to pay for your expertise, it is time to determine what your worth is. That worth may include a yearly six figure salary, full health insurance coverage and 401k or it may include a much lower salary with stock options and living expense compensation. Already, you should go into the interview with more confidence and assertion because you've already determined what you want out of the potential job offer.

With this information in mind it is time to approach the job offer. The potential employee is given an offer by the hiring manager but he realizes she is not offering him the market value of his expertise. With his previously acquired knowledge he should inform the hiring manager of the market price for his labor and ask for at least that amount of money. Ultimately, the first offer is simply a first offer.

It is important to note that this is in no way a complete guide to negotiating salary but it is one small simple change we can all make to ensure that we are paid what we deserve at our jobs. It is an uncomfortable discussion to have but it's important because at the end of the day it is you who suffers the consequences of your silence.

How Billionaires are Reinventing Space Travel



By Aaron Shaykevich

In July 2021, two billionaires, Richard Branson and Jeff Bezos [traveled to space](#) on rockets built by their own companies. They are the first and second billionaires to go to space respectively. Bezos' flight is unique (and arguably better) than Branson's since Bezos went [beyond the Kármán](#) line. The Kármán line was created to separate the earth's atmosphere from space, which is approximately 62 miles above the earth, while Branson reached around 53 miles above the earth's surface, which is below the Kármán line. However, Bezos broke this boundary and went around 66 miles above the earth.

Bezos did not fly alone, however, with three others joining him. An anonymous bidder originally paid \$28 million to fly with Bezos, but due to scheduling conflicts could not make it. Therefore, Joes Daemon, the person scheduled for the second flight got the "privilege" to ride with Bezos, who then granted this opportunity to his son. This is how, at age 18, Oliver Daemon became the youngest person to travel to space. Another record was broken by Bezos's enterprise 'Blue Origin' with the inclusion of Wally Funk on the flight. Funk was an aspiring astronaut who was rejected by NASA multiple times in part because of her gender, but has now become the oldest person to travel to space at the age of

82! Jeff Bezos' brother, Mark Bezos, also joined the historic moment.

Branson and Bezos did not only fly for enjoyment but also as a stunt, the goal of which is to promote future commercial space travel for their respective companies. While commercial space travel is a novel idea for many, seats on future flights are already being sold or even sold out. Virgin Galactic, the company Branson founded, originally sold tickets at around \$250,000, but recently changed their pricing to \$450,000 per seat. While Blue Origin hasn't officially reported costs for their upcoming commercial flights, [Reuters](#) reported in 2018 that the cost would be an estimated \$200,000-\$300,000 per seat.

This event does not come without its own controversy, however. Jeff Bezos, founder and former CEO of Amazon, has had many criticize his work within Amazon. Firstly, the alleged "mistreatment" of Amazon employees has become more recognized, and many blame Bezos. Furthermore, the wage disparity between Bezos and his employees shocks many, with him making around [\\$3,700 per second](#). For [reference](#), the median Amazon employee salary for 2020 was around \$29,000. This means that every 7.8 seconds, Bezos earns the salary of an average worker for a year! The flight Bezos took to Outerspace only exacerbated tensions between Bezos and his critics. The creation of Blue Origin alone cost Bezos nearly \$5.5 billion, a sore point for some. Joe McCarthy, a writer for [Global Citizen](#), points out 7 more philanthropic ways the money could have been used. For example, McCarthy describes that the money

could have been used to save 37 million people from starving or used to plant nearly five billion trees. Others point out that Bezos does not make much of his money from a salary, rather through stock options. [In fact](#), 90% of his net worth comes from his Amazon Stock holdings.

There are certainly positive and negative aspects to commercial space travel as a whole. There are certainly more practical, thoughtful, and environmentally friendly alternatives for those with that much excess cash. However, the prospect of space travel becoming accessible to more than just astronauts is still the dream of millions. While not as practical, it allows space enthusiasts, researchers, and basically anyone with at least \$300,000 lying around to partake in the extraordinary endeavor. Wally Funk, one of the passengers with Bezos, has stated that her dream did not need to die because others told her no. With the newfound access to commercial space travel, many can now live out their lifelong, "out of this world," dreams. Furthermore, as commercial space travel becomes more popular, the technology behind it will improve in order to increase capacity in flights and pricing. Maybe one day, we'll all have the incredible opportunity to experience space for ourselves.

