

# The Yeshiva University OBSERVER



ISSUE 66 VOLUME I

SEPTEMBER 2022

ELUL 5782

## NOBODY SAYS SORRY IN A COURT OF LAW



### EDITORIAL

BY BENJAMIN GOTTESMAN,  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

I spend a lot of time on Twitter. While it's not the best use of time, I justify it with the occasional sparks of inspiration that appear on my timeline. Recently, I've been flooded with videos of midnight slichos, the prayers of repentance that we recite before and during the Days of Awe, at the Kosel HaMaaravi [Western Wall]. Every night, thousands of Jews flock to the Kosel plaza, coming together to beseech God in the foothills of our holiest site. It is wonderful to see our people engaged in communal activity in our capital city - but that is not what I find so meaningful. What amazes me every time I open my phone is the wild diversity that descends upon Jerusalem's Old City each Elul night. Out of the thousands of petitioners, no two are the same. Some wear tall streimlich, others wear

knit kippot srugot and many don black hats. Some wear IDF-issued berets and others wear nothing on their heads at all. One need only open up any Israeli news site to know that these sects are at each other's throats in the Knesset and the public arena. However, when Elul rolls around, the discourse quiets— there is something larger at stake. The Yomi Noraim [Days of Awe] require prayer, and prayer demands a unified front.

It has certainly been a tumultuous start to the semester at Yeshiva University. Our little school found itself in the national spotlight, covered by the country's most established news outlets and discussed in the hallowed halls of the Supreme Court. The topic is an emotional one, and far be it for me to try and discuss it tactfully. Frankly, it does not matter what my thoughts on the matter are. However, what I can speak to is the collateral damage this saga has caused. It is embarrassing to have this aired before the world. More importantly, the recent decision to suspend clubs affects student

life in the most drastic move the administration has made in the post-COVID era. Furthermore, the conversation regarding the court case has become particularly embattled. People are understandably angry on both sides, and ad hominem rains down in the halls of Wilf and Beren.

Human rights and religious liberty are not small issues. I am not, God forbid, saying that we should take these matters lightly. However, as Rosh Hashana approaches, it is time we shift our focus, at least temporarily.

One of the central prayers of slichos is the vidui [confession]. We methodically admit our misdeeds before God and beg for forgiveness. Importantly, this prayer is not a personal one. It mentions each sin in the plural, putting the burden of responsibility on the community writ large. I wonder then, how it would be conceivable to recite the vidui without the voices of your brothers and sisters at your side. The vidui is an invitation to accept that culpability is never one-sided and that the only

way to repent is if reconciliation plays harbinger.

I am not telling the YU administration how to manage its affairs. I have no advice to offer to the Pride Alliance. Either way, I know this is not how we go into Tishrei. This cannot be how we are meant to enter the Days of Awe.

Two decisions will be made in the coming days. The first, and less consequential one, will be made by the courts. That will determine whether or not the Pride Alliance exists on campus. The more important decision will be made by us. It will determine our standing before our Father in Heaven during the Days of Judgement. This is the decision to love each other despite our differences. It is the decision to pray together despite our strife. It is the decision to ask for forgiveness even though we think we're right. It is the decision to forgive even when we feel we've been spurned. Tonight we say vidui. We're going to be saying it a lot during the next few weeks. Let's say it together. It's better that way.

### INSIDE THIS EDITION



OPINIONS: A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT  
PAGE 3



SCI-TECH: THE GENOTOXIC EFFECTS ON NAIL SALON TECHNICIANS  
PAGE 11



BUSINESS: THE EFFORTS FOR STARBUCKS UNIONIZATION  
PAGE 15



ARTS & CULTURE: A THEATER KID'S ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BROADWAY  
PAGE 20

# NEWS RECAP: SEPTEMBER 2022 EDITION



## NEWS

BY YU OBSERVER  
EDITORIAL BOARD

### YU News

- In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court denied YU its motion to stay a New York County Supreme Court's ruling mandating the allowance of the YU Pride Alliance. This was a reversal of Justice Sonia Sotomayer's decision to grant the stay.
- In a bold move, Justice Samuel Alito openly stated in his dissent that when YU eventually returns to the Supreme Court, they would win in no uncertain terms. YU must go through the New York Court of Appeals before returning to Washington.
- In a shocking response to the Court's denial, YU, in a two-sentence email to its student body, suspended all club activities. No timetable was provided for when clubs may return.
- JQY, a non-profit organization that has spearheaded Pride Alliance activity for years, offered to fund all undergraduate clubs so long as YU maintains its position. Clubs are invited to apply for up to 500 dollars in funding.

- As an act of sympathy toward YU students, the YU Pride Alliance has agreed to hold off applying for club status until a final decision is reached. This was done with the hope that YU will allow its students to partake in club activities again.

### World News

- Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom passed away at 96. Her seventy-year reign is the longest in British history and her calming presence was a staple of Western leadership for decades. Her son Charles, is set to be coronated as King Charles III this coming spring.
- Five protesters were murdered by Iranian security forces in the nation's Kurdish region. Civil unrest has rocked the regime after 22-year-old Mahsa Amini died under suspicious circumstances while under police custody. She had been arrested for wearing "inappropriate attire" under religious law and was being held at a "re-education center."
- Hurricane Fiona ravaged the Dominican Republic, displacing over 13,000 people and forcing the government to declare a state of emergency. The island of Puerto Rico remains without power as

President Biden promises increased aid and rescue workers.

- The United States Justice Department has launched an investigation into the Kansas City Police Department after allegations of racial bias in its hiring and promotion process. This comes as a continuation of Attorney General Merrick Garland's crusade against racial and gender inequality.
- The Kremlin prepares for four referendums or annexing large swaths of Ukraine in an official capacity. This move, a last-ditch effort by Vladimir Putin to establish Russia after their recent retreats, was decried by United States National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan.
- A panel, established by the Department of Health and Human Services, has advised anxiety screenings for adults under 65. This announcement comes on the back of economic and societal turmoil in the wake of the pandemic.
- New York Governor Kathy Hochul responded to historically low subway usage in New York City by placing two security cameras in every subway car. The hope is to alleviate a spike in violent crime in the city's underground.



## EDITORIAL TEAM

2022-2023

### EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Benjamin Gottesman

### MANAGING EDITOR

Aaron Shaykevich

### OPINIONS EDITORS

Atara Bachrach  
Daniel Ganopolsky  
Rivka Shavelson

### FEATURES EDITORS

Ru Benhamou  
Rachel Gilinski  
Raquel Leifer

### SCI-TECH EDITOR

Nicole Abittan  
Yosef Scher  
David Yagudayev

### BUSINESS EDITORS

Shua Feigen  
Eli Levi  
Amalya Teitelbaum

### ARTS & CULTURE EDITORS

Elisheva Hirsch  
Shayna Kahane  
Rina Shamilov

### LAYOUT EDITORS

Emily Rose Goldberg  
Belina Milhem Jena  
Racheli Jian

### BUSINESS MANAGERS

Amalya Teitelbaum

### WEBSITE MANAGERS

Atara Bachrach  
Max Friedman

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

*The YU Observer* is an independent student publication, self-funded and published on a monthly basis throughout the academic year. Views expressed in *The YU Observer* are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial board or the student body, faculty, and administration of Yeshiva University. All *The YU Observer* content is copyrighted and may not be reprinted without permission.

Please visit us at [www.yuobserver.org](http://www.yuobserver.org).

# A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT

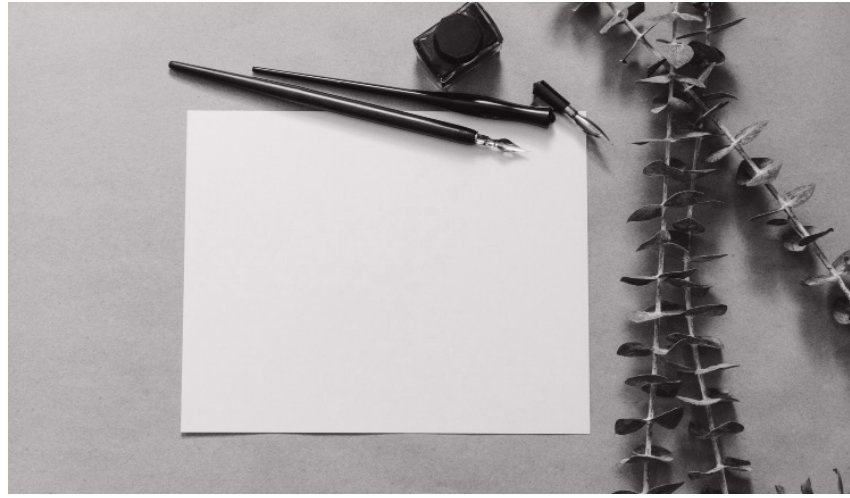
## OPINIONS

BY DANIEL GANOPOLSKY

Letter to the President:

Before the start of the school year, President Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman sent out an email to the Yeshiva University student body touting many of its achievements for this coming semester. He mentioned the infrastructure developments on the Beren and Wilf campuses, the success of our school's curriculum— rising to #68 in the country and #3 in New York City— and of course, he mentioned the \$91 million in donations the University was able to bring in this past year. President Berman ended his email by announcing an increase in the student body, specifically a 60% increase in Yeshiva University graduate schools and a 10% increase in the undergraduate schools.

I certainly do not wish to diminish the success our university has enjoyed, and I am proud to be a part of it. From computer science to business to philosophy, our curriculum surely deserves high praise, and it is not a stretch to suggest that the increase in admissions is a result of that standing. However, it would be a mistake not to mention the rise of antisemitism in New York City, specifically in our city universities, and the role it has played in our school's rise in admissions. All you have



to do is search “CUNY antisemitism” on google and hundreds of articles from all over will come up, demonstrating just how dangerous CUNY (City University of New York) has become for Jews. Jewish students have been verbally abused, their opinions on Israel and Jewish identity are not welcome, and some students have even been physically assaulted; several students had to drop out of CUNY because they felt it was too dangerous to be Jewish on campus.

This past summer, New York City Councilwoman Inna Varnikov (R) along with Chair of the Higher Education Committee - Councilman Eric Dinowitz (D) and other members of the New York City Council held a higher education hearing on the pervasive antisemitism taking hold of CUNY. To no surprise, CUNY chancellor Félix Matos Rodríguez canceled his appearance at the hearing the night before, and in his place sent two lawyers over Zoom. The hearing itself was hours long, with a line of CUNY students and profes-

sors waiting outside to testify to how horrific CUNY has become for Jews. Former CUNY School of Law student Rafaella Gunz testified at the hearing. She explained that she had to transfer to Yeshiva University because, “[she] feared for [her] physical and emotional well-being” after she was tormented by other students over her Jewish faith and Zionist beliefs. She is far from alone. I personally know many students that decided to attend YU because they feared the same thing would happen to them.

Historically, CUNY has been the university for New York City's Jews: Places like Brooklyn College, City College, and Hunter have all been popular institutions for Jews in New York—at least until now. Today, CUNY teacher unions pass antisemitic BDS (Boycott, Divest and Sanction) resolutions, and pro-Palestinian activist groups like SJP (Students for Justice in Palestine) continuously harass and assault Jewish students without condemnation. This

past summer, the CUNY School of Law unanimously voted to have a known antisemite give a commencement address at the CUNY Law Graduation Ceremony berating Israel and Jews publicly without shame and punishment from CUNY. New York's “premier liberal institution” claims to be all-inclusive, and yet the only group excluded from their inclusivity training is Jews. CUNY's perpetuation of antisemitism can no longer be tolerated.

Even though this antisemitism might be good for admissions as it sends more students our way, as the premier Jewish institution of America, YU cannot sit idly by. Our University, led by our president, has to stand up and defend Jews, both in and outside of our school. We need to be proactive; we cannot continue to study in a bubble, ignorant of the vile hate lurking outside of it. Our students, our faculty and our administration must all fight to protect Jews here and elsewhere. If we retreat to our safe space titled “Yeshiva University”, we will lose our rightful place outside of it.

As the five Torot (Truth - life, infinite human worth, compassion and redemption) explain, it is our duty to fight for our brothers and sisters, even if it comes at the cost of fewer of them attending our exceptional university.

## BECOMING INSPIRED AT YU

BY DANIELLA WEISS

We are about to start a new year of life with Rosh Hashana and a new school year at YU. It is therefore time for each one of us to make the changes we haven't made until this point! We can all work towards growing in our Judaism and relationship with Hashem through finding inspiration and helping others do the same, enhancing their Judaism as well!

In Pirkei Avos 1:14, Hillel asks “Im Ein Ani Li, Mi Li- if I am not for myself, who will be for me?” The lesson from this is that it's up to each one of us to be proactive to become inspired in our Judaism and relationship with G-d. Hashem loves each of us no matter where we are or how inspired we feel. From whatever place we

may be in now, though, we have the potential to grow and become more inspired; as long as we work towards gaining inspiration, there is nowhere to go but up.

If you are a student at YU who hasn't felt so inspired or connected to their Judaism in the past, YU is your opportunity. Through any of the Judaic classes you are taking, you can reach out to the teacher to ask whatever questions you may have, or you can build a relationship with them. You can even possibly go to the teacher for Shabbat; many teachers are happy to host students for Shabbat meals. YU also has many classes each night from a variety of speakers on multiple topics that could inspire you in your Judaism. We can also draw inspiration from our peers. When you're in the cafeteria, you can always walk up to a

student who inspires you and start talking to them.

For those who feel they are already very connected to their Judaism, you have the ability to inspire your fellow classmates: everyone has a part to play. Maybe go over to someone new during lunch and just say hi when you see them around campus to create a friendly atmosphere and show that you care. We know that Shavuos 39a says “Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh B'Zeh- all of the Jewish people are responsible for one another.” It's not enough if we remain exhilarated by our own connections with Hashem; we should help others on their journeys of developing a connection, too! Each person can model what it means to be a Jew for them with joy and excitement for a life of meaning. The more that those who feel inspired

are friendly with those who don't seem to have the same inspiration, the more passionate our fellow classmates will become.

When each student puts in the effort to create an environment where we care for one another, the more we become one unified family, just as Hashem wants us to be. In Pirkei Avos 4:5, Rabbi Yishmael explains that simply learning Torah isn't enough: one should learn with the intention of fulfilling and practicing the Torah's commandments as well, and not just learn as an end unto itself. If we want to practice the Torah, this includes teaching others the same.

SEE **BECOMING INSPIRED**  
PAGE 4

## BECOMING INSPIRED FROM PAGE 3

As one people, we need to teach and motivate others who might not know what we have learnt, so that all of us can practice the Torah as a nation.

Each person, no matter their background, is made in Hashem's image and has unconditional priceless worth. In this critical beginning stage of the year, we at YU have an opportunity to step out of our comfort zones, and make new friends outside of our set groups. There are many

students who might not have grown up in an Orthodox environment or who know very few people at YU. We need to show those

students that we care about them unconditionally, and this will go a long way to enhance their time at YU. I personally made a great new friend after going out of my comfort zone and introducing myself to



could be the year that we can truly become an am echad— one nation. The opportunities are here before us. Even as you go to do laundry, you can greet another student that's there, even if they're not exactly like

a student who didn't feel as connected to our community. If each student will do their part, this year

you. Although there are times when you could choose to sit alone and be more comfortable, maybe extend yourself and sit with the student you think you don't have anything in common with, because we always have something in common with each other. As you walk up and down flights of stairs, you have the choice to shine a smile to each student. We can only gain from being kind to one another.

It's up to us to make a change and open our eyes. This is the time to change. May Hashem give us a year of life, blessing, and unity. It begins with each one of us!

