

YITZHAK BRONSTEIN
Lessons for YU on the anniversary of Rabin's Assassination
OPINIONS 5

Yael Roberts
Comic confessions of female Jewish artists at YU Museum
ARTS 11

ISRAEL HELLER
YU, in Love and Squalor
THE SCENE 15

The COMMENTATOR

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Will You Be Ready?

Why We Cannot Afford to Overlook Chanan Reitblat's Story

BY NOAH JACOBSON

They called him a terrorist. They ripped the Israeli flag from his wall. And then they urinated on it. I sat impatiently at my computer for about half an hour, trying to think of a clever way to lead off

an article detailing my thoughts and reactions to the incident at the University of St. Andrews involving Yeshiva student Chanan Reitblat. Here was my initial strategy, a technique I've used in the past. Illustrate an analogous example which might bring the concept home to the reader in a more meaningful and

accessible way. Something along the lines of: "You're sitting in your Morgenstern dormitory room and suddenly, you hear the door swing open with a crash and a bunch of drunken thugs burst in and start causing problems." Then something about them desecrating your *tefillin*.

See *Reitblat*, page 6



The University of St Andrews expelled Paul Donnachie for desecrating Chanan Reitblat's (YC '12) Israeli flag.

The True Virtue of Steve Jobs

BY DANIEL WINCHESTER

The recent passing of Steve Jobs, co-founder and CEO of Apple, brought forth a wave of sadness and sympathy from competitors and consumers alike. Facebook users posted their respects en masse via "status update", and iProduct owners held nightlong vigils at the Mecca of modern technology, the Apple store. Newspapers eulogized Mr. Jobs from cover to cover, his death marking not only the end of a man, but of a business mogul, a tech genius, an artist, and an influential world figure.



As intriguing as the iPhone 4S are the economic implications of Jobs's career.

His achievements are so easy to catalog because they are so identifiable. The glossy veneer and savvy software of his products only serve to amplify their mesmerizing ubiquity. And the popular reaction to Jobs' death can probably be attributed to the remarkable proliferation of this "stuff," these incredible shiny

objects that exist in space. But Steve Jobs deserves as much praise for that which cannot be seen as for that which can. His economic accomplishments can be found in places hidden to the naked eye, and it is in these areas that his virtues can be uncovered. These economic

crawl spaces reveal the true accomplishment not only of Steve Jobs, but of anyone who has ever produced anything of value.

The Story of Consumer Surplus and Virtue at the Margins
Many critics of capitalism claim

that money fetishism and accumulation are defining features of capitalist systems. By association, successful industrialists or capitalists propagate this fetishism by creating the illusion that "money" equals "value".

See *Jobs*, page 6

NYPD Increases Heights Presence

BY ZACH DAITCH

For those of you who do not know the city too well, or even for those who do, you may have heard some rough things about Washington Heights. As of August 2011, there has been a noticeable increase in police presence in the Heights, with cops found all over Wilf Campus.

With this rise in police presence, students wonder what sparked this increase and if the cops are here to stay.

One of these new men in blue, who needs to remain nameless because of the sensitivity of his unit, explained to *The Commentator* that he is a member of a specialized team called "Impact Cops." These policemen are part of an initiative started by Mayor Bloomberg in 2003.

When Mayor Bloomberg began his terms as New York City's mayor, he had large shoes to fill. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani was known as the mayor who cleaned up New York City from much of its crime, but he left a city that was still far where it could be in terms of public safety. The threat of international terror aside, crime rates were not low enough to disregard the problem.

Among other plans to decrease the city's crime rate, Mayor Bloomberg wanted to attack specific points of weakness. Operation Impact was a program launched in January 2003 by Mayor Bloomberg in conjunction with New York Police Department (NYPD) Commissioner Kelly. This initiative was designed as an open attack on zones in the city that were considered especially high in crime relative to their surrounding zones.

See *NYPD*, page 4

New (Old) Rebbeim and the Missing Rosh Yeshiva

BY SHMUEL LAMM



Rabbi Ezra Schwartz, Rabbi Daniel Feldman, and Rabbi Marc Penner are three names that should sound familiar. Combined, the three *rebbeim* have over thirty years of

experience at Yeshiva University. This year, however, they've assumed new positions. As YU expands and the student body changes, it only gets more difficult to meet our faculty. This position switch by three longstanding YU *rebbeim* serves as an opportunity for us to reacquaint ourselves with them. In the process, we will see their teaching styles, views of our institution, and will investigate the curious application (or non-application) of the title "Rosh Yeshiva."

Rabbi Schwartz, the YU Bochein

(coordinator of *shiur*-placement exams), an assistant to President Joel, and a rabbi in the Stone Beit Midrash Program (SBMP) for six years, teaches a new *shiur* in RIETS on *hilkhot niddah* (laws governing nuptial relations). Rabbi Schwartz attended YU as an undergraduate, majoring in history with a minor in psychology. Upon graduating, he debated between law school and *semikhah* (rabbinic ordination). He chose *semikha*, spent six years in the program, and then earned degrees at both the Azrieli Graduate School of

Education and Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies.

A student of Rabbi Herschel Schachter, Rabbi Schwartz endeavors to teach more than just a laundry list of rules. Instead, he and his *shiur* strive to penetrate into the sources of the *halakhah*, delving into the Talmud and *peirushim* (commentaries). The goal of this method, as described by Rabbi Schwartz, is to develop *talmidim* (students) who learn "le-*halakha*, not just *halakhah*." In other words, the objective is to pro-

See *Roshei Yeshiva*, page 3

Staff Editorials

76 Years of What?

By **BENJAMIN ABRAMOWITZ**,
Editor-in-Chief

Things people often mean when they tell me they read *The Commentator*:

- They read *YUToday*
- They read *Commentary*
- They have seen *The Commentator*

The number of Yeshiva University publications, and its recent multiplication, has left many students confused about the difference between the various newspapers. That's why I want to clarify what distinguishes *The Commentator* from many of the other publications piled by the haphazard hundreds in (and around) the Wilf and Beren Campuses' matte blue receptacles (I've heard that some have even made it as far as the internet). I also hope to make it clear why I, personally, chose this paper.

The Commentator, first of all, is run entirely by undergraduate students. So we've already drawn a fundamental distinction between The Commie and *YUToday*, which is run by YU's Office of Communications and Public Affairs. The purpose of *YUToday* is to make sure the right people know how awesome we are. It is crucial for a university to put out such a publication.

University President Richard M. Joel assures Commie Editors-in-Chief that he does not believe *The Commentator* should operate as a press organ of the University, a *YUToday* with less gloss and more *Seven Up*, *Seven Down*. Rather, he elaborates, it is fundamentally necessary for students to develop voices of their own and express them constructively. Our university, countries, and world present us with more than enough issues to keep our minds whirring day and night—but if we want to play any part in resolving such tensions, we must constantly seek to improve our powers of expression and communication. *The Commentator* is one of a few student outlets for such expression.

Yet merely expressing our tension, confusion, or frustration often falls painfully short of the longer-term relief brought by practically fixing the source of the problem. Everybody needs a good venting session once in a while—er, daily—but while friends, commiseration, and an exaggerated imitation of that baselessly pretentious kid in your Bible class might make you say

hey, I can totally get through this, there's a more productive way.

When something here at YU doesn't work out for you, you can convey your angst by emitting a resounding, semester-spanning moan, or take a few moments to filter your thoughts, with the aim of concretizing them in a dignified, accessible, and persuasive manner. As Yeshiva students, we can work to actually minimize the number of university issues we have to complain about. Our administration reads *The Commentator* cover to cover.

The Commentator boasts vibrant sections detailing YU news, history, social life, sports, the arts, technology, and more. With careful editorial discretion, we hope to showcase the thoughts and feelings of some of the best of YU's undergraduate leaders and thinkers. But we also have the equally important goal of bringing about practical change in our university, of working with the right authorities to ensure, in order to meet student needs, that our institutional structure and mentality are always evolving.

Change can start with students if they work to refine their voices, and engage their peers and YU officials respectfully and respectably. Change might not ever come if our public reactions to YU imperfections are purely vitriolic, demonstrating neither discretion nor respect. When writing for *The Commentator*, students constantly keep in mind that their words might in fact effect change. Whether their work will merit such change depends largely on a student's own judgment.

So as it turns out I've failed to distinguish *The Commentator* from a few other publications with mostly similar intentions. You'll find it hard to find a student newspaper editor who's not a little too obsessed with changing YU for the better. There will always be a little overlap between some of our newspapers, maybe even some confusion (my dad thinks I edit *Commentary*). But one difference I know for sure is that *The Commentator* is the paper that made YU great for me.

Our team is driven and supportive, endlessly committed to the bombastic mission statement to the right. I've learned invaluable skills and lessons from Commie editors past and present. Also, we have a decently sized office that's great for hanging out, so while you're working to effect real change, you can get in a good venting session.

Commie-unicating can be fun!

See for yourself. Email Ben at

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The Commentator is the official student newspaper of Yeshiva University. For 75 years, The Commentator has served students and administrators as a communicative conduit; a kinetic vehicle disseminating undergraduate social, religious, and academic beliefs across the student bodies; and a reliable reflection of Yeshiva student life to the broader Jewish and American communities. The Commentator staff claims students spanning the diverse spectrum of backgrounds and beliefs represented at Yeshiva. We are united by our passion for living the ideals of Torah u-Maddah, and commitment to journalistic excellence.



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1 Unthink

The anti-Facebook social networking site quickly reaches 100,000 users. Just 899,900,000 more and they'll be competing with Zuck.



2 VEVO

YouTube's competitor is gaining popularity, starting to live-stream international concert festivals. Looks like ESL students may be seeing their families a bit more often.



3 Instagram

With only four employees, the new iPhone camera app has gained 4.25 million users. That's only like 1.0625 million users per employee. Okay fine, that is pretty impressive.



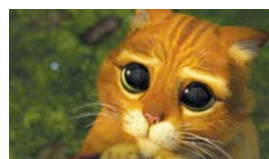
4 Apple executives

Apple just awarded them one million shares of stock. Mr. Jobs had no comment on the matter.



5 Damian McGinty

The *Glee Project's* winner debuted in last week's episode. And don't worry, YU Gleeks: no filter will ruin this guilty pleasure.



6 Puss in Boots

The new kids' movie ranked number one at the box office this week. And no, it is not the winter sequel to an adult film... Sorry, fifth-floor Hasidim.



7 Jameson

The popular whisky company has joined forces with Lady Gaga to produce a new cocktail. It's like a Shirley Temple, but with a little gaga (alcohol).

7 UP



7 DOWN



1 Greek debt

Even after months of negotiations, Greece's debt continues to climb. Somebody should tell them they don't have to eat at the Olive Garden every night.



2 Kim Kardashian

Although her wedding was promising, the notable A-list celeb is breaking the knot with her most recent hubby. I just hate it when things with my friends don't work out.



3 The UN

The International Atomic Energy Agency claims to have evidence that Iran has done things "relevant to the development of a nuclear device." Mazal tov on that irrelevant revelation.



4 Justin Bieber

The little twerp has been accused of fathering some woman's child. And he was like "baby, baby, baby...no."



5 Sprint

The shaky cellular company has decided to take a bet on Apple and invest billions in the rights to the iPhone 4S. Trying to diversify their portfolio, are they.



6 LinkedIn

To nearly no one's surprise, this company's stock has finally begun to plummet. Does that mean you'll stop getting those annoying emails? We don't know. P.s. Add me.



7 Passing of Andy Rooney

The funny, quirky and truly great journalist on 60 Minutes died on November 4 at age 92. He will certainly be missed.

Local restaurants' Caf Card programs develop at varying speeds

Golan declines comment

BY ARYEH YOUNGER

In Issue 76.2, *The Commentator* covered a story about the new food system and its relationship to the student body. As the article mentioned, there was an abrupt period during which the restaurants were no longer accepting the cards, for the program was taking a brief hiatus. New information has arisen regarding the nature of this hiatus.

Bruce Jacobs, YU's Director of Dining Services, explained that during this time, while "the vendors were getting a hold of the proper equipment...we put the brakes on the system." Although YU and the various food establishments had been speaking about this program for months, not all of the restaurants had obtained the technology to accept the Caf Card.

Many students may remember a short period when Golan was writing down names on a wrinkled sheet of lined paper. Apparently, Golan had not yet obtained the technology to take the YU Caf Cards, and

planned to use this temporary solution until the technology arrived. (The sheet of names was given to YU for recording.) And as for the 15 percent extra charge that Golan had imposed, it never really happened. "As soon as I got wind of that, I made them take it down," Mr. Jacobs assured. Yet, there has been no word regarding whether students who had paid the 15% charge to Golan were refunded their money.

Although Chop Chop and Lake Como are now using advanced analog systems to process the credits, Golan is using a slow dial-up



When it's off your Caf Card, \$14 shawarma seems like a steal.

method. At Golan, a student may notice this while waiting for his or her card to process. When asked about the 15 percent extra charge and the use of the dial-up method, Golan declined to comment.

Now that the system is finally up and running, the administration is anxiously watching its success. In the future, there could be more money on the account, but that is yet to be determined. A lot of what happens may be dependent on YU's finances.

At the same time, many YU students may have not yet come to terms with the limits of the plan, while others have. To quote Jacobs, "some people will just blow through the money, and others won't."

Roshei Yeshiva

Continued from front page...

duce *talmidim* who both grasp the workings of the *halakhik* system and feel comfortable responding to new, unforeseen difficulties. Through this program, students hope to take major steps toward becoming effective rabbis.

When Rabbi Schwartz looks at YU, he sees an institution engaged in a great balancing act—of *Torah* and *Madda*. Though sometimes the pendulum swings more to one side than the other, YU manages to combine the two realms to great effect. The key, according to Rabbi Schwartz, is the honest and passionate debate over what kinds of policies promote YU values. The constant *cheshbon hanefesh* (self-scrutiny) enables us to stay true to our principles.

Rabbi Daniel Feldman, in his first year with the Mazer Yeshiva Program (MYP), has opted to teach *masechet Shabbat* (tractate Sabbath). Rabbi Feldman brings extensive experience to the MYP lineup, with nine years in SBMP and three in Isaac Breuer College (IBC). Like Rabbi Schwartz, Rabbi Feldman cites Rabbi Shachter as a formative influence in his life. Additionally, he benefited from relationships with Rabbis Sobolofsky, Willig, Rosensweig, Simon, and Goldwicht. In his *shiur*, Rabbi Feldman attempts to explore the intellectual and historical underpinnings of the Talmud and accompanying *mefarshim* (commentators). He believes in engaging students in conversation, exploring the reasons for every statement, question, and answer they come across in the texts. The subject matter in this *shiur* has important real-life applications. In recognition of this, Rabbi Feldman devotes a day

every week to analyzing the practical uses of their previous *shiurim*. The *shiur* aims not only to improve students' learning skills, but to influence their *halakhik* conduct outside of the *beis*, as well.

Rabbi Feldman's position in MYP, however, has been a cause for confusion. Unlike the many other *rebbeim* in the program, and despite his many years of experience in Yeshiva, YU has not conferred upon him the title of Rosh Yeshiva.

YU is already well known for its high number of *roshei yeshiva*, a situation that some in the YU circle fear dilutes the title's esteem. Has YU decided to bar additions to the ranks?

Rabbi Reiss, The Max and Marion Grill Dean of RIETS and undergraduate Jewish studies, spoke to *The Commentator* to explain the meaning of "Rosh Yeshiva." Ironically, he explained, despite the great significance currently attached to the Roshei Yeshiva, the title itself originated as something routine. Its application, rather than reflecting a specific level of expertise or institutional power, was largely a matter of tradition. Any rabbi in the MYP program was referred to as a Rosh Yeshiva. Over the years, however, the honor and respect associated with the title grew and, as a result, YU developed a more official method of conferral. In the current system, around three years into a rabbi's MYP career, University President Richard M. Joel and *Rosh Hayes-hiva* and Chancellor Rabbi Norman Lamm decide whether to grant him the title. Though they consult no established criteria in order to make the decision, the rabbi is evaluated based on his scholarship and work with *talmidim*. Rabbi Feldman, as a

brand new addition to the MYP program, has not yet been considered for the title. Nevertheless, in the near future, he may be YU's newest Rosh Yeshiva.

