



The COMMENTATOR

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After Four Year Freeze, Faculty Demand Salary Raises

BY Gavriel Brown

After four years of salary freezes and severely reduced pension benefits, the faculty of Yeshiva University has begun considering a range of possible protest measures to press the administration to roll out substantial salary raises. Talk of signing petitions, educating students, publishing an open letter in the press, and even boycotting graduation have all been floating around.

“We’ve really had enough,”

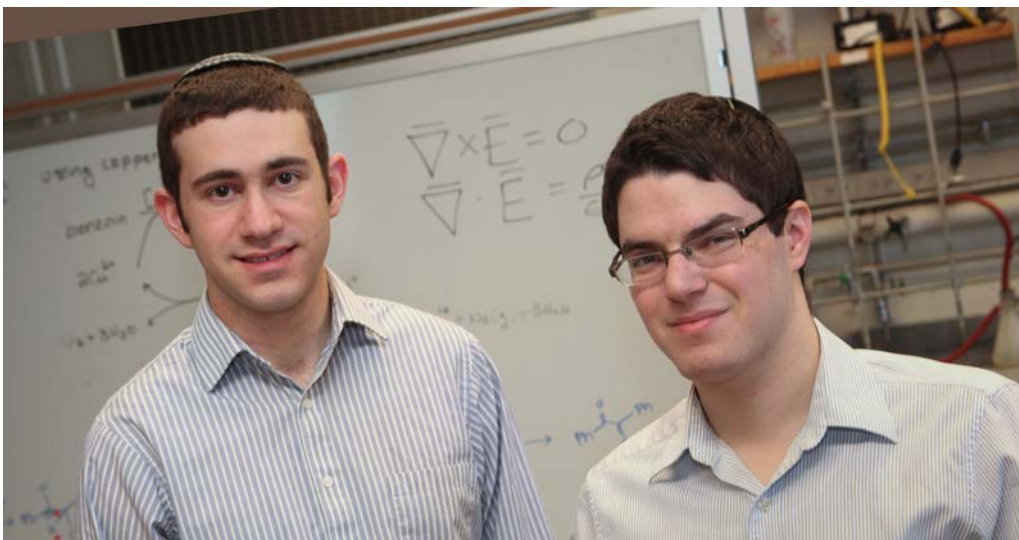
said a member of the faculty council, a university-wide governance board. Like all those interviewed for this article, this professor wished to remain anonymous. “We kept our side of the bargain—to roll out the new curriculum, to continue researching, and to continue teaching,” he said. “Now it’s time the administration kept its side of the bargain.”

A source within the faculty conveyed the general sentiment among the majority of faculty members: “We are demoralized and we feel uncared for

by the President and the Board of Trustees.” Other faculty members interviewed for this article echoed this feeling saying, “morale at this university is at an all-time low.” Another part-time faculty member said she and other lecturers in her department “feel under-valued and exploited.”

Faculty members insist that it was not simply morale at stake. They claim the capacity of professors to continue pouring in energy into teaching and research has been seriously

see **Faculty Cuts**, p. 4



YC Juniors Eli Grunblatt and Gilad Barach Received the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship

Student Election Roundup

BY EVAN SCHWARZBAUM

After being delayed by two weeks, Wilf Campus student government elections took place this past week and not without fanfare. Most positions featured competitive races between candidates with strong campaigns, making for an interesting lead up to the elections themselves. Aside from private campaigns launched by each candidate, students judged potential student leaders by their performance at the presidential debate and their presentation in a questionnaire appearing this newspaper.

The winners of the elections were first released by *The Commentator* and then distributed in a ystud as well by Canvassing Committee Chairman Tzvi Solomon. Most noteworthy were the presidential victors: Menachem Goldstein for YSU, Adam Zimilover for YCSA, Jesse Nathanson for SSSBSC, and Isaac Attia for SOY. Also remarkable were the two write-in candidates, Alan Avitan and David Bodner, who took the positions of YSU Treasurer and Senior Class Secretary, respectively.

Mr. Solomon was satisfied with the election process, particularly in light of the decision his committee made in the past weeks. “Postponing the elections awakened

see **Elections** on p. 3

NEWS BRIEFS

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

OUTGOING STUDENT GOVERNMENTS END YEAR WITH A BANG

Though election season brought in next year’s student leaders, this year’s counsel’s are going out with a bang. This past Shabbat, SOY-JSC and TAC teamed up to organize the year’s largest shabbaton bringing 80 men to the Bedford hotel and more taggers-on at Shabbat programming. Speaker Rabbi Ozer Glickman was unable to attend due to the unfortunate passing of his sister (B”DH), and all learning—lead by Nechama Price—was dedicated to her memory. The student governments added Lag Ba’omer programming to their agenda this year, bringing students to Tenzer Garden in a festive mood with pizza, fries, and ice cream. Other impressive year-end events have included a Yankees game attended by 100 students and an exclusive premiere of the highly anticipated movie remake of Yehuda Avner’s political memoir, *The Prime Ministers*.

SENIOR DINNER: WE’RE ON A BOAT

On Tuesday, May 7, the senior class celebrated its imminent graduation with a ride on a New York City yacht past the famous skyline and our city’s lovely Lady Liberty. More than 200 students enjoyed the Mendy’s catered event with sartorial flare, sporting formal attire and WASP-y attitudes to boot. After a magician barely contained the crowd’s growing anxiety from, the ship returned to dock and another class of YU graduates took their final school-bus ride back to their respective campuses. Congratulations to Senior Class Presidents David “Diesel” Muller and Atara Burian on a job well done, and to Vice President Brian Goodman on his election as next year’s Senior Class President as well!

YCDS AWARDS CEREMONY RECOGNIZES WINNERS, GRADUATES

On Wednesday night, May 8, a group about 50 strong congregated at the Schottenstein Theater for the 48th annual awards ceremony and reception. Notable among this year’s winners were Tani Isaac (Best Actor, *12 Angry Men*) and Doni Mandell (Best Actor, *Mister Roberts*), both graduating seniors whose outstanding performances the society will certainly miss. Moshe Wigder and Benjamin Weinreich also took home metal, receiving Best Supporting Actor for their roles in *12 Angry Men* and *Mister Roberts*, respectively, while Chief of Set Netanel Shafier received the coveted Krug Award recognizing an “excellent and definitive contribution” to the society on the technical side of the theater. Director Lin Snider wished well to several graduating members, while several others were inducted into the national dramatics society, Alpha Psi Omega.

CHRONOS HISTORY JOURNAL, YU JOURNAL OF FINE ARTS GOES TO PRINT

According to inside sources, the *YU Journal of Fine Arts*—also known as Something Rich and Strange or, more colloquially, as the Litmag—has gone to press and will soon be available to the student body and faculty for their reading pleasure. The *JFA* is an undergraduate journal of creative writing and visual art edited by students and composed entirely of student contributions. *Chronos*, the undergraduate history journal, has also gone to print. Both publications are put out annually with the support of the Yeshiva and Stern College Dean’s Offices. Look out for copies of this year’s journals at local YU newsstands in the coming weeks!

COMMENTATOR STAFF TURNING OVER, GAVRIEL BROWN NAMED EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As the academic year comes to a close, the 77th year of *The Commentator* comes to an end as well. With the new year will come some continuing staff, some internal shuffling, and some as always, new writers, editors, graphic designers, web designers, business managers and other assorted positions. *The Commentator* is glad to announce that Gavriel Brown will be leading this newspaper as Editor-in-Chief in the coming year. Gavriel began as a writer, moved up to become Features Editor and then News Editor, and has written many long, diverse, and important articles in *The Commentator* and other student publications. Brown has won YU’s “Point of Light” award and was recently awarded first prize in the 2013 Eli Wiesel Prize for Ethics Essay contest. Enthusiastic students looking to get involved with *The Commie* should contact Gavriel or any member of the staff for more information about getting involved in the best extra-curricular on campus.

STAFF EDITORIALS

At The Crossroads

BY EVAN SCHWARZBAUM

When I recently heard that Rabbi Dr. Aaron Segal would be hired as the new professor in the Yeshiva College philosophy department, I couldn't help but think about—nay, gorge myself on—the fantasy-world the hire promised for the future of YU: a YC graduate making for homegrown academic faculty; a philosophy professor whose doctorate from University of Notre Dame would wow people almost as much as his Talmudic prowess acquired over years of study at YU and Yeshivat Har Etzion; a real, living, Modern Orthodox, *torah umadda* personality at a flagship institution severely lacking in leaders dedicated to its own sacred mission.

This might just be a fantasy, and Segal might not be the Soloveitchick-eque savior that my mind wishes he would be. But his arrival—and the fantasy it engenders—prompted me to take pause and think about the current state of affairs at Yeshiva University.

When I first applied to YU—and through my years studying in Israel as well—it appeared to be a bastion of *torah umadda*, the center of the Modern Orthodox world that embodied and realized the inspiring philosophical teachings of The Rav and Rabbi Lamm that lay at the basis of so much of my religious experience until then, an ideal religious environment where the *beit midrash*, the lecture hall, and social activism merged into one. And though this perception may have been naïve and the result of simplistic and wishful thinking on the part of an idealistic teenager (it was), I do not believe I was the only one under such a spell; it appears to me that this understanding of YU is the one propagated by many *rebbeim* in America and Israel and by the institution itself as well.

But when I arrived at Yeshiva College—and I can speak only from my own experience and those of fellow students—such a robust and sophisticated environment is not what I encountered. Certainly, there was a strong *beit midrash* where I could learn *gemara*, high-quality classes for secular and even Judaic studies, extra-curricular activities for social and intellectual engagement, and CJB trips galore for activism and *tikkun olam*; but these separate opportunities did not overlap or integrate or cohere as one, but rather took place in parallel with each other, albeit on the same campus at the same time.

I am not asking that my university connect the dots for me; to a certain extent this lack of imposed ideology represents a mark of maturity, in that the school treats its students as adults capable of thinking through ideas independently. I am asking, though, whether YU represents—and actualizes—the idea of an integrated philosophy between Torah and Mada, Modernity and Orthodoxy, where the learning in the *beit midrash* draws

from sources, methods, and personalities in the College, and the academic classes draw from and relate to the ideas discussed in our sacred texts; where Modern Orthodoxy is performed not only with of Rabbi Brander in Nicaragua but with of the *roshei yeshiva* in Washington Heights as well. When do the Yeshiva and the University grow so distant from each other that they become, in fact, Ner Yisrael with Brandeis across the street?

President Joel is known to say that YU preaches (or pitches) a “Big Tent” where multiple streams and strains of Judaism and Orthodoxy can live in peace. And, indeed, why harp on subtle distinctions between groups that have so much in common and so much to gain from one another? As a flagship institution, it is YU's role to cater to and unite as many communities as possible. But all politics aside, it is worth considering honestly what it means to have a Big Tent and at what cost it comes.

By maintaining a Big Tent, YU can incorporate many different opportunities, ideas, and experiences, but cannot integrate them into a coherent whole; it is as though beneath the Big Tent sit hundreds of Little Tents, each spread out into its own corner, not interacting with any of the others. Because the institution is home to such diverse and contradictory personalities and philosophies, it is unable to articulate one meaningful message or agenda other than that it wants to be home to many messages.

To be clear, I do not mean to say that a Big Tent mentality is a bad thing, but only to hold up a mirror to ourselves so that we recognize what we are truly doing. To a certain extent, it may not be the goal for every student to excel in every area or to integrate them all but rather for each student to find his or her own way within an Orthodox environment. But for better or for worse, it appears that this is the philosophy our institution has taken over the past few years—to sacrifice a strong and integrated ideology for a weaker but broader coalition of groups.

And as members of this small community, it is in our own interest to remain cognizant of and honest about the path that our leading organization is following. If we agree with the direction YU is taking we should make our support clear, and if we disagree we should voice those concerns. In any case, though, we should understand the source of YU's decisions.

To that end, I return to my initial inquiry about leadership at Yeshiva University; who are the inheritors of our *torah umadda* forebears making the decisions about YU's ideological and philosophical direction? From another angle, are decisions even consciously made about these issues or do they simply “happen,” without any guiding voice? What is the role of the *roshei yeshiva* in this process? What about the President? And to what extent are these decisions made on an ad hoc, politically convenient basis on the one hand, or on ideological and philosophical grounds on the other?

