

# The Yeshiva University OBSERVER



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## LET'S START THE CONVERSATION



### EDITORIAL

BY SHOSHANNAH MARCUS,  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

I recently heard the most absurd statement in one of my classes. One of my professors was discussing the events surrounding Russia's invasion of the Ukraine and told us that he was withholding his opinion because "whenever I express myself or open a forum for dialogue here in Stern, I tend to upset people."

I was stunned that in a university setting, arguably one of the most crucial places for exploring arguments and developing opinions, dialogue about international affairs is actively discouraged. Even more so, any event that concerns the loss of innocent life should be of top priority for a Jewish institution and discussed accordingly. In fact, YU has been phenomenally encouraging dialogue by cultivating a series of expert speakers to discuss the ongoing conflict, in addition to its more hands-on volunteer mission to aid

Ukrainian refugees. Talking about current events is the least we can do to enact change, yet our community, as well as society as a whole, often suggests otherwise.

I have been watching Jubilee on YouTube for a couple of years now and I think they do a phenomenal job of allowing different sides of an issue to come, to sit down, and to have a conversation. They produce one series in particular, entitled "Middle Ground," in which people of different beliefs come together to discuss hot topics such as abortion, the flat earth theory, and, in perhaps their most polarizing episode to date, Marvel vs. DC. I find this series particularly intriguing because it is so rare to see two completely opposite sides have a civilized discussion that doesn't end in animosity or canceling.

As a young and admittedly some-

what naïve person, it seems like one of the biggest issues right now is that people are so unwilling to just have conversations with others. We are so concerned with political labels and blanket opinions that we refuse to speak to anyone who may disagree with us. Are our views really that fragile that we can't even hear the other side?

As an English minor, one of the things that my English professors have stressed is to include the opposing side's point of view while presenting an argument. In fact, acknowledging another, plausible side actually makes one's own claim that much stronger. But, if we never confront the other side, it is impossible to ever address it. We would essentially be speaking to a mirror: having the same conversation over and over again with no progress in sight.

As members of a university, we do ourselves a disservice by not encouraging the transfer of ideas. In the Batei Midrash [place of Torah studies] on both campuses, heated debate regarding the minute details of religious practice can be heard being argued and debated throughout the day and into the night. If the rabbis of the Talmud and the students of modern-day can find a way to respectfully disagree in their pursuit of the truth, why can we not carry that into other facets of our lives? As Jews we are meant to converse and debate in our quest for ultimate truth.

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NEWS



NEWS RECAP: APRIL 2022 EDITION

BY YU OBSERVER EDITORIAL BOARD

YU NEWS

- The YU Observer appoints the first male leadership in the paper’s history: Benjamin Gottesman as Editor in Chief and Aaron (Yitzy) Shaykevich as Managing Editor.
- With the policy suspended since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, Yeshiva University reinstated and outlined a new policy on April 5, 2022 allowing visitors into campus buildings and dormitories.
- Yeshiva University sent 27 students to Vienna, Austria, from March 13 to 20, 2022. These student volunteers aided and celebrated Purim with Ukrainian refugees, both Jewish and non-Jewish.
- Sy Syms students will no longer require its students to take First Year Writing. Instead, students will take a new course focusing on business writing.
- From March 13 to 15, 2022, 300 students gathered in Stamford, Connecticut, for YUNMUN XXXII, an event which took place over Zoom last year due to COVID-19.
- In mid-March 2022, two separate incidents of antisemitic harassment, including one instance of assault occurred in the area surrounding Wilf Campus. The NYPD is currently investigating.
- The President’s office canceled a scheduled Cardozo Law School event featuring noted Anti-Zionist Dr. Rabab Abdulhadi. In re-

sponse, a petition requesting Rabbi Berman apologize to Abdulhadi was signed by over 100 Cardozo students.

- Open to men and women, the Yeshiva College Drama Society (YCDS) will be performing Lee Blessing’s “Oldtimers Game” with showtimes on April 4, 6, 7, 10, 2022.

WORLD NEWS

- Rav Chaim Kanievsky, one Judaism’s most revered Rabbi’s, passed away at the age of 94 in Israel on March 18, 2022. Known affectionately as “Sar HaTorah” [Prince of Torah], Rav Chaim was known for finishing kol ha-Torah kullah [all of the Torah] before Pesach each year as well as his prodigious and encyclopedic knowledge of shas. Yehi Zichrono Bracha.
- The United States Senate held hearings for President Biden’s pick to fill Justice Stephen Breyer’s seat on the Supreme Court, Ketanji Brown Jackson. When confirmed, Justice Jackson would be the first woman of color to hold a seat on the court.
- As Russia continues its violent siege of Ukraine, President Biden calls for more sanctions to be placed on Russia by neighboring European countries. President Biden also declared Russian actions in the city of Bucha “war crimes” after “Russian forces retreating from a Kyiv suburb [Bucha] left behind dead civilians lining the streets.”
- Pakistani Prime Minister, Imram Kahn, dissolved the country’s parliament in an attempt to block a vote of no confidence following months of a dramatic downturn in the economy. Khan accused America for interfering with parliament in order to have

him removed from power and called for an election to elect new members of parliament to occur in the next 90 days; the United States denied any wrongdoing.

- Amazon workers at a Staten Island Amazon location successfully voted to unionize. This is the first successful attempt at unionization for Amazon workers after years of attempts.
- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a second booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine for individuals who are immune compromised or over the age of 50.
- 6 individuals were killed and 12 injured in a shooting in Sacramento, California on April 3, 2022. The shooting occurred near a nightclub in downtown Sacramento at about 2 am. Police believe the shooting may have been caused due to an argument caught on security cameras but police have yet to confirm a suspect or motive.
- Elon Musk became Twitter’s largest shareholder after he purchased 9.2% of the social media app’s stock. In total Musk invested about \$2.9 billion. This comes after Musk’s criticism of Twitter’s censoring of political candidates. It is unclear whether Musk will have much decision making power or what changes he would like to see being made at the company.



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# HAVE WE REACHED THE END OF COVID-19?



BY ISAAC SILVERMAN

As I walk around New York City's establishments, breathing in the fresh New York air without the barrier of a mask, it seems as though the COVID-19 pandemic is coming to an end. However, this is not the first time we were led to believe COVID-19 would end. In June 2021, as New York reached nearly 70% of adults vaccinated with at least one dose, former Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that many COVID-19 restrictions would be lifted, including social distancing, mask-wearing, and capacity restrictions. In fact, on June 15, 2021, fireworks were ordered to be set off in ten locations in New York, including the New York Harbor, to symbolize the "end" of the pandemic.

With the power of retrospect, it is evident to everyone now that the pandemic did not "end" that day, the Delta and Omicron variants, which followed in late 2021 and early 2022, led to the reinstatement of many COVID-19 restrictions. In addition, the discovery that the vaccine effects wear off and people would require booster shots to retain immunity from the virus made infection rates spike again once many people refused to boost. Fortunately, the Delta and Omicron variant spikes did not last long and seemed to dissipate as quickly as they

had arrived.

Recently, many new drug treatments have been created to help treat COVID-19 infections. However, the likelihood of mass distribution is low as future funding for COVID-19 aid is currently delayed in Congress. This is highly troubling as less than a third of the U.S. population has received a booster shot, and daily vaccination rates have plummeted.

Although COVID-19 infection rates seem to have slowed down in the U.S., several Western European countries, including Germany, France, and Britain, have reported of a subvariant of Omicron called BA.2. This variant is 30-50% more contagious than the original strain. Furthermore, it is not isolated from the U.S., and several reports of it have been detected in major cities, such as New York.

On March 7, 2022, New York City Mayor Eric Adams lifted the vaccine mandate on restaurants, bars and theaters, which former Mayor Bill DeBlasio had installed on August 17 of the previous year. Mayor Adams said: "Two years ago, New York City was the epicenter of the pandemic, but thanks to New Yorkers getting vaccinated and getting boosted we have made tremendous progress." Since the mandate was lifted, there has been an uptick in weekly average

COVID-19 cases by approximately 40%. Although cases were expected to rise, the addition of the new Omicron BA.2 variant makes the rise in infection rates more concerning. The Omicron BA.2 variant's doubling rate is only 7-8 days, which is half of the rate for the original strain of 14-16 days and faster than the Delta variant's rate of 11 days. According to Kristian Andersen, a virologist at the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California, there is likely to be a larger outbreak of BA.2 in the U.S. "sooner than what most people expect." With that wave, I am personally worried that hospitalizations and deaths will rise once again.

On March 11, 2020, COVID-19 was classified as a "global pandemic" by the CDC. Recently, Margaret Harris, a spokesperson for the World Health Organization, told CNBC, "We're going from the acute phase, the emergency phase, to a chronic phase where we're going to have to look at long term sustained means of continuing to combat COVID-19." Similarly, the CEO of Moderna, Stephan Bancel, was recently quoted as saying, "There's a high probability we're moving into an endemic setting." In my opinion, it seems as though that is indeed the direction we are heading. With the decline of vaccination rates, the lifting of restrictions, and the occasional spread of new variants, it is not easy to imagine a world with COVID-19 complete-

ly eradicated.

So what does the future look like if COVID-19 never comes to a determined "end"? According to the dean of the Chicago Medical School at Rosalind Franklin University, Dr. Archana Chatterjee, "In order to keep it under control, we likely will need some form of periodic vaccination. Now, whether that's annual or every two years or every five years, we don't really know that yet. I think that that will emerge as we gather more data." This is the same treatment method used for the influenza virus each year, which has proven to be successful year after year. Researchers will be able to discover changes in the virus strain and adjust a vaccine to defend against it. Although this is not the satisfying "end" of COVID-19 that I and many others hoped for, I find comfort in this possible solution.



## OPINIONS

## REFUGEE IN VIENNA: WHERE RESILIENCY THRIVES DESPITE THE WAR IN UKRAINE

BY ERICA SULTAN,  
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

Throughout my one-week stay in Vienna, I was at a loss for words. Now that I'm back on American soil, I think I've found them. I've had to push away the thoughts of the beeping monitor hooked to a young, frail woman during her chemotherapy session, of an older woman's elegant smile in the face of the sharp pains shooting up her leg, and of hearing a 79-year old man tell me that he cannot wait to rebuild his home. With my mind cleared, there's the underlying emotions of great empathy, my heart swelling at the love I've encountered, and the clear understanding that it is my responsibility to share the stories I've come to witness.

I was ecstatic yet unnerved to have been selected to go to Vienna, Austria with our school. One part of me was jumping up and down and exclaiming, "You get to be on the ground! You get to make a difference by physically helping!" But another part of me was much more cynical, sneering, "What can you really do for these people? You won't even be able to communicate with them!" I later came to realize that I was not the only one with these fears, and most importantly, I was not the only one to refuse to let these fears stop me. And so I went with 27 other Yeshiva University undergraduates on the plane to Vienna. Vice Provost Dr. Erica Brown, the mashgiach of the trip, Rabbi Josh Blass, and the Sacks-Herenstein Center founders, Terri and Andrew Herenstein, also accompanied us on our trip. We arrived with 60 suitcases full of donations (all from people in our own communities and from those in our YU community, which was collected within the span of two days): 65 electronics (including tablets, phones, and computers), 555 children's toys, over 2,300 pieces of Judaica, and over 300 costumes for Purim.

Upon arrival, we visited the Stadttempel (famously, the only synagogue in Austria that was not destroyed during Kristall-

nacht), the home of the Israelitische Kultus-gemeinde Wien (IKG), otherwise known as the Jewish Community of Vienna. These were the people leading the humanitarian mission, giving refuge to the many Ukrainians fleeing from the war.

There, we met President Oskar Deutsch and Secretary-General for Jewish Affairs Benjamin Nägele who debriefed us on the situation: there were 500 refugees with 500 more on the way and 40% of the refugees were children. IKG pays for buses to be sent from Vienna to Poland, that meet refugees with Jewish heritage. These refugees were immediately upon crossing the border, given three meals a day and housing. These children are put into school within 48-hours of their arrival, and all of their medical costs are covered (including those for physical needs and those for mental, PTSD-related needs). It was clear that they were taking on a monumental task, which was complemented with a massive bill per week that the community could not afford.

A student on the trip asked the Secretary-General, "What is the cap number on how many refugees you're able to take in?" Mr. Nägele, earnest and direct, said there's no such number and expressed, "We will keep taking in people because it is our responsibility to." At that moment there was an overwhelming sense of awe felt by everyone in the room. We were face to face with human kindness in its rawest form and its unwavering power. I heard everyone sniffing and smiled my own tears away. There was work that had to be done.

My specific task from IKG's PR department was to go to different events taking place throughout the



week to take pictures, interview refugees, and interview volunteers. My first stop was at a gemach, a charitable institution, where I met Yehudit Uri. She, along with a volunteer, was folding children's clothes. Yehudit and five other volunteers worked at the apartment bought by IKG for three days a week for the past three years. They were collecting and organizing clothes, toys, and utensils, specifically for infants. There were shelves upon shelves on each wall filled with clothing. There was a long walk-in closet filled with toys, books, and strollers for the fleeing refugees. I was amazed at their work and asked if I could be of any help. But Yehudit shook her head and exclaimed, "We've got it covered!"