In the wake of all these shake-ups in MYP, students in SBMP should not feel left out. Rabbi Marc Penner—who, this year, assumed the position of Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Jewish Studies in addition to his post as Director of Professional Rabbis for RIETS, acknowledges that many feel neglected in the shadow of the seemingly more vibrant MYP. He plans to focus especially on their needs this year, and has already begun to institute changes, such as the hiring of Rabbi Simcha Willig to run *va'adim* (literally, committees) for the students to relax and discuss issues that bother them. Rabbi Penner, a graduate of YC and RIETS, also aims to expand the roles of the *Sganei Mashgiach*, despite the challenge in surmounting the time restrictions students face from the dual curriculum. Alongside these mini-projects, he also now assists Rabbi Reiss in guiding the all the undergraduate and rabbinic programs. The portfolio they have to manage, he asserts, is enormous.

Though the rabbis featured in this article are all veterans of our institution, they each seem determined to add to Yeshiva in new ways. Simultaneously, they recognize that the perennial challenges our yeshiva faces—from balancing our philosophy to ensuring the smooth operation of our different programs—must be addressed as well. Nevertheless, though the projects they have laid out is a sign of change in the right direction, only time can tell if they will achieve their goals.

A Recap of the Town Hall Meeting

By MOSHE PETERS

This past Thursday, November 3, students, faculty, and staff joined together in the Heights Lounge for this semester's Town Hall Meeting with University President Richard M. Joel. Intended to promote open and meaningful dialogue between President Joel and the YU community, Town Hall Meetings are perhaps the best-attended Club Hour events. The program, as usual, featured a brief talk by the President followed by a question-and-answer session.

President Joel opened up his talk with a quite humorous and telling comment when he excused himself in the event of repeating his *divrei Torah* by explaining that "[he] never remember[s] which *divrei Torah* [he] give[s]," getting the crowd laughing early on. He elaborated on the fact that we should view ourselves not as "children of Noah," but instead as "children of Abraham," and that as such, we are destined to answer the call of God and be a blessing for the world.

In terms of the financial crisis that YU may or may not be experiencing, Joel explicitly stated that Yeshiva was down to its last one billion dollars and as such there have been pension issues and no salary increases for three years. However, he reassured the crowd, most other universities and businesses were in the same or similar boats and we therefore should not worry. He advocated admissions and recruitment as the way to save Yeshiva from this crisis and that all students should be ambassadors for the University. "That is," he stressed, "if you believe in YU. If not, I'll write letters to Fred Lawrence, then new pres[ident] of Brandeis telling him that you should go there."

President Joel ended his monologue by emphasizing the positive things that YU has seen and will continue to grow from over the next few months and years, including: a more creative faculty, a new, innovative curriculum with a different selection of courses, integration of the Syms School of Business (which Joel claimed is stronger than it has been in years) with Yeshiva College, the launching of a new MBA program (which will be closed on *Shabbat*, setting it apart from other

programs), the new Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought, as well as a slew of new CJF programs.

President Joel then opened up the floor to questions. The first question came from Matthew Luxenberg (SYMS '13) who thanked President Joel for his improvements to SYMS before getting to his question. He expressed how he was troubled by the fact that at the recent Durban III conference and bid for Palestinian statehood at the UN, Yeshiva University did not send students to rally for Israel nor did it excuse absences for students who wished to attend such events. President Joel explained that while, in the past, YU provided chartered busses or "fare cards" for the subway, this time was different, and they chose specifically not to, because the event was quite politically charged and much of the leadership of the "organized Jewish community," including Malcolm Hoenlein, said to stay away and not to mobilize for various reasons. In terms of the issue of absences, Joel basically responded by telling students to use their absences wisely. Luxenberg was unhappy with this answer and argued for a bit before giving up the microphone, but nothing came of it.

The next question, also involving absences, came from Shlomo Weissberg (YC '13), representing the members of the various institutional athletics teams. He argued that, as representatives of YU, students who are on teams and miss class due to a team event should not be penalized. President Joel responded very simply by stating that he does not know about the policy and will look into it, without giving a definitive answer.

Daniel Spector (SYMS '12), following up on an article published in *The Commentator*, inquired about

transparencies in the Seforim Sale. President Joel assured students that "this year will be different," explaining how everyone needs checks and balances, especially students. He explained that with an internal audit staff, financial management help, guidance and support, the university will "make sure that everything is on the up-and-up."

Representing the Yeshiva College Dramatics Society, Tani Isaac expressed concern over the selling

es – "it's a movie theater." He also reassured students that they are doing everything they can to find another viable venue to replace SCC.

Following up on this question, another student asked where the money from the selling of SCC would go. The President said that majority of YU's costs are from the undergraduate schools, so a large part will go there; however, it will be spread to the entire University, wherever it is needed.

Chesky Kopel (YC '14) inquired about "unconfirmed reports that the University plans on blocking web-pages for content on YUWireless." President Joel explained that it in fact was true. He, in consultation with psychologists and rabbinic authorities, decided that a "narrow experiment" will be run, blocking pornographic material in the dormitories, and that students will be informed of the guidelines. He also explained that illegal downloading sites will be blocked as well, having nothing to do with this "experiment," as he has a legal responsibility to do so as a university.

An Isaac Breuer College (IBC) student expressed a deep concern that the image of IBC is seen "more relaxed" and that a sign of this is the fact that the professors show up fifteen minutes late. President Joel expressed what appeared to be anger when he quickly responded, "It

will be more relaxed when they're not working here anymore!" He further explained that it is very complicated because the issue is one of faculty action. He assured the students that we will see changes there as far as faculty taking their responsibilities seriously.

Another student expressed his disappointment with the morning program as a whole and how it does

not provide for all of its students. President Joel explained that they are currently looking into the morning Judaic Studies programs and how to improve them to meet student needs.

One student, expressing the voice of thousands, complained about the new cafeteria layout, explaining that it takes a grueling fifteen minutes to get food – not nearly enough to get back to class on time. President Joel asked the audience if this was true and earned a unanimous, resounding "YES!" After turning to Vice President of Administrative Services Jeffrey Rosengarten, who nodded his head, Joel assured that crowd that it would be fixed as soon as possible.

Another student, upset about personal issues, asked President Joel to have his grade changed in one of his YC courses, as he felt he was graded unfairly. Joel quickly dismissed this question, explaining very clearly to the student that this was not the appropriate venue in which to discuss such an issue.

Yitzy Frankel ('12) complained that since the integration of YC and SYMS, he is unable to finish his dual major that crosses both schools and that it would only be possible if he were to stay an extra year. President Joel advised him to stay that extra year and graduate in 2013 instead, which did not really address the student's concern.

Ryssa Henry, from the Office of the Dean, complained about the garbage overflow on the fifth floor, and the consequent fruit-fly infestation. Joel said that the infestation is a known issue and is being dealt with.

Finally, Adam Newman ('13), complained about the impropriety of music played on the inter-campus shuttles. President Joel was a bit surprised that this question was being raised at the Town Hall Meeting. His solution: "We'll get more Mac-cabeats," or get rid of the music entirely, which seems to have already happened starting Saturday night.

On a whole, the Meeting was a productive one, providing a means for students and, in this case, staff, to communicate their concerns and needs regarding their university experiences. After conducting a survey, a high number of students complained about the questions that dealt with students' personal issues, such as grades, absences, and musical preferences.



of the Schottenstein Cultural Center (SCC) on the Beren campus, which up until now served as the venue for the Stern College performances. President Joel, expecting this question, expressed how pained he was by having to make this decision, but rationalized it explaining how it was a necessary financial move for the university and, further, that SCC is not an ideal theater for performanc-

NYPD

Continued from front page...

In 2003, the NYPD devoted 1,500 police officers to be part of Operation Impact. The zones were drawn by district, and the police officers were deployed based on good standing and ability.

In the first year alone, the program resulted in 31,000 arrests by these new Impact Cops.

In August 2011, Washington Heights was deemed an impact zone. So if you were not careful about your ventures in the community

last year, you should have been. However, after August, 50 Impact Response Officers were deployed in the Washington Heights area, between 181st and 193rd streets, from St. Nicholas to Amsterdam avenues, familiar stomping grounds for any Yeshiva student.

But this police presence does not come without some harsh criticism from our neighbors. DNAinfo.com, a local Manhattan news website, reported that there are those who believe that despite the program's success in other districts, Operation Impact's presence in

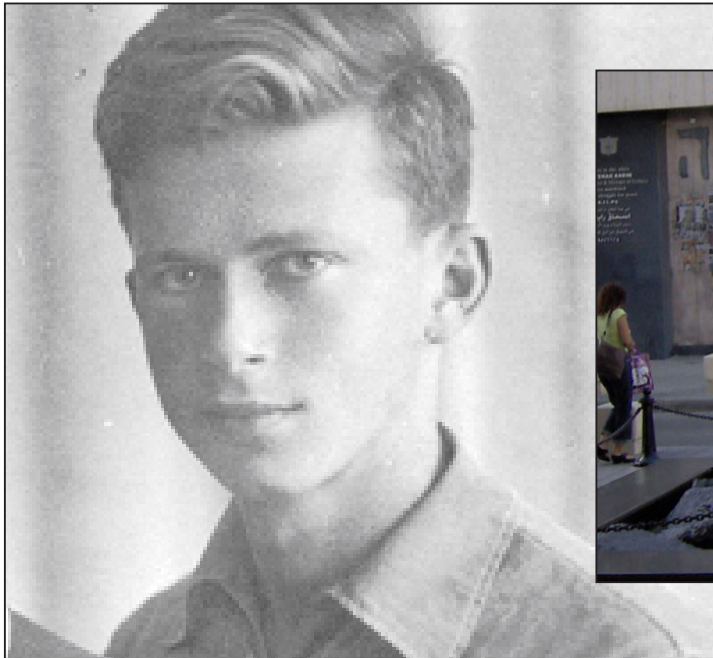
Washington Heights is misplaced and maybe even useless. The community members that feel this way point to past occasions when police show up for temporary periods of time, only to leave months later with no lasting "impact." A more permanent deterrent of crime may be necessary to truly change the nature of the Washington Heights area.

These Impact Cops are also in contact with the Yeshiva University campus security team. Don Sommers, Director of YU Security, explained to *The Commentator* that YU Security

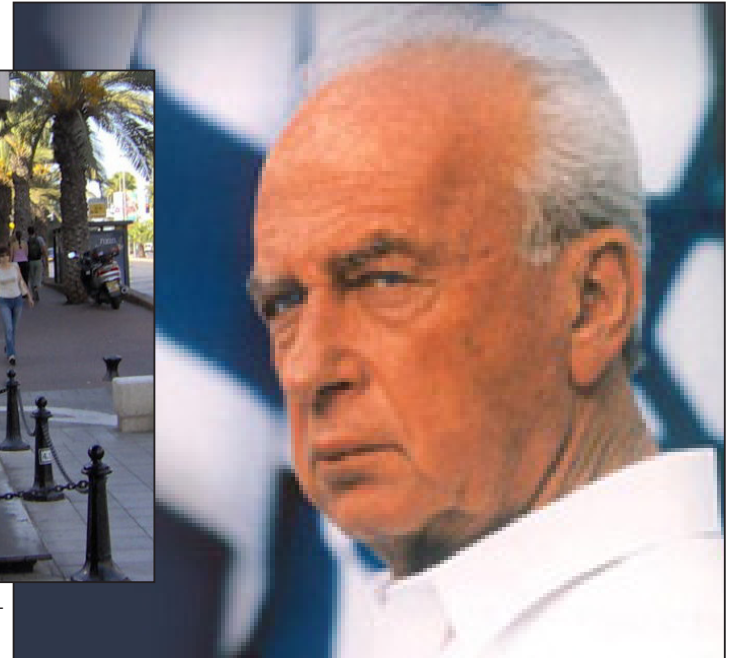
is in constant contact with the local precincts in order to share information to make sure all the students are safe. "It's a two-way street," said Sommers. YU Security shares security footage with the cops, while the cops update the security personnel about the status of the different regions of YU schools.

Our campus has been blessed with safety over the last few years, so for us, the knowledge that we are safer now than before can be comforting despite crime around us.

Learning from the Murder of Rabin



Yitzhak Rabin was murdered by Yigal Amir on November 4, 1995, after a rally in favor of the Oslo Accords.



By YITZHAK BRONSTEIN

Sixteen years ago today, Yitzhak Rabin was murdered at a mass rally in Tel Aviv by a Jewish extremist who opposed the signing of the Oslo Accords. At 73 years old, Rabin had devoted his entire life to service of the Jewish people and the state of Israel, starting from his enlistment in the Palmach, serving as a commander in Israel's War of Independence, and rising to the rank of Chief of Staff, leading Israel to its mind-blowing victory in the Six-Day War. His political career was no less impressive, working as Israel's ambassador to the United States—Israel's single most important diplomatic position—Minister of Defense and, twice, Prime Minister. Lest we forget, he was also a husband, father and grandfather, a Jew and a human being.

Yet all of this did not stop Yigal Amir, an Orthodox Jew and a product of the *hesder yeshiva* system—the community in Israel with which Yeshiva University has most in common—from gunning him down in cold blood. The assassination itself was the result of a long process of the demonization of Rabin conducted by large segments of the Israeli right-wing in general and the religious community in particular. One need only watch the extremely disturbing depictions of Rabin at the right-wing rallies at the time (viewable on YouTube) to get a sense of the public culture at the time. He is portrayed as a Nazi, a dangerous enemy of the Jewish people, and there are explicit calls for his assassination. Mainstream figures spoke to roaring crowds at these rallies, and one of these speakers is currently serving his second term as Prime Minister. Considering this backdrop, though it came as shock, it should not have been a surprise that Amir believed that Rabin fell under the *halakhic* status of a *rodef* (fleeing murderer), classifying him as a threat to the Jewish people that had to be eliminated.

The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, more so than other tragedy

in recent Jewish history, has much to teach the Jewish people about the need for increased dialogue, unity and tolerance over walking the paths of demonization, exclusiveness, and violence. It should engrain in our collective memory, forever, that our leadership can only be changed with ballots, not bullets. It should remind us of the Israel of June 1, 1967, when during the terrifying days immediately leading up to the Six Day War, the response of the Jewish people was to form its first national unity government. It was understood that the only way the Jewish people even stood a chance of dealing with external threats was if there was internal cohesion, and Menachem Begin—the most distinguished member of Israel's opposition for decades—was appointed as a minister to the previously leftist government.

Sadly, this sentiment did not last, and stricter divisions along political and religious lines existed in the aftermath of the victory in 1967. The internal war between the poles of Israeli society (which, in a nutshell, can be classified as Gush Emunim v. Peace Now) intensified. The rest is history, and the only question we can ask ourselves now is how we should react. Rabin's murder, first and foremost, should alert us to the depths we have fallen so that we can appreciate the progress that still needs to be made. As students of Yeshiva University, a self-identifying Religious-Zionist institution, it is imperative we recognize that this burden falls on our shoulders.

Disappointingly, as I recall various experiences that I have had over the course of my tenure at YU (and somewhat earlier), I can't help but think that we have utterly failed in this regard. The most blatant example occurred during my *shana bet* (second year) in Israel, when one of the leading Roshei Yeshiva of RIETS, while visiting Yeshivat HaKotel, was asked a *halakhic* question regarding the requirement to follow orders while serving in the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces). He responded, "If the army is going to give away Yerushalayim (Jerusalem),

then I would tell everyone to resign from the army - *I'd tell them to shoot the Rosh Hamemshala* (Prime Minister)." More scarily, the audience reacted with laughter. Now, there are only two options. Either he was serious or he was making a joke. If he was being serious about calling for the theoretical assassination of a Prime Minister, I would hope that immediate steps would have been taken on the part of YU to depose him of his position. But even if we afford him the benefit of the doubt by assuming that it was meant in jest, it behooves us to recognize the terrible tragedy that such a comment could be considered a joke (which it was) only a decade after an Orthodox Jew understood strikingly similar comments from his rabbis to be quite serious.

But the problem runs much deeper than the infrequent call for a political assassination. There is a culture at YU in which we are wholly dismissive of individuals in the broader Jewish community with whom we have disagreements. At best, they are dismissed as irrelevant, and at worst, perceived as threats to the sanctity of our institution and student body. This process, in which the types of speakers and opinions that can be expressed at student-run events is severely limited, brews radicalism and condescension toward those with whom we do not see eye-to-eye.