Rav Soloveitchik and Rabbi Dr. Lamm can no longer respond and write to the critical issues of our time, articulating a sophisticated Jewish approach to modernity; and thus, we must ask ourselves, Who will lead Yeshiva—and the Modern Orthodox community in general—as we approach the crossroads between the cutting edge and the obsolete?

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The Commentator is the official student newspaper of Yeshiva University. For 76 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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The Commentator

is looking to expand its staff for next year.

Positions are available for **writers, copy-editors, photographers, graphic designers,** and **web designers.**

If you are interested in joining, please contact us at **CommentatorChief@gmail.com**



1 Reading Week

At a little over a week, reading week is definitely one of the best weeks of the year. Central Park, er, Game of Thrones, here we come!



2 Senior Dinner

Senior Dinner. Who doesn't love boats? And who doesn't love seniors?! Put the two together, add a professional photographer (and a not-so-professional magician), and douse it in some highly non-alcoholic beverages, and Lady Liberty will never forget that parte.



3 Election Extension

Extending the Wilf Campus election. It may have touched some people's funny bones, but we had a robust field and now a new slew of Presidents, Veeps, and other interesting, and formally women only jobs. Congratulations! You are now student leaders, now make something of it.



4 Shavuot

We might all pretend not to, but come on, we all know we love those dairy meals. Especially the morning-after ice cream and waffles. Who decided that was a thing?



5 Summer Hats

The Commentator supports all forms of summer hats including flat caps, gatsbys, deerstalkers, Balmoral bonnets, mortarboards, zucchetos, and especially cloche hats. We do not, however, condone the use or wear of baseball caps. Straw sun hats or fedoras are sometimes permissible, but consult a local authority regarding sombreros.



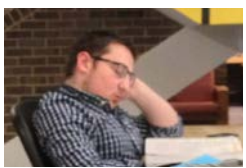
6 Fort Tryon Park on Shabbat

It's so darn sunny and so darn breezy and (perhaps as a result of those two factors) so darn beautiful and pleasant. Be careful not to carry or get too close to any ladies out there; there's no eruv!



7 Graduating

Finishing college is pretty awesome. If you're not lucky enough to be graduating just yet, just think about Rocky standing at the top of those stairs yelling "Yo Adrian" and multiply that feeling by a few thousand. That should get you pretty close.



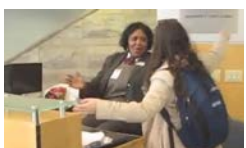
1 Reading Week

Shoot this means the year's almost over and I'm never gonna see my friends again and I'm graduating and I don't have a job and i have nothing to do which is so depressing and to make it all worse FINALS are coming up!



2 Finals Lady

The language in the YC email about the "return of the finals lady" struck both fear and a feeling of the return of michael jordan to the local JCC: In preparation for finals, please join me in welcoming back YC's Exam Director, Ms. Liz OuYang. We were pretty sure she wasn't 6' 6" apparently we were mistaken. .



3 SCW Campaign Videos

SCW campaign videos - we do care and we definitely know your names. Congrats! Our publicist knows all about post election damage control if you are looking for someone.



4 Finals After Memorial Day

Finals after memorial day. Who the heck wants to be sitting in a tiny chair attached to a tiny piece of wood ("desk") scribbling in a wide-ruled "blue-book" when you could be out on Fire Island hanging out with the wonderful grandchildren of Jay Gatsby? If you answered Leonardo DiCaprio, you fail.



5 Flowers

Flowers. Why would you give someone a gift that you know is going to die? It's just not nice. Think about it; when was the last time you gave someone a baby as a present? Yeah, I thought so.



6 Graduating

Eh, changed my mind, it's not so great. It's been a few months at this dumb entry-level job and I hate it already. Partying after graduation is sort of like when a toddler celebrates after getting up the first step in the staircase; you've got a long way to go, kiddo.indices, and Dow Jones industrial average all sunk between one and one-and-a-half percent each. We're not stock experts, but that just can't be good.



7 Last Commie Issue of the Year

It's been a good run this year, hasn't it. Thanks so much for reading, writing, ignoring, burning, blowing your nose, wiping Nagel tables, and reading The Commentator with us. It's been a pleasure to serve you and we hope you've enjoyed our services. Don't forget to vote for us in the upcoming elections!

Student Elections Cont.

several passionate students to declare their candidacy and ultimately enter into student council races, he said. "The Canvassing Committee is thankful for the outpouring support that we received from the student body, student councils, and the Office of Student Life."

Wilf Campus Director of Student Life Hezzy Jesin was similarly pleased, saying "The student leaders and the Canvassing Committee quickly recognized an issue that would have had a serious impact on the student body" and that "because of the way they handled the situation, even those that stood to lose the most from extending the deadline (the candidates who were running unopposed) not only took no issue with the decision, but even publicly supported it. This was an example of great student leadership."

Incoming SOY-JSC President Isaac Attia echoed that feeling too. "It's a real honor and privilege to represent the student body," he said. "It's a much more gratifying and heartwarming win because I had to fight for it. Knowing that it wasn't just handed to me but and that I earned it and that I have the support of the student body, makes it that much more enjoyable and gratifying."

SYMS President Jesse Nathanson expressed his feelings about being re-elected this year, which may be a first for his position. "I truly feel honored to be able to be involved with Student Government for another year. I think it takes a lot of time to get adjusted into the President position so I think it is positive that I know what to expect and hope to hit the ground running and waste no time transitioning into the job."

The new class of student leaders will make for an interesting year. While Mr. Nathanson and Mr. Zimilover bring extensive experience to their school-wide boards and Mr. Goodman to his class representation,

no other victors have experience in student government and some with little club leadership as well. But the outgoing student leaders do not seem worried.

"I do not think "experience" is the most important factor on the student boards because of the turnover that happens on the campus most years," SOY-JSC President Gabi Weinberg noted. I do hope that this year's boards can have ample meeting time with the elected leaders to pass the baton effectively. I think learning from the past year's mistakes is the best thing that we can give to the coming boards and I think we are both equipped and ready to share that advice."

Hoffman sounded a different note, suggesting that the experienced leaders would make up for any issues in other positions. "The lack of experience is somewhat of a disadvantage," he said, "but I think Jesse and Adam, two very strong, involved student leaders, will be able to make up for the experience that the other presidents lack. Having a president in his second term will be especially beneficial, and Jesse will enable the councils to more easily continue where we left off."

Adam Zimilover, outgoing VP and incoming President of YCSA who current president Adam Neuman claims is "constantly looking for ways to improve the Yeshiva College experience," had the most positive outlook on the matter. "I'm very excited to have the opportunity to work with other members of student council to improve upon what we did this year and to implement new ideas to better student life on campus," he said. "Most members of the student government are new to the councils and I'm looking forward to hearing the fresh perspective that they will bring to the table."

Jewish Studies Announces New Policies

BY ARIEH LEVI

Yeshiva University undergraduate students recently received an e-mail detailing the updated Jewish History and Bible requirements. Specifically, the new guidelines afford students greater flexibility in fulfilling the requirements.

For Bible, the previous guidelines dictated that each student fulfill four Bible requirements – one Introduction to Bible class, two "text-based" courses (Nevi'im Acharonim/ Ketubim), and one other Bible course, often "theme-based." The updated guidelines also require each student to complete four Bible courses; however, instead of two "text-based" courses, students are only required to take one. For the last two courses, students can now take a "theme-based" Bible course, a Jewish philos-

ophy course, or another "text-based" course.

For Jewish History, the previous guidelines required each student to fulfill two Jewish History surveys from different time periods. Though students must still fulfill two Jewish History courses under the new system, only one of those courses must be a survey while the second can be completed with any Jewish History course, survey or not.

According to Rabbi Akiva Koenigsberg, Associate Registrar, the changes were implemented due to student complaints that the old requirements were too restrictive. "Students wanted to be able to take other courses in these departments, and were unable to under the old system. The new one is much less restrictive."

Faculty Cuts Cont.

compromised. In a letter to the President and Board of Trustees, the faculty also claimed that YU has accrued a damaged reputation and therefore become “less and less competitive with its peer institutions.”

It's Not a Freeze, It's a Cut

In February of 2009, President Richard Joel announced drastic cuts across the university to help reduce the university's annual budget by \$30 million. He announced the laying-off of 60 employees, along with drastic cuts to non-personnel expenses. He announced a hiring and pay freeze for university faculty. Finally, the president announced a reduction in the matching contribution that the university would make to faculty pensions, cutting the maximum from seven percent to two percent.

“Faculty benefits—in this case, in the form of reduction in our retirement funds—are always the first things to be jettisoned,” a veteran faculty member told *The Commentator* in an interview. “It doesn't sound like a pay cut, but the rise of inflation and a reduction in pension-matching means most of us are earning 10 percent less than we did four years ago.”

Adjusted to the rate of inflation, the total loss of income for YU faculty due to the freeze amounts to at least 8.4 percent over four years. Workplaces automatically adjust for the rate of inflation by slowly increasing salaries year-by-year. According to recent findings by *NBC News*, the average median pay raise in 2012 was 2.8 percent. During the height of the recession, the national median hovered around two percent.

According to the American Association of University Professors, the average raise across American universities last year was 1.8 percent, or the approximate rate of inflation. At private universities, the raise amounted to 2.3 percent, or just above inflation; full-time professors earned raises of 3 percent. At Yeshiva University, the raise was zero percent.

Despite its neutral sounding name, a freeze does not adjust to the rate of inflation and thus essentially means a reduction in pay every year. While virtually every university in the country implemented pay freezes during the height of the recession, a large majority have lifted their freezes. Yeshiva University, however, continues to “balance the budget on the backs of faculty,” said more than a few full-time professors.

President Joel's salary, however, did not freeze. According to 990 tax forms available online, the President earned \$732,143 in base compensation in 2009 (this number does not include “other compensation,” “deferred compensation,” and “nontaxable benefits”). In 2010, he earned \$848,176, and in 2011, he earned \$879,821. According to *The Journal of Higher Education*, he was among the top twenty highest earning university officials in the nation.

The income disparity between top administrators and faculty is not limited to the office of the President. In 2011, Daniel Forman, Vice President for Development, earned over \$800,000 in salary and benefits. Provost Lowengrub earned over \$450,000 and Chancellor Lamm earned over \$500,000 in total compensation. The highest paid employee of Yeshiva University was Allen Spiegel, Dean of Einstein. He earned over \$1.2 million dollars in 2011.

Capping Retirement Benefits

Before 2009, the university would match faculty contributions up to a maximum of seven percent. After the recession, President Joel announced a sweeping reduction in the university's maximum contribution, capping the matching funds at just two percent.

A self-study report conducted by faculty

for the Middle States Commission emphasized that the five percent cut in compensation “must be considered in combination with the effective loss of 8.4% in the value of faculty salaries due to inflation over the past 4 years.” In essence, “faculty compensation has now fallen approximately 13.4% in comparison with what it was four years ago.”

As with all accredited American universities, Yeshiva University matches contributions to pension funds for professors. Unlike schools in the tri-state area, however, YU's contributions to faculty retirement plans are “ludicrously behind other universities,” as one tenured professor declared.

At New York University, five percent of a faculty member's salary is automatically set-aside for retirement, while the university matches voluntary contributions, up to five percent. At Columbia University, tenured faculty are matched anywhere from 5 to 12.5 percent maximum with other benefits. Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, will match faculty members up to 20 percent.

For YU faculty nearing retirement, YU's reduction in pension-matching has cost them tens of thousands of dollars in lost retirement funds. Money that could have been saved and then doubled by YU in preparation for retirement instead went unmatched for four years.

“STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW THAT THERE ARE FACULTY STANDING BEFORE THEM WHO ARE DEEPLY WORRIED ABOUT HOW TO MAKE ENDS MEET FOR THEIR FAMILIES,”

Some estimate their effective losses between 2009 and 2011 amount to a 13 percent reduction in pay every year.

A statistically significant survey of faculty members in 2012 revealed that as a result of the recession and retirement cuts, faculty have delayed retirement by an average of 1.5 years. For some academics, however, that number is in fact much higher. Indeed, a number of professors continue to teach because they simply can't afford to retire. According to one remark by a professor, the cuts are “making it more and more likely that I'll still be doddering down the hallways of Yeshiva University when I'm 90.”