# WHAT THE PRIDE ALLIANCE FAILED TO LEARN FROM JEWISH HISTORY

BY BEN HILKIAH

It seems as though we cannot go a week without the Pride Alliance lawsuit rearing its head on campus. This past week, drama boiled over when the Supreme Court rejected YU's request of a stay on a New York court's decision forcing YU to incorporate the Pride Alliance. Ostensibly, this means that within the next few weeks the YU Pride Alliance will be an official club on both Wilf and Beren campuses. When news of the lower court's ruling broke this past June it was met with jubilation from the queer community on and surrounding campus. One administrator at Jewish Queer Youth, the de facto parent organization of the Pride Alliance, wrote that she was so excited that she wanted to "dance through the streets." As a queer student, I am both bisexual and gender non-conforming, at Yeshiva University I cannot say I feel similarly. This is not something to celebrate. This is something to mourn.

I will not discuss whether or not YU needs a Pride Alliance. I feel strongly that there must be a safe space for people like me to come together and form a community but I understand that there's more nuance to this conversation. I certainly do not feel confident that the current iteration of the Pride Alliance will accomplish the vision that I have for queer orthodoxy. Regardless, that is not the point of this article. What upsets me is how the Pride Alliance handled this situation. Even if the ends that they achieved were as noble as they suggest, the means with which they met their goal is lamentable. In the middle of the first-century BCE, Judea was torn apart by civil war. The great-great-nephews

of Yehudah the Macabee were not as pious as their illustrious predecessors. These two brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, both coveted the Jewish crown for themselves and plunged their brethren into a bloody civil war to feed their selfish ambitions. Tragedy struck when Aristobulus, desperate for the upper hand, sent envoys to the Roman emperor Pompey, imploring him to join his side. Pompey obliged and marched on Jerusalem. His aid was enough to put Aristobulus on the throne, but it was an empty gesture. Pompey decided that Judea would be a wonderful addition to his budding empire. The Romans never left Jerusalem and 150 years later they destroyed the Beis HaMikdash. Hyrcanus and Aristobulus wanted each other dead. Their familial bond was severed in the shadows of their agendas. Their rage precluded reconciliation and instead, they turned outside the fold, seeking help from those who cared nothing for their community. Their callousness cost Judea her sovereignty and, eventually, her Temple. It is not outlandish to see parallels to this tragedy in our own painful saga. The Pride Alliance has dragged our Yeshiva into the secular courts, forgetting that brothers do not indict brothers, regardless of their perceived misdeeds. In doing so, they robbed our community of one of our most prized assets: autonomy. We are now bound to the whim of the modern-day Pompey: a power that does not understand our values nor cares for our Jewish future. A few centuries after Pompey stormed Jerusalem, Ptolemy II, the Greek Pharaoh of Egypt, requested that the Torah be translated from its original Hebrew into

Greek. He gathered 72 Sages and separated them individually. He instructed each one to translate the Torah without consulting

each other. The Talmud (Megillah 9a) relates that God performed a miracle, and each Sage produced the exact same translation, sparing the Sages great embarrassment and ensuring the continuity of Torah. Despite this miracle, the Sages established that day as a fast day, as the Torah had been secularized by a government confident in its ability to meddle in Jewish affairs.

The Sages understood that the ends never justify the means. Surely a major miracle had been performed in their midst! How was this not a time for celebration? The Sages explained that a short-term miracle, while inspiring, does nothing to alleviate the long-term destruction of an emboldened government, sully the sacred in favor of the secular. When the outside powers feel that they have jurisdiction over our religious texts, mourning and fasting is the appropriate reaction. Even if you believe that the YU Pride Alliance should be allowed on campus, as many well-meaning people do, how could you "dance in the streets with excitement" when the tremors of a secular gavel resonate where they do not belong? How can you celebrate your "miracle" when it pales in comparison to the dire ramifications of the loss of our religious



autonomy? Have you considered the cost of your so-called victory? I am proudly queer. I believe in Pride. Yet I am aware that I have a higher responsibility. I have an obligation to my community to defend its ability to govern itself as it sees fit. This is a religious issue because our communal leaders have decided it is a religious issue. It is our choice to make, and handing it off to a third party is reckless.

This is not the first time that secular governments have tried to regulate our yeshivos. In 1892, the Russian government began to interfere in both the hiring process and schedule of the famed Volozhin Yeshiva. Although it was the hallmark of Orthodoxy of its time, the Russians were ambivalent about Jewish values and prioritized their enlightened principles over their citizenry's well-being. Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, the legendary Rosh Yeshiva of the time, courageously closed the Yeshiva, rather than submit to outside legislation. His courage ensured that we remain autonomous and that the chain of Torah remain unblemished. Such bravery and determination is the standard of Jewish leadership. Perhaps our administrators should consider our past seeing as the Pride Alliance has refused to.

# THE GOVERNMENT IS IRRESPONSIBLE AND NOBODY IS SURPRISED

BY DANIEL GANOPOLSKY

Our nation has recently experienced massive shift in gun policy. In the landmark gun-carry case, *New York State Rifle and Pistol Association v. Bruen*, the Supreme Court declared that New York cannot force applicants for gun-carry permits to “demonstrate a special need for self-protection distinguishable from that of the general community.” It is therefore evident that New York’s “proper-cause” requirement to obtain a concealed-carry license is unconstitutional as it violates ordinary citizens’ Second Amendment rights.

While New York State Governor Kathy Hochul has already announced that new restrictions are forthcoming, it is important to take a step back and analyze the arguments of justice Stephen Breyer through the eyes of the great 18th-century English political philosopher, Edmund Burke. The goal here is not to approve or disprove the Supreme Court’s decision, but to examine and criticize the methodology of Justice Breyer.

Breyer wrote his dissent, accusing the majority opinion of deciding the case “without discussing the nature or severity” of gun violence. Breyer notes how, “In 2020, 45,222 Americans were killed by firearms.” He continues to elaborate on the increasing prevalence of gun violence in America. He points to school shootings, mass shootings, suicides, and road rage accidents. Breyer spends the first eight pages of his dissent listing all the potential dangers of firearms. He argues that since this threat is so severe, each state should be allowed to authorize its own gun regulation laws. Breyer expresses, “The primary difference between the courts view and mine is that I believe the amendment allows states to take account of the serious problems that I have just described.”

Justice Breyer claims that guns create more problems than solutions. Not once does he consider the benefits of gun ownership. Not once does he mention the motivation to carry a guns as protection, and how many countless lives



guns have saved. A simple reading of the Second Amendment does not affirm Breyer’s position. The Second Amendment only establishes a positive right of the individual to bear arms and restricts the government from taking them away. Breyer, lacking a strong constitutional basis for his position, appeals to the his audience’s pathos, arguing these restrictive measures are necessary because of the state of emergency we are in. He takes advantage of the increasing gun violence rates to justify his original interpretation of what the law should be.

The danger in Breyer’s approach is that our country is not forever in a state of emergency. Thus, we cannot favor legislation that is simply reactionary. If we do, then once our nation returns to its status quo, the law would no longer apply and would be deemed unconstitutional by his own admission. A Supreme Court Justice must be objective and must determine the law based on the reading of the constitution and the legal precedent decided before them, not by whether there is a temporary surge in gun violence. Edmund Burke points to the dangers in creating policy and law based on, or in reaction to, emergencies. Burke is wary of quick change because it can upend a stable government. Tradition reinforces values, morals, and instructions that keep society functioning. Government must create policy based on the situation at hand and the information available, rather than the extreme circumstances. Justice Samuel Alito points this out and dismisses

Breyer’s concern in his concurring opinion. “Why, for example, does the dissent think it is relevant to recount the mass shootings that have occurred in recent years?” Alito wrote, arguing that the New York law did not stop the 18-year-old shooter who killed ten people in a grocery store in Buffalo, N.Y., last month.

If the state wishes to save more lives, it should find a way to do so constitutionally and without legislation from the high court.

In addition to the Supreme Court case, the Senate passed a sweeping bipartisan gun control bill in response to Uvalde and a mass shooting in Illinois on July 4th, which Senator Chris Murphy described as “the most significant piece of anti-gun violence legislation in nearly 30 years.” Introducing the bill on the Senate floor, Senator Cornyn said, “Since the shooting, my office has received tens of thousands of calls, letters, and emails with a singular message: Do something. Not do nothing. But do something.” And that, indeed, is what he has done. The resultant legislation is sloppy, non-responsive, and rushed, but it’s “something,” and “something” was all it was ever supposed to be. Similar to Justice Breyer’s justification, this bill was a reaction to the emotional complaints of what constituents perceived as an emergency.

In addition, it is unclear what the bill accomplishes. The bill mentions red flag laws, but Illinois already has one. It mentions a permitting system for the purchase and ownership of guns, but Illinois

has that, too. It mentions “Universal” background checks, that’s also Illinois law already. What about “assault weapons” and “high-capacity” magazines? Highland Park has banned both since 2013. What about concealed carry? That was prohibited at the parade under an Illinois law that renders it illegal to carry firearms at “any public gathering held pursuant to a license issued by any governmental body.” Straw purchasing is also already illegal, and, besides, the gun was obtained legally.

Yoram Hazony writes in his new book “Conservatism: A Rediscovery”,

Burke’s objection to the introduction of very general (or abstract) principles into government is that, since they have not been formulated in such a way as to address only the particular offenses at hand, or to make specific improvements, it is impossible to know what one is really doing by adopting them. Legislators must therefore be alert “to prevent a surprise on their opinions,” which results from accepting too general a principle out of a need to make a necessary repair. As he writes: “Before they listen to even moderate alterations in the government of their country, they ought to take care that principles are not propagated for that purpose, which are too big for their object. Doctrines limited in their present application, and wide in their general principles, are never meant to be confined to a day at first pretend.”

If this bill does not resolve any current problems, we have to ask ourselves and our leaders what is its purpose. Our elected officials should not pass legislation for political clout. Without a concrete direction, vague and broad bills can be misconstrued and misused toward other unintended consequences. Our lawmakers need to be meticulous and thoughtful when writing and passing legislation. Otherwise, our political system will continue to mislead and fail us without recourse.

BY YITZHAK GRAFF

## A MESS OF RECORDS AND REELS: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WYUR

Most students of YU rarely enter the Schottenstein Center on 560 W 185th. Some may daven in the Shenk Shul at 9:15AM when they wake up late and still want to go to minyan. Others may have sat in the small theater in the basement for a Dramatic Society production. Almost none will ever ascend to the upper stories of the building. The rare few who have the stamina to climb the stairs or the resolve to ride the aging elevator to the third floor may have noticed a room in the back left corner of the forgotten student lounge. Next to a lock box whose combination has been forgotten to time lies a small plaque bearing the inscription “WYUR 64AM.”

The history of this WYUR can be divided into three main eras. The first era, going from 1961 to 1968, is the period of its early development. The second era, ranging from 1968 until 1997, bookends WYUR’s experience as a semi-professional college radio station with a consistent style of broadcast. The third era, from 1999 to the present, contains WYUR’s struggle to remain relevant in a world of increasingly-accessible media on the internet.

In May of 1961, Teddy Berman, the incoming President of the Yeshiva College Student Council (YCSC) proposed the idea of a student radio station to help revitalize student life on campus. Berman sought to address a common concern among candidates for student council at that time. There was a general feeling that members of student government were apathetic to actively improving student life. Berman imagined a radio station that broadcasted music and programs of interest to the student body could serve as a mouthpiece of YCSC to directly communicate with the student body. Although Berman’s theoretical station, dubbed ‘WYU,’ never materialized during his term in office, he certainly thrust the idea of a student radio station into the collective consciousness of the student body.

There were two attempts at starting a radio station during 1962, neither of which were managed by YCSC as Berman envisioned. The first attempt was made in March of 1962, in which two members of YCDS, Richard Weisman and Lenny Brandwein, started WGDR (Golden Dome Radio) as a division of YCDS. Weisman and Brandwein intended to broadcast music and news

reports nightly for the residents of Rubin Hall. The extent to which WGDR succeeded in making regular broadcasts is unknown. However, it is certain that the project didn’t last beyond the end of the spring semester when Weisman graduated.

In the following Fall, two tech-savvy freshmen, Sandford Moos and David Salanche, started a radio station in their shared room in Rubin Hall. Moos and Salanche’s WYUR was completely independent of any student organization. Their station saw enough success for an upper-classman resident of Rubin Hall to intrude upon their room and broadcast obscenities with their private equipment. When news of this incident reached the administration, they immediately forced Moos and Salanche to shut down their operation.

While all this was going on, YCSC was still dreaming about their theoretical radio station, WYU, without taking any serious steps to realize the goal. During this period of inaction, Irwin Geller, a writer of satirical pieces for the Commentator, penned a piece in December of 1963 reflecting on the potential of the theoretical radio station, WYU. YCSC’s first real step in realizing its goal of having a radio station was the creation of a Radio Club during the 1965 Spring semester. The Radio Club spent its first year bringing in experts to educate its members in the technical and rhetorical aspects of radio broadcasting, as well as securing industry connections to help prepare for its launch into a full-scale radio station. By December of 1965, the radio club had secured a grant from the American Broadcasting Corporation for broadcasting equipment, including turntables and transmitters. The administration refused to allow the Radio Club to begin broadcasting in January of 1966, citing concerns from the debacle of Moos and Salanche’s independent radio station in 1962. YCSC pushed back against the administration, insisting that the radio station would be an overall benefit to student life. The administration eventually softened up to the idea and released their approval of the charter for a student radio station in May of 1967.

In September of 1967, YCSC allocated \$2500 for the recently approved radio station, now called WYUR (Yeshiva University Radio). WYUR would use that money to arrange their setup and install all the necessary equipment to be ready for the launch of the station in January of 1968. WYUR made its first broadcast from the fifth floor of RIETS Hall (now called Muss Hall)

at 6:00PM on Thursday, February 1, 1968. Students living in RIETS, Rubin, and Morgenstern Halls could now tune their radios to 820 AM to listen to a variety of shows featuring music, news, sports, and lectures from YU faculty. About one month later, the WYUR expanded its broadcast to the Brookdale Residence Hall. WYUR was able to limit its audience to specific locations due to its unconventional method of broadcasting. WYUR’s broadcast was sent from the studio to transmitters in each dorm building using telephone lines. The transmitters, in turn, used the electrical grid of their respective dorm buildings in lieu of an antenna. This method was supposedly cheaper than using more powerful long distance radio waves, but it also granted benefits to both the station and the YU administration. WYUR benefited by being exempt from FCC regulation, since it was not a public radio station, and the administration could rest easy knowing that the broadcasts were not accessible to the general public. This method of broadcasting continued to be used until 2003, when the station began streaming on the internet. From its inception in 1968, WYUR was the first integrated undergraduate club at YU, serving both students of YC and SCW. The exact motivations for the inception of this novel arrangement aren’t completely clear but can be mostly reconstructed from the available record. WYUR was not receiving enough funding from YCSC to remain operational, so they likely turned to SCWSC to make up their deficit in return for expanding the broadcast to the Stern campus. The SCWSC held a vote to determine interest in a radio station among students of Stern, and the student body voted in favor of the club. This joint funding from both student councils meant that students of Stern were able to have their own shows on WYUR. The second era of WYUR began in March of 1968, when the station began to settle into its routine. Although the studio inhabited three different locations on the Wilf campus, the broadcast continued to be sent to the following four undergraduate dorms, RIETS (Muss), Rubin, Morg, and Brookdale Halls. The studio’s first move was in 1971, during which it was moved from the fifth floor of RIETS (Muss) Hall to the newly-renovated student union space in the second story of the garages just south of Belfer Hall. These garages were renovated in the early 60s to house physics labs for the Belfer School of Science, while the school waited for its 18-story tower to be built. Upon Belfer Hall’s completion in 1970, YU decided to designate part of the garages for student use. WYUR moved its studio into the new student union space in Fall of 1971 and stayed there for almost two decades. The studio’s second move happened in 1991. The administration wanted to use the garages to house cars, so they

relocated the student union space to the third floor of the Schottenstein Center. WYUR, along with the other Wilf student organizations, moved their offices to the Schottenstein Center.