3-Stock Highlight: August 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 interesting 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 **Square Inc. (SQ)**, **NIO Inc. (NIO)**, and **Pfizer Inc. (PFE)**.

Square Inc. (SQ):

It is no secret that our spending habits have changed throughout the pandemic, and the fintech (Financial Technology) giant has been there to help facilitate them along the way. Whether it was shipping necessities like personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, and medications, or the comforting experience of retail therapy for clothes you're probably never going to wear out (trust me, I've been there), the way we shop will forever be changed. Maybe you aren't ordering online as much as others, but we can almost all agree that contactless payment and "tap to pay" have become the standard when compared to the unsanitary alternative of cash.

The push for technologically-advanced point of sale (POS) systems in small businesses has seen an exponential rise throughout the pandemic thus far. You know those iPads or digital systems you pay with at the checkout that most small businesses are using these days? Chances are, they're running on Square's payment processing system. Square's stock price has also reflected this change, [nearly doubling](#) over the last 12 months. Between the

spread of new Covid variants and ever-changing public safety restrictions, the rise in online spending and contactless payment methods continue to give Square the opportunity to expand and diversify its offerings.

Lastly, Square's stock offers a unique opportunity to diversify into one of the most popular topics in the last two years: Cryptocurrency. Back in February, Square Inc. [purchased 3,318 Bitcoin](#) at an approximate price of \$170 million dollars, representing roughly 5% of Square's total cash, cash equivalents and marketable securities as of the end of last year. For many investors wanting to get a piece of all the Crypto action, Square's decision impressed millions. Another fintech craze that Square made news for was the [recent acquisition](#) of the BNPL (Buy Now, Pay Later) firm AfterPay for \$29 billion dollars. The BNPL space of the fintech world helps its users spread payments out for longer periods of time with little to no interest. Kind of like how you might pay for an expensive couch over many months, except that BNPL firms help you spread the cost of almost any type of product regardless of size or cost. To learn more about the BNPL space, check out my past Observer article "[BNPL: Biting Off More Than We Can Chew?](#)".

NIO Inc. (NIO):

There are few topics these days that rival COVID19 for news coverage, one of them being the recent rise in electric vehicle (EV) exposure and renewable energy sources. With this recent rise, NIO's stock has also been a challenger for one of the most popular stocks of the last year in terms of volume traded. The stock is

currently traded at a rate of 58 million daily shares on average. As of today, [nearly 47%](#) of all electric vehicles are located in China, with NIO having delivered over 20,000 EV's in the first quarter of this year alone. Between their rapid growth, Chinese government support, and China's incredible production capability, NIO will continue to make headlines across the world's markets. To learn more about the electric vehicle race, check out my past Observer article "[Electric Vehicles: Race to the Future](#)".

Pfizer Inc. (PFE):

You don't have to be a stock market investor to know this household name, largely because you've likely had it literally jabbed into your arm twice at this point. As of today, [more than 4.93 billion](#) COVID-19 vaccination shots have been given across the world, enough to vaccinate 32.1% of the global population and Pfizer is responsible for the majority of them. Pfizer has proved they possess numerous distinguishing characteristics that allowed them to take the lead in this worldwide challenge. Pfizer's long-time name recognition, industrial-level production capabilities, and historic stock reliability all come together to further entrench the pharmaceutical giant into our every-day lives. Today, with all the new COVID-19 variants circling and third vaccine/booster shots already on their way, Pfizer's piece of the action does not seem to be fading any time soon.

ARTS & CULTURE

My Unorthodox Life: Toxic and Enlightening



By Batia Segal, Business Editor

"My Unorthodox Life" is a Netflix reality show that follows the Haart family and their whereabouts in New York City. The mother, Julia, is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Elite World Group, a major modeling management company. The main idea of the show is to tell the story of Julia Haart, a woman who left her Orthodox life in Monsey, New York to liberate herself and become a powerhouse in the business world.