“That's a big problem,” said an associate professor involved in researching faculty retirement. “Faculty who we would frankly want to see retire are instead sticking around because they can't afford not to.”

The Cost of Cuts

For untenured, tenure-track, and even tenured professors making ends meet in New York City, the cuts are both painful and disheartening. An anonymous survey sent out to Yeshiva College faculty by *The Commentator* revealed the full extent of the cuts on the lifestyles of faculty members. “Some days, I feel it's irresponsible of me to keep pursuing this work even though I love it,” said one professor. “I have two children and though I have never been wealthy, I have never before lived as paycheck-to-paycheck as I now do, which can be incredibly demoralizing.”

Of the faculty members who completed the online survey, the overwhelming majority felt the stress of the lost income. Most mentioned curtailing travel plans, either for leisure or for scholarly conferences. Some mentioned the difficulty of affording the “skyrocketing cost” of living in the city. A few were concerned about meeting basic expenses.

According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Yeshiva University associate professors earn an average of \$107,000, assistant professors earn \$89,000, while instructors make around \$63,000. A YU report to the Middle States commission, however, reported, “especially high salaries above \$130,000 are disproportionately reflected in the average salary and perhaps give a misleading initial impression of faculty compensation.” Significantly higher salaries in the psychology and law school further skew the results. Lastly, Yeshiva University faculty, unlike those at Columbia or NYU, do not receive subsidized housing worth thousands of dollars a year.

“Students should know that there are faculty standing before them who are deeply worried about how to make ends meet for their families,” read one comment. Another professor divulged, “After groceries, paying rent, electric, internet service provider, and phone, I am left with about \$100 for clothing, dry cleaning, haircuts, and leisure activities for the month. That's not much when you live in NYC.”

While older faculty deliberate on later retirement, a number of younger faculty members are considering—and some have even begun—secondary jobs. “I have been forced to take a part time second job,” admitted one faculty member. A noticeable minority of respondents mentioned taking on freelance writing to make ends meet.

Lifestyle changes have forced some faculty members to compromise on their academic pursuits. “My scholarship has definitely suffered because I cannot afford more childcare,” said a faculty member. “I put much less energy into my teaching and try to focus more on my research and my publications,” said one responder to *The Commentator's* survey. “More publications mean I will have a better chance [of] finding a job in a different university.”

Indeed, severe salary cuts have caused a vocal minority at Yeshiva to consider seeking employment elsewhere. Ten percent of faculty surveyed would consider quitting their posts if the May 20th meeting with the President and the Board of Trustees does not result in a significant raise. According to sources within the faculty, a number of professors have already left since the cuts began, seeking higher salaries and more secure appointments elsewhere.

“If we want to keep the university competitive we need to keep salaries competitive,” said one long-time faculty member. “We want to keep attracting the best educators and researchers, and you can't do that when salaries and job security are on the line.”

“Many junior faculty are looking for other jobs,” a university insider revealed in the survey. “If the University continues in this vein, it will lose all its young talent.” Responding to the survey, one faculty member said, “I am simply not going to be able to ‘afford’ working for YC a lot longer.” “I love my work, and I love being at YU,” said an employee of YU, “However, if an appropriate position comes up elsewhere, it would be irresponsible for me not to consider it.”

Despite Cuts, An Unwavering Commitment to Students

One recurring theme in the survey was the unwavering commitment of YC's professors to their students: “I feel strongly that students

should not suffer”; “students will always be my priority”; “It is morally out of the question to do anything that will harm students.” In the faculty survey, no faculty member even considered withholding letters of recommendations if the administration did not respond with pay raises. Only two professors considered withholding grades.

The firm promise to ensure student success has placed many faculty members in a bind. Boycotting graduation, withholding letters of recommendation, abstaining from organizing extra-curricular activities, and withholding grades are a common protest tactic used by exasperated university employees. At YC, however, the faculty body has overwhelmingly sided against anything that would hurt students. When asked in face-to-face interviews if they would boycott graduation, most answered in the negative. When asked if they would withhold grades, many recoiled.

The majority of faculty members have instead chosen a more direct route to the President and the Board of Trustees. In a May 2012 letter signed by over twenty key professors of YU's Faculty Council—including YC's Carl Feit, Gabriel Cwilich, Paula Geyh, Joanne Jacobson, and William Stenhouse—faculty protested the “breach of trust” between the faculty and upper-level administration. The cuts, the letter claimed, would “extend far beyond faculty morale.” It pointed to “rapidly deteriorating” academic departments and programs, “dwindling” course offerings, “rising” faculty-to-student ratios, and a greater reliance on adjunct faculty. The reductions, they insisted, would “take another generation” to recover. The Board of Trustees did not respond to the faculty letter.

On Monday, 23 heads of departments and important professors at both Yeshiva College and Stern College for Women shunned an evening reception at the home of President Richard Joel in complaint of the salary freezes. To avoid a potentially uncomfortable situation, the Office of the President cancelled the event only hours before it was scheduled to take place.

What Would it Take?

According to sources within the administration, talk of a one percent pay raise has been circulating amongst the Board of Trustees and trickled down to the ears of faculty members. “1% would be insulting,” insisted a long-serving full professor in reaction to the rumors. “After years of taking a 10% cut in salary, 1% wouldn't even equal the rate of inflation.” Indeed, a one percent “raise” would actually mean a .7 percent cut per year.

According to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, to stay solvent above the rate of inflation, YU would have to raise salaries by at least 1.8 percent. However, to solve the salary impasse, stay competitive, and reestablish trust, YU faculty demanded an average of 3 to 4.4 percent raise, an increase in the cap for the voluntary matching retirement funds from 2 percent to 4 percent, and a long-term, transparent compensation plan.

If the May 20th meeting of the President and Board of Trustees does not result in pay increases, some tenured members of the faculty have pledged to publically air grievances in area newspapers. “Making our grievances public to the general public is a last resort,” said one member of the faculty, “but because we have seen no progress in more private communication, we feel we do not have much of a choice.”

Mismanagement Stalls Publication of SAAC Evaluations

BY ARIEH LEVI

In the April 2011 issue of *The Commentator*, Gabriel Weinberg published an article entitled "SAAC Success: Professor Evaluations to be Available Online in Fall 2011". The article detailed a new plan to allow YC students online access to student evaluations of professors—a more tasteful and informative version of RateMyProfessor, according to the article. Widely applauded and anticipated by students throughout the university, the new system would provide a level of transparency unseen at YU in prior years.

Three years and three SAAC presidents later, the system is still offline.

Plagued by "security concerns" and a slow-to-act bureaucracy, the plan has fallen by the wayside and out of the discerning eye of the student body. Josh Zimmerman (YC '12) former President of SAAC, told *The Commentator*: "I think the ball's been dropped... I'm not really sure where it's headed now."

According to Mr. Zimmerman, the faculty was always on board with the project. A faculty committee consisting of professors Gillian Steinberg, Ariel Malka, Shalom Holz and Paula Geyh ensured that guidelines were in place to allay faculty concerns. Citing worries over professor reputation and tenure tracking, the committee demanded that the site remain inaccessible to members of the administration. The committee also required that access be available to professors in viewing their own pages, ensuring a level of professionalism.

By June 2011, SAAC and the faculty committee were prepared to launch the site. However, the project remains unfinished.

Many involved point to the university's ITS department as the source of the project's stalling. According to Weinberg's article, the evaluations would have been available for current students using their Banner User ID and password to gain entry to the site. However, this would give SAAC—a student organization—access to the larger, secured YU

network.

According to Yoni Teitz (YC '12), former Webmaster for the proposed site, these security concerns proved to be too much for ITS and the project was stalled indefinitely. "It could have been online and ready in 5 minutes if ITS would have given us the go-ahead," said Mr. Teitz. "They were very unhelpful."

Mr. Zimmerman noted that ITS was hard at work in updating the entire Banner network when SAAC approached ITS with the proposal. However, Mr. Zimmerman also said that "ITS never really took SAAC seriously. I don't think they ever understood that we represent the entire student body."

Dr. John Savage, current Director of Academic Technology spoke to *The Commentator* on behalf of ITS. Although Dr. Savage was not part of ITS when SAAC first proposed the project, Dr. Savage said that he sees no reason why the project would have been delayed initially. "I can't imagine ITS would have any objection to it. Many universities have similar programs."

In addressing the specific issues relating to Banner raised by SAAC members, Dr. Savage told *The Commentator*, "Access to Banner is really under the registrar's jurisdiction... Moving forward, though, ITS would be more than happy to help any way we can."

Mr. Zimmerman also pointed to problems within SAAC itself. One unnamed student that the SAAC board had tasked with designing the website proved uncooperative and unreliable. "It got to the point where I had to use my friend's phone to call him, because he wouldn't answer my calls."

While the written SAAC evaluations were not given out at the end of this semester, the current SAAC board has high hopes that the project will be implemented shortly. Daniel Atwood (YC '14), current VP of SAAC told *The Commentator* about the future of the project. "SAAC will continue to work on setting up the course evaluation site next year. We need to be sure that the site is only accessible to current YU students, so it will need to be integrated into some sort of log in system."

OPINIONS

The Cost of Political Apathy Among America's Young Adults

BY AKIVA BERGER

As I leave the post of Opinions Editor, I would like to make one observation about student interest in politics, not only here at Yeshiva University but across the country as well. Over the course of the year, I have seen firsthand the immense apathy most of my colleagues exhibit towards politics and public policy, especially with regard to the economy and fiscal issues. When approached about writing an opinion piece, most students profess to know little about politics much less feel passionately enough to author an article. This political disengagement is not indigenous to Yeshiva University, however, but rather is endemic to most college campuses here in America.

AS STUDENTS, WE MUST REALIZE THAT WE TOO CAN AND SHOULD MAKE OUR VOICES HEARD FROM AMONG THE DIN OF AMERICAN POLITICAL DISCOURSE.

As political commentators Ruy Teixeira and Thomas Patterson point out, voter turnout in our age group has suffered the most rapid decline of any since the 1960s. Numerous surveys (such as those conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute, the National Association of Secretaries of State, and others) have demonstrated astonishingly low levels of civic and political engagement in the 18-29 year-old demographic.

This trend presents a dangerous setup in which a larger and larger share of the electorate either does not vote or does so while completely misinformed about the issues at stake. The result is decreasing accountability on the part of our elected officials, especially when it comes to preserving the economic interests of the younger generation. For example, politicians might pause before continuing to saddle future American workers with historic levels of debt if those who will bear that burden would speak out. Students might not be so happy to hear that the generous entitlement programs their grandparents now enjoy may not exist in their current form when their own retirement comes. While college students feel passionately about social issues such as gay marriage, abortion, and gun control, these issues ad-

see *Apathy*, p. 7

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President Carter's Latest Failure

BY JESSE SHORE

Yeshiva University is characterized by law professor and Rabbinic figure Michael Broyde as “the beacon of the ideal in [the Jewish orthodox] community.” This ideal, he explains, is realized in part through the administration’s decision not to interfere “with the academic freedom of a Cardozo Law student group functioning in its own name.” The student group decided to honor President Jimmy Carter with this year’s International Advocate for Peace Award (IAPA). Carter has a bad reputation amongst Israel supporters seeking a viable peace with the Palestinians. Naturally enough, the decision was controversial and has embittered many members of the YU community.

While amidst the bitterness Rabbi Broyde feels motivated to laud YU for the academic freedom it exemplifies, his rationale should remain secondary to a more important lesson. That lesson is to acknowledge that academic freedom by itself in no way safeguards against making poor decisions. Carter has an embarrassing track record regarding international conflict, and therefore his selection clashes with the prestige allegedly invested in the IAPA. Though any university group can function in its own name, it is easy to doubt whether these students were fully functional in their decision to bestow such an honor upon Carter.

Rather than working with regimes in conflict as an evenhanded advocate for peace, Carter is better characterized by his manipulation of any regime that he perceived would most likely put an end to a conflict. The sooner one party dominates (preferably Carter’s favorite), the sooner a conflict is ended. For example, Carter initially sought to placate the shah in Iran, assisting his regime’s hold over the country while it attempted to subdue a growing revolution. When the shah eventually fell, Carter shifted American support to Saddam Hussein’s aggressive Iraqi regime in the hopes of a swift, violent eradication of the new Iranian government. Carter thus became a catalyst of international conflict and turmoil.