Another event that I attended was a job fair, run by IKG, to prepare for the possibility that most of the Ukrainian refugees will have to stay in Vienna for the foreseeable future or even become permanent residents. There, I met 79-year old Yakov. I interviewed him, with a Ukrainian translator and found out that he traveled five days from Kharkiv to Vienna with his wife, Yelena, his daughter, Tanya, and his grandson, Max. He told me that he could not wait to rebuild his home, his country. My heart tightened at that. Then I interviewed Tanya, who spoke English very well, and who also attended the fair. She revealed to me that her family had actually planned to visit Vienna this summer to celebrate her father's 80th birthday. Based on current events, however, they will most likely be staying way past the summertime. She shared with me that her husband Bob Basset, a world-renowned artist recognized by Vogue International and New York Times Fashion Magazine, was still fighting in

Ukraine. Tanya shared with me a picture that her husband had sent of a disco hall before a Russian raid, and then the aftermath of it lit up in flames. Despite the gruesomeness of the messages, Tanya smiled at me, saying that she was blessed to at least still be in contact with him.

The days passed quickly, and suddenly it was Purim night, my favorite holiday. This is when we, as Jews, focus on the displacement of our people and the dangers of living in the Diaspora. I myself have never experienced this sudden displacement in that larger sense—that experience was felt by my grandparents and even my father who is an immigrant. And while I can't speak for the others on the trip, I imagine they too haven't been displaced in the same way our ancestors have been and in the same way as the people we would be celebrating Purim with have been. I wasn't oblivious to the parallels at play.

Everyone dressed up: one friend in a tutu, another in a blow-up dinosaur costume, and I as Princess Anna. We didn't know what to expect. All we knew was that Dr. Brown had spoken to a man at the local Chabad who had invited us to his Purim event that he was preparing to throw for the refugees. We were all excited to spend more time with them during a nice sit-down seudah [festive meal], but wow, we did not expect the party that ensued when we reached the event hall. We entered a ballroom adorned with strobe-lights, gorgeous chandeliers and stone pillars decorated with floral designs, and tables upon tables with fruits and vegetables laid out in beautiful displays. A DJ was on one side of the ballroom while another massive room was connected on the other so that the children could have their own party. It's safe to say that

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## REFUGE IN VIENNA

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the entire group was in awe as were the refugees who were donning either the costumes we had brought with us or their fanciest clothing. We all piled in close to listen to the Rabbi read the megillah, and when the name Haman was read aloud, the name Putin was yelled out too by the children in the room to which everyone in the event hall booted at. The parallel was not lost on the refugees as well. But there was something else paralleled: resiliency. Passed

down from our ancestors, resiliency and persistency in the face of all odds is an innate trait that exists in all Jews.

After a beautiful Shabbat, it was time to leave, which was something that no one in the group wanted. As we tried and failed at convincing Dr. Brown and President Berman that we should stay a few more weeks, we came to the realization that home was awaiting us. Coming back to America was extremely hard as I understood the impact we had on the refugees, some of

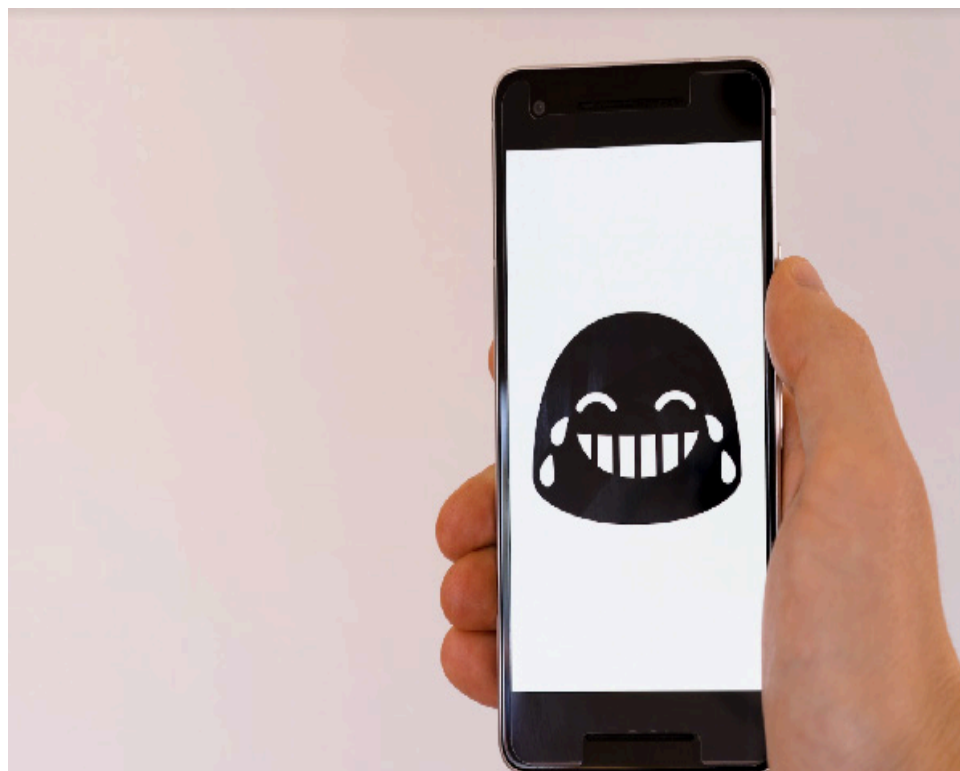
them still in contact with us and asking when we will be coming back, and I pondered how I, and the rest of YU, could still make an impact. We had already created a fundraiser so that we could help with the massive expenses of this operation; I knew YU was having weekly Zoom seminars about the rich Ukrainian Jewish history and the current events. But I knew there was more that could be done: that understanding I had mentioned at the beginning of this article. Now that I've shared mine, I'm challenging you, dear reader, to be a storyteller yourself.

Find an audience, it can be as little as one person, and discuss with them what you've witnessed while reading this. How resilient the Ukrainian refugees are, how strong the Viennese Jewish Community is, and how they need your help.

To directly donate to the Viennese Jewish Community, follow the instructions here: [yu.edu/feedrefugees](http://yu.edu/feedrefugees)

Photo Credit: Erica Sultan

## IT'S JUST A PRANK



BY RACHEL GILINSKI,  
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

Most would agree that hurting people is bad and that it's insensitive to hurt another's feelings. For some reason, though, once the date on the calendar hits 4/1, that premise goes straight out the window. Hurting people's feelings is no longer termed as such. Now it's simply called a "prank." Sharing devastating news or traumatizing others is fine, as long as you laugh and exclaim, "April Fools!" Since when does the day of the month serve as a reasonable excuse for hurting others? Why are we so quick to forget that other people have feelings and emotions?

The first day of April isn't the only time that people are prone to pranking others, nor is it the only time when pranks can go too far or be harmful. Pranks

are prevalent in our society, and for some reason, people don't realize how harmful they can be to those involved, nor do they seem to care. The problem is that people like pranks. They enjoy pulling them on others and like watching the behind-the-scenes processes when others do it. Prank videos on YouTube can individually reach hundreds of millions of views; TikTok videos of people pranking their friends or family go viral. Why are viewers so eager to see people getting upset and have their feelings hurt? Furthermore, why are creators so eager to embarrass their loved ones just to get those views?

One might argue that most of these videos are staged. Yet

the harm they create exists nonetheless, staged or otherwise. These prank videos show viewers, often immature, impressionable kids, that it's okay to hurt the people you care about, as long as it's funny. We have somehow created a culture that prioritizes online fame over the thoughts and emotions of real, living people. With every new public prank, we are further influencing viewers to disregard others' feelings.

I won't pretend that April Fool's Day, or even pranks as a whole, are the sole reason why our society is so severely lacking in empathy. It is, however, one symptom of the larger problem, highlighting how comfortable we are in tormenting others for the sake of our own entertainment. Pranks are likely not the reason why individuals

in our society tend to be apathetic toward others' feelings. But the fact that these videos are popular at all, videos in which betrayals become a joke or emotional confessions mean nothing, is alarming. How much apathy, or even sadism, is present in our society for videos like this to be relished by millions? With videos like these rising in popularity and with every video subconsciously convincing viewers that it's fine to lie and hurt others as long as you call it a prank, how much more prevalent will this apathy become?

## WE CAN BE DIFFERENT WITHOUT BENIG DISCORDANT

BY BENJAMIN GOTTESMAN,  
ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

“Six teens mercilessly beat a Jewish man in Brooklyn.” That’s the news I woke up to yesterday. This follows two days of rallies in Manhattan where protestors called for the renewal of the intifada and the ethnic cleansing of Jews in Israel. These rallies came on the heels of a two-week wave of violence in the Holy Land which left eleven of our brothers and sisters dead. The Israel Defense Force is on military alert as the country prepares for a wave of violence as Ramadan begins.

Unfortunately, we have been here before; dealing with tragedy is a too-regular part of the Jewish experience. Even so, each loss stings as if it is the first time we have suffered. There is no way to prepare for the news of more lost life.

In order to honor the memories of the fallen, let us consider who they were. This month we laid to rest a chabad Rabbi who ran a soup kitchen. A Moroccan-Israeli mother of three who died fighting the man who stabbed her. A chareidi school teacher with a one-year-old son and a new baby on the way. A quiet senior citizen, content to spend his days learning Torah. A small-business owner shopping for Pesach whose fourteen-year-old son tearfully recounted his father’s unyielding love. A woman from a rural kibbutz who passed while her nephew, a first-responder, tried in vain to resuscitate her. These are the people we lost; gunned down and stabbed in the streets of our homeland.

There were no commonalities between the victims aside from their shared heritage. It did not matter if the victims were young or old, male or female, Ashkenazi or Sefardi. Chassidim, chareidim, religious Zionists, and secular

Jews were targeted alike. The lens of antisemitism blurs all lines.

Often, we fall prey to partisanship, focusing on division more than togetherness. Sometimes it takes hardship to remind us that “kulana bnei ish echad nachnu” - we are all the children of one man (Gen. 42:11). In the Book of Esther, Haman charges our ancestors with being “a divided and disjointed nation (Est. 3:8).” Esther thus instructs Mordechai: “Go and gather the people (4:16),” understanding that salvation only sprouts through communal strength. Similarly, on the night of the exodus from Egypt, God commands that the Paschal lamb be eaten in groups (Ex. 12:4), forever setting the precedent that togetherness is the harbinger of freedom. Today, we begin the seder by ceremoniously inviting the needy into our homes, as only through a show of unity can we begin to relate the genesis of our peoplehood.

We live in a time in which tremendous ahavas yisroel [love for fellow Jews] has been demonstrated. Our Yeshiva’s recent mission to Vienna on Purim was the modern fulfillment of Esther’s call for unity, as our peers spent the festival arm-in-arm with Ukrainian refugees, displaying the innate brotherly love that sustains our people. Over COVID, a groundbreaking initiative to unite the Orthodox world in a day of Torah learning drew thousands of participants. Just recently, Jews from all walks of life rallied together to support the victims of the tragedy in Surfside.

However, on occasion, we still struggle to look past our differences. It is not a secret that our campus is not monolithic; Yeshiva University’s student body is as diverse as it is passionate. Religion is a sensitive matter and

the fact that it informs the way we believe our institution should run only exacerbates the tension that may arise between those who approach faith differently.

Periodically, this passion gives way to frustration. When our emotions get the best of us we may find ourselves expressing anger and vitriol rather than constructive conversation. It is not uncommon to hear mean-spirited comments about other members of the student body on both Wilf and Beren. Just recently, I heard students mocking “the guys in Glueck” for their meticulous approach to halacha. On the flip side, sarcasm regarding the perceived “liberal” element on campus is just as common. In a time where achdus (unity) is so crucial, we are overly quick to put down those who are different from ourselves.

I don’t need to give more examples because we’ve all heard the jokes. We’ve all heard the one-liners about “frummies” or “lefties” or any other silly nickname designed to take what someone else holds dear and trivialize it for a cheap laugh. It is vital that we speak often and passionately about societal issues, but that must be done



respectfully and with kindness. I understand that at the heart of these conversations is a deep and genuine worry about the future of the community, but that is not a warrant for degenerative speech and jokes.

There are eleven freshly filled graves in Israel today. As hate rains down from all sides, a little bit of communal love would go a long way.

Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook zy”a writes in Orot that “just as our land and the world with it was destroyed through baseless hate, so too our land and our world with it will be built through baseless love.” I know we will see these worlds fulfilled. I know we will be a part of it.