There was no effort by WYUR to record and archive its broadcasts, however a rough sketch of their general content can be reconstructed from the surviving material culture, which includes the archived student newspapers and items in the possession of WYUR. From 1968 to 1997, the bulk of WYUR’s regular programming consisted of music shows managed by student disc jockeys (DJ). The DJs generally broadcasted selections from a specific genre, while providing some commentary and receiving calls from listeners. Most shows focused on traditional Jewish music, Israeli music, or rock music.

News was usually broadcasted between shows and contained a combination of general news and YU news. The YU news was pre-recorded by the WYUR newsmen and included all manner of events relating to the student body. The general news was provided by a subscription news service that provided daily news tapes for broadcast.

WYUR also broadcasted YU sports games up until 1997. They relayed the play-by-play of all home games and away games that were close enough to transport the broadcasting equipment. WYUR did not resume sports broadcasting after its 1997-1999 hiatus, and MacsLive was created as early as 2002 to replace the defunct WYUR sports broadcasting program.

The general trajectory and goals of the station managers shifted over the course of the 70s, 80s, and 90s. In the beginning of the 70s, there was a general desire to focus the station’s efforts on Jewish programming, which generally manifested in most of the music shows playing Jewish and Israeli music. In addition, there were some instances of special Jewish programming that were broadcast during this period. In SEPTEMBER 1970, WYUR broadcasted Rav Soloveitchik’s *drasha* on his concerns with the legal secularization of YU. In March 1972, WYUR secured telephone interviews with two Jewish dissenters stuck in the Soviet Union, named Gavriel Schapiro and Dr. Alexander Lerner, discussing their experiences living under Soviet oppression. Schapiro was able to secure his exit visa about a year after this interview, but Lerner was forced to remain in the USSR until 1988. In late 1977, WYUR experienced its first crisis. They reported that the transmitting equipment was damaged and about 600 records were stolen. Funds to bring the service back on air were hard to come by, and this event led to a year-long fight between WYUR, YCSC, and SCWSC over who had to pay for the repairs. WYUR was able to recover from this event with some

1. A common semi-satirical epithet for Yeshiva University. It referenced the many copper domes that adorned the roof of RIETS Hall (now Zysman Hall). In 1962, the copper had long oxidized and turned green, but the epithet was still popular, likely because the domes were no longer gold in appearance.

## HISTORY OF WYUR

FROM PAGE 6

additional funding from the student councils and a lot of ingenuity from WYUR's engineers.

Since WYUR was not certified by the FCC, it could not ensure that there were no other neighboring stations with similar frequencies interfering with its broadcasts. In Fall 1985, the frequency was changed from 820AM to 640AM to avoid interference from other neighboring radio stations.

As WYUR entered the 80s, its audience became more interested in popular music including rock, funk, and reggae. The station managers tried to stave off this desire for more alternative types of music, but they were not entirely successful in preserving the Jewish focus of the WYUR of the 70s. By the early 90s, the music shows in general were becoming less popular and were being replaced by comedy and political talk shows.

From the late 80s until 1995, WYUR suffered numerous break-ins and damage to their equipment. They were not the only student organization to suffer from this at the time. It seems that back then the Schottenstein Center had a security problem. WYUR's constant need to repair and replace equipment meant that its service became less reliable and started an overall decline. In addition to its spotty service, it also suffered several crises of leadership and internal feuds. There was an attempt in 1995 to completely over-

haul the station broadcasting tech and replace it with a more powerful FM frequency. This upgrade was estimated at around \$20,000, and the money never materialized. WYUR continued to decay until it completely went off air in 1997. There was an attempt in 1999 headed by Eli Gurock to restart broadcasting. Opting for a cost-effective remedy for the problems experienced in 1995-97, Gurock changed the frequency to 530AM with the rationale that there would be less interference from other radio stations at such a low frequency, potentially improving the sound quality. This innovation was not as effective as Gurock hoped, and WYUR returned to its dormant state after Gurock graduated in Spring of 2000.

In Fall of 2003, an enterprising student named David Weinberg began to work on reviving the station once again. Weinberg chose to shift the medium of broadcast from radio waves to the internet. He made use of communication infrastructure that the university had already installed in all the dorm buildings instead of investing an estimated \$20,000 to modernize the radio broadcasting set-up.

Under Weinberg's leadership, WYUR launched their new website, wyur.org, in November 2003 and began broadcasting on the internet. This began a new era of success for the station. During the mid-2000s, WYUR hosted annual Shabbatons and ran 30+ hour

marathon

events.

All the enthusiasm began to peter out in 2008, and by May of 2009, the website was no longer running.

Another attempt to revive the station was made in the Fall of 2011. The new WYUR Twitter account tried to hype up its prospective audience for the October 25th launch date, but technical difficulties with the new website, wyur.net, prevented them from reaching their audience.

The new website was only made operational in February 2013. WYUR began to broadcast regular shows again, though they were not able to regain the enthusiasm of the mid-2000s. In Fall 2019, WYUR experienced some serious difficulties resuming broadcasting due to some aging internet tech in the studio. The team was able to resume broadcasting for Spring 2020, and they continued until March of that year. Broadcasting was discontinued when almost everyone was sent home due to the uncontrollable spread of COVID-19. The wyur.net website went offline in October 2021.

It can be easy to get lost in tracing the ups and downs and



broadcasting trends of WYUR throughout all of its eras. Despite the thorough appearance of this piece, an entire book's worth of material would be insufficient to properly chronicle the events of a single year. Thus is the problem of writing history. The events included in this article were chosen to showcase the impact that WYUR had on the hundreds of students who got to develop their own voices through their shows and the thousands of their peers who found enjoyment in listening. It is important to recognize that all the students who participated in making WYUR a reality for its entire history acted out of a desire to connect students to one another and engender a community of students who were invested in making this university a better place.

## STUDENT LEADER SPOTLIGHT: ELIANE MORADI

BY MARCELA HOMSANY

Laying on her bed in a shoe-box dorm room that looks out to someone else's apartment, Eliane Moradi (SCW '25), an upper freshman in Stern College for Women, looks ahead at the decorations that scatter across the opposite walls of her single bedroom— a giant Italian flag and a variety of boarding tickets from her flights to and from Milan. Eliane Moradi was born a triplet on February 25, 2002 in the Clinica Mangiagalli Fondazione in Milan, Italy. Her childhood was filled with visits to Great Neck to see her grandmother, activities in the local Jewish community, and lots of gelato. Going to a Jewish day school her entire life, Eliane expresses that despite her love for Italy, living there as a Jew specifically, was not without its difficulties. She notes, "Italy is not a country like Israel or the USA where the Jewish population is very normalized. Our school in Milan is not very big as we're just a few people. We're a small community. We have just a few Jewish friends, and we are

used to living in a small community. Because of that, being in the United States, at the beginning was very overwhelming. Here there's a huge community and a very wide range of Kosher products while in Milan, there is not."

Regardless of their size, the Jews in Milan are a target for attacks. Eliane recalls an attack that happened to a young boy returning home from his Bar Mitzvah classes. "When I was in high school, my friend's brother was having his Bar Mitzvah at the time. He was walking with his bike, and a small, ganti-semitic gang stopped him. He was wearing a Kippah, so they asked him, "Are you Jewish?" and he said "Yes." They then pulled his backpack and kicked him all at once. Fortunately, he was on his bike so he was able to escape." The anti-semitic attacks in Italy have increased so much that Eliane no longer finds it safe to live there anymore. "I would never go back as much as I love Italy. I will never go back because being a Jew there is not easy. Being a Jew in Israel or in

the United States is way easier than being a Jew in Italy. Also, there is a lot of anti-semitism, so I would feel more safe in Israel or in the United States." Yeshiva University has maintained itself as a safe haven for many international students like Eliane and has helped her adjust to life in America. She recalls: "At first, it was all very overwhelming. I would always come to New York for vacation, but it was never a place that I thought I could live in. Thank God, my sister was with me, so I wasn't alone, and I'm very lucky that from the first day I met my friends I was very welcomed by everyone." With initiatives like the Mechina Pathways Program, Eliane was able to meet people from all over the world who share her experiences with anti-semitism, moving to America, and growing religiously. "The most important thing for me that I think made me feel very comfortable from the beginning, is that I met international friends that have gone through this process, so we understand

each other," says Eliane Moradi (SCW '25).

While at YU, Eliane has slowly cultivated her Judaism, making positive changes to her otherwise traditional background. "Since I moved to YU I feel like I'm more attached to my religion. When I came here, I wasn't sure about it, and I'm still not really sure but I'm working on it. I didn't eat strict Kosher, I just ate Kosher meat but not Kosher dairy. I'm now starting to also eat Kosher dairy. YU is helping me know/understand that I want to become Shomer Shabbat and in general, live a more religious lifestyle." With three more years to go, Eliane Moradi is excited to see what YU has in store for her, as she continues to adapt, grow, and improve her new life in America.

# CLUB PROFILE: CANCER RESEARCH SOCIETY

BY RAQUEL LEIFER,  
FEATURES EDITOR

*Each month, the YU Observer aims to highlight one club available to the YU undergraduate community. For the September 2022 edition, the YU Observer is highlighting the Cancer Research Society.*

**Club Name:** Cancer Research Society

**Heads:** Sara Chemel (SCW 23') and Gabrielle Kupferman (SCW 23')

**Relevant Campus(es):** Beren

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

The Cancer Research Society is for motivated students who are passionate about innovation in medicine, specifically in the field of cancer research. As part of a community dedicated to studying advancements in cancer treatment, students will learn about current findings at the forefront of the field.

**Why is this club important?**

Our club is important in encouraging a culture of collaboration in the sciences. Making involvement in research more accessible to Stern students is of utmost importance to us. It is crucial that we ensure a passion and drive for research in the undergraduate community, especially in a field as ever-changing as oncology.

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

We have both taken part in cancer research over our undergraduate careers. I (Gabrielle) did a summer research program at the MD Anderson Cancer Center, and Sara works in a lab studying triple negative breast cancer. We both recognize that there is room for tremendous growth in the field; this club encourages us to stay current on the ever-changing field of cancer.

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

We have met to discuss articles relating to innovation in cancer treatment, with club members researching and presenting advancements in areas of cancer research that interest them. Last year we discussed an article about the ability of exercise to reduce systemic immune inflammation index (SII) in childhood cancer patients.

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

We plan to bring in researchers from nearby institutions who are at the forefront of advancements in cancer treatment.

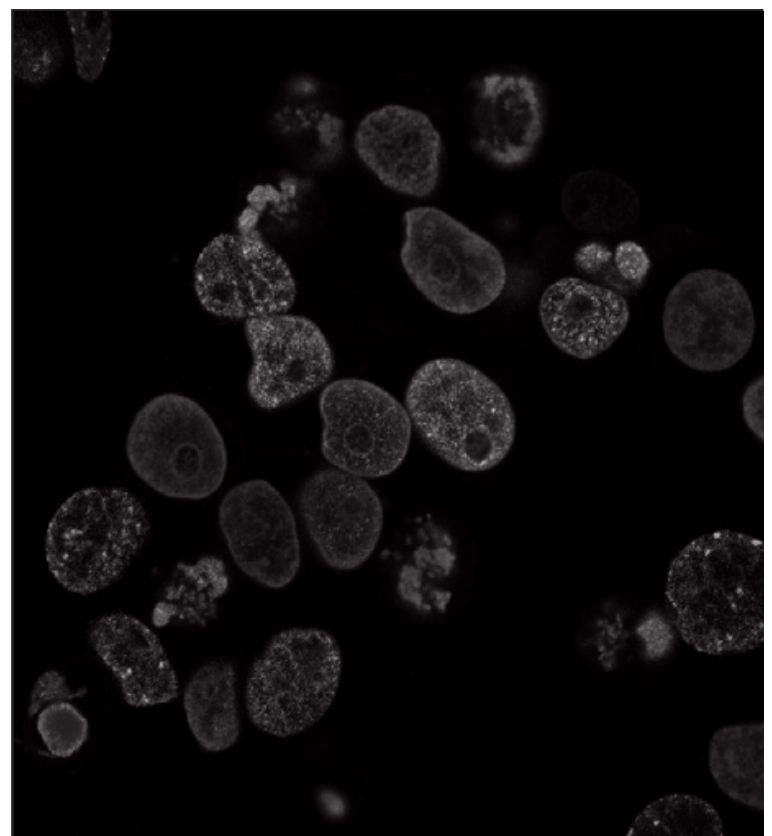
**What is your advice to someone looking to get involved on campus?**

Join our WhatsApp group chat to learn about upcoming events, and reach out to one of our club heads if you are interested in presenting an article!

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

Please reach out to us with any questions at [schemel@mail.yu.edu](mailto:schemel@mail.yu.edu) and [gkupferm@mail.yu.edu](mailto:gkupferm@mail.yu.edu)

**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!**



BY MARVIN AZRAK

## YU SOCCER

The YU men's soccer team entered this season with championship aspirations, retaining 17 returning players from the 2021 campaign, where they reached the Skyline Conference semifinals. Under the guidance of coach Tobias Esche and his co-staff John Schatz, Joshua Gochiz, and Ezequiel Lepera, the team now possesses the assets to overcome the offensive struggles that plagued them last year and reach the summit. Now, a third of the way through the season, the team finds themselves with a 2-1-1 overall record, searching for the internal spark to rekindle their mojo. A player anonymously remarked: "it's disappointing because we know we're better than what we've displayed out

there." We get in our way late in ballgames, and it's up to us to figure it out."

The Macs showed their versatility in the season opener in a non-conference matchup at Lehman College. The first goal of both the game and the season was scored in the 31st minute by a skillful collaboration between Josh Ziarno and David Anitran. Minutes into the second half, Ziarno scored his second goal with a helpful assist from Gabe Einhorn to give YU the lead for good. Time-pressed, Lehman applied pressure seeking the equalizer but was denied by goalkeeper Nicolas Dlugach, whose diving stop kick-started a Macs insurance play. Soon after,

Lucas Barades scored YU's third, giving the Macs a two-goal lead. It was an impressive debut for coach Esche, whose tactical adjustments empowered the team to victory. A player stated: "he's the smartest coach I've ever played for. His vision is unmatched, and it's a guarantee we'll be in every contest because we've got the coaching advantage. It gives us a boost before the game even starts." Dlugach's 11 saves led the way. It was a solid start to the season. "It wasn't our best performance, but pretty good for the first game," a player told the Observer."

The Mac's home opener

was a 3-0 match against Sarah Lawrence. Despite the win, the team wasn't satisfied with their performance. A player commented: "that was probably the worst I've seen us play in practice or a game, but we won, so we'll take it. It's a team we should've picked apart early and couldn't cash in on our opportunities which allowed them to remain in the contest, which won't work against stiffer competition." The Mac's offense went dormant for the remainder of the first half after an early goal by Yoan Reiter. Still, senior stopper Benjamin Brener made some

SEE YU SOCCER,  
PAGE 10



# FACULTY PROFILE: DR. NORA NACHUMI

---

BY RAQUEL LEIFER,  
FEATURES EDITOR

---

*Each month, the YU Observer aims to highlight a YU faculty member. For the September 2022 edition, the YU Observer is highlighting Dr. Nora Nachumi, PhD.*

I am lucky to have been in two of Dr. Nachumi's courses during my time at Stern. During the spring semester of my sophomore year I took "Comedy and Satire" which analyzed comedy and satire as distinct genres in diverse formats. I am currently taking "Novels and Screens" where we have been comparing pieces of literature to their film counterparts. Dr. Nachumi is incredibly personable and is the kind of professor that genuinely cares for her students. If you have the opportunity to take her, you definitely should!