“If I had done such a thing,” writes the late

journalist Christopher Hitchens in one of his tirades on Carter’s foreign policy, “I would take very good care to be modest when discussions of Middle Eastern crises came up [...]. It’s hardly an exaggeration to say that every administration since has had to deal with the chaotic legacy of Carter’s mind-boggling cowardice and incompetence.”

Carter’s shortsighted and violent schemes extend beyond the Middle East, though. He played a critical role in undermining Russian forces in Afghanistan in this proxy battle during the Cold War. When the Russians finally withdrew, the Afghan rebels were left in a power vacuum. Violently putting an end to a conflict, however, is a far cry from advocating for peace. Instead of advocating for peace, he abandoned the Afghans to rival regimes with fancy military equipment paid for by the U.S.

Additionally, Carter’s role in the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt fails to illustrate his ability to advocate for peace. This peace treaty (which is now unraveling before our very eyes) was inspired by Anwar Sadat’s

the pomp and circumstance that traditionally surrounds international peace treaties. He was not a peace advocate.

Carter’s unimpressive track record as an international peace advocate can be amply illustrated without alluding to his bigoted and incriminating remarks about Israel. Still, because of these remarks, Carter has earned his infamous reputation among Israel supporters. His attempt to compare Israel to apartheid South Africa is not only categorically wrong, but was described by non-other than Richard Goldstone, a harsh critic of Israel, as “unfair and inaccurate slander,” and that such hate-mongering only serves to “retard rather than advance peace negotiations.” This obstacle to peace, exacerbated by Carter, is even more difficult to overcome in light of Carter’s inexplicable advocacy for Hamas, a terrorist organization that openly seeks Israel’s destruction.

The reputation for peacemaking that Carter has made for himself, which is gloriously documented on his website, are what his supporters might appeal to in defending

public service initiatives are practically a banality for former presidents. In Carter’s case, it is very easy to be idealistic when you have ideological philanthropists and a reputation to rebuild. Lastly, his one sided approach with international conflict is being perpetuated today. Carter’s stalwart support for Hamas and irresponsible trivialization of Iran’s nuclear ambitions link his failures as president with his incompetence as a former president.

Given Carter’s egregious involvement with the Israeli-Palestinian peace initiative, and given his history of manipulation and incitement, it is easy to understand why there was an uproar of objections against the decision to honor him. What is more difficult to understand is why the Cardozo students chose to honor him with this particular award. The award these students chose simply does not befit the man. At the very least, there are other candidates who are arguably more deserving of the IAPA. A couple of explanations come to mind.

One explanation is about the nature of annual awards. An award which is expected to be given out on a timely basis can be more self-indulging for those who bestow the award than those who accept it. It is more of a promotional stunt than a serious recognition of someone’s accomplishments. This might also explain why there was a surprising absence of protestors at the actual award ceremony. Critics of Carter might have realized that there was no prestige to be had from this award and that there was, perhaps, something more productive they could be doing with their Wednesday afternoon. Yet, even assuming the award committee really had the best intentions, Carter’s latest failure was his inability to decline the IAPA from a group of ill-informed students.

Editors Note: This article is a modified version of an article that was originally published by CAMERA (The Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America). The author was the same in both cases, and he gave The Commentator explicit permission to publish this version.

**CARTER’S STALWART SUPPORT
FOR HAMAS AND IRRESPONSIBLE
TRIVIALIZATION OF IRAN’S NUCLEAR
AMBITIONS LINK HIS FAILURES AS
PRESIDENT WITH HIS INCOMPETENCE
AS A FORMER PRESIDENT.**

shrewd observation that Israel was willing to make huge sacrifices simply for recognition by its neighbors. Menachem Begin and the Israeli public accepted the initiative with gratitude, even though the price for peace was Israel reducing its territory to less than half of what it had become after the Six Day War. Carter was simply a witness to this exchange. He was a fortuitous figurehead who provided

his eligibility for the IAPA. Even so, an honest defender bears three limitations in mind. Firstly, Carter’s failures in office, when he had more responsibility, should offset his later initiatives. That Carter lost his reelection in a landslide is testament to the severity of his incendiary approach to Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan. Secondly, such well-meaning programs, like peace, economic, educational, and other

Why Go to College Events?

BY JOSH HANAU

It would be foolish to deny that education is undergoing a major evolution worldwide. The emergence of MOOCs, Massive Open Online Courses, has made it possible for anyone with an internet connection to access college level material (often for free). Naturally, as is the case with most socio-technological advances, this particular phenomenon comes along with an obvious array of new possibilities. No longer does a student need to travel to a college campus, and spend four years—and often six figures—in order to study a particular discipline. He or she can simply access the material online, often free of charge, and master it at his or her own pace. The emergence of this new technology, however, raises a fairly obvious question. Is university education becoming obsolete?

One classic justification for going to college—which I assume is quite prevalent at Yeshiva University—is the citing of employment opportunities that such an experience will likely result in. Many higher-paying jobs, for example, require a college degree in order to indicate a baseline level of competence. Thus, the financial loss incurred by tuition fees is offset by the potential for future profits, and can easily be viewed as a worthwhile and

necessary investment. It's worth noting, however, that sociological patterns are far from static in the technological age. Mark Zuckerberg, Sean Parker, and Steve Jobs have proven that a creative idea, and prodigious coding or entrepreneurship abilities, can be more lucrative—albeit riskier—than pursuing a standard “professional” career. Furthermore, as the MOOCs phenomenon becomes more widespread, internet degrees might begin to gain the same value as more traditional degrees. After all, if a job candidate can pass a test, and display the necessary proficiency, why should it matter how he or she came upon such knowledge or abilities?

The answer to such a question, I believe, is predicated

on whether a traditional college education offers any advantages that an online education might not be able to match. And while enumerating such advantages may be tough for the average person, it has been a relatively simple task for those most intimately connected to the collegiate experience. One such person, literature Professor Andrew Delbanco of Columbia University, was the guest lecturer at the Schottenstein program's Wednesday luncheon series on January 30, 2012. At the luncheon, he mentioned how he has been teaching the same course—which features the same novels—for years, yet his experience varies with each new semester; how despite the fact that he is the expert, he consistently manages to gain new and profound insights from his students.

education apply in the “objective” fields as well, manifesting in the form of group studying. Group studying is, simply put, a more effective means of studying than any attempted individual endeavor. There have been numerous studies that have determined this to be the case. And naturally, it is a common practice on university campuses, where students can easily gather in order to study and learn together. Such experiences cannot, however, be easily matched in cyberspace.

The discussion of interpersonal learning experiences related to coursework, however, only offers a portion of what makes a college education so critical in preparing students for entry into the world at large. Perhaps the most crucial aspects of a

college education are the experiences that lie outside the purview of classroom related experiences; *Sedarim*, events, clubs, newspapers, journals, student governments, service-learning missions, and general community-building, are all experiences that teach us how to work with others, how to understand others, how to respect others, and ultimately, how to understand and respect ourselves. In the truest sense, college is a time that enables us to discover our place in the world, a time when we can build up the moral and emotional tools necessary for real success, regardless of the path we might take.

Without programs like *Toastmasters* and *Active Minds*, we might feel alone with our individual quirks and anxieties. Without programs like the *Medical Ethics Society* and the *Busi-*

ness Ethics Club, it would be all too easy to lose a grip on our values in the chaos of the outside world. Without weeknight *Shiurim* and special lectures, we could become too narrowly focused on the minutia of our regular Torah and secular studies, focusing on the tree, while missing out on the forest. And without programs like the *CJF*, *Music Vs.*, and *College Edge*, we might make the mistake of focusing too heavily inwards, while neglecting those around us who are in need.

And thus, there is one thing that seems abundantly clear to me: without supplementary events, the college education is simply incomplete.



The potential for knowledge, he might argue, increases exponentially when interpersonal exchanges are an ingredient in the educational recipe. These interpersonal exchanges, which appear to lie at the core of education, are absent in online education ventures, preventing them from truly competing with a traditional college education.

Some might argue, however, that a humanities course is different from a traditional math or science course, in that it is subjective and open to endless dialectic. A course like calculus, on the other hand, would appear to be objective, with class discussions deemed less crucial to the educational experience. Nonetheless, I believe that the advantages of group

Apathy Cont.

mittedly do not have the sweeping and profound impact on the everyday lives of most Americans. The fact that most students have seldom been exposed to the hassles of a byzantine tax structure does not help the cause.

Here at YU, I feel that awareness of foreign policy issues, especially those pertaining to Israel, is relatively high. Yet, for all of those not planning on moving to Israel, America's fiscal and economic outlook is arguably just as critical for us to keep well-informed of. With 54% of recent college graduates either jobless or underemployed, the state of our economic recovery should be of paramount concern to all undergraduates planning on entering the workforce in the coming years. The

single largest factor that can spur or impede economic growth is government policy. To be completely ignorant of the major fiscal issues of the day, from Obamacare to tax policy to sequestration and budget cuts, is simply imprudent. Even if politics on the whole seems dirty or just flat-out dull, each of us has a duty to both ourselves and our fellow citizens to at least acquire a minimal working knowledge of the field.

This is not to say that every student here at YU need become a political junkie who subscribes to multiple newspapers and watches C-SPAN religiously. More accurately, I am arguing for more political cognizance on the part of America's youngest voters, those who will soon be joining the pro-

ductive sector of the economy if they have not already done so. The laws our government passes, and those it chooses not to, have real-life ramifications for all Americans across all age-groups, even if for some these consequences will only manifest themselves at a later date. As students, we must realize that we too can and should make our voices heard from among the din of American political discourse. We will soon be inheriting a country already facing substantial fiscal and socioeconomic challenges. It behooves us to start paying attention to the policies that carry so much import now and in the years ahead.

The YU Year in Review

BY GAVRIEL BROWN

Disclaimer: the authenticity of the identity of the author has been confirmed by *The Commentator* editorial staff; the views expressed do not reflect those of any Commentator writer or staff member. Also, this is a joke. Seriously.

This academic year was a year of promises. The Republicans promised to bring sanity back to the White House while the Democrats promised a fixed economy, even though it didn't need fixing because it was "getting to 95 percent" and was "totally on track". Closer to home, registration finally unveiled "Degree Track," the snazziest technology update since Internet in Furst, which, to be fair, was never promised to anyone.

President Joel promised to investigate YU abuses, while *The Forward* swore to sift through Gottesman's basement archives for an off-color comment possibly made by the Rav when the recorder was turned off on a Sunday shiur back in 1964. Also, Rabbi Reiss vowed to turn on or turn off the pornography filter—I can no longer remember which one.

While President Obama promised investigations into the Libyan bombing, President Joel promised to build a mikvah on campus, Rabbi Brander promised Gilad Shalit, College Edge promised to get kids into college, and *The Commentator* promised to make news at the first State of the University address.

Some pledges were kept: drop dates were moved, the poli-sci journal was published, scaffolding was taken down, and Jewish studies finally crawled out of the cave and introduced (insignificant) changes to its requirements. Some promises were abandoned: student elected officials reneged on their promises, AIPAC vowed to chuck Chuck Hagel, solemn officials promised gun reform, and the CJF vowed—but was unable to deliver—world peace and unity (maybe next year).

This year everyone promised change and, well, maybe some things did change. The curriculum changed, the Knesset changed, and, after the latest Cardozo event, so did President Joel's hair color.

Other changes were less conspicuous. Backdoor leadership changes accompanied by fluffy front door press releases kept hitting our mailboxes faster than IT could shut them down for temporary outages. The women got a Yom Ha'atzmaut Chagigah, RIETS got a chassid, and

The Associate became the *Sy Syms Bissness Review* (sic).

So many promises, so much change. Did anything good result?

To answer that question we'll need to take a thoughtful look back on this past academic year. So pull up a chair, and get ready for YU's first year in review.

Speaking of chairs, in...

September

...before the *tushies* of YU students hit their seats in September, Clint Eastwood was

already speaking to empty chairs at Tampa's Republican National Convention. The previous evening, YU's own Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveichik conferred a hurried yet "apolitical" blessing on the Republican hopefuls, who hoped to change their image from a party of rich WASPs to the party of rich, white Jews. After concluding, Soloveichik rushed back to his hotel room to catch the latest Simpsons episode, which, he insisted, was created "by You, our Creator; not by mortal man".