**WANT TO BE FEATURED NEXT EDITION?**

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

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## ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB HOSTS EVENT FEATURING “GROW TORAH” ORGANIZATION



BY AVERY ALLEN

On March 21, 2022, the YU Environmental Club brought renowned speaker and advocate Mr. Yosef Gillers, to speak to students about the importance of the environment in the Torah. Gillers founded “Grow Torah,” a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing experiential environmental education for Jewish institutions.

Gillers began by introducing the connection between Torah and the environment and by discussing the significance of God’s gift to Adam. In the beginning of Bereishit, God bestows upon Adam the great gift of dominion over the Earth. With this humbling gift comes boundless possibilities and opportunities. However, giving a gift also creates a considerable sense of responsibility in guarding and enhancing

its development. Rashi expounds on this notion by elucidating that, if we refuse this responsibility and cause harm to the environment, the roles between humans and the animal kingdom will be reversed.

Gillers expressed the profound message that our human responsibility toward the Earth involves immense pride, protection, and liability. He passionately discussed how we can propel our human duty through certain actions. Some examples of these actions include creating community gardens, getting outside more, and teaching schools about the importance of caring for the environment. For the students of YU, environmental action can be anything from getting involved with local organizations to keeping in mind

the importance of caring for the environment as we navigate our future careers.

Gillers concluded the discussion by emphasizing the importance of being both an Orthodox Jew and an environmentalist. He explained how each one of us should keep in mind our pivotal role in how we can care for the environment wherever our futures take us. In every profession, from business, to engineering, to education, Gillers explained why the environment should always be at the forefront of our minds.

Gillers’ message clearly reached the hearts of those who attended his presentation. One student participant, Molly Cate (SCW ‘23), commented “it was

so inspiring to hear how we as Jewish youth can have an impact on environmental awareness.” The club’s president, Yaacov Strickon (YC ‘24), shared similar sentiments that “it was amazing to see people come together to focus on a theme in Torah that is underrepresented in traditional study.” Overall, the event was a great success that pivoted a chain of environmental pride and respect in the YU community.

Thank you to everyone who came to this event to hear how Torah and environmental action are greatly intertwined. Thank you also to Mr. Gillers for speaking and handing out some “Grow Torah” swag! Join the Environmental Club on our hike at Van Cortlandt Park on Sunday, April 10, 2022, and stay tuned for more events!

## STAFF WRITER PROFILE: ELIZABETH KERSHTEYN

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

Each month, the *YU Observer* aims to highlight some of the YU undergraduate students who have written articles for us over the course of the semester. For the APRIL 2022 edition, the *YU Observer* is highlighting Roni Leider.

**Name:** Elizabeth Kershteyn  
**College:** Stern College for Women

**Major:** Biology

**Year:** Fourth

**Favorite part of being on (or back on) campus?** Learning in-person with my favorite professors and friends.

**What do you miss most about Zoom school?** Making coffee

**right before the lecture.**

**Currently Reading:** *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos* by Jordan B. Peterson

**Currently watching:** *Winter on Fire: Ukraine’s Fight for Freedom* (Directed by Evgeny Afineevsky)

**Coke or Pepsi?** Coke

**Android or Apple?** Apple

**What’s a quote/thought/or piece of advice you have for your fellow students?** “If you are not willing to be a fool, you can’t become a master.” - Jordan B. Peterson

**See some of Elizabeth’s past articles here:**

- <https://yuobserver.org/2022/03/rusias-propaganda-and-terrorism-wages-war-against-ukraine/>

- <https://yuobserver.org/2022/02/hunger-death-and-propaganda-in-yeonmi-parks-in-order-to-live-a-north-korean-girls-journey-to-freedom/>
- <https://yuobserver.org/2021/12/forgotten-female-scientist-hypatia-of-alexandria/>

*Photo Credit: Elizabeth Kershteyn*





# CLUB PROFILE: FOOD 4 THOUGHT

BY AARON SHAYKEVICH,  
OPINIONS EDITOR

Each month, the *YU Observer* aims to highlight one club available to the YU undergraduate community. For the APRIL 2022 edition, the *YU Observer* is highlighting the Food 4 Thought.

**Club Name:** Food 4 Thought

**Heads:** President Racheli Jian,  
Vice President Will Besharim

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

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

Food 4 Thought aims to reduce food waste on campus through donating the extra food from campus events and educating students on what they can do to reduce food waste.

**Why is this club important?**

Being a Jewish school, we should remember that one of the main ethical principles in Judaism is *bal tashchit* (to not destroy/waste). There is a substantial amount of food that gets thrown out on Shabbat alone. This club offers opportunities for students to prevent food waste while sharing with others.

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

Racheli: Everyone I spoke to who stays in for meals, both during the week and on Shabbat, mentioned to me how uncomfortable they felt throwing out perfectly good and untouched food. I thought that this

club would offer students a way to prevent food waste on campus.

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

We pack and deliver meals to homeless people every Shabbat. We organized a *matanot l'evyonim* (gifts to the poor that is done on Purim) packing event, which included making care packages with food, water, and encouraging handwritten notes. We also collaborated with the Jewish Community Council (JCC) of Washington Heights to raise money for Holocaust survivors.

**What are some plans you have for this semester/future semesters?**

In the future, our goals are to work together with Yeshiva University to distribute the extra food on campus not only to individual people in need but also to shelters, soup kitchens, or other organizations that help large groups of people. We also wish to distribute leftover food from any YU event and not just the remaining Shabbat food.

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

If you are looking to join a club on campus, check your email or WhatsApp. There might be a lot of texts and emails, but you can find really exciting events or clubs.

**Anything else to say about your club:**

You can contact Racheli at [rji-an@mail.yu.edu](mailto:rji-an@mail.yu.edu) or Will at [besharim@mail.yu.edu](mailto:besharim@mail.yu.edu). Look out for our emails for any upcoming

events and join our WhatsApp WhatsApp group chat!

**Are you a YU undergraduate club head interested in seeing your club featured in a future edition? Email us at [theyuobserver@gmail.com](mailto:theyuobserver@gmail.com) with your club name and the names of the club heads!**

Photo Credit: Food 4 Thought Club



## NESHAMAS CONNECT PUTS A SPIN ON JEWISH DATING

BY RAQUEL LEIFER,  
FEATURES EDITOR

Founded by Annie Rabinowitz, Neshamas Connect is a dating site featuring an interesting concept that puts a spin on Jewish dating. Traditional dating amongst Jewish singles typically consists of submitting a resume, bio, and picture to a friend or shadchan [matchmaker] who acts as an intermediary between the men and women profiled. "I wanted to create an interactive database where single people can go and put themselves out there for other single people to be able to see them," shared Mrs.

Rabinowitz, who was involved with the Staten Island community volunteer shadchan group prior to the launch of her new initiative Neshamas Connect. Rabinowitz has applied some of her own experiences into her innovative approach to this new site. She explained that since "it takes being married to know what you need to be married," she is always available to offer advice to the participants.

Witnessing the difficulties that singles often face when matched based on the traditional format, Rabinowitz was inspired to make a change. She decided to create an innovative dating concept

utilizing a short video clip as a way of Jewish singles getting to know one another. The process involves signing up, posting a short video, browsing the videos of the other members, and ultimately messaging an individual of one's choice. The idea is that the videos posted on Neshamas Connect lend themselves to showcasing a more comprehensive view of an individual compared to the traditional resume process. The other key difference is that while Rabinowitz is always available to offer advice, the goal of the site is to put the control in the hands of the participants.

The current age range on the site varies from 20-72 (Jewish singles 18+ can join) and crosses a multitude of religious levels. While videos are vetted prior to upload, users of the site are responsible to follow up on a prospective match. This platform is currently free to members and relies on word of mouth to spread awareness.

The new launch has not been without its challenges, according to Rabinowitz. Some potential users are hesitant to try this nov-

SEE **NESHAMAS CONNECT**,  
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# FACULTY PROFILE: DR. ALYSSA SCHUCK

BY RAQUEL LEIFER,  
FEATURES EDITOR, ON  
BEHALF OF THE  
YU OBSERVER



**Raquel Leifer (RL):** Hello. Please introduce yourself.

**Dr. Alyssa Schuck (AS):** Hi! I am a Clinical Associate Professor of Biology at Stern College for Women. I am also the program director for the Jewish Foundation for Education of Women (JFEW) Scholarship Program. My educational background includes my BA in biology from Stern College for Women, as well as my MS and PhD in microbiology from New York University.

**RL:** How long have you worked at YU?

**AS:** I've been at YU for almost 16 years.

**RL:** What do you like most about working at YU?

**AS:** I like a few things about working at YU. I like that my colleagues and students share a lot of the same goals and values. Even though there is diversity among students and faculty, which enriches the experience here, I think that because we share all certain values, working here has more meaning to me. I also really like watching the students grow. In the JFEW program, I really enjoy watching the students mature, develop, and gain confidence in themselves over the three years here. In the classroom, I love it when students get excited about the same subject matter I'm excited about, and when they see how the information that we learn applies to their daily lives.

**RL:** What made you passionate about your field?

**AS:** When I was at Stern, I just loved biology. I give credit to Dr. Babich for the path that I ended up on; he suggested going to graduate school for a PhD. Once I graduated from Stern, I spent a year working as a lab technician and I liked working in the lab setting. In addition, I started to see myself as someone who might enjoy sharing the passion of science with others, which I thought I could do by teaching. Microbiology itself was more accidental; I actually did not actively decide that I liked microbiology, per se. I joined a lab for a few months as part of my graduate studies, and I found that the people in that particular lab were very good educators, "had my back," and I knew I could learn a lot from them. This lab happened to be a microbiology lab. In hindsight, I'm thrilled that I ended up there, because I think microbiology is an exciting and amazing topic to study and teach. Most people don't think too much about microorganisms (although in the last two years, everyone has been thinking about it!) But it's fascinating, elaborate, and it has so much relevance and applications for our day-to-day lives.

**RL:** Do you have any advice for students interested in a career in your field?

**AS:** Don't lose sight of the goal, don't get caught up in minor setbacks. If there are obstacles or delays—whether those are grades that are not up to your standards, or experiments that go wrong—just re-evaluate. If you still feel strongly that this career is something that you really want to

pursue, keep going! You don't have to be number one. Graduating with a degree and enjoying it along the way is a success.

More generally, for careers in the sciences, I would advise students that, contrary to popular belief (:), you don't have to have a straight-A average. And, you'll find your place, even if you're uncertain of your career path right now. It will all fall into place.

**RL:** What makes your field special?

**AS:** What makes biomedical research special, I think, is its constant and unending pursuit of knowledge about the natural world. As it is famously said, "The more you know, the more you realize you don't know." The same is true in science. As soon as we come up with a theory, and think we've figured things out, nature throws us a curveball. Learning about the complexity of the biological world is an incredible intellectual pursuit, but to me it's also a philosophical or religious one. We are learning about the world that G-d created. The more complex we realize it is, the more amazed we are! It's beyond brilliant!

**RL:** If you could bring in any guest lecturer, alive or deceased, who would it be, and what would he/she speak about?

**AS:** Dr. Barry Marshall. He experimented on himself to show that it's actually a bacterium that causes a certain disease, which was previously thought to be caused by stress. The experimental mod-

el he was working with wasn't giving results, so he drank a flask of bacteria himself! When he got sick from the bacteria, he demonstrated the link between that organism (*H. pylori*) and peptic ulcer disease. I think it would be fascinating to hear not only how he persevered—because the scientific community initially laughed at his idea—but also what his thought process was when he had the crazy idea to drink a flask of bacteria!

**RL:** What is one thing you want students to know about you?

**AS:** I have high expectations of my students in terms of academics and character. I think we should hold ourselves to high standards. At the same time, though, I am human! I understand that that life can be complicated and messy, and that there are sometimes things that come up that take precedence over schoolwork. I would absolutely want my students to feel that they can speak to me if they're having trouble academically (or in any other way, if they're comfortable).

**RL:** Is there a particular book you would recommend that everyone read?

**AS:** *Grit* by Angela Duckworth and *Missing Microbes* by Martin Blaser

*Photo Credit: Dr. Alyssa Schuck*



NESHAMAS CONNECT

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el approach, particularly when it comes to being unsure about exactly what content to post on video. To facilitate the process, there are a few sample videos on the Neshamas Connect social media pages. Rabinowitz appreciates those who are committed to the process and encourages

the many followers of her email campaign to be patient as the site grows.

“Hopefully, as it grows, videos will become less intimidating and less taboo,” Rabinowitz explained.

For more information, check out the website at <https://www.neshamasconnect.com>.

*Photo Credit: Neshamas Connect*



# THE HIGHBRIDGE PARK CLEANUP EVENT: YU’S ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY CHESED INITIATIVE

BY RU BENHAMOU,  
FEATURES EDITOR

Yeshiva University students gathered to give back to the community on Friday, March 25, 2022 through a joint campus event to clean up Highbridge Park. This event was created and promoted by the Assistant Director of the Office of Student Life (on the Wilf Campus), Rabbi Herschel Hartz, with the help of the Wurzweiler Care Cafe, as well as its partnership with the Northern Manhattan Division of NYC Parks.