For example, during my first year of YU, I attended the panel featuring homosexual graduates of Yeshiva describing their respective struggles. The event itself was the most well-attended that I can ever recall seeing on our campus, perhaps signifying (what I feel to be) a widely-held sentiment among Modern Orthodox students that engaging in this public discussion was of great necessity. The reaction of the rabbinic faculty (minus a few saints, who, if you recall, took heavy criticism), though, was extremely upsetting, if not outright embarrassing. Should we really be surprised by homophobia in the Orthodox community if the reaction of our rabbinic leadership to the event was as

intolerant as it was? Should we be shocked that a shooting occurred at a gay center in Tel Aviv two years ago, killing a 24-year-old man and 17-year-old woman?

The end result need not be bloodshed in order to appreciate the gravity of the problem, and the negative effects of this intolerant attitude are observable on a plethora of other issues. How does our institution and, particularly, its rabbinic faculty, relate to more liberal forms of Judaism than those practiced in the Glueck Beit Midrash? Over my two and a half years at YU, I have had the misfortune of encountering this closed-mindedness in different forms. Roshei Yeshiva called for the complete breaking of ties with any community that endorses female rabbinic ordination; casualties in the Yom Kippur War were blamed on the sexual promiscuity of secular Jews; and Rabbi Ethan Tucker of Mechon Hadar was barred from speaking on campus. Even more common are personal attacks on figures who are associated with movements that diverge from our own. Dialogue and discussion seem to be the last things on our minds, and this climaxed with the formation of the infamous Censorship Committee, which now prohibits a significant portion of leading Jewish figures from appearing on our campus. This policy must be recognized as a dangerous formula for destroying any sense of unity between ourselves and the larger Jewish community, and the effect this sentiment has is already clearly observable by the people with whom we choose to identify. While numerous eulogies were given on campus this past week for Rabbi Natan Tzvi Finkel, Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir yeshiva, there was (to the best of my knowledge) not a single mention when Rabbi Hanan Porat, a leader of Gush Emunim, passed away several weeks ago, nor any mention of the anniversary of Rabin's assassination.

Yes, it is true: there are fundamental disagreements between the Roshei Yeshiva of our institution and those of other rabbinical seminaries and other communal Jewish

leaders. I am not arguing that YU needs to accept a culture of complete pluralism, and there is a whole host of ideas with which it is obviously impossible for Orthodoxy to jive. What can be accomplished, however, is significant improvement of the way we relate to those with whom we disagree. There seems to be an assumption that any viewpoint expressed on this campus implies implicit legitimization of said opinion by the administration and, therefore, we need to limit the voices that can preach here. This mentality is incredibly misguided, and fixing this perspective must be our first course of action, for two reasons. First, it is crucial that even students who disagree with a given position are able to gain exposure to human beings who *do* hold such positions, in order to better appreciate their own context in the broader Jewish world and beyond. Moreover, is anyone really shallow enough to assume that the YU community is so monolithic that there are no students who identify with ideologies other than those propagated within the halls of the *beit midrash*? Should these students not be provided with outlets for serious Jewish expression, or is it really better for these students to completely fall through the cracks of Judaism?

To conclude, as Jews living in the 21st century, the term "never again" is frequently heard within our community. It fits more situations better than others, if only because we cannot always control the external threats that face us. With regard to Rabin's assassination, however, it most certainly is within our power to declare and implement "never again." It is completely within our control to determine how we relate to our fellow brethren and to ensure that a healthier, more positive form of tolerance is employed within our halls. In essence, it is up to ourselves to ensure that the untimely death of Yitzhak Rabin was not in vain.

ה'י זכרו ברוך
May his memory be blessed.

Reitblat

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defiling your *tzitzis*, or sully the pictures of *gedolei Yisroel* hanging on your wall.

The issue with that journalistic approach, though, was quickly evident to me: it wouldn't be effective, because that hypothetical is so utterly implausible, so downright preposterous. That sort of thing would never happen here. It just wouldn't. We all know that.

If we were about seventy city blocks south of our own campus at Columbia, or all the way at the other end of this island on the NYU campus, then maybe we could better conjure up such a thing and perhaps empathize in a more substantive way. But we aren't: we're here in Yeshiva University.

That is, perhaps, why you chose to attend this institution in the first place. Because you knew full well that at Stanford or at the University of Michigan or at Brandeis, this sort of thing might – just might – happen to you. And you hedged a pretty safe bet by coming here to YU. The classrooms of Furst Hall, the couches of the Heights Lounge, and the streets of Yeshiva's Jewish and pro-Israel stronghold in the heart Washington Heights are, have been, and will likely continue to remain utterly devoid of the sort of anti-Semitic, anti-Israel bigotry that exists in bounty on nearly every other college campus in this country and around the world.

And so I started this article with the cold hard facts. The gritty, uncomfortable, unpleasant details. Because we simply can't imagine what it would be like to have our own Israeli flag defiled. All we can do is try to focus on and hope to somehow internalize this difficult truth: a Yeshiva University student – one of us – was the victim of a hate crime. Sure, he was studying abroad, outside of our protective bubble, the formidable citadel and safe haven that is Yeshiva. But the fact remains: this happened to a YU student. This happened to us.

Do you get that? Does it shake you the way it shook me? Excuse me if you think I'm overblowing this, but I think it should shake you. And at the very least, I think it is your responsibility to know about this and, if I may be so bold, to learn from this.

What was perhaps most shocking to me about this story was that I myself had only heard of it just the other week. And I soon discovered that I was not alone – all around campus I asked other students whether they had heard about this story. The overwhelming majority of my friends and acquaintances had not. That was not only surprising to me, but unacceptable.

I've spilled much ink and expended much energy in trying to persuade others – as well as myself – to seek out just a bit of shock value in our own lives. I think a healthy

dose of exposure to what's out there in the world – which, especially in the area of anti-Semitism, we are so often sheltered from – is an important part of our education here at Yeshiva. But why, I've been asked? And truthfully, I've often asked myself the same. But now I know.

Because of Chanan Reitblat. That's why.

Because the perceived safety and security of Morgenstern Hall? Of Glueck? Of imposing Belfer Hall, which stands perpetually at guard for us? Those are great. And they allow us to grow in our knowledge and live out our college experiences in peace and tranquility. But that's only temporary. That's not going to last. The world isn't peaceful and tranquil. The world has a lot of bad people in it – people who don't like you, and who aren't afraid to tell you why. In a couple of years, Belfer Hall won't be able to stand up for us – we must stand up for ourselves.

I sat down with Chanan to discuss the incident and ask him what he thought YU kids should do with this whole unfortunate episode. He told me how he truly believes YU students have the best resources and opportunities to become masters of their own history, heritage, and faith. And yet, so many of them fall short of becoming strong advocates for their own people. So many of them don't take that necessary step.

The reason for this is obvious. On other campuses, where the legitimacy of Israel and of the Jewish people is called into question on a regular basis, students know they need to be prepared. But in YU, where we are so rarely on the defense, where we so rarely need to stand up for ourselves, it's easy to get lazy.

I can't help but think of President Joel's famous and oft-quoted battle cry of "ennoble and enable". As sick as you may be of hearing it, that little tagline truly does, I believe, go to the core of what this university is about. The knowledge we gain here cannot remain here. It needs to be portable. And as Chanan Reitblat showed us, it needs to be accessible – it needs to be on the tip of our tongues and worn proudly on our sleeve. President Joel also tells us often to engage the world. Well, Chanan's story should serve as a haunting reminder to us that at some point, even if we settle nicely into our cocoons and choose not to engage the world, the world can, at any moment, choose to engage us.

Chanan Reitblat was prepared. Ultimately, his story has a favorable ending. His perpetrators were convicted of their crime. Justice was served. But only because Chanan remained strong. Only because he was confident enough in himself, in his Zionism, and in his Judaism to push back. Only because he was ready.

Will you be?

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The truth is that the critics of capitalism are partially right. "Money" does not equal "value," and the fact that Jobs had a lot of money (about 8 billion dollars of it), does not make him a more valuable person. In fact, "value" equals "value", and the fact that Jobs increased the amount of value in the world makes Jobs a more valuable person. Let me explain.

Consider the following story. Before the iPod burst onto the scene, I had \$400 of spending money that I could have spent many different ways. \$400 could have bought me a one-way ticket to New Zealand, a cheap Monet lithograph, a week's worth of Prime Grill steaks, or a lifetime supply of pencil erasers. But I personally valued these things differently. I was *willing* to spend up to \$1000 for a one-way ticket to New Zealand, \$750 for a Monet lithograph, \$500 for a week's worth of steak, and \$5 for a lifetime supply of pencils. Unless I chose to save the money for something more valuable



Jobs' gadgets set a new aesthetic standard for the world of technology.

to me in the future, I would spend it on the thing that I valued the most – namely, the ticket to New Zealand. Buying the ticket would have given me \$600 of "surplus value" or the value that I attached to the product minus its market cost.

But then a bunch of dancing silhouettes with alt rock musical taste introduced me to the iPod, and I immediately gave it a personal appraisal of \$1500. It out-valued the New Zealand ticket by \$500 dollars and created surplus value for me that had not existed before. I purchased that iPod with my \$400, thereby actualizing the surplus value I had assigned to it. I essentially gave Apple \$400 in exchange for a \$1500 value. More importantly, my life became \$500 *better* than it would have been in an iPod-less world. I left the Apple store with a hop in my step and a bud in my ear.

Now imagine this calculus performed by millions of consumers

all over the world, each of whom experiences an increase in personal surplus value because of the intrigue of the iPod. Each consumer's appraisal of the iPod and the marginal increase in value over the next best thing will differ, but total "world value" will undoubtedly increase.

The Story of Externalities and Unintended Virtue

Who benefits from a MacBook purchase? The answer, at first, might seem obvious: the buyer. The buyer receives many benefits. He gets a lightweight laptop with a fool-proof interface, sleek design, and many incredibly addictive and useless apps. He obtains an object that doubles as a study aid, notebook, and status symbol. And he acquires the awe and jealousy of those poor souls fighting viruses on their Compaq PCs. The buyer certainly pays for what he gets, and Steve Jobs is amply rewarded for creating such a valuable product.

But the benefits of the MacBook accrue even to those who *do not* pay

for them. In economics, this effect is called an *externality*. Externalities come in many shapes and sizes, and when it comes to computers and software, the most important externality is called the "network effect".

The network effect takes place when the value of participating in a network increases as more people participate in that network. When the first person bought a MacBook, the value of the product was probably quite low to him. After all, very few software programs were compatible with the MacBook, most programming being tailored to Microsoft Windows, and there was no social benefit to buying the MacBook because it had not yet become hip. But as more people began to purchase the MacBook, the value of owning the product rose. Software companies began to produce Mac-friendly software, and to own a Mac became a symbol of social status. Heck, wouldn't you add value

Jobs

to your Mac if you knew that Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman were Mac users (and they are)?

The important thing to note here is that the additional value created by the increased participation in the network is not reflected in the market. You do not compensate Steve Jobs for the uptick in value of *your* product that results from someone else's purchase of *their* product. Steve Jobs basically worked pro-bono when it came to creating "cool" at the margins.

The Story of Creative Destruction and the Virtue of Failure

Have you ever heard of Lisa? NeXT? The Power Mac G4 Cube? You probably have not because these are just a few of Steve Jobs' failed inventions. The Lisa, released in 1983, contained such novel features as the "mouse", "windows", and "menus." At ten thousand dollars, however, no one could afford it. The NeXT, developed in 1988, was the device on which the World Wide Web was created, yet it crashed and burned because of its exorbitant price. The Power Mac G4 Cube revolutionized the sleek translucency that many of today's Mac products feature, but its hardware and software were prone to fits and cracks.

Each of these products failed for various reasons, but their destruction laid the groundwork for better, more efficient products to come to market. For example, the Lisa's software featured a "document-centric approach" to word processing by which you could create a document without opening an application and save it directly to your computer. It was also the first publicly sold computer with a "Graphical User Interface", a system where the user could simply click on an icon to open a program rather than type in a command. Future computers, by and large, used the latter feature and scrapped the former. But the failure of the Lisa was necessary for manufacturers to realize which features appealed to consumers and which did not. The failure or "destruction" of Jobs' invention played a role in the creative process of technological development.

Steve Jobs, even in failure, contributed more to society than any of us can imagine. He sold a product that people cherish, launched a network teeming with value, and set the stage for the next great wave of mind-blowing inventions. We all love our iPods, iPhones, MacBooks, and iTunes stores. But the next time you download an app to your iPhone, think about the value you attribute to your device. Think about the impressive network to which you belong. Think about what today's technology allows us to do and what tomorrow's might bring. Think about the economics of it all. An industrial icon can receive no greater tribute.

The Anti-Israel President?

By RAFI MILLER

President Barack Obama has quite the reputation among some of the more conservative supporters of Israel.

Author Dan Senor wrote that Mr. Obama “has built the most consistently one-sided diplomatic record against Israel of any American president in generations.” Columnist Caroline Glick suggested that Mr. Obama “is the most hostile US president Israel has ever faced.” Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney said that “President Obama has thrown Israel under the bus.” Likud MK Danny Danon went as far as saying that “Barack Hussein Obama adopted Yasser Arafat’s staged plan for Israel’s destruction.”

The problem is that these judgments were all interpretations of Mr. Obama’s rhetoric. True, this administration has had its rhetorical spats with the Netanyahu government. Mr. Obama’s critics may have blown these spats out of proportion, but I am not looking to apologize here. Rhetoric is a small aspect of a president’s foreign policy. You also need to look at actual *policy*.

In my opinion, when judged by its concrete achievements, this presidency is in fact among the most favorable to Israel in history.

Here is why:

Military Support

The US provides Israel with about \$3 billion in military aid every year, by far the largest package given to any American ally. On top of that, in May 2010, Mr. Obama asked Congress to give Israel a \$205 million gift for the Iron Dome project.

Mr. Obama also approved a sale of F-35 fighter aircraft to Israel, announced in August 2010, which is critical to Israel’s continued qualitative military edge. The Bush administration long held back such a sale.

American officials also revealed in September 2011 that the Obama administration has been secretly supplying Israel with bunker-busting bombs since 2009. Israel had sought these bombs from the Bush administration for years with no success.

The US and Israel have also dramatically increased their military coordination. In October 2009, they held their largest-ever joint air defense exercise, Juniper Cobra. The two-and-a-half-week exercise involved over 2,000 personnel from both countries. An even larger air defense exercise with about 5,000 personnel is now in its planning stages for early next year. Several joint infantry exercises held in Israel over the last two years were also unprecedented in scale. (See Levinson, Charles. “US, Israel Build Military Cooperation.” *The Wall Street Journal* 14 Aug. 2010.)

In March 2011, US Secretary of



Popular consensus may not reveal President Obama’s legitimate stance on the State of Israel.

Defense Robert Gates testified to the House Appropriations Committee as follows: “In terms of concrete steps to improve the security relationship between the two countries, *more has been done in the last two years than in any comparable period in my entire career.*”

Wow.

Mr. Obama also has a strong record in the War on Terror. An expanded Predator drone program has eliminated thousands of terrorists in six Muslim countries. Mr. Obama also personally oversaw a mission in which special forces shot Osama bin Laden point-blank in his bedroom. These last examples are not directly related to Israel—just too impressive to not mention.

The Iranian Threat

You don’t hear about it much in Mr. Obama’s rhetoric as president, though he was adamant about it during his 2008 campaign: “The world must prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.” US diplomatic cables published by Wikileaks show that organizing international sanctions against Iran was a top priority of the new administration’s foreign policy in 2009.

For example, in September 2009 the administration scrapped the plans for building a missile defense site in Poland. Russia had strongly opposed those plans, and the US apparently canceled them as a *quid pro quo* for Russia’s cooperation against Iran. Missile defenses were installed around the Middle East instead.

The US pressured China as well. Wikileaks revealed that the US organized a plan for China to buy Saudi oil to reduce its dependence on Iran for energy.

After consistent prodding and deal-making, tough international sanctions were finalized in June 2010. Even Iran’s propaganda-minded leaders acknowledged the sanctions’ hard hit on their economy.

The US also pressured Russia over its agreement to sell S-300 air defense missiles to the Iranians. The missiles would strongly deter a military strike against Iran. The Russians delayed the missiles’ delivery, scheduled for March 2009, because of US pressure. They finally canceled the \$800 million sale in September 2010.