The show is attempting to shine light upon the dangers of extremism and the beauty of luxury. For example, there is one scene where her fourteen-year-old son Aaron reveals to Julia that he does not watch TV nor talk to girls anymore in an attempt to gear his focus toward Torah. This revelation brought Julia to tears, as she became frantic that her son would turn into what she left behind in Monsey. Interestingly enough, it is not her son who is practicing extremism, it is actually Julia. Most parents would be happy to see their children focused on their studies and freeing themselves of distraction by their own will, but Haart is so afraid of, as she puts it, "fundamentalism," that it makes her extreme in the opposite direction. She prefers to fuel her son with distractions. Her initial attempt at this was the day that her son was in the city, she brought in an inappropriately dressed drag queen opera singer. This, in my opinion, is

utterly inappropriate for a fourteen-year-old, but leaving her Orthodoxy in Monsey did not make Julia more open-minded; instead, she closed herself off to those who do not find meaning in her way of life. This, too, is extremism, and I think the show does a good job of highlighting that.

On the flip side, the show does not do a good job of causing their audience to covet the life of the luxurious lifestyle of the Haarts. For comparison's sake, "Keeping Up With The Kardashians," a reality show that follows the wealthy Kardashian family's life, creates a sense of escapism for the audience. The Kardashians make their lavish lifestyle seem effortless and therefore more covetable while the Haarts seem to be putting a lot of effort into not being Orthodox, hence the show's name, instead of simply being who they are. This is prominent from the first episode and its title, "She Wears The Pants." The identity of the show is not to highlight the fruit of Julia's hard work as a business mogul; rather, it is to highlight a life that they're not even living. Because of this, the audience is less likely to become inspired by the Haart family and their hard work, instead it creates skepticism of Julia's heavy criticism of the ultra-Orthodox community and potentially fuels a person's preexisting spite for the religious community.

In other words, a series that could have served as inspiration for women is serving to bring down others.

All in all, "My Unorthodox Life" is great for anyone who enjoys trashy reality, like myself. With that being said, the directors could have easily

shifted the focus of the show away from her leaving religiosity. On the other hand, the series is terrible for anyone who does not like low-quality television, highly judgemental and materialistic people or the bashing of Orthodoxy.

Lucifer: When Devil Goes on Vacation



By Elizabeth Kershteyn

Speaking of the devil...

The Master of Hell decides to drop his full-time job as a torturer and instead finds himself in Los Angeles managing a luxurious nightclub... While this plotline may sound ridiculous, it is actually the setup for the Netflix TV series *Lucifer*. The show follows the fallen angel who is known by many names but mostly by Lucifer Morningstar (played by Tom Ellis). He enjoys living a life full of privilege, wealth, and doing people favors. His life gets even more exciting when he gets involved with the LAPD homicide detective Chloe Decker (played by Lauren German). After helping her solve a crime, he becomes a civilian consultant for the police department. Chloe and Lucifer's relationship develops as they go on to solve various crimes together.

Lucifer, however, is not the devil you think he is. You would probably imagine him as an ugly creature with dark wings, horns, and maybe even a goat beard, who works to make people sin. Mr. Morningstar couldn't be further from this image. He is a

gallant, handsome man who is very popular among women. Most importantly, he loves punishing sinners. People often think that they sin because they are influenced by the devil, but Lucifer is always quick to remind them that he is not to blame for their wrongdoings. Working together with the detective, he uses his knowledge of human beings to help solve homicides and ultimately bring justice to criminals he despises so much. To do that, he uses an array of special abilities such as superhuman strength, regeneration, a fast metabolism (no matter how much he drinks, his liver can take it), and, most importantly, manipulation. His main special ability allows him to find out what a person's deepest desire is just by looking into their eyes. No one can resist being honest and open to the devil. His talents and behavior often shock those around him but eventually everyone seems to be ok with it and just accepts that he is different.