In the first park cleanup event held in September 2021, about fifteen students gathered together to clean and clear away the weeds and foliage that were damaging the park. Due to staff shortages within the park, Yeshiva University teamed up with the Parks Department to

facilitate park cleanup events with the students from both the Beren and Wilf campuses.

The most recent event consisted of about twenty students who cleaned, repaired, and painted the park’s fences. Among the students were some impactful members of the Washington Heights district, such as councilwoman Carmen De La Rosa as well as assemblyman Manny De Los Santos. As pivotal pillars of the community in Washington Heights, both political figures, with their support, have facilitated this environmental chesed event.

Students expressed their passion for helping out members of their community. One participant,

Elazar Abrahams (YC ‘22), shared that “while events like American Dream takeovers and sports tickets are great, these chesed initiatives are some of the most important things that a student council can do. I’ve found projects like our Bronx Fire response, relief mission to Vienna, and these park cleanups to be the most rewarding part of the job.”

It is evident that this park cleanup event has encompassed a critical aspect and focus of the Yeshiva University community: the fourth Torah value of chesed or compassion. As a Jewish institution, YU endeavors to effectuate the essential principles of what it means to be a Jew in the modern

world. A focal point of acting and representing ourselves both as Jews and scholars is active participation utilizing these values, especially the one of chesed. Menachom Aharon Wallach (Makor ‘22) commented on this ideal and on the importance of such an event, saying, “[I]t was such a wonderful opportunity to help cleanup the park and participate in a meaningful experience with the YU community.”

Make sure to stay tuned for the next upcoming Park Cleanup Event for a chance for true chesed and environmental care and activism!

*Photo Credit: Herschel Hartz*





# OLDTIMER'S GAME: THE DRAMATIC RETURN OF THE YCDS

BY ZAKKAI NOTKIN

After three long years since their last show, the Yeshiva College Dramatics Society (YCDS) finally returned on the night of April 4, 2022 with its presentation of Oldtimers Game, a play by Lee Blessing. The show revolves around a minor league baseball locker room on the day of an "Old Timer's Game," an exhibition match between former and current players, coinciding with the arrival of a new owner with big ideas.

YCDS's Oldtimers Game was produced and performed by a group of men from the Wilf campus who had little to no experience and limited resources. I am glad, however, to report that the play far surpassed my expect-

tations. Despite their handicaps, YCDS has put on a show that is legitimately praiseworthy, entertaining, and meaningful.

"Since the society had to basically reform from scratch, a lot of work had to go into making it happen at all, so we might as well make it good," shared Rami Levin (YC '24), actor and Vice President of the society. President Berman, who attended opening night, summarized his feelings with one word: "awesome." In my opinion, that truly was a fair assessment, considering the packed audience and hitchless performance.

Each actor stood on his own, giving characters that could blend together on paper unique personalities and on-stage presence. Each one has his own goals, flaws, and

heartfelt moments. Thanks to the work of the indispensable director, Professor Rueven Russel, the dialogue demonstrated quick wit and intense drama. Additionally, the jaw-dropping fight scenes were choreographed by a professional stunt coordinator who lives in Washington Heights. The imaginary locker room on stage felt like a window into its own little world.

I tremendously enjoyed the play and I highly encourage anyone interested in theater to attend,



if only to see the results of hard work and determination.

Open to men and women, Oldtimers Game will have show-times on April 4, 6, 7, 10, 2022.

Photo Credit: Yael Evgi

## YU OBSERVER STAFF PICKS: FAVORITE STUDY SPOTS

BY YU OBSERVER EDITORIAL BOARD

To highlight the personalities of our talented staff, the YU Observer chooses to share one of the staff's favorite picks. This month, the YU Observer has decided to ask the YU Observer staff what their favorite study spots are at the moment.

**Shoshanah Marcus, Editor in Chief:** the reference library in 245

**Danielle Lane, Managing Editor:** front lounge in Schottenstein Residence Hall (best dorm ever!!!!)

**Rebecca Aduculesi, News Editor:** the second floor library

**Bluma Gross, News Editor:** The back study room in Hedi Steinberg Library

**Marcela Homsany, News Editor:** The New York Public Library

**Rina Shamilov, News Editor:** My dorm room

**Atara Bachrach, Opinions Editor & Website Manager:** The corner



study room in the Wilf library

**Eli Saperstein, Opinions Editor:** Study? I'm in syms...

**Aaron Shaykevich, Opinions Editor:** At home (I commute)

**Ru Benhamou, Features Editor:** Room 210 in the Wilf Library

**Raquel Leifer, Features Editor:** The Library

**Yael Spodek, Features Editor:** Study Room 211 at Wilf Library

**Nicole Abittan, Science & Technology Editor:** 2nd floor library in 245

**Leia Rubinstein, Science & Technology Editor:** study rooms

**Yosef Scher, Science & Technology Editor:** My room

**Eli Levi, Business Editor:** Library third floor

**Jake Sheckter, Business Editor:** My apartment

**Amalya Teitelbaum, Business Editor & Manager:** Brookdale back lounge

**Benjamin Gottesman, Arts & Culture Editor:** Gleuck 1

**Elisheva Hirsch, Arts & Culture Editor:** bean bag on 2nd floor library loft

**Cayla Muschel, Arts & Culture Editor:** fifth floor of YU library

in the colorful chairs by the railing! (with a coffee - shhh)  
**Adi Benhanan, Website Manager:** Bean bags in the 9th floor Computer Science Lab in 245!

**Max Friedman, Website Manager:** Heights Lounge  
**Ezra Jacobs, Business Manager:** My room (what else is a desk for?)

**Rachel Gilinski, Social Media Manager:** What's studying?  
**Erica Sultan, Social Media Manager:** bottom level of the reference library

**Racheli Jian, Layout Editor:** the bean bags on the upper floor of the 2nd floor library  
**Belina Milhem Jena, Layout Editor:** Beit Midrash in 245



# SHERRY HERRING: THE GREATEST SANDWICH YOU'VE NEVER HAD

BY BENJAMIN GOTTESMAN,  
ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

One stifling summer day in nineteenth-century Philadelphia, soda vendor Robert McCay Green ran out of ice. Desperate to find a cooling agent for his sugary drinks, Green dropped a scoop of vanilla ice cream into his soda, hoping that the frozen dessert would keep the soda cold and refreshing. Instead, Green discovered that the drink took on a completely new flavor, and the ice cream float was born.

Some things should not work, but they do anyway. Dropping rich, creamy ice cream into fizzy root beer should not produce a delectable treat superior to the sum of its parts. But as Green learned on that sweltering day in Philly, sometimes the best results come from the strangest of combinations. To find the modern version of this culinary phenomenon, one need only venture to Sherry Herring, a small, unassuming operation in the heart of the Upper West Side.

Founded in 2011 by Sherry Ansky, Sherry Herring has become a staple of Tel Aviv's culturally confused cuisine (that's a compliment). Recently, Ansky opened up shop

they're really, really good. It starts with a baguette so fresh you would think it was still baking. Then comes a healthy serv-

boldness of the flavor profiles really hit home.

Sherry Herring draws all crowds. From devout Jews searching for a taste of the past to hipsters hopping aboard the latest trend, Sherry Herring is the perfect meeting spot for the Upper West Side's various contingencies. In trying times such as these, nothing quite unites the world like a really tasty sandwich.

What happens when a French baguette meets Dutch Herring? What happens when an idea originating in Tel Aviv ends up thriving in Manhattan? What happens when a dish inspired by the food our ancestors ate in Europe is served in the style of modern America? What happens when you take a chance on something that by no indication should succeed but may just come through for you anyway?

The answer, at least at Sherry Herring, is one really good sandwich.



in Manhattan, bringing her elevated herring sandwiches to those of us still in the Diaspora.

A herring sandwich should not work; when I was first introduced to the concept, I was offended on behalf of sandwiches everywhere. Then I tried one and discovered that

ing of melting butter, perfectly cured herring, a dollop of sour cream, finely diced chiles, and sliced scallions. To top it all off, a cherry tomato is squeezed over the sandwich. It's a bizarre combination, but it's wonderfully delicious. The freshness of the ingredients is unparalleled, and the ingenuity and

## THINGS TO DO IN NYC: SPRING EDITION

BY ESTHER ATRI

Year round, there are many things to do in the busy and bustling city of New York. With spring break (or Pesach break for YU students) around the corner, I compiled a list of attractions that accompany the spring season in NYC.

### 1. Cherry Blossom Watching at Roosevelt Island

What: Take the air tram to Roosevelt Island and enjoy the amazing view of the cherry blossoms at the Cherry Walk that were gifted to the United States by Japan in 1909  
Where: The tramway to Roosevelt Island runs every 7-15 minutes from 59th Street and 2nd Ave  
Price: Attendance is free, but you need to pay for the Roosevelt Island Tram via Metro-card

To find out more: <https://newyorksimply.com/cherry-blossoms-new-york-city/>

### 2. Central Park Rowboats

What: Soak up the sun and enjoy the peace and nature of Central Park while rowing a boat!  
When: Open from April through November (on weather permitting days)  
Where: Loeb Boathouse at Central Park  
Price: \$20 per hour (cash only)  
To find out more: <https://www.centralpark.com/things-to-do/sports/boating/>

### 3. Orchid Show at the New York Botanical Gardens

What: Take-in the most beautiful orchids on Jeff Leatham's Kaleidoscope exhibition  
When: February 26 through May 1  
Where: New York Botanical

Gardens

Price: \$23 on weekdays, \$30 on weekends  
To find out more: <https://www.nybg.org/event/the-orchid-show/>

### 4. Anita Gelato

What: Enjoy the warm weather with Tel Aviv's famous Anita Gelato  
When: Open daily from 8am to 12am  
Where: 1561 2nd Ave, New York, NY 10028  
Price: Ice cream starts at \$5  
To find out more: <https://www.anita-gelato.com>

### 5. Summit One Vanderbilt

What: Experience the most thrilling view you'll get in NYC standing over 1,000 feet above Midtown!  
Where: One Vanderbilt (42nd and Madison)  
Price: Tickets start at \$39



To find out more: <https://summitov.com>

Be sure to check out my Instagram, @eestandthecity, for more great NYC activity ideas!

Photo Credit: Esther Atri



**WANT TO SHARE YOUR OPINION?**

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

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



**Soup, Salads**

**Sushi, Salmon**

**Lots of Space**

**Jerusalem Café**

**36<sup>th</sup> St. between 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Ave**





# MARCH MADNESS: THE YEAR OF THE HAWK

BY EZRA EMERSON

Oh, March. There's so much to like about you. Spring is in the air, which means spring break (or Pesach break for YU students) is around the corner. MLB Spring Training is back along with the tail ends of the NBA and NHL seasons. Jewish High School teens get their personal share of sports entertainment too, with the Red Sarachek tournament happening right here in YU (shout out to MTA, Ramaz, and VT on winning their respective tiers championships). And then to top it all off, there's March Madness, the basketball event of the year.

March Madness is a basketball tournament made up of 64 NCAA DI basketball teams from all around the country. Seeds are what each team is given, based on how well they did during the previous year. There are the clear top teams, who get the higher seeds of 1-5, as well as the middle of the pack, who are usually seeds 6-10 and might win and advance for a round or two. Finally, there are the bottommost teams, known as the Cinderella stories, who are usually seeds 11-16. Some are able to do some damage, but most are just there as a practice game for the bench. There is also a DIII version of March Madness, which our very own Macs played in, as well as a women's basketball March Madness. While March Madness brings new people together, it also tears families and friends apart. People get so caught up in the hype that they make their own brackets, most of which get busted in the first few hours. March Madness is a cultural highlight to the month of March each year, and this year was no exception.

March Madness begins with a round called the first four where there are four spots in the actual tournament to be played for by teams who didn't automatically make it in. I was very surprised to see that in this round, Wright St. beat Bryant, even though Bryant has the nation's leading scorer, Peter Kiss.

Then, while we celebrated Purim, the real fun began. As a Memphis Tigers fan, I enjoyed seeing them win in the first round. Tennes-

see, Gonzaga, Duke, and Baylor all made their presence known by dominating their respective games. As usual, there were some upsets, such as tenth seed Miami coming out strong and beating seventh seed USC in a nailbiter, ninth seed TCU giving eighth seed Seton Hall a run for their money, and twelfth seed Richmond letting their presence be known by knocking out fifth seed Iowa. But the big upset of the round was by far fifteenth seed St. Peters, hailing from Jersey City, beating the beloved second seed Kentucky in OT. I cannot tell you how crazy watching that game was; brackets were busted, people were going crazy, and best part of it all was that it was a New Jersey team.