All the while, the US and Israel have fought an intense covert war against Iran’s nuclear program. Multiple Iranian scientists have defected or been assassinated. Industrial equipment imported to Iran has turned out to be defective. Mysterious explosions have beset Iranian pipelines.

The most effective tactic of all was Stuxnet, an unprecedented cyberattack launched in spring 2010 that probably set the Iranian program back by years. Its development required extraordinary intelligence cooperation between the US and Israel. Reports say that Mr. Obama sped up the program. (See Broad, William J., John Markoff, and David E. Singer. “Israeli Test Called Crucial in Iran Nuclear Setback.” *The New York Times* 16 Jan. 2011: A1.)

But despite the sanctions and sabotage, Iran remains fixated on building a bomb. The military option is still on the table. A congressional hearing on Iran in October 2011 mentioned contingency plans for attacking Iran, reportedly approved by Mr. Obama.

Diplomatic Support

The US led a behind-the-scenes campaign that got Israel accepted to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, a forum of wealthy democracies, in May 2010. “This will bring Israel billions,” said Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

Israel has also long relied on the US veto to protect it from prejudice in international forums. This has been no different under this president:

The Obama administration opposed the Goldstone report.

The Obama administration boycotted Durban II and Durban III.

The Obama administration defended Israel’s nuclear program from condemnation by the International Atomic Energy Agency in September 2010.

The Obama administration vetoed a UN resolution on Israel’s settlements in February 2011—even though the White House agreed with the draft—because it unfairly singled out Israel.

Throughout autumn 2011, the US led an aggressive diplomatic campaign to prevent a vote at the UN Security Council to approve a Palestinian application for membership (which the US would veto anyway if need be). The campaign succeeded and the Palestinian Authority fell short of getting the nine votes it needed. Then, as mandated by US law, the Obama administration cut funding to UNESCO after it admitted Palestine as a member state.

Getting Results

Of course, the policies of a US

president are far from the only factor that determines the course of events in the Middle East. But the results of this administration’s diplomacy compare rather favorably with those of its predecessor:

During the Bush administration we had the Second Intifada, the eviction of all Jews from Gaza, the Second Lebanon War, the Gaza War, the miring of American forces in Iraq, the rise of Iranian hegemony, and the spread of Islamic terror around the globe. During the Obama administration we have had relative peace and prosperity in Israel (key word: relative), Iran’s influence has declined, Al Qaeda’s leadership has been decimated, and the Arab world is starting to hold its dictators accountable.

Differences on Peace

There is no denying the tension between the US and Israeli governments over the peace process. This tension came to a head in March 2010 when Vice President Joe Biden’s visit to Israel ended disastrously. Mr. Netanyahu was snubbed soon after at the White House, according to disputed reports. The Obama administration also pressured Israel into a ten-month settlement freeze that lasted from November 2009 to September 2010, in a failed effort to start peace talks with the Palestinian Authority.

Mr. Obama has repeatedly insisted that “friends are going to disagree sometimes.” But do these incidents betray Mr. Obama’s ultimate lack of friendship toward Israel nonetheless?

As I see it, if Mr. Obama were an Israeli politician, his visions for the peace process would fit right in with Kadima, Israel’s largest political party. Anything I have ever heard Mr. Obama say about Israel would sound perfectly natural coming from the mouth of Israeli President Shimon Peres. That is why Mr. Obama sometimes grates against the Likud government in power; his policies are still clearly pro-Israel.

Most Israelis see it that way too. A poll by Keevoon Research and *The Jerusalem Post* in September 2011 found that 54 percent of Jewish Israelis see Mr. Obama’s policies as favoring Israel, compared to 19 percent who see his policies as favoring the Palestinians.

There is plenty about Mr. Obama’s Middle East policy that we can criticize. I doubt that these criticisms outweigh his concrete accomplishments. But at the very least, with US-Israel cooperation at an all-time high, we ought to be grateful when gratitude is due.

Rafi Miller is a senior majoring in Mathematics and Physics. He also designed the website of The Commentator.

Featured Faculty Dr. Benjamin Epstein

BY SOLLY BENADERET



Every semester, a wave of new faces encounters Yeshiva University's campus. Whether they are first-year students fresh off their term in Israel, transfer students, or visiting assistant professors, each individual must adjust to this campus's unique setting. For Dr. Benjamin Epstein, a visiting assistant professor in the Political Science Department at both the Beren and Wilf Campuses, the move was a vast change from his previous employment.

Before coming to YU, Dr. Epstein taught at both high school and collegiate levels. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin with a concentration in education and a minor in history, he began his career in San Diego where he taught high school U.S. history and political science, while, on the side, coaching the varsity basketball team to the state championship. Afterward, he moved to Brooklyn, where he taught U.S. history while earning his Master's degree in American politics and political theory. After realizing that he wanted to teach college students, he received his PhD in political science from Queens College.

While earning his PhD, Dr. Epstein originally focused his research on the impact of racial and ethnic political movements on American politics, the basis for a course that will be offered this coming semes-

ter. However, he eventually shifted his area of study to American political development, the theory of how political culture, ideology, and governing structures shape the development of political conflict and public policy.

Still, Dr. Epstein further specified his study to political communication and how the internet, which birthed social media behemoths such as Facebook and Twitter, revolutionized modern politics, giving a voice to the underrepresented populace. He explains that even though the Internet "is centralizing the [political] process, it is a long way from a utopian, full democratic system," and he "is excited to continue researching how underrepresented groups use new technology to increase their voice." Currently, he is in the process of converting his research into a book.

Although YU is an academic environment totally different from that which Dr. Epstein has been associated with in the past, he expresses excitement "in navigating this new system," calling it "a learning process." One striking difference that he finds at YU, besides the obvious religious setting, is the distribution of political affiliation among students. He says that he has been "teaching in New York City and teaching young people and Jews, and all of those things would lean liberal or democratic, but it is interesting that there is a large conservative representation in the classroom...there is more of a balance" in the classroom compared to his previous teaching positions.

Though Dr. Epstein's credentials are impressive, what distinguishes him is his passion for teaching, his love of politics, and his "proud Midwestern" upbringing. He expressly states, "I don't want to be a leader in the classroom more than I have to." He encourages students to take an active role in class as well as in politics, which he says is what makes politics "relevant and interesting." When asked if he had any thoughts of going to Washington, the professor said he had no intention of leaving, expressing that he is a teacher at heart. Yet when asked if he had supported a presidential candidate, Dr. Epstein answers, "yes," but elects to hold his political leaning close to the vest, like a true politician.

University saves money, environment OES reduces on-campus energy consumption in new ways

BY MICHAEL SILVERSTEIN

At a time when scientists are complaining about environment pollution and the university is strapped for cash, it should be a relief to hear that the university has at least one department that is trying to solve both of these issues. Since its formation, the Office of Energy & Sustainability (OES) has provided the university with hundreds of thousands of dollars in savings in just the past few years. By examining utility bills, performing multiple physical improvements on the energy-consuming systems, and raising environmental awareness, the OES has been able to make sure that YU is an environmentally friendly place, while also trying to keep the university economically sound.

The OES's history begins in 2008, when it was created in response to two demands: to make YU a "greener" university, and to help manage energy expenses on all five of the YU campuses. Its goals (according to its mission statement, found on the YU website) include reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy usage,

"incorporate[ing]... the ideals of sustainability into" various parts of the university and its culture, and, of course, raising environmental awareness on campus. To help achieve these goals, YU appointed Michael Winkler, who had over a decade of experience in this field, to be director of the OES.

Soon after Winkler was hired, he sprang to action. Winkler explained that the same year he was appointed he realized that the university needed, to quote Winkler, "a tool to track, analyze and report the hundreds of utility bills that... [YU] receive[ed] each month." The university then chose the Metrix 4 system from Abraxas Energy Consulting.

Metrix not only tracks yearly energy expenses (allowing for the OES to understand the university's utilities), it also takes into account the weather and how it affects energy usage. Thus, if it is a particularly hot or cold year, although utility bills may be very high, Metrix allows its users to see if they were able to reduce potential utility costs.

When representatives from Abraxas arrived at YU's Einstein Medical Center (where the OES is currently based) to provide training for

the Metrix software, they also examined the HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems for a few hours. Although Abraxas had only promised to reduce utility bills by \$25,000 per year, their "audit identified some low-cost energy conservation and efficiency opportunities," Winkler explained.

According to Abraxas, their audit eventually reduced YU's utility bills by \$160,000 per year. Some of the improvements were performed that day by on-site facility workers, and others took much longer. Physical improvements included repairing leaky valves, reducing steam consumption, and installing new HVAC hardware.

Winkler said that after seeing such positive results from the Einstein energy audit, the OES has performed energy audits on all five of the university's campuses, focusing on areas such as lighting, ventilation, chillers, and steam boilers. He stated that "[i]n the last two years, we have focused on improvement with a rapid payback, like lighting efficiency and lighting controls upgrades." These lighting improvements are an ongoing process.

Following this trend of adopt-

A Product of Culture: Sociologically Deconstructing the Myth

BY YONI ZISOOK

While walking through the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam this past summer, I was awed by the magnificent exhibits. In particular, I was mesmerized by Rembrandt van Rijn's *The Night Watch*, prominently displayed and considered to be one of the world's most famous paintings. I could not help but revel in its beauty and in Rembrandt's pure genius. As I sat on the floor, looking at the painting and falling into a stupor, I wondered how Rembrandt was able to paint such a masterpiece. Did Rembrandt just wake up one day and paint this extraordinary work? Could it really be that Rembrandt simply had a moment of inspiration and voila, out came *The Night Watch*? Does this painting represent the romantic myth of the artist?

Before continuing any further, it is necessary to take a step back and clarify our terms. Art generally finds itself categorized under "culture." In this regard, art is akin to the opera or the playhouse. However, in sociology, culture is a far more elastic term; culture refers to forms of meaning through symbolic media, like language. Culture represents the expressive aspects of human experience. It is an abstraction from greater society, the patterning of social relations. Culture connotes any form of meaning, which certainly includes high artistic achievement, but also includes ideas, values, religion, aesthetics, science, art, and so on.

Max Weber believed that in modern society the unification of culture disappears and independent value-spheres emerge.¹ One such value-sphere that emerges is the art-world, an autonomous value-sphere, which creates meaning in social life for those closely involved in the creation, dissemination and appreciation of art. This art-world can be visualized or mapped as four concentric circles building upon one another. In the very small center, there are the artists and their social networks. In the second, slightly larger circle, there are art critics. In the third circle, which is even larger than the second circle, there are art consumers. Finally, the fourth cir-

cle, which is the largest of them all, contains the interested public.

Let us now deconstruct the myth of the artist. In this context, deconstruction refers to an analysis that ends up questioning the consequences of what is being analyzed. Many would like you to believe in an ideology of artistic production, which claims that artwork is the sole product of a moment of genius or inspiration by the artist, the innermost circle. Art advertisers, museums, collectors and, perhaps, the artists themselves, the third circle, often promote this romantic fantasy, for it heightens the value and accomplishments of a painting or artist; it helps create an allure. Admittedly, as a member of the fourth circle, I was sucked into this trap when first looking at Rembrandt's *The Night Watch*.

In reality, as longtime Northwestern professor of sociology Howard Becker points out, creating a work of art is a long and mundane process.² "All artistic work, like all human activity, involves the joint activity of a number, often a large number of people," working together diligently over extended periods of time.³ Artists are dependent on cooperative links and social networks in addition to their basic supplies (such as the canvas or oil paints) necessary to fashion a work of art. "The artist's involvement with and dependence on cooperative links thus constrains the kind of work he can produce."⁴ All of this therefore suggests that art can be distinctly sociological, for sociology in its most basic form is the study of social causes and consequences of human behavior. Consequently, Rembrandt's *The Night Watch*, commissioned by the Amsterdam Archers Guild and completed in 1642, is the product of the artist's genius combined with the social processes of daily life incumbent on any work of art.

¹ Weber, Max. *Essays in Sociology*. Ed. H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills. New York: Oxford University Press, 1946.

² Becker, Howard. *Art Worlds*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982.

³ Becker, *ibid.*, p. 1

⁴ Becker, *ibid.*, p. 26

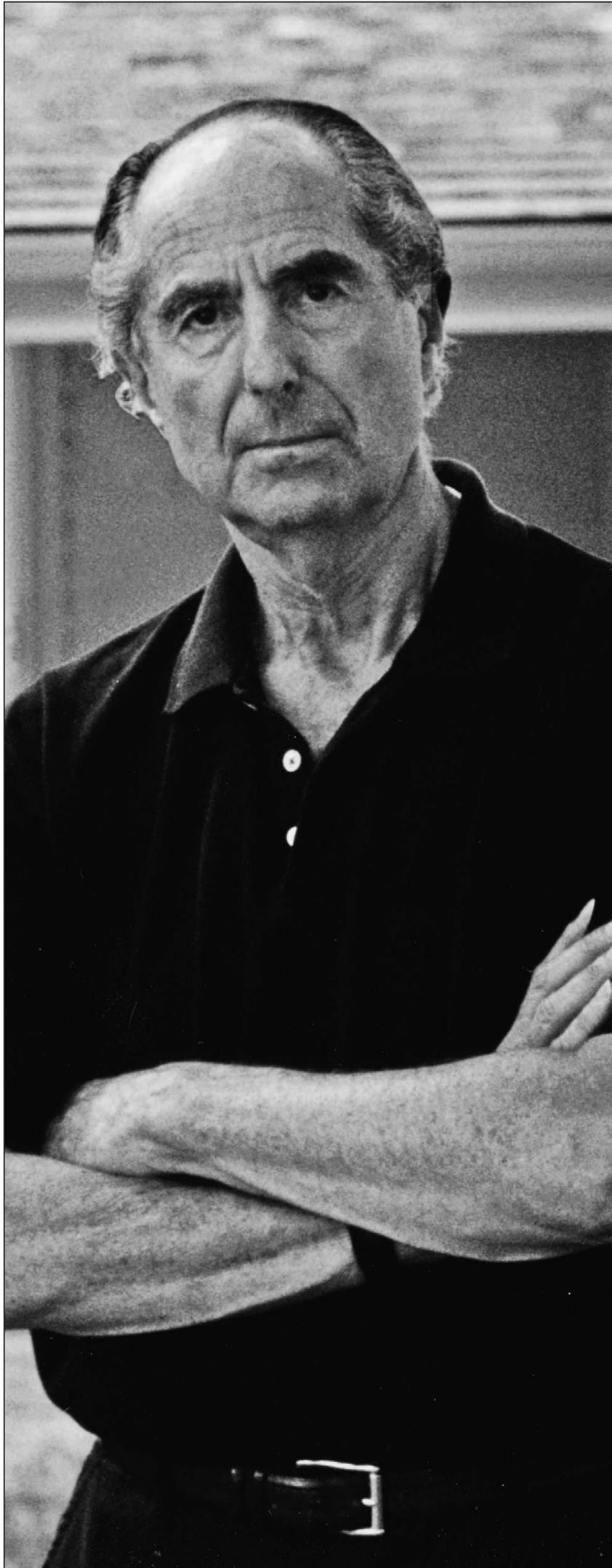
ing programs that have a "rapid payback," Winkler revealed that the OES is currently "aggressively implementing energy projects that have simple payback."

The OES has certainly taken some major strides with respect to energy management. By actively examining the university's utilities and energy expenditures, it was able to find multiple ways to reduce energy costs and consumption, saving the university hundreds of thousands of dollars in only a few years. Yet, this is only the begin-

ning for the OES. By 2020, it plans to reduce university carbon emissions by 20%. The OES continues to try to find other ways to advance, such as by applying for grants from Con Edison and from the state of New York.

In a time when the university's economic stability is as fragile as the environment, this approach of being both economically and environmentally minded seems to be working well, making YU a greener place and helping to relieve its economic burden.

How Yeshiva University Changed Philip Roth, Forever



Philip Roth is the author of *Goodbye, Columbus*, *Portnoy's Complaint*, and *Nemesis*, among many other novels and short stories.

COMPILED BY ADAM ZIMLOVER AND DOV HONICK

On March 29, 1962, Philip Roth participated in a literary symposium at Yeshiva College, along with other contemporary authors. The *Commentator* published an account of the event (reprinted below), which frames Roth's speech as a defense against critics of his recently published short story, *Defender of the Faith*, with no mention of any actual confrontations with Yeshiva students. However, a more recent *Commentator* article (reprinted below) sheds light on what actually occurred, and how formative this event was on Roth's burgeoning career.