**RL:** Please introduce yourself.

**NN:** Hi! I am an Associate Professor in the Department of English at Stern College for Women. I received my PhD in Literature and a certificate in Women's Studies from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. I specialize in a number of different areas of the long eighteenth century, including celebrity culture, the novel, the theater, and women writers, including Jane Austen. I also work on film adaptation and popular culture.

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

**NN:** I've been at Stern for about 21 years.

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

**NN:** Number one for me would be the students, most of whom are curious, driven, and fun. When you get an engaged or really curious student, it's the best. I like my colleagues, in and out of my department, as well.

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

**NN:** When I began college, I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. One day my favorite English professor told a story about his father who gave him this advice: "in any job you do, there is a lot of little picky

work, so choose a field where you already do the little picky work." I thought about this advice, and I realized that the one thread running throughout my entire life was reading. I'd always been an avid reader, and so I decided to major in Literature. Initially I thought I would focus on twentieth-century American literature, but I became fascinated by eighteenth-century British literature and culture. In addition to plagues, pirates, and revolutions, it was also the period that saw the emergence of the novel. It also was when women began to write professionally (which was quite scandalous at the time). What we now think of as the "celebrity bio" emerged then as well. Some of the issues that were relevant to eighteenth-century women writers are still very important to women today. I suppose this is why I also love teaching Introduction to Women's Studies, the foundational course in the women's studies minor at Stern.

**RL:** Is there anything interesting you are currently working on?

**NN:** Two books that I just edited have come out. The first is called *Making Stars, Biography and Celebrity in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. The essays in here are game changing in terms of the way we understand the relationship between biography and celebrity during the period. The second book, *Jane Austen, Sex and Romance, Engaging with Desire in the Novels and Beyond* is the product of a long collaboration that began in graduate school with my friend Stephanie Oppenheim, when we realized that academics and non-academics didn't relate to Austen in the same way. The stereotype was that non-academics thought of Austen as a romance novelist and academics thought of her as a satirist. But the more we looked at things, the more we saw that this was a huge and inaccurate misrepresentation. Our collection is the first to include pieces by both academic and non-academics, about desire in all things Austen. A chapter I wrote on the 1995 BBC *Pride and Prejudice* is in it. Meanwhile, another essay—which Stephanie and I co-authored—on comedy and satire in Whit Stillman's adaptation of Austen's *Lady Susan*, has

just been published in a collection called *Austen After 200*. My next project is a biography of an eighteenth-century actress named Eliza Farren.

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

**NN:** We live in a world that values business, science, and technology far more than the humanities. If you choose a career in the humanities, know that what you are doing is extremely important.

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

**NN:** Literature invites readers to enter imaginatively and empathetically into the lives of others. Reading allows us to have an out of body empathic experience that we can't get anywhere else.

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

**NN:** Definitely Virginia Woolf. She was an early twentieth century modernist writer. She wrote *A Room of One's Own*, which is based on a series of lectures she gave at a women's university. Woolf tells the women to imagine Shakespeare's sister, who was just as much of a genius as he, but could not write plays or act because of the limited options available to women. In Woolf's tale, Shakespeare's sister commits suicide in despair. Woolf tells her audience that—if they continue to work for a world in which women can write—Shakespeare's

sister will be reborn, probably in about 100 years. That's about now and it would be amazing to see what she would think of the opportunities available to women writers today. The other person I would bring is Alice Walker, whose essay, "In Search of Our Mother's Gardens," responds to *A Room of One's Own*. Walker, an African American, asks how Black women kept their creative spirits alive through generations facing far more difficult challenges than the women Woolf considers.

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

**NN:** I want my students to know that if they ever need advice, I am here for them and happy to help.

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

**NN:** Oh gosh – if you ask me tomorrow, I might say something different but I'd recommend reading at least one of Austen's mature novels carefully. All of her novels make people better readers. In fact, in 2012, researchers at Stanford University discovered that, like listening to Mozart, reading Jane Austen makes people smarter.



Evan G. '20  
**DELOITTE**  
Tax Consultant

Tali J. '21  
**BLOOMBERG**  
Data Analyst

Zachary L. '21  
**MORGAN STANLEY**  
Credit Risk Analyst

Nate S. '21  
**ACCENTURE**  
Software Architect

Bailey F. '20  
**ALBERT EINSTEIN**  
College of Medicine





Rebecca S. '20  
**GOLDMAN SACHS**  
Senior Analyst

Daniel F. '20  
**DEUTSCHE BANK**  
Investment Bank Analyst

# Did You Know?

**96% of YU graduates are employed or in grad school within 6 months of graduating.**

A degree from YU prepares our graduates to join the most successful establishments in the world.



**RISE UP**  
The Campaign for 613

YU SOCCER  
FROM PAGE 8

big saves, and after a rousing talk from Esche, the Macs scored two more goals, including an impressive rebound by Josh Ziarno.

In last season's semi-final, the Macs were eliminated in a 1-0 double overtime loss to Mount Saint Vincent. Revamped and recouped, the team sought better results in their first matchup with the reigning champs but squandered a late lead in a stormy 5-3 defeat. Despite the rain, Junior Lucas Barades kept the team afloat with a magnificent hat trick, and the Macs held a two-goal lead at the half. Unfortunately, Mount Saint Vincent showcased their championship skill in the second half's early minutes and sliced the deficit in half. After going up by two again, the Macs looked to their stifling defense to wrap things up,

but injuries and undisciplined play saw the tide turn for the worse and ultimately resulted in a loss for YU. Within 14 seconds, Mount Saint Vincent scored two goals to even the marks. After several attempts by the Macs to regain their standing, Augustus McGiff capped the comeback with a late tally to clinch an exhilarating 5-3 Saint Vincent win.

A player recounted: "we blew an opportunity to surmount ourselves early, and they exposed our deep woes towards the end. We hung with them, but they were deeper and wore us down physically and mentally. That being said, they're beatable, and we'll get them next time."

The Macs returned to their home pitch and faced the conference rival Merchant Marines in another disappointing match. Although the Macs secured 11 corners, the Marines forced the draw. "We're not reaching the level we know

we're capable of, but understand there's a lot of soccer left to play, and it's only up from here," quipped a player. After falling behind early, the Macs upped their game, and before the first half ended, Rafael Cohen, on a brilliant assist from Lucas Barades, evened the score. The game then turned vicious, with numerous yellow cards handed out to both sides by the referees. In the 58th minute, the Macs forged ahead with an exceptional goal made by Ethan Fettya, giving them a 2-1 lead. Unfortunately, within the last 18 minutes of the game, Merchant tied on a corner kick. A player expressed, "chippy contest, but we deserved a win with how we competed and outplayed them in the big moments. A key to winning is creating your luck, which we weren't able to do late in games this weekend, and it's on us individuals to lift each other and lead by example. We believe we have

as good a team as anyone, but we must go out there and show it."

Overall, the team's offense has increased from 2.2 goals per game last season to 2.75 this year, but their goals against have alarmingly spiked from 1.7 GAPG to 2.25. A player affirmed: "defense wins championships, and we're having issues with that now. Yes, we're an offensive-minded team because that's the DNA of most of us, but most of our goals have come when we're disciplined defensively, allowing us to vault into our prolific attack."

## ELUL TORAH ON BEREN

BY RAQUEL LEIFER,  
FEATURES EDITOR

The start of the school year on the Beren campus serves to usher in the fall semester with exciting events, just in time for the *Yamim Noraim* [Days of Awe]. The Torah Activities Council (TAC) has been hard at work, both behind the scenes as well as on the front lines, planning many *Elul*-inspired events. The committee began to organize and strategize with weekly planning meetings over the course of the summer. The *ruach* [spirit] was palpable as ideas circulated, and objectives were laid out.

The focus of the meetings was determining how the Office of Torah and Spiritual Life could best serve the interests of the student body, with a particular emphasis on bringing meaning to *Elul* through various Torah opportuni-

ties. Considering all their goals, the committee brainstormed and categorized both short and long term aims. Their first goal was to have the very first Shabbos on the Beren campus be the largest there ever was. TAC exceeded this goal with over 400 participants this past month. The Shabbos featured President Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, Dean Shoshana Schechter, Mrs. Rachel Ciment, and both Rabbinic couples, as guests. For all involved, it was critical that Shabbos be viewed from a holistic lens, focusing on the *kedusha* [spiritual importance] of the day, and not merely about getting from *hadlakas neiros* [candle lighting] to *havdalah* [lit. separation- the end of *shabbos*] in a linear fashion. The hope is that excitement will continue to be generated through cooperative activities such as brownie baking with both Rebbetzins Ellie Fine and Michal Schonbrun, and future *kumzitzes*

[nights of inspiration].

The hallmark of the *Elul* programming were the "Teshuva Talks" guest speakers. The leaders who came to speak shared their personal experiences in a way that made it easy to connect with them. The insightful conversations allowed those participating to contextualize the topics discussed. Thus far, speakers have included Rav Aryeh Lebowitz, Rav Hershel Schachter, and Rav Eytan and Rebbetzin Aviva Feiner. The talks will conclude next Wednesday with Mrs. Elisheva Kaminetsky, and recordings can be found on the Stern Torah Spotify profile.

In addition to new programming, TAC, in connection with the Beit Midrash committee, have discussed ways to revitalize and revamp the Beren Bekius Program. This year, the program has done away with tests, and is instead focused on building a commu-

nity space of weekly learning in the beis. In this fashion, students are excited to contribute to the community at large while they learn subjects such as *Hilchos Brachos*, *Shnayim Mikra*, and *Maseches Brachos*, which can be helpful in their daily lives. Thursday night *Mishmar* was also reimagined with a focus on learning in a non-pressured environment, where those present could derive meaning from various *seforim* [Torah books] and speakers alongside their peers. Another great opportunity offered this *Elul* were the "Elul Chaburot: Teshuva Texts" with the Rabbinic couples. Students had the opportunity to choose from chaburot ranging from, *Pachad Yitzchak* by Rav Yitzchak Hutner with Rabbi Fine, *Rav Pinchas on Elul* and *Yomim Noraim* with Ellie Fine, *Rabbeinu Yonah's Shaarei Teshuva* with Michal Schonbrun, and *Rambam's Hilchos Teshuva* with Rabbi Schonbrun on Monday and Wednesday nights. Another avenue that TAC is playing an active role in are Chessed opportunities on campus such as Friendship Circle events and many more.

*Elul* is the time for personal introspection, as we each conduct our own *cheshbon hanefesh* [accounting of the soul]. The Torah opportunities offered at Stern during this zman have been incredible vehicles of inspiration for all involved, and there is no question that we are all better



# NEED A KIDNEY? JUST PRINT ONE!

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

BY BELLA RUDOY

Four and a half years. That's the average time people suffering from kidney failure wait on the transplant list. According to the National Kidney Foundation, over 3,000 new patients, on average, are added to kidney transplant wait lists each month, one person is added to the list every fourteen minutes, and thirteen people die each day as they wait. As dejected surgeons and devastated families bemoan these staggering numbers, bioengineers believe they may have found a solution: 3D-printing the kidneys that organ donors cannot supply.

3D-printers build up thousands of thin layers of material in order to produce the desired object. In biotech, 3D-printers are used to build layers of living cells mixed with other organic material to create what is known as 'bio-ink'. This bioink is then used to print the tissue to constitute the desired organ. The organ is then treated with an ionic solution or UV light which allows it to stabilize.

The first printed "organ" was an ear for a patient suffering from microtia, a disease in which an individual is born with one ear and suffers from severely

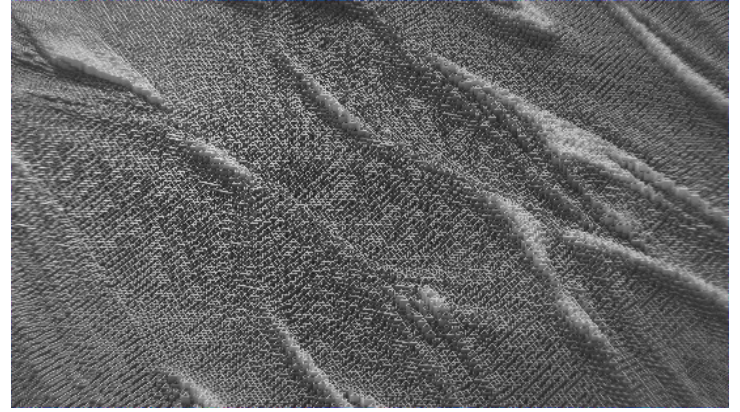
affected hearing. In July 2022, 3DBio Therapeutics successfully 3D-printed an ear for this patient with their own cells and then successfully implanted it onto the patient, immensely improving her quality of life.

In recent months, skin has also been 3D printed, helping patients suffering from severe wounds. The 3D printed skin has shown promising results in animal testing; when it was implanted onto mice, it began to connect with the mice's existing blood vessels rather than just falling off their bodies. Even more astonishing, is that a 3D-printed bladder has successfully sustained the life of a patient suffering from a defective bladder. With a sample of this patient's bladder tissue, a bladder was 3D printed in just two months and then successfully transplanted into the patient. Although the 3D-printed ear and bladder were a considerable success, bioengineers' ultimate goal is to 3D print more complex organs such as the kidney. Bladders are very simple organs that hold only two cell types, while kidneys are far more complex and hold over twenty kinds of cells. Although 3D-printing complex organs seem to be years away, progress has been made. In 2019, Israeli researchers successfully 3D-printed an entire heart, but it was too small to function properly in a human

body. Aside from scaling up this tiny heart, complete with a vascular

system, scientists aren't sure yet if the 3D structure would be able to hold the flow of blood at such a high pressure or if the structure would remain stable within a human body.

While there have been some setbacks from other organs, the potential advantages of bioprinting kidneys have caused bioengineers to strive to discover how to properly print such a complex organ that would successfully function in the human body. Researchers are attempting to use a patient's own stem cells to print kidneys, as they did with the successfully printed ear. This has shown to be more effective than the previous approach of creating scaffolds— structures of materials on which new tissue can be grown— as 3D scaffolds made it difficult for cells to distribute and develop properly. Additionally, utilizing stem cells has been shown to reduce the risk of



rejection from the body, which is one of the leading causes of post-operative death for transplant patients.

CollPlant, a leading biotech company, has already been working on 3D-printing lungs and has recently begun its work on 3D-printable kidneys. Stem cells have been successfully 3D-printed as parts of these complex organs, but the bioengineers still need to discern a way to utilize these stem cells to regenerate kidneys. Nevertheless, based on the research being conducted, it seems that a patient waiting for a kidney transplant for four and a half years will be a notion of the past as the new, custom-printed, one-hour kidney begins to revolutionize and transform our future.

## THE GENOTOXIC EFFECTS ON NAIL SALON TECHNICIANS

BY MICHELLE BENGAL

As a woman who regularly receives manicures and other salon services, I am familiar with the products and circumstances present in such establishments. One might know that acrylic nails are not necessarily healthy, but falsely assume that they cause minimal harm, as the products are attached to the nail beds and are changed on a monthly basis. The recipients of manicure and pedicure services should not be concerned, but rather the technicians who perform these services, inhaling chemicals found in common solvents, glues, and shellac polishes. Many nail technicians accumulate both short and long term pathology due to constant exposure to airborne volatile chemicals, insufficient ventilation, and a lack of personal protective equipment (PPE). Research studies show undeniable evidence that the conditions present in nail salons directly

produce reproductive, respiratory, and oncological issues in the nail technician community, which largely consists mostly immigrant women of Asian descent.