Soloveichik wasn't the only one watching lots of Television in September. Three weeks of class before a three-week break meant few assignments and thus plenty of time to catch up on all the shows missed while, er, on break.

President Joel gave the first "State of the University Address" at which he unveiled the iPhone 5, noting that it is "wifi ennobled and Bluetooth enabled." He also praised the amazing strides taken in this new *shalem* device: noise-censoring functions, rounder corners, flashier screens and more touchy-feely modes to fit all manner of interested donor.

A week later, the Democrats filed into Charlotte to celebrate President Obama's vast accomplishment over his last four years, noting that he had killed,

eradicated, eliminated, removed, and otherwise disposed of Osama bin Laden. Also they killed Osama bin Laden, did we mention that? The failures of his administration were of course inherited from George Bush, caused by Republicans, or both.

Back on campus, RIETS swiftly ordered photographers into the beis to record students before they scattered after break, never to show up again.

Across 185th, the new curriculum broke ground with new departments in "Contemporary World Choreographers" and "Distance Over Time"; with course offerings in "Homeopathy," "Creating the Steak" and "Idea of Smelf: Old Spice and New Worlds." The liberal-arts course-offerings were immediately criticized in *The Commentator* for not teaching essential vocational skills such as house painting, carpentry, and auto mechanics.

Speaking of vocational colleges, in...

October

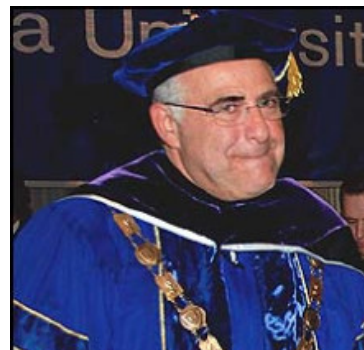
...Centre College hosts the first and only VP debate. Deep in heartland Kentucky, Vice President "Malarkey" squared off with P90X spokesperson Paul Ryan on "47 percent" of hot button issues. They are fortunately interrupted by a Russian Punk band before the hardworking Janesville native could succumb to the VP's infectious smirk. The band was later released after newscasters around the globe pleaded with the authorities to never have to say their name on air again.

Other televised videos hit campus that October. *YU News*, later named *Scheiner News*, makes a splash by reading off studs you just deleted while displaying grainy pictures of campus buildings. *Scheiner News* competes with *YU Reads*, a video series of YU students reading off the list of course offerings and cracking corny jokes.

After much hype, Gilad Shalit was honored to present Rabbi Kenneth Brander to talk with the student body about his vast array of accomplishments across the Jewish world. Shalit later apologized for Rabbi Brander's shyness and thanked the student body for their "amazing show of support and appreciation towards Rabbi Brander and all his important undertakings," despite not winning this year's Nobel Prize, which went to the European Union.

While Rabbi Brander relished in the limelight, three YU employees—

MTA freshman (we aren't sure which one)—wrote a scathing critique of President Joel's "ridonculous" salary, the caf's unbalanced diet, incest, the tuition crisis, and, worst of all, shiur assistants. After drawing attention to the most pressing problems facing the university since its inception in 1928, President Joel responds by not responding to "that malarkey." *The Commentator* responds by writing its first nice article since 1997.



However, the largest event of that month—indeed the entire semester—was certainly Sandy.

As she barreled down the East Coast, IT (predictably) shut down servers, but not quick enough to stop Dean Eichler from sending out his now infamous stud "IT'S A GREAT TIME TO CATCH UP ON ALL OF YOUR OUTSTANDING READINGS AND WORK - AS WELL AS YOUR SLEEP [smiley face]! TRY TO USE THE FREE TIME WISELY!! (sic)." A day later, the women of Stern College arrived uptown just as *Roshei Yeshiva* began collecting two of every animal.

Fortunately, the only damage to campus was blowouts in Belfer and Furst Halls caused by a volatile mix of rain, high winds, and gays. IT soon restored the internet but forgot to plug in a cable marked "Rubin," causing anxious FTOCs to call FEMA. FEMA responded months later by setting up temporary routers and chastising students for "going on certain websites I don't even want to know about..."

President Joel interrupted FEMA at the town hall meeting, where he promised to set up a committee to investigate *halachik* problems in the BMP *beis* after a student realizes that the CJF worked above the ark and, "everyone knows all they do is help *goyim*."

Another student asked about a new task force called Jewish Observation of Key Elements (JOKE), organized to investigate whether Torah U'Madda could be integrated within the college without causing widespread depression, insomnia, social anxiety disorders, loss of libido, or other common side effects within the student body. "The task

force will convene at least twice a century," President Joel assured the concerned student.

Speaking of assurances, in...

November

...President Barack Obama, now back in office despite retired Jews in Florida, promised concerned citizens that the U.S. would not drive off the fiscal cliff. Obama later admitted he has "no idea" what a fiscal cliff was, why it was dangerous, and what he could do about it. Aids in the White House say Obama was relying on the Mayan calendar to end the world before Congress did. To prove there are institutions worse than Congress, the NHL announced the lockout would continue.

Thankfully, Gangnam Style hit YouTube, distracting the world through "sexy ladies," imaginary rodeos, and catchy Korean dance moves. Obama fled to Burma—an obviously important ally, Congress disbanded for some holiday, and everyone forgot about the looming storm.

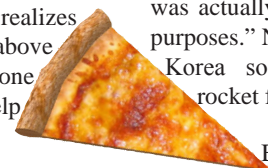
The Observer published its first "mini-skirt issue" which "looks pretty good and feels pretty good" according to a student. Meanwhile, *Kol Hamevaser* wrote an article with 1,200 footnotes, and TEIQU invited a slightly-to-the-left YU *Musmakh*.

Speaking of leftists, the United Nations approves Palestine as a non-member state meaning, well, absolutely nothing. The YU student body responded by convening a rally at Times Square, confusing Scandinavian tourists. Palestinians responded by showering Israel with rockets. "We really thought they were fireworks," said a spokesperson for the al-Qassam Jihadist Brigades. "We are totally sorry about the confusion." As an apology, the Jihadists sent over more rockets.

On the other side of the Middle East, Iran launched what looked to the intelligence community like an intercontinental ballistic missile but was actually "for peaceful, civilian purposes." Not to be outdone, North Korea soon launched its own rocket for "agrarian purposes."

Back on campus, YC junior Michael Strassenberger joined the Yiddish Club for his 347th slice of Pizza since September. "Eich Liben Pizza," he said after the event.

Meanwhile, General David Betrayus falls in love with his biographer. Hoping to start a new chapter in his life, the disgraced CIA director is



hired as the head of a Florida Jewish high school. Another journalistic scandal hits home in...

December

...when President Joel promised the student body that he would investigate *The Forward* for covering up "journalistic abuses" leading up to an article that showed him to be making more than any other Jewish leader in the world. Students were reassured that, although the investigation would be lead by a YU-hired team, the results would "speak for themselves."

Across the Atlantic, another president wished he could silence the opposition. Mohammed Morsi granted himself unlimited powers to "protect" his people from the unjust justice system, the undemocratic legislative system and the unfair press.

Speaking of the press, *The Commentator* covered student elections, which prompted outrage from students who hoped the newspaper would "just write heavy metal band reviews."

In a slight misunderstanding, YUConnects hosted its twice-annual "Night for Men" prompting outrage from *Roshei Yeshiva* who called the event "the next tolerance club" and promised a lockout.



Later that month, the annual Chanukah concert featuring America's Got Talent star Edon filled Lamport Auditorium. That evening, sixteen SCW students were arrested for soliciting a minor. They now work in a Florida Jewish day school.

As the 5,125-year cycle of the YU Events Calendar came to a close, YU administrators prepare for the impending global catastrophe by sending CJF volunteers to Mayan villages to build libraries and fishponds. While there, students learned that, just like YU's Events Calendar, the Mayan Calendar was deeply flawed.



As New Yorkers gather in Times Square to say farewell to 2012, a crowd of 200 YU students made a big circle, whip out guitars, and broke into a slow *shirah*, further confusing Scandinavian tourists. However, YU's finals only ended a week into...

January

...when half the student body

showed up on Ben Yehuda and the other half traveled to Uzbeki-bekistan-stan with the CJF.

After binging on "Downton Abbey," "The Walking Dead" and reruns of "Arrested Development," students returned to YU ready to take on 9 straight weeks of classes—or not—since the lockout ended and NHL resumed. Women at Stern were unfortunately unable to watch anything, as the English department banned electricity in favor of quill pens and papyrus.

Meanwhile, the weather—more erratic than wifi in Rubin—measured 62 in New York, 25 in Phoenix, and hotter-than-the-face-of-the-sun in Australia, obviously demonstrating Global Warming to be a liberal hoax.



Speaking of liberals, Yair Lapid's *Yesh Atid* party jumped in the polls and landed 19 seats in the Knesset, one of which went to future YU honorary doctorate recipient and ESPN addict Dov Lipman—proving that years spent as a counselor at Jewish sleep-away camps might actually get you somewhere in life. Not wanting to appear irrelevant, hawkish Jews campaigned to defame and discredit Chuck Hagel, ironically proving Hagel right when he said that the Israel lobby wielded a bit too much power.

On MLK day, President Obama is inaugurated—without error—for a second term. The festivities included lip-syncing by Beyoncé, smiling by Joe Biden, and a shoutout to Morgan Freeman. President Obama was the first president to say the word "gay" in his inauguration speech, which triggered a hailstorm over Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Speaking of storms, *The Beacon* failed to infuriate the student body for over six months. One student asked the editor how he "could begin to explain this." The editor's response: "just get over it already." In relevant newspaper news, *The Observer* published an article about a skirt-wearing feminist, who, we are told, "looks good and feels good" despite being wildly estranged from Torah.



In an effort to bring students back to Torah, RIETS hired a few Chabbdad *chassidim* who began a night seder

on the famous seforim "Find Love!" "Be Happy!" and "Marriage Now!" before Dean Berger threatened to resign. In response, a RIETS official said "you can't go wrong by moving Right."

Speaking of Seforim, in...

February

...the annual Seforim sale attracted a swarm of students looking to be happy, find love and get married now. Despite calls from *The Observer* to ban *The Magic Touch*, the Seforim sale went on without a hitch.



Other schemes encountered problems. The CJF planed a covert operation to black out the New Orleans Superdome during the Superbowl in time for Beyonce's Halftime show, hoping for more views of its "inspiring presentations" of "Torah and sports" with Charlie Harrari and Rabbi Brander. Unfortunately, miscommunication about timing spun the plan out of control.

Speaking of out of control, curmudgeony newspapermen sporting monocles and shouting at students to "get off my lawn" interrupted the proceedings of YU's annual Model UN (YUNMUN). In response, high school students were forced to record the inappropriate behavior in YUNMUN's daily newspaper *The Gazebo*. In solidarity with the high school students, UN's Secretary Ban Ki-moon sent a strongly worded letter to the editors of *The Commentator* urging them to "think of the children."



In other United Nations news, North Korean's "South Park" lookalike Kim Jong-un and Iranian human rights activist Muhammad Ahmadinejad stop their nuclear weapons program after reading a strongly worded letter sent by members of the Security Council.

Back on campus, RIETS Dean Benedict XVI announced his resignation to a crowd of devoted followers on the 185th street plaza. He cited the ailing health of internet filters as his reason for stepping down to pursue scholarship.



Meanwhile, another RIETS Dean unfortunately forgot about filters.

YC junior Michael Strassenberger joins the Toastmaster's Club for his 733rd slice of Pizza since September. "Pizza is delicious, nutritious—and *I am cheap*," he remarked in an eloquent speech during the event.

In Washington, major Republican lawmakers and officials backed a legal brief supporting same-sex marriage, causing a massive snowstorm that inundated New York City with nine inches of snow. Other lawmakers came to YU in...

March

...when Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, former President of Bolivia, visited the Latin American Business Club. Despite questionable human rights practices, his pro-Israel stance got him past the censorship committee, which does or doesn't still exist, depending on the event.



In Israel, Kotel officials arrested a prepubescent boy for "praying loudly and sounding like a girl."