Lucifer doesn't hide the fact that he is the devil, but no one except his therapist seems to believe him. Yes, the fallen angel goes to a therapist to complain about his life on earth. His main issues are his identity crisis, daddy issues, and self-obsession. Lucifer is angry with his father for making him the ruler of hell, which in turn made Lucifer the most hated celestial being on earth. He seems to enjoy the power that comes with being the devil but also despises the darkness that comes with it. Finally, Lucifer struggles with his father and thinks that all his problems stem from him and seeks revenge. During his therapy sessions, Lucifer also talks about his relationship with the detective. He truly cares about her

but often, due to his extreme self-obsession and narcissism, thinks he is the most important person. Throughout the series he learns how to empathise with other people and the importance of kindness and forgiveness. Ultimately, this pair goes through a lot of challenges together that only strengthen their bond and reveal more information about their past.

From the religious Jewish perspective, the show is hilarious at most and silly at least. Angels, who according to Torah are immortal and have no free will, are free to do what they want and can be killed with weapons forged from hell. Apparently, they are also prone to depression and unhealthy coping mechanisms such as alcohol consumption. In addition, the only thing that keeps a person in hell is guilt. If they don't think they are guilty, they can leave hell.

The showrunners didn't make a huge emphasis on any one specific religion. The setting looks Christian, but Jesus is never mentioned. Most characters are either completely fictional or just loosely based on the Bible. The makers of the show used the Bible as an intriguing base for their own fascinating humorous and action-filled story in which an angel has free will and struggles with depression, and a human therapist is counselling the wife of god and going out for a drink with a demon. *Lucifer* makes for a great detective type TV show, perfect to watch and laugh at in the evening with friends. The final season, season 6, is to premiere on September 10, so make sure to catch up before then!

Phoenix



By Anonymous

Each month, the YU Observer sends a call to YU students for poetry submissions following a specific theme. This month, the theme was "Phoenix", and we are featuring the anonymously written piece, 'Phoenix'. Other submissions of honorable mention have been published as well.

Her tears crystallize into droplets,
Tinkling like marbles
In the jars of antiquarians,
Who scratch away the ruby pebble
Of her congealed blood
From the hollow shaft,
To flick it away-
Admiring her gossamer feather.

Her ethereal song-
poignant and stirring,
How she burned until there was
nothing left
Yet choked out black ashes from her
newborn lungs-
A piercing screech of life.

They say don't be afraid-
How little they know of flames,
And living in the shadow of
approaching fire
Haunted by memories of burning

Her mouth stretches open
Swallowing only air,
Wordless.
Her language forgotten-
Whisked away by the waves of eons.

She flies alone,
Her wrinkled face weary,
Basking in the silence of loss-
Where unnatural creatures settle
Who don't belong.

As you gently card your hands
Through her incandescent feathers,
She releases a primordial wail.
Don't ask her to sing-
Let her tears puddle on the asphalt
And drip into the gutter with the rain.

Flames to Future



By Yael Spodek

Each month, the YU Observer sends a call to YU students for poetry submissions following a specific theme. This month, the theme was "Phoenix", and we are featuring the anonymously written piece, "Phoenix". However, the poems below are other submissions of honorable mention.

Your breath is dwindling, your legs are giving up, and your back feels broken. You're running in darkness that you can feel it's so thick. You're running but you don't even know what from. You're praying you won't fall, even though you just want to collapse and sleep. You're dripping with sweat, you're so hot you feel like you're burning, you feel as if you're going to burst into flames and turn to ashes. But you keep going, you keep running, you keep living. And your life continues as if you're not running marathon after marathon in your head. You feel like the walls,

you can't even see, are closing in on you. So you start to run faster and faster. Trying to outrun your imagination, trying to outrun your feelings. You see a glimmer of light, a slight bit of hope. And suddenly you regain your strength. Your legs are no longer trembling, you're able to breathe, and you're running faster than you ever have. Trying to reach the light, trying to get out and get away from whatever it is you're running from. Then, out of nowhere, a rushing sensation runs through your body. You almost fall backwards as a gust of air is breathed back into your

lungs. You feel reborn. You open your eyes and you're awake, lying in bed, and ready to keep running. Not running from the bad but running towards the good.

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We would love to hear from you!