The nail salon industry brings in a whopping 48.2 billion dollars a year, with over 54,000 established in the US, and counting. There are around 380,000 nail technicians, most of whom are uneducated immigrants earning an average salary of \$29,000 annually. According to a study assessing work related symptoms, perceived knowledge, and attitude among nail salon technicians, 84% of respondents demonstrated an inaccurate knowledge of nail cosmetics' risk. Most are unaware that the level of total volatile organic compounds (TVOC) which they inhale daily is comparable to that emitted by gas line.

Moreover, the lack of personal

protective equipment usage and other safety mechanisms pose serious risks to salon workers. Post-pandemic, it is understood that the usage of gloves and masks are imperative in substance-body isolation when breathing in contaminated air. Additionally, because many of these chemicals regularly cause adverse dermatological reactions and rashes, the wearing of long sleeves can actively prevent dermal exposures.

There are innumerable organic compounds, carcinogens, and toxic chemicals present in this line of work, but the most prevalent and threatening include: toluene, ethyl acetate, high levels of carbon dioxide, ethyl methacrylate, formaldehyde, and benzene. Toluene is a toxic chemical which is found in nail lacquers and glues. According to the CDC, it is "irritating to the skin, eyes,

and respiratory tract and can cause systemic toxicity by ingestion or inhalation and is slowly absorbed through the skin." Worsened symptoms include stumbling, irregular heartbeat, fainting, or even death. Ethyl acetate, found in nail polish removers and base coats due to its thin and basic film-forming properties, is flammable and highly toxic when ingested or inhaled. Such exposure can be seriously damaging to internal organs, form allergic reactions, and have chronic respiratory effects. In a combined research study that monitors TVOC levels in Boston nail salons, there was a discernible presence of organic chemicals in the air after analysis of the gas chromatography. More concerningly, it was found through a comparison of pre-shift and post-shift blood sam-

SEE **GENOTOXIC EFFECTS**,  
PAGE 12

## GENOTOXIC EFFECTS FROM PAGE 11

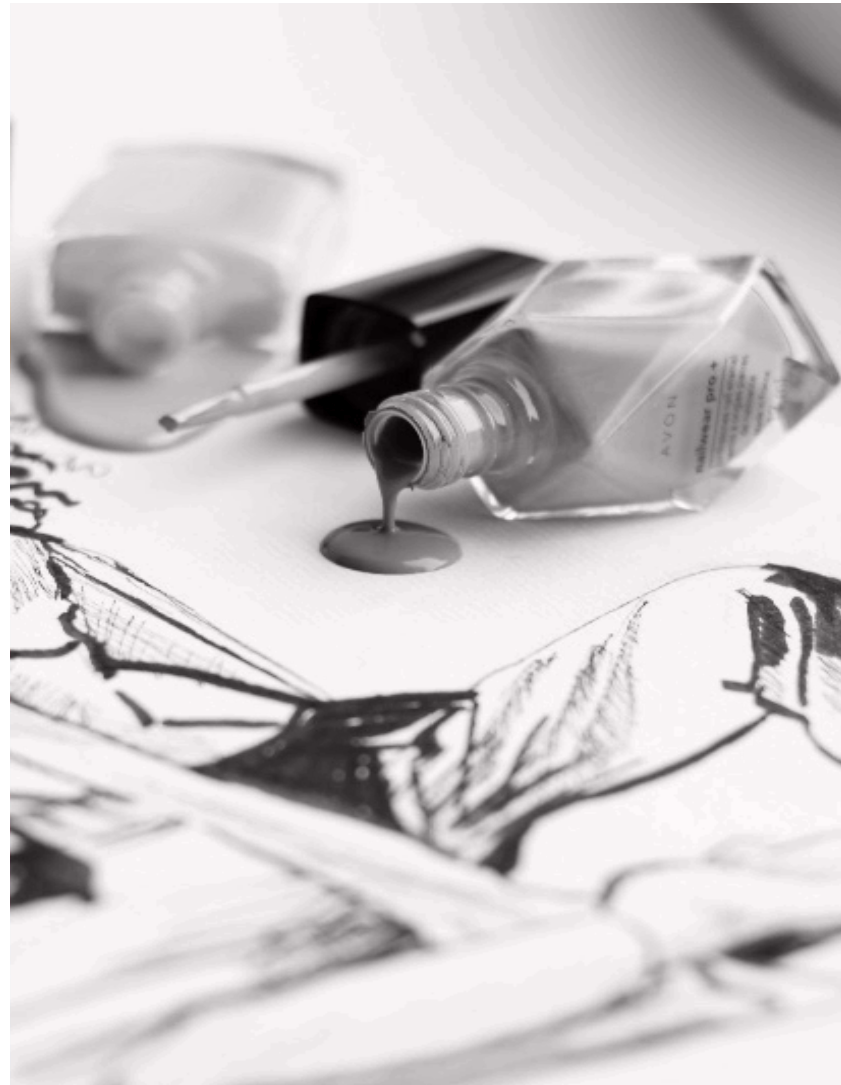
pling that toluene and ethyl acetate actively penetrate technicians throughout their shifts. One individual had a blood VOC concentration of toluene of 0.2 micrograms per liters pre-shift, and a level of 0.8 micrograms per liters post shift. Another individual attained a blood VOC concentration of ethyl acetate of 0.3 micrograms per liters pre-shift, with a spike to 1.45 micrograms per liters post-shift.

Another risk factor is the high presence of carbon dioxide gas in nail establishments. Excessive inhalation of carbon dioxide is known to cause sleepiness, anxiety, and impaired cognitive function. Following the release of information that 15 out of 21 surveyed salons exceeding 800 parts per billion in TVOC concentrations, defining them as having insufficient ventilation, there is a reasonable means for concern. For instance, when no services were taking place, there was a level of less than 1,000 ppb of TVOC and CO<sub>2</sub> concentration, compared to 12,000 ppb while services were occurring. Although one might hypothesize that TVOC and CO<sub>2</sub> levels would be more concentrated by manicure stations where the actual services take place, that is incorrect, as research shows that levels were elevated equally throughout entire salons.

Ethyl methacrylate (EMA), is an additive in artificial nail enhancements, such as acrylic nails. Ethyl methacrylate is known to cause nose and throat irritation alongside asthma-like symptoms. In a study conducted in 2002 by the Cosmetic Ingredient Review Expert Panel where mice were exposed to EMA, findings concluded positive evidence of mutagenicity in a lymphoma cell assay and case reports cite examples of individuals suffering from rashes upon exposure.

Lastly, benzene and formaldehyde which are found in removers and hardeners, are classified as genotoxic class one human carcinogens, collectively causing symptoms such as rashes and wheezing alongside damage to lung function and chromosomal mutations in bone marrow

cells. In a comet assay, a test that detects chromosomal aberrations, studying gasoline workers exposed to Benzene, research suggests that they suffer from “increased DNA fragmentation, higher frequency of micronuclei and decreased leukocyte viability.” Moreover, the National Cancer Institute states that formaldehyde causes myeloid leukemia and other cancers in the paranasal sinuses, nasal cavity, and nasopharynx.



There are three primary long term effects to consider regarding nail technicians' line of work: reproductive disabilities, occupational asthma, and formation of cancer.

In a study on the occupational risks among Asian nail salon workers, many symptoms were found across the board, such as headaches, lightheadedness, irritation to the eyes, nose, skin and throat, and most alarmingly a 11.7% rate of at least one miscarriage. In another study on spontaneous abortions, researchers outlined a direct correlation between spontaneous abortion and the number of hours worked per day in conjunction with the number of services performed per week. Additionally, due to their phthalate inhalation and disproportionate exposure, birth defects and various adverse effects on reproductive health and development are fairly common in nail technicians. The CDC adds that

“women who breathed high levels of benzene for many months had irregular menstrual periods and a decrease in the size of their ovaries.”

Next, occupational asthma is common in nail salon workers. It can be defined as circumstantial asthma triggered by exposure to inhaled irritants in the workplace, meaning that irritation should subside when the causes of asthma

auto garage workers. Based on this, a handful of cancer risk models display that 20 years of exposure to formaldehyde and benzene are a surefire way to inhibit the development of cancer. The Department of Health and Human Services states that benzene causes cancer in humans, specifically leukemia, and this study concurs that adding formaldehyde is associated with squamous cell carcinoma, nasopharyngeal cancer, Hodgkin's lymphoma, and leukemia.

While nail salons are extremely common and provide a pampering experience, there are necessary preventative measures that need to be taken in order to reduce the risks posed on nail technicians. Some safety precautions include enforcing proper PPE, improving ventilation, instating bans against the usage of certain products, and enriching the curriculum of nail specialty licensing to gain awareness. Other than prioritizing the usage of PPE, ventilation can be improved via opening windows, installing fans, investing in a portable air cleaner, fume extractor, and nail dust collector machines, which are designed specifically for nail salons. Even something as simple as introducing raw charcoal into the environment, being that it is porous in structure and can collect bacteria, harmful pollutants, and allergens from the air, is a step in the right direction. Also, bans and regulations can be implemented on a government level, just as NYS has, which undeniably limits the risk factor. Since 84% of nail technicians report not knowing the genotoxic effects and risks of their job, it is crucial to reconstruct the education learned during licensing and inform those who are already involved in the profession of the genotoxic effects. Together, these actions can reduce the risk of abnormalities and diseases discussed occurred to nail salon technicians.

are avoided. Consequently, a dual asthmatic reaction was observed in the bronchial provocation test, in which the patients simulated their work using their own products which include methyl acrylates, and reported chest tightness, coughing, and wheezing. Despite this specific study conduction occurring on a smaller scale, there are larger studies who studied exposure to methacrylates in dental technicians and found significant increases in adult onset asthma.

Lastly, cancer, which is inevitably caused by factors experienced out of moderation, can come in all sorts of colors and sizes. As mentioned earlier with respect to TVOC levels, the concentrations of organic compounds in nail salons were comparable to those measured in studies of oil refinery and

# THE LARGEST BACTERIA EVER DISCOVERED

BY ADIN Y. BLUMOFE

In 1683, when the Dutch natural philosopher, Antonie van Leeuwenhoek, made the first modern microscope, he looked into a world never before viewed and ushered in the field of microbiology. His microscope allowed humans to see bacteria for the first time, but a recent discovery means humanity never needed a device to catch a glimpse of prokaryotes, in the first place.

Capable of being observed by the naked eye, a single-celled organism, 5000 times more prominent than the average microbe was recently discovered. *Thiomargarita magnifica*, the small behemoth, which can be “picked up with a pair of tweezers,” is proving to be biologically fascinating to scientists.

Traditionally, single-cell organisms, like bacteria, constrained by geometry, remain microscopic. Cells move resources in and waste out through their outer membrane, the phospholipid bilayer. For a cell to enlarge it

needs to increase the surface area of the phospholipid bilayer to keep up with greater resource demand and to flush out increased amounts of waste products. However, there is a fundamental problem: surface area is two-dimensional, while volume is three-dimensional. The mathematical implication is that the cell’s surface area will never expand faster than the size it needs to govern. In essence, cells become less efficient the larger they get. This is why cells usually divide instead of continuously expanding, as evolution favors the fittest.

*T. magnifica* has bucked the trend of nature, resulting in a biological curiosity. Due to the bacteria’s enormous size, it unsurprisingly produces a tremendous amount of waste products that are stored in the central vacuole, a cell’s garbage bag, which occupies most of the organism’s volume. Normally, a bacteria’s ribosomes and DNA proliferate across the entirety of a bacteria, which are what keep the cell functioning. However, due to the

immense size of the vacuole, the organelles are squeezed against the phospholipid bilayer, a most unusual arrangement.

The bacteria’s particular size has raised multiple questions that require further study and analysis. For instance, the species is “significantly above [the upper theoretical] limit” expected to be possible; current scientific assumptions in deriving these ranges now need to be reevaluated. Additionally, exactly why this species developed in the manner that it did remains a mystery. Currently, scientists do not believe the risk of cross commutability with humans or animals is possible.

*Thiomargarita magnifica* is the largest microbe ever discovered, but we should assume



it won’t always be the case. It has managed to elude researchers thus far partially because of its obscure location. It is found underwater, at “the border of seawater and sediment among mangroves” in the Caribbean. Humanity has named around 30,000 species of bacteria out of the estimated trillion that are thought to exist on our planet; a q-tip and curiosity are the only thing keeping *Thiomargarita magnifica*’s honorific status intact.

## NECROBIOTICS: A NEW FIELD OF SCIENCE

BY YOSEF SCHER,  
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY  
EDITOR

Scientists have recently discovered something from one of your worst nightmares: reincarnated spiders transformed into mechanical robots. While some people are genuinely horrified by the thought of reincarnated organisms, the nascent field of science called “necrobotics” has provided scientists with high hopes for future applications.

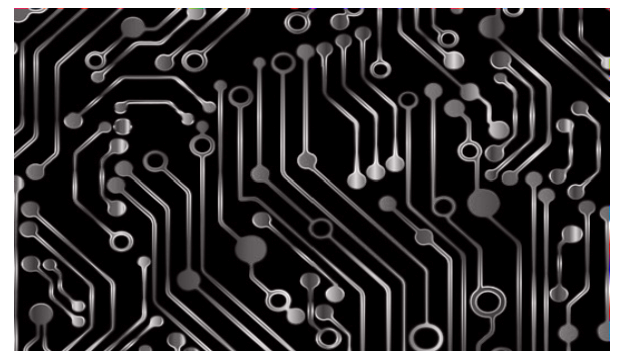
This innovation was born out of a simple observation from Rice University. As Faye Yap, a mechanical engineering graduate student, walked back from class one day, she noticed a dead spider on the floor. This was not the first spider she had ever seen in her life, but this was the first time she keenly observed the dead creature and saw that it curled up when it died. After pondering why this was, Yap turned to one of her professors, Daniel Preston, to help her solve this enigma.

Initially, Preston recommended that the spiders be put in a double boiler, “hoping that the wet heat would make the spiders expand

and push their legs outward.” When that didn’t work, Yap and Preston decided to take a simpler approach: supergluing a syringe to the spider’s cephalothorax, the scientific term for the fused head and thorax of the spider, and shooting air into that area. Yap had doubts about whether such a simple solution would work, so it was exhilarating when the necrobot moved its legs on the first attempt! After several successful attempts, Yap concluded that the spider moved its legs with the syringe technique because spiders are designed like hydraulic systems, which “generate, control, and transmit power through pressurized liquids [or gases].” While spiders can “naturally flex their limbs inward using their flexor muscles,” spiders need to utilize hydraulic pressure to push its eight legs outward. As such, when the spider is alive, it can “control how much their legs extend by forcing blood into them.” When the spider dies, it no longer has blood pressure, so its legs curl up. The air pumped into their cephalothorax acts as an artificial blood pressure that can extend their legs.

After explaining why this phenomenon occurred, Yap and Preston moved to the next stage in their experiment: seeing if the spider could act like mechanical robots and pick up objects. The scientists found that the spider had “a peak grip force of 0.35 millinewtons,” which is roughly a hundred times their body weight! While this was an accomplishment in itself, Yap and Preston wanted to further their investigation and see how precise the spider was in picking up objects. As a result, they tested if the spider could delicately handle a jumper wire—a small component of an electric breadboard—without dropping it. Like the other tests, the spider was successful on almost every attempt.

While the spiders’ tests were relatively simple and mundane, scientists predict that future research with necrobots will enhance our knowledge of robotics and help us in our day-to-day lives. For instance,



Yap and Preston believe these necrobots can be “[deployed] ... to capture smaller insects in nature”, such as mosquitos, that rampantly spread disease. Additionally, scientists believe these necrobots will be used as robots that will sort, move, and assemble small objects, such as those found in microelectronics. Although some scientists are skeptical about the functionality and future of necrobots, Preston and Yap are adamant that the futuristic advancements in necrobotics are not a question of if but rather a question of when.