Minority Writers Discuss Conflicts Between Loyalties For Symposium By Jesse Rosenblatt

The Commentator, April 11, 1962

Three noted American authors discussed "Artistic Conscience" as related to the conflict of loyalties in fiction writers who belong to minority groups at a well-attended symposium on March 29, 1962 in Yeshiva's Lampport Auditorium...

Philip Roth, Jewish writer, whose first book, *Goodbye Columbus*, won the National Book Award in fiction for 1960, stated that the purpose of the fiction writer is to tell the truth about what he sees... A good part of Mr. Roth's speaking time was devoted to an attack against detractors of his work. In a short story entitled *Defender of the Faith*, Sheldon Grossbart, a Jewish private in the United States Army is depicted as an obnoxious goldbricker who plays on the sympathies of his Jewish sergeant to obtain favors. To people who claimed that the story could hurt Jews, Roth argued that the story's hero is also Jewish. This defense, that a Jewish hero offsets any harm done by the harsh portrayal of the villain, seems a bit strange for a man who believes that no apology is necessary for the presentation of the truth...

Roth's Visit to YU Changed Career By Menachem Butler

The Commentator, March 2005

More than 40 years ago, the event that forever shook the writing career of Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Philip Roth took place at Yeshiva University.

At that time, Roth, along with Ralph Ellison (author of the 1952 novel, "Invisible Man,") and Pietro di Donato (author of a proletarian novel, "Christ in Concrete,") took part in the March 29, 1962, literary symposium, "A Study in Artistic Conscience: Conflict of Loyalties in Minority Writers of Fiction." David Fleisher, then chairman of the Yeshiva College Division of Language, Literature and the Fine Arts, served as moderator for the evening.

Philip Roth, then in his late 20s and teaching at University of Iowa, recently had been awarded the 1960 National Book Award for Fiction and the Daroff Award of the Jewish Book Council of America, for his collection of stories, "Goodbye Columbus" (1959)...

Roth was criticized from within the Jewish community for his story "Defender of the Faith," (originally published in the April 1959 edition of "The New Yorker" and later included in "Goodbye Columbus"). In this story, Roth illustrated various tensions within the contemporary American Jewish community, and wrote about an immoral Jewish kid serving in the armed forces, who was flawed, aggressive, conniving and interested in money...

Decades later, Roth would recall with anger how he was treated at the Yeshiva University symposium for simply voicing his own minority opinion. At the 1962 symposium, Roth was asked if he would write the same stories had he been living, just decades earlier, in Nazi Germany.

Roth answered "Yes," and that the situation of Jews in America was secure enough that a writer could feel comfortable to write that which he believed to be true.

Trying to shift the focus from the attacks against Roth, Ellison said he had received letters from readers who were furious he depicted incest in a black family, and upon seeing the further assault against Roth, asked the crowd: "What is going on here?"

While the audience quieted down for Ellison, they, afterwards, continued to attack Roth for his comments.

When the program ended, and Roth tried to leave the stage, those students who were most antagonistic towards Roth during the lecture gathered around him and began to yell at him. As Roth recalled the Yeshiva events in his 1988 autobiography, "The Facts:" "I listened to the final verdict against me, as harsh a judgment as I ever hope to hear in this or

The encounter at Yeshiva was, according to Roth, "the most bruising public exchange of my life."

any other world. I only began to shout, 'Clear away, step back - I'm getting out of here,' after somebody, shaking a fist in my face began to holler, 'You were brought up on anti-Semitic literature!' 'Yes,' I hollered back, 'and what is that?' - curiously wanting to know what he meant. 'English literature!' he cried, 'English Literature is anti-Semitic literature!'

Later that night, at dinner with his wife and his editor at the Stage Delicatessen, Roth vowed he would "never write about Jews again." However, Roth continued writing about Jews, albeit from a different perspective. As he later recalled, "I had misunderstood the implications of the event for me, actually, because the fact of the matter was that rather than never writing about Jews again... I was actually branded... It was probably the luckiest thing that ever happened to me to run into such a fierce opposition so, so quickly in a career. And it fixed the subject for me, it fixed my focus, it fixed my attention."

The encounter at Yeshiva was, according to Roth, "the most bruising public exchange of my life," and it turned out to be the beginning of his taking issue of his own personal Jewish identity and allegiance towards his faith. "After an experience like mine at Yeshiva, a writer would have had to be no writer at all to go looking elsewhere for something to write about," Roth later recalled.

Roth took from his experience that the audience comprising Yeshiva students and faculty was "fanatically insecure."

Rabbi Dr. Rosenberg Calls for Holocaust Education

BY ADAM ZIMLOVER

The Commentator's History Section recently published an article detailing how Yeshiva College students, for the most part, did not actively protest against the Holocaust. Rabbi Dr. Bernhard Rosenberg, Professor of Speech at Yeshiva University, spoke to *The Commentator* in response to this article. Rosenberg was born in a Displaced Persons camp in Germany and lost many relatives, including two older siblings, during the war. He has spent many years as an advocate for increased Holocaust studies, and has recently published the *Rosenberg Holocaust Siddur* with added prayers and essays commemorating the Holocaust.

Rabbi Rosenberg believes that it is an embarrassment that

Yeshiva University does not offer graduate courses in Holocaust studies. He passionately argues for the importance of high-level Holocaust education, and details how he has repeatedly fought for the creation of such classes. Rosenberg remarks that he has been denied the opportunity to teach such courses himself. According to Rosenberg, there are only two or three classes taught each semester on the Holocaust, far fewer than in most secular universities. Many of the buildings on campus were donated by Holocaust survivors, and Rosenberg believes that it is a disgrace that in the buildings that bear the name of the survivors, there are relatively few classes taught on the Holocaust.

When asked by *The Commentator* why he thinks that no Holocaust studies graduate program exists, he cites two reasons. University officials have told Rosenberg that Yeshiva

does not offer more classes on the Holocaust simply due to a lack of funding. However, Rosenberg believes that the lack of courses reflects an attitude within the University of solely looking towards the future, instead of reflecting on the past. He equates this attitude with the apparent apathy of Yeshiva students during the Holocaust.

According to Rosenberg, the uniqueness of Yeshiva University comes from its goal of preparing the current generation of Jewish youth for future leadership positions. He believes a failure to instill in current youth what happened during the Holocaust will allow future revisionists the chance to deny that the Holocaust ever happened. Rosenberg feels that education is the only way to ensure the Holocaust is never forgotten.

Notes on a Nameless Place: Reading Amos Oz's *Scenes from Village Life*

BY AVITAL CHIZHIK

"This book isn't about the nature of Israel," says the author, smiling wryly. "It's about the nature of dreams."

At the publication of his fourteenth novel, *Scenes from Village Life*, Amos Oz is considered by most of the literary world as the Israeli novelist. Between the pages of his novels, essays and memoir – as well as in those of A.B. Yehoshua and David Grossman – contemporary Israel, in all of its complexities, is supposedly captured.

Yet this time, Oz insists that his latest novel is, in fact, completely unrelated to Israel, but rather about "how people live together and yet apart from each other." At a reading and conversation with journalist Ruth Franklin at the 92Y this past October, Oz casually explains that *Scenes from Village Life* is "no allegory of Israeli life, though others will see it as such." He quickly adds, "But that is the destiny of literature coming from a troubled part of the world."

This slim volume is a series of loosely related short stories, each sparse and dark, depicting daily life and problems

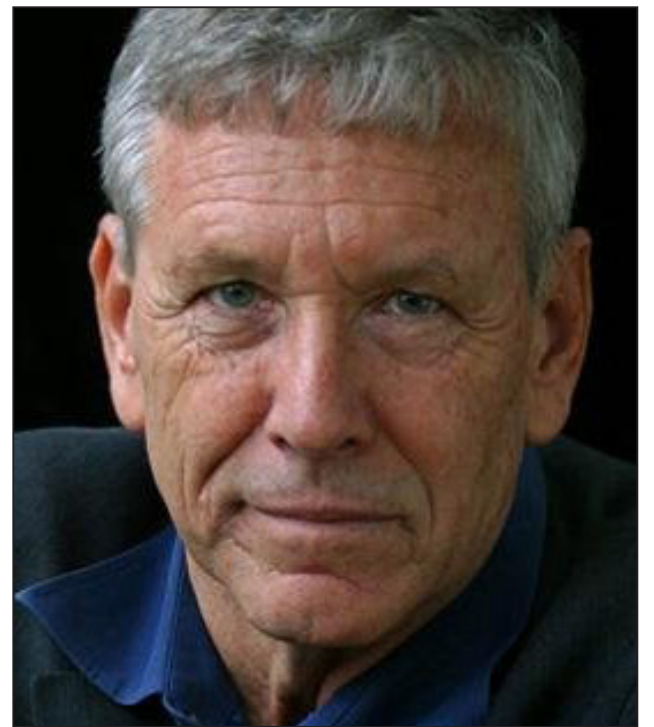
in the fictional northern town of Tel Ilan, a place hailed by its residents as "better than Provence," the "Tuscany" of Israel. Oz describes that while usually his story ideas begin with a sense of characters, this novel began with a sense of place, in a dream. "I dreamt I was in one of those old Jewish villages, looking for somebody," he says. "The village was completely deserted. And in the middle, strangers were looking for me, and I had to hide."

In the eight fiction pieces that make up *Scenes from Village Life*, Oz aspires to touch on many subjects, the alliterated lists of emotions which have almost become a mantra for him: "Love, longing, loneliness, and loss; death, desire, desolation."

"This book and this village are about a half-knowing state," he says. "About old life."

The characters who live in Tel Ilan are varied. The reader encounters a spinster doctor, awaiting her visiting ill nephew who will never come, in the story "Relations." A real estate agent looking to purchase a villa in "Lost" visits the beautiful granddaughter of a man "who wrote long novels about the Ho-

See *Village Life*, page 12



Amos Oz received the Pras Yisrael (Israel Prize) in 2007, the State's highest honor.

The Sound and the Fury, in 7/8: Opeth live at Webster Hall, Alcest and Enslaved live at Gramercy Theater

BY ISRAEL HELLER

There are quite a few things that can be said for the state of heavy metal at the end of 2011. Thankfully, one thing is that the genre is still being pulled in all sorts of intriguing directions, and with no volume lost. Another is that no matter how beloved you are, your fans will still boo if you disappoint them with less than skull-crushing material. You can't have it all I guess,



especially if you're from Northern Europe and have the requisite polysyllabic name and play death metal. This is what Mikael Akerfeldt, the leader singer and guitarist for Opeth learned when he and his band tried some more tempered new material. Opeth played songs mostly off their new album, *Heritage*, as well as various acoustic odds and ends from throughout their career. However, those who came for the death metal of *Deliverance* or *Blackwater Park* went home disappointed. Those of

us who stayed in their comfort zone, which is just to the left of whatever we were expecting from them. From the jazzy strains of "Throat of Winter" to the serpentine riffing of "I Feel the Dark," Opeth's music bounced

and jugged the way it always does, only this time more in the service of melody and atmosphere, rather than pure noise terror. That's not to say they didn't let loose every so often, as the Dio tribute "Slither" made abundantly clear. It turns out that in addition to all that King Crimson, they've been listening to Thin Lizzy and Led Zep, too. Fun stuff. Opeth are doing what they want, and for that one must give them credit, but still, even I have to admit I miss the mountains of sound they used to conjure. But whatever, they deserve to be happy, I guess.

Those seeking unabashed amplifier worship needed to look no further than the Enslaved/Alcest show the following Sunday. Enslaved are coming off one of the best metal albums in years, *Axioma Ethica Odini*, and this was their first headlining tour to hit NYC. They brought along with them Alcest, from France. They were led by a man named Niege, who has done more than anyone in recent years to reintroduce beauty and grandeur into metal.

Alcest took the stage first, playing in thick plumes of fog against an ethereal blue backdrop. Their set drew heavily on "Escailles De Lune," their recent masterpiece, and one that may prove to be the most influential album I heard that weekend. Alcest have become the foremost purveyors of BlackGaze, a blending of the black metal and shoegaze, retaining the volume and serrated riffing of the former with the submerged melodies and epic song lengths of the latter. A crowd that had come for rock-and-roll-infused death metal soon swayed in place, overcome by the piercing riffs and plaintive cries of the band. You wouldn't think there would be metal to study to, but this it. (Yeah I know. All metal can be studied to—whatever.)

Then came the headliners, Enslaved. There is an interesting comparison that can be made between Opeth and Enslaved. Both came out of Northern Europe during a fertile time for Euro Death Metal. Both made their name on ferociously raw

early albums, and both slowly but surely moved away from those original sounds. However, where Opeth emerged from the box and took off running, Enslaved made a more understated break. Understated is an odd word to use when discussing death metal. Records like *Eid* and *Isa* introduced flourishes of acoustic guitars and organs, whereas Opeth released an entire album of acoustic songs. With their latest two records, the divergence became even more clear, as Opeth move further into the realm of lounge jazz while Enslaved more or less retain their loud fast roots. Enslaved raced through tracks like "Axioma" and "Giants" as well as material from their new E.P., *The Sleeping Gods*. The guitars alternately chimed and crunched, the drums pounded and rolled, and the crowd obliged with much frenzied moshing. It was death metal the way we loved it, and that's what we came for. For all the interesting and weird directions metal benefits from, speed and aggression still rule on the road.

Revisionist Mystery: A Review of Graham Moore's *The Sherlockian*

By Dov Honick

In 1891, Sherlock Holmes dies, plunging over the Reichenbach Falls in the mutual clutch of Moriarty during that final showdown between the nemeses. Holmes suddenly reappears in 1894 in "The Adventure of the Empty House." The initiated refer to this three-year period as the Great Hiatus. The stories, published in 1893 and 1901 respectively, leave an eight-year gap during which Arthur Conan Doyle, Holmes' creator, shrugged off public pressure and avowed that the character of Holmes was through. So what made him bring Holmes back? Graham Moore's debut novel *The Sherlockian* attempts to answer this question. While it's true that the proffered answers are fiction, they're pretty darn fun, and, well, almost convincing.

The Sherlockian alternates chapters between two mysteries set in two centuries. The first story begins in 1893 with Conan Doyle's resolution to kill Holmes. England may mourn, but Conan Doyle doesn't care, until, of course, a letter bomb goes off in his study. The word "Elementary" is written on the envelope, and police incompetence requires Conan Doyle to investigate the attempted murder himself. Together with his faithful friend (and Watson proxy) Bram Stoker (who, conveniently, authored *Dracula*) Conan Doyle begins his investigation, soon realizing that the bomb in his study is only a small part of a

much greater murder spree plaguing London's less reputable neighborhoods.

Interwoven with this Victorian plotline is a modern mystery, occurring in 2010. The Baker Street Irregulars, the world's foremost Sherlockian society, are holding their annual convention. Moore immediately introduces us to Harold White, who is about to be inducted as the Irregulars' youngest member, an honor among those for whom deerstalker hats and pipes are still *de rigueur*. This convention is special for another reason. Alex Cale, the society's most revered member, has found Conan Doyle's missing diary, which chronicles the days of the Great Hiatus. What happens next is a fairly predictable nod to the genre. Cale is found murdered in his hotel room, garroted by his own shoelace. "Elementary" is written in blood on the wall, and the diary is missing. The Irregulars are in an uproar, each accusing the next of the crime. As suspicion flies around the room, White, like Conan Doyle a century before, steps into Holmes' shoes and resolves to investigate the murder and find the diary himself.

Although this is a novel, Moore is not afraid to play, at times irreverently, with real literary figures of the

past, but this is more than just name-dropping. Moore's use of particular authors is also distinctly appropriate, and shows an acute awareness of the authors' literary tendencies and habits. Conan Doyle has studied lock-picking from the Bohemian



Oscar Wilde, and disguises himself in drag with Bram Stoker to attend a radical feminist convention. J.M. Barrie makes a cameo appearance as well.

While these caricatures of real authors may seem comic, *The Sherlockian* is a mystery, and a good one at that, eschewing many of the usual clichés of the genre. Sure, there are villains who vacillate between suave and scarred, as well as budding romances between main characters, but *The Sherlockian* properly remains within its limits. None of the characters breaks out any unexpected martial arts skills; they are literary types and act like it (the notable exception being Stoker, who, of course, is entirely too comfortable with shocking, gothic violence). There is none of the flapdoodle ubiquitous among thrillers such as *The Rock*, in which Nicholas Cage kills all the bad guys *because* he's Nicholas Cage, not because mild-mannered chemist types easily transform into nerdy Rambos.