A day later, Kotel police throw out President Obama for wearing his paper Kippa slightly off-center. Unable to mend ties between the Ultra-Orthodox and the rest of world Jewry, Obama instead reconciled Israel and Turkey after a romantic night out on the Mediterranean turned ugly two years ago.

After a \$75 billion search, scientists in Geneva's CERN laboratory finally found Waldo. In celebration, the entire European Union was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics.

Leading up to the Sarachek Basketball Tournament, RIETS unveiled RosenSwag, a new line of casual wear "for the homo religiosus." Button down shirts with tag lines for men read "I'm a gavra" while the women's line of baseball seminary shirts read "Seriously, I'm not a cheftza." Not to be outdone, the Organization for the Resolution of Agunot puts out its own line of T-shirt reading "Friends Don't Let Friends Wear T-Shirts About Prenups."



Days later, staff of *The Commentator* was told that high school students, dressed in "colorful shirts," "cheering loudly," and "having fun," were inundating YU's uptown gym for the Sarachek tournament. An investigation and subsequent article caused one student to demand the article's rescission at a town hall meeting. In defending *The Commentator*, President Joel noted how much he enjoyed the newspaper's heavy metal band reviews.

In other YU news, Psy's Gangnam shiur reached 1 billion views on YU *continues on p. 10*



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Torah, College Edge took pictures with underprivileged students, RIETS elected its 8th pontiff (Dean Innocent the VI), YCDS built a boat, and YU sold Brookdale residence hall to fund additional *rebbeim* for IBC. Downtown, a high-up CJF official banned employees from hearing about the Rav's views on women's Torah leadership, noting that his "dangerous views" might "inspire women to take a more active role in Orthodox life—chas veshalom."

Speaking of active Orthodox Jews, in...

April

...YUPAC made its annual trip to Washington, which, surprisingly, actually resulted in Hamas



undercover militant Chuck Hagel travelling to Israel three weeks later handing out cash to everyone he met. After giving his last \$100 of his original \$10 Billion, to a *Chabbad Kollel*, Hagel returned to the U.S. to *shnorr* at the White House for said *Kollel*.

Speaking of Israel, students at this



year's *Yom Ha'atzmaut* celebrations were disappointed that this year's ceremony did not feature a real-time translation of the evening's Hebrew speech. A student said, "I felt so lost this year without the really helpful translations. Last year I totally understood the whole speech."

Undeterred, students enjoyed the rest of the day's festivities, which included windsurfing in Tenzer gardens, putt-putt on Segways, and a couple's photo booth sponsored by YUConnects.

In an email sent at the end of the day, President Joel thanked the organizers for the "outstanding success of this year's celebrations" and also apologized for "all those awkward moments where you

were forced to say hello to people that dumped you." The President promised "greater gender separation next year to prevent this kind of thing from happening in the future."

Meanwhile, *Kol Hamevaser* published an outrageously popular article "Shut Down the YC Art Department." Unbeknownst to the author, however, the department had been shut down years before due to budget problems.



Speaking of budget problems, YU facilities finally harvested the marijuana planted on the 185th plaza following orders from the President to "fill budget gaps any way possible." The marijuana is later used to help fuel YU's literary journal.

Sy Syms hosted its annual dinner, giving out awards to every student in attendance in an effort to boost its students' resumes. In a similar effort to boost student employability, the Career Center ran a program on "how to shake hands."

Speaking of resumes, the student election cycle began, with Student Life canvassing campus in search of students to run for many open spots. After being promised pizza at meetings, YC junior Michael Strassenberger is convinced to run for YSU President. Elections are held in...

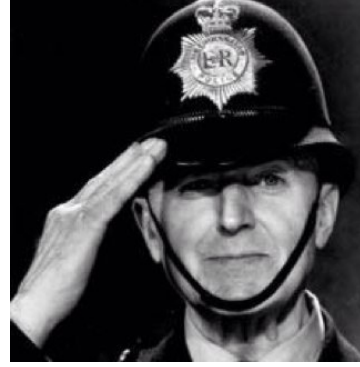
May

...when a field of new candidates cropped up after elections are postponed. The YC Supreme Court is outraged, the Chief Justice telling *The Commentator*, "wait we had a Supreme Court?" In other newspaper news, a *Commentator* investigation ousted Herschel Keter (YU '48) for squatting in Muss Hall for twenty years.

After a successful first season, MTV launched the second season of "Da Heights." The reality show profiles the lives of five *Roshei Yeshiva* as



they navigate "the bass and the *beis*" of "the last real neighborhood of Manhattan." MYP students continue to follow the show religiously and



appreciate that it "airs at 10 pm, right after night *seder*." "Da Heights" vied with Rabbi Carmy's "Police Philosopher" for Nielson ratings in the highly competitive "18-24 year old Yeshiva students" category.

As courses wound down, the senior class headed out to its annual black-tie dinner-on-a-boat, this year featuring glow-in-the-dark dodge-



ball. "In retrospect, it was a bad combination," said the senior class president, in reaction to the loss of 23 glow sticks, 11 dodge-balls, and 3 undergraduates to the Hudson River. President Joel promised an investigation.

Meanwhile, Stern College student government hopefuls



produced grainy YouTube videos of themselves hugging security guards, dancing down Lexington, and promising to "totally improve everything." For the first time, YC students beg IT to shut down the internet.

In other news, YC hired dictator Kim Jong-un to proctor final exams and former President Jimmy Carter was invited to graduation to receive the coveted "scandal of the year" award. Students vowed to protest.

As the year concluded, we return to our original inquiry. This year was full of promises and full of change. Did anything good result? I'll leave that up to you to decide. Let's just hope that next year promises fewer embarrassments, scarcer scandals, richer donors, stronger filters, happier students, and, of course, more free pizza.

Who Was Rabbi Isaac Elchanan?

BY GAVRIEL BROWN

We've all heard the name Rabbi Isaac Elchanan hundreds of times. His name is plastered across the facades of our buildings and the front of our new YU swag. He's on our stationary, our flag, and our YU admissions-sponsored *tchotchkes*. The man behind, or rather, atop, the name on our logo deserves some attention. A little research reveals the lucky story of a fledgling home-yeshiva, an ideological young student, and his internationally renowned rabbi.

The story of RIETS begins not in the boisterous streets of the Lower East Side but in the pastoral Lithuanian town of Slutsk. Moshe Meir Matlin, born in the far-flung town, but a promising student, came to the Kovno, the capital city, to study with the undisputed master of Talmud in Eastern Europe, Rabbi Yitzchok Elchanan Spektor.



Rabbi Spektor hadn't always been the Chief Rabbi of Kovno. Like Rabbi Matlin, his roots lay in extreme poverty in a tiny town at the edge of the Lithuanian empire. According to Rabbi Spektor's biographer Ephraim Shimoff, his father was his first teacher. At eight, he was recognized as a prodigy. At ten, he was orphaned. At thirteen, he married. A few years later, he lost his 300-ruble dowry to the bankruptcy of his debtor. Destitute, Rabbi Spektor moved to a nearby town to serve as a rabbi. His pay: five Polish guldon a month, barely enough to pay for food.

Undeterred, Rabbi Spektor continued to seek out mentors. His erudition earned him respect in every town he visited: Tiktin, Karlin, Nishvez, Novohrodok. He slowly began to rise in the ranks. After thirty years of study and community leadership, he earned the coveted position in Kovno.

Once in office, the challenges facing Rabbi Spektor became national. According to Geulah Bat Yehuda in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, he helped manage the Volozhin Yeshiva and appointed rabbis to serve on commissions previously limited to lay-leaders. He saved the Mir Yeshiva from internal politics that threatened to tear the place apart. He

temporarily permitted Lithuanian Jews to eat peas and beans over Passover after a drought and famine loomed on the horizon. In solidarity with poor Jews, he took a stand against price-gougers by prohibiting the use of a specific species of Etrog. His community celebrated his progressive halachik decisions regarding Agunot. Rabbi Spektor was undoubtedly a rabbi of the people.

By the last quarter of the 19th century, Rabbi Spektor attempted to tackle pressing international issues through social activism. Together with Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, he lobbied the Russian government to protect Jewish citizens after deadly riots broke out in 1881. He was the only rabbi invited to a conference in St. Petersburg to discuss the deteriorating problems facing Russia's Jewish community. Later, he urged Jewish communities around the world to rally against Russian policies that were squeezing the Jewish communities of the precious few financial and religious resources available.

Towards the end of his career, Rabbi Spektor joined the early efforts of the Hovevei Zion movement. He held parlor meetings in his home and unabashedly endorsed the fledgling movement and the obligation to settle the land.

Such an active lifestyle surely wore down the frail rabbi. The few surviving pictures of Rabbi Spektor show a man exhausted by the tensions of leading Russian Jewry. Unlike other photographs of rabbinic figures of the age, he wears a simple—if not disheveled—coat. His white bearded and frazzled hair show a unassuming man disinterested in appearances. “His life was characterized by personal sanctity, reverence, and humility,” writes Gilbert Klaperman in *The Story of Yeshiva University*.

Rabbi Spektor's global vision of Jewish solidarity attracted students from towns and villages across Lithuania. His broad-minded *halakhik* decision-making and camaraderie with Jews of all stripes—not to mention his ocean of Talmudic knowledge—inspired his students to build communities in the nascent locations of Palestine and the United States. Rabbi Meir Matlin was one of those students.

After receiving ordination, Rabbi Matlin was recruited to New York City, where, in 1891, the Chief Rabbi of New York quickly enlisted him as a *dayyan* and supervisor of all *schochetim* in New York City. Rabbi Matlin relished in his demanding schedule, touring the city's few Jewish enclaves to quietly inspect slaughterhouses, butchers, restaurants, and grocers. According to Moshe Sherman in *Orthodox Judaism in America*, Matlin was an introverted scholar who, unlike his teacher, never presided over weddings, divorces, or funerals. However, he did share two important commonalities with his teacher: a belief in the importance of both the advanced study of Talmud and secular subjects.

Rabbi Matlin enrolled his son Akiva in Yeshivat Etz Chaim, a secondary school for proficiency in *Chumash* with Rashi and *Gemara* with *Shulchan Aruch*. Students at the Lower East Side *cheder*, founded in 1886, stood with one foot in the new world and one in the old. They were mostly new immigrants or first generation American, but they had a knack for the city and its potpourri of poor immigrants. Unburdened by their baggage of leaving Eastern Europe, many sought a general education that would actualize their potential in America. Etz Chaim was, in essence, the first American answer to the *Torah U'Madda* question.

The peddlers and rabbis, butchers and newspapermen who sent their children to the Yeshiva wanted—*needed*—their children to have a dual education. Without English and math skills their children would be lost in the urban tangle of tenements. Without knowledge of basic biology and history, their children would end up as their parents—tailors and shoemakers, not the doctors and lawyers of their dreams.

After a few years of study, Akiva Matlin grew too old for the yeshiva. His cerebral father, however, was eager to further his son's religious studies. In 1896, Rabbi Matlin assembled a few graduates of Etz Chaim and began to teach Talmud in his unassuming apartment at 172 Clinton Street in the heart of the Lower East Side.

“The news of this advanced class spread, and soon the group grew to about twelve students,” records Sherman, “Rabbi Matlin could not accommodate them in his home any longer and began to seek larger quarters.” The father of a student convinced Matlin and the nearby Mariampol Synagogue to house the new Yeshiva. Later, the school moved to a synagogue established by butchers located, not surprisingly, above a butcher

shop. The yeshiva could certainly claim humble roots.

The yeshiva attracted both American students seeking *smicha* and new immigrants—some with advanced rabbinical training—who were seeking the familiar environment of the house of study to begin their adjustment to American culture.

Like Yeshivat Etz Chaim, the Lithuanian students of Rabbi Spektor who founded the nascent yeshiva firmly believed in *Torah Lishma* (Torah for its own sake). In addition, according to William Hemreich, author of *The World of the Yeshiva*, “secular studies became two of the most basic features of the yeshiva.” The new seminary would train rabbis who could “relate to the American environment and the particular demands it made on new citizens.”