The second round had its own drama, with an opening overtime upset by eighth seed North Carolina over first seeded Baylor. Eleventh seed Michigan also provided another upset by foiling third seed Tennessee's plans to bring the trophy to Knoxville. One seed Gonzaga figuratively put a dagger into my heart by beating out ninth seed Memphis in a nailbiter 82-78. Duke, led by Coach K who is the winningest coach in Duke's History, Coach K also kept their last dance tour alive, beating out seventh seed Michigan State. Miami and eleventh seed Iowa state both kept their upset mode alive, each beating their higher-ranked opponents by 5 or more. And yet, the Cinderella we all saw in St. Peters, danced into the sweet 16 as well, this time beating seventh seed Murray State.

Now, this is where it usually gets really fun. In the sweet 16, anything can really go. You can either get all the upsets happening, or it can be the usual high seeded teams that move

on. In this year's case, a mix of both was given. First seed Kansas and second seeds Villanova and Duke got through it pretty well, beating the other teams all by 5 points or more. There were also the shocking upsets, with the eighth seed University of North Carolina stomping all over the fourth seed University of California Los Angeles Bruins paws, fourth seed Arkansas calling cap on one seed Gonzaga's dominance, and fifth seed Houston taking the claws out of one seed Arizona Cats, which made the already crazy March Madness even crazier. You would think the story would end for fifteenth seed St. Peters. Welp, you're wrong. They went on to show off their true feathers (they're Peacocks, get it?), and beat a hot (they're the Boilermakers, get it?) and rising team in the third seed Purdue.

After an epic round of drama, you would think it would continue, right? Nope. The elite 8 was nothing but the top seeded team left showing why they were seeded that way. First seed Kansas, second seed Duke, and eighth seed UNC all destroyed their opponents, one of the losing teams being the Cinderella's fifteenth seed St. Peters. The only game that was fun to watch, in my opinion, was second seed Villanova versus fifth seed Houston, with the score differential being only 6 points.

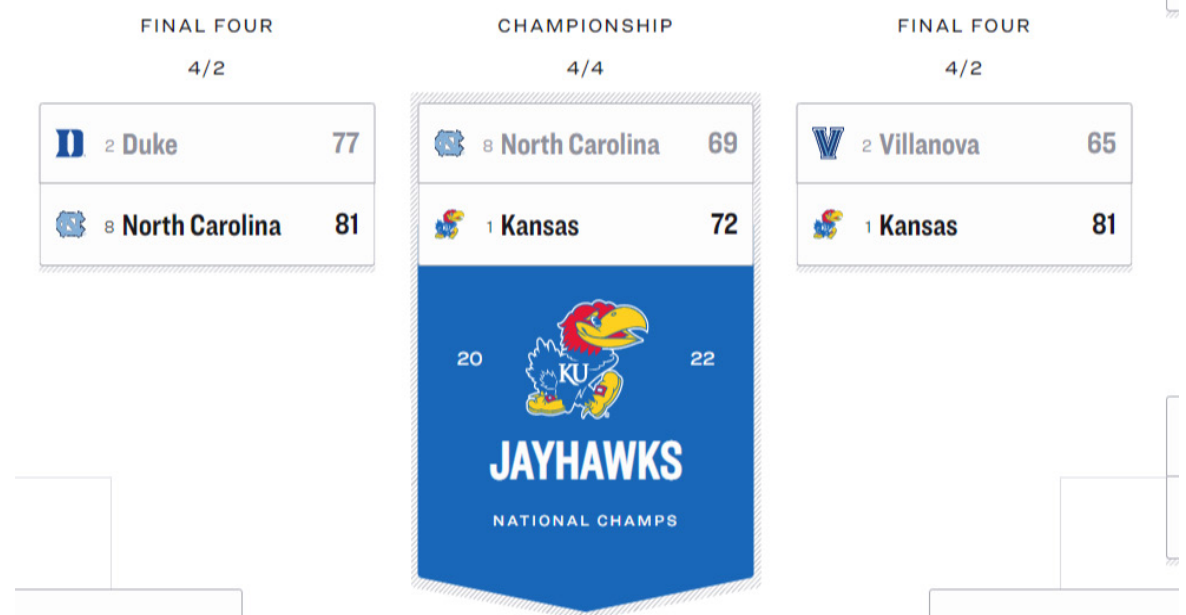
The final four was set. First seed Kansas vs. second seed Villanova and eighth seed UNC vs. second seed Duke. Villanova has won two Madnesses in the past six years, while Coach K is still on his farewell tour, and against UNC of all teams. The long standing rivalry goes back a while ago, and with the schools both based in North Carolina, it was bound to happen. Some key players have

come from both programs, including Christian Laettner, Grayson Allen, Vince Carter, and Michael Jordan just to name a few. And since Duke and Coach K's last home game of the year was also against UNC, and that didn't end well, Duke wanted revenge. But sadly, it happened again. It was definitely a close one, but UNC sent Duke and Coach K home unhappy, falling short of their national championship goals. With the loss, Coach K is done, Duke is out, and UNC is in.

Now to the other great game. Sure, Villanova is good and all and has recent championship experience under their belt, but it wasn't their day at the end. Kansas took the living daylight out of Nova, demolishing them by more than 15 points.

And then there were two. First seed Kansas versus eighth seed UNC, and only one can claim the ship. In the end, it was Kansas who came away with it. They started off with a 7-0 run in the first two minutes, showing no sign of mercy. UNC answered back with a bold statement of their own, with a 22-7 run in the last nine minutes, and a 15 point lead heading into the second half. Kansas came back and made things interesting, going on a 25-10 run in the first 10 minutes of the half. As the game got closer and closer to the finish line, the intensity heightened as the teams were neck and neck. Ultimately, Kansas pulled out victorious.

Although March Madness is over, April has arrived, bringing with it the MLB, NBA, and NHL to look forward to. Oh, and don't forget about Pesach!





## BUSINESS

## WHY ARE GAS PRICES SO HIGH?

BY DANIEL BRAHA

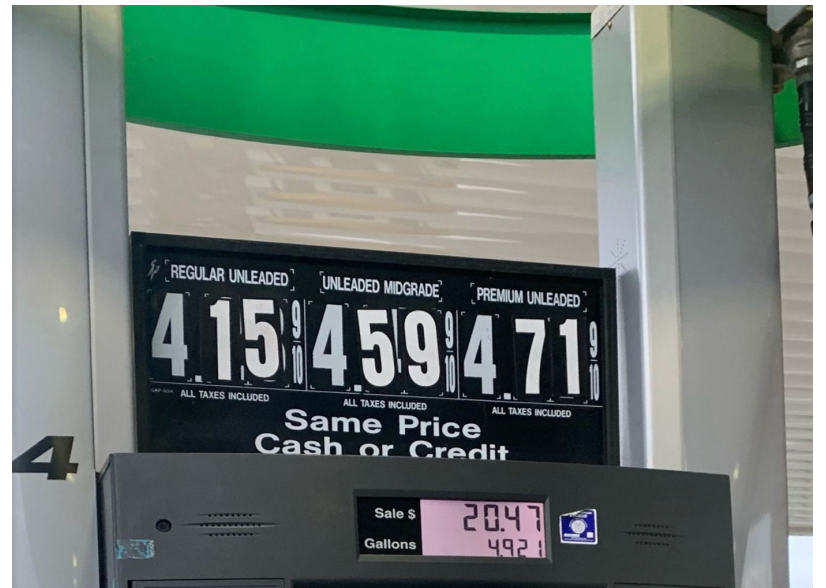
The issue of high gas prices has become more apparent than ever for the American people. Consumers have already seen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on gas prices, but the Russian invasion of Ukraine has worsened the situation in recent weeks. The gas prices have now escalated so much so that U.S. citizens are having a hard time keeping up with the exorbitant fares. Americans have never seen gasoline prices this high, nor have they seen the pace of increases so exponentially. At this point, it is difficult to know whether to attribute these crazy prices to the pandemic, the U.S. political landscape, or the war for these outrageous costs. During the pandemic's peak in 2020-2021, American citizens began to see higher prices at the pump. Prices jumped during that period largely because the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries said it would not boost oil production due to an "imbalance in oil supply and demand." With regards to the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, President Joe Biden has recently been a subject of criticism. Specifically,

the President has made many sanctions that targeted, or rather banned, Russian oil imports to the United States. President Biden has stood by the position of the sanction on Russia and conceded that the American people would have to pay more for gas. He also made reference to the proposition that defending freedom had to come at a cost and as such the U.S. citizens had to bear the cost.

To put this into perspective: regular-grade gas prices have hit up to \$4.173 this past week—a 55.4 cent increase from a week ago—according to the American Automobile Association. This price increase is in addition to the 40% year-over-year increase in gas prices as of the end of January. It is worth noting that while gas prices continue to climb, the aforementioned figures do not account for inflation, which has seen record-high rates in the past week as well.

It is clear that the White House is conflicted between the need to address the high price of gas and its agenda with the war in Eastern Europe. In the short term, this is leading the White House to approach governments it had previously shunned, such as Venezuela,

or had friction with, like Saudi Arabia, to secure additional energy supplies. Government officials are adamant that their policies are not impeding the domestic production of oil and gas and assert that transitioning to clean energy is the only way to truly become energy independent in the long run. Increasing gas prices have affected the youthful population, especially full-time college students who have limited options in ways to earn money. Evidently, the tension may be on the rise since Russia's assault on Ukraine is predicted to escalate in the subsequent weeks, which may continue



to send tremors through the world economy by ratcheting up energy prices. Considering that Russia is one of the biggest oil and gas producers in the world, any disruptions to their exporting system may have a major impact on prices. In addition to the current gas price crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic has already left the global economy with jittery financial markets, which the rising inflation rates do not remedy. The aftershocks from the invasion could easily worsen the current situation, causing gas prices in the U.S. to remain high and continue to rise to record-breaking levels.

Photo Credit: Daniel Braha

## BUSINESS BASICS: NETWORKING

BY AMALYA TEITELBAUM,  
BUSINESS EDITOR &  
MANAGER

When one first enters the business world, they are told to network. Networking provides an outlet for those coming into the workforce to highlight their strengths, weaknesses, and skills.

Networking is defined as an exchange of information and ideas among people with a common profession or special interest, usually in an informal social setting. The process often begins with a single point of common ground, whether that be the field of business, an interest, or an opinion. This applies to everyone from high school students to CEOs as it is a way of developing and maintaining professional or social contacts at every stage in one's career.

Networking should be the first thing one does when beginning a career in any field of business. According to the Harvard Business Review, networking is

a necessity. Myriads of research and studies prove that professional networks lead to more job and business opportunities, increased knowledge, improved innovation capacity, and greater status and authority. Building and nurturing professional relationships also improves the quality of work and increases job satisfaction.

An integral piece of networking is crafting, perfecting, and memorizing one's elevator pitch. It is called an elevator pitch because it is based on the unrealistic but possible situation that one was in an elevator with the CEO of their dream company. The individual would have approximately 30-60 seconds to sell themselves to this CEO before the elevator reaches the next floor and the CEO exits. There are a few important ideas to remember when crafting one's elevator pitch. It is important to state a specific goal as well as who you are, and what you have been doing or accomplished. Also, be sure to incorporate what makes you unique and to conclude with an engaging closing statement

with a call to action.

When crafting one's elevator pitch there are two things one should keep in mind: creating your brand statement and proving your brand statement. One's brand statement is similar to a subject heading, it is a succinct sentence of who you are, what you have accomplished, and what you have to offer. It should be placed at the very beginning of your elevator pitch. The rest of your pitch should be examples and proof backing up your brand statement. It is important to remember that an elevator pitch is not a resume and is unlikely to land you a job. The point of an elevator pitch is to get you that first interview, to



knock over that first domino.

There are endless opportunities for one to network. Networking can occur at a school affair containing professionals. Networking can be approaching a speaker after an event. Networking can be speaking to guests at a table. Networking can be as simple as sending an email. In the business world, the three most important Ns are network, network, and network. It is never too early to start networking. Send that email. Make that call. Go to that event. After all, there is nothing to lose from networking: there are only meaningful connections to be gained.



# MUSK PROPOSES EXPANSION OF TESLA TO INCLUDE SUPERSONIC ELECTRICAL AIRCRAFTS

BY RONI LEIDER

Entrepreneur Elon Musk, the co-founder and CEO of Tesla, is primed to expand his empire beyond electrical cars. Adam Jones, a Morgan Stanley analyst and COO of Datawallet, predicted that Musk will expand his company to include aircrafts, calling it “Tesla Aviation.” Jones described, “In our view, the chance that Tesla does not ultimately offer products and services to the eVTOL [electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft]/UAM, Urban Air Market, is remote. The potential skills transferability and network adjacencies are too strong to ignore.” As of March 2022, Jones has a price target of \$1,300 and an Overweight rating on Tesla shares, meaning that Tesla shares will generate a greater return than the average return in the general industry.

Jones’ prediction is not without basis; Musk has alluded to his future plans of building an electric aircraft. In October 2020, Musk tweeted, “there should be a new supersonic jet, this time electric.” This was written in response to a



tweet from “The World of Engineering” twitter account commemorating Concorde’s, an infamous supersonic jet, last commercial flight, which took place on that day, 19 years prior. Musk also tweeted, “I’m so dying to do a supersonic, electric VOTL [sic] jet, but adding more work will make my brain explode.”