## WHAT IS BRAIN FOOD?

BY MIRA POSTELNEK

“We are what we eat” is a saying we’ve all heard since elementary school, and honestly, it’s always seemed like a silly expression at best. However, as we mature, it’s become apparent that what we put into our bodies seriously affects us. Of course, in a society with an unhealthy and obsessive focus on weight loss and fad diets, one can easily get lost in the craziness of it all. From keto to intermittent fasting, we sometimes lose focus on why we care about what we eat in the first place. It’s common knowledge that consistent exercising, managing blood pressure, avoiding excessive alcohol consumption, and having a healthy balanced diet can promote energy and overall well-being. There is, however, an equally considerable correlation between one’s diet and mental health, cognition, and memory, which is often over-

looked. Numerous studies have shown that diligently adhering to a “Mediterranean diet”, which consists of a plant based diet, can help boost one’s cognitive health, increase energy, and reduce depressive symptoms. For example, a study by Europe PMC showed that a “Mediterranean diet” could significantly reduce inflammation in our bodies and boost cognition as well as memory. In comparison, high-calorie meals, rich in saturated fats, stimulate inflammatory effects, which lead to detrimental effects on brain health as well as cognitive impairments and damage to the blood-brain barrier. Furthermore, an observational study showed individuals with depression scored having significantly higher depressive symptoms when eating foods associated with inflammation and lower intakes of nutritional food. This correlation can partly be explained by the

mechanisms of transferring food to neurons. The brain requires an immense amount of energy, and the process of transferring energy from food to neurons fundamentally controls brain function. Therefore, converting energy in neurons can affect synaptic plasticity, which explains how metabolic disorders can potentially disturb brain function/cognition. A study conducted by The New York Academy of Science explored the evidence of cognition decline and dementia risk with high-fat diets. They found diets high in fruit, vegetables, and fish, mirrored the prior results, with heightened cognition and decreased risk of dementia. One benefit from plant polyphenols (found in fruit, vegetables, and nuts) is the antioxidant vitamins they provide, which assists in brain function. Another vital benefit is the omega-3 fatty acids which support neurotransmission and have anti-inflammatory effects, while a lack

of this essential hydrocarbon can promote inflammation and compromise cognitive function. Additionally, Omega-3 supports brain flow to the brain, resulting in higher memory and comprehension performance. Given the contrary effects of these two diet choices, the evidence shows that consumption of a “Mediterranean diet” can create the most successful outcomes for both mood and cognition. With this knowledge, hopefully, as the semester progresses, we can all make small choices to add more of these helpful nutrients into our diet to promote our success.



## A CASE STUDY INTO WOLFF-PARKINSON-WHITE DISEASE

BY JUDAH BERMAN

This past summer I had the opportunity and privilege to shadow an interventional cardiologist. During my month following the doctor, I saw many routine cases. Some cases include tachycardias (fast heart beat), nose bleeds, and thickening heart valves (which open and close to pump blood in and out of the heart). These conditions required anything from simple medication to complete replacement. One patient even had an arrhythmia that we fixed by depolarizing the heart for one beat (remember, the heart is an electric machine, so you can reboot it by stopping it for a split second). However, in my last week we witnessed an incredible case that was easily fixable, yet extremely rare. A young male walked into the clinic after a scare the previous night. During a vigorous and intense game of basketball, his heart rate spiked to high rates, something normal when engaged in such strenuous activity. However, after he had slowed down to stop playing, and even fully calmed down, his heart continued to beat at an abnormally high rate. He reported to us that his heart was still beating fast when he got home, where they called an ambulance which was able to administer a medication that helped bring down his heart rate. The medical

report said that his heart had been beating at nearly 180 beats per minute (bpm) for 45 minutes. This was quite the interesting case, and the doctor I shadowed was eager to show me this one. He took one look at the EKG (Electrocardiogram) chart which maps out a single heartbeat, grinned, and explained to me that by looking at the specific distances between points in the EKG, he could tell it was Wolff-Parkinson-White Disease (WPW).

The heart has three nerves, two on the left side and one on the right. These nerves respond to signaling levels in the blood and tell the heart to speed up or slow down. When one runs, the adrenaline level in the blood increases and this tells the heart to beat faster. Someone with WPW Disease is born with a fourth nerve. When the heart reaches a certain high point of beats-per-minute, the fourth nerve begins to act as a closed circuit. On a micro level, this means that the beat of the heart triggers the fourth nerve, which in turn tells the heart to beat again, and the cycle repeats. On a macro level, this means the heart is stuck in a very fast loop until the individual receives medication or some other intervention. This explains the young man’s extremely prolonged tachycardia. As I said earlier, there is an easy fix. Medicine today tends to stray



away from open heart surgery as long as it’s not absolutely necessary, and for good reason. Those types of surgeries, no matter how small, require intense preparation and carry many risks. In this case of WPW, surgery is not needed. Instead, interventional cardiologists use catheters placed through arteries. In this case, the cardiologists placed a catheter into the femoral artery, which is located in the leg. From there, the catheter makes its way up through the arteries to the heart. Attached to this catheter is a small device that emits a radio frequency. The catheter is positioned over the extra nerve, and then administers a quick moment of radio frequency at the pre-

cise moment when the heart beats and the nerve comes up and touches the cathode. The frequency ablates (kills) the nerve cells of this extra nerve, and cures the patient 90% of the time. Without the extra fourth nerve, the heart continues to beat as normal. I was unable to watch this procedure as it occurred several days after I finished shadowing the physician. However, it was extremely interesting to learn about this disease, and leaves me with a question. How many different abnormalities are truly out there in the medical field? And what can we do to treat them all?



## BUSINESS

## THE EFFORTS FOR STARBUCKS UNIONIZATION

BY ELIYAHU SOLOMON

When President Joe Biden remarked shortly after his election in 2020 that he intended to be, “the most pro-labor president you’ve ever seen,” the expectations were set sky high. Up until that point, labor unions had shrunk to represent only 10.8% of workers in the United States, a number that only continued to decline in 2021, Biden’s first year in office.

Yet despite the promise from the President, the real labor movement has not occurred in the White House nor has it occurred in Congress, where the Protecting the Right to Organize Act, or the PRO Act, has failed to pass the Senate and is unlikely to do so. Instead, the labor struggle is happening at Starbucks, the largest coffee chain in the United States and the second largest fast food chain overall, behind McDonald’s. The questions remain: How has Starbucks managed to revolutionize this new wave of unionization in the United States, and what does this general unionization trend mean for everyday workers?

In the 21st century, unions are relatively weak and make up very little of the current workforce. Back in the 1960s, unions made up nearly 30% of the workforce, a number which has slowly plummeted to its lowest point of 9.9% in 2019 then back up to 10.3% in 2020. This has coincided with a large shift of wealth towards the top 1%, and protections for workers during the pandemic to be miniscule at best. Due to a changing nature in work, many laborers feel overworked, underpaid, and in some cases abused by management and customers. One such group of workers are Starbucks workers, who have in recent months seen a surge of unionization efforts, including many which have been successful.

Starbucks, specifically its CEO Howard Schultz, has spoken out against unions as a company. There were a number of attempts to unionize back in the 1980s, continuing with nearly no success up until late 2021, when a Starbucks store in Buffalo joined Workers United New York, cre-

ating Starbucks Workers United in the process. Since December 2021, over 200 United States Starbucks locations have voted to unionize, with 76 more still yet to be decided.

It should come to no surprise that Starbucks workers are driving this unionization push. Starbucks has always tried to build its brand as a “progressive” one. One look at its website shows how Starbucks sees itself as environmentally conscious and committed to diversity. It ranks 100 on both the Human Rights Campaign’s Corporate Equality Index and the Disability Equality Index. Starbucks labels its baristas as “partners,” and provides health benefits for them if they work 20 hours or more. All this makes it quite intriguing that Starbucks would be involved in an excessive amount of union-busting and other illegal labor practices.

Yet Starbucks does not seem to live to their so-called “progressive capitalist” image that they have tried to cultivate. Friendly worker benefits packages as well as creating a more positive company culture was not adequate enough in preparing workers for dealing with the effects of the pandemic. As expected, the pandemic changed lots of things, including how we interact with one another within society. For centuries, coffee shops served as a place outside the home and office that people were able to sit down and meet. Unlike restaurants, where two or more people are focused on their food, which can get pricey at times, coffee shops allow a low cost, warm, welcoming, and slow-paced environment where two people can allow for the time to pass as they

enjoy the aromas, soothing music, and comfortable surroundings which a coffee house like a Starbucks can bring.

Although the pandemic forced the closures of many dining and social meet-up spaces, the demand for coffee did not wain. Mobile orders made remotely increased, and unlike ordering in-person, mobile orders allow the customer to make complex drinks without the stigma of telling it to an actual person, as well as hide the fact of who else ordered. One person can order a drink from a couple of blocks

away without realizing how long the wait is while ordering in person requires a person to get in line and make a decision based on how long the line is whether to stay and order or leave and take their business else-

where. Due to this, baristas are now put under immense pressure to keep the line moving and get the drinks (no matter how complicated) into the hands of sometimes irritable customers who have yet to get their morning (or afternoon, or evening) coffee. Starbucks employees, who are often college students or people working two or more jobs, were also tasked with being “mask police,” making sure customers were following local store guidelines, creating another point of tension between baristas and some customers unwilling to follow Starbucks rules. In other cases, homeless, mentally unwell, or people struggling with drug abuse would come into the store, and once again it would be up to the already busy, overworked, and underpaid employees to go far beyond their capacities and deal with different mental health crises.

This is a small part of the underlying motivations behind the recent Starbucks unionization efforts. For these employees, it is not enough that some basic metrics for diversity are met. Rather, they require either more help in the service aspect of the store, more protection from unruly customers, or even workers trained in mental health to help ease what has become an excessive demand of Starbucks baristas. While unions may have not been a part of Howard Schultz’s grand plan, the reality is that Starbucks has outgrown that initial part of its history, and unions now play a factor in determining how each individual store wants to manage itself. The pandemic has exposed that while many workers are deemed “essential,” they are not treated by upper management as such.

The Starbucks unionization effort is not just a one-off. In fact, many other industries are going through a unionization renaissance, as workers at Amazon, Google, and many other places seek to level out the playing field between management and employee. This attitude has been reflected by the public view as well. According to Gallup, American approval of unions has spiked up to 71%, up from a low of 48% in 2009 and its highest approval rating since the mid 1960s. In the 18-34 demographic, those just beginning or about to enter the workforce, unions see an approval rating of 77%. In the bigger picture, this unionization shift reflects the needs and demands of a new workforce, a generation which has seen a number of different catastrophes including the 2008 recession, the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as just a general culture of overwork needed to pay for basic necessities such as education, healthcare, and cost of living.

Waves of unionization amongst employees in any given company, as well as a general increase in public union support allows for a build up of political power from the bottom up. Starting small and increasing from there allows for unions to take control of the younger demographic, who in turn push support on the older demographic, as well as slowly replace the older demographic in legislative bodies. A pro-union attitude is one that gradually occurs after years of failure and success, and Starbucks workers is one of many examples we will see for a long time of a shift towards pro-unionization and a balance of power between management and employees.



## SEPTEMBER'S STOCK PICKS

BY ELI LEVI,  
BUSINESS EDITOR  
AND AMALYA TEITELBAUM BUSI-  
NESS EDITOR AND MANAGER

Each month's edition of the YU Observer will include a "Stock Highlight" on a few stocks that have been in the news lately, have fascinating stories, or provide an exciting 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 real cash. This month, for our September 2022 edition, we will be highlighting Pinterest and Etsy.

### Pinterest

Pinterest stock actually seems to be doing well compared to some of the lows it has faced and, in general when entering a possible recession or during a bear market, it is always smart to buy the dip. Therefore, now might not be the best time to add Pinterest to one's portfolio. When looking at the macro conditions and general trends during a bear market,

there tends to be significant consolidation. This means that larger players such as Amazon, Microsoft, and Meta are looking for possible acquisitions. Decreased stock prices make this option more attractive, despite the fact that companies may be trying to conserve cash. Pinterest is a prime example of a company whose stock price has historically suffered and has had trouble sustaining its bottom line. All of these sound like negatives and they are, but Pinterest still has a large user base that could potentially be valuable to several companies. As an individual company, it might not be profitable, but when put into a larger framework of a Meta or Microsoft, there is real value. Thus, Pinterest is a strong M&A target. I actually think Snapchat and Twitter fall into this category as well. However, Twitter is currently mixed up in the whole Musk fiasco and Snapchat is controlled entirely by Evan Spiegel, who has refused to sell time and time again, making Pinterest a more likely target for ac-

quisition. If Pinterest were to be acquired, the buyer would most likely pay around a 30% premium on the stock price. 30% returns sound pretty good to me.

### Etsy

While this is a website that many know of, few ever step back and think about its potential in the stocks and finance sector. It's often just looked at as a site for cute DIY projects and arts and crafts. When taking a look at its recent and perceived upcoming stock rates, one will find that there is another angle to consider. Etsy operates a global marketplace where people can make, sell, and buy unique, personalized goods online. The company also offers various services to support its sellers. The market has seen a massive uptick in Etsy stock prices starting back in SEPTEMBER 2020, when many users were rushing to sites like Etsy in attempts to open small businesses during Covid. In 2021, the market

saw stock Etsy prices as high as \$300. Currently, the stocks for Etsy are valued at \$107.50. While this is certainly a decrease from past years, the prices seem to be on the rise again. The Etsy stock price rose 1.01% on the last trading day (Thursday, 15th Sep 2022), rising from \$111.23 to \$112.35. It has now gained 3 days in a row. This may seem something to be taken with caution, as it has the potential to be short-term. But there have been many times when a stock in the lower part of a wide and strong rising trend in the short term, potentially poses as a very good buying opportunity. Statisticians have predicted that, given this current short-term trend, Etsy stock is expected to rise 44.44% over the proceeding 3 months and, with a 90% probability, hold a price between \$156.57 and \$194.88 at the end of this 3-month period. While investors are welcome to treat this specific stock with caution, it seems very probable that the market will see an increase in Etsy stock very soon.

## BUSINESS BASICS: COMPANY TAXES

BY AMALYA TEITELBAUM  
BUSINESS EDITOR AND MAN-  
AGER

Benjamin Franklin once stated, "In this world, nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes." To even the most experienced eye, filing taxes is an extremely daunting task both on the individual and the corporate level. However, when broken down into simple steps, systems, and concepts, this topic can become much more intelligible.

In the United States, there are three tax systems: regressive, proportional, and progressive. A regressive tax system levies the same percentage on products or goods purchased regardless of the buyer's income. A proportional tax applies the same tax rate to all individuals regardless of income. A progressive tax imposes a greater rate of taxation on higher income levels, operating on the theory that high-income earners can afford to pay more, and thus should do so to support societal needs. The US federal tax operates under a progressive system.

Just as taxes must be paid by

individual earners, companies and employers must pay them as well. For employers, however, there are several types of taxes to be paid at local, state, and federal levels.

Before an employer begins the process of filing corporate taxes, they must first retain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) also commonly referred to as a Federal Tax Identification Number. This is a nine-digit number that the IRS uses to identify and section business entities for record purposes. Furthermore, it allows owners to legally hire and pay employees, pay federal taxes on company profit, apply for business licenses, and open a business bank account. EINs are used by employers, corporations, partnerships, and sole proprietors, alongside a myriad of other business entities.