Barely a year of study passed before news of Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Spektor's death reached the shores of Manhattan. For Orthodox Jews, in whose homes his picture “hung on the walls of almost every Jewish home in Russia,” according to historian Gilbert Klapperman, his death marked the passing of an advocate and sage. For Rabbi Matlin, his rabbi's death meant the loss of a teacher and role model. Rabbi Matlin joined communal leaders, parents of the students of his yeshiva, Lithuanian immigrants, and other lay-leaders in deciding to name the new yeshiva in his honor. His death gave birth to the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary.

The next twenty years of RIETS brought about quick changes. Under the guidance of Rabbi Matlin, the yeshiva bought a new building. The newly formed Union of Orthodox Rabbis threw its support behind the school. Yeshiva Etz Chaim merged with RIETS in 1915. After student protest, the administration introduced a new general studies curriculum. The outbreak of World War I ended immigration and forced the school to attract American students by expanding course offerings. In 1916, RIETS opened a high school. In 1921 it opened a Teacher's Institute. In 1928, RIETS opened a four-year liberal-arts school: Yeshiva College.

The American answer to *Torah U'Madda* was not quite as rosy as many had hoped. The founding of the college was not without internal and external controversy. Orthodox Jews associated all but the most basic secular study with secularism. Helmreich's *The World of the Yeshiva* recounts that various protests against the project. The head of the Mir, Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz, denounced American Torah institutions. In 1932, postcards were distributed across the east coast proclaiming Yeshiva College to be a “nest of atheism and *Apikorsut*” (denial of God). Rabbi Elchana Wasserman condemned the school.

By bifurcating the institution between seminary and college, tensions and mutual suspicion became inevitable. When funds dried up during the depression, *roshei yeshiva* accused the administration of siphoning funds away from the yeshiva.

Rabbi Matlin, however, escaped the second round of ideological battles of Yeshiva College. According to *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Chronic health problems caused him to flee New York City in 1915 in search of a tranquil town, not unlike his bucolic birthplace in rural Lithuania. Spurred by populist romantic enthusiasm, Rabbi Matlin applied for government land in Montana where he hoped to create a model rural Jewish community in America.

Moshe Meir Matlin, however, was a rabbi, not a rancher. Not surprisingly, his idealistic venture quickly fell

apart. He was forced to give up the land. He traveled to Sioux City, Iowa, where he accepted a small rabbinical position. He also served as a *mashgiach* for Midwestern slaughterhouses until his death in 1927.

Without Rabbi Matlin's quiet coordination and vision, RIETS and Yeshiva University would not exist. But you wouldn't know it from visiting campus. His name appears nowhere—not on buildings, not in classrooms, not online. There are no Moshe Meir Matlin memorial lectures or Moshe Meir Matlin memorial prizes.

In the annals of YU history, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Spektor, like Harry Fischel and David Zysman, lives on in name only. “Like many other major figures of his stature and influence he has not received the attention from historians that is his due” said Dr. Jess Olson, Assistant Professor of Jewish History at Yeshiva University. “We are still waiting for a critical, academic study that places Rabbi Spektor in his context as a leader during perhaps the most complex and trying times in modern Jewish history.”




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Cultural Calendar

BY YAEL ROBERTS AND SRULY HELLER

Summer is nearly here, and with its glorious arrival comes time to do, you know...things. Now that the yoke of the dual curriculum will be relaxed from your shoulders for three short months, you should get out there and, well, do stuff. Below is a list of things we think you would be best served doing, unless of course you decided to park at the pool and let God draw on your skin with red marker. Either way, below is our official, first ever YU Commie Summer Cultural Calendar.

The Great Gatsby, in theaters May 10

The classic novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald comes to life on screen, starring Leonardo DiCaprio. This summer story takes place in Long Island, and the movie is a great way to herald in the New York summer.

Carl Andre: Sculpture as Place, 1958–2010, Dia: Beacon, opens May

Barely an hour from New York City (via MetroNorth) and nestled in the mountains along the Hudson, the town of Beacon is host to a top tier art museum, the Dia: Beacon. This summer, catch *Carl Andre: Sculpture as Place, 1958-2010*, the first North American retrospective of the sculptor.

Frieze Art Fair, Randall's Island, May 10-13

This art fair features the work of a thousand artists, and a series of lectures and debates. A sculpture park exhibits new work commissioned for the fair, while the Frame section showcases work by solo artists from emerging galleries. The Focus section presents projects specifically for the art fair. The three-day festival takes place on Randall's Island overlooking the East River.

GoogaMooga, Prospect Park, May 17-19

Experience food and drink from New York City restaurants and breweries, alongside musical performances from The Flaming Lips, Yeah Yeah Yeahs, and Matt & Kim.

Random Access Memories by Daft Punk, May 21

The dance-floor gods return with their first record in eight years, *Random Access Memories*. If the first single, "Get Lucky," is any indication, they still know how to compel almost involuntary motion in various joints and ligaments.

Bushwick Open Studios, May 31-June 2 (free)

During this seventh annual festival, visit the studios of artists all around Bushwick. From Arts in Bushwick (AiB) comes a weekend festival complete with music, screenings, performance art, and community murals.

The Hurry and the Harm by City and Colour, June 4

From Dallas Green's melodic and boyish voice comes a new album. The band's name is taken from his name: Dallas as a city and Green as a color. He's been writing music since he was 14, and this album will contain 15 songs, along with the already released single "Thirst."

Weird Al, The Capitol Theater, June 2

The parodist of all parodists returns to the stage, a new batch of fake songs with familiar melodies in tow. Leave your Amish paradise, and go be pretty fly for future Riets *musmachim*.

TransAtlantic: A Novel by Colum McCann, June 4

From the author of *Let the Great World Spin*, winner of the National Book Award, comes a new novel weaving together three narratives from Newfoundland, Dublin, and New York.

The National, Barclay's Center, June 5

The indie rock band based in Brooklyn plays in their hometown this June. Expect to hear new hits from their May album release, *Trouble Will Find Me*.

Pythons by Surfer Blood, June 11

Following *Astro Coast* (2010), the alternative rock band from West Palm Beach releases a new album, *Pythons*. The single "Weird Shapes" has been released from the album, and is worth checking out before the full album is released.

Man of Steel, in theaters June 14

This is simple, really. It's a new Superman movie. Go see it. Everyone else with a pulse and within driving distance of a theatre will.

Drawn to Nature, Wave Hill, through June 16

At Wave Hill in the Bronx, "a public garden and cultural center," you can visit numerous curated gardens, and also check out the rotating art exhibits in the Glyndor Gallery or Sunroom. In one of their summer exhibits, a group of artists express their devotion to the world of nature. Juxtaposed to the natural plethora of flowers and trees beyond the galleries, this exhibit is a must see.

The Ocean at the End of the Lane by Neil Gaiman, June 18

Arguably the greatest British fantasy writer alive, Gaiman's first novel in 7 years, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, arrives this summer. The novel promises magic, death, history, and the quiet menace of spirits, in other words, a Neil Gaiman novel.

MGMT, The Wellmont Theater, June 20

The electro-psych pop group MGMT returns this summer, testing songs from their new album on the road, along with old favorites Brian Eno, Time to Pretend, and Kids.



***Pacific Rim*, in theaters July 12**

The Mexican maestro of horror and fantasy, Guillermo Del Toro, returns to cinemas in a rather large fashion with a film about rather large robots. Large, Godzilla like monsters threaten Earth, and the only answer is, of course, those aforementioned large robots. I am nothing if not there.

JT/Jay Z, Yankee Stadium, July 19

The Rap and Pop titans do not clash so much as mesh, as evidenced on the fleet rhythms and deep nocturnal grooves of their single "Suit and Tie". Go see Jigga and JT on tour this summer at stadiums up and down the coasts. Make sure your swag keeps fresh under a layer of suntan lotion.

Summer Slaughter July 19 – August 16. Rockstar Mayhem Fest June 29 – August 4

The two standouts from this year's batch of summer metal festivals are clearly the perennial safe bet Summer Slaughter tour, and the often shaky but surprisingly strong lineup of this year's Rockstar Mayhem festival. Slaughter is headlined by The Dillinger Escape Plan, considered (in my opinion, accurately) the most dangerous live show in metal, a reputation burnished with many a collapsed stage, and the occasional flaming instrument. Main support for Slaughter comes from Animals as Leaders and Periphery, two of the better bands from the recent glut of extreme prog metal bands. Expect dizzying solos and strong musical and vocal hooks. Meanwhile, Rockstar's Mayhem festival, in the past headlined with such headache generators like Disturbed and Atréu, comes back strong this year with headliners Rob Zombie, Mastodon, and Amon Amarth. Expect death in the lyrics, and thunder in the sounds.

Fun., Pier 26 at Hudson River Park, July 22

You've probably heard of the indie pop band by now. Their huge hits "We are Young" and "Some Nights" helped them jump to popularity over the past few years. Here they live this summer with Tegan and Sara.

***The Wolverine*, in theaters July 27**

Everyone's (OK, My own) favorite X-man returns this summer in a solo adventure that sees Hugh Jackman's Wolverine travel to Japan to further explore what has been done to his body. Expect blades, lots of them, emerging from hands and sheathes, and more often than not ending up in flesh, albeit in a PG-13 fashion. Can't win them all.

***Only God Forgives*, in theaters July 19**

After the success of *Drive* proved there is a market for dark, moody, blood-splattered thrillers, the star and director of that film, Ryan Gosling and Nicholas Windig Refn, return with *Only God Forgives*, another violent noir, this time set in and shot on location in Bangkok.

Jimmy Eat World, Central Park Summer Stage, August 7

The pop-punk survivors Jimmy Eat World hit the stage on the strength of their new record *Damage*, hard guitar crunch and sugary hooks intact.

John Singer Sargent Watercolors, The Brooklyn Museum, through July 28

A collaboration of the Brooklyn Museum and The Museum of Fine Arts Boston, this exhibition brings together 93 of the 2,000 watercolors painted by the prolific John Singer Sargent. A few of his oils will be present as well, alongside displays demonstrating his technique, and video of an artist reenacting the way Sargent painted.

Shakespeare In the Park, through August 18, Central Park (free)

This year's free shows are *Comedy of Errors* (May 28 to June 30) and *Love's Labour's Lost, A New Musical* (July 23 to August 18). Just show up at The Delacorte Theater earlier that day. It's worth skipping class or work to go.



Bulls on Parade: The Dillinger Escape Plan Live at the Music Hall of Williamsburg

BY SRULY HELLER

Bulls on Parade: Dillinger Escape Plan, Live at the Music Hall of Williamsburg, Saturday, April 28th.

The moments before a concert's headliner descends on the stage are usually fraught with all manner of excited cheers, mental preparations for two hours of ecstatic sing-alongs, and swaying vibes. Not so that Saturday night for the 550 or so black clad attendees of Dillinger Escape Plan's first New York show before their upcoming album, *One of Us is the Killer*. There, when the lights dimmed, and an arrhythmic percussive sound filled the speakers, every man and woman in the room assumed a defensive posture, feet planted, arms extended at chest level, fists balled. Someone whose never been to a Dillinger concert before might have wondered why, with the band's arrival clearly imminent, everyone assembled looked like they were about to go mano-a-mano with a level five hurricane.

The first 30 seconds of the show would have resoundingly answered that question. The Dillinger Escape Plan, a collection of five men teetering on the precipice between their 20s and 30s took the stage, and immediately launched into "Prancer," the lead single from their new album, and a classic Dillinger jam, all serrated, careening guitars, throbbing low end bass, and sharp, rhythmically insistent drumming, topped off with the vein popping howl of the well muscled lead singer Greg Pucciato.

From the first note, the first cymbal strike, roughly half the assembled crowd exploded, for lack of a better word, into each other, for lack of a better visual metaphor. You may have heard of some moshing going on at Metallica or Linkin Park concerts. Those nearly avuncular pushes and shoves barely share the designation with what goes on at Dillinger Escape

Plan show. Here the rules were simple. Hear the music, hear the frantic scraping notes of "Sugar Coated Sour," jump into the pit, make no move to intentionally harm anyone, and, beyond that, *do what thou will*. Flailing limbs, full body slams, crowdsurfing, five at a time, and stage diving, ten. The mosh pits at a Dillinger show is a symphony of movement and well-intentioned fraternal violence as potent and physical as any sound emerging from the stage.