The proposed aircraft will have vertical takeoff and landing, allowing it to takeoff and land without the presence of a runway as well as hover without lateral movement. The aircraft will also be able to reach extremely high altitudes. It will use two propulsion systems: one would lift the plane off the ground and the other would thrust the aircraft forward at high speeds of 1,236km/h (768mph). It is ideal for an elec-

tric plane to go as high as possible, but it also needs to overcome gravitational potential energy which can be done by having a certain energy density in the battery pack. Once this is achieved and the aircraft is at a high altitude, the energy used is low and the aircraft is able to recapture a portion of the gravitational potential energy on its descent.

A note from a team of Morgan Stanley analysts was released, discussing the finances regarding the potential future of Tesla Aviation. It stated, “We have run a range of scenarios flexing market share and EBITDA margin assumptions based on our global eVTOL/UAM model (a \$9tn TAM by 2050... yes....2050). Discounted back to the present on a per-share basis, we’re coming up with potential preliminary outcomes on the

order of \$100 per Tesla share on the low-end to approximately \$1,000 per Tesla share (or more) on the high end.” This means they have crunched numbers using valuation techniques like looking at market share and EBITDA margins in order to conclude that the present value of Tesla stock is \$100 per share on the low end and \$1000 per share on the high end. Currently, the firm has a \$900 target, but it is not inclusive of Tesla’s possible participation in the aviation sector.

Morgan Stanley estimates that by the year 2030, the total addressable eVTOL market could amount to \$12 billion. By 2050 it could reach \$9 trillion. The idea of reducing traffic, increasing sustainability and bettering the environment is appealing to many companies and the government. Many positive effects may result as an effect of this change, such as an improved air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Adam Jonas has confidence that in the years to come, Tesla will explore other areas alongside eVTOL. Musk has demonstrated his clear ability to revolutionize the automotive industry, and it seems probable that he will soon revolutionize the aviation industry, as well.

## TELEGRAM: DOING WELL AMID RUSSIA’S MEDIA CRACKDOWN

BY ELIZABETH KERSHTEYN, STAFF WRITER

Telegram, a messenger app created by Russian billionaire Pavel Durov, has been getting a lot of attention from the media lately. The app has managed to avoid major anti-media crackdowns and bans from the Russian government, unlike Facebook and Instagram which have been both restricted and banned. It has also been playing a crucial role in the Russia-Ukraine war.

According to Time magazine, “Wars have unfolded on social media before, but rarely have they been so meticulously documented as in Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. And Telegram has emerged as its most important social-media platform, offering the world an unfiltered view of the war.” Since the beginning of war millions of



Ukrainians have relied on Telegram to find information about the ongoing battlefield locations, information about shelters, humanitarian aid, and possible routes to leave the country. ‘UkraineNow’ is one of multiple channels that sends out real time updates on air strikes and alerts Ukrainians as to when to seek shelter. It currently has 1.19 million subscribers and claims to be “the main verified source of official information about the current news in Ukraine.” The channel posts daily updates from Ukraine’s govern-

ment, relevant news, updates on humanitarian aid and available statistics and general information regarding the ongoing war. Even though the situation in Ukraine is critical considering the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe, the authors of UkraineNow make sure to keep the spirit of their readers high and try to cheer them up with occasional memes or good news.

Telegram has become the bat-

tlefield of the information war. President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, has been using his Telegram channel to post updates on Ukraine’s anti-war efforts and rally international support. However, Durov has been increasingly concerned about calls to violence and alleged fake information that may have been spreading through Telegram, there were even talks of him shutting down the app altogether. He later changed his mind following immediate public outcry, but asked to “double-check and do not take on faith the data that is published in Telegram channels during this difficult period”.

What makes Telegram so unique? Telegram claims to be more secure than other messengers such as

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## TELEGRAM

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WhatsApp, and relies on features such as “secret chat,” which enables the end-to-end encryption between two users, and a “self-destruct” timer, which deletes the chat forever. The data is only stored on sender’s and receiver’s device. After the chat has been deleted, not even Telegram can access it.

In addition, Telegram provides the user with more anonymity

when sharing information. Telegram claims that its unique feature makes it impossible to trace a forwarded message back to its sender. Pavel Durov has also made it clear that he values the privacy of the users: “We’ve no issue with formalities, but not a single byte of private data will ever be shared with any government.”

Telegram has also been doing quite well in Russia despite previous scandals and threats from the Russian government to ban the service. According to Reuters,

Megafon, one of Russia’s biggest telecoms operators, has analyzed mobile internet traffic and showed that “Telegram’s share had jumped to 63% in the first two weeks of March from 48% in the first two weeks of February.”

Telegram is currently a free app, but with such rising popularity many have wondered how the app is going to sustain itself. Pavel Durov has assured users in his Telegram post that he is not planning to sell the company but will begin to generate revenue

in the forthcoming years. He also promised that all features that are currently free will stay free forever, but the company is thinking about introducing a premium user accounts feature to meet the demands of a growing company.

Telegram is currently, without a doubt, one of the leading messenger apps. With the rising concerns of tech companies selling their users data, will Telegram emerge as a safe haven against authoritarian governments and speech censorship? Only time will tell.

## HOLY FRAP! A NEW STARBUCKS CEO

BY MEIRAV JANUS

After 13 years as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Starbucks, Kevin Johnson has announced his retirement, which will go into effect on April 4, 2022. Howard Schultz, who founded Starbucks into the coffee titan it is today, was the CEO for 30 years and has stated he will volunteer to return as interim CEO. Schultz started at the company when there were 11 stores with 100 partners and grew the company to 28,000 stores worldwide, according

to the official Starbucks website. In announcing his role as interim CEO, Schultz remarked, “when you love something, you have a deep sense of responsibility to help when called. Although I did not plan to return to Starbucks, I know the company must transform once again to meet a new and exciting future where all our stakeholders

mutually flourish.” The company announced that Schultz will receive \$1 dollar in compensation.

Starbucks’s board of directors publicly thanked Johnson for all that he has done for the company, especially through-

ber. Johnson’s resignation comes in the midst of many employees “who have taken to social media to criticize work conditions and raise other issues at the chain,” according to a New York Times article.

retirement, said, “I feel this is a natural book-end to my 13 years with the company... I have enjoyed every minute of the job and am proud of what we have achieved together. It has been an honor to serve the 400,000 Starbucks green

springs partners around the world.”

The Starbucks website, which published an article on the management change, concluded, “We must continue to earn the trust of our people and our customers every day by how

we deliver the Starbucks experience, how we treat each other, and how we act as a responsible community member and corporate citizen... It is critical we set the table for a courageous reimagining and reinvention of the future Starbucks experiences for our partners and customers.”

out the pandemic, when they were forced to shut down many stores. Johnson, 61, insisted that his retirement was planned and that he informed the board he would retire as soon as the pandemic came to an end. Johnson will continue as a Starbucks partner and has agreed to stay on the company’s Board of Directors through Septem-

Johnson’s most notable accomplishments as Starbucks CEO was establishing the People Positive, Planet Positive, and Profit Positive framework. According to the Starbucks website, this initiative “seeks to create a better world for Starbucks partners, farmers, customers and the communities it serves.” Johnson, announcing his





# 3 STOCK HIGHLIGHT: APRIL 2022 EDITION

BY JAKE SHECKTER,  
BUSINESS EDITOR

Each month's edition of the YU Observer will include a "3-Stock Highlight" on a few stocks that have been in the news lately, have fascinating stories, or provide for an interesting read. On behalf of the YU Observer, we'd like to remind everyone that these stock picks are for educational purposes only and are not to be taken as financial advice or used for investing any real cash. This month, we will be highlighting Twitter Inc. (TWTR), CVS Health Corp. (CVS), and Roku Inc. (ROKU).

### Twitter Inc. (TWTR)

On April 4, 2022, investors and social media users everywhere were shocked by the news regarding a company many of us use every single day: Twitter. It was announced that business titan turned richest man in the world, Elon Musk, bought a 9.2% stake in the company for roughly \$3 billion dollars, making him the largest shareholder. Through a seeming ripple effect a few other social media stocks such as Snap and Meta were trading higher that morning. Twitter's stock price that day had soared over 29% before 2pm EST.

As many of us know, this is not the first time we've had at least some type of controversy surrounding Elon Musk and Twitter. In fact, some might call Elon and Twitter a dynamic duo of sorts as a result of his use of the platform in the past. Elon Musk has mentioned and even endorsed cryptocurrencies on social media in the past, such as Bitcoin and Dogecoin. And through a series of announcements, tweets, and "Saturday Night Live" jokes in May 2021, the Tesla company and its CEO have thrown the value of several cryptocurrencies on some crazy rides. Some might then wonder whether all those nods add up to market manipulation. In 2018, Elon was ordered to pay a \$20 million dollar fine to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission due to "misleading tweets" about Tesla stock. Musk has also had loose ties with Twitter's (outgoing) CEO, Jack Dorsey. In early 2020, Dorsey was being attacked by Elliott Management and an activist campaign, and we witnessed Musk come out and tweet his support for Dorsey. It is also important to keep in mind, the circles

these individuals occupy often overlap. They are roughly the same age. Elon Musk created PayPal and Dorsey created his own fintech startup Block/Square. It just makes sense that the familiarity and connection is there. "Oh hi lol," was Musk's only tweet on the day of the announcement. The next day, Musk tweeted, "Looking forward to working with Parag & Twitter board to make

services, nutritious and wellness counseling, will hopefully help CVS pivot to a more tech-forward position going forward. In addition, CVS is also trying to bring the health services it provides in its in-store clinics and its telehealth platform to the virtual setting, reported CNBC.

Essentially, it will be extreme-



significant improvements to Twitter in coming months!" Musk remains one of Twitter's most popular users, with over 80 million followers. He also often surprises Twitter users by using his account to share funny memes and updates on his life and companies.

### CVS Health Corp. (CVS)

Recently, CVS made what many are calling a "pioneering move" into the digital world of the Metaverse. In addition to all the possible uses and applications of the Metaverse, the healthcare giant proposes ambitious plans to offer its products and services, including the ever-growing industry of telehealth, in the virtual world.

"CVS is looking to trademark its logo and to provide an online store as well as downloadable virtual goods." These "virtual goods" could include health products, prescription drug products, and beauty products. These redeemable virtual products, as well as offering non-emergency ser-

ly interesting to see what this looks like in practice; that CVS is trying to not only patent virtual versions of the products that you can easily find in its various store locations. But also somehow make this transition for its telehealth services into the metaverse. Again, expanding this whole idea of being what could healthcare look like in the metaverse? Could it again democratize access for consumers?

"CVS recently reported their full-year results for 2021. This is not a super high-growth stock, although... it pays a really nice dividend of about 2%, which is just a little bit higher than the average stock trading on the S&P 500." said Rachel Warren, a long-term investor, contributor, and show host for The Motley Fool. During 2021, CVS increased its revenue 8.7% compared to 2020. At the end of the day, CVS proves itself time and time again to be one of those classic healthcare stocks you can check out for slow but steady growth. One aspect of CVS that particularly grabs my attention is their acquisition of Aetna a couple

years ago, and that additional healthcare benefits segment brings in a ton of revenue growth in just its healthcare segment alone, which has been up almost 9% year-over-year in 2021. General pharmacy services were also up 8% revenue-wise for the 2021 year.

### Roku Inc. (ROKU)

Shares of media-streaming technology expert, Roku, are on an extreme sale these days. Yet, the company's future prospects are still brighter than ever. Being the worldwide leader in streaming video platforms, this company succeeds as long as the digital media sector is growing, and it only seems to be growing exponentially. This is where one of Roku's strongest aspects lies: Roku investors don't care which streaming service might be winning or losing the content wars, because all those rivals rely on Roku's proven hardware and software solutions for getting their content in front of consumers. Furthermore, Roku is also diversifying and introducing new revenue streams such as its own string of original shows, on-screen shopping tools, and more.

On Monday, April 4, 2022, Roku's stock price was up 5% after the company landed a multi-year extension of its distribution agreement with Amazon. "Customers can continue to access the Prime Video and IMDb TV apps on their Roku devices," Roku said in a release on its website. Having popular apps such as Prime Video and YouTube being built into devices such as Roku TV's and media streaming devices is a significant selling point for the hardware. The company had also struck a multi-year pact with YouTube in early December.



## SCI-TECH

## DIABETES DEBUNKED

BY DANIELLE LANE,  
MANAGING EDITOR

“Do you have the good kind or the bad kind?”

“Can you eat that?”

“Are you allowed to eat sugar?”

These are a few of the VERY frustrating questions that I have been repeatedly asked since being diagnosed with Type One Diabetes 12 years ago. Over the last 12 years, I have realized how little people know about diabetes. I don't blame people for their ignorance, as the people in my life knew very little about the disease before my diagnosis, but it is time to shed some much needed light on the facts of what diabetes really is.