As an employer, one is responsible for reporting and depositing employment taxes, including federal income taxes, Social Security and Medicare taxes, and Federal Unemployment (FUTA) taxes - taxes that provide payments of unemployment compensation to workers who have lost their jobs. There

are three steps to filing these. First, an employer deposits the employment taxes. As stated by the IRS, employers must deposit federal income tax withheld (from an employee's paycheck), as well as social security and Medicare taxes. The IRS has two tax payment deposit schedules, monthly and bi-weekly, and an employer can determine which schedule applies to their business by checking the requirements for both on the IRS website. All federal tax deposits must be made electronically through the Electronic Federal Tax Payment System (EFTPS). The second step is reporting the employment taxes. While the employer has already given over the taxes they must now submit an official report on what they deposited. Included in what an employer must report are wages, tips, and other compensation paid to any employee in their company.



These totals are in addition to the original deposit incomes. Thirdly, once an employer has deposited and reported the taxes, they must maintain the taxes - specifically the tax records. Employers should keep all records associated with employment taxes, including amounts and dates of all wage and pension payments made to all employees, for at least a few years in case of an error in any part of the filing process.

Many employers may simply leave it up to their company's hired accountants to deal with the processes and concepts and concepts mentioned above. However, it is recommended that employers themselves still have an understanding of the tax system.

## SNAPCHAT'S LAYOFFS

BY RONI LEIFER

Snap, the maker of the social media platform Snapchat, has announced its plans to lay off about 20% of its employees. As of June 30, Snapchat employed over 6,400 people. The company as of this publishing, they have laid off 1,300 employees.

Snap's plan to lay off many of its employees comes as a result of the financial hardships they have been facing. For the most part, tech companies have experienced financial growth as a result of the pandemic. Due to this financial growth, Snap, along with many other tech companies, was obtrusively energetic in hiring new employees.

In March of 2020, right before the pandemic, Snap had around 3,427 full-time employees. They ended last quarter with 6,446. Now, the these pandemic hires have proved to be unsustainable. Moreover, current economic turmoil and fears of a recession have caused some companies to decrease payroll. For example, companies such as GoodRx Holding Inc. have had to make the executive decision to announce staff cuts as well.

Snap's decision to lay off employees was somewhat predict-

able. Since the beginning of this year, Snap's stock prices has significantly decreased. So far, they have lost approximately 80 percent of their value from a year ago. In May, Snap announced that they would try to find ways to draw back on spending. They also stated that they would need to decelerate the hiring of new employees. They proceeded to second quarter and refused to predict third quarter results.

Aside from the economic turmoil, Snap has been undergoing, there are other factors that have contributed to their cuts. Chief Executive Evan Spiegel came out with a statement clarifying the company's goal of reconstructing. He stated, "We are restructuring our business to increase focus on our three strategic priorities: community growth, revenue growth, and augmented reality..." "Projects that don't directly contribute to these areas will be discontinued or receive substantially reduced investment." Snap disproportionately laid off some departments more than others, as these departments aligned less with their new vision for the company.

For example, Snap Games, Snapchat's gaming business, will be suspended. Snap Games works differently than other partnerships of the company. Other game

publishers make promotional filters from time to time and have exclusive sales on Snapchat. Snap Games is more consistent and has a goal of allowing developers to build mini apps and games within the platform. In fact, over 300 million users currently play Snap Games, which is over 90% of all Snapchat users. Although there is such a high engagement rate, as compared to other social media platforms, financing it has been difficult.

Another department that will be deeply affected by the staff cuts will be Zenly. This is a French app that was bought by Snapchat in 2017. It focuses on the social mapping of others, allowing users to see where their friends are in real-time.

According to Bloomberg, Snap's hardware division has experienced staff cuts as well. The hardware division is responsible for Snapchat's Spectacles – AR sunglasses that can record video. Although the Spectacles attracted positive publicity to the company in March, they are not a major source of revenue. This is why the Spectacles have not been of prime concern to the company since its IPO. Additionally, the hardware division is also responsible for the Pixy camera drone. After only a few months of being on the market however, it was canceled.

Snap also plans on reconstructing its ad sales organization. The chief business officer of the department, Jeremi Gorman, has left to work for Netflix instead. Despite Gorman's departure, Snapchat has announced that it will be focusing on improving sales through its reconstruction of the ad sales division. There will be three new president roles that will supervise different regions throughout the world.

Employees were not satisfied with the way Snap chose to execute its layoffs. The majority of people who were laid off had brief meetings with their direct managers. These meetings appeared on employees' calendars without explanation. The managers allegedly "read a script" telling them about their termination and where to access more information about their benefits and severance. Employees were left confused with little information.

Some employees even had their access cut to their work tools before they even entered the meetings where they got laid off. Other employees had their access to work tools taken away during the meetings themselves. One worker described the process, stating, "Before we were even finished being told what was happening, teams were kicked off the calls, computers completely wiped.. some people couldn't even login to get laid off."

## THE BENEFITS OF NEGATIVE WORKING CAPITAL

BY ELI LEVI,  
BUSINESS EDITOR

Working capital is generally defined as current assets minus current liabilities. Following this equation, most companies should have positive working capital because they need enough current assets (cash & cash equivalents) to pay off their current liabilities. Stated simply, the company needs enough money to keep operating, i.e. to cover day-to-day costs, which is why working capital is occasionally dubbed operating working capital. Based on the above-stated definition a company should dread ever having negative working capital as that shows that they do not have enough money to cover their current liabilities.

Nevertheless, in some business models, especially those that are in the early high-growth stage, negative working capital can be a huge boon.

There is a liability called deferred revenue that drives this phenomenon. Deferred revenue is different from revenue because it has not been recognized as revenue yet. The way accounting works is that revenue is recognized when the service that the entity is paying for is performed. From an accounting standpoint, the cash received beforehand is recognized as revenue. Until the service is performed though that cash is recognized as a liability called deferred revenue.

Now that we understand what deferred revenue is we can jump into why negative working capital can be beneficial. A famous example of this is Amazon. Amazon has negative working capital because many of its services,



including Prime, are paid for at the beginning of the year, yet Amazon performs the service throughout the whole year. This causes Amazon to have a very large deferred revenue balance because the money Amazon received at the beginning of the year for their prime service is going to be recognized as revenue throughout the year, not on the day they received the money.

For a growing company like Ama-

zon negative working capital can serve to fuel its business. When Amazon brings in all of its revenue at the beginning of the year it has the ability to reinvest all of that capital immediately into new projects. The earlier a company can reinvest the money it has the faster the business can grow. This is a major benefit to any company looking to grow quickly.

# SUBSTACK AND INCENTIVE ALIGNMENT

BY ELI LEVI,  
BUSINESS EDITOR

Substack is an online publishing platform using innovative methods to optimize the creator and customer experiences, while nonetheless remaining monetizable. Typically, a substack writer releases content to a paying, subscribed audience, and need not worry about the backend work such as payments, online presence, comments, etc. In exchange for facilitating the exchange and handling the logistics, Substack takes 20% of the subscription revenue. Although this is a sacrifice that the platform's writers willingly undertake, this unique model, wherein writers connect directly to their audiences and monetize their user base, causes Substack to stand out from more traditional forms of popular media in a few key aspects.

Substack adopts a very hands-off, policy when it comes to regulating what content writers can or cannot produce, thereby enabling user demand to dictate the content rather than a set of company ideals. This is advantageous because it facilitates freedom of speech which many believe to be the greatest weapon against misinformation. To use an extreme (but demonstrative) example, censoring Nazi rhetoric in a Facebook-esque fashion is not

something that Substack ascribes. Instead, it allows for the competition of ideas, believing that in the long run, the truth will prevail. In assuming this approach to media, Substack is very careful to make sure the way they are monetizing and moderating its platform is aligned with its values and culture of unobstructed contact between creator and consumer.

One of the fundamental principles of any startup is taking market feedback and using that, and only that, to improve the product. This is something that Substack's business approach embodies, by only adding features to their service in accordance with demand. In addition to embodying this idea by minimally regulating the type of content published, the Substack platform is designed in a way that it is simple for writers to join and leave the platform, should they choose to. This forces Substack to constantly be improving the experience for writers, to ensure they continue to stay and use their platform.

Substack's commission-based monetization is a form of incentive alignment, meaning that Substack is structured in such a way that the company profits more when the writers on Substack make more money from subscriptions. To give a counterexample, Facebook monetizes content by vying to hold the user's attention for the longest period

of time, even if the content being viewed is not productive or not in the user's best interests. By taking 20% of what writers earn, Substack's model supports their writers in producing meaningful content that is of interest to those viewing it.

Substack also differentiates itself by not having an algorithm (as detailed in *The Social Dilemma*) that recommends which writers to subscribe to. Instead, Substack shows readers who the writers that they already read follow. Thus, Substack is designed in a way that everyone's incentives are aligned: Substack, the writers, and the users. The Substack model also lends itself to less polarization because it is not characterized by people angrily tweeting back and forth at each other. On Substack, someone has to take the time to flesh out their ideas and then thoughtfully respond. Slowing down the process and conducting a long-form dialogue are conducive to a more insightful, less brash, and overall enhanced experience that yields little polarization in comparison to today's standards. Chris Best, the CEO of Substack, also makes the point that someone that hates you might follow you on Twitter, but no one that hates you is going to pay to read your material on Substack. Substack creates a tailored service where users can

pick exactly what they want to read and what content they want to pay for.

Substack has tapped the force of incentive alignment to drive its business forward. Incentives are one of the most powerful economic forces out there. Here is how Josh Brown sums up how powerful incentives are.

*"Show me the incentives and I will show you the outcome."*

That's a Charlie Munger quote about how incentives drive nearly everything. I have come to accept this philosophy as one of the simplest, strongest heuristics through which to view nearly everything pertaining to human affairs. Nothing I've seen in my industry has ever contradicted it.

By aligning its incentives with its user's incentives, Substack taps into this powerful force and drives the company to always make the experience better for their writers. By starting with its premise and goals and then setting the company's structure up in a way that aligns with its goals Substack has positioned itself for success.

# BODIES BODIES BODIES MOVIE REVIEW

## ARTS & CULTURE

BY ANDREW WARREN,  
STAFF WRITER

*Bodies Bodies Bodies*, a new horror whodunit directed by Halina Reijn, tells the story of six Gen Z-ers and one Gen X-er who plan a lavish mansion party during a hurricane. During a party game, one of the Gen Z-ers is killed, causing each survivor, in typical whodunit fashion, to speculate as to who among them is the murderer.

Harvard Business review writes that we consume horror to stimulate ourselves. They explain that "exposure to terrifying acts, or even the anticipation of those acts, can stimulate us — both mentally and physically." This explains why the first act is so difficult for horror movies.

Most horror movies don't start killing main characters until after the initial setup, which generally occurs a third of the way through the movie. People don't watch *Friday the 13th* to see counselors revitalize a struggling camp, they watch it to see Jason slaughter those counselors— But there's not much slaughter in those first thirty minutes.

At the same time, if the movie rushes through the first act, the audience does not get the chance to develop any emotional attachment to the characters and their subsequent deaths become meaningless. Thus, there are two paths a horror movie can choose to take. It can spend the first act building up suspense and atmosphere. This is what Jordan Peele movies tend to do. Or it can make its characters fun and engaging, so the lack of tension is compensated with humor and playfulness, which is

what *Scream* does really well.

*Bodies Bodies Bodies's* first act chooses the second route with mixed results. There's minor friction between some of these friends, but not enough to make the audience feel anxious. You're just watching rich, unlikeable, young adults party in a mansion. The film, at this point, lacks humor and tension, leaving the first third of the movie genre-less. These scenes are vital to understanding the group's dynamics: the characters' relationships comically fall apart toward the end. However, little is done to make them enjoyable. The party scenes are shot in such a way that one feels less like a participant and more like an observer in the corner.

The movie's focus and atmosphere immediately shift once the first murder occurs. The

satire starts to kick in and the jokes start to land. A lot of the humor revolves around seeing Gen Z'ers—who frequently get "outraged" or "traumatized" online—use that same language in a situation that justifiably demands trauma and outrage.

The film's larger message has to do with social media and the ways we communicate. So many of our conversations are through texts or DMs. This allows us to avoid any conflict with the people around us, because we can always send out messages with empty niceties as opposed to hashing out any animosity. Our relationships get built on a

SEE **BODIES BODIES BODIES**  
PAGE 19

## BODIES BODIES BODIES

FROM PAGE 18

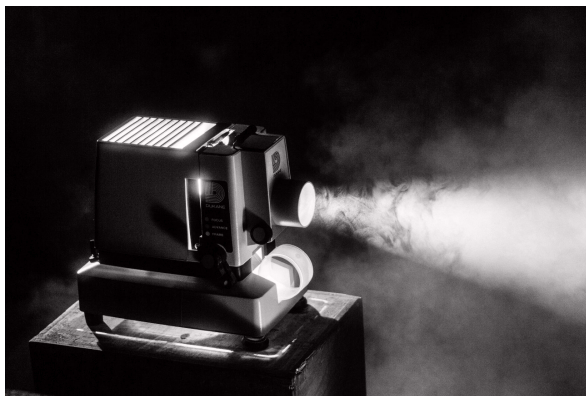
foundation of unresolved grudges. The appearance of a murder pushes this central theme to the forefront. When push comes to shove, these so-called friends really don't like each other. Friends accuse friends. Girlfriends turn on girlfriends. Hidden grudges get revealed and passive aggressive behavior becomes wholly aggressive.

The central mystery is pretty engaging and pays off wonderfully. It's a movie that will probably reward a rewatch as certain behaviors are viewed in new lights as all motivations

are revealed. The killer reveal (not spoiling anything) was done perfectly and tied in very well with the film's main points.

The acting is fine, but not remarkable, and I would chalk that up to the difficult tone.

It's not a broad comedy but it's also not a straightforward horror, so the actors need to be funny but in an understated manner. Maria Bakalova and Myha'la Herrold play their roles too seriously for my liking. On



the other hand, Rachel Sennott was truly a standout. She plays Alice, an amateur podcaster who tries to be above the petty drama. Every line she delivers is

hysterical. She clearly understands what the writer was going for and is the source of a majority of the laughs.

The cinematography and filming techniques didn't impress me. The scenes are mostly shot handheld, wobbly, and through up-close camera angles. I nor-

mally prefer when the director tries to impress me, like with well choreographed tracking shots or snappy editing. And while I understand that this probably didn't upset most viewers, cinematography is something I consider in my verdict.

*Bodies Bodies Bodies* is a fun, non-regrettable watch. The first act drags and isn't shot in a particularly creative way. But the satire hits its targets, the story is original, and the last 50 minutes really fly by. I would recommend it to fans of *Scream* and *Mean Girls* because of the similar plotline and satirization.

6/10

## CHASSIDUS SEASON

BY JONAH JAMES,  
STAFF WRITER

During *Elul*, many students on campus begin making new resolutions for *Rosh Hashanah*. We seek to deepen our commitment to Torah and our fellow man, and one may notice an array of customs cropping up, like daily *shofar* blowing, *selichos* for *Sephardim*, and reciting extra psalms.

Of these customs, perhaps the addition of the psalm *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* in the daily prayers passes most hurriedly. The *Midrash* describes *Ori* [my light], as a reference to *Rosh Hashanah*, and both kabbalistic and chassidic tradition emphasize reciting this psalm during *Elul*.

However, the fifth Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom Dov Ber Schneersohn, opens a new portal into its profundity. The Rebbe Rashab, as he is known, extracts two verses from the psalm *L'Dovid Hashem Ori* in his 1910 treatise entitled *Achas Shealti*.

He identifies a seeming contradiction with one of the psalm's verses, which states: "If war would beset me, still would I have trust." If one's trust in Hashem is secure, why would he ask Hashem to avoid war, instead of accepting the situation? From this point on, the Rebbe Rashab takes us on a journey that is both mystically enriching and arduously demanding, nurturing our consciousness while expecting tangible application.