Moore's awareness and use of literary history are not limited to Victorian England. The mystery surrounding Cale's murder and the missing Conan Doyle diary is based on the life of Richard Lance-lyn Green, the foremost Sherlockian of his day. Green, too, was aware of Conan Doyle's missing diary, and when a cache of missing papers turned up at Sotheby's, he did his best to have the auction stopped. Shortly afterward, he was found dead in his room,

actually garroted by his own shoelace. The coroner could not establish if the death was a murder or a suicide, and, as a result, no one was ever tried. Much of this novel then becomes Moore's exploration of the possible motives and his attempt to "solve," or at least pay tribute to, the real-life murder.

On the popular television show *The Office*, Dwight Schrute informs the viewers of his ingenious method for solving murders: "It's never the person you most suspect, it's also never the person you least suspect, since anyone with half a brain would suspect them the most. Therefore, I know the killer to be... the person I most medium suspect." That this maxim does not ring true in *The Sherlockian* is what distinguishes it, and makes it quite a bit more than just a mystery novel. *The Sherlockian* takes you into territory so unexpected it'll take some time to believe it, and it's just ambiguous enough that you don't really have to. By the end of the story, Harold White's search for the diary and whether or not he finds it, become, even to himself, inconsequential. This is because *The Sherlockian* is not ultimately about murders and a lost diary at all; it is about the poignancy of humanity's need for answers, and just how far humans will go to get them.

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Musica=Energia: An Out-of-this-World Performance

By Mordy Weinstein

Recently, I had the fortune of attending a performance by an off-Broadway production by The Voca People. It was a singular experience, and I'd like to discuss it by splitting the review into three foci: musicality, performance, and greater significance.

Musically, the Vocas are not overly impressive. By this I mean that as musicians, they are not doing something innovative and incredible. No one can deny that they all have fantastic voices and that they can blend just as well as many professional *a cappella* groups. And certainly, their covers accurately resemble the original songs. But these things have become givens in the professional *a cappella* realm, and for the Vocas, musicality is not what makes them shine.

Firstly, it should be noted that the Vocas almost never sing a song in its entirety, instead opting for medleys of songs sharing some thematic relation. Their pervasive use of medleys gives the performance a feel that is significantly more "show" than "concert." The main deficiency in the group's general sound was dynamics, the high and low volume

points of a song. Because the Vocas were only singing medleys, they intentionally maintained a high energy level and so their performance never really reached a low volume point, a crucial element of music that more readily grants a song emotional meaning. Some of the transitions between songs felt a bit awkward, and occasionally, tuning fell apart.

Finally – and this is just a personal pet peeve – it was announced at the beginning of the show that all noises are made by the human mouth. This is a misleading statement. To the uninitiated of the world of *a cappella*, the Vocas are a group of superhuman individuals who can make unbelievable noises with their mouths. Unfortunately, it's not entirely true. They may all be talented singers, but many of the noises they make are substantially enhanced by various digital effects used in conjunction with their microphones. Again, I wish to stress that to the layman, the Voca People certainly sound great and sing songs that everyone recognizes and enjoys, and that these are small gripes, only mentioned because of the high standard to which professional groups need to be held.

Viewing The Voca People as a performance rather than a concert,

however, allows for much more praise. As entertainers, quite simply put, they excel. In this conception of the show, the music is framed by points of humor and interactive elements. The Vocas arrive onstage with a storyline: they are a group of aliens who have crashed on our planet because their spaceship, which runs on music, has run out of energy. They must therefore sing earthly tunes and tones to refuel the ship and get back home to Voca. Throughout the show, the Vocas involve many members of the audience, singing the music "contained" in an audience member's brain by putting their hands on that person's head. They also engage some of the younger members of the audience by having them pretend to play the instruments the Vocas were emulating (much air-guitar ensued).

In one particularly funny and risqué skit, the male Vocas picked an attractive female from the audience and sang to her, claiming that she was the most beautiful woman they had ever seen. They brought her up on stage, danced with (and around, and up against) her, and sang to her, serenading her with tunes kosher and less so. The three female Vocas became wildly "jealous" and each one picked a man from the audience

to bring onstage. Given the *kippah* on my head, it was inevitable that I would be brought up along with two other Jewish men from the audience. We were sung to, danced with, and made to feel uncomfortable. We, along with the audience, were kept roaring with laughter the entire time.

To tie this all together, I believe the show is quite significant, but only as a part of a chain that has already begun. At its core, The Voca People presents another musical forum through which *a cappella* is being brought to the forefront of society's musical sentiments. With shows like *Glee* and *The Sing-Off* gaining more viewers each week and season, *a cappella* has never been bigger. College *a cappella* groups have begun sprouting up all over the country and *a cappella* videos, as we all know, go viral on YouTube. Off-Broadway is a very important forum, because it is a live show, as opposed to *Glee*, which meets with complaints of its use of auto-tuning technology, and because it is not a competition like *The Sing-Off*. Bringing *a cappella* to the mainstream has been successful, but the next battlefield will be bringing contemporary *a cappella* to the mainstream.

The Voca People and *Glee* use *a cappella*, but not in the way most college and professional groups do. The arrangements are still very "old-school *a cappella*," usually featuring progressions of homophonic "ooh" and "ah" or separate instrumental lines. Contemporary *a cappella* has ventured far beyond this, exploring the possibilities of sounds that only voices can make, including dynamics and diphthongs. To this end, *The Sing-Off* is doing the best job, while The Voca People are continuing to put more *a cappella* into the vernacular. That's not to say it's not important; it's just to say that it's not on the next frontier.

Overall, I'd definitely recommend The Voca People for everyone to see. It's highly entertaining and it features a lot of great, popular music. Also, it should be noted that if you are under the age of 30, you can get tickets to see The Voca People for \$30, which is a bargain for the entertainment you'll get.

The Voca People perform almost every night at The Westside Theatre, located at 407 W. 43rd St. Tickets are available at <http://vocapeople.com/buy-tickets/ticket-info>. Scroll to the bottom for the "Under-30" discount.

Graphic Details: Autobiographical Comics Challenge Traditional Judaism and Redefine Feminine Image

By Yael Roberts

"Normal people don't care about comic books" one character tells another in Diane Noomin's comic. While it's easy to believe that "normal people" may not look twice at comics, the exhibition *Graphic Details: Confessional Comics by Jewish Women* proves that "normal people" can and do care about graphic expression. The exhibit makes comics relevant to everyone and emphasizes the importance of comics to the fine art world.

Noomin is one of eighteen female, Jewish artists to be displayed in the exhibition of autobiographical comics that opened at the YU Museum on Sunday, September 25 and is on view through April 15. After debuting at the Cartoon Art Museum in San Francisco, the exhibition travelled to the Koffler Centre of the Arts in Toronto. After its stay at the YU Museum, the exhibition will continue on to Portland, Ann Arbor, and Vancouver.

From far away, each comic seems highly detailed and incomprehensible. But up close, each comic is filled with personal detail, personal confession and personal narrative. Similar to the concept of comics themselves, which at first might seem ridiculous to display in a fine arts museum, the exhibit, which at first seems unapproachable, is in fact highly personable and highly interactive.

The exhibition is beautifully displayed. Framed comics line the blue walls, and specific parts of comics are blown up and highlighted above the frames. The viewer can browse a table of published graphic novels and comic collections by the artists. And a computer in the center of the room allows the viewer to select specific comics to be played and narrated by the artists themselves, fitting for an exhibition about autobiography.

There is a bluntness and honesty that comes with autobiographical comics that fine arts can't provide. A painting can illicit emotion in the viewer, but when words blare across a page, a viewer knows exactly what a character is thinking or screaming. This refreshing honesty is often absent from more nuanced fine art. As one of the artists, Racheli Rottner, explains about writing a graphic novel, "I wasn't circling the subject anymore—I was telling it."

These Jewish women unabashedly share their hopes, desires, frustrations, and tribulations. They rant and rage about their sex lives, their interpersonal relationships, their Jewish lives and their political lives. "We've got a proud modern tradition of truth-tellers, from Belle Barth to Lenny Bruce to Sandra Bernhard, who take a more in-your-face, confrontational stance for the pleasure of challenging convention," write curators Sarah Lightman and Mi-

chael Kaminer.

By challenging convention, these women wield their pens like swords, erasing stereotypes about women in comics who traditionally flaunt fantastically perfect bodies. *It Ain't Me Babe*, published in 1970, was the first comic written and drawn by women to challenge the stereotypical female heroine in comic books. In 1972, Aline Kominsky-Crumb was featured in the first issue of *Wimmen's Comix*. Trina Robbins, one of the first producers of *It Ain't Me Babe* and of *Wimmen's Comix*, writes in an article for *The Jewish Daily Forward* that "Wimmen's Comix tackled subjects that the guys wouldn't touch with a ten-foot pole: abortion, lesbianism, menstruation, childhood sexual abuse."

Since then, women have followed Robbins's lead, expressing their individuality and power through comics. Instead of subjugating to the male hero, these women confront and attempt to overcome real issues. In Miriam Katin's comic, she must confront a fellow IDF soldier, Obadiah, when he makes the statement, "Well to hell with you. Who needs you? What are you anyhow? A woman. A female. A worthless nothing."

Yet through their comics, these women prove they are something, as they take their place in society as individuals. "I guess she's just expressing her individuality," Lauren Weinstein writes in her comic *Last Dance* about showing up at her prom in fish net stockings with razor-bladed runs. These women express their individuality as Jews unashamed to portray their bodies or their emotions vividly, honestly and intensely.

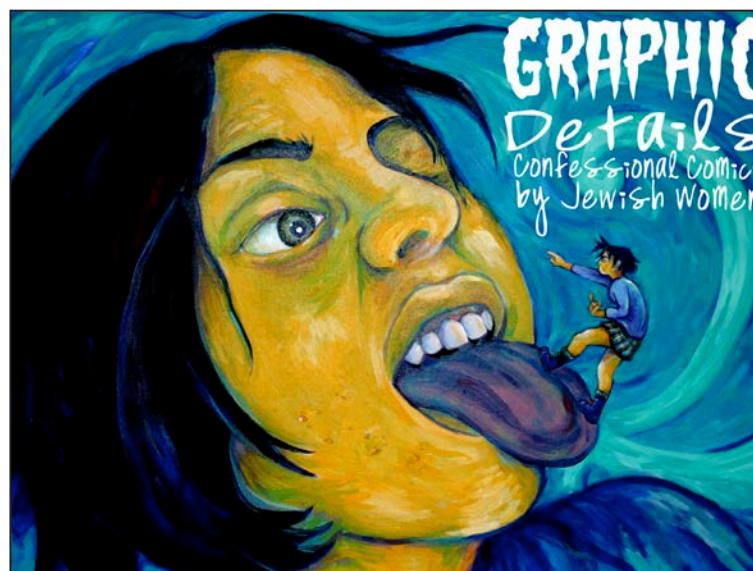
"I loved him with intensity. I hated with him intensity. There was no middle ground," writes Laurie Sandell in her comic strip *The Imposter's Daughter*. And in these comics, there is no middle ground. They are filled with intensity and contradiction. The form of comics—text and images in boxes—makes the juxtaposition even harsher—there are no transitions, plot twists are sudden, and people's lives take turns

for better or for worse in the space of a single page.

Not only do their lives change suddenly and untraditionally, but these women's emotions are far from safe or traditionally Jewish. Rottner compares waiting for Moshiah to waiting for a man to come and deliver her. He never shows up. In the world we live in, where Messianism is hard to picture, and Judaism is often hard to connect to, these women turn the bible on its heels. One uses the command for men not to wear women's clothing and juxtaposes it with men dressed in drag. In Davis's *Toys in Babeland*, a Hasidic man eavesdrops on two girls purchasing vibrators in a sex shop. Corinne Pearlman's comic *Show and Tell* is a small square panel of a girl in tears, crying, "In fact m-my parents are assimilated!"

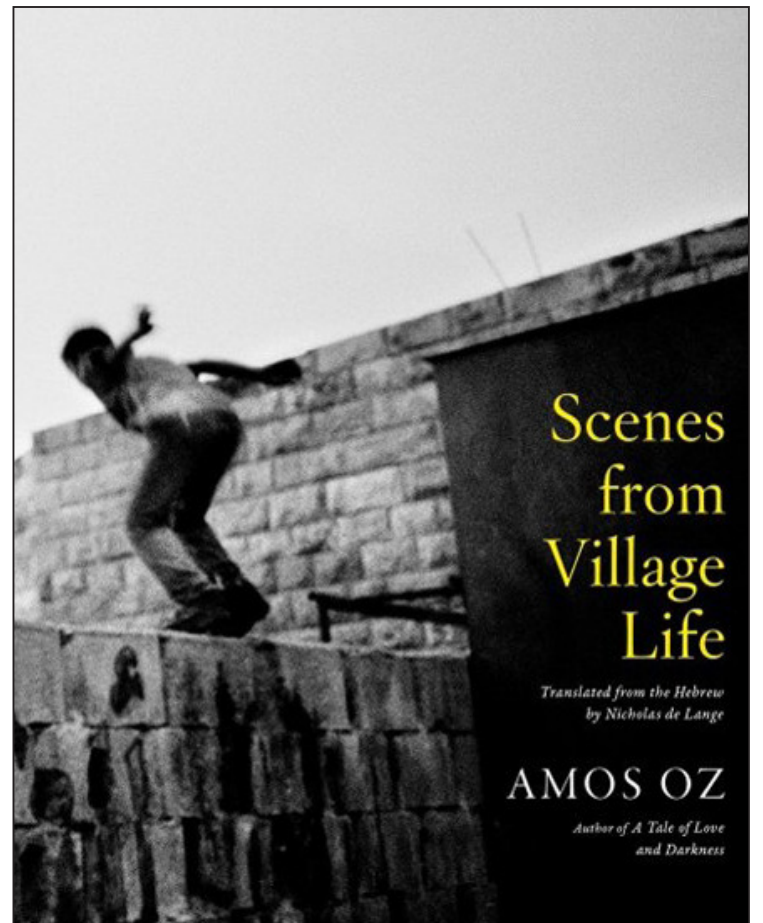
The exhibit combines both showing and telling. The age-old piece of advice for writers, "show, don't tell" is ignored, and appropriately so. As Pearlman writes, "the urge for Jewish women to 'show and tell' in graphic form is nothing new." In comics, the graphic side of show meets the verbal side of tell. And these two elements hand in hand create a powerful exhibition that ignores conventions even beyond this piece of advice. Comics present the perfect medium to do so, as Laurie Sandell said, "This form allowed me to tell a sometimes dark story with moments of levity and comic relief." By juxtaposing radical ideas with humor, text with image, traditional Jewish ideas with radical movements, and by bringing characters from one world into another, the viewer becomes a final character in this tragic comic world.

Graphic Details is on display through April 15, 2012 at the YU Museum. Admission to the YU Museum is free for students of Yeshiva University. An upcoming event, Jewish Women and Comics Symposium on Sunday, February 26, will bring together academics and cartoonists to discuss the art of graphic details and narrative, and the role of women and Jewish storytelling.



Female Jewish artists found successful expression of their tension via comic fine art.

Village Life



The Jewish Chronicle hails Oz's newest novel as "One of the most powerful works you will ever read about present-day Israel."

continued from page 10...

locust, even though he had spent all his life in Tel Ilan."

One is introduced to an "unhappy seventeen-year old" lusting after an older divorcee, the village librarian, determined to win her favor: "He waited for Ada Dvash to finish work...he preferred to stay in his room, reading or listening to music. His school friends enjoyed making noise, being surrounded by noise, whereas he preferred silence. That's what he'd tell her this time. And she'd see for herself that he was different. Special."

And then the couple who organizes community singing events, in memory of the young son who had committed suicide under his parents' bed and was only discovered the next morning, after they had slept in it. And, in "Waiting," published in *The New Yorker* several years ago, one meets the smooth-talking village mayor who waits for his disappeared wife, the kind of woman who "contained herself... but never forgot."

Perhaps most memorable is "Digging," the story from which Oz chose to read the most at the 92Y, in his measured staccato Hebrew. Oz artfully paints the tension brewing between a senile ex-Knesset member, the widowed daughter he lives with, and the Arab student lodger whom his daughter insists on helping. The old man insists that the Arab student is an anti-Semite, and while his daughter exclaims and asks what the student had done wrong, the old man responds, "He hasn't done anything. He just doesn't like us. That's all. And why should he? I don't like us much myself."