According to the CDC, diabetes is “a chronic (long-lasting) health condition that affects how your body turns food into energy.” What this means is that when we eat food, a hormone called insulin breaks down the large food particles into glucose molecules. The body then uses that glucose as energy to fuel the body. Individuals with diabetes either no longer produce insulin, or their body is unable to utilize the insulin it does make. Diabetes has been broken down into two main groupings: type one and type two.

Type One Diabetes:  
Individuals who have been diag-

nosed with Type One Diabetes (T1D) no longer produce insulin. This typically occurs when the body's immune system attacks itself and destroys the cells necessary to produce insulin. This often occurs during adolescence, and therefore T1D is frequently also called “juvenile diabetes.” In order to replace the insulin that the body no longer produces, individuals with T1D either take insulin injections or wear an insulin pump, which allows for a constant stream of insulin to enter the body. To ensure the proper dosage of insulin, diabetics must continually monitor their blood sugar. T1D is chronic and there is no known cure yet.

Type Two Diabetes:  
Individuals who have been diagnosed with Type Two Diabetes (T2D) are still able to produce insulin, but their bodies are unable to use it properly to regulate blood sugar. T2D

patients are able to manage their disease through diet, exercise, and occasionally medication— either orally or through injections. As with individuals with T1D, individuals with T2D are also required to closely monitor their blood sugar. Unlike Type One Diabetes, however, Type Two Diabetes can be cured through proper diet, exercise, and medication.



Diabetes is a complex and multi-level disease. One article is not sufficient to fully explain the intricacies of the disease, but hopefully understanding more about the disease can debunk some common misconceptions. First of all, one does not develop diabetes if they are “too fat” or “eat too much sugar.” Both forms of diabetes are autoimmune diseases. There is no known cause for T1D and often T2D can be caused by a combination of genetics and lifestyle. Secondly, no food is bad

or off limits to a diabetic. Diabetics are taught that through proper medication and lifestyle choices they are able to enjoy many different foods in moderation. Just as someone without diabetes shouldn't eat an entire pizza or cake in one sitting, neither should a diabetic. Rather a few pieces in moderation is the healthiest option. Finally, there is no “good” or “bad” diabetes. Both forms of diabetes come with their own challenges. It is rude and belittling to act as if anyone's illness is better or worse than others.

Whether it is your grandparent, your roommate, or a stranger on the train, it is very likely that you will come in contact with many diabetics throughout your life as according to the CDC approximately 1 in 10 adults have diabetes. No one expects you to know everything or even to say the right thing, but please remember we are all fighting a hard battle and often kindness is the best medicine (but still take your insulin!!!).

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## CHEWING SUGAR-FREE GUM MAY REDUCE RISK OF PRETERM BIRTHS

BY MEIRAV JANUS

Premature birth, according to the Mayo Clinic, is a birth that takes place prior to the start of the 37th week of pregnancy, while an average healthy pregnancy is usually around 40 weeks. Preterm labor is a serious medical condition that can threaten both the mother and the baby. The earlier the baby is born, the more severe the effects of this can be. In underdeveloped countries, preterm birth is more common due to the lack of available resources and medical care.

In Malawi, where preterm birth is reportedly the highest globally, a study was conducted to see if chewing sugar-free gum daily negatively correlated with preterm births. The study in Malawi was inspired by recent research that concluded that poor oral hygiene had a negative effect on birth. In

the study, the pregnant women were told to chew sugar-free gum, which contains xylitol, a chemical that is known to improve oral health. Surprisingly enough, there was a correlation between what like two seemingly unrelated parts of the body. Of the 4,349 pregnant women that were a part of the study, 549 of them had preterm labor (12.6%). Although that is still a lot of preterm births, that is a 24% reduction compared to the control group (18.1%) who did not receive the gum.

Periodontal diseases affect preterm birth by causing gum inflammation which may lead to bacteria entering the bloodstream, eventually leading into the placenta. The placenta, the fetus's life support, is where the baby receives all their nutrients whether good or bad. Any harmful bacteria that enter the placenta

automatically enter the baby's bloodstream as well, which can lead to defects and harmful effects on the baby. This condition, according to the Cleveland Clinic, is called chorioamnionitis. Choriomnionitis often causes the baby to be delivered as soon as possible due to causing greater health risks to the mother. In America, chorioamnionitis only occurs in 2% of births. The risks from not delivering the baby include sepsis and blood clots.

Maintaining good oral hygiene is not only important for having a nice smile but can also have a serious benefit on the health of the baby and mother during pregnancy. Fortunately, chewing sugar-free gum may be an easy way to ensure that not only are your teeth



healthy but that your future child is healthy and that you are able to have a full-term pregnancy.

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# FORGOTTEN FEMALE SCIENTIST: ROSALYN YALOW

BY NAOMI FRIED

Rosalyn Sussman Yalow once said, “[p]erhaps the earliest memories I have are of being a stubborn, determined child. Through the years, my mother has told me that it was fortunate that I chose to do acceptable things, for if I had chosen otherwise, no one could have deflected me from my path.” Yalow, a 19th-century Jewish woman, achieved what was unimaginable for even the ordinary white Christian American male during her time.

Born in the Bronx, New York, in July 1921, Yalow was raised in a Jewish household. Despite the influence of societally imposed gender roles, her father instilled in her that women could do anything that men could do. In high school, Yalow discovered her interest in the sciences. She was interested in chemistry, but her interest shifted to physics when she attended the all-female, tuition-free Hunter College. While there, Yalow contemplated continuing to study physics. She wrote in her autobiography: “I was excited about achieving a career in physics. My family being more practical thought the most desirable position for me would be as an elementary school teacher.” Additionally, it seemed unlikely that good graduate schools would accept and offer financial support for a woman in a field like physics that was so male-dominated. Although Yalow was hesitant to pursue her dreams, she decided to continue her studies because her “physics professor encouraged [her], and [she] persisted.”

At Hunter College, Yalow had to work twice as hard to prove that she was worthy of being a physicist because she was a woman. One of the professors who overlooked her gender and realized her potential obtained a part-time position for her as a secretary to a leading biochemist at Columbia University’s College of Physicians and Surgeons. This position offered her an insight into the world of biochemistry, and she was fascinated by it. Not believing that she would be able to obtain a good job in her field as a woman, she took another position as a secretary for Michael Heidelberger at Columbia,

who hired her under the condition that she would study stenography. After graduating from Hunter College in 1943, Yalow received an offer to become a physics teaching assistant at the University of Illinois. She was thrilled about this job offer and was excited to get back into the field of physics. Yalow even “tore up all [her] stenography books, stayed on as a secretary until



June and during the summer took two tuition-free physics courses.” At the University of Illinois, she discovered that she was one of the only three Jews and the only woman among its 400 faculty members. Moreover, she was the first woman in over 20 years. She received this job offer mostly because World War Two had just begun, and many men had gone off to fight. As a result, the University opted to offer women education and jobs to avoid being shut down. At the University of Illinois, Yalow started her graduate studies, where she met her future husband, Aaron Yalow, on the first day of class.

Yalow recalls that despite the busy time she had and the challenging transition she was going through, she was delighted to receive straight A’s in both of her courses. She received an A in lecture and an A- in her lab. After seeing this A- in her record, the physics department chairman said to her, “that A-

confirms that women don’t do well at laboratory work.” Yalow decided to take this criticism as a motivator to continue working hard and to prove him wrong.

After graduating with her Ph.D., Yalow took her first job as an assistant electrical engineer at the Federal Telecommunications Laboratory in New York. Once again, she was the only female

ued to invest in the women that she believed had the potential to become scientists. Eugene Straus, the author of *Rosalyn Yalow: Her Life and Work in Medicine*, reported that Yalow was bothered that “there [were] no organizations for women in science.” At the Nobel prize presentation ceremonies in Oslo, Norway, Yalow emphasized her achievements as a woman. She highlighted that unfortunately, many, including women, believe that a woman belongs exclusively in the home and should not aspire to achieve more than her male counterparts.

After receiving the Nobel Prize and the prize money associated with it, she was asked what she would do with the money. Yalow was stumped and couldn’t think of anything to answer the question. Yalow worked hard for everything she had all her life, and she wasn’t used to receiving anything on a silver platter; Rosalyn firmly believed that hard work was the real key to happiness. Rosalyn was an inspiration to many young women and demonstrated that if women believe in themselves and they have a goal in mind when working hard, they can achieve anything.

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employee. After a few jobs in engineering, Yalow decided to devote her career to full-time research. In 1950, Yalow began working with a physician named Solomon Berson. Together, they discovered new ways to use radioactive isotopes to measure blood, study iodine metabolism, and diagnose thyroid diseases. Later, Yalow started focusing on insulin, which was the most available hormone to which she could apply the technique she had developed. This research would later lead her to develop the method that won her a Nobel prize. In 1977, Yalow was the co-winner of the Nobel prize in physiology or medicine for the development of this technique she had been working on with Solomon Berson, which they called the Radioimmunoassay Technique. She was the second woman in history to receive a Nobel prize.

Yalow faced a lot of criticism from fellow women at work, but she never quit and contin-



## CAN DAYLIGHT SAVINGS IMPACT OUR HEALTH?

BY MIRA POSTELNEK

Daylight savings (DLS) is often viewed as an annoyance each spring, when we lose an hour of sleep, and as a miraculous time each fall, when we gain a full hour of sleep. DLS, however, can have a major impact on one's health. The mandate of daylight savings began during World War I, and again during World War II, there was an energy crisis which led to the creation of daylight savings. The intention behind DLS was to have extra light in the afternoon, and thus conserving energy by decreasing the amount of electricity needed in the evenings. Unfortunately, this intended reduction of electricity is undermined due to the electricity consumed by school children and workers who wake up and start their days prior to sunrise. Additionally, DLS only prolongs daylight for a maximum of one hour, during the spring and fall months.

Studies done by the U.S department of Transportation in 1975 show that DLS cut the world's energy consumption by approximately one percent. The decrease in electricity use was counteracted by an increase in heating and air conditioning during winter mornings and late summer afternoons respectively, making the reasoning behind DLS essentially ineffectual. Therefore, the supposed advantage of gaining daylight is nearly insignificant compared to the actual expenditure of electricity being used after sunset, due to the late sunrises in winter months. Another pro-daylight savings hypothesis was that crime rates would drop with more daylight

hours. Although this hypothesis had some truth, the improvement was negligible, and the detriments to health outweighed the slightly lowered crime rates.

The health issues associated with DLS were explored in a 2020 study. Researchers discovered the effects of "springing forward" were not only an inconvenience, but were also correlated with serious health effects. The change in DLS disrupts work schedules, rest schedules, and circadian clock rhythms. Noticeable alterations in behaviors are seen after DLS during waking hours, based on self-reported alertness and a significant increase in fatal traffic accidents (reportedly a 30% increase on DLS day). Most importantly, a 3.9% elevation rate in myocardial infarctions was found during DLS. This research study verified adverse reactions associated with DLS shift, including strokes, heart attacks, sleep deprivation, and immune related conditions.

The disruption in sleeping patterns due to DLS is a direct, major detriment to health. The "falling back" in November seems to have relatively benign effects. While it may cause minor misbalance, research hasn't shown significant health impacts. Springing forward however, makes it feel like 7 a.m. when the clocks really read 8 a.m. This shift throws off the body's natural circadian rhythm for months to follow. This most severely affects adolescents who may already be chronically sleep deprived due to school, sports, and social activities. The majority of children and workers begin school and work at 8 a.m.,

meaning that during daylight savings, they must travel in darkness. The time shift sets off our body's natural rhythm since morning light, which is delayed a full hour, improves alertness. The delayed sunrise may also increase levels of cortisol, the hormone that regulates stress. This increased stress level is potentially a result of decreased light exposure on the amygdala, which is the area in our brains that regulates emotions. Additionally, the later sunset creates a delay in the brain's release of melatonin (the hormone that promotes drowsiness). This delay in melatonin release causes less overall sleep and creates more problems than the one hour lost during the clock change. Some scientists believe that this change in sleep patterns results in circadian misalignment, a mismatch between our biological rhythms and the outside world.

These unnatural and unhealthy effects on our bodies due to DLS is why the abolishment of DLS and adoption of a permanent standard time would be beneficial. On March 15, 2022, the U.S senate passed legislation that would cancel daylight savings and establish a permanent time starting in 2023, ending the twice annual clock change. The Senate approved this measure, called the Sunshine Pro-



tection Act, unanimously by voice vote. This bill must first be passed by the House of Representatives before President Joe Biden can sign and make this official in the United States.