He explains that the Divine energy en clothed in creation adapts to the created being, differing from the energy as it exists in its Source. Higher spiritual entities – like angels, for example – understand their *creatio ex nihilo* from a mere ray of Divinity, granting them intense spiritual excitement. This ray allows angels to see and feel their continuous creation and absorption in their Source, like sunlight as it still exists within the globe of the sun.

The Rebbe then outlines the general structure of chassidus Chabad. For our world to exist, Hashem allows a ray of His light, reduced in both quantity and quality, to be en clothed in creation. This light must break through spiritual curtains separating our world from the next, and when it finally reaches creation it is like darkness, or black fire. Similarly, a candle's wick burns with a fire that simultaneously destroys the candle while shining white light. In our lives, both a white and black fire illuminate our soul, with white fire being a love for Hashem gifted to us from above, and black fire being a love that we must cultivate ourselves. To develop love for Hashem, says the Rebbe Rashab, one should contemplate during *Pesukei d'Zimra* (Songs of Praise) on how Hashem permeates everything and that all is nullified to His light, from the rocks Hashem enlivens to the flowers Hashem grows.

To engrave this message con-

cretely, the Rebbe teaches that physicality is secondary to spirituality like the body is secondary to the soul, so the body moves via the soul dragging it. When a person reflects deeply upon this, he will not desire pleasure from material pursuits in and of themselves, but rather will be wholly dedicated to revealing Hashem so He is seen and felt. This recognition allows one to abstain from permitted pleasures and engage only in the absolutely necessary. Even in necessary matters one's sole focus will be the Godliness within them.

Next, the Rebbe synthesizes the concepts of Hashem's transcendence and immanence. He learns from the repetitive description of Hashem as the "Life of life" that Hashem's exaltedness above the world (the *Life* of life) and Hashem as the world relates to Him (the *Life* of our *life*) exist simultaneously. Our service requires these two perspectives fused with each other, as both are true.

We achieve a love of Hashem, as He fills the world, through contemplation; however, loving Hashem as He exists beyond any relationship with the universe is generally only accessed through faith for brief periods of time. The Rebbe stipulates that meditation upon God as the root and source of worlds is not for the sake of the Divine soul, but rather for refining the animalistic soul—the part of our psyche that looks out only for its own egotistical survival.

This, says the Rebbe, is the entire purpose of our soul's descent into a body, so that the soul should be like black fire that brightens the darkness of the world. To affect our thought, speech, and action, Chassidus explains to the ego that our true desire is nullification to Hashem, so even the animal soul will seek to reveal Hashem.

With this elucidation, we can answer our initial question about averting war. War, says the Rebbe, refers to the war of our divine and animal souls. In this melee, "still would I have trust" in victory, through contemplating Godliness. Nevertheless, there are two ways of refinement, one through the war of prayer, and one through tranquility in Torah. If there is but "one thing I ask," says King David in the next verse, it is to "sit in the house of Hashem" so that the letters of Torah illuminate our lives, allowing us to refine the world through peace.

Nowadays, says the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe, the world's refinement has been completed, and as we enter *Rosh Hashanah*, and all that remains is to open our eyes to the reality of Moshiach, "when the moon becomes like the sun and she no longer needs to receive His light." May we see this speedily in our days.

# A THEATER KID'S ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BROADWAY DONE RIGHT

BY LEORA KRONENBERG

Confession: As of this writing, one week and five days have passed since the Fall 2022 semester began. In that time I have been to three Broadway shows. In the Spring 2022 semester, I attended ten Broadway shows.

I'm well aware that I have a problem.

Finding cheap Broadway tickets that are worth your money and time is not easy. Thankfully, I have some friends in Stern College who were more than willing to give me their best Broadway advice. After seeing more shows than I can count and spending no more than \$50 on each seat, I believe I am now qualified to share my knowledge.

Here is my beginner's guide to affordable Broadway, complete with an overview of avenues to finding cheap tickets and my recommendations for Broadway shows you can't miss.

How to get Tickets Under \$50:

## a) Win a Lottery

There are two primary websites for entering Broadway lotteries.

**BroadwayDirect** allows you to enter lotteries for multiple shows the day before the performance.

**LuckySeats** is essentially identical, but they allow you to enter for shows a week in advance. If you win, you get the best seats available at the discounted price stated on the website. Some shows use an app called **TodayTix** as an avenue for their lottery (more information below). If you are dying to see a show and it does not appear on one of these two websites, check the website of the show, as sometimes the show runs a lottery through their own app or website.

## b) Rush

Rushing a show means rushing (get it?) to the box office right when it opens and seeing if they don't mind you taking some empty seats off their hands. Some shows have online rush through their website or through the **TodayTix** app (more below), in which you wait on a virtual line instead of a real one. Some shows even have student rush, in which you get cheap tickets for even cheaper if you present your Student ID. Only some shows offer the rush option, so check the show's website before heading to the box office.

## c) TodayTix

TodayTix is a ticket vendor that notifies you if there are lotteries/rush available, or when there is a great deal on a show. You can buy tickets on an advertised deal up to weeks in advance. If you don't win their lotteries, they'll usually offer you some sort of discount to buy the best tickets available for a slightly higher price than you would pay had you won the lottery tickets.

## d) Standing Room

If you are really desperate to see a show before it closes or before the cast switches out, standing room is the way to go. If a show is completely sold out, the box offices will begin to sell standing room tickets for around \$40. When you ask for tickets, the box office will tell you if they are offering standing room tickets and when you should come back to purchase them.

## Bonus - TKTS Booth

Head to Times Square and look under the famous red carpeted steps. The tickets sold at the TKTS Booth there are usually at least \$50, but they sell last minute tickets to some of the most popular shows.

Now, here are 5 of my favorite recent Broadway show experiences:

## 5. Into the Woods

Type of Ticket: Standing Room

Price: \$39.00

Seats: N/A

Review: I stood for 3.5 hours to see the iconic Sara Bareilles and Phillipa Soo live. My back hurt for days afterwards, but it was worth not being able to sit up straight. I was initially skeptical because I didn't like the movie, but I now understand why people insisted that this show was good. This story was meant to be performed live. It didn't take itself too seriously and was so theatrical and whimsical. Also, it's worth mentioning that Milky White is the unsung hero of this show.

Only on Broadway Moment: I waited by the stage door afterwards, and I got to meet the actor who puppeteered Milky White. It was my first time meeting a Broadway actor, and I now have an amazing video of me embarrassing myself by nervously stammering that he was the best in the show.

## 4. Wicked

Type of Ticket: Lottery, BroadwayDirect

Price: \$49.00

Seats: Orchestra Row C, all the way on the left

Review: I mean, how is one supposed to react to Defying Gravity being sung about three meters away from them? Our seats were insanely close which made me feel surrounded by the story. Strong voices are required to act in this show, so every actor was remarkably talented. Our Glinda was especially funny, and had us laughing the whole time. Elphaba was outstanding and her youthful performance really reminded us that Elphaba was just a freshman in university when this all happened. It was an overall magical experience in Oz.

Only on Broadway Moment: Nothing in particular except the usual rush of emotions that seeing Defying Gravity live evokes.

## 3. Beetlejuice

Type of Ticket: Lottery, BroadwayDirect

Price: \$50.00

Seats: Orchestra Row S, exactly in the middle

Review: This show directly appealed to my cynical side. It was wildly different from any Broadway show I had been to previously. Dark humor paired with painfully bright strobe lights made it just awesome.. I cannot think of a single actor in that show who was not insanely talented or funny in their own right. The storyline is simple yet engaging. By the end you feel so much love for the heroes but desperately want to be invited to an event hosted by the villain. Our seats were so centered that it felt like all the actors were talking directly to us. It truly was a wildly fun ride.

Only on Broadway Moment: Ever watch the Try Guys on YouTube? The night we went, I opened my Playbill only to find out that Keith was making his Broadway debut as an extra. I spotted Ned, Zach, and the rest of the Try Guys team in the audience, there to support him. I also spotted a bunch of cameras pointed at the audience, so we'll see if some Stern girls make it in a Try Guys video. Keith got his own bow complete with confetti, despite being onstage for about 5 seconds. But that doesn't matter; he's great anyways.

## 2. Funny Girl

Type of Ticket: Lottery, LuckySeats

Price: \$47.50

Seats: Orchestra Row O, on the left near the aisle

Review: I went in with zero expectations, thinking I might not like it, but I absolutely loved it. Our Fanny Brice (Julie Benko) was hysterical and insanely talented. There were multiple standing ovations for each song she sang. It was nice to see that she wasn't trying to replace Barbara Streisand, rather adding her own spin on the character. Nick (Jeremiah James) was also very talented (and very slick), and Mrs. Brice and the ladies embodied the Jewish grandmothers we all know and love. An unexpected hit for me. Only on Broadway Moment: I stage-doored again, and had a full conversation with the actor who played Nick and the actress who played Fanny. They were incredibly sweet! Fanny Brice also signed our Playbills, and we got pictures with both of them.

## 1.SIX

Type of Ticket: Lottery, BroadwayDirect

Price: \$35.00

Seats: Orchestra Row B, all the way on the left

Review: Again, I went in with no expectations, and I was blown away. This was less like a show and more like a concert, but in the best way possible. Concert tickets are always better closer to the front, so the fact that we were so close made us able to engage with the cast when they broke the fourth wall. It was a blast. We saw it with the original Broadway queens minus one, and what we loved best is that the cast and the score made sure each queen had their own distinct energy. Each one's music and dance style were completely their own, which made for an excellent show and a no-skips soundtrack to enjoy afterwards. 10/10, I would highly recommend it.

Only on Broadway Moment: Unbeknownst to us at the time, the queen who was absent that week was replaced by someone who many people were scrambling to see live - Keri Rene Fuller. We were absolutely blown away by her performance.

In summary, don't forget to enter lotteries, stagedoor safely, and rush responsibly. Have fun!

# THINGS TO DO IN NYC: WASHINGTON HEIGHTS EDITION

BY YISROEL ROSNER

Washington Heights has a deep history of population change and demographic fluctuation. However, two things that have remained constant are Yeshiva University's flagship campus and vibrant culture surrounding it. The primarily non-Jewish community surrounding us represents the bridge from our world to the greater outside. Whatever values we espouse from the Yeshiva University environment are ultimately meant to be applied outside our little bubble. Subsequently, it is important to learn about and explore other cultures so that we may relate to them. There is nowhere better to start than our university's hometown, Washington Heights. Congressman Adriano Espaillat remarked about the Heights at the recent Nosotros event, "I'd venture to say it's the only neighborhood that still has a pulse." Now, while Washington Heights certainly has no shortage of energy, it also has more subtle avenues of attraction. Fort Tryon Park represents one of the more

overlooked aspects of the 'pulsating' neighborhood of Washington Heights.

Any true vibrant neighborhood cannot merely offer 24/7 stimulation and radiate cultural pride, but must also provide an 'eye of the storm,' a respite that allows reflection in order for the vibrancy to be focused. Fort Tryon and Fort Washington Parks serve this role in Washington Heights. Generally, when people are asked to think of an "urban retreat" in Manhattan, they are essentially being told to conjure up an image of Central Park. While it is true that the great green rectangle is synonymous with nature in the Big Apple, in my humble opinion Fort Tryon park captures the duality of NYC even better: the beautiful cohesion of the minutiae of busy day-to-day life amalgamated with rejuvenation. Due to the Manhattan Schist, Fort Tryon Park, along with its Fort Washington twin, exceed the elevation of the relatively lower, but still high in altitude, central Washington Heights, making the area the true natural summit of Manhattan. If one stops to contemplate the height

even for a moment, they can't escape the visceral symbolism of a personal dominion over 'the big picture,' literally and figuratively towering over the city. Consequently, Fort Tryon is an ideal place for introspection.

As soon as you enter the park you are bombarded by many different varieties of deciduous trees, including the rare and conserved semi-deciduous American Elm. You feel as if you are more so entering a forest than an urban park. You notice that the trees stay concentrated on the slope as you walk up, and that when you finally reach the open area summit, you get a panorama not of the city-scape, but of trees. The knowledge that you're above everything enters your mind, but you can't see what you've left behind. You can only see what is ahead.

On the trail is The Met Cloisters, a Metropolitan Museum building, specializing in European Medieval Art, that loudly screams 'We are not in NYC anymore.' The architecture of the structure is full of dramatic, gothic, angular

columns, Greek Pillars, and early Renaissance aesthetic streaks. Seemingly, Fort Tryon Park is a meta-anachronism, designed to take you out of your current place, present time. As you walk along the trails to the west side of the park, you are rewarded with the only real view within the park's confines: the Hudson River, glimmering front, center, and below, highlighting the George Washington Bridge and the slightly elevated shore of the continental United States. It's an idealistic image perfect for whom Kermit might say, "The lovers, the dreamers, and me". The park also offers an assortment of majestic arches, sports facilities, and various trails, but ultimately Fort Tryon's attraction is its fully immersive offering to retreat to nature. There is no appeal to an admittedly beautiful view of Midtown Manhattan skyline like Central Park, and no resort to gigantic zoos and botanical gardens like Bronx Park. Fort Tryon Park is by design a sleepy little, ancient hollow in the city that never sleeps.

## COVID 22: THE FASHION PANDEMIC

BY NOAM BEN SIMON

Now that the remnants of COVID-19's quarantines have faded into trauma-induced repression, it is time we are all honest: very few of us did those daily workouts we promised we would do while in lockdown. However, we did *prepare* for those workouts, buying clothing and gear to make the perfect at-home gym.

At the same time, in this age of resolutions, businesses realized that the type of clothing their employees wore was irrelevant as long as they were productive, and in that realization came the explosive popularity of athleisure. In the days since, popularity has remained, and the companies at the head of this craze have remained giants on the shoulders of our secret bedroom workouts.

Historically, clothing has always been affected by global events. The normalization of pants for women came from the factory work of World War II, the glitz

and glamor of the Roaring '20s ensued after the tumultuous World War I and Spanish Flu. So too, the rise of athleisure came with the cabin-fever of COVID quarantines. The



reasons are obvious: comfort, style, and practicality. No longer did people need to "dress to impress" - we were all at home, our lives dominated by making the best of our situation.

The rise of athleisure before the pandemic was only one part of the story. The pandemic itself just served as its "tipping point"

(for any Malcolm Gladwell fans out there). Fitness-wear was in the zeitgeist before COVID; the athleisure industry was already seeing consistent, natural growth in the time leading up to the pandemic.

The pandemic and its effects caused the athleisure market to skyrocket, seeing massive growth with every quarter.

Even with this in mind, the rise of athleisure is more of a paradox than a mark of the changing times. Although e-commerce saw a massive increase in revenue over the pandemic - 30% between 2019 and

2020 - all forms of industry consumption decreased. Yet, this era of fashion made big waves, and the companies at its forefront continue seeing explosive sales. Lululemon, for example, saw consistent double-digit revenue increases, even seeing a *forty-eight percent* increase in revenue, from \$4.402B to \$6.25B, between 2021 and 2022.

Looking forward, athleisure is promising. Experts are predicting "a compound annual growth rate of 8.9% from 2022 to 2030". Although this stock advice helps those in the market, I quote my Rabbi here when I say, *L'mai Nafka-Minna (what is the difference)?* What should the average consumer expect to see in the near future regarding athleisure?

Some likely plans for Lululemon: expanding its market to men's wear, growing its stores, and creating partnerships with Nike and Under Armour. Consumers will begin seeing a continued normalization of athleisure and athletic wear at home, gym, and even in the workplace. Regardless of how involved any one person is in the market, the market's upcoming trends will reveal the goldmine of retail opportunities leftover from the last three years of self-improvement.