Later, in a rather brilliant dialogue between the old man and the student, the young man explains that he is writing a book: "I'm trying to write a book about you...and about us. A comparison."

The elderly Jew responds with a huff: "A comparison. What sort of a comparison?...To reveal our ugly face?"

"Not ugly, exactly. More like unhappy."

"And how about your face? Isn't it unhappy? Are you so pretty? Beyond reproach? Sainly and pure?"

"We're unhappy too."

"So there's no difference between us? If that's the case, why are you sitting here writing a comparison?"

The irony, and subtle humor, is palpable, heavy with what Dan Friedman of *The Forward* calls a "profound sense of uncanny foreboding", reminiscent of Kafka and of Elie Wiesel's *The Judgment*. Friedman has pinpointed strong parallels – just like Kafka and Wiesel, *Scenes from Village Life* is heavy in allegory, more so than any other work of Oz's. Which, as Oz himself explains at the 92Y reading, was a deliberate move on the author's part, an attempt to create a place in which deeper themes, beyond culture or geography, can be explored. Because literature, for Oz, is above all that very village, anonymous and mundane, a meeting point that transcends human differences.

"Think of Chekhov, Faulkner, Marquez," he says. "Remote places are what are most universal. Because universal, you see, is the opposite of international."



Notoriously uptight, pre-medical students can obtain the information they need to at least be successful.

The Idiot's Guide to Pre-Med (What They Don't Tell You)

ANONYMOUS

In the words of one of the more interesting characters in *The Devil Wears Prada*, "gird your loins" or, as I would like to say to my fellow pre-med-ers, brace yourselves.

The long road ahead is indisputably difficult, no matter how high you think your IQ is, or, more likely, how much higher you think your IQ is than the IQ of the guy sitting next to you. This difficult road was designed by medical schools in order to determine who can survive when the road becomes even more difficult. The sooner you become acquainted with the many hoops medical schools expect you to jump through, the better you will be as a competitive applicant. For example, you do not want to be doing intensive research the same summer that you will be preparing to take the MCAT.

Understand that there will be moments when you feel hopeless and overwhelmed, but that you will ultimately persevere and continue on. You will have sporadic meltdowns, wondering what happens when you do not get accepted into any medical school (although there are many backup plans). You may get frustrated that you have to memorize grasshopper appendages, while your friends are getting a "real" education. Unavoidable chemistry labs, which closely resemble Snape's potion class and are tediously long and pointless. Be forewarned, you will also relinquish Sunday football binges, a spirited activity in Morg Lounge. In short, your college experience will be very different than most of your friends. While you and your philosophy major friend both go to Yeshiva University, you are in an entirely different college.

However, despite how demanding pre-med might be at Yeshiva, take solace in the fact that if you

survive with respectable grades, you will be in good shape as an applicant. In truth, I cannot make such a claim at this juncture, as I am only a student and still very much in the process of pre-medicine. I cannot claim to have an omniscient view of the GPA cutoffs for getting a medical school interview. Moreover, even pre-health guidance cannot make definitive cutoff points. This is partly because the GPAs can vary (as evidenced by the students accepted) and because medical schools are somewhat fickle in what they are looking for. This does not mean that someone with a poor GPA has a chance of getting into Johns Hopkins. Getting stellar grades should be the primary objective of a pre-medder, but NOT the only objective. Medical schools are looking for students who are not only bright, but also have a combination of motivation, commitment, and personality. Thus, there are additional ways of making yourself a viable candidate, and GPAs for acceptance can vary.

How can a student compensate for a substandard transcript? This question really touches the core of pre-med responsibilities. An admissions board member of Mt. Sinai Medical School once explained to me what he coined "the four pillars" of pre-med:

- MCAT score
- GPA
- Extra-curricular activities
- Letters of recommendation

To be considered by an American medical school, you will have to have a solid foundation in all of the pillars. Take a pillar away and your application becomes substantially weaker. Now, having four different pillars as the barometer of your overall character allows room for flexibility and individuality, a topic we will later discuss in detail.

Additionally, as a pre-med student, you will not only have to strengthen these "four pillars" to the largest extent possible, but you must incorporate downtime and a social life into your schedule. Right now you may be asking, "Is there such a thing as a pre-med student with an active social life?" Such an ostensibly oxymoronic life is indeed possible. The only way to attain this ideal, balanced, four-pillared pre-med-with-a-social-life model is to have proper time management of the "here and now" while simultaneously being a conscientious and farsighted planner.

Therefore, the goal of this column is to first explain all aspects of the four pillars in detail. After examining the basic core pre-med program, some strategies will become obvious. For example, if one takes his science prerequisite courses seriously, this will make the impending MCAT much easier to prepare for. Even while analyzing the four pillars in their proper detail, I hope to be at least mildly entertaining and offer some refreshing perspectives. I will also divulge some of the secrets I collected from chatting up various doctors. Lastly, by doing this, I hope to alleviate some of the more common pre-med symptoms (fear, anxiety, tachycardia, chest pain, night sweats, etc.).

Stay tuned for follow up articles regarding the story of the successful doctor who sucked at Yeshiva pre-med, perseverance as a pre-med despite some below-average grades, and maintaining integrity despite intense competition.

Sincerely,

Trying to stay on the road while maintaining my ideals and principles through the cutthroat program of Yeshiva College pre-med

How to Fix the Patent System

By ARIEL KRAKOWSKI

Why do patents exist? A person does not inherently own the rights to his ideas.

The patent is an artificial construct to encourage innovation in areas that otherwise would be underdeveloped. For example, certain companies invest millions of dollars in Research and Development and only get a return on their investment if they own exclusive rights to their inventions for a certain period of time. In this way, the patent system can encourage innovation.

However, in many areas, the current patent laws cause the exact opposite to happen. Software patents are often given as the prime example where patents end up stifling innovation. Frequently, patents are granted for ideas that are not really that innovative. Often patents are granted when similar ideas had been floating around before. In other cases, many people can come up with the idea independently, but one company manages to patent it first and exclude others from using it. In fact, even if a person is only later able to come up with the idea on his own, why should the initial patent prevent him from using his idea? He was able to discover it without their help. What economic good is served by preventing him from using it? It would be difficult to prove he never saw the original patent, but the system should be adjusted so only extremely innovative ideas are granted a patent.

Another issue with the patent system is the inefficiencies and costs involved. It costs many thousands of dollars to apply for a patent, and then it can take the government years to process the patent. The whole system is slow and inefficient. Patents should have a much higher bar to be granted, but there should also be a quicker, cheaper process to maintain one.

Recently, some people have begun crowd-sourcing some of the patent review process. Instead of just having inefficient government clerks reviewing the patents, the process is open to the wider public. This way, many people can review the patents to check if they involve any "prior art". This is a step in the right direction, but the very definition of the patent needs to change. Even if a patent does not involve prior art, who says the idea is so innovative that others couldn't have thought of it on their own?

Instead of just checking the patents for prior art, I suggest a more radical move. If an idea truly deserves to be patented, then no one else should be able to think of the same idea on their own. To apply for a patent, a person or company would have to submit the problem they are trying to solve, and the general area of the solution they have in mind. All this would be posted to a public

website. The actual proposed solution would be posted privately to the patent site. If no one can suggest the same solution, then the patent is truly innovative and will be granted. But if people can come up with the same solution on their own, then no patent would be granted. Why should there be a patent, when others were able to figure out the same idea?

This new system would greatly reduce the number of patents granted, but it would fit with the way ideas are actually discovered. In a recent paper, "The Myth of the Sole Inventor", Mark Lemley demonstrates that most inventions are invented simultaneously by different groups of people working independently of each other. There is little reason why one group should be granted exclusive rights to something that another group is already working on. In my proposed solution, multiple groups would be able to submit their ideas to one site, and instead of a patent being granted, the idea would become open to the public. The companies would still be encouraged to submit their ideas, whether to get their patent or to prevent their competitors from patenting the idea.

By having the general public review the patents, people will suggest more unique ideas, and this will lead to even more innovation. Of course, this system will lead to large numbers of submissions, and new methods will be needed to categorize and process all the patent data. In the current system, the patent-reviewers do not even have access to the internet when reviewing patents. In the new system, all patent applications will be well categorized and tagged and have clear semantic data that could be processed by computers. This way, it will be much easier to find related patents, and perhaps even to discover what areas are ripe for new ideas.

The entire patent process would be much quicker and cheaper. Instead of paying government clerks to review the patents, the process would be a global collaboration. People and companies will compete with each other to suggest solutions to the problems or to find related patents. There could even be financial incentives, or there could be certain opportunities for suggested ideas to be patented themselves. But people would likely partake in the process without even getting any money, as they do on sites like Wikipedia and StackOverflow.com. However it is done, the whole process will be much faster and cheaper than the current system. Many details of such a system would still need to be worked out. Perhaps it could then be tested out in a small area of software patents. If such an idea succeeds, it could lead to greater innovation, a greater spread of ideas, reduced legal costs, and a true stimulus for the economy.

To Kindle a Soul

BY ALEX PORCELAIN

For thousands of years humanity has depended on the information, stories and guidance of books. Books are so essential to the development of society that we devote special attention to the means of written communication when studying any period in ancient history. We learn about the papyrus scrolls used to document the laws and tenets of ancient Egypt and hear about stone tablets used to facilitate intellectual discovery in Ancient Greece. When it comes to more modern histories, there is also a strong focus on physical written works. Most of us can readily identify Johan Gutenberg as the guy who invented the printing press in 1439. We analyze newspapers and important publications, tracing their impact and noting their historical significance. In short, books have been around for a while, and they've always been important.

But I don't think anyone needs to be convinced how central books are to every aspect of our experience as human beings. After all, we are the people of the book, right? In case you forgot, I'll remind you how the centrality of books is not just historical. As Yeshiva students, we spend countless hours each week poring over the texts of our Bible, *sifrei halacha*, and the Gemara. We rely on a sturdy *mesorah* that ensures us our *sifrei Torah* are kosher (and deal with a complex set of *halakhot* if there is even one mistake) and can create great *chiddushim* from what may seem like the smallest change in phraseology. We avoid resolving a commentary to the question of *girsas* changes or typos by "the guys who printed it".

These are all products of a world in which written communication was something physical. Until recently, books and the information they conveyed were guaranteed to end up on a tangible page somewhere. Whether you were the King of England or a *bachur* in the *beis*

medrash of Ponovezh, you could always hold the book you were reading. You could touch the words. You could smell the pages. You risked getting ink on your hands. There was something special about books, regardless of the words inside. Fast forward a whole bunch of years and society progressed. Technology slowly improved. First there were blogs, online newspapers and scanned copies of physical books. We built an internet that could host an infinite wealth of information. Who needs ink on a page? Save the trees. Say goodbye to big bulky dictionaries and encyclopedias. We could do without those. It's all online anyway.

There were a good number of years when internet and print media coexisted. We checked the news online, but made sure we still read the newspaper. We didn't place laptops loaded with the Bar-Ilan program beside Vilna Gemaras. There was something intangibly less holy about the computer version. We knew the technology was able to get us all the information and text we could ever want, but we were skeptical of the quality. Same with secular stuff. We weren't ready to embrace the experience, and forgo the countless hours our predecessors invested in writing physical books. We didn't know if the digital version would provide us with the same experience. Many wondered, "Will I feel as good

about it if I do *shnayim mikrah* from a laptop?" or "Can I feel the same emotions Emily Dickinson was conveying if I read her poem online?" In both the secular and Torah realms, there was a brief time when society was hesitant to equate physical books with digital text.

But in the past few years technology companies have upped their game. With smartphones, tablets and e-Readers came the loss of all reservation. Today any popular book can be acquired digitally. No questions. Popular books from hundreds of languages are now available on the Barnes and Noble Nook or Amazon's Kindle. And if you don't want to spend another \$179 for a specialized device for e-books, there are free Kindle Apps available for the iPad, PC and smartphones. Once you have one of these things,

it becomes so much easier to just download your textbook. With five button clicks and a seventy-six-second wait, you can have almost any textbook at your fingertips. And it will only weigh 8.7 ounces (if you get the newest model of the Kindle). These companies make it too easy for us to give up old fashioned bound books. Newspapers and magazines automatically downloaded each day. Kindle just announced its lending library, which will allow users to "borrow" digital copies of popular titles for free. You can walk around with *Shas* and *poskim* in your pocket. Each day, e-Book and tablet technology is growing, adding more content and allowing for more features. Anyone who embraces the new technology can save a lot of time while minimizing technical stresses like finding books and flipping through pages. When enough books are streamlined and the technology is around for long enough, e-Book and tablet users will eventually save money too.

While there are still plenty of people who enjoy reading their *Wall Street Journal* with their arms fully extended, and many schools use a variety of claims to explain why children should learn things the old-fashioned way, many predict the next generation will give up on printed materials completely. Our global tradition as book readers will be

nearly extinct in developed countries. Even if this vision of complete extinction isn't true, there will certainly be a mass shift away from using printed materials. Books will be another thing of the past.

For Orthodox Jews, however, printed material will never lose its value or prevalence. We are steeped too deeply in studying ink and paper. We have extensive literature on the laws of *tefillin*, *mezuzot*, and *sifrei Torah* to remind us how important physical writing is to our tradition. When it comes to learning, we believe in "Open a book, read what it says, follow it", not "log on, search for the keyword, copy and paste." Books will never lose popularity to technology, because on a global level, most people learning in a yeshiva anywhere in the world would be penalized if caught with laptop, even if they were "preparing *mareh mekomos*." Forget that we'll never be able to use our Kindle on *Shabbos*, many argue that using a computer or tablet somehow affects the experience. That's hard for some of us to digest. Here at YU, students can be seen tapping away at the keys of a laptop in *shuirim* and *sedarim* throughout the year. It's quicker. We can collaborate. I can study better for the *bechina*.

Make what you will of technology's new offerings. Embrace them and be inconvenienced a bit or shun them and maybe connect to the deeper experience. The specs of these devices are incredibly impressive. I was so impressed and tempted to purchase one that I converted what was set forth as a product review for Amazon's Kindle into this broader discussion of what we as YU guys have to gain or lose by relying on newer technologies. Some guys swear by it for books and *sefarim* alike. Others are reserved, scared that bringing technology into our reading and learning will somehow compromise the wisdom and depth we hope to gain through the text. Who knows.



A Pre-Season Review

BY NOAH BOTWINICK

The YU Men's Basketball team is looking to regain some of its mojo after finishing a dismal 7-18 last season and being ranked 8th out of 10 teams in the Skyline Conference. Heading into the first game of the season, which tips off in 2 weeks, the team is looking to erase last year's bad memories. With two weeks left to practice and one successful scrimmage against Queensboro already behind them, the team looks poised to turn last year's season into one that can be known as

merely a transitional year after the Martin Leibovich era.

As Queensboro and a few loyal fans saw in the 10-point YU victory last Wednesday night, the YU team features some new powerful additions to help bolster a now deep rotation. 6'8" big man Arman Davtian from Haifa has already earned himself a spot in the primary rotation with his quick moves to the basket and strong finishes inside, and being quite large. Arman, who played division two at Rockhurst for two years, will add to an already strong lineup of big men with 6'6" shooter and prolific scorer Dovie Hoffman

from Tarzana, 6'6" athletic freak Yoni Eckmann from Wynnewood, and talented finisher and team energizer 6'6" Shlomo Weissberg from Skokie. All three American big men saw lots of playing time last year and have proved themselves capable against any team in the Skyline conference, especially with 6'10" rim-rocking backboard-breaking dunk-machine Lester Prosper from Old Westbury having graduated last year. Currently recovering from an injury is fifth-year 6'4" big man Ohad Babo, who also looks to help bolster YU's imposing presence in the paint.

Another much talked about new addition is Benjamin "Benji" Ritholtz from Merrik. Many YU students have already seen the 6'3" Benji light it up with his money shooting from deep within three-point territory at the annual high school Saracheck tournament, two years ago. They are looking forward to seeing him continue his tenacious shooting spree on the college level. In the scrimmage last week, Benji was given plenty of playing time and drilled a deep three pointer, and sources within the team were hopeful regarding his shooting abilities based on his performance, which

was considered impressive for a rookie in his first game in college.