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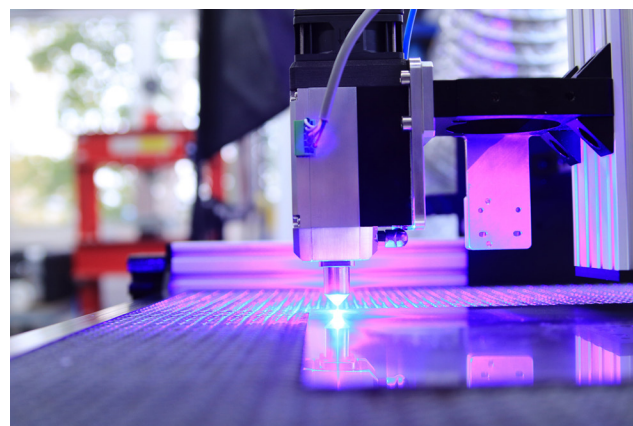
## 3D PRINTING TECHNOLOGY REVOLUTIONIZES DENTISTRY AND MEDICINE

BY SIMA GREENBERG

Three dimensional, or 3D, printing technology has transformed many industries, including the mechanics and product design models involved in dentistry and medicine.

The three main methods of bioprinting skin include laser-assisted bioprinting, inkjet-based bioprinting, and extrusion bioprinting. Both the laser and inkjet methods print the cells drop-by-drop and have high cell viability. Since the laser-as-

sisted bioprinting method doesn't use a nozzle, it is the most precise method of the three. The laser-assisted method, however, is the most expensive and



time-consuming method. There-

fore, as of now, the inkjet-based bioprinting method is the most common.

A primary use for 3D-printing technology is in the world of dentistry. Dental implants and crowns use this 3D-printing technology

to obtain the exact desired measure-

ments and shapes of each tooth, eliminating the human error component. Dental implants and crowns are not connected to the central nervous system, rather they serve as protection of the tooth or of the area surrounding the missing tooth. It is far simpler to 3D-print an object from simple materials, rather than print biological materials to function as part of an organ system.

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Not only has this new technology been used in dentistry but also has been paramount in the field of medicine, specifically in producing synthetic skin. In recent years, biomedical engineers have been working to create synthetic skin tissue. The uses of synthetic skin tissue are not limited to skin grafts. Synthetic skin tissues have the potential to help burn victims, repair UV-ray damage, and contribute to the development of drugs and cosmetics. If the methods of drug testing continue to evolve successfully, animal drug testing can be limited.

The bioprinting of skin is patient-specific; it is not a one-size-fits-all treatment. The skin must

be a perfect match in order for the human body to “accept” it. It can be very complex as each person has a unique skin color and geometry of their cells. Computer technology, however, helps with the process of making sure the new skin is perfect with the cells arranged in the same patterns as the rest of the patient’s skin.

The cells need biocompatible components to connect to each other, so bioinks are used to connect the cells from individuals to a unit of mature skin tissue. Bioinks are composed of fibroblasts, keratinocytes, fibrin, collegians, and stem cells. Other components are also used to model the

structure and functions of human skin cells.

Some challenges involved in the development of skin printing technology include pigmentation, hair growth and other dermal features. These methods have the potential to have a great impact on the quality of skin grafting, wound healing, and advanced pharmaceutical research, but they are still premature and have difficulties to overcome.

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# THE NAIL SALON EXPERIENCE: THREATENING OR TREATING YOURSELF?

BY RACHEL SARRAF

Many people enjoy getting their nails done on a monthly, or even weekly, basis. There are different types of nail applications: regular nail polish, powder nails, or ultraviolet (UV) gel nail application. Though many are not aware of the dangers involved with the nail salon experience, it is important to be cognizant of the harmful chemicals and compounds involved when someone paints their nails.

When someone gets their nails done, many steps are involved in the process. During the preparation, the nail technician uses nail polish remover to remove the remaining nail polish on the nails. The nail polish remover is mostly made of acetone, a volatile organic compound (VOC). Increased exposure and contact with toluene, another type of VOC, lead to acute and chronic poisonings.

Dibutyl phthalate, a member of the phthalate chemical family, is utilized in nail salons to reduce nail chipping. Phthalates are classified as endocrine disruptors, and they mimic the estrogen hormone in one’s body. Also, phthalates have been proven to impair the hormonal development of male fetuses and can cause organ damage. According to Pinar Erkekoğlu, a professor at Hacettepe University, “[s]everal methods, including chromosomal aberration test, Ames test, micronucleus assay and hypoxanthine guanine phosphoribosyl transferase (HPRT) mutation test and Comet assay, have been used to determine genotoxic properties of phthalates.”

An additional chemical compound found in nail salons—specifically in nail polish—is

Triphenyl phosphate (TPHP). It is used as a plasticizer and a fire retardant. In one study, researchers found that “nail polish may be a significant source of short-term TPHP exposure and a source of chronic exposure for frequent users or those occupationally exposed.”

In 2019, a study aimed to characterize occupational health risk factors and chemical exposures among Asian nail salon workers on the East Coast of the U.S. The data from this study was collected from 112 workers exposed to 100 personal chemical measurements spanning from 25 nail salons. The nail salon workers self-reported health problems that either emerged or became worse after these individuals began working in the nail salon industry; 8% had headaches, 9.8% reported lightheadedness, and 21.2% reported that they had nose, eyes, throat, and skin irritation. Also, about 70% of the participants said that they were pregnant, of which 11.7% had at least one miscarriage. An additional study was conducted about “[e]xposure of Nail Salon Workers to Phthalates, Di(2-ethylhexyl) Terephthalate, and Organophosphate Esters.” This study was organized to learn more about the exposure of nail technicians to semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOC), and compared urine samples before and after their shifts at the nail salon. The urine samples collected post-shift had a higher concentration of SVOC than the pre-shift samples. The change that appeared the greatest was for a metabolite of the phthalate alternative di (2-ethylhexyl) terephthalate (DEHTP). This shows that there is not only exposure to volatile organic compounds, but also to semivolatile organic compounds as well.

One method of applying gel nail polish is by

using a UV nail lamp “a source of artificial UVA radiation, often used to dry, harden, and cure the nails at home and in the salon.” Doctor Nahla Shihab, an internist and researcher in Maryland writes, “UVA radiation is known to be mutagenic and can cause damage to the DNA, resulting in cutaneous malignancy.” There had been a report on two women who had undergone this treatment and developed squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) on the dorsum of their hands, which sparked concerns about the safety of this method. The analysis showed that women who used UV nail lamps regularly had a much higher chance of developing SCC on the dorsum of their hands. Researchers believe this occurs because “UVA penetrates deeply into the dermis to cause cellular damage and photoaging.” One can reduce the risks by wearing fingerless gloves and wearing sunscreen.

Luckily, there are many ways to prevent risks from the harmful chemicals involved in getting one’s nails done. From the perspective of a nail technician, there are various ways to mitigate these risks. For example, they could wear nitrile gloves (protect against chemical compounds), wear a mask, and wear goggles. Additionally, there should be an updated ventilation system in the nail salon. Moreover, nail technicians should be aware of and read the health guides provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and OSHA.

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## NAIL SALON

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Others are adamant that reducing the risks of exposure through the use of healthier, alternative nail polish brands, such as OPI, Orly, and Sally, is the wiser approach to tackling this issue. Another way to reduce risk is by using non-toxic nail polish remover. For example, instead of using nail polish with 100% acetone, use one with a lower percentage so that it is not so highly concentrated. Lastly, it may be best to bring your own tools and nail polish because it is cleaner and will decrease the chances of spreading bacteria and fungus.

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## POLAR HEAT WAVE ODDITY

BY JAKE SHECKTER,  
BUSINESS EDITOR

Climate change is an ever-gloomy term that sits in the back of much of our generations' minds. The apparent changes in our climate are certainly on the minds of more people than ever before, especially when planning for the long-term. Members of the younger generations (Millennials, Gen Z, etc.) are now battling worries unique to them alone, asking themselves: will the planet last long enough for my children or grandchildren? What will the Earth look like in 100, 200, or even 300 years if the human population doesn't destroy it before then? Unfortunately, even with these daunting thoughts, it feels futile.

As anyone who does even a little research knows, there is not much one can do individually. In fact, 100 companies have contributed to roughly 70% of greenhouse gasses since 1988, according to a study by the Business and Human Rights Resource Center. The total amount that an individual person, like you and I, is responsible for results in less than half of the impending increase in temperature and storm volatility on Earth. Nonetheless, it can be difficult to hear of disastrous changes to the climate. Just in the last few weeks, there has been an abnormal development in the temperature at the polar ice caps. And honestly, I was absolutely shocked that no one else was talking about it, considering its effects on the whole world.

An unprecedented heat wave has struck both Antarctica and the Arctic, shocking scientists and further signifying the alarming effects of climate change on Earth. In mid-March, 2022, Antarctica soared 70 degrees Fahrenheit (21 degrees Celsius) above normal temperatures. For the first time in 65 years the temperature exceeded -22 degrees Fahrenheit. While few have had the luxury of being blissfully unaware (or ignorant) of the recent melting of the polar ice caps, this drastic jump in temperature signifies a much larger and shocking battle to keep the Earth's natural climate intact.

Climate change is caused by greenhouse gas emissions, the largest gas being carbon dioxide. As humans contribute more greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere, they collect to create a "blanket" of sorts and disrupt the Earth's natural Ozone layer, as well as heating up the Earth by trapping heat in. "From 1990 to 2019, the total warming effect from greenhouse gasses added by humans to the Earth's atmosphere increased by 45 percent," according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Two miles above sea level sits Concordia Station, a French-Italian Research Facility in Antarctica, where the record-breaking temperatures were recently recorded. At this time of year, the poles are entering opposing seasons; the Arctic (or North Pole) is slowly emerging from winter as Antarctica (the South Pole) is supposed to

be rapidly dropping in temperature. The two poles are melting together, a shocking event that we have never

witnessed before. While unprecedented, the rising temperatures were not unforeseen. Last year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned that there were irreversible meltings of the polar ice caps on the horizon. On December 6, 2021, a journal by the "Geophysical Research Letters" stated that "[the] Arctic heat waves are becoming more frequent, long-lasting and widespread." It seems that both were right.

How did this heat wave happen? The North Pole's rising temperatures can be chalked up to the ending of winter and the predicted effects of the rising climate that are to happen as Summer begins. Not to say that the temperatures are normal, but the explanation is much simpler and easily predicted than that of the South Pole.

Antarctica is experiencing what is called an "atmospheric river" that was trapped within a "heat dome." An atmospheric river is exactly what it sounds like, a narrow stream of water vapor that moves through the atmosphere. Scientists who observed



the changing of the climate predict that moisture encapsulated in Antarctica was pressurized and trapped in this atmospheric river, causing the air to heat up. This phenomenon is known as a heat dome. Arctic amplification is another factor possibly causing the temperatures at the poles to heat up. Arctic amplification is the speed at which the impact of climate change is felt on the poles - currently residing at two to three times the speed of the rest of the globe. What us Americans (or Canadians in my case) are feeling in terms of rising temperatures and volatile climates nowadays, the poles are experiencing two to three times as severe.

This heatwave is on track to set off a domino-like effect with the rising sea levels and rapid reduction of our critical ice caps. An onset of additional heatwaves are predicted to occur in the poles. This leaves us wondering: what's next and what are we willing to do about it?





CLASS OF 2022

## UNDERGRADUATE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY CHECKLIST

Graduating This Year? Mazel Tov!

Be sure to complete all the items below to participate in your Commencement Ceremony.

**STEP 1**

Consult with your academic advisor or program director to be sure that all of your graduation requirements have been met.

Visit [yu.edu/academic-advising](https://yu.edu/academic-advising) to schedule.

**STEP 2**

Degrees are awarded in September, January and May. Contact your campus Registrar to determine if you are eligible to attend Commencement.

Visit [yu.edu/registrar/graduation](https://yu.edu/registrar/graduation) for additional information.

**STEP 3**

Apply for Graduation by your degree's deadline:

**February 15th**  
(May Degrees)

**March 1st**  
(September Degrees)

The Application for Graduation—Undergraduate Degree can be found here: [yu.edu/registrar/forms](https://yu.edu/registrar/forms)

**NOTE:** If you miss this deadline your name will not be included in the Commencement Program.

*Be sure to RSVP on the application to Commencement and give your accurate height and weight so your gown fits just right!*

**STEP 4**

Pay your graduation/diploma fee of \$150 to the Office of Student Finance.

**STEP 5**

Cap and Gown Distribution Events will be held on each campus in early May.

Come with friends; have your picture taken in the photo booth to be featured at Commencement!

*If you cannot pick up your attire at a distribution event you may pick it up from the Office of Student Life starting the day after the event.*

*No attire will be distributed at Commencement.*

**STEP 6**

Each graduate will receive **6 guest tickets** when picking up their cap and gown.

If you would like to request additional tickets, please fill out the request form by visiting [yu.edu/commencement](https://yu.edu/commencement)

**QUESTIONS?**

Visit [yu.edu/commencement](https://yu.edu/commencement) for updates closer to the ceremony, or email [commencement@yu.edu](mailto:commencement@yu.edu)

**WE ARE EXCITED  
TO CELEBRATE  
WITH YOU!**

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