And what music that is. The Dillinger Escape Plan started out as four teenagers from New Jersey playing standard hardcore songs, 1 to 2 minutes in length, usually 3 chords bashed out with little regard to musical progression, to say nothing of innovation. Like any other garage band really. However, their debut album, *Calculating Infinity*, took the genres of hard riffs and crushing breakdowns of hardcore and metal, added intensely intricate jazz chords and time signature, and then exploded the mix, creating an entirely new genre, Mathcore. So named for its complexity married to heaviness, the genre eventually came to include such legendary bands like Converge, The Mars Volta, and War from a Harlot's Mouth. But Dillinger were first, and kept on innovating, adding elements in their subsequent records *Miss Machine* and *Ire Works* as far ranging as Bossa Nova to pure mainstream pop, on tracks like "Setting Fire to Sleeping Giants" and "Milk Lizard." In a genre and subgenre where tracks on an album can sometimes blend together in a progression of aural sameness, no one has ever accused Dillinger of repeating themselves.

This was made apparent Saturday night, with the band alternating between the heady screeching crush of their earlier material, and the heavy pop of their later albums. There was the opening track of *Miss Machine*, "Sunshine the Werewolf," all massive drum fills and slashing guitar lines, with the lead guitarist Ben Weinman jumping off the veritable tower of amplifiers at the end of that song's final breakdown. "Gold Teeth

on a Bum," off 2010's *Option Paralysis*, began the way it does on record, with distorted sitar chimes leading into a crushing riff that nearly swallows the rest of the rhythm section with its relentless march. There was even an arena style sing-along, to the My-Chemical-Romance-like angst of "Milk Lizard," with the crowd singing along with Pucciato, "And we were never meant to be alone..." The sweetness was soon abated though, when the barking verses returned. The crowd loved that too.

What did suffer, considerably, was the venue. Not for nothing has Dillinger earned the title of "Most Dangerous Live Band in Existence," as, by the end of the night, half the tiles in the men's room ceiling, unfortunately located beneath the stage, had simply fallen off, the reverb too much to bear. The worst of it, however, was reserved for the stage. By the time the band tore into their last song, the definitive Dillinger anthem "43% Burnt," what felt like nearly half the audience, myself included, were up on the stage, taking the pit to the band themselves, who either got in the mix, like Pucciato, or stood on the amps and continued playing, like Weinman. Halfway through, the stage collapsed in the middle due to the excess weight of 125 moshing, jumping metalheads. The band stopped for a second, laughed, and then went right back into the screaming, dizzyingly complex finale, a musical passage that was accompanied in the past with the lead singer fire-breathing over the audience. Not that night sadly, but the sight of the band clearly enjoying playing amidst their adoring, albeit violently dancing fans was heartening enough. Once the stage was finally clear, and the last notes of the night echoed in the darkened, destroyed venue, Pucciato took the mic and unleashed one last red-faced howl. Rage, like solace, is never too far from the forefront on nights like these.



You Should Have Been There: Mourning a Lost Bohemian Culture

BY YAEL ROBERTS

Nostalgia reoccurs in every generation. It's one of those forces that kicks in when you least expect it. It's part of the condition of being tied to culture: you're always mourning for whatever culture came before you. Whether you're an artist, a writer, or a musician, you romanticize those who preceded you. As an artist, you're tied to them and draw your inspiration from the past. Soon though, the creators of the future will be looking back on people like you, mythologizing them and romanticizing them into fictions and ghosts of times long gone.

Today, we mourn the culture of the 60s, the 70s, the 80s, and even the 90s. At the recent Downtown Literary Festival, panelists mourned a lost bohemian literary culture, at two events: "Is the New York Bohemia Dead?" and "You Should Have Been There: Stories of the Best Show Ever." Writers and musicians talked about the New York music scene of the past. A few blocks away, at the New Museum, an exhibit, New York: 1993: Experimental Jet Set, Trash, and No Star, looked back 20 years at the art scene in 1993. It would be hard to argue that nostalgia didn't permeate the walls of the museum, as if the artwork itself were yearning for dead, ideal world.

New York: 1993: Experimental Jet Set, Trash, and No Star

It was 1993. Conflict raged in Europe and the Middle East. People were dropping from AIDS left and right. Debates about gun control, health care, and gay rights were taking New York by a storm. And Sonic Youth was about to release their eighth album, *Experimental Jet Set, Trash and No Star*. It was a time that most college students today can't remember.

But the current exhibition at the New Museum attempts to recreate this year in history. *New York: 1993: Experimental Jet Set, Trash, and No Star*, is an exhibition that includes five floors full of work created that year. The exhibit, mourning a lost bohemian culture, attempts to cover everything going on that year visually, from painting to photography to film to installation. Seeking to span the spectrum of art from that year, The New Museum is transformed into a more traditional museum, showcasing two-dimensional work.

Larry Clark's collection of skateboards attests to a counterculture of the 90s. A few floors up, Ann Hamilton's *Tropos*, an installation of books crossed out and cut up, works well juxtaposed with Derek Jarman's film *Blue*, a sound installation accompanied by an entirely blue screen, his last film before he died from AIDS in 1994.

Other artists experiment with photography, like Steven Pippin in "The Continuing Saga of an Amateur Photographer." Pippin developed images developed in the 55-minute trip between Victoria and Brighton, by locking himself in the train's bathroom and developing his images in the bathroom's toilet. The results are oddly haunting, containing eye-like forms that almost seem to stare back. Another series takes photographs and replaces them with lines about the content of the photograph. An open and honest diary showcases 481 sheets of yellow notebook paper, filled with diary entries with lines like "Can I be so presumptuous? Perhaps such realizations are best left for your own discovery about this piece."

It's almost as if the curator has forced artists to collaborate after their death, like on the fifth floor, where a rug installation with photographs on the wall is juxtaposed with a sound installation of "Sail on Sailor" by Kristin Oppenheim. These artists are collaged with their contemporaries and made into what they were not. They are mythologized into an historical account of an art culture now gone. Devon Dileou's directory boards demonstrate this best, as they detail various exhibitions in the 90s, including their titles, curators, and artists, acting like tombstones memorializing a dead culture.

But it's not just the contemporary art world that yearns for the past. Today's writers also mourn a bohemian culture long gone.

"Is the New York Bohemian Dead?"

On April 14, Katie Roiphe (author of *The Morning After*), Donald Antrium (a novelist), James Atlas (Saul Bellow's biographer, and Lucas Wittman (editor at Daily Beast) gathered for a panel, "Is the New York Bohemian Dead?" as part of the Downtown Literary Festival.

What is Bohemia? What are these writers yearning for? The panelists described a community, joined together in their opposition to mainstream society. A wild, reckless community, drinking themselves into abandon, sleeping with as many people in one night as possible, too stoned to function in day-to-day society. And of course, living without such luxuries as insurance or a savings account, and subsisting day by day, with no guarantee of what tomorrow will bring.

Susan Sontag once said to a young writer, "People like us don't have health insurance and a savings account! We're bohemians! We're intellectuals!" Yet as James Atlas points out, "Susan Sontag herself had health insurance." According to Atlas, nothing has changed. "Each generation laments the disappearance of the bohemia before it." He continued, "We're all dreaming about... Edna St. Vincent Millay. They in turn looked back to an earlier period when there was a literary period in the late 20th." With every generation comes a longing for what came before, "We're about to decry [bohemia's] absence. We won't be the first."

Not only do we mythologize the figures of the past, but they mythologize themselves, Roiphe explained. But maybe sometimes romanticizing something is useful. And why? Because if we don't, we're missing something. We're missing the spark, the passion, the living a life on the edge of ordinary existence.

Atlas reminisced, and perhaps romanticized, a visit to Allen Ginsburg about 20 years ago: "He lived on East 10th street. And to get into his house you had to call about to the third or fourth story window... 'Allen!' or in my case, 'Mr. Ginsburg!' Then he'd drop the keys down to the street... and there he'd be with his boyfriend... and he'd play chance on his tape recorder and was stoned and it was just one of the most tremendous evenings of my life. Today he'd get a genius grant and have a house in the Hamptons. But he was being Allen Ginsburg, and it did had a kind of incredible authenticity to it."

Wittman says he found bohemian life accidentally, and solitarily. He has never felt part of a bohemian, artistic community, separated off from the rest of society. Williamsburg might be the hot spot for ten years, Bushwick for another ten, while meanwhile, Williamsburg turns into a neighborhood filled with multi million dollar apartments. But artists have nowhere to turn for a real sense of solidarity. Antrium agreed, commenting, "I don't feel like I'm part of an idea about art, and it's lonely... there's been a kind of wrecked dream that's been going on."

This could be attributed to economics in the city, or today's technological world where we can exist alone, yet in a strange way still exist together. Writers in generation's past were expected to live marginal lives: they had no money, no agents, and creative talent wasn't a marketable skill.

Antrium concluded that the discussion wouldn't be happening if as writers, they didn't feel like something was missing. And what are we missing? The humanities and the arts have been devalued, the panelists agreed. But mostly, today's writing is missing things like wisdom, maturity, rigor, honesty and clarity, to name a few. Perhaps these are forms of writing that only a bohemian culture can create.

"You Should Have Been There: Stories of the Best Show Ever"

It's not just the visual art culture and the literary art culture that mourn for what previous generations had. The music culture also cries for the shows of yore. Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth spoke at another one of the events at the Downtown Literary Festival: "You Should Have Been There: Stories of the Best Show Ever." Moore started going to shows in early '76. Although Max's Kansas City interested him, the pictures he saw of CBGB really drew his attention. After running into an intoxicated Joey Ramone on his way to the show, paying an entrance fee of three dollars (an inordinate amount of money at the time) and peeing in a urinal next to Elvis Costello, he got to hear Costello and Richard Hell sing *You Gotta Loose*. But Moore's most evocative memory of CBGB's was the Patti Smith show he saw there in '76. Moore and his friend were shoved aside by CBGB personnel to make room for William Burroughs, who had his own table and chair in the center of the venue crowded with cats, dogs, and just about anything. Smith sang straight to William. "It was all for William," said Moore, "and it was beautiful."

Patrick Stickles, frontman of Titus Andronicus hails from Glenrock, New Jersey. His most memorable show was February 15, 2003, at the Roseland ballroom after: Sleater-Kinney, a punk band from Olympia, Washington. "Thank you for protesting the war [in Iraq], and thank you in advance for shaking your ass," Sleater-Kinney screamed before the show began. Stickles lamented the "dichotomous promise that punk had" as both a political force and a musical culture.

Nikolai Fraiture of The Strokes talked about reading a lot of books like *Just Kids* or *Ghosts of Buildings on Fire* depicting the scene in New York in the 70s and 80s. Already, Nikolai began to look back on a time he hadn't been alive for, a time when Moore was running to shows at CBGBs. Nikolai contrasted the 90s which he said was probably as cool as the 70s and 80s, to now, when New York is more corporate, and trying to get a gig at the show must be hard for a new band. For Nikolai, it was never about the actual show but about the before and after, about being so messed up that he and a Julia Casablancas, also of The Strokes, wandered down 42nd and scaled the wall at the UN. He remembers sneaking into shows, eye-opening shows, magical crazy colors at shows, and mostly one specific Jane Addiction's show. The Jane's Addiction show was somewhere in between, a turning point in the New York music scene.

Sonic Youth formed in 1981. The Strokes formed in 1998. And Titus Andronicus formed in 2005. Each band member looked back to a show from a previous generation. Memory has that way of easily turning their shows into stories, making that one the bohemian ideal we'll always be striving for, the best show ever. Whether or not it was—well, I guess you should have been there.

On the subway ride back from the festival, I'm reliving what that Jane's Addiction show must have been like, when I look up to find that Nikolai is riding next to me. He's riding the subway like any other human being in New York. And I think for a moment, that maybe this is our bohemia, this unintentional community of commuters who don't even know each other exist. This is the only place we come together: on subway rides, walking unintentionally together down the streets. The solitary existence we lead isn't really so solitary after all. I shuffle the songs on my ipod, and "Last Night" comes on, The Strokes song reminiscing about something of the past. I smile at Nikolai, but I don't think he notices. And I'm already getting nostalgic for The Strokes, nostalgic for the present. I'm already writing them in to the list of bands I'll one day remember, and history is standing next to me. The cycle continues, the yearning for the past, and we're all already remembering and mythologizing the present. You should have been there. Or maybe, you should be here, now.