Benji is not the only blond-haired rookie 6'3" Ben from America, however, as Ben Silver from Valley Village has also made his presence felt. Ben is a high-percentage shooter as well, who can also play the small forward position. In three years the YU team is going to be all about the Ben-Ben combo, sources have predicted.

If these were the only new additions the team had this year "it would have been enough," in the words of the famous *Haggadah*

See *Pre-Season*, page 16

YU Cross-Country: A Way of Life



Meirah Freiden and Benjamin Joslin. Credit yumacs.com

BY ELANA GOLDBERG

Much to my dad's chagrin, I was never very good at being sporty.

Sure, I tried my best. Begged my parents to put up four squares' worth of concrete in the backyard so I could "shoot hoops" (it now functions as an excellent patio ground for our *Succah*). Went to tennis day camp (for approximately four days before a "shoulder injury" took me out of the game. I was, obviously, devastated). I even tried my hand at soccer (fractured greenstick in my left wrist, but the knee socks were pretty cool).

Try as I might, by the time the other girls in my grade caught up to my early growth spurt and I went from a starter on my eighth-grade basketball team to most enthusiastic benchwarmer—thanks for the confidence boost, Coach Shyman—I was ready to trade in my Air Jordans for...insert non-stereotypical-but-adequately-feminine shoe of your choice.

So last spring, I tried out for the YU Cross-Country (XC) team on a whim. Running had always been my favorite way to burn off the calories from the occasional (daily) donut, and I figured it would be a good way to exercise. After huffing and puffing my way through a 5K (approximately 3.1-mile) race, I made the team, and officially became a part of YU athletics.

Based on my past experiences with the sporting world, I figured my career on XC would be a short-lived one. However, something different happened with this sport than with the rest. I became committed. I was driven. I was *motivated*.

Why? Because XC isn't just a sport. It's a way of life.

I know, cue the national anthem and a slow-mo shot of the team bursting through a YU athletics banner in a crazed display of victory. But as cliché as I just sounded, it's true.

Some people seem confused about the draw of XC. One of my friends incredulously asked me one morning why I put in all this effort

"just to run." And I totally hear her. When most people think running, they envision offensively short shorts (unfortunately true) and people running around for ostensibly no good reason whatsoever. But what people don't realize is that running, and learning to run right, actually affects every part of your life. Running the actual races is just the cherry on top of a giant, XC-flavored cake (low fat and whole wheat during training season).

Running XC teaches perseverance. It teaches discipline. It teaches you to push yourself farther than you ever thought possible. Since running is largely mental, XC teaches you that your fastest is never really your fastest, and that only you stand between you and victory. XC teaches both developing your individual strengths and learning to function as part of a larger team.

Obviously the physical aspects of XC are vital to our successes as runners. Running takes a fast (hehe) toll on your body, and the only remedies are stretching, ice packs, and rest. Unfortunately the last solution is not an option during training and racing season, so if there's ever an ice shortage in the YU caf, you can bet an XC runner has something to do with it.

Eating right is also a must, and contrary to popular belief XC runners do *not* starve themselves. The very opposite—the boys eat like pigs, and the girls eat like super delicate, feminine pigs (the girls also don't sweat—we *glisten*). We just make sure to eat the right things, like proteins and carbs, especially before race days. At pre-season camp at the Kutcher Sports Academy in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, I can proudly say that our boys were the last ones at the tables every time (take that, soccer).

More important than the physical demand of XC, however, is the mentality required to run, and run well. Serious running requires extreme dedication and resolve. At the beginning of the summer, XC Coach Ben Joslin doled out individualized training schedules that had us running 5 or 6 days a week. Now that

school is in full swing, the girls have daily 6:30AM runs and the boys run every night. It's a huge time commitment, but more than that, running is exhausting and at times frustrating. To push through the physical and mental pain we need positive attitudes and drive, and that's often something a person has to cultivate rather than draw from naturally. I can honestly say that I think I've become a more positive person since joining the XC team.

This is not to say, of course, that running XC can't be an extremely gratifying and satisfying experience. This season especially, the XC team is setting quite the standard at the races. Thus far in the season both the men's and women's teams have placed 2nd overall in the two races run at Van Cortlandt Park, the Baruch Cross-Country 2011 Invitational and at the Queensborough Invitational a week later. Out of those two races, several of our men and women "medaled" (made-up XC verb indicating one who receives a medal at a race), meaning they finished in the top 15 or 20 of over 90-odd runners. We will race our two championships post-*Chagim*, titled the HVMACS/ HVWACS and the Skyline Championships, and we aim to surpass our prior achievements at those two final races.

The YU XC men and women's teams are going somewhere this season that no prior XC team has dared venture before. We are turning running into an actual, verifiable sport at YU, into teams that—hopefully—win trophies, but more importantly, win respect in representing such a challenging yet rewarding sport. I say without any hesitation that I love the XC team, and I think that every member of the team would admit the same. We are fast, we are strong, and we are good. It gives me great pride and pleasure to be a part of something so monumental, and my hope is that this year sets a precedent for continually raising the bar on the XC teams for many seasons to come.

If only Coach Shyman could see me now.

Macs Begin Season Anew in Non-Conference Schedule

BY NATHAN JAPHET

After a dismal conference showing this year, the Mens' Soccer team has turned it around during the non-conference games schedule. This year, the Macs were winless for all nine of their conference games. The poor showing was due to an inability to generate enough possession for any offense to develop out of the midfield. As a result, the opposing team often controlled the ball in the Macs' side of the field and would eventually exploit a weakness to score. Another glaring weakness was the mental side of the game; the team would often let up a goal and get dejected instead of bouncing back.

The winless record did not mean, however, that the team always played poorly. The team had some brilliant displays of individual talent. Benjamin Guigui, a freshman from France, quickly developed into the striker role, scoring a beautiful long range goal against St. Joseph's. Simon Goldstein, a transfer student hailing from Vienna, Austria, often blew by defenders with his dribbling skills. The duo of Daniel Benchimol, the team's field general and Captain Jack Sztrigler developed into an efficient and quick passing midfield unit. Though it would display lapses, the flat four defensive line gelled into an unit, and caught opponents' offenses offside, including catching NYU-Polytechnic offside 11 times. Adam Barel admirably filled in as goalkeeper for the injured starter Joey Blechner.

As a whole, the team fought hard against two top teams, losing 5-2 to Maritime and 6-1 to St. Joseph's of Long Island and in two 4-0 losses to Old Westbury and Mt. St. Vincent, the team put up much more of a fight than the score suggested. Specifically, in the Mt. St. Vincent game, the team let up three quick first half goals and was in danger of letting the game run away. During halftime, the team gathered and declared that the game was still winnable and that it simply would not give up. Though Mt. St. Vincent scored one more

goal, Yeshiva actually dominated the second half, with more shots on goal and more possession of the ball than the opponents. The game marked a turning point for the men with the team banding together and becoming mentally tougher.

After returning from the Chagim break, the team started on its non-conference schedule, facing teams that, on the whole, are less competitive than the teams in the Skyline conference. The men emphatically beat St. Joseph's of Brooklyn 5-0, featuring a goal and three assists from Guigui, two goals by Benchimol, and one goal by defensive midfielder Max Burton. In the next contest, the men faced off against Berkeley College of NJ. Last year, Berkeley beat Yeshiva 6-2, and in the start of this year's contest, after a back and forth first half, scored one goal. In the very beginning of the second half, Berkeley scored again, but instead of folding, the Macs fought back with grit, diving and sprinting for every ball. In the 84th minute, sophomore David Roumani reaped the benefits of the team's efforts and guided a rebound from a beautiful free kick by Benchimol into the back of the net. Yeshiva kept up the pressure and came with inches of tying the game on another scorching attempt by Benchimol. Though the game ended in a 2-1 loss, it showcased the newfound toughness and brotherhood of the team.

In their latest game, the Macs beat Sarah Lawrence 1-0, with senior Zecharia Hirsch scoring his first goal of the season off of an assist from Benchimol. The team played what the players generally agreed was their best game of the season in preserving the lead in a tight game as well as playing a free-flowing and offensive minded game. Through the start of the non-conference schedule, the Macs are now 2-1 with two shutouts. The Macs will next face St. Joseph's of Brooklyn in a rematch on 11/7 and hope to take their winning momentum into the team's two final matches against City College and Berkeley College of NY.



YU, in Love and Squalor

BY ISRAEL HELLER

The Wilf Campus can, when the sun is right and the students are tucked away in class, achieve a quiet, nearly aching beauty. The benches gleam with late rays, and the heart of the city can be glimpsed all the way down the avenue. Problem is, this can all be a bit much to process when you're late to class due to some unspecified registrar snafu. Note that I use the term snafu the way WW2 soldiers used it. Fubar works here as well, if you can't get your IBC credits straight, or were one of the (seemingly) randomly selected students to be prosecuted for *shiuur* tardiness. The darker side of CJF raffles indeed. You then go off to class, which can range from the kind of enlightened discourse and knowledge dissemination that remind you of the wonders of idea and thought, to the kinds of Draconian hellholes Kafka dreamt about from his insurance desk.

My point is as follows: Yeshiva University plays host to a wide variety of events and occurrences; scenes, in short. (I feel like I should acknowledge the pun in some way, as tribute to section overlord Kaufman.) I would like to take the opportunity to detail and discuss a few scenes that I've either experienced or fabricated. These situations for me capture in some small way the overwhelming and multifarious experience that is the Jewniversity. (Half-hearted apologies to Touro, Lander, Ner Yisroel, etc. Shut up Hebrew U.)

Let's start with something basic, the roommate. I remember show-

ing up the first day of my first semester, going through the whole check-in routine, waiting on line for photo ID, signing a bunch of random forms and getting my keys, all these little rituals culminating in that grand moment: my arrival in my dorm. There I waited for the person I was going to be living with for the next four months, perhaps the next 36, as some are known to do. I sat on my nice soylent-green-based mattress and waited for the man. He never showed up, because it turned out he didn't exist. The gods of admissions frowned upon the size of the incoming class, and so the gods of housing smiled upon me in turn. I had my own room. Ok so this scene is basically irrelevant for most of you. My bad. Next scene.

From the fresh-faced innocence of orientation we now travel to the furthest reaches of damnation, the wretched pit from whence original sin sprang forth as well as the site of our next scene: registration. Now, many of us registered in Israel. We had to get on the bus to the top of some annoyingly outskirts-ish hill in Jerusalem, and eat stale *rugelach* while a dean exhorts to take classes on topics so boring our mind barely perceives them in the interest of self-preservation. This is but the prelude to some more sinister fugue, that of walking into Furst, and taking the right-hand path (devious!) to the Registrar. Abandon hope, and future career aspirations, all ye who entre. Just try to remember as you're being bounced from desk to desk that this not the sum total of YU, though granted that is difficult when you get a CRN error message along the lines of Error: Wrong Eye Color

or whatever. We move on.

The next scene for our purposes would have been the Caf Store, in all its gouging glory, but it hath been corrupted in the name of progress and arbitrary rearranging. It did make room for some Starbucks-on-campus licensing though, so all's fair in love and capitalism, I guess.

So we detour to the Heights Lounge. What I can say about the Heights Lounge. Fairly little to be honest, but people seem to spend much much time here, so it has to be mentioned I guess. About half of YU's procrastination gets done here, as well the President's Town Hall Meetings. Which is more enjoyable is a matter of preference I imagine. Here one can glimpse the YU social scene in all its barely extant glory.

People, in variously colored clothing, gather around one another at couches and tables and converse. It seems nice. I usually find a corner and drown it out with something loud and cacophonous, but even then, I'll spot that one person who sees the light of day biannually, and I'll have to go say hi. This is the heights lounge. Quite the scene.

The shuttle. If going out and doing things in fairly loud environments appeals to you, you will be patronizing YU's shuttle service. Here we have our third scene, but like every other scene here, it has many permutations of such. There's going downtown: The Before, and back uptown: The After. But to be honest, pre-gaming has served to eliminate such distinctions. Here

much of what makes YU unique and banal comes into play. It's as fascinating a scene as any. Leaving aside all the easy jokes and commentary about men and women that the shuttle has entailed, there is much going on here. It's one of the few venues where the many many many MANY social mores of YU are tweaked if not abandoned, if only for certain stretches of the FDR. Seeing a wide variety of fellow students, and hearing what adventures and misdemeanors they plan on getting up to is a lesson all its own. It is here that the unspoken boundaries and groupings of the Caf and Heights Lounge seem to melt away in the darkness of the shuttle's interior. Who knows, if there's a traffic jam, you may even make a new friend, or not. I love my headphones.

I haven't even gotten to Morning Programs, or the CJF, or even indeed the Town Hall Meetings. Those all deserve articles too, but I'm only capable of generating so much venom at once, and I'm only ceding YU so much *vis-a-vis* my mental health. Anyways, where was I. Oh yes, YU. Number 45 with a bullet. Your one-stop shop for nobility and ability, or something like that.

So the next time you encounter some sort of social or bureaucratic situation that has you beseeching the heavens for answers, remember this. This is Yeshiva University, and you have a much better chance for salvation if you join an *a cappella* group or go on a CJF trip to the Congo. That's about it really. If all else fails, well, the Counseling Center is that way, and their competence will both shock you and restore your faith. Nowhere But Here.



Inviting?

Pre-Season

continued from page 14...

Shel Pesach. However, the team has also been bolstered with beastly 6'3 forward Netanel Weinstein from Efrat and strong 6 foot point guard Adam Levine from Rishon Lezion. Both are, as noted, strong players who, combined with their speed and talent, could eventually work themselves into the rotation.

However, the bulk of the team's damage against other teams will likely come from returning players. Captain and third year starting PG Omer Haim, 5'9", from Rehovot, is back to lead the team again this year after being among the leaders in the conference in assists per game last season. Helping in the back court is shooting guard and fellow Captain Chen Biron from Tel Aviv, a 6'4" sharp-shooting three-point specialist with a quick release. Most of the scoring load is expected to come from third-year 6'5" Gil Bash, also from Tel-Aviv, who can inflict damage from outside, inside and is especially dangerous in the open court.

Assisting Omer off the bench and

his teammates on the floor is Ohio basketball legend David Schmelzer, an athletic 6'3" point guard who's added a deadly jump shot to his already loaded arsenal. Helping out as shooting guard is returning Niv Zinder, 6'1" from Tel Aviv, whose jacked build and blazing speed make him a lethal defender. Also playing the shooting guard spot is third year 6'3" Raphy Abergel from Montreal, whose jump shot from three-point range is inexorable when he catches fire. YU's roster also features returning 6' point guard Eitan Selevan, from Teaneck, arguably the quickest player on the team and one of the most talented ball handlers; fellow Teaneck resident and 6'1" second year guard Jon Furor, a fast, athletic multi-tooled player who led the team in points per minute last season despite coming off the bench; and second year 5'8" (but 5'9" with shoes) point guard Noah Botwinick from Riverdale, who likes mashed potatoes and has a cute dog named Sheba.

"This should be an exultant, jubilant season for us," says Davtian

while dunking over a less talented, less big player in the gym who was foolish enough to get in his way. "I'm particularly enthralled by the opportunity to embrace a consistent

role on the team."

"I'm gonna come watch them whenever I'm around," says Stern student Talya Shumacher, who happened to be walking in the library

while this article was being written. "It should be fun to see them competing with and hopefully beating some other universities."

Dorm Gourmet Rolling in The Middle East

BY ELAINA KAUFMAN

We all know there's no place like YU.

However, sometimes we crave the world beyond the good-looking post-grad-filled Third Avenue and the nocturnal St. Nick. This dish combines traditional American *fête* just in time for Thanksgiving mini-break, with that classic Middle Eastern condiment that New York hipsters can't seem to get enough of.

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Half cup of original hummus | Pepper |
| One small sweet potato (unpeeled) | Optional: sweet potato Terra |
| Dash of chili powder | Chips or veggies |
| Salt | |
| 1. Wrap potato in saran wrap and poke wholes with a fork. Microwave until soft (about four minutes). Let cool before removing the peel. | |
| 2. Mash well. | |
| 3. Stir evenly into hummus. | |
| 4. Add spices to taste. | |
| 5. Spread hummus on top. | |
| 6. Layer turkey onto wrap. | |
| 7. If you like an extra crunch, you can add sweet potato Terra Chip crumbles, potato chips, or veggies. | |
| 8. Roll wrap. | |

